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LITERATURE   SCIENCE   ART
There is a particular kind of people who call themselves sceptics and who require "material proofs", and yet in this, for each proof they will find some disproof of their own. If a witness to something appears, they will say that it simply seemed so to him. If a great number of witnesses come forward, it will very likely be declared that mass psychosis took place. If they see the impression of something on a material film, they will probably suspect some cleverly fabricated falsification. In this they lose sight of the fact that a man who is too suspicious of others bears within himself the germs of that very thing which he is so ready to impute to others.

Among all the forms of evidence, the most striking ones for sceptics will be signs which have appeared on material objects. If something appears upon a film which was not in front of the camera at the moment of exposure, then even a sworn doubter will be shaken in his confirmed scepticism, that is to say, in his ignorance. So many times each one has had occasion to meet with people who have solemnly declared that if proofs should be manifested to
them, they would proclaim far and wide that of which they had been convinced. But when these proofs which they were awaiting appeared before their very eyes, not only did none of them proclaim anything publicly, but they continued quite coolly to wear the same mantle of sceptical complacence. Does one need to cite examples of this?

Let us leave for awhile the matter of personal observations and for the time being disregard the great number of witnesses, while we recall several episodes in the field of photography. A large amount of literature has grown up regarding the question of photographing forms "from beyond". In the book "Photographing the Invisible" by James Coates can be found a whole series of prints which it is difficult to suspect of any falsification. Likewise it is just as impossible to regard as spurious those accidental prints which the photographers themselves consider due simply to defective films. I recall how once in India a photograph was taken of a deceased person, and on the print beside the body appeared a whole row of figures, which those intimate with the deceased conclusively recognized as relatives of his, who had preceded him in death. Likewise we have had occasion to see simple passport photographs upon which in the most unusual places appeared faces which could not be accounted for. Photographers have been chagrined at deteriorated films, but of course such "deterioration" can take place far oftener than may be supposed.

Quite recently there was communicated to us the following "mysterious" episode, which took place during the filming of a motion picture.

This amazing story which occurred on the set in one of the Hollywood studios was related by the distinguished American cinema artist, Warner Baxter. During the making of the picture sequences, in the course of the action, he was to represent a man mourning over the death of his wife. The actor was in great form, and the director remarked that never before in his life had he played his role with such versimilitude.

That evening the film taken was run off in the projection room at the studio in the presence of the director. After several minutes he rushed to the telephone and called Baxter.

"Come immediately," he said in a trembling voice, "something absolutely unbelievable has happened."

Baxter hastened to the studio in an automobile. The director led him into the projection room and told the operator to rerun the film taken that morning.

That which Baxter saw on the screen stunned him also. He saw himself seated in an armchair in an attitude of despair. Suddenly behind his back appeared quite perceptible lineaments of a woman's figure. Neither Baxter nor the director could find any explanation for this astonishing manifestation. The possibility of the unobserved appearance of an outsider before the camera during the filming was absolutely excluded. Likewise there could be no question of a technical trick. The camera man affirmed on oath that he had used an absolutely immaculate roll of film.

The next day the taking of this same scene was repeated, with all measures of precaution being taken. When this second film was run off, the amazed spectators again saw this mysterious apparition behind the actor's back.

In the words of Warner Baxter, to this day he has not succeeded in accounting for this astonishing manifestation. Some of the cinema artists who believe in the occult sciences affirm that in the case cited there took place a manifestation of some particular spirit. Others affirm that the thoughts of the actor, attaining a high degree of tension, took on a material form. The fact that the mysterious spectre appeared in both the successive exposures excludes any possibility of fraud or trick.

Let us set aside for awhile carrying out to conclusion arguments as to precisely how to explain the unexpected appearance of the figure on the film. On these themes it is possible to discourse at great length, and for sceptics such conjectures will still be unconvincing. But the very
appearance of the figure on the film, which was testified to by the many who saw this registration, remains indisputable. It is especially characteristic that the episode occurred twice. It is entirely impossible to form conjectures and conclusions about precisely what attendant circumstances could contribute to such a manifestation. Obviously there exist such conditions, complicated as viewed by human thinking, which do not as yet yield to formulation.

We have had occasion to hear in what unexpected conditions the most remarkable prints have resulted. Yet at the same time, when, according to human reasoning, the “best” conditions were arranged, no results were obtained. Precisely the unexpectedness of manifestations especially arrests the attention. In this very unexpectedness vanishes any suggestion of fraud. And again, what falsification could be looked for in those cases, when people not only do not rejoice at the manifestations, but on the contrary consider them simply deterioration of films?

It has been related to us, how a friend of ours obtained from a photographer’s studio a so-called unsuccessful photograph, upon which in different positions there had come out some strange unaccounted-for faces. The photographer was extremely apologetic for such strangely spoiled film, and did not even want to give away a negative, in his opinion so unsuccessful. In this case it is characteristic that the apartment itself of the photographer was quite the usual type, in which there were made numerous exposures every day. And our friend himself was in a most ordinary worldly frame of mind, being completely removed from thought about anything extraordinary. Many times we have happened to hear that surprising manifestations occur not when they are expected by the human reason, but precisely in the most unexpected circumstances. We have happened to see the rooms where remarkable prints had been made, and it was amazing that in such a drab atmosphere anything unusual could take place. Evidently there exist especially subtle conditions which for the present elude human understanding.

Likewise by their own premature conclusions people frequently destroy the possibilities of significant manifestations. The grossest judgments during the subllest manifestations can only be harmful. Before making any arbitrary conclusions, one should without prejudice collect all the available facts. In this matter, let people call you materialists,—it is unimportant how they shall define your methods. But first of all it is important to display impartiality in all relationships. The film is a material object. No one will suspect the film and the photographic apparatus of anything “supernatural”. But if these material objects note down something most subtle, it is all the same by what path and what method, provided the new facts penetrate into the human consciousness. Everything which broadens and bestows new possibilities must be accepted with gratitude.

If a noteworthy fact comes out not in a specially constructed laboratory but amidst the most worldly surroundings, then certainly this detail in no wise belittles its true significance. It is possible to call to mind so many most useful discoveries made not by specialists in the particular field, but sometimes as it were by casual workers. From the domain of metallurgy we have had occasion to hear how specialists have paid attention to the particular methods employed by certain experienced workmen. Precisely these “casual” methods subsequently proved especially useful in the hands of specialists, forming them into an integral and significant improvement.

Specialists divide themselves into two camps. Some, even those who are serious scholars, arrogantly pass by the most interesting facts if they are not arrayed in scientific garb. Whereas the others, amid the most ordinary surroundings, know how to observe and to work out most important improvements. Of course it is well known that there has been inspected only the most insignificant portion of brain activity. Not without reason has attention frequently been turned to the fact that human mutual relationships have been least of all studied. Call these domains psychology or, circumstantially, reflexology; give them any names
which can assist your experiments, but guard these most precious fields against light-minded outrage.

It is highly indicative that such books as Alexis Carrel's "Man, the Unknown" have reached ten editions and are considered the most widely circulated in the international market. Man is still striving for cognition. Apart from epidemics of dances and newly devised games, people in all countries are striving for enlightenment. News has reached that at present in Moscow upon suggestion of the late Maxim Gorky a colossal block of buildings covering 450 hectares is being erected, dedicated to the study of man. The central place is occupied by the All-Union Institute of Experimental Medicine. Research with goodwill is the first factor in advancement.

It is He on the white horse that we must outride
For the waters are rising and in comes the tide,
Then let us go quicker and quicker than He,
Like the sun and the rain and the wind on the sea.

Look! he rides as the foam on the waters that pour
In their torrents to break up the rocks on the shore,
And the storm winds are with Him to urge on his flight,
While the light of the west has long sunk from our sight.

And the air is alive with black pinions, a beam
As of metal wings kindles the East in its gleam,
'Tis a light that is sinister saffron and dun,
And that tinges the foam like a sinister sun.

Yet an army behind Him all riding as one,
And all armed with the shafts of an Infinite Sun
Are invading the Past as the light of the Dawn,
Will invade the dark night till a New World is born.

For the Iron shall break up the Iron, and the Fire
Burn up all the anger, devour all the ire,
Till the forest huts rise as an emblem of Peace
And the Golden Age come and the cities shall cease.

Though the sands and the salt water pools hurry by,
Yet the night cometh up with no star in the sky,
Then let us go quicker and quicker than He,
Like the Sun and the Rain and the Wind on the Sea.