

'precipitated' on paper—and the same with intent to deceive'; or it appears within a sealed slate (packed with tricks that are vain); or (as in Mr. Trowbridge's case) it is made to appear in red letters scratched upon the bared arm of the medium. For the red letters, the sole apparatus required is the sharpened stem of a wooden match—which is usually let into the under-side of the leaf of the séance-table by the aid of a bradawl. The match-stem is a crude pen; the 'writing' is speedily done by rubbing the bared arm against it; and half a dozen rapid and vigorous rubs of the other hand give the straggly letters the red and fiery appearance that completed the illusion. This is but one of a thousand illusions—some clumsy, many clever, some marvels of skill and cunning—that have deceived tens of thousands of people and led well-meaning Catholic writers, unversed in such wiles, to give such misleading and exaggerated descriptions of the phenomena of mediumistic séances. In the course of a series of articles on the subject two years ago, we outlined the broad features of the methods of deception practised by leading professional mediums. We expressed the conviction that, back of the wholesale chicanery with which mediumism is saturated, there is a thin, small film of genuine phenomena that defy natural explanation. It represents, to our mind, a very, very small fraction of one per cent. of the sum total of the 'manifestations' that have so captured the fancy and impressed the imagination of our Catholic writers on the subject of spiritism. And we are convinced that these few and rare genuine phenomena are not to be looked for in the performances of the professional medium. For ways that are dark and for tricks that are vain, the 'meejum' is peculiar. Which the same we are free to maintain.

THE EMPEROR OF AUSTRIA

A cable message received last Friday stated that the joyous celebrations in connection with the Emperor of Austria's diamond jubilee of his accession to the throne were overclouded by the fact that four people were killed and 106 injured while witnessing the illuminations. Forty-three of the Emperor's grand-children gave a fairy play at the Royal residence at Schonbrunn. After the celebration of Solemn High Mass at the Cathedral the Emperor received the congratulations of the Royal princes, ambassadors, and Court officials.

His Imperial Majesty Francis Joseph, Emperor of Austria and King of Hungary, who is in his 79th year, is one of the most remarkable figures in the civilised world to-day. He is the ruler of a dozen States and twenty peoples speaking as many languages. He was born in 1830, and ascended the throne as far back as 1848, that is before the South Island of New Zealand was settled. No prince of the Hapsburg House ever enjoyed such universal respect and reverence, and to these qualities is in a great measure due his success in keeping welded together an Empire composed of so many diverse nationalities and conflicting interests. Whoever has occasion to approach this 'Grand Old Man' among the monarchs of the world is filled with enthusiasm for his charm of manner, his democratic approachableness, his amazing frankness, and his sterling sense of justice.

Notwithstanding his great age he still works ten hours a day and more at State and military affairs—and that for weeks on end—often contenting himself with a 'quick lunch' brought to him at the desk in his study. He is to-day the same early riser he was in the days of his youth, and summer and winter rises from his little iron bedstead at the unearthly hour of half-past four. His toilet—bathing, shaving, and dressing—never takes him longer than half an hour; and, as the Emperor does not care for civilian dress, he usually dons the uniform of a Colonel of one of his own regiments.

On his frequent shooting expeditions, however, he wears the coarse dress of Alpine Austria, and in his study appears in a short military cloak with a peakless soldier's cap on his grey head. Every single act of this remarkable old man's life is conducted with military precision. On the very stroke of 5 his breakfast—a cup of coffee, some cold meat and rolls—is brought him, and before 6 he is in his study.

The Emperor at Work.

A casual glance might lead one to think (says a writer in *Cassell's Magazine*) this was a cosy sitting-room, with its dainty pictures, framed photos, and charming furniture, but the big writing-table in the window, the book shelves, and the litter of newspaper cuttings on tables, chairs, and floor, reveal the room's true purpose. In this study the aged Emperor works uninterruptedly until noon. Bulky packets of papers and Ministerial reports are read to him, and so carefully does he go through this work that he frequently pounces on contradictions between clauses which have entirely escaped the notice of Ministers or Under-Secretaries who may have drafted the Bill.

The Austrian Emperor is a great man for inviting petitions from all sections of his wonderful empire—and few people realise the diversity of nations which go to make up the Dual Monarchy. May not the domes and minarets and cupolas of Islam be seen in Bosnia and the Herzegovina? Is not Italian the language of Istria? Are not the Hungarians more different from the Austrians than the Irish from the English.

Naturally, then, petitions are numerous, and every one of these documents is read by the Emperor, who speaks and writes with perfect ease seven or eight languages, including Magyar, Croat, and Polish, as well as Italian and Russian. If he thinks any petition worthy he puts his Imperial sign manual upon it and passes it on to a Minister, who carries out the request. Important laws may often lie on the table in this room for many weeks before the conscientious old man will make up his mind to sign them; nor does he ever put his signature on a death warrant without exhaustive study of the case, and until he is convinced that clemency would be an injury to society. In one corner stands a little cupboard in which the old Emperor Francis Joseph keeps his private correspondence and accounts; and here, too, he keeps papers he dislikes to sign and equally dislikes to return to the Ministers unsigned, lest their feelings be hurt. Such documents frequently are concerned with the conferring of honors and distinctions. Having read and signed a whole host of reports, petitions, bills, and other documents, the Emperor glances through the Vienna papers and also the big assortment of newspaper cuttings from all the leading journals of the world.

In the Vienna Hofburg, as the Imperial Palace is called, general audiences are held twice a week, and positively anyone wishing to prefer a request or petition may approach freely this most democratic of Emperors.

Granting Personal Interviews.

It does not matter whether the Imperial visitor is a street-sweeper or a nobleman like one of the princely House of Esterhazy. I have often seen Archdukes and Princes with their dress-coats ablaze with orders walking into the presence of the Emperor side by side with the poorest of peasants. Naturally, the audiences cannot last long, since the aged monarch often receives over a hundred persons in a single forenoon. In each case Francis Joseph is posted up on the subject from the written petition; and as neither an adjutant nor any Court official is present, the Emperor alone is face to face with his petitioner. It frequently happens that the latter is struck absolutely speechless in the Emperor's presence, but the old man will take his hand and speak words of kindly encouragement until his visitor is quite at his ease and recovers his speech.

Frequent slips of the tongue, such as 'Your Excellency' and even 'Mr. Emperor!' are never heeded, of course; and to hear the old Emperor rattling off the dialects of his polyglot empire is an experience probably unique in Royal receptions. He drops into Hungarian for one set of subjects, and there is Polish for the Galicians; Czech for the Bohemians; Italian for the people round about Trieste and the Adriatic seaboard; and so on.

Of course, not every petition can be granted, but even if the Emperor is bound to refuse his manner has so delicate and gentle a charm that the disappointed one comes away full of love for the old man. A light nod and a smile is a hint to the visitor that the audience is over, and the Emperor hurries over to his desk to make a few notes and get information from the list there about the next case.

In the ordinary way, however, the Emperor lunches with his Adjutant-General, taking only a soup, two dishes

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