Part III

LOS ANGELES SUNDAY HERALD

City News

SUNDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 4, 1906.

HOW MEDIUM FAKERS DUPE INNOCENT

CLUMSY CHARLATANS PREY UPON GULLIBLE LOS ANGELES PEOPLE

AUTHORITIES TO RID CITY OF SHARKS

Dock Houghton May No Longer Protect in Council Gang of Harpies Who Fatten on Feeble Minded—Exposure of Methods of Spook Mediums

BY BESSIE BEATTY

IF legislation and systematic exposure can avail anything, Los Angeles, heretofore the heaven of the charlatan, will soon be too warm for even the most heat-proof fake spiritualist medium, clairvoyant, psychic or "business" adviser.

Not only psychic but legislative forces are working against the reign of the crooks who take the money of the foolish and unsuspecting, under false pretenses.

A general round up of the occult workers who tack their signs in dingy windows, looking out from dingy lodging houses, reveals some startling facts.

Fooling some of the people all of the time and all of the people some of the time is a lucrative occupation in Los Angeles. The fake mediums work quietly but persistently, and a few discoveries mean little to them. When people who have been duped become too persistent, the medium moves on to another house or drope out of sight for a little while, only to bob serenely up again.

The exposure of the methods of Mrs. Elsie Reynolds at the seance given Wednesday evening at 743 South Broadway, when the spot light discovered Mrs. Reynolds hidden under a bundle of gauze and masquerading as the spirit of some one's dead sister, has led to an investigation of the methods of others, and steps have been taken to have her license revoked.

Illiterate and Uncouth

Several times before side lights have been thrown on the methods of this woman, but in each case she has changed her lodgings and gone on with her practice of taking money from the gullible. In the letter which is published in The Herald today she explains her own methods better than anyone else could. She is writing to Mrs. Laura Hyland, a medium who worked in Sawtelle, playing on the feelings of the old soldiers, and also in Los Angeles. Mrs. Hyland retired from "active" business life because the people whom she has duped made life in beautiful Southern California uncomfortable for her.

Mrs. Reynolds is a woman with practically no education, and it would seem that the person who could be fooled long by her must be a fool indeed, and yet she appeals to a large class of people who have absolute faith in her. She is illiterate and uncouth, as her letter indicates.

She is one of those women who refuse to grow old gracefully. Her face is deeply wrinkled and filled with hard lines. Her hair has been bleached and the black pencil she uses lavishly in her eyebrows. Her smile is sickly and forced, her voice is cracked, and altogether she is a person to inspire only pity.

Medium Is an Easy Mark

She is cautious and yet easy to fool, if there is a dollar in sight, as those from whom she takes her living.

I first saw her at the Wednesday evening seance.

In company with a couple of detectives and Claude Hadley of the Anti-Faker society, I went to the seance. I was represented to be Mrs. Hadley and was admitted without questioning.

Mr. Hadley had called several times upon Mrs. Reynolds, had been visited by the spirit of his dead mother, who, by the way, is not dead, and had been advised, he says, to buy property in Searchlight, Nevada, through G. A. Plaisaunce.

Mr. Hadley had prepared Mrs. Reynolds for my coming. He represented himself as a man with money who had come from Kansas City. He said his wife was coming in a few days with his baby boy, and thus she was ready to welcome me without suspicion. She was even more than ordinarily cordial and asked me to bring my baby to see her.

Two of my friends came later and they had a more difficult time to get in. Mrs. Reynolds was not taking any chances and she put them in the back room, though I was given a seat near the cabinet. Mrs. Reynolds does not stop at little things. Her seance was for full forms and when they began coming they came in all sizes.

Runs a Pretty Graft

Before stepping into the cabinet she invited the skeptical ones to examine it. Of course no one did, for all within that circle were supposed to be firm believers. There were thirty persons in the two rooms and if we had not broken up the little party so soon Mrs. Reynolds would have received 50 cents from each of them, making a total of $15 for a couple of hours' graft.

She announced that she wanted no strangers.

"I have to be very careful whom I admit," she said.

"They have run so many people out of town that I guess I am the only phenomenal medium left, and I intend to stay here all winter if they will let me."

"Mrs. Reynolds ought to have a larger room," said the man who sat next to me to a friend on the other side.

"This place is much too crowded. She should have a large square room built especially for her. She has to move so often, too."

While we waited for the visitors from spiritland, I noted the women who made up the circle. There were sad faced all, women with white hair and trusting faces. There were young women with sallow complexions and stupid eyes, and others that revealed signs of intelligence of a kind that should be able to penetrate the sort of shams which Elsie Reynolds offered.

Cruel Deceptions

The men were as plentiful as the women. Some of them were her confederates, as the fist fight which closed the evening's entertainment proved. Others had gone there in the hope of once more seeing a loved wife or mother. Some had come with the hope of gaining advice from the person they had loved best in the world. They kissed the ugly, wrinkled medium, in the dim light, and believed they were kissing a dear one. They wept and the medium wept with them. They spoke soft caressing words and the cracked voice of the medium answered them in the softest tones a cracked voice can command.

The medium came as wife, sister, daughter, mother, father, or uncle as her dupes wished. Some times she donned a mustache and some times she put on only the trailing gauze robes.

When she finally fell into the arms of a detective she came to him as his sister, in spite of the fact that he has no sister who is not living, and when the lights were turned on she fought like a mad woman.

Even after all this there were people in the room who believed in her, who are still her friends and it is to some of these feeble-minded ones that she will probably bring spirit friends tonight.

Women Densely Ignorant

Since the evening of Mrs. Elsie Reynold's seance I have visited a dozen of her kind, allowed myself to be parted from a dozen dollars and have seen myself as a dozen different persons. One told me that I am to marry the dark man and another the fair man; one that I am to be rich and another "only comfortable;" one that I should invest in real estate and another in mining stock; one that I should get a divorce and another that I should stay with my husband.

Not content with permitting me to live one life or even a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde existence, I must live a dozen lives, if I am to prove that the clairvoyants, mediums and psychics swerve not from the truth.

As the foolish girl seeking guidance in her love affairs I appealed to some, and as the wronged wife I asked advice of others. Upon questions concerning the most sacred things in a woman's life these mediums, psychics and clairvoyants were willing to give me advice for the sum of one dollar. Nay, not only willing, but anxious. Assured me that they were doing the same things all the time for others and knew they could help me. As the lovesick maiden they flattered me and as the wronged wife they condoled with me. What I appeared to want they were ready to give, and what I expected I received—all for one dollar.

In no case did I find a woman of more than average, or of even average, intelligence. The majority of them are illy educated and not on speaking terms with the best the English language has to offer. Some of them are hopelessly illiterate, each had left her girlhood far behind her and was lavish in her use of smiles.

Mrs. Edwards a Poor Guesser

If they had only happened by chance to once break behind the mask and tell something that was true about me they might still have left me with a vestige of belief in their sincerity, but alas, it was not to be.

Mrs. Belle Edwards, "psychic medium and clairvoyant, life reader who succeeds when all others fail," according to the pasteboards upon which Mrs. Edwards advertises herself, failed like all the rest.

"Dear, you are in trouble," said Mrs. Edwards with a tear in her voice, and then she smiled. "Cheer up, dear, I will help you.

"You have people who are close to you in the spirit world, haven't you, dear?"

I nodded in assent, and encouraged she went on:

"Your mother, who is in spirit land, is hovering around your chair."

This was news to me of a startling character, but I covered my surprise and nodded again.

"She says that she will watch you and that everything will be all right.

"You are worrying about a man." She paused long enough to see what effect this stupendous statement would have. It is such an uncommon thing for a woman to worry about a man.

Illiterate, Slangy and Stupid

"You are worrying about two men and you will marry one of them. One is a fair man, ain't he? Yes, of course he is. And he is big. There is another man and you do not know which one to chose. You must marry the fair man, for he is the one for you.

"You must tear the other man out of your heart and say skidoo to him, for you cannot marry them both. It will be hard for him and hard for you, but you must do it, dear, for the fair one is the one for you." With each sentence she paused to see the effect of her words, and the look of submission which met her gaze evidently convinced her that she was on the right track. She was fat, greasy and repulsive. It was nauseating, but I kept at my disgusting task.

"You have never been happy." The happiest girl in the world jumped at this statement, and the medium immediately supplemented it.

"No, dear, you have not really been happy. You only think you have."

I did not stop to argue the difference between being happy and thinking you are happy, so she offered the consolation "that some day I will be happy."

Tries Silly Flattery

She talked more of my mother in spirit land and told me that if I was much with mediums I would get wonderful manifestations. Heaven forbid.

"You are quite a mediumistic little body yourself," she said much as if she were presenting me with a million dollars, and immediately I began to see visions of the fortune I could pile up on the weaknesses of the multitude; of the happy homes I could wreck; of the plans of Cupid that I could upset; of the oil stock I could unload on the unsuspecting, and of the sand lots I could offer to the widow with a little money.

I learned that a large part of the medium's wealth comes through their "business" advice.

Anyone with a little money to invest can get all the good advice he or she wants from a medium. They have it at their fingers' tips, and they are fairly aching to get rid of it for the sum of $1.

Unscrupulous real estate dealers come in for a large share of the profits in this way.

I told one medium that I had some money which had been left me by an uncle in the east. It was not very much, only about $3000, but I thought it might be made more if properly invested. She agreed with me thoroughly and was confident that she could tell me just what to do with it.

Works with Real Estate Sharks

I promised to telephone her when I would come for a reading, but she allowed me to depart reluctantly. Three thousand dollars was too good to be let slip easily. She assured me that she felt in just the right mood at that minute and thought she could get some good "communications" for me through her "spirit forces."

Alas, the poor forces had to wait, and they are probably waiting yet. The medium will mourn in vain for her commission. Some day I shall make public a list of names of real estate men who are partners in crime with fake mediums.

In the Grand Pacific hotel, the home of numerous advisers of various kinds, Madam Frye presides in a two-room apartment, cheaply furnished, and a crime against all ideas of the artistic. In addition to being a psychic medium she is also a magnetic healer, who "never loses a case." She guarantees to cure rheumatism and even goes so far as to say that she can cure weak eyes, however bad they may be.

Twelve long hours "Madam" keeps open for business, and she undoubtedly finds is profitable, for she has been there for two years. "Madam" does not call herself a spiritualist, for she says she does not know where her alleged power comes from. She just "gives what she gets."

For $2 a treatment she said she would cure the weak eyes of a friend whom I promised to bring to see her. She never gives a treatment for less than $2. Oh learned, skilled men who have devoted a life to the study of this affliction; think of that!

Henley Is Prosperous

I called on John Henley late in the afternoon and found him busy. He carries on his business at 444 South Spring street and he has no difficulty in attracting the gullible.

"I cannot see you now as I am busy, but you may make an appointment," said Mr. Henley. He consulted an engagement book and finally announced that he could see me the following day at 1 o'clock, or that evening at 5 o'clock. All the rest of his time was engaged. Mr. Henley is a very busy man.

According to Mr. Hale of the Anti-Fakers' society, a year ago Mr. Henley was exposed at a public trumpet seance. When the flashlight was thrown on Henley he dropped the trumpet exclaiming "McGinnis threw the trumpet at me." McGinnis, Mr. Hale says, is John's funny Irish spirit guide, who assists at his trumpet seances.

I did not have time to have that promised reading and I regretted it, for I have no doubt I missed a chance to turn an "easy dollar in a safe investment."

The Doctor Isn't Greedy

I called upon "Dr." W. H. Green, a short, fat man who calls himself clairvoyant and business medium, and has rooms at 119½ South Spring street. Dr. Green can tell you how to make a million but he contents himself with extracting dollars from others and letting them have the millions. The doctor does not explain why he does not invest one of the dollars himself, make a million and settle down to live the rest of his life in luxury.

Mrs. Wesley is one who has been endowed with the faculty of locating vast bodies of ore. Just why Mrs. Wesley does not locate some vast bodies of ore for herself and thus amass a fortune I did not succeed in discovering. At 541½ South Spring street she tells one upon what to speculate, how to get a divorce, how to get a husband, and how to do almost everything else you want to do.

Mrs. J. J. Whitney, a trance and business medium, is another one of the Spring street advisers who can make others rich and happy but is willing to sacrifice herself on the altar of hard work.

Marked Down to Two Bits

There are some of them who come cheaper than others. If you look as if you are one of the dollar kind you will always be charged a dollar, but it is possible to get what you want for almost any sum you want to pay.

Prof. Mulburn conducts regular bargain readings, and he will give you a $2 reading for only 50 cents. He places his own valuation.

Dr. Milburn has such a wonderful opinion of his high powers that he causes a star to be placed above his head in all pictures of himself.

Prof. St. Elmo cuts Prof. Milburn's prices in half and for 25 cents he will tell you just exactly what you should do to be happy, healthy, wealthy and wise. Each one is wonderful, astounding, convincing; each one is the only one in the profession who is not a faker.

Just think of it, 25 cents to know whether you shall marry or not. How could find a cheaper way of picking a husband?

Reno is another of those who offer bargain readings, and his regular $2 readings are cut to 25 cents. No one has ever yet discovered who paid Reno $2 for a reading, but that is what he thinks they are worth.

City Full of Phenoms

Mme. Henreare boldly announces that mining stocks are her specialty. Think of the self-sacrifice of this woman. She will tell you where to invest your money and make you rich without ever a thought of the hard work she is doing, when she too might be rich.

Mme. Ora is another of the 25-cent kind, that is, if you are fortunate enough to be a woman. "Gents" 50 cents. Madam Ora does not explain why a man is worth double the amount that a woman is worth; perhaps it is charity to her sex which makes her let woman "down easy."

Mme. Le Pierro claims she was born with a double veil and she thinks she is especially gifted in revealing all mysteries. Mrs. Le Pierro's self-sacrifice is only equaled by the self-sacrifice of others of her kind. She can tell all about mining and buried treasure, but she never thinks of using any of this knowledge to her own advantage. Why it is preferable to give others opportunity to gather in large fortunes while the psychic lives in a dingy block and gives "readings" at two bits a read is unfathomable.

Elsie Is Unabashed

A Herald representative called Mrs. Reynolds on the telephone Friday, giving the name of Mr. Crane.

"Are you giving sittings now?" was his question.

"Yes, who is this?" asked Mrs. Reynolds. "Have we ever met?"

"Oh, yes, many times," was the reply.

"Well, I can give you at sitting tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock."

"All right. Will you give a seance Sunday night?"

"Yes, to a few intimate friends only. I have been letting in too many outsiders lately, and it caused some trouble Wednesday evening."

The receiver was hung up with the promise to be there sharp at 9 o'clock.

A litle thing like exposure seems to have no effect on Elsie Reynolds.

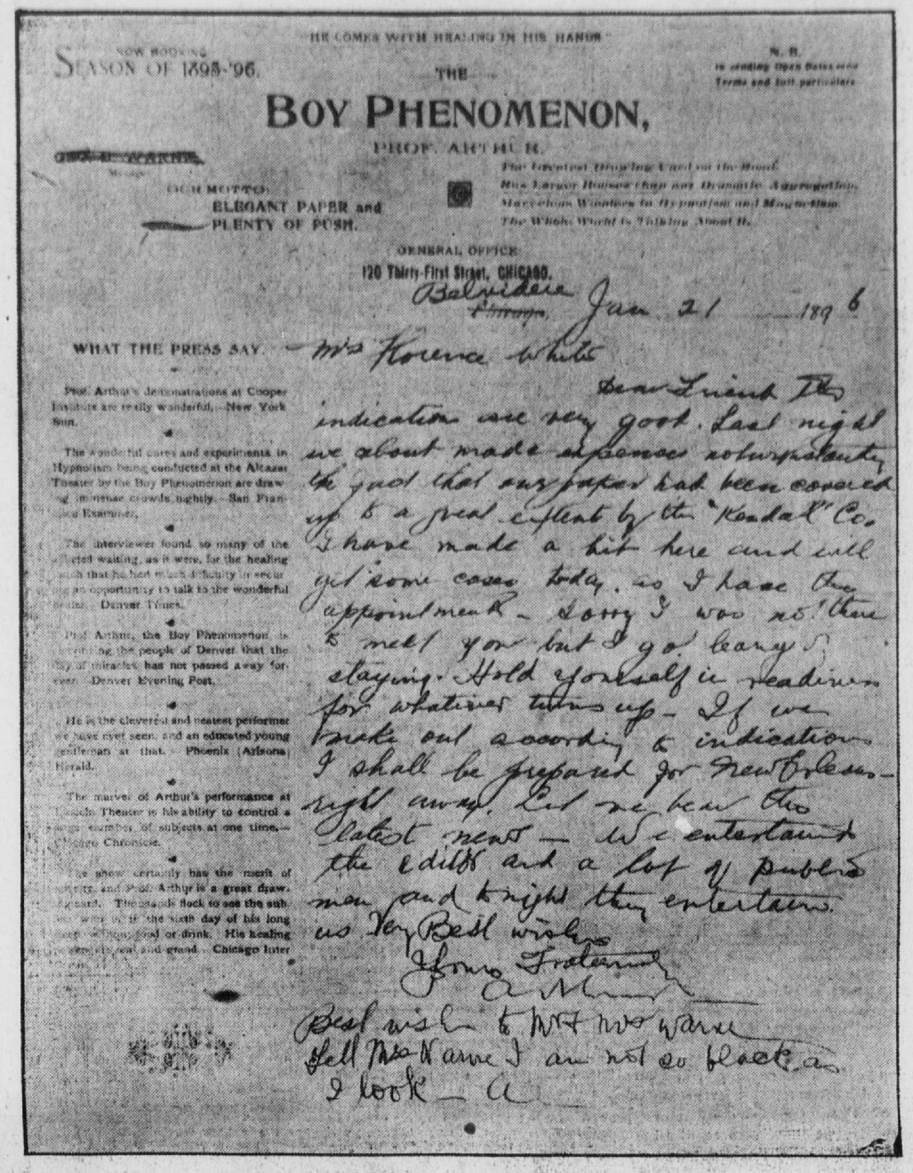
While in the cabinet Wednesday night just previous to the exposure, this wondrous dame who was posing as "Little Effie" delivered this bright gem: "You must have saw medium's ad in the Examiner."

DOCK HOUGHTON AND FLORENCE WHITE STAR AS A SPOOK TEAM

In 1896 Dock Houghton, who now represents the Sixth ward in the city council and wants another term, traveled with Mrs. Florence White through the Mississippi valley states as Prof. Arthur, the boy phenomenon, holding seances and giving hypnotic exhibitions, using Mrs. White as his subject.

Houghton can seldom be induced to talk of his own experiences "on the road," but he is lavish in his praises of the press agent who did his advance work.

"That man was a wonder," is the way he begins his eulogies of the press agent. "Why, when we would strike a town late at night I would have to look at the hotel register early in the morning to find out if I was a duke or an earl or the wild man of Borneo before I dared to go into the breakfast room."



HE COMES WITH HEALING IN HIS HANDS

NOW BOOKING SEASON OF 1895-'96.

THE BOY PHENOMENON, PROF. ARTHUR.

The Greatest Drawing Card on the Road. Has Larger Houses than any Dramatic Aggregation. Marvelous Wonders in Hypnotism and Magnetism. The Whole World is Talking About It.

N. B. is sending Open Dates and Terms and full particulars

OUR MOTTO: ELEGANT PAPER and PLENTY OF PUSH.

GENERAL OFFICE: 120 Thirty-First Street, CHICAGO.

WHAT THE PRESS SAY.

Prof. Arthur's demonstrations at Cooper Institute are really wonderful.—New York Sun.

The wonderful cures and experiments in Hypnotism being conducted at the Alcazar Theater by the Boy Phenomenon are drawing immense crowds nightly.—San Francisco Examiner.

The interviewers found so many of the elected waiting, as it were, for the healing touch that he had much difficulty in securing an opportunity to talk to the wonderful healer.—Denver Times.

Prof. Arthur, the Boy Phenomenon, is astonishing the people of Denver that the day of miracles has not passed away for ever.—Denver Evening Post.

He is the cleverest and neatest performer we have ever seen, and an educated young gentleman at that.—Phoenix (Arizona) Herald.

The marvel of Arthur's performance at Lincoln Theater is his ability to control a large number of subjects at one time.—Moline Chronicle.

The show certainly has the merit of novelty, and Prof. Arthur is a great drawing card. The people flock to see the subjects who, on the sixth day of his long fast, had neither food or drink. His healing demonstrations are grand.—Chicago Inter-Ocean.

Belvidere Jan. 21 1896

Mrs Florence White

Dear Friend The indications are very good. Last night we about made expenses notwithstanding the fact that our paper had been covered up to a great extent by the "Kendall" Co. I have made a hit here and will get some cases today, so I have the appointment — Sorry I was not there to meet you but I got leary of staying. Hold yourself in readiness for whatever turns up — If we break out according to indications I shall be prepared for New Orleans right away. Let me hear the latest news — We entertained the editor and a lot of public men and tonight they entertain us. Very Best wishes

Yours Fraternally

Arthur

Best wishes to Mrs Mrs Warne Tell Mrs Warne I am not so black as I look — A

Letter written by "Prof. Arthur," the "Boy Phenomenon," to Florence White in 1896. Mrs. White is at present plying her vocation of spook booster in Los Angeles, while her side partner has risen to the distinction of being the councilman from the Sixth Ward. Witness how the phenom "got leary" and failed to meet the fair Florence. Note how nicely things were running for the smooth one who came with "healing in his hands." Transcript of letter in text of story.

MAYOR WILL ASK FOR ORDINANCE

In an interview which the president of the Anti-Faker society had with Mayor McAleer, the mayor said:

"I intend to take this question up with the city attorney early Monday morning and see just what can be done in the case of Elsie Reynolds and other impostors.

"When a saloon keeper abuses his license it is taken away from him and the same rule should apply to others. We cannot refuse to give a license to one of these people until it is proved to us that they are impostors. When they are shown up, as Mrs. Reynolds was Wednesday evening, I think we have grounds for taking some action."

PROF. ARTHUR, BOY PHENOM, DOING HIS FANCY STUNT

Prof. Arthur Houghton & Florence White

Arthur Houghton and Florence White in their thrilling hypnosis scene. Note the repose of the Spook seeress, who yielded to hypnotism at so many "plunks" per hyp. See the embryo statesman's masterly method of slipping the sleep drops to the entrancing and Effulgent Florrie. The phenom's tawny locks are a familiar sight to habitues of the city councilmanic lobby.

PROFESSOR ARTHUR'S LETTER TO HIS SIDE PARTNER

BELVIDERE, Jan. 21, 1896.

Mrs. Florence White:

Dear Friend: The indications are very good. Last night we about made expenses, notwithstanding the fact that our paper had been covered up to a great extent by the "Kendall" company. I have made a hit here and will get same cases today, as I have the appointments. Sorry I was not there to meet you, but I got leary of staying. Hold yourself in readiness for whatever turns up. If we break out according to indications I shall be prepared for New Orleans right away. Let me hear the latest news. We entertained the editor and a lot of public men and tonight they entertain us. Very best wishes.

Yours fraternally, ARTHUR.

Best wishes to Mr. and Mrs. Warne. Tell Mrs. Warne I am not so black as I look.—Ar.

FLORENCE WHITE STILL IN THE GAME AS SPOOK RAISER

BY HUGH K. HARTUNG

Passing No. 444 South Spring street yesterday afternoon the legend "Madame Florence White—School for Psychic Forces" on a sign beckoned me to enter, and aroused a curiosity that seemed also to possess others who read the sign, ponder, looked up at the windows and then moved inward or onward as the final mental conclusion dictated.

With me it was inward. I wanted to be shown, being a native Missourian.

Saturday must have been a dull day at the school. There was a painful quiet in the building. Few persons tarried even in the hall. In Mme. White's reception room one young woman rocked in a chair, watching the throngs on Spring street below, and looking anything but a client. Maybe madam had told her bad news, for she looked sad.

Madame knew I was there, even though I entered quietly. Folding doors apparently screened me from her, as she was in an adjoining room, but she pushed the sliding doors ajar.

The psychic forces were working.

Would I enter? Madame smiled sweetly from the half open doors—opened so quietly I did not know she saw me first.

I caught a glimpse of an incandescent light shedding a dim red radiance over a center table in the room beyond. Transparent paper furnished the red, while a magnifying glass that lay near convinced me at a glance that my hands were to be read.

Madame Is Uneasy

"You are Mme. White?" I asked as she sat down on one side of the table and waved her hand to me and to a chair at the other.

The psychic forces were working.

"I assume you give advice on business matters to men, and will, for a fee, give me the benefit of your advice?" I began.

Madame eyed me sharply as though making a mental picture of my liberality and money-producing capacity, and admitted that she did practice the advice business.

"I have the fever to buy real estate that comes to all newly arrived Californians," said I, "and I want your best judgment on where a poor man can invest to best and quicket advantage."

Madame shifted about uneasily in her chair. I thought I had asked her an easy one. She seemed to think differently. I hastened to make matttrs easier by adding:

"Of course in Southern California it is not a question of losing money on real estate. You cannot lose it. What I want to know is what your mysterious sources of information advise as the quickest, safest speculative proposition."

"Well, I have not been here very long," she said, hesitatingly, "and I do not feel like giving advice on real estate."

I wondered whether she had read my mission and taken a seat on the cautious train. Did she expect me to ask advice on horse races, the political campaign or when and where the next strike would happen in the Greenwater district? Did she—horrors—suppose that I did not have the price of her fee?

Foresees Prosperity

"Oh, I am willing to pay a dollar or two for the service," I hastened to explain.

"I will do what I can for you," she vouchsafed.

The psychic forces were working.

"I am governed by readings of the hand, by my natural intuition, by my knowledge of men and affairs and by other forces—that is how I work," the madame continued.

She coughed every now and then, saying her throat irritated her, all the time looking at me closely and sizing me up.

She took first my one hand then the other and gazed at the palms through a magnifying glass. Not a word was said about real estate. My thirst for speculative information was growing acute.

"Your fate lines are a little conflicting but prosperity will come to you between your thirty-fifth and fiftieth year," was her comment as with my hand outstretched under the electric light she passed the magnifying glass back and forth.

By asking questions I got back to the real estate—the original proposition. My mission was mercenary, I explained, and I wanted to know where to place a portion of my monthly wages to accumulate some ground here or there to hold for investment.

Gives Vague Replies

"Well, I have not been here very long. Have you?" she said, giving me a scrap of information about herself.

"Oh, since the first of the year, but I am at sea as to where one's wages should be placed in real estate."

"I believe Long Beach offers fine opportunities," she finally gurgled. "I was there this summer and had a chance to judge. Glendale, friends tell me, has cheap property which will go up."

"How about Pasadena? I see much building going on out that way," I said, again seeking to get a definite prophecy. I wanted to help along the psychic forces for all I was worth.

"Yes, property is a good investment out that way. And at Sawtelle, too. Friends tell me lots can be had there cheaply now, and they are going up

(Continued on Page Six.)