

"MATTER THROUGH MATTER"

Hereward Carrington

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There is one very clever "test" that is sometimes performed which would seem to show that something of this sort IS accomplished. It is, however, nothing more than an ingenious trick, and this might be a good time to explain its modus operandi. The general effect of the illusion is this: The medium requests some one to assist him in an experiment in which he is going to attempt to pass "matter through matter." As the test is one in which a confederate might easily be employed, he is very careful to choose some person who is well known, or whose character is above all suspicion. If this were not so, the entire effect of the test would be lost upon the investigators. Having secured his assistant, he hands him, for examination, a solid steel ring, just large enough to slip on and off the hand and arm easily. The ring is perfectly solid, and may be examined by anyone desirous of doing so. When this part of the performance is finished, the medium and his sitter then join or clasp their right hands (as in handshaking), and the sitter is instructed not to release the hand for a single instant. To "make assurance doubly sure," however, the hands are fastened together in any way the sitters may desire; the hands being tied together with tape, e. g., and the ends of this tape tied and the knots sealed. The tape connects the wrists and the hands of the medium and his sitter, and this tying may be made as secure as possible. A piece of thick cloth is now thrown over the two hands and the lower part of the arms, concealing them from view. With his disengaged hand the medium now takes the iron ring and passes it up under the cloth, so as to bring it in contact with his own arm. He holds it there for some time, but ultimately snatches off the covering cloth, and reveals to the eyes of the astonished audience the ring—now encircling his own arm—in spite of the fact that the ties are still in statu quo, and the sitter never let go his hold for an instant. The ties and the ring may again be examined, if desired, before the hands are separated.

This is an exceedingly effective test, and has every appearance of being genuine—indeed, it is hard to see where trickery can come in. The trick is one of the simplest imaginable, however, and is performed in the following manner:

The medium has provided himself with TWO rings exactly alike; one of these the audience is free to examine, the other the medium is wearing on his right arm, under his coat. When the two hands are clasped together, therefore, it is a simple thing for the medium, under cover of the enveloping cloth, to slip the duplicate ring down his sleeve, and on to his own hand, and that part of the "miracle" is accomplished! It remains only to explain what becomes of the first ring. The cloth thrown over the arms is very thick and stiff, as stated, and the inner side of this contains a double partition, or sort of bag, into which the medium slips the duplicate ring. The cloth may now be shown on both sides, without disclosing the ring, and the medium makes away with it as soon as possible, in order to avoid detection.