

PSYCHIC EXPERTS ROUGH ON LODGE "Ghost Breakers" Give Scientist and Spiritism Short Shrift in Discussion CALL PHENOMENA FRAUDS

Sir Oliver Lodge came in for some rough handling at the meeting of the Contemporary Club at the Bellevue-Stratford last night, in a discussion on "Psychical Evidence of Survival." At one period, when Lightner Witmer, director of the psychological laboratory at the university of Pennsylvania, made a half-jocose, yet cutting remark concerning the financial side of Sir Oliver's advocacy of communication with spirits of the dead, the audience heard from a few of the distinguished Englishman's supporters. In the main, however, the large and fashionable audience at the Bellevue seemed inclined to agree with Doctor Witmer and other speakers who exposed the trickery of spiritism.

Dr. James H. Leuba, professor of psychology at Bryn Mawr College, led the assault on Sir Oliver Lodge and his lectures in this country. The speaker said that Sir Oliver's knowledge of physics did not qualify him to speak on psychical matters. "He is to be taken seriously," said Doctor Leuba, "only when he discusses physics." Doctor Leuba refuted the assertion that scientific men have studied spiritism with a view to believing in it by asserting in turn that 49 per cent of the scientists in this country are nonbelievers and that of the other 51 per cent very few indeed believe in spiritism. "The physical manifestations of spiritism have been discredited utterly," said Doctor Leuba. "The spirit messages have been discredited likewise, first because the messages themselves have been of a nature that pointed to an earthly rather than a spiritual origin; and second, because though the spirits pretend to possess wonderful powers, never has one of them offered a clear-cut, incontrovertible proof of the authenticity of the message."

Newbold Convert to Spiritism "There never was a man less entitled than Sir Oliver Lodge to regard himself as a public benefactor," Doctor Leuba concluded. "The picture of the other world presented by contemporary spiritism is a degradation of the splendid ideals and aspirations of Christianity." Dr. William R. Newbold, professor of philosophy at the University of Pennsylvania, confessed that he had been a hesitating and reluctant convert to spiritism. "I don't believe anything so much that I cannot change my mind in the face of new evidence," he explained. Though expressing the reasoned conclusion that existence after death had been demonstrated, he solemnly warned his audience against taking for granted the myriad nonsense that masks under the cloak of spiritism. "I have observed since this fad for spiritism that the shelves of an old book store I frequent have been swept clear of books of every sort on spiritism. I know what was on those shelves—most of it rubbish. I know that the publishers are hurrying into the market all sorts of rot. Be careful. It is as bad to be too credulous as too skeptical. It is not true that any one can go through the door of the spirit world. We are entering into an era of invention that will keep the best minds busy for the next hundred years." Dr. Lightner Witmer pointed out that

we have all of us an "idiot spot" in our minds as well as a "blind spot" in our eyes. "We are having a great deal of fun," said Doctor Witmer. "We are being fooled by mind readers and other sleight-of-hand artists. It is a crime to take from a child his belief in Santa Claus. Nor would I take from any grown-up his infantile joys. "It happens that we spend the first twenty years of our lives painfully and laboriously getting a mind; the last twenty years of our lives, if we live to a great age, equally painfully but not so laboriously, losing it. "If Sir Oliver Lodge never had possessed a better mind than he is displaying today he never could have attained the rank of even a third-rate physicist." Applause greeted this sally. "He still has sense enough, however," continued Doctor Witmer, "to make scientific nonsense financially profitable. There were a few scattered blisses at this. Doctor Witmer spoke of the panic emotionalism called hysteria, which he said had been brought to the top by the war, along with every other passion. "save that which animated Him,

who said: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' "The hit of the evening was Doctor Witmer's description of a séance, for which he loaned his laboratory to Doctor Newbold, remaining himself, but intentionally not as a participant. Spirit Began to Call "In a little while the 'spirit' began to call for me," said Doctor Witmer. "I went over to the table, and was told that my father wanted to speak to me. For a half-hour we talked about his old walking stick, the pet dog, how I was getting along and how my brother was getting along. Finally I said: 'I don't know whether it makes any difference, but my father is still living.' "Doctor Hodgson, who was present,

accused me of taking an unfair advantage of the spirit. "Mr. Rinn kept the audience laughing at his stories of trickery in spiritism. "What chance would Sir Oliver have against a card sharp?" asked Mr. Rinn. "If he saw a circus lionhorn making a little pea disappear and reappear under three walnut shells he probably would write a learned treatise telling how, by some occult force, the little pea had been made to disappear into space. Baltimore Brokers Held in Chicago Chicago, Feb. 10.—(By A. P.)—Edward J. Lawyer and Lou Cohen, Baltimore brokers, were arrested here early today on word from Baltimore that they had been indicted in connection with a \$200,000 bond swindle there.

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