## MISCELLANEOUS.

#### VISIT OF MR. SELBIT AT THE LOWE OBSERVATORY.

BY EDGAR LUCIEN LARKIN.

I called upon the Selbits at their hotel when they were captivating all Los Angeles, and even the vicinity, with their stage wonders in the Orpheum. [See Mr. Abbott's article on another page.] After a pleasant chat with Mr. and Mrs. Selbit, I asked if they would take me over to the Orpheum. Mr. Selbit took his hat and in a few minutes the stage manager admitted us to the "secrets of the stage." None was there save we three. Mr. Selbit let me handle every minute part of the apparatus, yet I failed to discover the extremely simple optical principle of the projection of these pictures. When Mr. Abbott later wrote me how the consummate illusion was performed, I was filled with chagrin and discomfiture, to think how I could have missed this very easy explanation, and that after handling every kind of lens since early youth. Mr. Selbit is a master in the art of illusion and delusion. But then I had it out with him: I invited him to come up here to the Observatory on the top of this mountain. He was delighted with the telescope, spectroscope, and the shining instruments, with their great variety of lenses. He admired their beauty and power of penetration into space deeps. After a pleasant afternoon, he went down to Los Angeles. But he went away without detecting how to measure the distance of the sun; nor how to measure the distance of a star; nor how to weigh our sun and hundreds more; nor how to compute the mass of the sidereal universe. We are evened up.

Lowe Observatory, Mount Lowe, Cal., Febr. 12, 1913.

#### DAVID P. ABBOTT, THE SOLVER OF MYSTERY.

We are greatly pleased to be able to make public in this number of *The Open Court* a secret of mediumship which has puzzled the world of believers and unbelievers in spiritualism for many years. The editor of *The Open Court* is especially interested in its publication because he has been a party, albeit in a passive character, to its gradual disclosure.

Mr. David P. Abbott of Omaha, Nebraska, a genius in mediumistic lore, the author of the remarkable book Behind the Scenes with the Mediums, was for a long time puzzled at the marvel of some well-known mediums, two sisters, who made the pictures of dead relatives appear in colored painting before the eyes of their sitters. We need not repeat reports of spiritualists who were often overwhelmed at the spectacle, and even skeptics became convinced that here was true evidence of spirit life which would prove the im-

mortality of the soul. From time to time Mr. Abbott communicated to us the gradual progress of his work including his disappointments when his theories proved incorrect, but he never lost the conviction that the mystery



MR. DAVID P. ABBOTT.

could not be a miracle and that because the trick was so effective it must be very simple.

Any one who is acquainted with Mr. Abbott's great work Behind the Scenes with the Mediums will grant that there is no one more familiar than

he with the subtle methods of deception by which telling effects are produced upon believers in spiritualism—effects which will frequently remain a puzzle for the staunchest skeptics.

We may here mention that Mr. Abbott is also the inventor of a mystic teakettle which can be carried all around the room in one's hand and is without connection either by pipes or wires with any external object, and yet its mysterious little spout will intelligently answer questions to the inquirer while he holds it in his hands. The ghost whom he makes inhabit the teakettle speaks in a tiny whisper, not unlike the voice of the famous nun of Lübeck who has dwindled away to nothingness and is preserved in a bottle hung up in the cathedral of her native city.

We congratulate Mr. Abbott on the great success he has achieved in solving the great mediumistic mystery, although we regret that it was not he who reaped the pecuniary rewards.

# BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTES.

ELLU, THE ORACLE OF THE OTHER SELF. By the Author of *Psychocraft*. Portland, Me.: C. H. Emerson, 1912.

The author, Mr. C. H. Emerson, a believer in mysticism, has devised an oracle which in many respects resembles the ancient Hebrew system of divination by the Urim and Thummim, and also the Yih King of the Chinese based upon the Yin and Yang. To us outsiders such devices are mere games like telling fortunes by cards, but this modern invention both illustrates the need of mankind to have a guide in cases of doubt, and offers a method of satisfying that need. The difference between Mr. Emerson's invention and the oracle of Yahveh, the Urim and Thummim, is mainly that the latter is based on a binary system and has but two elements, the Urim, or the shining ones, and the Thummim, their opposites, whereas Mr. Emerson introduces balls of three colors, blue, white and red. These move freely in a little box with a glass-covered slit permitting three of them to show at a time. The book itself (attached to the box) contains answers corresponding to the order in which the three balls appear, when invoked in connection with any of the twenty-six suggested questions. The Chinese Yih King is an enigmatical book to those who do not conceive it as a book of divination; and we may say that if we had Mr. Emerson's book on Ellu without any information as to its use we would be just as puzzled in reading its various sentences as a modern scholar when confronted with the perplexing declarations of the Yih King.

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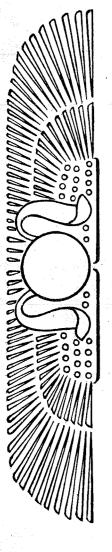
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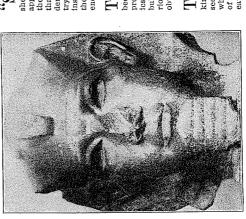
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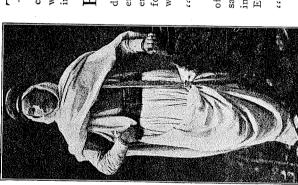
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