

THE DIARY OF A NOBODY

George Grossmith

The moment I turned out the gas, and almost before I could get my hands on the table, it rocked violently and tilted, and began moving quickly across the room. Gowing shouted out: 'Way, oh! steady, lad, steady!' I told Gowing if he could not behave himself I should light the gas, and put an end to the seance. To tell the truth, I thought Gowing was playing tricks, and I hinted as much; but Mrs James said she had often seen the table go right off the ground. The spirit 'Lina' came again, and said 'WARN' three or four times, and declined to explain. Mrs James said 'Lina' was stubborn sometimes. She often behaved like that, and the best thing to do was to send her away.

She then hit the table sharply, and said: 'Go away, Lina; you are disagreeable. Go away!' I should think we sat nearly three-quarters of an hour with nothing happening. My hands felt quite cold, and I suggested we should stop the séance. Carrie and Mrs James, as well as Cummings, would not agree to it. In about ten minutes' time there was some tilting towards me. I gave the alphabet, and it spelled out 'SPOOF'. As I have heard both Gowing and Lupin use the word, and as I could hear Gowing silently laughing, I directly accused him of pushing the table. He denied it; but I regret to say, I did not believe him.

Gowing said: 'Perhaps it means "Spook", a ghost.'

I said: 'You know it doesn't mean anything of the sort.'

Gowing said: 'Oh I very well - I'm sorry I "spook",' and rose from the table.

No one took any notice of the stupid joke, and Mrs James suggested he should sit out for a while. Gowing consented and sat in the arm-chair.

The table began to move again, and we might have had a wonderful séance but for Gowing's stupid interruptions. In answer to the alphabet from Carrie the table spelt 'NIPUL', then the 'WARN' three times. We could not think what it meant till Cummings pointed out that 'Nipul.' was Lupin spelled backwards. This was quite exciting. Carrie was particularly excited, and said she hoped nothing horrible was going to happen.

Mrs James asked if 'Lina' was the spirit. The table replied firmly, 'No,' and the spirit would not give his or her name. We then had the message, "NIPUL will be very rich.'

Carrie said she felt quite relieved, but the word 'WARN' was again spelt out. The table then began to oscillate violently, and in reply to Mrs James, who spoke very softly to the table, the spirit began to spell its name. It first spelled 'DRINK'.

Gowing here said: 'Ah! that's more in my line.'

I asked him to be quiet as the name might not be completed.

The table then spelt 'WATER'.

Gowing here interrupted again, and said: 'Ah! that's not in my line. Outside if you like, but not inside.' Carrie appealed to him to be quiet.

The table then spelt 'CAPTAIN', and Mrs James startled us by crying out, 'Captain Drinkwater, a very old friend of my father's, who has been dead some years.'

This was more interesting, and I could not help thinking that after all there must be something in Spiritualism.

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Mrs James asked the spirit to interpret the meaning of the word 'Warn' as applied to 'NIPUL!'. The alphabet was given again, and we got the word 'BOSH'.

Gowing here muttered: 'So it is.'

Mrs James said she did not think the spirit meant that, as Captain Drinkwater was a perfect gentleman, and would never have used the word in answer to a lady's question. Accordingly the alphabet was given again.

This time the table spelled distinctly `POSH'. We all thought of Mrs Murray Posh and Lupin. Carrie was get→ting a little digressed, and as it was getting late we broke up the circle.