

Light:

A Journal of Psychological, Occult, and Mystical Research.

"WHATEVER DOETH MAKE MANIFEST IS LIGHT."—Paul.

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

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[The Editor of "LIGHT" desires it to be distinctly understood that he can accept no responsibility as to the opinions expressed by Contributors and Correspondents. Free and courteous discussion is invited, but writers are alone responsible for the articles to which their names are attached.]

NOTES BY THE WAY.

Contributed by "M.A. (Oxon.)"

MASOLLAM.*

(Continued from page 306.)

One of the most striking characters in the book is the Sheikh Mohanna, the head of one of the first families in the Druse nation, a curious and interesting people who inhabit the northern frontiers of Palestine under the lofty range of the Lebanon. This people has preserved amongst its traditions traces of magical rites, a fact which Mr. Oliphant uses to show, amongst other things, that what is creating so much astonishment in these days was familiar to the Druses before any such manifestations were heard of in England. He refers to *A Ten Years' Residence on the Lebanon from 1842 to 1852*, by Colonel Churchill, Staff Officer of the British Expedition to Syria. From Vol. I., p. 164, of this volume it appears that Sheikh Behir, one of the best informed Druse Sheikhs, showed Colonel Churchill many of the phenomena with which we are now familiar as occurring in the presence of mediums. The movement of objects from and to various parts of a room; the levitation of objects such as a jar filled with water; the cure of disease; intercourse with spiritual beings; these and such facts Colonel Churchill records as occurring in the presence of this Druse Sheikh, expressing his own conviction that "an unseen influence of some kind is called into operation." On these authentic records Mr. Oliphant seems to have modelled the character of Sheikh Mohanna.

The second part of *Masollam* opens with the arrival of one Santalba, who is possessed of very occult power which he frequently uses, and the philosophy of which he seeks to expound in some of the most interesting passages of the book, with the Sheikh Mohanna. The two friends have been separated for nearly a quarter of a century, during which time the Sheikh has gone through terrible experiences; such, however, as are likely to beset any adventurous student of the occult who succeeds in penetrating beyond the threshold. He tells his friend that his power of psychical healing, which was native to him, continued to increase for many years after their separation, until he was finally introduced to a society of spiritual beings with whom he maintained a daily and almost hourly intercourse and from whom he received great aid in his work of healing. During his periods of fasting and abstinence he became gradually aware of a powerful light which these spirits could not endure, and which revealed to him snares and pitfalls all round him. By resisting the ingress of this effulgence he

became again *en rapport* with these lower spirits, who yet seem to have been in a way good. However to resist the higher impulse he soon found was to descend consciously to a lower plane, on which alone his healing gifts could be exercised, and power obtained. What was to be done? The healing could not be bad, yet the other was revealed as the more excellent way. The Sheikh was in a conflict between the two: the struggle was intense. It was the struggle between the higher impulses and those lower but not therefore necessarily base, which each must pass through in some form or other before he wins his victory.

In the course of this hand to hand conflict, in which the struggle seemed to be to the death, he bethought him of the hidden mysteries of the Druse religion, known only to a few of the inner initiates. To this source of knowledge he turned for light and guidance. His higher light was gone; the better spirits were gone too, or came only fitfully, while the lower class increased in number day by day. He would summon by magic rites these spirits known to the profounder magicians of old. He had done it in former days with impunity, but now, with powers of will sapped and impaired in potency by contact with inferior beings, he was no longer Master. He was swept out of himself by unseen influences into unknown regions; remaining for days in trances, until at length he became conscious that he was obsessed. Receiving every sensual gratification, many marvellous inspirations, he was discontented with the former, and for the latter the verifying faculty was gone. He could no longer tell the real from the phantasmal. He became the recipient of a revelation which was a skilfully concocted falsehood. He knew it, yet he was forced to promulgate it and he suffered horrible tortures from the conviction that obsessing fiends were using him to undermine the faith of his friends. He had "quenched the Spirit." He had turned away from light to darkness, and he was helpless. In Christian parlance his was "the sin against the Holy Ghost."

In this extremity there came to him once more the light (such as that which arrested Paul on his way to Damascus) which he had formerly seen. The spirit within him was not dead, for he loathed the devil's work he was forced to do. He saw a figure of radiant loveliness who addressed him: "Look up, for your deliverance draweth nigh." It was the figure of a woman, and he realised her as the feminine principle in "The Eternal Word." The apprehension of this truth was to be his deliverance. He was to proclaim the truth that the highest form of inspiration could only descend by the operation of a conjunction of the masculine and feminine elements. It is, as Mr. Oliphant puts it, a very impressive parable of what happens in one of many forms to any soul that would penetrate the arcana. If it is content with a low plane it will necessarily remain on it, for the upward motive-power is lacking. If it aspires for progress, progress will come in due and fitting time. If it misses opportunities, it must wait till they recur. But if it deliberately chooses darkness rather than light, it must sink; if it yields to temptation it must fall; and it cannot escape the ordeal.

I have ventured on a very imperfect summary in my

* *Masollam*: A Problem of the Period. Blackwood, 1886.

own words of Mr. Oliphant's impressive discourse put into the mouth of Santalba. I can do no justice to it. I can only recommend all whom I can influence to read it for themselves. Whether they agree or not with all it teaches, they will be surely conscious of having read noble words, clothing ideas at once grand in themselves and suggestive of deep thought. That Mr. Laurence Oliphant correctly appraises the progress that this generation has made in its psychical development is proved to demonstration from the fact that he has been able to publish such a book as *Masollam*, and (I may add) from the fact that its tone and matter have received ungrudging commendation from such a journal as the *Saturday Review*.

I may be permitted to state that I have, from a different point of view, while contemplating problems of the day with which Mr. Oliphant deals, been led to conclusions on some points precisely similar to his own. I have been impelled, for instance, to dwell and insist on the following points, all of which he emphasises.

1. The psychical development of the present age, which renders it, for instance, most unlikely that occult phenomena will ever again be crushed out as they were during the witch persecutions.
2. The wisdom of heeding and observing them by proper methods, and so to have them under control, and avoid the risks of ill-regulated and disorderly Spiritualism.
3. For the evil and good are mingled, and the adversaries are active opponents to good in every form. (See *Spirit Teachings*.)
4. The risks and dangers of unlicensed intrusion into these domains, from unworthy motives, such as mere idle curiosity, greed of power or gain, and the like.
5. The manifest action of unseen influences in impinging on our world and directing and controlling our acts.
6. The absolute impossibility of getting satisfactory results by methods of investigation such as appeal first of all, as being most familiar, to the ordinary scientific mind.

These and such theses I have maintained amongst Spiritualists for many years. It is satisfactory to find an expert, whose experience has been on quite other lines to mine, arriving at the same conclusions.

CORRESPONDENCE.

[It is preferable that correspondents should append their names and addresses to communications. In any case, however, these must be supplied to the Editor as a guarantee of good faith.]

The Late Mr. D. D. Home.
To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I have no intention or idea of denying all the falsehoods which are and will be told concerning my dear husband, the late Mr. D. D. Home. Great minds in all ages have suffered from prejudice and from party spirit, reason sufficient that Mr. Home, whose mission for good was so remarkable, should have to bear such attacks. It is, nevertheless, wonderful, considering how widely spread was his fame, that these attacks should have been so feeble, for discussions not based upon facts cannot be called convincing arguments. I am even of opinion that these attacks have served to strengthen still more the unblemished reputation which he enjoys in all respects in every country. My object, therefore, in writing to you is not to touch upon such matters, but to inform you that the statements of the *Daily News* with regard to Mr. Home are entirely erroneous. Mr. Home never suffered from any disorder save his neuralgic gout, and it was after severe suffering that he became worn out and the complication from the lungs supervened.

His great relief and amusement, in moments when he felt better, was to sit down to the piano and recite poetry with that wonderful talent so generally admired and with the aid of that remarkable memory which he preserved to the last. He went

out but little into the garden, for the pretty little villa, which I still occupy, is not sufficiently isolated for an invalid, and we were too much exposed to the gaze of passers by.

He enjoyed the view of the park from the balcony, and notwithstanding his long and painful illness he still preserved his gay and amiable character. This was because the good spirits never left him, and during the last few years, notwithstanding that he had few séances, he was surrounded by them and we had very remarkable manifestations relating to our private life.

I am much indebted to you for the kindly remarks you have published, for which I thank you most sincerely, and remain, yours, &c.,

Auteuil, July 7th, 1886.

J. D. HOME.

Cures by "Vital Force."

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Adverting to the testimony given in "LIGHT," to the cures effected by Mr. Omerin, 3, Bulstrode-street, Cavendish-square, kindly permit me to mention a case which came under my own observation. My daughter was subject for years to frequently recurring attacks of very acute neuralgia in the head, so severe as to drive her almost frantic, and to have very serious effect upon her general health. The best medical advice was taken, and remedies of various kinds were tried—all to no purpose. At last resort was had to Mr. Omerin, and after a few visits she was completely restored, the neuralgic attacks ceased, and though this was three years ago she has never had them since.—Yours truly,

July 12th, 1886.

E. DAWSON ROGERS.

My Seance with Mr. Eglinton.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I have read with much interest the letters on this subject from the two devotees of the new god, Slate-pencil. Next to studies psychical, the most interesting to me are studies psychological. It is surely instructive to notice the intolerance inseparable from devoteism of any kind; the substitution of the *odium psychicum* for the *odium theologicum*, and the steady gravitation of irritated credulity towards the sweet solace of vituperation.

It will hardly be expected that I should say much of these letters. It is their *raison d'être* to misrepresent mine and then to argue with some success upon this misrepresentation. I stated that I went to the séance in an impartial frame of mind; the devotees say that I did not. Who shall contend against such mind-reading as this? Nay, more, I stated that I went with a sincere desire to be convinced. This is compared by one of the devotees to the mental attitude of "a magisterial and police-constable investigator." If I came away in a somewhat different frame of mind, that was the result of circumstances over which I had no control. I take not the faintest interest in detecting impostures; my desire is to establish scientific facts. And no fact could be more interesting or important than that alleged in connection with Mr. Eglinton, if only it could be proved. But if the humble seeker after truth can get the proof only by keeping his eyes shut, I, and such as I, must leave the search to the devotees. I obtained a negative result and I ventured to state the fact. Hence this outcry. "We do not want to hear about failures, but about successes," exclaims with a naïve pathos one of the devotees. Goethe thought otherwise. It was in nature's failures that he discovered her secrets. What is called my "cheap irony" (it certainly cost no effort) was really the irony of facts. Nothing took place while I was present; directly I withdrew, the phenomena rushed into the void thus made. The inference I drew was that the phenomena were a little shy of one who had had a scientific training, however sympathetic might be his feeling towards them. The inference the devotees draw is that I went in an unfit frame of mind. Which is the more logical inference; which involves the smaller assumption?

It is true that what is innocently described as "one of the chief characteristics of the phenomenon" was brought for the space of an hour prominently before me, viz.: "the absolute uncertainty of its occurrence." And one of the devotees seems to think that this should have convinced me. Alas! I have no Hibernian blood in my veins.

The same gentleman talks of "the insolent imputation of trickery on the part of Mr. Eglinton." I do not at all grudge him the use of an adjective which evidently relieved his feelings. Rather am I astonished at his moderation. For a dictionary

was doubtless at hand whence he could have culled a hundred epithets of still fuller flavour and not more inappropriate, and yet he contented himself with this one. But who made the imputation? Not I. On the contrary, I distinctly said: "Far be it from me to say that the phenomena occurring in Mr. Eglinton's presence are aught but genuine." This misrepresentation of my letter, made apparently merely for the sake of letting off a drisyllabic adjective which would no doubt have kept a little longer even in this hot weather, is the more regrettable inasmuch as it inevitably tends to detract from the high value which one would fain assign to the writer's own observations at Mr. Eglinton's séances. If he is unable to reproduce accurately the statements of a clearly-printed letter, a melancholy suspicion is forced upon the mind that his eye might possibly have been deceived during the production of the subtle phenomena of mentography.

However, I have no time for more, nor may I be able to reply to any further letters on the subject, as I shall be moving about. I wish, however, emphatically to repeat that I went to Mr. Eglinton's séance in all good faith, and with an open mind; and was much disappointed that he was not able to give me any help towards maintaining this mental attitude. Of course, I might try again, and when guineas are as plentiful as blackberries, and we reckon the years of our lives by centuries instead of decades, I think I shall.

A. EUBULE-EVANS.

I have suggested no "hypothesis," "crude," or otherwise, to account for what does *not* take place in my presence. When it does take place, will be time enough for the hypothesis.

Psychography.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

"For myself I have now no hesitation in attributing the performances to clever conjuring."—ELEANOR MILDRED SIDGWICK.

SIR,—“The most stubborn of all bigotries,” writes Sir Bulwer Lytton, “is the fanaticism of unbelief.”

It would be difficult to conceive a more suggestive illustration of the credulity of incredulity, than the unwarranted conclusion arrived at by Mrs. E. M. Sidgwick, as above quoted and published in the June number of the *Journal* of the Society for Psychical Research. That number is exclusively devoted to the investigation of slate-writing phenomenon occurring in the presence of Mr. William Eglinton. Narratives of more than forty séances are recorded with more or less detail, and the following names testify by their signatures to the reality of the phenomenon:—Mrs. Brietzcke, G. A. Smith, J. Murray Templeton, J. H. Symons, H. Wedgwood, E. T. Bennett, G. R. Vicars, and F. W. Bental. At the close of the *Journal* appears the account of a remarkable séance held on the 26th May, 1886, at the residence of Professor Boutlerof. It commenced at 9.20 and terminated at 10, and the conclusion arrived at from witnessing the phenomenon is thus set forth:—

“1st. That the mediumistic autographic writing is genuine, and cannot be referred to the domain of prestidigitation or explained by the generally-recognised mechanical, physical, or chemical laws.

“2nd. That the force can manifest an intelligence of its own not depending to a certain degree upon that of those who assist at the séances.

“3rd. This phenomenon, by its objectivity, especially affords facility for observation, and deserves full attention and investigation from competent persons and institutions.

“(Signed),

“NICHOLAS WAGNER, Professor of Zoology, and Honorary Member of the University of St. Petersburg, Corresponding Member of the Society for Psychical Research.

“A. BOUTLEROF, Fellow of the Imperial Academy of Sciences, Professor of Chemistry to the University of St. Petersburg, Corresponding Member of the Society for Psychical Research.

“A. DOBROSLAVIN, Professor of Hygiene to the Imperial Medical Academy of St. Petersburg, Corresponding Member of the London Society for Psychical Research.”

This is the evidence, and these the witnesses, that the lady with unblushing boldness has no hesitation in dismissing, and consigning the signatories to the list of incompetent observers.

Professor Balfour Stewart has narrowed the issue, and laid down the law with regard to the phenomenon of slate-writing in a mode from which, in our opinion, there is no escape. Either the phenomenon is genuine, and we are brought face to face with a stupendous fact, or, it is the grossest of impostures. One

or the other it must be, and neither those who deny, nor those who accept the fact, can evade this unquestionably logical conclusion. It is inevitable that denial should involve calling in question the integrity and good faith of the medium for its production. Seeing that the element of personal probity of character cannot be eliminated from the controversy, but is of necessity inextricably mixed up with the subject, it behoves those to whom the evidence in its favour may appear insufficient to be exceedingly guarded how they pronounce a judgment from merely negative results, and which if uttered must reflect adversely on the character of another. It is here I complain of the words of Mrs. Sidgwick. True science is cautious in its statements. Mrs. Sidgwick's hasty conclusion is unscientific and incautious. The lady has no hesitation in delivering a verdict, and the sentence in which her conclusion is expressed is sufficient of itself to indicate that on psychical mysteries she is the most simple of neophytes. Perhaps Mrs. Sidgwick will let us know her views of the qualities that constitute a competent and trustworthy witness? Ordinary minds are under the impression that capacity for investigation, accuracy of observation, and veracity of character are the principal qualities requisite. Many witnesses to the truth of slate-writing undoubtedly combine all these characteristics, yet this lady of science, who confessedly has seen nothing herself, is prepared with a waive of the hand to quietly ignore their testimony, and *without hesitation* to deliver her dictum ascribing the phenomenon to clever conjuring. Slate-writing (Mrs. Sidgwick notwithstanding) has about as much to do with conjuring as with vaccination, and this any person of ordinary intelligence and capacity, possessing an open mind and a sincere desire to know the truth, is capable of verifying for himself.*

In November, 1884, accompanied by Mrs. L. and Miss L., I had a séance for slate-writing with Mr. Eglinton. The facts as extricated from my diary are as follows: I took with me my own book-slate. It was cleaned and placed on the table, in the daylight, and in full view of all. My right hand was on the slate and Mr. Eglinton's left; the other sitters joining hands. I inquired, “Can you read my thoughts, and produce on the slate a Spanish proverb now in my mind?” The sound of writing came directly as if from the direction of the slate in the centre of the table. After the three taps, we opened the book-slate and found written:—

“We could perhaps write the Spanish proverb, but we refrain from doing so, lest outsiders should say *all* our information is extracted from the brain, and thus we should establish a bad precedent.”

In this experiment I can testify to three facts.

1. That the writing took place on my own book-slate.
2. That the slate was clean and absolutely free from writing when placed on the table under my hand for experiment.
3. That I neither removed my hand nor my eye from the slate, from the time it was placed in the centre of the table until taken up to examine the writing. The observation of the sight and the pressure of the hand were both continuous.

Perhaps Mrs. Sidgwick will be kind enough to point out in the above experiment where the margin for sleight of hand comes in.

In proof that the intelligence conveyed in the writing may be independent of the minds of the sitters the following test was adopted. A coin, selected at random from a number loose, was at request taken by Mr. L. from his pocket, and without looking at it himself or allowing either Mr. Eglinton or the other sitters to see it, was placed between the leaves of the folded slate and the slate as before placed on the table. We then inquired the name of the coin and the date. The sound of writing was heard as in the previous experiment, and on opening the slate was written

Sixpence 1854.

This was correct. An ordinary slate was then cleaned and one side held by the hand of Eglinton, the other end *resting on my shoulder*.

In this position, the circle joining hands, the sound of writing was heard by all, and being so close to my ear it was scarcely possible I could be mistaken in locating the sound on the slates. When the circle broke connection by disjoining hands the sound of writing ceased, and resumed the moment contact was restored. This experiment was repeated twice. The communication, when completed, was a long one, and as I

* With all respect to the opinion of the lady, and to use her own formula, I have no hesitation, as the result of my investigation, in stating that it would be equally sensible, and quite as scientific, to refer psychography to the “proper motion of the stars” as to ascribe the phenomenon to legerdemain.

still retain the slate with the message intact I will reproduce it for the benefit of your readers, as it was written under the circumstances described as above, and which render the explanation by conjuring to ordinary mortals out of court:—

MY DEAR SIR,—It is with great pleasure that I find myself able to write to you at length. The power did not enable your friends to do so other than in the most disjointed manner, therefore I felt it best to use the opportunity of saying a few words to you. I wish, first of all, to thank you for your usefulness to the cause, and for the staunch manner in which you have ever fought its battles, and secondly, to say that I still retain an interest in the development of your family circle, and shall hope to give you proof shortly that my guardianship has had some tangible effect. That this is a great and glorious truth your friends must know—glorious, because it tells you there is no death. It reconciles you to everything in life, and is comforting because of the knowledge you possess that those who have gone before are able to return again and tell you of their continued existence.—ERNEST.

The time occupied in writing the above may have been thirty seconds, but could scarcely have exceeded that period.

If the strong evidence produced in favour of the reality of psychography is to be ignored by science, the only logical conclusion to be arrived at is that all educated human testimony is valueless.

If we are so liable to be deceived that we cannot even decide on a simple matter of fact cognisable to the senses of sight, hearing, and feeling, all evidence becomes useless, and capital punishment, and every other punishment, must be abolished.

I offer no opinion as to the nature or value of the communications, or the identity of the intelligence purporting to write. The controversy as between the representatives of science and psychology has not reached that stage. Mrs. Sidgwick dogmatically denies the fact. Having studied the subject for some years, I assert on the contrary the reality of the fact, but beyond that admission I should have some hesitation, notwithstanding lengthened experience, in publicly advocating any theory professing to explain the facts or cover the whole of the ground as to the nature and character of the agency behind the phenomenon.

Scientific dogmatism is not less objectionable and insufferable than theological dogmatism. Goethe, in his day, complained of the growing dogmatic spirit of science. It has become more positive since.

Having routed the theologians, and, after a hard fight, firmly established the grand principles of evolution, scientific veterans seek to "rest and be thankful." But for the human intellect there is no finality in knowledge, and evolution may prove to be a principle of far deeper significance and wider application than science in its present attitude has yet been able to perceive.

Croydon, July 12th, 1886. J. H. MITCHNER, F.R.A.S.

Mr. Eglinton and the Psychical Research Society.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I have been much grieved and surprised at hearing of an unjustifiable attack upon Mr. Eglinton, made by Mrs. Sidgwick in the last *Journal* of the Psychical Research Society, and I feel it only my duty to contribute my quota of evidence in confirmation of the genuineness of the manifestations produced through his mediumship, believing him, as I do, to be an upright and honourable man, as I know him to be a genuine and very remarkable medium. I must first (very reluctantly) say a few words about myself, in order that your readers may judge whether I am a person likely to be deceived for months and years by the tricks of a clever conjurer, or one liable to hallucination, "unconscious cerebration," or any other mode of self-deception.

Though without any special talents, I think I may say that I possess fair general abilities, and I am usually credited with having a good allowance of common-sense and judgment. I am not at all what is called nervous or excitable, and when present at séances my mental attitude is one of calm, attentive observation. I do not think the slightest detail ever escapes my notice, and after a séance, though not in the habit of keeping a diary, I always make brief notes of what has taken place. I have only been a Spiritualist during the last two years, up to which time I was as great a sceptic as anyone. A little account of "How I Became a Spiritualist," signed "M.B.," appeared in "LIGHT," of November 8th, 1884. I am what is called "mediumistic," though I was unaware of my possessing this power until after my first séance, and during the last twelve months have developed the faculty of automatic writing. This process of

development of psychic powers requires as much patience and perseverance as any other art or science, and convinces the psychic that there is nothing whatever supernatural in the phenomena produced through mediumistic power. I myself begin to have some very slight comprehension of what my guide or control calls "spiritual chemistry," that is the combination of conditions, physical and otherwise, necessary to the production of spiritual phenomena. I sit for automatic writing or other manifestations invariably alone, except about once a fortnight, when I join a lady friend of mine living at a distance, for a séance. Until the last few months we obtained manifestations (I being the medium) with a small table, by means of tilts given at letters of the alphabet, by which we obtained some of the most remarkable tests of identity I have ever heard of. Since however we have both obtained the power of automatic writing, our "guides" have requested us to use this means in preference to tilts. I only refer to these communications for the purpose of saying that in them Mr. Eglinton's name is sometimes mentioned, such a sentence as the following being written through my hands: "When are you going to Mr. Eglinton?" The séances for the most wonderful manifestation which I ever received or witnessed were arranged in this way. One evening while I was sitting with my friend, Mrs. R., my guide requested me by the tilting method to arrange a séance with Mr. Eglinton, for the purpose of obtaining this manifestation (which I will only allude to as being connected with the phenomenon of matter passing through matter). He himself fixed the day for the séance, subject to Mr. Eglinton's approval, and after two sittings for the purpose we obtained success. I can, therefore, only come to the conclusion that if Mr. Eglinton's phenomena are produced by skillful conjuring, I myself must equally be a deceiver, though it is difficult to imagine (being, as I believe I am, in my right mind) what my motive can be for a course of persistent self-deception.

I have during the past two years had between fifty and sixty séances with Mr. Eglinton, about twelve of which were non-professional, and took place at private houses. At these latter the phenomenon of psychography or independent writing did not take place, with one exception, which I will describe. We were in number six persons, and sat round a very large circular table. The master of the house, of his own accord, not at Mr. Eglinton's suggestion, placed in the centre of the table some sheets of foolscap paper and a lead pencil. After some ordinary manifestations by raps and tilts, the gas was directed to be put out, and the medium who sat next me became entranced. Shortly afterwards the sound of rapid and firm writing was heard by us all, in the centre of the table, lasting about a minute (I cannot be certain as to the exact time), when directions were given that the gas should be re-lighted, and on this being done a sheet of the paper was found to be written on two sides in a bold and regular handwriting, which we recognised as being that of one of Mr. Eglinton's guides, and it was signed with his name. The contents of this letter, which I need not refer to, would have taken an ordinary mortal probably twenty minutes to write. A sceptic will say (preliminary arrangement in this case being out of the question) that the medium was able—unperceived by us all, not excepting myself, who was close to him and could detect his slightest movement—to reach out his arm and write in the middle of the table; but granting the possibility of this, granting even that he could in this position write a long letter in a handwriting not his own, in the space of little over a minute, I say it is simply impossible for a mortal being to write line after line clearly and regularly in total darkness. Anyone can try this for himself.

With regard to my personal experience when sitting alone with Mr. Eglinton, I have received a very remarkable series of letters, all from one person, the friend who now is able to communicate with me through my own powers, though not with so much force or distinctness as when I sit with Mr. Eglinton. He passed over into spirit-life about two years and a-half ago. Of these letters I have received thirty-eight in number, the first two of which were written on slates, all the rest on paper, some are of great length, taking over an hour to copy; others contain only a few lines and I have had séances at which I obtained nothing, though on these occasions I usually got a letter on a slate from one of Mr. Eglinton's guides, containing advice concerning my development. My friend was an Austrian, though speaking and writing English perfectly; he always wrote to me during his earth-life in English and has continued the same practice since he has been able to recommence his correspondence with me; his letters, with one ex-

ception, are written in English, though they frequently contain sentences or quotations in German. The one exception I have named was written eighteen months ago, was in German and written in the German character; it occupied two sides of a sheet of notepaper, and at my earnest request he afterwards added a few words in English on another page of the same sheet of paper. I have likewise specimens of "Joey's" writing on paper. At my earlier séances, wishing to obtain every possible proof of the genuineness of these direct writings, I frequently wrote questions on half-sheets of paper before leaving home, which I placed on the slate held by Mr. Eglinton just under the table, his left hand being held in both mine, and these questions, with the answers written directly in pencil by "Joey," on the same piece of paper, I still possess, and would willingly show to anyone, my letters from my friend being sacred.

I only wish to add one more fact. Since Mr. Eglinton's return from Russia I have, while sitting alone for automatic writing in my own room, asked my friend and guide if, when he had the opportunity of writing me a long letter through Mr. Eglinton's mediumship (those through my own power are very brief), he would give me his opinion and advice on certain subjects, which I named, if it were possible for him to do so, and I have been very much gratified to find he has done so in the two letters I have recently received. I will just give one instance of this sort. The beginning of this week I was surprised and rather dismayed, to begin with, at receiving the following sentence from him in automatic writing: "I wish you would try to take photographs, and you would soon succeed in getting spirit-photographs." I begged him to reconsider this desire, and, if he could, to write me at length about it at my next séance with Mr. Eglinton, which was to take place yesterday. I was so fortunate then as to receive a letter (though not a very long one) from him, and this subject was at once attended to as well as others on which I had asked advice. The sentence concerning photography commenced, "I was amused at the surprise you exhibited when I told you to sit for photographs," and went on into details, reserving, however, his final decision on the subject.

I am afraid I have trespassed unduly upon your space, but I have been as brief as I could be, consistently with doing justice to a subject on which I feel very strongly. Every sentiment of gratitude to one to whom I owe so much, and of love for the cause of truth and justice force me to testify in the most explicit manner to the genuineness of the phenomena produced through Mr. Eglinton's mediumship, and I hope the time will come when those who have cast undeserved reproach on an innocent and honourable man will learn to regret their action and confess their error. Contrary to my custom when writing to "LIGHT," I sign my name in full, and am yours truly,

July 3rd, 1886.

MARY BURCHETT ("V.").

Mrs. Sidgwick and Conjuring.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Here is a small argument which I would wish to use in regard to the recent paper by Mrs. Sidgwick. If slate-writing is a mere trick, and Mrs. Sidgwick can be tricked by an amateur conjurer, why is it that with this King of tricksters, the slate-writing medium, the results obtained in her presence are nil?—Yours obediently,

H. K. BRIETZEKE.

Mrs. Sidgwick on Slate-writing.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—I see that at the meeting of the Society for Psychical Research on the 5th inst., Mr. F. W. H. Myers complained of the inadequate nature of the response to the appeals which he had made to Spiritualists, for evidence in relation to the phenomena then under consideration. But surely the cause is obvious enough! Spiritualists have seen with no little surprise and regret the ready resort to extravagant theories for the apparent purpose of minimising the worth of their testimony, and, naturally, they have not cared to place their experiences before people who, as it seemed to them, either could not appreciate them or would attempt to explain them away by some weak hypothesis. Mrs. Sidgwick's paper in the last number of the *Journal* is a case in point. She gives what most unbiassed minds would regard as irrefragable evidence for the genuineness of the psychographic slate-writing obtained in the presence of Mr. Eglinton, and then coolly winds up with the assurance that after all she has "no hesitation in attributing

the performances to clever conjuring!" Surely this is one more justification of the Spiritualists in disregarding the appeal to them to place their evidence at the disposal of the Society for Psychical Research.

Mrs. Sidgwick says she cannot imagine herself as being convinced "except by the testimony of thoroughly competent and trustworthy witnesses that in several cases it" (the slate-writing) "had been produced under circumstances which dispensed with the necessity of continuous observation." Mrs. Sidgwick admittedly distrusts her own powers of continuous observation, and therefore has little faith in that of others. But even if satisfied on that point, she has yet to be assured that the witnesses are "thoroughly competent and trustworthy"—so that she has left herself plenty of methods of escape from conviction. Still, I am, in courtesy, bound to believe that she would be convinced if she had the testimony she seems to ask for, and I will therefore contribute something towards it by narrating a little experience of my own. I have had the most complete evidence, in scores of instances, of the genuineness of the phenomena in the presence of Mr. Eglinton; but I prefer now to speak of an experience with Dr. Slade, because it absolutely meets one at least of Mrs. Sidgwick's conditions—the dispensing with "the necessity of continuous observation." As to another condition, my "trustworthiness," I must leave that to Mrs. Sidgwick and others who know me. As to the third condition, my being a "thoroughly competent" witness, I have only to say that I have studied conjuring for many years, and am quite conversant with the various methods by which Spiritualistic phenomena are parodied by conjurers, amateur and professional.

My first interview with Dr. Slade, when he was in London, took place under the following circumstances. I was then editor of "LIGHT," and feeling that, occupying that position, I ought to satisfy myself whether he was a genuine medium for slate-writing or not, I determined to visit him, and to secure, if possible, a sitting with him under the most perfect test conditions. On my way I bought, at a shop in Holborn, a pair of folding slates, which never left my hands from that moment till the séance was over. Arrived at the doctor's lodgings, we sat down facing each other, with our sides to the table. It was bright daylight with the sun streaming in through the window. Having myself opened the slates, which were quite new, with the "bloom" on them, Dr. Slade suggested that they should be sponged, but this I thought unnecessary. On my asking for a crumb of pencil, Dr. Slade cracked a small piece with his teeth off a stick of pencil which lay on the table, and dropped the piece between the slates. Sitting then, as I have said, face to face, I placed the toes of my boots on his, and held one corner of the closed slates between the finger and thumb of my left hand, while he took hold of another corner with the finger and thumb of his right hand—this being the first time, it should be observed, that he had so much as touched the slates. My right hand held his left hand upon the table. He then suggested that we should pass the slate under the table; but I said "No." He remarked that that was the customary thing, especially at a first sitting. I still objected, whereupon he rejoined that under the circumstances we might not get anything; but bearing in mind the purpose for which I had come, of applying an absolute test, I answered: "I do not care whether we get anything or not, but, if we do, I want to be able to say that the slates were never out of my hands or out of my sight for a second!"

While we were thus talking I both heard and felt the writing going on, and upon opening the slates (which I did myself) I found clearly written the words, "I hope this evidence will be sufficient for you." The crumb of pencil was lying, as is usual in such cases, on the last stroke of the last letter.

Mrs. Sidgwick thinks that writing on a slate cannot be felt, but I know from frequent experience that when, as in this case, the slates are held between the finger and thumb in mid air, and the writing is done firmly and quickly, it can be felt, and that very distinctly.

Experienced Spiritualists will, of course, regard the above case as so simple as to be hardly worth the recording, but I have given it because it is one which entirely "dispensed with the necessity of continuous observation." Mrs. Sidgwick must at least concede that much, if she admits that I am a "trustworthy" witness; and if she does so admit, then I go further and challenge her to produce any conjurer of acknowledged reputation who will pretend that he can achieve the same result under the same circumstances.—Yours truly,

E. DAWSON ROGERS.

Rose Villa, Church End, Finchley, N.
July 12th, 1886.

OFFICE OF "LIGHT,"
16, CRAVEN STREET,
CHANCERY CROSS, S.W.

Light :

SATURDAY, JULY 17TH, 1886.

THE CHARGE AGAINST MR. EGLINTON.

Our various correspondents are replying so ably to Mrs. Sidgwick's article on Mr. Eglinton in the June number of the *Journal* of the Society for Psychical Research that, except in one particular, we cannot do better for the present than to allow the defence to be thus carried on. We confess, however, that the more we study what Mrs. Sidgwick has said, the more does the impression grow in our minds that in view of the spirit in which that lady has approached the subject little will be gained by a prolonged discussion. It is useless to argue with those who have made up their minds that they will not see, and considering all the facts it is difficult to believe that Mrs. Sidgwick and others have not entered on the inquiry with a strong hope that Spiritualism may be found untrue. If it were otherwise why have the majority of those who, in the *Proceedings* and *Journal*, have been giving publicity to their views, apparently lost no opportunity of creating a prejudice against Spiritualism by disparaging allusions to it, and strained attempts to minimise the value of the evidence on record? For example, judging from her recent article and also from the paper which she read at a previous meeting of the Society, Mrs. Sidgwick's frame of mind seems to be one in which she eagerly seizes hold of any scrap of adverse evidence, no matter how flimsy its foundation in truth. A case in point is the manner in which she commences her *Journal* article. She says:—"Before laying before the readers of the *Journal* a collection of evidence received from members of the Society about slate-writing experiences with Mr. Eglinton, it seems desirable to recall two incidents in his career which show that we must not assume any disinclination on his part to pass off conjuring performances as occult phenomena."

One of the matters to which she alludes is the well known "Vega" incident, in which, read it as we will, we fail to find any evidence incriminating Mr. Eglinton, and we cannot but think that only those anxious at all hazards to discredit him, and who are coincidentally ignorant of the veriest rudiments of the study, would have quoted it in such a connection. The other "incident" is a more serious charge—one of direct fraud—into which we have now made, as far as is possible (the letter quoted by Mrs. Sidgwick appeared eight years ago), a searching inquiry. The result overwhelms us with astonishment that Mrs. Sidgwick should so unnecessarily, and obviously wilfully, rake up what is, upon the face of the complete correspondence, a very doubtful story, and have sought by its use as an introduction to her article to prejudice the minds of her readers. We fail to see what object she had in view except to attempt to minimise the value of the strong testimony in Mr. Eglinton's favour which had reached the Society, to say nothing of the far stronger testimony already published elsewhere, and to which she appears resolutely to have closed her eyes. Were the writer not a lady, we should characterise such conduct in very strong terms; as it is, we content ourselves with a protest against its extreme injustice and unfairness.

Mrs. Sidgwick has suppressed very material facts in her quotation as printed in the *Journal*. In the first place the alleged circumstances occurred two years previous to the letter in which the accuser made his charge, during which time he had made no public move in the matter, and only did so at all in consequence of personal pique against the

Council of the late B.N.A.S. In the second place, the suppressed portions of the letter quoted by Mrs. Sidgwick bear upon their face the mark of utter worthlessness. We affirm that no one accustomed to examine and weigh evidence in a scientific manner would have accorded to the correspondence the slightest serious attention without the clearest corroborative testimony. This seems to have been altogether lacking, for the charges made were fully investigated by the Council of the B.N.A.S. (some members of which are now on the Council of the S.P.R.), with the result that they dismissed the question as insufficiently attested—in fact, by no means could they get direct evidence from the accuser in support of his statements. These facts have been confirmed within the last few days by members of the Council of the late B.N.A.S., before whom the question was first brought.

MRS. SIDGWICK AND PSYCHOGRAPHY.

BY THE HON. ALEXANDER AKSAKOFF.

Not having a sufficient knowledge of the English language to express myself fluently and clearly in public, I regret that at the recent meeting of the Society for Psychical Research, of which I am a member, I was unable to say how much I was astonished with the illogical deductions of Mrs. Sidgwick's paper, published in the June number of the *Journal* of the above Society, and which deals extensively with the phenomenon of psychography and Mr. W. Eglinton's slate-writing in particular. I shall not at this time enter into details, because such logic is evidently controlled by the "interests of the heart," against which there is no appeal. But I wish to point to only one fact, which shows how much these interests are obscuring not only logical deductions, but even the plainest faculty for remembering what one writes and prints.

Among the many cases in defence of psychography which Mrs. Sidgwick adduces, she selects only one, viz., the case where Mr. Wedgwood received writing between his own sealed slates. This condition fully satisfies the exigences of this lady, because it "dispenses with the necessity of continuous observation." "But even in this case," says Mrs. Sidgwick, "there seems a serious flaw in the evidence. Mr. Eglinton saw the slates at the first séance, when nothing occurred; and even if it could be proved that they had not been tampered with in the interval between the two séances, I cannot perceive that we have any means of knowing that a pair was not prepared in imitation and substituted at the second séance. It is surely significant that there should be but a single instance of writing in securely closed slates and that a dubious one."

The flaw is not in the evidence but in the memory of Mrs. Sidgwick. She does not recollect that Mr. Wedgwood, before going to the second sitting, "fastened gummed paper round the edges" of the slates, "so as to close the inside hermetically," yet writing was nevertheless obtained upon them. It is clear that this gumming of the slates was quite a new condition for Mr. Eglinton, and consequently he could not have had a pair "prepared in imitation and substituted at the second séance."

"It is surely significant" Mrs. Sidgwick should print and criticise this evidence, which is absolutely perfect, but should fail to remember its details! Accusing of *mal-observation* all the witnesses for the genuineness of the writing, she proves herself guilty of *mal-reading*.

I shall now refer to another important point which seems to me to be generally omitted in this discussion. An inseparable part of psychography is not only *direct writing*, but also, if I may say so, *direct seeing*. Answers are given to questions written on slates without the knowledge of the medium; words are read in closed books, and so on. Such things, from the standpoint of Mrs. Sidgwick, are the result of sleight of hand. It is, for her argument, a pity that *sleight of seeing* is not equal to *sleight of hand*. The eye requires a certain amount

of time to obtain an impression of external objects. A gentleman who was present at the meeting of the Psychical Society on the 5th inst., gave an excellent example of this fact. With the view of proving how much could be done by *sleight of hand*, he related how a friend of his, an amateur conjurer, was very much interested in Bosco's performance of one sovereign disappearing and re-appearing in the same hand, which was apparently motionless, and he was desirous that he should teach him the delusion, to which Bosco answered that he (the amateur conjurer) would never be able to do this trick, because the movements necessary for its successful performance were done by him in one-seventh of a second—an amount of time, he said, in which the eye cannot catch the motion, and the hands appear to have been immovable. But this gentleman, adducing this fact against mediumship, failed to perceive that if Mr. Eglinton is able to read a question written upon a slate, or open a book and find and read therein the required page, line, and word, with such promptitude that nobody remarks it, then, according to physiological law, he could not have seen what was there written or printed, because the eye, by such a quickness of movement, cannot catch the necessary impressions.

Before asserting the contrary, Mrs. Sidgwick must prove such a fact is physiologically possible.

MR. EGLINTON AND MRS. SIDGWICK.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Permit me to thank the large number of correspondents who have replied to the appeal which you were good enough to insert in your last issue. By every post I have received warm letters of sympathy, but I would trespass upon your space again to say that, whilst I am personally gratified with this expression of good faith in myself, it is not exactly what I desire.

Although the testimony is already overwhelming, I urgently request everyone who has had sésances with me to state the facts of the same concisely, but in a sufficiently comprehensive manner to embrace the following points:—

1. Was writing obtained on your own slates or paper? and if so, what were the precise conditions under which it was produced?
2. Was writing obtained on fastened slates, or upon the locked slate? And if so, were they out of sight at all, or for a sufficiency of time to allow them to be written upon without your observing the same?
3. Has your observation been sufficiently keen to warrant your saying that the hand holding the slate has always been in sight?
4. When writing has been obtained between two slates have you ascertained whether they were clean prior to the writing taking place?
5. Has the writing been of such a nature as to cause an impression that it had been previously prepared? Or, has it been pertinent to the questions suggested on the spot? And if so, could it by any means have been known beforehand what you were about to ask?
6. Did the writing take place under, or over the table? or in what position was the slate at the time of writing?
7. Have you marked a new piece of pencil or chosen a coloured crayon? and has the writing been produced in the same colour? Have the facets of the pencil afterwards been found to be worn?
8. Are you able to state positively that the sounds of writing came from the slate? and have you felt the vibration of the pencil when writing at any time when you have held the slate?
9. State generally whether you have not been allowed at all times to freely examine the room, table, slates and pencils, and whether your attention has been unduly diverted at any moment during the sésance.

It is not for myself that I desire this evidence, but simply to accumulate the same for the purpose of showing Mrs. Sidgwick that the majority of persons coming to me have taken every precaution against "clever conjuring," and that they are endowed at least with some of the intelligence necessary to a correct observation of the facts, and upon the possession of which she prides herself.—Yours truly,

6, Nottingham-place, W.

W. EGLINTON.

ON THE SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM : MEDIUMISTIC PHENOMENA OR CONJURING TRICKS?*

BY M. HERMANN.†

Translated by "V" (slightly abridged).

The question as to the genuineness of mediumistic phenomena has again been recently brought prominently before the public, and has set both parties in commotion. The arrival of the celebrated medium, Henry Slade, has been an opportunity for Spiritualists to make new converts to their cause, and for their opponents to enter fresh protests against the "Spiritualistic swindle." If I take this opportunity of speaking upon the subject, I do so, firstly, in order to answer the numerous questions addressed to me, and, secondly, to enlighten the public on the difference existing between conjuring performances and mediumistic manifestations.

That such enlightenment is highly needed has been recently expressly stated by two prominent *savants*. Dr. Eduard von Hartmann, as well as Baron Dr. Carl du Prel, only recognise the possibility of a decision being arrived at upon the mediumistic question by the *savant* uniting with the prestidigitateur in investigating the matter, and by the latter giving his judgment without prejudice and solely in the interest of truth. So-called physical manifestations are, in their character, very similar to tricks performed by conjurers, and only the latter are competent to decide whether the phenomena can be produced by conjuring or whether they lie beyond it. It follows that the conjurer, being obliged to closely observe the eyes of the spectators while performing his tricks, must himself possess unusually sharp eyes, which render him capable of seeing more than ordinary people. I think I have thus proved that in a certain measure I am not only *justified* but even *called upon* to give my judgment concerning mediumistic phenomena.

Although I had often heard of Spiritualistic mediums, and had received the most wonderful accounts from America, my first opportunity of seeing a medium, and one who was universally considered at the top of the tree, and who at that time was at the height of his career, was in 1877. Henry Slade made in that year his first European tour, and came early in November to Berlin. The sensation he created was extraordinary, especially as till that time the general public had heard nothing of Spiritualism. Soon, however, the usual thing took place in such cases; instead of an objective inquiry being made by competent persons, accounts were circulated by people who understood nothing whatever about the matter, and were full of prejudices; but many persons who were anxious to have their opinions confirmed applied to conjurers, begging them to give their judgment as to these "miracles." The Spiritualists had already established a psychical society, and applied for this purpose to the late Bellachini, who finally declared it to be "highly presumptuous" for anyone to assert that Slade's manifestations were conjuring tricks.‡

While Spiritualists thus succeeded in securing Bellachini's evidence in their favour, their opponents set to work and applied to me to give my judgment about the matter. I was present, therefore, at several sésances and

* From the June number of the *Sphinx*.

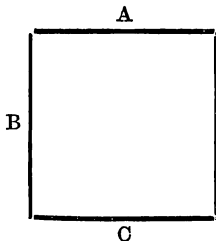
† Herr M. Hermann, of Berlin, is universally recognised as the most celebrated prestidigitateur in Germany, and is looked upon by the united German Press as being the most proper person to pronounce a judgment on the question now before us. Herr Dr. Paul Lindau expresses the same opinion in his article in the weekly paper, *Das neue Berlin*, entitled, "A Spiritualistic Séance," and the conjurers themselves acknowledge Herr Hermann to be their master. He is celebrated not only for his performances of conjuring, but for his clever invention of many astonishing "tricks," and he rests his pretensions upon a scientific basis, having formerly studied for the medical profession. He must not be confounded with Herr C. Hermann, of Vienna, who has likewise an European celebrity as a conjurer, and who professed his willingness in the *Allgemeine Zeitung* of May 4th, 1886, to hold a trial sésance with Mr. W. Eglinton.—Ed. *Sphinx*.

‡ Herr Hermann does not lay much weight on Bellachini's opinion, as he says there were many conjuring tricks he could not find out.—*TS*.

published the result of my observations in the *Berliner Tageblatt*. I may be permitted to refer to some of the opinions I there expressed, but I must at the same time remark that my attempts at explanation were of doubtful value, as they did not rest upon what I had seen with my own eyes. My explanations I gave to show that the possibility of a mechanical way of producing the manifestations was not altogether inconceivable; this, however, did not prove that Slade had really performed them by this means, as I had not myself witnessed them. It is evident that the experiments under these circumstances lose in value as proof, as long as there is a possibility of their being performed by sleight of hand or other artificial means.*

I now proceed to the phenomenon of slate-writing, which is certainly the most convincing, and, in any case, the most surprising of all experiments. I must myself allow that I am incapable of explaining what took place at a séance I was present at with Slade, although I may remark that I have only seen this experiment once, and it is just possible that, on a repetition of it, I might have been able to discover the possibility of performing it by means of prestidigitation. Slade took one of my slates, which was quite clean on both sides, placed a morsel of slate-pencil upon it, pushed it slowly beneath the table, and held it so that the frame and part of the slate itself were visible. Thereupon I heard the sound of writing, and when Slade slowly withdrew the slate, writing was upon the *top side* of it. I need scarcely say that a change of the slate for one already written upon, or its reversal while it was being pushed under or withdrawn from beneath the table, could not possibly have escaped me, and further that prestidigitation is not able to explain this experiment. In spite of this, I must not attach too much importance to this fact, as even in this case the subjective qualification of the observer has its influence, and the opponent might object that my attention had not sufficed to discover the manipulation. Neither is the production of writing between two slates, one upon the other, under *every* circumstance a proof positive; the conjurer in this case has many possibilities of producing such writing. I will describe one of the several possible combinations, which, perhaps, has also the advantage of calling attention to certain points which might easily be overlooked by those experimenting.

Let us imagine that a "medium" (A) gives a séance to two visitors (B and C), and arranges them in the following position (as usual with Slade). He then takes two slates brought by the visitors, lays a morsel of slate-pencil between them, presses them together, and holds them in a slanting direction before the ear of B, while he manages to write something under his left shoulder. While this takes place his thumb is visible to everyone above the slate, his four fingers, however, of course being unseen. Talking about one thing and another goes on, while they wait in vain for the "spirits" to write; at last the "medium" lays the slates down, looks inside them, but can find no writing, as the others can see for themselves. The slates are again laid one upon the other and held anew in the manner before described. This time writing is distinctly heard, and even the strokes, the finishing of a word, &c., can be distinguished. Three smart taps give the signal that the writing is finished, the slates are laid down, opened, and behold, legible writing upon the *inner side* is seen. After a few minutes the "medium" wipes the writing off, lays the same slate upon the table, having previously put a morsel of pencil beneath it, and touches the top side of the slate gently with one hand,



* The next paragraph goes on to describe Slade's *modus operandi*, when sitting for the phenomena of raps and moving of objects, and to show how these might be mechanically produced.—Tr.

while the other is clasped by one of the visitors, so as to complete the chain. Under these circumstances the writing is again audible, and is found on the under side of the slate when it is turned up.

The explanation of this performance is so absurdly simple that the reader will shake his head at it. Let him remember, however, the ancient saying "*simplex sigillum veri*," and that most similar cases may be compared to the egg of Columbus. Besides, it is necessary for the success of the "trick" I am about to describe, not only that the performer should possess great dexterity with his fingers, but he must likewise be very clever in diverting the attention of the bystanders.

We will imagine that the "medium" wears on his forefinger a flesh-coloured sort of thimble, to the point of which a morsel of slate pencil is attached; of course this can only be managed when the forefinger is not seen by the spectators. He writes then, avoiding any noise in so doing as far as possible, on the under side of the second slate, which in the position I have described is not seen by anyone. The slight sound is easily overpowered by loud talking, clearing the throat, &c., during the *apparently unsuccessful* attempt. The slates are now laid upon the table, unclasped, and of course the inner sides found blank; when the "medium" restores them to their former position, he manages to arrange the slate which he had written upon so that the writing is *now* on the *inner side*. Any ordinarily expert conjurer can manage this reversal of position without its being detected. Now, then, he writes loudly and distinctly with his forefinger upon the side of the slate as yet unwritten on, and then the experiment is not only concluded but the next one is provided for. When the slates are laid upon the table and opened, this time writing is found upon the inner surface and is seen by every one; but there is likewise writing upon the other side of the slate, and it is the "medium's" most important task to *prevent* this being seen by the spectators. *How* this is to be done I cannot further describe, but it must depend very much on the circumstances and on the skilfulness of the operator. The slate which already is written upon is now simply laid upon the table over the morsel of pencil, and the sound of writing imitated by some method which I cannot here go into. I will only remark that a little apparatus can be concealed in the sleeve links, which being pressed produces a sound precisely similar to the scratching of a pencil.

I have convinced myself while performing this experiment frequently in the presence of competent witnesses, that persons possessing sharp powers of observation and familiar with such tricks, have been unable to find out how it was done; and of course it is much more easy to deceive complete neophytes in such matters.

(To be continued.)

HERMETIC SOCIETY.—On July 8th, a paper on the Physical Alchemy, of which we are unable to give a report, was read by Mr. S. Liddell, M. Mathers. And on the 15th, a paper, of which we hope to give a report in our next, was read by Mr. Maitland, on the New Illumination. It was announced that at the meeting of Thursday, 22nd, which will be at 8.30 p.m., the President will be happy to reply to any questions which members may desire to have answered, if they will send them in writing, to the hon. sec., at any time before that date.

SPIRITUALISM, in its true sense—in the sense which we attach to it—means all good to all mankind. It reaches out into the churches and claims all true spirituality embodied in their teachings. It goes down into the hearts of men, ever inspiring to noble thoughts and generous deeds. It enters the circles of business life, and prompts to upright action in commerce, in trade, and in industrial pursuits of every kind. It takes up its abode in the home, and inculcates the purest philosophy of life and happiness. And in addition to all this, it brings a new revelation to man—the positive assurance of another world, as a spiritual supplement to this world, and a blessed communion with the inhabitants thereof, of whom are those who were once near and dear to us.—*Golden Gate*.

M. AKSAKOW'S REPLY TO DR. VON HARTMANN.

TRANSLATED FROM "PSYCHISCHE STUDIEN" (June).
(Continued from page 303.)

We will pass over in silence the the long succession of witness-esses of all sorts in Mumler's favour, and all the different methods devised for the detection of his fraud, the supposition of which was quite natural, but none of them ever had any success. It will suffice here to reproduce an article in the *British Journal of Photography*, contributed by its correspondent at Philadelphia, Mr. C. Sellers, and which is therefore not chargeable with a predisposition in favour of Spiritism. It is as follows:—

"For some months past the papers have been giving accounts of some operator in the fair city of Boston—the Athens of America—who, experimenting one Sunday, found a double image on his plate; and the second image proved to be a likeness of a deceased cousin. After this he found that all, or nearly all, pictures made by him had this spectral image on them with more or less distinctness; and as the wonder was noised abroad, his room was soon crowded by the curious, all anxious to secure portraits of their departed friends. Photographers laughed at the thing, and said the deception would be soon discovered. Many imitations, too, were made by the usual process first discovered by Sir David Brewster, and more were made by printing on the yet undeveloped plate by superposition; and to some of these plans the deception was ascribed. But in time men of considerable scientific reputation inquired into the affair, but could not discover the trick." "Now as to the selves, they differ very materially from anything ever seen, and I know of no way of imitating them never a full length portrait; always the bust or length, and yet you cannot say positively where the figure appears. The first impression on many is that it is very plain, and then it seems not to be so examined in detail. I have not seen the negative the appearance of the print I would say that, judging from the general whiteness of the image, the spirit must have been the first object to appear in developing the plate. The features are not at all distinct. There are general features marked, but in all parts, except the very interesting face, the surrounding objects are distinctly seen in image, and yet there is none of that clearness of definition usual in the under-exposed figure in ghost-pictures. They seem very much out of focus when they stand at the back of the sitter, more distinct when on the same plane, if my memory serves me rightly, I saw none to the left hand of the sitter, i.e., to the right hand of the sitter."

"Believers in Spiritualism explain the matter thus:—Spirits themselves cannot impress their own image on a sensitive plate, but they can mould into form some of those higher principles of matter; and this matter, although invisible to our naked eyes, can reflect the chemical rays of light, and thus impress a picture I have seen of a guitar to the left of her bidding. They say there can be no such thing as a spirit matter, but that spirits can form or mould their images at will; hence the figures seen are, in all cases, merely models held up before the camera by the spirits, not real portraits of themselves, and likewise allege that the spirits see the likenesses in the memories of the sitters.* How could he handle a subject like this, and what a capital 'strange story' he could compose from these marvels!" (Copied into the *Spiritual Magazine*, 1863, pp. 125-128.)

I have abbreviated this letter, because it is rather long, but I give it for the technical details, which are of value, and also for the then already formulated hypothesis of the modelled and worked up matter—the same hypothesis which we meet with again ten years later with Beattie, and which will have for us a high importance when we come to deal with visible materialisations.

To conclude with the *Journal of Photography*, this seems the proper place for a notice from the same at the time of the Mumler trial:—

"Apropos of the Mumler spirit photograph, a good many absurd things have been said *pro* and *con* on the subject. But anything that is visible to the eye of the camera, and thus capable of being depicted by photography, must, therefore, necessarily be visible to the human eye, is surely ignorant of that important branch of physics known as fluorescence. Many things being photographed which to the physical eye are utterly invisible. Why, for the matter of that, a room may be full of the ultra-violet rays of the spectrum, and a photograph might be

taken by means of that 'dark light.' Objects in a room so lighted would be plainly visible to the lens of the camera; at any rate, they could be reproduced on the sensitive plate, while at the same time not an atom of luminousness could be perceived in the room by any persons possessing ordinary human vision. Hence the photographing of an invisible image, whether that image be of a spirit or a lump of matter, is not scientifically impossible. If it reflect only the fluorescence or ultra-violet spectral rays it will be easily photographed, but it will be quite invisible even to the sharpest eye." (Reprinted in the *Spiritual Magazine*, 1869, p. 421.)

We come at length to the trial which made Mumler's fame. This trial was instigated by a New York journal, *The World*, and took place in April, 1869. Mumler was arrested on the charge of practising fraud and deception on the public by means of supposed spirit photographs. The following are the chief points in the case:—

Eight photographers were called by the prosecution, to prove that Mumler was an impostor, and six methods were indicated according to which spirit-like forms could be produced, but none of them had ever himself seen a picture taken by Mumler, or ever had looked at his apparatus or into his studio, and nothing could be adduced to show that Mumler's pictures had been effected by any of the alleged methods. On the contrary, four photographers, Mr. Slee, Mr. Guay, Mr. Silver, and Mr. Gurney, who had been with Mumler, and had examined his process, testified that none of the six methods mentioned had anything to do with Mumler's, which was the ordinary one; and further, Mr. Slee, a photographer at Poughkeepsie, had invited Mumler to his house, and there, with Mr. Slee's own camera, his own glasses, and his own chemicals, the same effects were produced! Mr. Guay* had spent three weeks investigating the phenomena with Mumler, and testified that he had seen these pictures developed when he had himself conducted the whole process, from the cleaning of the glass plates to the production of the picture. Mr. Silver testified that when Mumler came to his (Mr. Silver's) gallery, and used Mr. Silver's apparatus and materials, a form came on the plate near Mr. Silver, and spirit pictures had even been produced when in Mumler's presence. Mr. Silver had himself performed all the manipulations with his own materials. And lastly, Mr. Gurney, a celebrated photographer in New York (707, Broadway), gave the following evidence:—

"I have been a photographer for twenty-eight years; I have witnessed Mumler's process, and though I went prepared to scrutinise everything, I could find nothing which savoured of fraud or trickery; it was the usual process of preparing a plate for taking a photograph, the only thing out of the usual routine being the fact that the operator kept his hand on the camera."

There is yet another fact which has been established by uncontroverted testimony; it was admitted by all the photographic witnesses for the prosecution that shadowy forms such as those upon these pictures could not be transmitted (reflected) from a negative plate to the sensitive plate in the dark and developing-room by means of other light than gaslight, candlelight, or daylight. And it was proved by half-a-dozen witnesses who had visited Mumler's gallery for the purpose of detecting fraud, that neither gas, candle, lamp, nor daylight was used by him in his dark-room, and that the only light which penetrated that room was obtained through a small window with a dark yellow curtain. And yet Mumler produced these pictures, and in many cases delivered them to his sitters within a few minutes after the sitting. In the case of Mr. Livermore (a well-known banker of New York), who was one of the witnesses at the trial, Mumler developed three pictures of his deceased wife, taken within ten minutes, and each in a different position, after the sitting.

Nor is this all. Not only did the judicial investigation establish the fact that human forms invisible to the eye were represented on the plates; twelve witnesses declared that in these forms they had recognised the likenesses of their friends or deceased parents. More: five witnesses, among whom was Judge Edmunds, declared that similar pictures had been obtained and recognised, even when the persons represented had never been photographed during their lives.

Many other similar witnesses could have been called for the defence, but the judge considered the above to be sufficient, and his decision was as follows: "After careful attention to the case, he had come to the conclusion that the prisoner should be discharged. He would state that, however he might believe that trick and deception had been practised by the prisoner, yet as he sat there in his capacity as magistrate, he was compelled to decide that he should not be justified in sending the defence to the Grand Jury, as in his opinion, the prosecution had failed to prove the case." (For other details of the trial see *Banner of Light*, 1st to 8th May, and 28th August, 1869, and *Spiritual Magazine*, 1869, pp. 241-260.)

(To be continued.)

*[It ought perhaps to be mentioned that Mr. Guay had become an assistant of Mumler, receiving one half the profits of the business. This was eight years after he had conducted the investigation of Mumler's photographs at Boston, on behalf of Mr. A. J. Davis.—Tr.]

*[This early view shows an approach to some theories which the Spiritualist of the present day is apt to treat rather impatiently.—Tr.]

MEDIUMSHIP.

From the *Golden Gate*, San Francisco.

The most careful and thorough students in the philosophy of spirit control are yet but in the primary school of this wonderful unfoldment of modern knowledge,—have hardly advanced beyond their primers. And some who think they know the most about mediumship evidently know the least.

Experience and practice will bring the truth to light eventually; and when it does we apprehend that Spiritualists whose experiences with some mediums have been of a character to arouse distrust and suspicion in their minds, will see that what they supposed was dishonesty in the medium was the result of disturbing influences that may be understood, and perhaps obviated.

Let us consider a few facts in that most satisfactory, and yet to some a very unsatisfactory, phase of mediumship, independent slate-writing. We have had much more experience with this phase than with any other of the many marvellous "gifts" with which Spiritualists are familiar.

We have learned that for some seekers after this truth the mediums can procure no writing; for others they can get only unsatisfactory messages, and those often under conditions to create a suspicion of jugglery; while for others, the same mediums can obtain the most satisfactory messages, and in the most open-handed and honest manner. The latter has usually been our experience, especially when sitting with the medium alone; but often when accompanied by others the result has been unsatisfactory, and sometimes open to the suspicion of trickery.

We have obtained the writing while holding the slate alone, with the medium sitting fully six feet away—the writing being a perfect *fac simile* of that of the mortal whose spirit purported to control. After many sances with the same medium, all of the most satisfactory character, extending over a period of some four years, a lapse of about eight months ensued. Upon again trying to obtain the writing through this medium, we could get nothing, and after two or three trials gave it up, quite as much to the disappointment of the medium as to us.

Now, why is it, it may be asked, that the medium who can obtain the writing for one person and at one time in a satisfactory manner, cannot procure it for another, and at any time in like manner? And why is it that in this phase of mediumship there should ever occur suspicious circumstances to disturb the mind of the investigator? These questions are more easily asked than answered. If it is true that with some persons the manifestations are always open to the suspicion of fraud or jugglery, and with others that no suspicious circumstances ever occur, may it not be that the causes for these irregularities exist independent of the medium? May there not be something in the atmosphere of the investigator, or in conditions that he may unwittingly take upon himself from others, to produce the unfavourable results mentioned?

Another fact, familiar to those who have given independent slate-writing much attention, leads us to conclude that the messages are not always, perhaps not generally, written by those from whom they purport to come,—and that is the similarity of chirography running through most of them. With a dozen messages or more, all written upon one slate, may be seen as many different and widely-varying styles of writing; and yet a careful examination will disclose certain peculiarities running through all alike. This is more noticeable with the first communications of spirits by this process. Such messages are probably written by some one of the medium's guides, who has learned the art, and who acts as an amanuensis for unskilled spirits,—and who is also able to give something of the latter's style, blended throughout with the medium's mentality and manner.

In several instances, in our own experience, the communicating spirits have learned how to master conditions, and hence are able to do their own writing. In such cases but little, if any, trace of the medium's hand can be discovered therein.

The trance and other phases of mediumship are subject to like irregularities, often irreconcilable, apparently, with the idea of genuineness. Our best trance and test mediums sometimes utterly fail, not only in giving any convincing tests, but will actually state things concerning the investigator that are far removed from the truth.

An excellent test medium, of this city, whose success in giving tests from the public platform has been truly remarkable, was recently visited for a sance by an old and well-posted Spiritualist, an entire stranger to her—but one who had witnessed her public mediumship. He was told that he was born in a foreign land, and that he had but recently come to the investigation of Spiritualism. Then names and incidents without stint were given him, not one of which he recognised; in fact there was no truth in anything that she gave him. At the same time he is satisfied that she is a good medium—the reason for her failure in his case being the result of unfavourable conditions over which she, or her guides, had no control.

These are facts familiar to all Spiritualists, but are nevertheless but little understood. They should be carefully considered by all who would arrive at the truth.

DIRECT WRITING IN RUSSIAN.

From the *Rebus*.

From the first days of Mr. Eglinton's residence in St. Petersburg, it was several times promised during the various sances that I should receive a direct communication from a departed person, well-known to me, whose name was quite unknown to Mr. Eglinton, and I am quite sure that no one except myself could know it. On one occasion, however, this same name was pronounced by a direct voice, and it was said that the same person desired to give a communication. The day of Mr. Eglinton's final sance in Russia approached, and he was on the eve of departure. I could not be present at the four preceding psychographic sances, and therefore the promised message came not, and I lost every hope of receiving it. We were all assembled for the last sance, and we only waited a belated member of our circle, when I remarked that Mr. Eglinton, quietly speaking to all at once nervous, pale, and very agitated. I thought that he was vexed that the sance would take place too late, and, just on the eve of his departure, and attributed his nervousness to it; in fact, he was probably beginning to feel the influence of his guiding force, and left the drawing-room impetuously. Coming back a few minutes after, Mr. Eglinton told our host and me that, as he entered the next room, he heard a voice speaking, and it told him to sit with me, before the intended sance took place, for the purpose of receiving the message in direct writing. We went together into M. Aksakof's study, took two slates, lying on the writing table, and two marked cards from the drawer (all of which had been prepared by our host), and sat down at a card-table, on which stood two lighted candles. The sance began in the ordinary way. I will not enter into particulars of the first three experiences, as they presented nothing notable, merely mentioning that the writing, which I heard several times, began with great rapidity as soon as we formed the chain. Whilst one of the three experiences took place, I received, on one of the slates lying on the table surface, under my hands and those of Mr. Eglinton, an answer to a mental question. On the two cards, which I put by turns between two slates with the addition of a small piece of pencil, we found brief communications in English. On the last one it was written that the person, well-known to me, would now write. Then taking another white card from a packet bought by M. Aksakof himself, I examined it carefully, not letting it go out of my hands for a moment. Meanwhile, Mr. Eglinton tore a small piece off its corner, which I put in my pocket, and without changing place, he stretched out one hand, took a book from the writing-table at his back, and opened it before me. I put in my card with a small bit of lead pencil, shut the book, placed it flat on the table, and held its two sides with my hands. Mr. Eglinton placed his left hand on the corresponding one of mine, and with his right hand touched the book by its corner from below on its other side. In a few seconds the sound of writing was heard, and I also felt something moving in the book, which I was firmly pressing. Shortly after I heard three light knocks on the surface of the book. Opening it, I saw one of the sides of the card covered with a fine handwriting in Russian. The language was quite correct, and terminated with the signature of the person to me. No traces of the pencil were found on the leaves of the book, although in all the card contained twenty-three lines.

The contents of the communication, as it regards exclusively me alone, offer nothing interesting to the public. When we had finished the sance, and others entered the room, and I asked Professors Boutleroff and Wagner to compare the torn corner with the card itself, and needless to say, it exactly corresponded.

Maison Pretat, Moskoff, Moscow. BARBARA PREBITKOFF.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

SPECIAL NOTICE.—The Editor of "LIGHT" cannot, save in exceptional cases, undertake to answer correspondence through the post. All inquiries reaching this office no later than Wednesday morning, will, as far as practicable, be answered in the ensuing number of "LIGHT."

MRS. HAGON.—Will you kindly give us a call, and we will see what can be done?
 REV. F. MANN.—Letter forwarded as requested. No information yet to hand with regard to other matter.
 J. E. FIELDING.—We regret we cannot comply with your wish. "Nizida" requests us to withhold the name.
 "V."—Thanks for MSS., a portion of which appears this week. Will you kindly write on one side of the paper only?
 MRS. MELLON.—Thanks for cutting. We shall be pleased to receive a call from you when you come to London.

It is rumoured that Mrs. Fletcher intends to visit England in the autumn.

WHAT IS SAID OF PSYCHICAL PHENOMENA.

PROFESSORS TORNEBOM AND EDLAND, THE SWEDISH PHYSICISTS.—“Only those deny the reality of spirit phenomena who have not examined them, but profound study alone can explain them where we may be led by the discovery of the cause of trivial occurrences, or to what new spheres of Nature may open the way; but that they will bring forward is already made clear to us by the revelations of natural history in all ages.”—*Aftonbladet* (Stockholm), October 30th, 1879.

BARON CARL DU PREL (Munich) in *Nord und Süd*.—“One thing is clear; that is, that psychography must be ascribed to a transcendental origin. We shall find: (1) That the hypothesis of prepared slates is inadmissible. (2) The place on which the writing is found is quite inaccessible to the hands of the medium. In some cases the double slate is securely locked, leaving only room inside for the tiny morsel of slate. (3) That the writing is actually done at the tip of the pencil. (4) That the writing must be actually done with the pencil by an intelligent being, since the answers are exactly pertinent to the questions. (5) This being can read, write, and understand the language of human beings, frequently such as is unknown to the human mind. (6) It is a human being, as well in the degree of its intelligence as in the mistakes sometimes made. These beings are therefore, although invisible, of human nature, or species. It is no use whatever to fight against this human language. (7) If they are asked who they are, they answer that they are beings who have left this world. (8) When these appearances become partly visible, perhaps only their hands, the hands seen as if of human form. (9) When these things become entirely visible, they show the human form and countenance. . . . Spiritualism must be investigated by science. I should look upon myself as a coward if I did not openly express my convictions.”

J. H. FICHTE, THE GERMAN PHILOSOPHER AND AUTHOR.—“Notwithstanding my age (83) and my exemption from the controversies of the day, I feel it my duty to bear testimony to the great fact of Spiritualism. No one should keep silent.”

PROFESSOR DE MORGAN, PRESIDENT OF THE MATHEMATICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON.—“I am perfectly convinced that I have both seen and heard, in a manner which should make unbelievers called spiritual, which cannot be taken by a rational explanation by imposture, coincidence, or mistake. So far I feel the ground firm under me.”

DR. ROBERT CHAMBERS.—“I have for many years known that these phenomena are real, as distinguished from impostures; and it is not of yesterday that I concluded they were calculated to explain much that has been doubtful in the past; and, when fully accepted, revolutionise the whole frame of human opinion on many important matters.”—*Extract from a Letter to A. Russel Wallace*.

PROFESSOR HARE, EMERITUS PROFESSOR OF CHEMISTRY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA.—“Far from abating my confidence in the inferences respecting the agencies of the spirits of deceased mortals, in the manifestations of which I have given an account in my work, I have, within the last nine months” (this was written in 1858), “had more striking evidences of that agency than those given in the work in question.”

PROFESSOR CHALLIS, THE LATE PLUMERIAN PROFESSOR OF ASTRONOMY AT CAMBRIDGE.—“I have been unable to resist the large amount of testimony to such facts, which has come from many independent sources, and from a vast number of witnesses. . . . In short, the testimony has been so abundant and consentaneous, that either the facts must be admitted to be such as are reported, or the possibility of certifying facts by human testimony must be given up.”—*Clerical Journal*, June, 1862.

PROFESSOR GREGORY, F.R.S.E.—“The essential question is this, What are the proofs of the agency of departed spirits? Although I cannot say that I yet feel the sure and firm conviction on this point which I feel on some others, I am bound to say that the higher phenomena, recorded by so many truthful and honorable men, appear to me to render the spiritual hypothesis almost certain. . . . I believe that if I could myself see the higher phenomena alluded to I should be satisfied, as are all those who have had the best means of judging of the truth of the spiritual theory.”

LORD BROUGHAM.—“There is but one question on which I would ask the author, Is the Spiritualism of this work foreign to our materialistic, manufacturing age? No; for amidst the varieties of mind which divers circumstances produce are found those who cultivate man’s highest faculties; to these the author addresses himself. I but even in the most cloudless skies of scepticism I see a rain-cloud, if it be no bigger than a man’s hand; it is modern Spiritualism.”—*Preface* by Lord Brougham to “*The Book of Nature*.” By C. O. Groom Napier, F.C.S.

THE LONDON DIALECTICAL COMMITTEE reported: “1. That sounds of a very varied character, apparently proceeding from articles of furniture, the floor and walls of the room—the vibrations accompanying which sounds are often distinctly perceptible to the touch, without being produced by muscular action or mechanical contrivance. 2. That movements of heavy bodies take place without mechanical contrivance of any kind, or adequate exertion of muscular force by those present, and frequently without contact or connection with any person. 3. That these sounds and movements often occur at the time and in the manner

asked for by persons present, and, by means of a simple code of signals, answer questions and spell out coherent communications.”

CAMILLE FLAMMARION, THE FRENCH ASTRONOMER, AND MEMBER OF THE ACADEMIE FRANCAISE.—“I do not hesitate to affirm my conviction, based on personal examination of the subject, that any scientific man who declares the phenomena denominated ‘magnetic,’ ‘somnambule,’ ‘mediumic,’ and others not yet explained by science to be ‘impossible,’ is one who speaks without knowing what he is talking about; and also any man accustomed, by his professional avocations, to scientific observation—provided that his mind be not biased by pre-conceived opinions, nor his mental vision blinded by that opposite kind of illusion, unhappily too common in the learned world, which consists in imagining that the laws of Nature are already known to us, and that everything which appears to overstep the limit of our present formulas is impossible—may acquire a radical and absolute certainty of the reality of the facts alluded to.”

CROMWELL F. VARLEY, F.R.S.—“Twenty-five years ago I was a hard-headed unbeliever. . . . Spiritual phenomena, however, suddenly and quite unexpectedly, were soon after developed in my own family. . . . This led me to inquire and to try numerous experiments in such a way as to preclude, as much as circumstances would permit, the possibility of trickery and self-deception. . . . He then details various phases of the phenomena which had come within the range of his personal experience, and continues: “Other and numerous phenomena have occurred, proving the existence (a) of forces unknown to science; (b) the power of instantly reading my thoughts; (c) the presence of some intelligence or intelligences controlling those powers. . . . That the phenomena occur there is overwhelming evidence, and it is too late now to deny their existence.”

ALFRED RUSSEL WALLACE, F.G.S.—“My position, therefore, is that the phenomena of Spiritualism in their entirety do not require further confirmation. They are proved, quite as well as any facts are proved in other sciences, and it is not denial or quibbling that can disprove any of them, but only fresh facts and accurate deductions from those facts. When the opponents of Spiritualism can give a record of their researches approaching in duration and completeness to those of its advocates; and when they can discover and show in detail, either how the phenomena are produced or how the many sane and able men here referred to have been deluded into a coincident belief that they have witnessed them; and when they can prove the correctness of their theory by producing a like belief in a body of equally sane and able unbelievers—then, and not till then, will it be necessary for Spiritualists to produce fresh confirmation of facts which are, and always have been, sufficiently real and indisputable to satisfy any honest and persevering inquirer.”—*Miracles and Modern Spiritualism*.

DR. LOCKHART ROBERTSON.—“The writer” (i.e., Dr. L. Robertson) “can now no more doubt the physical manifestations of so-called Spiritualism than he would any other fact, as, for example, the fall of the apple to the ground, of which his senses informed him. As stated above, there was no place or chance of any legerdemain, or fraud, in these physical manifestations. He is aware, even from recent experience, of the impossibility of convincing anyone, by a mere narrative of events apparently so out of harmony with all our knowledge of the laws which govern the physical world, and he places these facts on record rather as an act of justice due to those whose similar statements he had elsewhere doubted and denied, than with either the desire or hope of convincing others. Yet he cannot doubt the ultimate recognition of facts of the truth of which he is so thoroughly convinced. Admit these physical manifestations, and a strange and wide world of research is opened to our inquiry. This field is new to the materialist mind of the last two centuries, which even in the writings of divines of the English Church, doubts and denies all spiritual manifestations and agencies, be they good or evil.”—From a letter by Dr. Lockhart Robertson, published in the *Dialectical Society’s Report on Spiritualism*, p. 24.

NASSAU WILLIAM SENIOR.—“No one can doubt that phenomena like these (Phrenology, Homeopathy, and Mesmerism) deserve to be observed, recorded, and arranged; and whether we call by the name of mesmerism, or by any other name, the science which proposes to do this, is a mere question of nomenclature. Among those who profess this science there may be careless observers, prejudiced recorders, and rash systematisers; their errors and defects may impede the progress of knowledge, but they will not stop it. And we have no doubt that, before the end of this century, the wonders which perplex almost equally those who accept and those who reject modern mesmerism will be distributed into defined classes, and found subject to ascertained laws—in other words, will become the subjects of a science.” These views will prepare us for the following statement, made in the *Spiritual Magazine*, 1864, p. 336: “We have only to add, as a further tribute to the attainments and honours of Mr. Senior, that he was by long inquiry and experience a firm believer in spiritual power and manifestations. Mr. Home was his frequent guest, and Mr. Senior made no secret of his belief among his friends. He it was who recommended the publication of Mr. Home’s recent work by Messrs. Longmans, and he authorised the publication, under initials, of one of the striking incidents there given, which happened to a near and dear member of his family.”

CONJURERS AND PSYCHICAL PHENOMENA.

Mediums, who are the instruments of an external agency, have, more than once, been confronted with conjurers who deceive by sleight of hand; and in the same manner that no man of science who has thoroughly and fairly investigated the phenomena has failed to become convinced of their reality, so no conjurer who has been confronted with the same facts has been able to explain their occurrence by prestidigitation. Houdin, Jacobs, Bellachini, Hermann, Kellar, and others have already confessed their powerlessness to produce under the same conditions what occurs without human intervention in the presence of a medium. We give the testimony of one of them:—

Harry Kellar, a distinguished professor of legerdemain, investigated the slate-writing phenomena which occurred in the presence of Mr. Eglinton, at Calcutta, regarding which he said:—

“In conclusion, let me state that after a most stringent trial and strict scrutiny of these wonderful experiences I can arrive at no other conclusion than that there was no trace of trickery in any form; nor was there in the room any mechanism or machinery by which could be produced the phenomena which had taken place. The ordinary mode by which Maskelyne and other conjurers imitate levitation or the floating test could not possibly be done in the room in which we were assembled.”

ADVICE TO INQUIRERS.

The Conduct of Circles.—By "M.A. (Oxon.)."

If you wish to see whether Spiritualism is really only jugglery and imposture, try it by personal experiment.

If you can get an introduction to some experienced Spiritualist, on whose good faith you can rely, ask him for advice; and, if he is holding private circles, seek permission to attend one to see how to conduct séances, and what to expect.

There is, however, difficulty in obtaining access to private circles, and, in any case, you must rely chiefly on experiences in your own family circle, or amongst your own friends, all strangers being excluded. The bulk of Spiritualists have gained conviction thus.

Form a circle of from four to eight persons, half, or at least two, of negative, passive temperament and preferably of the female sex, the rest of a more positive type.

Sit, positive and negative alternately, secure against disturbance, in subdued light, and in comfortable and unconstrained positions, round an uncovered table of convenient size. Place the palms of the hands flat upon its upper surface. The hands of each sitter need not touch those of his neighbour, though the practice is frequently adopted.

Do not concentrate attention too fixedly on the expected manifestations. Engage in cheerful but not frivolous conversation. Avoid dispute or argument. Scepticism has no deterrent effect, but a bitter spirit of opposition in a person of determined will may totally stop or decidedly impede manifestations. If conversation flags, music is a great help, if it be agreeable to all, and not of a kind to irritate the sensitive ear. Patience is essential, and it may be necessary to meet ten or twelve times, at short intervals, before anything occurs. If after such a trial you still fail, form a fresh circle. Guess at the reason of your failure, eliminate the inharmonious elements, and introduce others. An hour should be the limit of an unsuccessful séance.

The first indications of success usually are a cold breeze passing over the hands, with involuntary twitchings of the hands and arms of some of the sitters, and a sensation of throbbing in the table. These indications, at first so slight as to cause doubt as to their reality, will usually develop with more or less rapidity.

If the table moves, let your pressure be so gentle on its surface that you are sure you are not aiding its motions. After some time you will probably find that the movement will continue if your hands are held over, but not in contact with, it. Do not, however, try this until the movement is assured, and be in no hurry to get messages.

When you think that the time has come, let some one take command of the circle and act as spokesman. Explain to the unseen Intelligence that an agreed code of signals is desirable, and ask that a tilt may be given as the alphabet is slowly repeated at the several letters which form the word that the Intelligence wishes to spell. It is convenient to use a single tilt for No, three for Yes, and two to express doubt or uncertainty.

When a satisfactory communication has been established, ask if you are rightly placed, and if not, what order you should take. After this, ask who the Intelligence purports to be, which of the company is the medium, and such relevant questions. If confusion occurs, ascribe it to the difficulty that exists in directing the movements at first with exactitude. Patience will remedy this, if there be a real desire on the part of the Intelligence to speak with you. If you only satisfy yourself at first that it is possible to speak with an Intelligence separate from that of any person present, you will have gained much.

The signals may take the form of raps. If so, use the same code of signals, and ask as the raps become clear that they may be made on the table, or in a part of the room where they are demonstrably not produced by any natural means but avoid any vexatious imposition of restrictions on free communication. Let the Intelligence use its own means; if the attempt to communicate deserves your attention, it probably has something to say to you, and will resent being hampered by useless interference. It rests greatly with the sitters to make the manifestations elevating or frivolous and even tricky.

Should an attempt be made to entrance the medium, or to manifest by any violent methods, or by means of form manifestations, ask that the attempt may be deferred till you can secure the presence of some experienced Spiritualist. If this request is not heeded, discontinue the sitting. The process of developing a trance-medium is one that might disconcert an inexperienced inquirer. Increased light will check noisy manifestations.

Lastly. Try the results you get by the light of Reason. Maintain a level head and a clear judgment. Do not believe everything you are told, for though the great unseen world contains many a wise and discerning spirit, it also has in it the accumulation of human folly, vanity, and error; and this lies nearer to the surface than that which is wise and good. Distrust the free use of great names. Never for a moment abandon the use of your reason. Do not enter into a very solemn investigation in a spirit of idle curiosity or frivolity. Cultivate a reverent desire for what is pure, good and true. You will be repaid if you gain only a well-grounded conviction that there is a life after death, for which a pure and good life before death is the best and wisest preparation.

The following are a few books which will prove of service to the inquirer. They can be obtained by members from the Library of the London Spiritualist Alliance, or they may be purchased of the Psychological Press (see advt. pages), 16, Craven-street, Strand, W.C.:—*Animal Magnetism (Wm. Gregory)*; *Miracles and Modern Spiritualism (A. R. Wallace)*; *Researches in Spiritualism (W. Crookes)*; *From Matter to Spirit (De Morgan)*; *The Debateable Land (Dale Owen)*; *Footfalls on the Boundary of Another World (Dale Owen)*; *Planchette (Epes Sargent)*; *Proof Palpable of Immortality; The Scientific Basis of Spiritualism (Epes Sargent)*; *Report of the Dialectical Society*; *Zöllner's Transcendental Physics (Translated by C. C. Massey, 2nd Ed.)*; *Psychography ("M.A., Oxon.")*; *Spirit Identity ("M.A., Oxon.")*; *Higher Aspects of Spiritualism ("M.A., Oxon.")*; *Judge Edmonds, Letters and Tracts; Primitive Christianity and Spiritualism (Crowell)*; *New Basis of Belief in Immortality (Farmer)*; *Hints for the Evidences of Spiritualism (M.P.)*; *Theosophy and the Higher Life (Dr. G. Wylie)*; *Mechanism of Man, 2 vols. (Mr. Serjeant Cox)*; *Startling Facts in Modern Spiritualism (N. Wolfe)*; *Arcana of Spiritualism (Tuttle)*; *Spirit Teachings ("M.A., Oxon.")*; *The Use of Spiritualism (S. C. Hall)*; *Spiritualism at Home (Morell Theobald)*; *Pioneers of the Spiritual Reformation (Howitt Watts)*.

These are but a few volumes of a very extensive literature. Not counting pamphlets and tracts, upwards of 2,000 volumes on the phenomena and philosophy of Spiritualism have been published since its advent. It is therefore manifestly impossible to do more than allude to the fact here.

THE CASTLE OF CURES.

There is scarcely anything in the life we live to-day which would not astound our grandfathers, and if it could be possible for some old-time garrulous man—of the quaint vivacity and curiosity of (say) old Samuel Pepys of Charles the Second's time—to come back and look at the places he knew, he would certainly find them so transformed as to be as strange to him as the people who inhabit them. Everything, and almost everything, has changed. A man not only belonged to his parish, but he seemed to be tethered within it. A resident of London knew less of the remotest corners of the New Hebrides, or of the Balkans, or of the North Pole, than a man of the same rank and position in the days of the old-time London to Derbyshire as there is now in a voyage round the world. For evidence of that you only need to turn to the works of the dandies of the day, or to the letters of Izaak Walton in the "Compleat Angler." And the same story of the difficulties and dangers of travelling in those old times is again and again in the big books published under the auspices of the Master of the Rolls. It may indeed be said that there is no phase of life which has not changed immensely, and immensely for the better. Take, for instance, the altered conditions under which ailing people are now, as compared with the conditions obtaining in those old times. The barber was the general surgeon, and he was as much steeped in ignorance as his patients were steeped in superstition. The barber could not bleed, and for general ailments the people in rural districts had to trust the old woman whose knowledge of simples gave her a strange power over the minds of those about her. It is still possible to find some survivals of these old-fashioned women doctors; whether we can call them the "survival of the fittest," in Darwinian phrase, is questionable. Even in the best centres of population, in London and in the various capitals of Europe, medicine was for a long time professed and practised by charlatans. It was with a painful slowness that honest and earnest men obtained a knowledge of the human frame and of the effects of certain medicines in certain ailments. When once the medical profession freed itself from charlatanism, its progress in knowledge and the increase of the respect with which it was regarded were rapid indeed. Now, thanks to the high-mindedness of its members and their devotion to their art, no profession is more highly esteemed than that of medicine.

But it has happened that as science has advanced, the calling of medical men is reserved to mainly in cases where there is special disease. Most common ailments are treated and conquered without the advice of a physician being sought. The physician himself would be the first to admit the value of certain special medicines. These medicines are specialties which bear the names of their owners and manufacturers; and are known all the world over. If it were not for the facilities which modern journalism affords by means of advertising columns, the knowledge of these medicines would be restricted to the localities in which they were first prepared. It is not only journalism that has helped them. Their advertising in the papers would be no good in spending enormous sums in specific advertised could not be carried safely and continuously, and at a little cost, to the uttermost parts of the earth. Thus it happens that all the material triumphs which have been obtained by science and industry have gone far to make it possible for the proprietors of popular medicines to present their wares wherever there are human beings needing them. This far and wide distribution of enormous development of methods of production. We can refer to one case in point. We have all of us seen "Beecham's Pills" advertised. Dr. Beecham believes in advertising. His pills are good; their goodness is the foundation of his prosperous business; and it is only by his advertisements that he can spread the knowledge of years since he first began to use the formula which his wares were very soon appreciated. He had again and again increased his means of production, and extend and reorganise his methods of distribution. This increase was in all sections; in the home trade, the colonial trade, and the foreign trade. If you were down at St. Helens you would find what a big business that of Mr. Beecham's has become. He has just recently had to rebuild his premises, and no one of the most prominent of the objects in the Lancashire town is the new castellated building in which Mr. Beecham makes the millions of pills that are wanted of him. He thinks that this building may well be called the "Castle of Cures," because he says that the means enable him to rear this striking structure have come from the thousands of people in all parts of the world whose faith in Beecham's Pills is the growth of experience. The knowledge that Beecham's name is a name covers, keeps and increases the customers who everywhere have learned not only to look upon it as a household need, but as a requisite in travel. Advertised everywhere, Beecham's Pills have been tried everywhere, and the want for them everywhere has made it necessary for Mr. Beecham to build this "Castle of Cures" of his.

In connection with Teemer's visit to this country next month, and the following particulars will doubtless be of interest:—

HANLAN'S CONQUEROR.

"MONTE CRISTO" AND THE AMERICAN CHAMPION.—All who have read "Monte Cristo" and who has not? must remember the little mysterious casket formed of a single gem, which the count always carried with him, and the contents of which sent one to oblivion and after raised the poisoned body to life again. That casket was an imaginary one found in the traditions of the astrologer-chemists of the middle ages. But there is in America a young athlete who has done wonders on river and lake, who has his talisman in the form of a pain cure, to which he trusts as much as Monte Cristo did to his. This is the now champion sculler of America, John Teemer. When he was a lad in the iron mills of a small town (McLeesport, his birthplace), near Pittsburgh, he was accustomed to see how the men, when they got a bruise, sprain, or burn, made use of the same remedy, and how the faith they had in it was absolute. And he soon learned from experience that there was a reason for the absoluteness of their faith. He was a smart lad, his work developed his physique, and his play—for when away from the iron mills he was on the river—soon made him prominent among his mates. Old judges of sculling thought great things of him, and when he was only nineteen pitched him against the most famous oarsmen of the day. On one day he rowed in three three-mile heats. He won the first, in the second he was third, and in the third he came in first with the best time then on record. Two