

# Light:

*A Journal of Psychical, Occult, and Mystical Research.*

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

"LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!"—Goethe.

No. 292.—VOL. VI.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 7, 1886.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

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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)."

I have delayed too long, from causes beyond my control, to call attention to two new volumes of the "Biogen Series" which Professor Coues edits. No. 4 is entitled, *Can Matter Think? A Problem in Psychics*. The editor speaks of his anonymous contributor as "a wise and learned man, highly versed in physics and chemistry, as well as in the art of the medical profession, of extensive and varied information acquired in nearly all parts of the world, and a veteran Spiritualist in the proper sense of the term." His discussion of Huxley's assertion that "thought is a function of matter" is complete and striking as an argument. The editor's preface is not the least important part of the book. He introduces his anonymous contributor in some thirty pages of matter full of suggestiveness, and expressed in the racy and incisive language which we expect from Dr. Coues. It would be instructive to dwell on some of the hints given (e.g., p. 13) of man's complex constitution: of the forces by which phenomena familiar to us are effected: of materialisations and dematerialisations; but unfortunately on the eve of leaving London for some weeks, I have not the time to devote to a careful study of the work such as would qualify me to write critically on its contents.

The author thinks that "the recent organisation of the Society for Psychical Research in London must be regarded as a concession on the part of science to a pressure of spiritual environment that had become irresistible. . . . This new departure makes an epoch that is destined to become memorable. It cannot be without result, if even inquiry be stimulated to such extent that no man need fear to tell what he knows, or to give the public the benefit of any conclusions at which he may have arrived. . . . The question is, are they [the English and American Societies] putting to sea indeed? Thus far they have picked oakum to spin into theories, and walked the deck on tiptoe for fear of wetting their feet. I hope we [Dr. Coues and the author] may not have to withdraw from a position that is becoming stultifying to every true Spiritualist and every psychic scientist of experience." This extract from the letter which accompanied the author's MS. from London, sufficiently shows the attitude that he takes up. It is dated May, 1885. What has happened since has not tended to show that that attitude was a mistaken one.\*

\* See article "American Society for Psychical Research," on page 365 of current number of "LIGHT."—ED. "LIGHT."

The other volume of the series is entitled *Kuthumi; the True and Complete Economy of Human Life, based on the System of Theosophical Ethics*. The book, which consists of aphorisms or terse sayings on religious and ethical subjects, is rewritten by Dr. Coues from *The True and Complete Economy of Human Life*. From the 1770 edition, which contained two parts, the editor has adapted them into their present state. The aphorisms remind one of the style of the Proverbs of Solomon. They embody a pure morality. "Do well whilst thou livest: but regard not what is said of thy deeds. Content thyself with deserving praise, and thy posterity shall rejoice in hearing thy praises. As the butterfly that seeth not her own colours: as the jessamine that scenteth not the fragrance it casteth forth: so is the man that appeareth gay, and biddeth others take note of it. To what purpose, saith he, is my vesture of gold, or to what end is my table filled with dainties, if no eye gaze upon them, if the world know it not? But do thou give thy raiment to the naked and thy food to the hungry: so shalt thou be praised, and feel that thou deservest it." Much of this type is in the book. "Avoid not death, for this is a weakness: fear it not, for thou understandest not what it is. All that thou certainly knowest is that it putteth an end to thy sorrows."

My comment on Mr. Myers's speech at the Psychica Society's meeting was written after reading the report in "LIGHT," and without seeing the revised record in the *Journal*. I am glad to be corrected in any point when I am in error. But, as is perhaps inevitable, when two persons write about a matter respecting which one of them is in ignorance, misunderstandings will occur. Mr. Myers seems to assume that I have a series of cut and dried records of séances which I could easily denude of private allusions and names, and which might then be printed. I have no such material. My records of what occurred are embodied in my series of diaries, which, as I have said, contain matter that I am not able to put into anyone's hands. To disinter from their connection the accounts of such phenomena as Mr. Myers alludes to would be a most onerous, and, in my judgment, a profitless task. I selected what I thought best when I printed what Mr. Myers speaks of, my *Researches in the Physical Phenomena of Spiritualism*. When those papers are republished in a volume which is now in preparation, I shall have to rewrite some of the chapters, and I shall then refer to these records, bearing in mind what Mr. Myers desires. But I am bound to say that I am persuaded that I have something better to do than to spend any part of my overtaxed time in disinterring original accounts of phenomena which occurred long ago, and which were described with scrupulous accuracy, so far as I was able, at the time of their occurrence, in those papers in *Human Nature*. I should not help on what Mr. Myers wishes, and the burden of such profitless work is one that, with every respect for his opinion and wishes, I am not disposed to take up.

It is evident that we approach the subject from wholly different points of view. The Society for Psychical Research is seeking for evidence from the point of view of negation: perhaps to prove this to be "all clever conjuring": perhaps to reduce all to hallucination: at any

rate (for I will not even seem to impute motives) not from any standpoint of conviction as to the reality of what I, on the contrary, am absolutely persuaded of. I do not care one jot to produce evidence which I entertain no doubt would be treated as other evidence has been. We were not a circle that met for the purpose of getting scientific evidence under test conditions. That never entered into our minds. We were concerned far less with the phenomena than with the people who produced them, as evidence of what I, at least, regarded as infinitely more important—the teaching conveyed. I have recorded the phenomena from that point of view solely; and that is their interest to me, as I supposed it would be to my readers. But if the mass of published fact of a similar nature does not impress the Society for Psychical Research, I do not believe that anything I could write would be of service. Be that as it may, I must ask to be allowed to pursue my course in my own way. When the subject of materialisation is completed, I shall recur to my own personal experience in automatic writing, psychography, and kindred phenomena. My working power is not what it was, and the demands on my time are severe, but I do not despair of reaching my goal before the Society for Psychical Research has adequately dealt with the mass of evidence which now lies ready to its hand. The evidence, I repeat, is vast. I must decline the honour which Mr. Myers would put on me of bearing anything more than my own very small share of the burden of evidence. There is a wealth of fact ready for the Society for Psychical Research when it awakes to its opportunities.

I should like, for it is well to be precise in correcting error, to say that I have personally witnessed, and that repeatedly, all the phenomena I describe. It is true that certain phenomena occurred with greater intensity when I was entranced, but I believe I am right in saying that all occurred at various times while I was in a state to observe them carefully and repeatedly. Finally, I accept entirely Mr. Myers's disclaimer of any desire to be intrusive in his search for evidence that he thinks of value, and I desire to acknowledge the courtesy of his language respecting me. But, while doing so, I cannot but remember the consuming zeal with which examination and cross-examination have been conducted by leading members of the Society in respect of proffered evidence. I cannot pretend for a moment to volunteer myself for any such treatment. The very thought of it is terrible. Life would contain one more horror, and this would be enhanced by the certainty that the methods favoured by the Society would lead of a certainty to a mere verbal criticism of facts, the true significance of which are only "spiritually discerned." In so writing I am not desirous of blaming; I only state what I believe all Spiritualists will endorse. I wish with all my heart that the Society would accept the President's advice and investigate patiently with public mediums. Those members who have investigated have hitherto succeeded chiefly in prescribing, or at any rate in furnishing, conditions under which no phenomena have occurred. Would it not be well to consider how and why it is that a few only of the leading members of the Society for Psychical Research have failed to see what thousands of others have easily witnessed?

I hope and expect to leave town at once, and for a considerable time I fear I shall be out of the reach of correspondents. May I ask that any matters connected with Spiritualism not of pressing importance may be deferred till my return in October; and that any correspondents whose letters remain unanswered will accept my absence as a reasonable excuse? It is important that I should get as complete a rest as possible. Letters addressed to me at 16, Craven-street will be opened and attended to, as far as may be, in my absence.

## SOME PERIODS OF "CONTINUOUS OBSERVATION."

I have gone through most of the evidence for psychography through Mr. Eglinton's mediumship, published in "LIGHT" in 1884, 1885, and 1886. I intended to adduce all the cases of two classes: (1) in which the period of observation was exactly coincident with that of the sound as of writing (and consequent withdrawal of the slate for examination); (2) in which the period, though not exactly thus coincident, would still be limited to a very brief interval, after allowance made for any supposable error in the mental estimate of it by the witness. But I found that the citation of cases belonging to the second class would be too long a task, and that in the case of some statements it would require communication with the witnesses to confirm what is otherwise only a strong presumption from the language used. That is work which ought to be performed by the Literary Committee of the Psychical Research Society. I have, in the following, confined myself to cases of the first class, and from this I have had to exclude some apparent cases for inexactitude of statement on this point, though as to most of them I have little doubt that prompt communication with the witnesses would have removed the uncertainty in favour of inclusion. Other cases I have had to exclude because it is not expressly shown that the question was a new one, or because it might have been easily anticipated, if not suggested, as when the witness asks if a certain relative is present, and gets the answer "yes" or "no" merely.

If any one doubts whether such expressions as "immediately," "at once," "instantly," "in a moment," &c., are to be taken literally, all I can say is that the *onus* is upon that person to show that the witness did not mean what he or she said. No sceptic can claim the benefit of a *presumption* of inaccuracy in the use of plain words by a witness, though it is open to any one to seek to verify a subjective doubt on this point by cross-examination. But should the doubt nevertheless be persisted in without inquiry, I shall not strongly protest, provided only the doubter will be reasonable enough to admit that at any rate such expressions cannot stand for intervals of more than (say) fifteen seconds. To that extent, or even a little more, I am quite willing to give up the exact coincidence of the periods, not because I see the least obligation to give it up, but because the thing to be proved is not that the sound was that of the writing, but that the requisite period of "continuous observation" was exceedingly brief. Now a few seconds more or less may of course make a great difference in the mere possibility of performing certain operations within the given space of time, but it can hardly affect the question of the observer's vigilance.

I have cut out everything in the statements which does not belong to this particular point, though many of them present other features absolutely irreconcilable with the hypothesis of conjuring. For it must be understood that this list is not the collection of evidence which the Editor of "LIGHT" has announced as about to be published, but is one undertaken on my own account, with mere reference to the duration of the period of observation.

The dates are of the number of "LIGHT" in which the reports appeared.

The italics are mine unless the contrary is stated.

### COINCIDENCE OF THE PERIOD OF OBSERVATION WITH THE SOUND AS OF WRITING.

1. Dr. Wyld, April 26th, 1884. A circle of seven at a private house.

"The slates were new, and the property of Lady C., and Mr. Eglinton, as usual, began by holding a slate, on the surface of which was placed a crumb of slate-pencil, below and closely pressed against the under surface of the table. Then, on each one present, in rotation, asking that a name, a word, or certain information should be written, the request was *at once* and

audibly complied with. Eglinton then requested the lady at his right hand to unite with him in pressing the slate close against the under surface of the table, and again our requests for names and words were at once met by writings on the slate.\*

[It will be seen that by including these cases, which would be some fourteen in number, I have assumed that the usual and natural course of examining the slate after each answer, and before the next request, was adopted. But it would have been better to have had this expressly stated.]

## 2. "Convinced." May 24th, 1884.

"We had many curious tests, such as several numbers, and the word 'Victoria,' which we asked for, and which were at once written on the slate. I then asked for the words, 'Life is real,' and there immediately appeared, 'Life is real, life is earnest,' thus completing the first line of Longfellow's 'Psalm of Life.'"

[The "several numbers" obtained make the total number of experiments in this account indefinite. We will reckon them as only three.]

## 3. Mr. Cholmondeley Pennell, May 31st, 1884.

"In the case of the long message which was signed 'J. G.' I asked that the full name might be given. This was immediately done, whilst I was holding the two slates together above the table, between the medium and myself.

"On another occasion I asked that the figure 2 might be written, which was promptly done, the slates at that time being in full view and lying flat on the upper surface of the table, one exactly on the top of the other."

[I should not have included the second, as "promptly" might possibly not mean instantaneously, but that Mr. Pennell, in a later reference (in the same account) to this and the preceding experiments, says (italics his own): "The writing was immediately produced in the form of answers to impromptu demands or questions from myself."

## 4. Hon. Percy Wyndham, M.P. June 7th, 1884.

"I then asked what was the nature of her death, and the reply was immediately written 'sudden' (correct). I then asked if they would tell me the name of a relative of mine who had recently come to London. The reply was immediately written, 'Blunt.'†

S. J. D., July 12th, 1884.

[This is the gentleman referred to in Mr. Eglinton's letter in "LIGHT," July 31st, 1886, as an amateur slate-writing conjurer.]

"But the best test of all was when I put a crumb of pencil on the slate and then put another slate over that, holding the two slates together myself. I then asked if I should ever become a medium. No sooner was the question asked than I heard the pencil within begin to move; I heard the crossing of the t's and the formation of the capital letters, and in a few seconds three small raps were heard, and to the astonishment of all, when I removed the upper slate I found the following message written in a clear and good hand . . . . 'Dear Sir,—We perceive that you possess mediumistic powers of a very high order, but you have not always done what is right for their development,' &c. [The message was in 125 words.]

## 5. Mrs. H. C. Ramsay. July 26th, 1886.

"To prevent the idea of the slates having been chemically prepared, Mr. Eglinton suggested our desiring a word or a number to be written upon the slate, and, upon our [herself and her daughter] fixing upon a word, it was immediately written."

## 6. "L." August 30th, 1884.

"The communications were immediate . . . . A long letter signed with initials came from a relative (inquired for) with a Greek quotation. He had been devoted to Greek literature and art while on earth, and was a clergyman of the Church of England. The quotation was from Cor. xii.‡ The Greek was very plainly

\* I regret that I must exclude Dr. Wyld's third case, as the words "at once" are omitted, I suspect only by accident. "Mr. Eglinton then placed a slate on the upper surface of the table with a fragment of pencil, and covered this slate with another slate; for the third time our requests were complied with, and names, figures, and sentences were written as dictated by us."

† Mr. Wyndham adds: "My relative, Mr. Wilfred Blunt, had lately come to town, and had some days previously paid me a visit. He was not in my mind at the time. My question referred to a sister of mine who resides in Italy, who had just come to London, whom I had seen the day before."

‡ "Concerning spiritual things," &c., a rather stock quotation which I have seen in Greek on another slate, either Eglinton's or Slade's, I forget which.—C.C.M.

and beautifully written, and the accents were given." . . . . 'L.'s' previous acquaintance with Mr. Eglinton was confined to a five minutes' interview for an appointment."

## 7. J. Mair Rolph. January 10th, 1885.

"I then asked for some numbers, naming them, and the word 'Alice' to be written, which was done instantly."

[I may here say that in the case of questions put *vis à voce*, and the answer said to come instantly, &c., I read the account as meaning that the question was put *after* the slate was in position. This is the natural, and, as I know by experience, the usual course. It is, however, not quite invariable, as Mrs. Sidgwick has shown in the case of one of Mrs. Brietzke's questions, reported in the June number of the *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research*.]

## 8. Russian Investigators (four names signed). May 8th, 1886.

"Mr. Eglinton then invited M. Blagoi to give additional support to the slate, and a verbal question was asked, to which an immediate response was given, the rapid sound of writing being distinctly heard."

## 9. Major le M. Taylor. May 22nd, 1886.

"When the slate was thus in position my friend asked that his name might be written on it. This was at once done."

Now in the statements of these nine witnesses—an imperfect list, I believe, even of the cases published in "LIGHT" alone—we have some twenty-seven or twenty-eight distinct experiments all presenting at least a very strong *prima facie* case of strict coincidence between the period of observation and that of the sound of writing. As already remarked, I am at a loss to conceive how any one can read the other features in some of these statements without admitting that if the statements are honest, psychography is proved up to the hilt. I hope these points will be brought out in the promised publication. Meanwhile, on the point dealt with above, I have only to add that by extending the period of observation by a few minutes only, the foregoing list would be indefinitely enlarged. And I will end by giving a single specimen of evidence I have had to exclude from my list, as not coming within the exact coincidental limit.

"S. J. D." (an amateur conjurer in slate-writing, according to Mr. Eglinton) says in "LIGHT" of October 25th, 1884:—

"After sitting for upwards of an hour, we concluded that a most successful séance was at an end. The medium, however, continued under control, and taking a large slate, I placed it\* under the flap of the table, holding it closely there, and requested that, if possible, a lengthy message might be written, also hinting that if it were partly in Greek it would be very interesting.

"Scarcely a minute elapsed before the pencil began to move, and wrote with great rapidity.

"I looked under the table, holding the slate firmly with my hands. Mr. Eglinton's hand, which rested on my own, was perfectly quiescent.

"The writing had continued for about fifty seconds, when it paused, and commenced again in a different style. I remarked this at the time, and also called attention to the fact that the pencil was then at about the further end of the slate, some three inches from the bottom.

"Then again the writing paused, and proceeded with the same rapidity as before. The message as follows was what we found written on the slate, in a bold distinct writing, different from either 'Ernest's' or 'Joey's.'

"As will be seen, the pause which I noticed was merely the commencement of the Greek quotation.

"Not the least interesting part of the experiment was that when my ear was about an inch off the slate I was able to detect the variations of the writing.

"The Greek, on being submitted to an expert, was declared to be wonderfully exact in the formation of the letters, and thus, with such startling rapidity and correctness, the following message was written."

The message (eight lines, followed by two in Greek) is set out.

C.C.M.

IN CONSEQUENCE of a fire which completely burnt out the printing establishment of this paper, "LIGHT" is slightly behindhand in delivery this week. Subscribers will kindly accept this explanation of the delay.

\* Italics mine as before.—C.C.M.

## SEANCE-ROOM PERPLEXITIES.

(From the *Banner of Light*.)

[The following article is from the pen of a writer who has already contributed a very thoughtful book to the literature of Spiritualism, entitled "Materialised Apparitions," and which was recently noticed in these columns.—Ed.]

The intelligent investigator, who has carefully studied materialisation, and has become fully satisfied of the existence of objective forms temporarily assumed, no longer cares for bolts, locks, or test conditions, knowing that the mental atmosphere which requires these things is detrimental to the higher and more delicate manifestations. The appearance of these forms, coming out of invisible space, and departing in the same way, no longer challenges his credulity, or takes him by surprise; he has become familiar with them, and his attention is naturally drawn to the inquiry as to who and what they are.

In pursuing this department of inquiry, he not unfrequently finds himself adrift upon an unknown sea, without compass or chart to guide his course, and is fortunate if he is not sometimes thrown back upon the shore whence he started, bewildered and astonished at what he has encountered.

In order to escape from this bewilderment he is obliged to review his entire experience, and in so doing may find, in some of the investigations he has made, especially in séances where there is little or no order, deceptive things which have led him astray—things which create distrust and tend to weaken his confidence in the honesty of the medium.

As an illustration I will cite one of the many cases that have come under my observation: A gentleman who had visited materialising séances quite often, where what claimed to be a near and dear relative came to him, giving strong evidence of her identity, was afterwards led to attend another séance, under a different medium, where the same spirit, as he supposed, came to him, giving her name in full. He was delighted with what appeared to be additional evidence of her spiritual existence, and greeted her warmly. In the course of their interview, he alluded to meeting her at the other place. Indignantly she replied, "I did not go there; they are all frauds!"

He left the séance with feelings of disgust, remarking that he could find lying enough in this world without going to the other for it.

I remonstrated with him against forming a hasty conclusion, saying it was probable that the first indication of true materialisation was the production of the double of the medium, and that the manifestations in some séances did not go much beyond that point, everything depending upon the condition of the medium and the audience; that the form which came to him on that occasion was either the double of the medium or a direct personation, and he should seek for an explanation of the false statement in the character of the medium, whom he would be likely to find imbued with feelings of jealousy and hatred toward other mediums, and that the form which came to him, denying her presence elsewhere, simply voiced the unfortunate condition of the medium's mind. Instead of being disgusted he should feel thankful that he had, thus early in his investigations, encountered a phase of the phenomena which opened a wide field for study, and if rightly understood, would prevent him from forming conclusions which he would eventually have to abandon.

"These séances," he said, "claim to be materialisations; how, then, are we to know when we are imposed upon? Personation is a fraud when it pretends to be materialisation, doubly so when it is used to bear false witness against the neighbour."

"That is true," I replied, "and it is the cause of almost all the violence and disturbance exhibited in the séance. The average common-sense of the audience is shocked by seeing the medium come out, pretending to be the materialised spirit of friend or relative."

The fact that the medium *does* come out, more or less disguised, and not in her own dress, is evidence of the intent to deceive on the part of some one. Personation ought not to be tolerated, unless it is clearly stated at the time what it is.

Inasmuch as some mediums and their controls will not make this statement, so long as they can fill their séance-rooms with credulous people who are willing to accept everything as materialisation, it may be as well to point out some indications by which the sensible investigator may detect the true from the false.

In personation (sometimes erroneously called transfiguration), there is always the form of the medium, changed only in the dress and arrangement of the hair. Often there is an abundance of white lace wrapped around the head, so that, in the dim light of the séance-room, it is difficult, without close inspection, to detect the likeness. (If any one doubts this, let him try the experiment on some of his friends, in the same degree of light.) There is always the same general bearing of form, the same characteristic shake of the hand and arm, and, if you are at all sensitive to the magnetism of others, or possess even a limited appreciation of the size and shape of objects, you can readily tell when you have hold of the medium's hand. Such exhibitions are, at best, nothing but trance-mediumship of a very ordinary character, and, except in the change of dress, cannot be said to possess any claim to materialisation, and should be for ever discarded from the séance-room where that phenomenon is expected to occur.

In well-ordered séances, where there is an intelligent manager, personation seldom occurs, and there is none of that silly talk indicative of a low order of spirits; but in others, personation is the rule rather than the exception; and, whether the medium is entranced or not, the occasion is often used to disparage other mediums. In the case cited above, the form and the medium were in accord, and to all intents and purposes one and the same person.

This is only one of the many obstacles strewn along the path of the seeker after spiritual light. The question naturally arises, How far are we justified in encouraging, by our presence or otherwise, these mediums and their controls?—for such manifestations are totally devoid of the higher elements of materialisation. While it may be our duty to treat them kindly, still, if they will not learn and practise the common civilities of life, it may be far wiser, in regard to our own spiritual welfare, as well as the good of society, to let them alone severely.

The character of the séance depends much upon the mental and moral conditions of the audience, and we are to blame if we do not hold it up to the highest expression of life, where love and affection are ever the surest evidence of a divine origin. It does not avail with those who believe in the return of spirits that the séance-room is the theatre of strong manifestations; the mental and moral character alone determines its value.

There is no more reason that we should consort with ignorant and distasteful spirits than with the same class in the flesh, and it becomes an important question, how far the moral taint is inherent in the returning spirit, or is taken on in passing through the atmosphere of the medium.

The evidence thus far obtained would seem to settle the fact that the more refined the medium, with the audience in accord, the purer and more elevated the manifestations.

Whether it be medium or audience, those who trail the séance in the dust, poisoning it with their low impulses, will, in the end, pay the utmost penalty for their unwisdom; for the moment they give way to such tendencies they open wide the door for kindred spirits to blend with their mistaken desires. Let them beware how they trifle with an unseen power whose subtle influence may not only mar their lives here, but throw its baneful shadow far into the future.

Winchester, Mass.

E. A. BRACKETT.

## MARY F. DAVIS.

From the *Religio-Philosophical Journal* we learn with deep regret that on Sunday, July 18th, the spirit of Mary Fenn Davis bade adieu to its mortal form and passed to the higher life from Orange, New Jersey. "In the hearts of thousands Mrs. Davis holds a place which will always be warm. The memory of her sweet, patient face and gentle speech will ever be fresh in the minds of these friends. May the unspeakable agonies of a crushed heart and all the physical suffering of the last illness be blotted out of her remembrance, to the end that she may take up her life-work for humanity where she was forced to lay it down through the culmination of a mistake made thirty years ago. Out of her trials may all good women gain new strength to battle with error, passion, ignorance, and hereditary idiosyncrasies, which have beset the path of the reformer ever since man walked the earth."

A biographical sketch of this talented woman will appear in a later number of the *Journal*, written by her loyal and steadfast friend, Mrs. Hester M. Poole, from which we hope to give a few extracts.

## 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.]

## An Explanation.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Mrs. Sidgwick has made remarks on a séance of mine for slate-writing reported to the Society for Psychical Research, and although I have replied to those remarks in the *Journal*, it will not be seen by the general receiver till another month has passed, and these remarks of Mrs. Sidgwick's allowed to rest so long on the minds of persons not accustomed to think for themselves, either from laziness or other causes, are calculated to do much harm. The *Journal* is for private use only, but I know how far from home the said *Journal* goes, and I am anxious that I should not be misrepresented.

I now send you almost exactly the letter I have sent to the Society for Psychical Research, and I shall be very grateful if you can find a corner for it.—Yours obediently,

H. K. BRIETZCKE.

To the Editor of the "JOURNAL OF THE SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH."

SIR,—May I be permitted to reply in your *Journal* to some remarks of Mrs. Sidgwick's about my reports on slate-writing séances? In regard to the words, "and the same slate was placed as before," after my request for the figure 4, &c., I beg to state when I say "in a moment," I mean in a moment—that is to say, the slate was hardly in position before the writing was heard. I am fully aware the same slate was used, for I had almost all the writing done on purpose on the three new *uncleaned* (I think wrongly reported by you as *cleaned*) slates—that Eglinton had not touched till I held them with him.

As I wanted these particular slates used, they were placed and replaced. "Cat" and 4. Professor Barrett had been refused, and these were two of the words I asked and received. I state bare, unvarnished facts, and say what I mean, so trust nothing that I do not mean will be put into my mouth. I am accustomed to watch and study nature, and claim sound common sense. If I said "I watched Amœbæ change form, and that in one case, so many times in a minute," I should not be supposed to mean five minutes or any other space of time, but the minute I said; so I go back to the old case;—if I say "a moment" or "instantly," I mean it and stick to it.—Yours obediently,

H. K. BRIETZCKE.

## The Issue between the Society for Psychical Research and Spiritualism.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—In a note appended to Mr. F. W. Myers' letter of this week you say, "That so long as Spiritualists are not assured that any evidence which they may possess will not, if sent to the Society for Psychical Research, be entrusted to certain persons who have, by reason of the temper and method in which they have approached the investigation, rendered it impossible for any one with the slightest shred of self-respect to place themselves in communication with a society which has not disavowed such temper and methods, there is no chance whatever of Mr. Myers' request being complied with." Exactly. As you say, "Spiritualists have had enough of such cases," and I for one am not concerned to have my own experiences treated upon the "broom-stick" or other far-fetched theory, improvised as I conceive, more for the purpose of trying to show when the unreliability comes in than for the elucidation of truth, unpalatable though it may chance to be.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

STANHOPE T. SPEER.

Rock Cottage, Ventnor, Isle of Wight,  
August 3rd, 1886.

## Psychography—A Humble Suggestion.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—Much has been said at different times in your columns about the unhappy pigheadedness of those who decline to accept the testimony of others merely because it happens to conflict with their own experience. Will you permit me, in my own case at least, to wipe out this sorely-felt reproach? I am placed in a position to do so by the very interesting paper of Baron Carl du Prel. In this paper he formulates the conditions under which

alone conjuring is logically excluded as an explanation of so-called Psychography. They are as follows:—

1. The experiment must take place in the light.
2. The slates shall not be put under the table.
3. The medium must not meddle with the slates brought by the experimenters.
4. Only when the person experimenting has finished with his preliminaries the medium is to be allowed to place his hand upon the closed slates lying upon the table.
5. And now the experimenter may put a short precise question.
6. When the audible writing is finished, the slates must be opened by the experimenter himself.

I think these conditions most admirably formulated (allowing for the Spiritualistic English), and if, under these conditions, Mr. Eglinton is able to produce the phenomenon of Psychography to the satisfaction of Professor Barrett, Mr. F. W. H. Myers, Mr. Gurney, or Mr. Frank Podmore, I shall be as satisfied that the results are genuine as if I had witnessed them myself. I regard the gentlemen whom (without their cognisance) I have thus ventured to name as examples of the "level head" (hebdomadally recommended in your columns for maintenance), which alone can command the confidence of those who, like myself, have been cruelly denied the personal enjoyment of the Nottingham-place miracle.—Faithfully yours,

A. EUBULE-EVANS.

## THE "BANNER OF LIGHT" FREE CIRCLE MESSAGES.

The last number of our Boston contemporary contains the following paragraph:—

"Attention is called to the earnest endorsement which William Foster, jun., of Providence, R. I., bestows upon the work of the *Banner* Message Department, in the concluding paragraph of his verification of the communication of O. P. Osborn, which we desire London 'LIGHT' to copy."

Without endorsing all that is given at the *Banner* Circles we may point out that "LIGHT" has never questioned the *bona fides* of the medium through whom these messages are given. A distinction is necessary between editorial articles and the correspondence which from time to time appears in our columns. However, we hasten to comply with the *Banner's* request, and append the paragraph alluded to. We may mention that it is only one of many similar testimonies which have lately appeared in our contemporary:—

"Now a word vindictory of the Free Circle and its communications. The establishment of the Circle was a happy thought, and well has it performed its mission. Through it thousands have come to bear testimony to the truths of spirit-communion and bear words of cheer and greeting to friends left on the mortal side of life. Occasionally some captious, carping person has had his word of doubt, or sneer, or a denial of the verity of the communications, but it has been a vain attempt at impeachment. A study of the vast body of these communications, with an honest, candid, discriminating mind, must result in an acknowledgment of their origin in a source independent of the medium through whom they were uttered. No single mind, however erudite or gifted, could give such a variety, covering so many shades of thought and expression, to say nothing of the facts, names, dates, incidents and particularities connected with the individual purporting to be communicating. Then, again, the localities of these, scattered over the entire earth, show that no medium could group so many particulars, all focalising at a point, and that point absolute truth. That this has been done is sure, and, all things considered and balanced, the corollary is that the communications can come only from the spirit-side of life.

"Providence, R. I., July 5th, 1886." "WM. FOSTER, JUN."

THE following story lately appeared in a native Japanese paper:—"A few nights since a Jinrikisha man, whose stand was close by the entrance to a temple in the vicinity of Kawasaki (Osaka), was hired by a woman to take her to a house in the village. After starting, the Jinrikisha man says, he was astonished at the lightness of his fare and repeatedly turned round to see if she had not alighted. Each time, however, he distinctly saw her, and in due course they arrived at the house he had been hired to take her to. Here she got out and at once entered the premises, but, as she had not paid her fare, he, after waiting a few minutes, knocked at the door. His summons was answered by the master of the house, to whom he applied for payment of the amount agreed upon (10 sen), when to his astonishment he was told that he had made a mistake, and that no one had lately entered the house. The Jinrikisha man, however, was not to be put off, and insisted that he had brought a woman who had just entered the premises without paying her fare. To this the master replied that his statement could not be correct, as there was no woman living on the premises, his wife having died a few days previous. The Jinrikisha man, however, would not be convinced; so a child, four years old, who was nursing the deceased's baby, was called and stated that she had just seen her mother enter the house and nurse the baby. The husband was convinced that his deceased wife had paid a visit to the children, and paid the man his fare."—From a letter of the Rev. G. H. Pole to the *Church Missionary Gleaner*.



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

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The Annual Subscription for "LIGHT," post free to any address within the United Kingdom, or to places comprised within the Postal Union, including all parts of Europe, the United States, and British North America, is 10s. 10d. per annum, forwarded to our office in advance.

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*Light* :

SATURDAY, AUGUST 7TH, 1886.

### A DISCOVERY, AND WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

We give below a full reprint of certain reports of sittings with Mr. Eglinton, which appeared in "LIGHT" of June 12th and October 25th, 1884, and which were signed by the initials "S. J. D." We bespeak a careful perusal of these reports, that the facts we are about to refer to may be appreciated.

At the meeting of the Psychical Research Society last May, Mrs. Sidgwick read a paper, in the course of which she cited some conjuring experiments in slate-writing at which she had been present, with a view of showing how easily observation might be deceived, and of raising the inference that the evidence for psychography is worthless. At a subsequent meeting Mr. F. Podmore described similar experiments with an amateur conjuror, whom we believe we are right in identifying with the one referred to by Mrs. Sidgwick. Neither that lady nor Mr. Podmore was at liberty to disclose the name of the person. No mention or hint was afforded by either that this amateur conjurer had ever sat with Mr. Eglinton, still less that he had had many sittings with him, resulting in the most perfect conviction that the phenomenon of psychography was genuine, and in published reports giving full details of some of the experiments on which that conviction was founded. From the following circumstances our readers will judge whether we are justified in believing that this is, nevertheless, the simple fact.

Mr. Eglinton was in Russia at the time when Mrs. Sidgwick's paper was read, but on his return the name of "S. J. D." (among others) was suggested to him as that of the amateur conjurer referred to. He thereupon wrote to "S. J. D.," who had, at the sittings aforesaid, professed to him a special skill in simulating the slate-writing phenomena under conjurer's conditions—in terms similar to those of the letter he had before addressed to Dr. Herschell on the same subject. He received the following reply:

Dear Mr. Eglinton,—I have received your letter of the 10th (June) inst., which, owing to my absence from home on a short holiday trip, has not been answered before. With regard to your question, it is quite untrue that I have ever instructed any one in the *modus operandi* of your slate-writing. Hoping your health is better for your tour in Russia, believe me, yours very truly, S. J. D.—

This letter, though not unfriendly in terms, was an evident evasion of the question, and the phrase, "instructed any one in the *modus operandi* of your slate-writing," was not, supposing it to have been carefully chosen, exactly what might have been expected from the author of "S. J. D.'s" published reports. As it would have been perfectly easy for

"S. J. D." to have replied simply that he was not the person referred to by Mrs. Sidgwick, were that the case, the evasion led naturally to the conclusion that he was.

As it seemed important that the public should be in full possession of the facts, and as there had evidently been a suppression of them somewhere, we addressed a letter to "S. J. D.," calling his attention to the suggestion that he was the person referred to by Mrs. Sidgwick, enclosing the letter from Mr. Eglinton which appeared in this paper last week (referring to the published reports from "S. J. D." of his sittings with Mr. Eglinton), and urging "S. J. D." to do Mr. Eglinton justice by a full disclosure of the facts. Allusion was also made to the editorial right and duty, in certain circumstances, of disclosing the name of a correspondent when that has been at request withheld from publication in the first instance, but has been communicated to the editor "as a guarantee of good faith." To that letter we have received the following reply, which, as we expressly informed "S. J. D." that the correspondence would be published if thought necessary, we now give:—

SIR,—Your letter of the 31st ult., duly to hand. With regard to your insinuations as to my having given séances to a well-known scientific person with a view to discrediting certain alleged psychical phenomena, I must remind you that I have already answered a similar letter to yours that I received from another quarter, and of this fact I doubt not you are cognisant.

I am, therefore, greatly surprised you should have thought fit to trouble me further.

I most certainly decline to give any details with regard to a matter that does not directly interest myself.

Respecting the accounts mentioned by you as having appeared in "LIGHT," July 12th and October 25th, 1884, under my initials, I think it right to inform you that since certain events have been brought to my notice, the Spiritualistic theory I entertained at the time of witnessing these séances has been considerably modified.—Yours, &c.,

August 1st, 1886.

S. J. D.—

If we do not at once publish the full signature to the above letter, it is not because in our opinion the circumstances do not justify our doing so, but because our present purpose does not require it, our concern being not, in the first place, with "S. J. D.," but with others. The identity of "S. J. D.," with the amateur conjurer referred to by Mrs. Sidgwick—and we believe by Mr. F. Podmore—is no longer doubtful, and that is the fact with which we have now to deal.

We think that not our readers alone, but the whole impartial public, would fully agree with the concluding sentence in Mr. Eglinton's letter last week: "Nor, indeed, would any candid person, with knowledge of the conjurer's real views and experience, wish to make an adverse use of such (conjurer's) performances, while keeping the public in ignorance of circumstances so essential to be known." And the questions we have to ask—and we can scarcely suppose that an answer will be refused—are: Was Mrs. Sidgwick, or was Mr. F. Podmore aware of "S. J. D.'s" antecedents as an investigator with Mr. Eglinton, when she or he put forward these conjuring experiments with the aim of disparaging the evidence for psychography? Did they or either of them know of those reports of "S. J. D." in "LIGHT"? Did they ask "S. J. D." if he could explain his own evidence? Did they, with knowledge of that evidence, and of that publicly declared conviction, by their amateur conjurer, after full and long investigation, that the phenomena were genuine, think that those were facts which could influence no one's judgment, and which could fairly be suppressed?

Looking at the high estimation in which those to whom we are compelled to address these questions are held, we can hardly doubt what the answer will be. We have to differ seriously from Mrs. Sidgwick; we do not regard her

as so exempt from any sort of prejudice as her friends believe her to be, but of such a want of candour and upright dealing with the public she aims at instructing as would be implied by the knowing suppression of such facts in such a connection, we should never have supposed, and do not now suppose her capable, though we have to recognise the facts which make it imperative to ask for a formal denial.

The alternative might be hardly less painful, were the anonymous "S. J. D." as well known to the public which concerns itself with these subjects as is Mrs. Sidgwick. That alternative is that he either concealed altogether from Mrs. Sidgwick his past experience with Mr. Eglinton, or slighted it, without informing her of the particular evidence he had personally obtained, and of the decided conclusion at which he had arrived upon it. Were that so, it would be easy to see why, when he could no longer keep himself in the background, protected by anonymity and by the scrupulous good faith of misled friends, he might find himself compelled to take up the position adopted in his letter to us. He must throw over his former conviction, without attempting to explain his former evidence. He must lay his change of opinion upon a new knowledge of "certain events"—presumably, those recently republished by Mrs. Sidgwick, and concerning (for what they may be worth), not the evidence of Mr. Eglinton's psychographic mediumship, but some former antecedents—as if these could in the least affect the value of such experiences as he has himself described! And even thus he appears to guard himself by speaking of the "Spiritualistic theory," though we must presume him to be aware that it is not the only alternative to conjuring entertained by investigators. Nor does he suggest that he, the skilled conjurer, took the obvious course, if doubts of his own experience had ever been really excited, of again visiting Mr. Eglinton to verify or remove them. "It is quite untrue that I have instructed anyone in the *modus operandi* of your slate-writing," he says now to Mr. Eglinton. Is that the straightforward answer of a man whose own performances had been publicly cited, with suppression of his name, to induce an impression that was false in fact?

"S. J. D." is, we believe, a very young man, and it is apparent from his own reports in "LIGHT" that he is of a very mediumistic temperament. We do not for a moment suggest that that "development of his powers," which is spoken of in one of the communications he received through Mr. Eglinton, proceeded so far as to enable him to pass off genuine psychography for conjuring. The experiments described by Mrs. Sidgwick and Mr. Podmore certainly require no such explanation. But he may well have been led to entertain a strong ambition to emulate Mr. Eglinton's results, a state of mind which may have been originally responsible for subsequent misleading occurrences. We have no wish, by publication of his name, to do him any possible injury, or to expose him to unnecessary annoyance. We rather trust that his own returning sense of justice will yet lead him to help in removing misapprehensions from which truth and innocence might suffer.

We must add that he is an Associate of the Society for Psychical Research, a fact which imposes upon him a duty to that Society, and which it concerns the Society to know.

We now append the communications of "S. J. D." to which we have referred, and which appeared respectively in "LIGHT" for July 12th and October 25th, 1884.

#### Some Incidents and Thoughts Experienced by an Inquirer.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—It is with pleasure I record a few observations on my investigations of Spiritualism. If anyone had told me six months ago that a time would come when I should be forced to acknow-

ledge a belief in what was popularly and generally known by the name of Spiritualism, I should have treated my informant with contempt, for until a short time back I had a vague notion, like a great many others, that it principally consisted of table-turning, chair-dancing, and other frivolous and trifling manifestations. I did not then know the names of Crookes, Wallace, and Varley, and many other scientific men in connection with psychological research, for the fact was I took no interest whatever in the same, never having had it put before me in its true light. However, a few months ago, during a sojourn in the high Alps of Switzerland, I was startled one night by the unexpected and unsought-for manifestation of a dear friend, who had but left this world a few weeks before. There is no need for me to reproduce the account of it here, as it would but little concern the general reader, but it was a curious fact that the visitation was corroborated by another friend, who slept in a neighbouring room. From that time I have taken an interest in Modern Spiritualism. A few months ago I came across a stray copy of "LIGHT," and was much taken by an article entitled "Advice to Inquirers," by "M. A. (Oxon.)." On the first opportunity I followed the advice so clearly and well set down. Unfortunately, things did not seem to go right, for, instead of communications as I had looked for, I found myself uncontrollably seized and moved about in the most absurd manner; nevertheless, I saw quite enough to convince me that there was at our sittings great force present. Sometimes it became impossible for me to touch the table without having my hands flung off by the unseen force; at other times I was convulsed in the manner so peculiar to sensitive mediums. I was very astonished at these things, especially as none of the other sitters were so affected, and I had always prided myself on having the reverse of a nervous temperament. I have witnessed death and suffering in the most horrible forms, yet never lost for an instant complete control of my nerves, and on more than one occasion I have been in great personal danger of my own life and yet never experienced fear. So my readers can well understand my astonishment at what happened in my own private family circle. After trying many times with a like result, I began to despair of the experiments, and, had it not been for the kind and courteous letters I received from the gentleman so well-known by his signature of "M. A. (Oxon.)," I fear I should have given up further proceedings. Having made the acquaintance of Mr. Eglinton, I introduced to him a friend of mine, and we agreed to try a daylight séance on Monday, June 30th. This was a red-letter day for me, for I obtained for the first time pleasant communication with—

"The great intelligences fair,  
That range above our mortal state,"

to quote the words of our poet Tennyson. To those persons who have given any time at all to the study of psychological subjects the idea of trickery or juggling in slate-writing communications is quite out of the question, but to those of my readers who do not know much of the subject, I give the conditions under which we obtained the messages. I procured two ordinary slates at a stationer's shop, and these did not leave my possession during the séance. At first we obtained messages by simply putting a piece of slate-pencil on one slate and holding the slate on the table. After a while the force became stronger, and messages with various signatures and styles of writing were received. But the best test of all was when I put a crumb of pencil on the slate and then put another slate over that; holding the two slates together myself, I then asked if I should ever become a medium. No sooner was the question asked than I heard the pencil within begin to move; I heard the crossing of the t's and the formation of the capital letters, and in a few seconds three small raps were heard, and to the astonishment of all, when I removed the upper slate I found the following message written in a clear and good hand. I was particular to notice that the small crumb of pencil was nearly worn out, and was left at the very end of the flourish of the signature. Thus it was written:—

DEAR SIR,—We perceive that you possess mediumistic powers of very high order, but you have not always done what is right for their development. It is necessary that you should form a circle of friends, those who are in sympathy with you in your desire to cultivate the power given you, and with them enter upon your development, but not too often. The uncomfortable seizures which sometimes possess you are but a prelude to other and stronger manifestations, and really come from someone who is desirous of manifesting to you, but who does not know the method of doing so. We shall take great interest in helping you, and you may be assured of our presence whenever we can get the power.

ERNEST.

Now, I ask the thinking reader how could a communication like the above be written in about forty seconds, and how could any human being have done it by trickery when in broad daylight I had both slates held firmly together in my own hands, and how could the medium have known about the seizures which occurred in the privacy of my own family circle, and

of which I had not told him? I may mention that Mr. Eglinton was so affected by convulsive seizures during the latter part of the séance that I wished to give it up, but he begged us to continue, as he was as much interested as we were. However, after about three-quarters of an hour of constant communication, we were informed by the intelligences that the power was nearly exhausted, and the messages became difficult to decipher, and at last we were told by raps they could write no more, and even these became fainter and fainter. I must say Mr. Eglinton appeared somewhat exhausted, and as I had also lent much power I felt I had done enough, specially as one of my unseen friends had advised me in a written message that I was not sufficiently physically strong to try too severe experiments. I could give numerous other messages here, but as they were mostly of a private nature, and only interesting to myself and friends, I shall not do so. If in this world where we hear so much about Materialism and the like, we find that we are surrounded by great and unseen intelligences, which our philosophers cannot successfully explain nor our scientific men teach us about, and which no sensible man who has thoroughly investigated the subject can doubt, do they not teach us to look higher than the mere quibbles and controversies of our daily life, that we may more and more realise the infinite workings of the one Great Unseen yet ever-present power? But at the same time I am quite prepared to admit that if we pursue the investigations otherwise than as our conscience tells us to be right, we are not only likely to bring misery on ourselves, but also on those we come in contact with. We are so surrounded by the many ceremonies and formalities of this life that it is well-nigh impossible for us to realise what we really are in ourselves, and it is not until we strive to look to higher things that we can ever hope to solve the problem of life. To those of my readers who have not had even the small experience I have had, I cannot too earnestly advise them to follow implicitly the words of a well-known writer: "Try the results you get by the light of Reason. Maintain a level head and a clear judgment," and I may add, approach the subject with the reverence it deserves.

By following these directions, I doubt not you will become wiser and better for the investigation. Sceptical friends may tell you Spiritualism has never done any good in the world and never will, but these persons are ignorant of the subject, and show themselves so by such remarks. And as for some of those so-called "learned" men who will try and teach you that man has no further existence after death, and that there is no such thing as God, and who, in their folly and conceit, try to argue out their theory,—to these persons turn a deaf ear, for by a right study of Spiritualism you will soon learn how true are these words of Schiller:—

"A God there is, over space, over time,  
While the human will rocks like a reed to and fro,  
Lives the Will of the Holy—a purpose sublime,  
A thought woven over creation below;  
Changing and shifting the all we inherit,  
But changeless through all One Immutable Spirit!"

And now I must bring my letter to a close. I fear that to many readers who have been investigating Spiritual phenomena, my experiences seem as nothing beside the more remarkable manifestations they have witnessed. Yet I have penned this in the hope that it may show those unacquainted with the subject what may be gained by inquiry in a very short time.—Yours truly,  
S. J. D.

#### An Interesting Seance with Mr. W. Eglinton.

By S. J. D.\*

The Psychography produced through the mediumship of Mr. W. Eglinton, is now so well authenticated to all readers of "LIGHT," that I refrain from giving minute details of a most interesting séance I had with that gentleman, on the afternoon of October 9th.

I had previously called on Mr. Eglinton on the afternoon of October 8th, accompanied by an old friend, designated Mr. M.

We sat for nearly two hours, hoping Ernest, or his kindred companions, would give us the manifestations we so patiently sought, but in vain.

At two o'clock on Thursday (the next day) we again met, I being accompanied on that occasion also by another friend.

We sat at usual. Questions, often beyond the knowledge of the medium, were asked, and the answers received on a small folding slate I had brought for the purpose.

At my request answers were given in alternate colours of crayon previously placed between the slates by my own hand.

Not to test Mr. Eglinton's honesty (for of that all who know him are assured), but for the purpose of rendering the experiments more complete, I put in a small grain of pencil, the tip of which I had

previously prepared by immersing it in ink. With this piece of pencil between two slates of my own bringing, I requested the intelligences to write.

They immediately did so, and on removing the slate I found the inked grain of pencil worn quite away at the faceted point, thus clearly showing that it was the same piece I had inserted that had been used.

Between the famous slate presented to Mr. Eglinton by a distinguished personage, with a strong Brahma lock securely fastened by myself, we obtained messages in the well-known handwriting of Joey.

After sitting for upwards of an hour, we concluded that a most successful séance was at an end. The medium, however, continued under control, and taking a large slate, after carefully cleaning it, I placed it under the flap of the table, holding it closely there, and requested that, if possible, a lengthy message might be written, also hinting that if it were partly in Greek it would be very interesting.

Scarcely a minute elapsed before the pencil began to move, and wrote with great rapidity.

I looked under the table, holding the slate firmly with my hands. Mr. Eglinton's hand, which rested on mine, was perfectly quiescent.

The writing had continued for about fifty seconds, when it paused, and commenced again in a different style. I remarked this at the time, and also called attention to the fact that the pencil was then at about the further end of the slate, some three inches from the bottom.

Then again the writing paused, and proceeded with the same rapidity as before. The message as follows was what we found written on the slate, in a bold, distinct writing, different from either Ernest's or Joey's.

As will be seen, the pause that I noticed was merely the commencement of the Greek quotation.

Not the least interesting part of this experiment was that when my ear was about an inch off the slate I was able to detect the variations of the writing.

The Greek, on being submitted to an expert, was declared to be wonderfully exact in the formation of the letters, and thus, with such startling rapidity and correctness, the following message was written:—

"On a recent occasion we had an opportunity of giving you absolute and undeniable proof of our ability to manifest ourselves. Most thinkers who, like yourself, dare to investigate any new truth, can always find comfort in the knowledge obtained, and especially so, sir, is it in your case, for by our advice and the guidance of Ernest you have developed your own powers to an appreciable extent.

"Do not be too anxious to make converts, or worry over sceptics. As the Lord said:

"Ἀφετε αὐτοὺς. ὁδηγοὶ εἰσι τυφλοὶ τυφλῶν τυφλὸς δὲ τυφλὸν ἐὰν ὁδηγῇ ἀμφοτέροι εἰς βάθυνον πεισύνται."

"They must seek to find the light as you have done.

"Be assured we shall continue to aid you all we can.

"J. S."

Who my unseen communicant, "J. S.," was, I have yet to learn, but he certainly appears to have taken an interest in my welfare.

Amongst Spiritualists, slate-writing, through Mr. Eglinton, now seems to have become almost an every-day phenomenon; yet to view it must always fill one with astonishment and wonder.

The sentences written so rapidly and so full of pith and shrewd observation always strike even the most sluggish inquirers with amazement.

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* (Eppe Sargent); *Proof Palpable of Immortality*; *The Scientific Basis of Spiritualism* (Eppe Sargent); *Report of the Dialectical Society*; *Zöllner's Transcendental Physics* (Translated by C. C. Massey, 2nd Edit.); *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. Wyld); *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 writer, for family reasons, does not wish his name published. It has, however, been sent to us as a guarantee of good faith.



## PSYCHICAL RESEARCH IN AMERICA.

The pseudo-scientific attitude of certain English Psychical Researchers (P) seems to have found imitators on the other side of the Atlantic. From the last number of the *Religio-Philosophical Journal* we learn that the methods of, and the spirit in which the American Society for Psychical Research approach the question of psychical science generally, are no more to be commended than the tactics of the sister Society in England.

In the course of the article before us appears the following strongly condemnatory passage, the true significance of which we shall point out presently. The writer says of the American Society for Psychical Research:—

"We suspect your motives as much as we condemn your methods; and we are not disposed at present to condone your sins. We challenge your sincerity. We do not think that you are in earnest in this matter. We gravely doubt that you do not consider yourselves much wiser than others are, while we observe in your operations no trace of that humility which is the touchstone of wisdom. We question that your learned body, as an organisation, either expects or desires spiritual enlightenment, or indeed is either ready or willing to receive spiritual instruction, or in fine is able to understand the simplest phenomena of Spiritualism. Our amazement would be—had we not long since given over wonder at any possible exhibition of human vanity and human ignorance, had we not learned to regard with indifference the curse of the commonplace, withholding contempt even from that which is contemptible—our amazement would be that among your number not one human soul has been found to flash out in flaming indignation at the publication of your proceedings.

"You are pleased to style yourselves 'The American Society for Psychical Research.' We say to you, gentlemen, that being what you are, your very name is an insult to psychic science, and would be, were it known, a just cause of offence to hundreds of thousands who have reached that goal toward which you have resolutely turned your backs. In discussing the charges which we bring against you, we shall take occasion to show you that you are not in the line of psychic evolution, but surely tending in the opposite direction.

"That you know nothing of psychic science is obvious from the composition of your society. Not that you have not two or three members whom we know to be profound psychists, more or less prominently identified with Spiritualism, and well versed in its phenomena.\* But it is that these gentlemen are almost necessarily silent in your midst. They are not your recognised leaders. You do not look to them for advice and counsel and instruction.

"There are thousands of persons all about you who are competent to instruct you in that which you have yet to learn—the first principles—the very rudiments of psychic science, the alphabet of psychic research. These people, gentlemen, are the entire body of enlightened, progressive Spiritualists of America, whom you call cranks."

The entire article, which is over two columns in length, is entitled "A Critique of Pure Unreason: Being the Theosophical Society's First Indictment of the 'American Society for Psychical Research,'" and is presumed written by, but at any rate published with the sanction of, Professor Eliot Coues, inasmuch as some time since an announcement was made that Professor Coues would watch and criticise the proceedings of the American Society for Psychical Research on behalf of the Theosophical Society.

If this is the case Professor Coues' remarks are worthy of the weightiest consideration, and there can be no question that the indictment is largely correct; indeed we gather from another incontestably reliable source that it is unfortunately only too true.

\* [The writer probably refers to Professor William James, of Harvard, and the Rev. Minot J. Savage, both of whom are candid men and fair investigators. The great mistake was putting Professor Simon Newcombe in as president of the Society after his public avowal of antagonism to the spirit hypothesis, and even his denial of facts.—Ed. of "LIGHT."]

## HYPNOTISM AS A HEALING AGENT.

ABSTRACT OF A PAPER READ BEFORE THE NEW YORK ANTHROPOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

By M. L. HOLBROOK, M.D., Editor of the *Herald of Health*.

If you will look in Dunglison's *Medical Dictionary* for a definition of hypnotism, you will be referred to mesmerism, and if you then turn to the word mesmerism you will be referred to animal magnetism; under this term you will read that "Highly impressible persons can be thrown into a kind of hysteric sleep and somnambulism, designated by Mr. Braid as hypnotism and nervous sleep, sometimes called Braidism; further than this the magnetiser cannot reach. It is a mode of action on the nerves through the senses." Other authors define hypnotism to be sleep produced by animal magnetism. In my opinion this term is a very unsatisfactory one. Literally, it means sleepism, and nothing more; and yet the phenomena which are included under it are more than this. It includes the subject of clairvoyance, willing at a distance, and the hypnotic treatment of disease. In all ages human infirmities have been treated by the laying on of the hands of certain persons known to possess special healing virtues in their touch. Among the Chaldeans, Babylonians and Persians, the Hindoos, Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans, the priests often effected cures and threw people into a deep sleep in the shades of the temples, and produced effects like those referred to animal magnetism. The results were considered supernatural, and this, no doubt, gave great power to the priesthood. The idea that it was a natural gift, the phenomena of which might be brought under the domain of the exact sciences, never for a moment occurred to them.

### Persons with the gift of Healing.

In the middle of the 17th century there were a number of persons in England said to have this gift. The most noted of them was Valentine Greatrakes, who achieved a very great fame. He is reported as being able to cure many diseases, and thousands of persons flocked to him from all parts of the kingdom. Several of the most distinguished scientists and theologists of the time, and among them Robert Boyle and R. Cudworth, witnessed and attested the genuineness of some of his cures.

In the 18th century, John Joseph Gosner, a Roman priest, took up the notion that all diseases were simply devils inhabiting mortal bodies, and he practised a method somewhat similar to Greatrakes, gaining great power over the nervous systems of his patients. He firmly believed his gift was a divine one, and united it with religion.

I have not time to mention many extraordinary persons with similar gifts, but will give a few connected intimately with the modern revival of this subject.

### Mesmer, Braid and Esdaile.

Mesmer was no doubt the first. He was both a physician and astrologer, and believed the stars exerted an influence on man. He supposed at first that the influence was magnetic or electrical, and used to stroke his patients with a magnet to effect a cure. Later on in life he came across Gosner, the Romish priest, and observed that he did not use magnets, but his hand to manipulate his patients, and he also discarded them, believing, instead, that the power lay in himself. Removing to Paris he excited profound interest, and though stigmatised as a charlatan by his medical profession, crowds flocked to see him. He had his consulting rooms dimly lighted and hung with mirrors in order to produce a profound effect on the imagination. Soft musical strains now and then broke the silence, and fragrant odours were wafted through the room. His patients sat in a circle around a kettle in which simmered various drugs over a slow fire, holding each other by the hand, while Mesmer, dressed like a magician, walked about, touching one, making passes over another, looking at a third. The effect was somewhat magical; hysterical women fainted or were entranced; men were convulsed and seized with palpitation, and the effect, on the whole, can hardly have been anything but injurious. The Academy of Sciences pronounced Mesmer's theories false, and his system fell into disrepute.

Passing now by many disciples of Mesmer, who kept his name from oblivion, we come to Braid, Esdaile and Elliotson.

Braid was a surgeon of England, and in 1841—a complete sceptic to the phenomena—undertook to investigate and prove its falsity. It was not long, however, before he discovered that he

could, to use his own words, "produce a peculiar condition of the nervous system, induced by a fixed and abstracted attention of the mental and visual eye on one object not of an exciting nature." This condition he called *neuro-hypnotism*, or nerve-sleep, but for brevity's sake the prefix was dropped. Braid was, no doubt, the first to study the subject scientifically. He was ably seconded by the late Dr. W. B. Carpenter, who recognised its high importance. It was the impetus which Braid gave it that produced all over England and the United States such a crop of lectures and exhibitions on biology that there was hardly a small town in the country which forty years or so ago was not visited by performers, who would throw some of their audience into a state in which they would do the most absurd things at the command of the operator. Surgical operations were performed without pain on persons hypnotised.

Esdaile did this in India, many of his operations being of the most difficult and painful kind. In a little medical college in Cleveland, Ohio, Ackley and Delamater, two eminent and bold surgeons, hypnotised, or as it was called then, mesmerised many of their patients and operated on them without causing the slightest discomfort. This was about 1846 or 1847. Well do I remember hearing it talked about by my elders as marvellous, if true. It seemed as if the time had come for a revolution in our methods of treating the sick, and that instead of drugging them with poisons we should be able to follow Christ's example, and tell them to "arise and walk," but, alas, there was to be another disappointment. The good day did not come. Anæsthetics were discovered at this time; they produced a condition in which operations could be performed without pain. They were simple and more effective, and so hypnotism fell into disuse by medical men. There was great rejoicing at this among the more conservative physicians. "Hurrah, rejoice!" wrote one physician in the *North British Review*, "mesmerism and its professors have met with a heavy blow and great discouragement."

But as a stream of water on its way to the sea, if it meets with obstacles, turns its course and finds another channel, so hypnotism, under all sorts of names, has, since 1850, rejected by the learned professions, lived a precarious existence under many curious *noms de plume*, such as spirit-healing, mind-cure, prayer-cure, magnetic treatment, &c., among untutored, unscientific people, whose minds were not so full of learning that there was no room for new ideas. It had too much vitality to die; it had real merit when properly used; it could not do impossible things, but it could do much.

Curative hypnotism claims two great powers: one, that of anæsthetising not so rapidly as ether, but more safely; the other of vitalising—assisting by some change in the circulation of the blood and some alteration in the action of the nervous system—the powers of nature, which are, after all, the only curative powers.

#### Healing Power of Hypnotism.

The extent of the healing power of hypnotism cannot yet be known. Only after years of patient inquiry shall we be able to say what infirmities it will cure, what it will alleviate, and what it will produce no effect upon. It is not wise to be too sanguine, and it certainly would be folly to set it up as a panacea. My own opinion is that it will be of very great use in producing sleep. In our age of over brain excitement and worry, when the struggle for success is almost deadly, sleeplessness is becoming dangerously common, and a majority of our remedies are more or less injurious if used for any length of time. Of two men in the race for success, equally gifted in other respects, the one who sleeps well will be most sure to win. Indeed, it is not at all uncommon for a man of brilliant talents to have his life almost ruined by insomnia. The hypnotic sleep is profound, sweet, and refreshing. I have often heard patients declare that a half-hour of it did them more good than a night of ordinary sleep, and it leaves no poison in the system to produce after evil effects.

Besides sleep, the relief of pain by hypnotism is a marked feature. If the most severe surgical operations can be performed on one in the hypnotic condition, without his knowledge, certainly it may find a wide field in the slighter pains, which, after all, in their aggregate are very considerable. Nervous headaches, and those caused by exhaustion, we know yield most readily. The pains from sprains, burns, rheumatism, and lumbago may also often be cured or relieved. Neuralgia, chorea, hysteria, some forms of paralysis, perhaps epilepsy and chronic nervous exhaustion, with its long train of distressing and perplexing symptoms, will, I firmly believe, find a valuable remedy in hypnotism, especially if united with a wise hygiene.

There are some nervous states in which it seems most desirable to evoke the imagination to the fullest extent. Hyp-

notism will do this far better than the most extensively and boldly advertised nostrums. The excitable condition of the nervous system of the hysterical patient renders them specially subject to hypnotic influences; and when in this state, as has been proved by Braid and others since, a profound change of nervous action can be induced, which after a number of repetitions may become permanent.

#### Bad Habits.

There is another class of diseases, coming often under the name of bad habits, for which we may hope hypnotism will furnish, if not a sovereign remedy, at least a most valuable one. The January number of the *Journal of Inebriety* speaks on this subject as follows:—

"Mr. Myers, in the *Fortnightly Review*, brings out some curious facts showing the power of a dominant idea impressed on the mind in a state of hypnotism. In one case, Du Magne hypnotised a man who was an inebriate, but sober at the time, and impressed upon his mind very strongly the idea that he could not use alcohol, that it was poisonous and very dangerous. After coming out of this state, the idea continued for many months, and he was a total abstainer, although exposed to temptations. Dr. Leibvauld tried the same experiment on many cases with success. He found that men under the influence of spirits could not be hypnotised, and that in some cases the impression made on the mind was very transient, in others it lasted a long time. He supposed that if the hypnotic impression of repulsion against alcohol could be repeated often it could be made permanent, and in this way made practical in very many cases. Professor Beamis reported a case where a great smoker was told, while in a hypnotic state, that he must not drink or smoke again. He followed this idea and was able to break away, but was hypnotised and impressed many times, and the repeated suggestions came at last to be fixed thoughts.

"A theory mentioned to explain this is that alcohol paralyses the higher inhibitory centres, while hypnotism strengthens these centres; also, hypnotism paralyses the appetite centres, and thus counteracts the alcoholic action. It is further stated that repeated pressure of the idea of alcohol repulsion produces a shock to the brain centres, and thus alterations take place, causing permanent changes of character.

"No doubt certain sensitive organisations under the influence of hypnotism, may be profoundly impressed by dominant and single ideas.

"To apply this in a practical way to inebriates is a new field of psychology that may have a wide future. The laws of mind over body are as yet scarcely known, but we can rest on the conviction that science is on the track, and sooner or later the facts will be discovered, and their application made to the affairs of every-day life."

#### Parturition.

Hypnotism promises to be of great service in cases of painful parturition. Many years ago I became aware of this by observing its effects on a woman who had suffered from a tedious and painful labour, till her strength was nearly exhausted, when a hypnotiser threw her into the hypnotic sleep, and the child was delivered without pain within an hour, greatly to the surprise of the attending physician, who had lain down to rest.

#### Proper Persons to Hypnotise.

An important question now arises: Can any person become a hypnotiser and produce good effects, or is it a gift possessed only by a few? The general belief is, the latter, and I am of this opinion. Not all who can induce the hypnotic state can produce the healing effects. Why this is, we do not at present know. The firm, decided, but gentle character, whose nervous system is sound, seems to me to be best adapted to this work, though I have no doubt the power may be cultivated to a very considerable extent. The great difficulty at present is in obtaining reliable operators, who can act most favourably on the nervous system of the subject, and produce the most lasting effects.

One more point and I will close. May harm come from hypnotism? To this I answer, there is nothing in the world that may not harm if wrongfully used. Milk is good for babes; but too much of it is an evil. Fresh air is excellent and desirable; but to sit in a draught of it may cause pneumonia. So hypnotism, by evil designing persons, or those of a low character, may do harm, and when crudely and ignorantly applied it may also produce injurious effects, as may any remedy. Beyond this there need be no danger.

Our copy of "LIGHT" (London) for March 6th has had quite a varied experience. It was in the Oregon at the time that steamer was wrecked, but was fortunately rescued from a watery grave, and now reaches this office bearing the evidence of having been thoroughly submerged.—*Religio-Philosophical Journal*.

THE HERMETIC SOCIETY.—At the meeting of this Society, July 22nd, the President replied to questions which the members had been invited to send in, and read a paper on the higher application of the "Seal of Solomon." The thirteenth and concluding meeting of the session was held July 29th, when Dr. W. Wynn Westcott read a translation of the *Kabbalistic Book of Formations*, the *Sepher Jetzirah*.

## WHAT IS SAID OF PSYCHICAL PHENOMENA.

PROFESSORS TORNEBOM AND EDLAND, THE SWEDISH PHYSICISTS.—“Only those deny the reality of spirit phenomena who have never examined them, but profound study alone can explain them. We do not know where we may be led by the discovery of the cause of these, as it seems trivial occurrences, or to what new spheres of Nature's kingdom they may open the way; but that they will bring forward important results is already made clear to us by the revelations of natural history in all ages.”—*Aftonblad* (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-pencil. (3) That the writing is actually done at the time. (4) That the medium is not writing. (5) The writing must be actually done with the morsel of slate or lead-pencil. (6) The writing is done by an intelligent being, since the answers are exactly pertinent to the questions. (7) This being can read, write, and understand the language of human beings, frequently such as is unknown to the medium. (8) It strongly resembles 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 proposition. (9) If these beings speak, they do so in human language. (10) If they are asked who they are, they answer that they are beings who have left this world. (11) When these appearances become partly visible, perhaps only their hands, the hands seen are of human form. (12) 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 unbelief impossible, things called spiritual, which cannot be taken by a rational being to be capable of 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 honourable 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 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. 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—occur, 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 FRANÇAISE.—“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, Homœopathy, 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 ascertainable 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 dear and near 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. Eglington, 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 ridiculous 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.

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