

# JOURNAL

OF THE

## SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.

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### NEW ASSOCIATES.

ELLIOT, THE HON. MRS., The Deanery, Clifton, Bristol.

HARLAND, HENRY, Authors' Club, 19, West 24th Street, New York,  
U.S.A.

HILL, W. SCOTT, 47, Manor Place, Edinburgh.

MCCHESNEY, MRS. JOSEPH HENRY, Brooklyn, New York, U.S.A.

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### MEETING OF COUNCIL.

At a meeting of the Council, held on the 5th inst., the President in the chair, the following members were also present:—Professor Barrett, Messrs. Edmund Gurney, Richard Hodgson, C. C. Massey, F. W. H. Myers, Frank Podmore, H. Arthur Smith, and Hensleigh Wedgwood.

The Minutes of the previous meeting were read, and signed as correct.

Four new Associates, whose names and addresses are given above, were elected.

In accordance with his request, it was agreed that the name of Dr. Wyld should be transferred from the list of Members to that of Associates.

One present to the Library was on the table, which is acknowledged in the Supplementary Catalogue. A vote of thanks was passed to the donor.

A vote of thanks was also passed to the anonymous donor of £10 towards the cost of the *Journal*.

The cash account for the preceding month was presented in the usual form.

The next meeting of the Council will be held on Friday, the 30th of July, at 4.30 p.m.

## REPORT OF THE GENERAL MEETING.

A General Meeting of the Society was held on the evening of Monday, July 5th, at the Rooms of the Society of British Artists, Suffolk Street, Pall Mall.

The President of the Society, Professor Balfour Stewart, F.R.S., occupied the chair. He invited Mr. O. C. Massey to read a Paper on "The Possibilities of Mal-Observation in Relation to Evidence for the Phenomena of Spiritualism." The paper will appear at length in the forthcoming Part of the *Proceedings*, and only an abstract of the argument is here given.

Adverting to the reference of the phenomena in question to conjuring, Mr. Massey considered that there were certain broad and essential distinctions between the two cases as regards the faculty of observation. The causes of mal-observation when a design to induce it may be assumed were mainly three—(1) Uncertainty as to the precise thing to be observed; (2) Defective physical conditions of observation; (3) Occasions of distraction of attention. Apart from confederates and artificial appliances, every conjurer was dependent upon one or more of these for his opportunity. At mediumistic sittings they all could be, and frequently were, excluded. With this view the investigator could take all the arrangements into his own hands, reducing the medium to the *minimum* of the activity upon which a conjurer must depend to mask his proceedings, thus reversing one essential relation of such a performer to his spectator. Illustrative cases—described as only samples from a bulk—were cited at length from several published reports, including the reader's own experience. Reference was made to the position adopted by Mrs. Sidgwick in the June number of the *Journal*, that evidence for these phenomena was vitiated by the necessity for continuous observation. In this view, not only were important facts lost for observation, but evidence might contain statements of non-existent facts, it being part of the juggler's art to induce a false appearance of them. But (Mr. Massey contended) this positive error could only belong to honest statements when the latter were of a general character, omitting to discriminate the true perceptive elements of a composite observation, and giving only a mental result in place of testimony of the senses. Except under conditions which could have no general application to these phenomena, if the conditions of observation were physically easy, individual acts of perception were not fallible, and the question whether they had in fact been performed could be settled by the testimony of a veracious witness, which would always betray its own defects by absence of particularity. On the other hand, the suggestion of positive mal-observation was excluded by particularity of statement. As to mere failure of observation of important facts, it

was always necessary to consider in the particular case what were the nature and dimensions of any fact that could affect the result, in order to judge of the possibility of its eluding the senses and mind of the witness. This was not a question to be disposed of by reference to the general instability of attention in prolonged observations; the degree of mental pre-occupation to be induced by the conjurer in the witness was measurable by the physical acts the conjurer must perform in the circumstances of the case. In conditions well arranged by the observers, as in many of the recorded experiments, these acts would be extremely obtrusive, and often very complicated—whereas the preparations were expressly designed to limit observation to their exclusion, and one only need be excluded. In other cases the physical character of the phenomenon described was such as to make the suggestion of a conjurer's agency inappropriate upon even the largest admissible suppositions of imperfect observation—as when a little table disappeared bodily and afterwards descended, in full view from the ceiling in a private room, as Zöllner and the medium were sitting side by side, or as when Mr. Massey himself had a fallen chair, of which he had a clear view, picked up and deposited at his side by invisible agency at his request, when the medium was sitting five feet off from it.

But Mr. Massey did not admit that exceptional manifestations or conditions were essential to guarantee observation, and he adduced an experience of his own and Mr. Roderic Noel's in Eglinton's slate-writing, to illustrate the extent of the claim he made for average powers of observation.

He then criticised an account given by Mrs. Sidgwick, at a recent meeting of the Society, of a slate-writing performance of an amateur conjurer, in which her own and a friend's observation was effectually baffled. He referred to it in order to show that the supposed observations were not stated with the particularity necessary to constitute even apparently good evidence, and could therefore raise no presumption against other evidence which on the face of it was free from defect.

He proceeded to answer Mrs. Sidgwick's view that the medium had an advantage over the avowed conjurer in his "privilege of failure," and also urged that the medium had a far severer ordeal of investigation to pass through than any conjurer. He then dealt with some general objections to the evidence, such as detected trickery, the absence of tests which would dispense with any continuous observation in the presence of the medium, and the failure of some investigators to obtain any satisfactory evidence at all. He pointed out that such failures had been presupposed by the Society at the outset, as the phenomena had not the scientific character of being reproducible for any and every one. The conjuring theory was totally inadequate to the

magnitude and duration of the experience now accumulated. Conjurers themselves who had sat with mediums had come away without discovering trickery, and the letter recently published in *Light*, from the amateur conjurer, Dr. Herschell to Mr. Eglinton, was a striking testimony to the genuine character of "autography."

The Society and its investigators should approach the subject with some regard to the psychical conditions which the hypothesis of mediumship involved, and not with the dominating idea of conjuring, though every investigator ought to be adequately impressed with the necessity of strict and close observation and exact statements. It should be considered that telepathy might imply much more than consciousness would reveal, and that the psychical influence of mental dispositions might be a real condition in the production of the phenomena. Mr. Massey concluded by recommending the appointment of a committee to examine and report upon the existing evidence for "autography," but urged that such a committee should not be composed of those who would make an indiscriminate application of Mrs. Sidgwick's extreme presumption against observation, as in that case only a foregone negative conclusion was to be expected.

In inviting discussion, the President said that Professor Sidgwick's remarks, which Mr. Massey had quoted, had done good if they had called forth such a paper as that which had just been heard.

The Rev. W. Stainton Moses said that he thought we must all feel deeply indebted to Mr. Massey for the able, temperate, and closely-reasoned paper which he had read to us. Referring to the June number of the Society's *Journal*, he remarked that some had thought that sufficient notice had not been taken of Mr. Eglinton; but that reproach could now no longer be made. At the same time, he wished to enter his protest against what he considered the unfair tone and style of the article in the *Journal*, and generally of the manner in which the evidence had been treated. It was not of hopeful augury for the usefulness of the Committee proposed by Mr. Massey. He had even been led to ask himself whether Spiritualists could be of any further use—if indeed they had been of any—within the Society if that article was to be taken as an expression of the Society's opinion. He hoped it would be disowned as the action of the Society; and he had been glad to hear, since he came into the room, that they were to look on it only as an expression of individual opinion, and that it did not commit those who, like himself, differed from it, to its lines. He hoped to hear this view confirmed from the chair, for, until disavowed,\*

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\* As the Society has no collective voice in such matters, it is not necessary, or even possible, that any view expressed by an individual member of it should be "disavowed." It will be remembered that even in the case of papers published in the *Proceedings*, "the responsibility for both facts and reasonings rests entirely with their authors."—Ed.

the paper in question will be held by many to embody the views held by the leaders of the Society for Psychical Research, and therefore of the Society itself.

To show that these things did not rest on Mr. Eglinton's shoulders alone, he (Mr. Stainton Moses) would like to call attention to an example in his own experience, where writing was done on a slate in a locked cupboard of his own, under circumstances which absolutely convinced him of the reality of the phenomenon. This occurred at an important crisis in his life, in harmonious connection with a variety of other phenomena which forced him, as a logical necessity, to accept the Spiritualist hypothesis, from which he had never since wavered.

Dr. Wyld felt with Mr. Stainton Moses, that Mrs. Sidgwick, in the remarks that had been referred to, had not dealt with the subject of slate-writing in a satisfactory manner. The cases which she had reviewed were recorded by ladies and gentlemen of undoubted veracity, and of fully average intelligence, and some of them were worthy of the closest attention; yet Mrs. Sidgwick dismissed the whole evidence in these words, "I have now no hesitation in attributing the performances to clever conjuring." Mrs. Sidgwick had no pretensions to being a conjurer; and she was perfectly well aware that conjurers had given a verdict the reverse of her own, because their written and signed testimony had during these eight or ten years appeared almost continuously in print, in the pages of the Spiritualistic journals; and Dr. Wyld therefore thought that he did not speak discourteously in characterising Mrs. Sidgwick's view of the whole case as an evidence of excessive credulity on her part, in relation to her powers of judgment in occult matters.

Dr. Wyld then described two experiments observed by himself, one with Mr. Eglinton and the other with Dr. Slade, which he regarded as affording absolutely incontrovertible evidence as to occult slate-writing.

The experiment with Eglinton was as follows: it occurred early in the year 1884. A bit of slate pencil being placed between two slates which were previously examined, he and Eglinton then placed their hands on the top of the upper slate as it lay on the table. Immediately the sounds of writing were heard, and these having ceased, Dr. Wyld and Eglinton examined the slates and found one of them covered with fine clear writing from the top to the bottom of the slate the writing being in reply to a question they had put regarding a disputed matter. Finding that the last sentence was unfinished, Eglinton took another slate which Dr. Wyld examined, and pressing this against the under side of the flap of the table, Eglinton asked Dr. Wyld also to press it close to the table, which he did, whereupon the sounds of writing

were again distinctly audible; and on examining the slate it was found also covered with fine writing from top to bottom, and the last sentence carried round the four sides of the frame of the slate. The reply to the question put was clear and sensible, and quite to the point.

The writing on the two slates seemed to occupy about two minutes, but on copying this writing afterwards, Dr. Wyld found that the operation occupied twenty minutes of quick writing.

These two slates were, before the experiment, examined by Dr. Wyld, and he never lost sight of them during the experiment for one second, and he maintains that this experiment was entirely outside the range of conjuring, and that it demonstrated occult slate-writing.

The second experiment was with Slade. Dr. Wyld had many experiments with Slade, but the experiment now to be described was a crucial one.

He sat with Slade in daylight, no visitor being in the room except himself. He having taken up a slate from a pile of slates on a table said, "I wish this experiment to be perfect and therefore you must not touch this slate from beginning to end of the experiment, not even with the tip of your finger, because if you did so, some ignorant person might say that you produced the writing by sleight of hand."

Slade sat about four feet from Dr. Wyld at the opposite side of a table, but some distance from the table, and Dr. Wyld having first examined both sides of the slate, and found it a new dusty slate, placed a crumb of pencil on the table; he then covered the pencil with the slate and pressed the slate to the table with his elbow, while he seized Slade's two feet with his two feet, and his two hands with his two hands, and then said "Now write."

Immediately the sound of writing occurred, and this having ceased, Dr. Wyld pushed Slade's hands away, and lifting the slate from the table, found a message written in dusty slate pencil writing, containing five Christian family names and a message concerning a family matter of importance. This experiment was entirely beyond the range of conjuring; and of occult slate-writing Dr. Wyld has no more doubt than he has of his own existence.

Mr. F. Podmore then said that he would give an account of a recent slate-writing experiment which he had witnessed. Mr. Z., a conjurer, recently gave a slate-writing séance to Mr. A. Podmore, at which Mr. F. Podmore was permitted to be present. Mr. Z. began by giving Mr. A. Podmore a double-slate with Bramah lock, to examine. Mr. A. Podmore satisfied himself that there was no trickery connected with the slate. He then, at Mr. Z.'s request, put some small pieces of coloured chalk into the slate and locked it, putting the key in his pocket. Mr. A. Podmore clearly understood that he had to watch this

locked slate (which lay on the table in front of him) very closely; and he is even now of opinion that he did actually keep his eyes fixed upon it continuously. When, however, after the lapse of about a quarter-of-an-hour the slate was opened, it was found to contain a long message written on both the inner sides. Mr. A. Podmore was astounded, and expressed himself confident that he had not let the slate go out of his sight. Yet Mr. F. Podmore had noticed that there was an interval of something like three minutes, during which his brother had removed his eyes from the slate and kept them fixed on Mr. Z.' face. In that interval the conjurer's trick was performed, and Mr. F. Podmore had been allowed to witness the performance.

Mrs. Brietzcke said that she should like to add her testimony to the reality of the phenomena obtained with Mr. Eglinton. On several occasions when she was present writing had been done on the slates while they were held in mid-air; and a great number of times pertinent answers had been given to questions the nature of which the medium had no means of knowing.

Mr. F. W. H. Myers then made a few remarks, of which the following is the substance.

When the question is raised as to whether an article signed by a private Member of our Society is to be taken as authoritatively representing the views of the Society, it is well to remember that the Society has only one way of expressing its views as a whole, namely, by the election of Members of Council, and by the papers or circulars put forth in the name of the Council. No doubt if articles advocating a particular set of views were persistently excluded from the Society's publications, the holders of those views might feel that they had cause to complain. But Messrs. Massey and Moses (who have been on the Society's Committee since its foundation) do *not* thus complain, and I think I may add that I happen to know that they have often been themselves asked to write more frequently. In particular, there is, I believe, a strong desire on the part of many members of the Society to hear more about those very phenomena to which Mr. Moses has just now alluded. The contemporary notes of those phenomena—with such omissions as the private character of part of them might render necessary—would form a document of the utmost value to inquirers. Even the brief account of those phenomena which we already possess forms the backbone of the evidence for Spiritualism. It is earnestly to be hoped that the notes which Mr. Moses tells us were so carefully kept, may be given to the world with the completeness and detail which their importance imperatively demands. And as regards Mr. Eglinton, Mrs. Sidgwick, who, with Professor Sidgwick, is unable to be present to-night, has asked me to say that she is personally anxious that her expression of

views should not be the only one, but that those who disagree with her arguments should in their turn write to the *Journal*, the next number of which, it is hoped, will contain Mr. Herschell's letter in favour of the genuineness of the impugned phenomena. The degree of power possessed by conjurers to produce illusion is surely a necessary subject of discussion, and one on which it is impossible to attain a clear knowledge without personal trial and reference to experts. If Mr. Eglinton's phenomena are genuine, the discussion of the conditions under which they are obtained may be expected to lead to an improvement in those conditions, from an evidential point of view.

Mr. Massey has quoted Mrs. Sidgwick's modest estimate of her own powers of continuous observation, and has argued that Mr. Eglinton need not have exercised his 'privilege of failure' in her presence. But remembering that Socrates was pronounced by the oracle the wisest of men because he was the most conscious of his own ignorance, we must not argue that Mrs. Sidgwick is a worse observer than other people because she is more fully aware of her own deficiencies.

And meanwhile there is another branch of evidence which, if made of satisfactory strength, would support the distinctly Spiritualistic hypothesis far more directly than any physical phenomena can do, and which private persons can work at without the need of a professional medium. I mean the attainment through automatic writing of facts unknown to any of the persons present. It is alleged by Spiritualists that this frequently occurs, and all Spiritualists, as far as I have heard, admit that this is a class of evidence of capital importance to their theory. I have again and again publicly asked for such evidence, but have reaped as yet a very scanty harvest. Nor is this apparently due to reluctance on the part of Spiritualists to send cases to me, for the very few good cases which have reached me have come mainly from Spiritualists, and, on the other hand, the Editor of *Light*, who has made a similar appeal, has not (judging by the few cases as yet reported in his paper) been more successful than myself. May it not fairly be said that if Spiritualists took more pains to make careful and patient experiments, and to report them at the time with accuracy and detail, they would be taking the best means to further the acceptance of their distinctive theories?

Mr. W. Lant Carpenter would like to ask whether the physiological principle of "persistence of vision" had been taken into account in reference to some of these experiments. It was known that an act which took place in less than one seventh of a second could not be perceived by human sight. A lighted stick rapidly whirled round, appeared to be in all parts of the circle at once, causing the appearance of a



circle of fire. Mr. Carpenter described a feat performed by the conjurer Bosco, in which two sovereigns were made to appear in and disappear from the palms of his hands, the conjurer himself being absolutely naked to the waist, and the only perceptible movement was a slight apparent trembling of both hands. The success of the trick was due to the extreme rapidity with which the hands were withdrawn and again extended, the sovereigns being temporarily concealed under the armpits.

Mr. R. Pearsall Smith (of Philadelphia) called attention to the caution required in judging of uncomprehended phenomena in slate-writing, produced by those upon whom fraud had been proved. He called attention to a Mr. Yeo, who held for sale, at prices varying with their difficulty, seven ways of producing phenomena in slate-writing, with the standing offer of a forfeit of £20 on his failure to reproduce any Spiritualistic phenomena after having seen them twice. He also read a letter from Professor Fullerton giving unfavourable results of his inquiries at Leipzig as to the competency in accurate observation of those who had been associated with Professor Zöllner in his investigations, stating that Professor Zöllner was diseased in mind, that one of his coadjutors suffered from cataract, and the other was over 80 years old. He said that the special virtue of true scientific investigation was in the sincere welcome given to authenticated facts for or against the theories under consideration.

The President, while endorsing the observation made that Mrs. Sidgwick's paper was merely the expression of her private opinion, and before calling upon Mr. Massey for reply, said he would like to make a remark or two. In regard to many classes of phenomena, planchette-writing for instance, several theories might be brought forward by way of explanation. But with slate-writing, it must be either deception, or we were in the presence of novel and very extraordinary phenomena. There was no middle course. If you did not incline towards accepting the reality of the phenomena, you necessarily inclined to the conclusion that you were being wilfully deceived. A slate-writing medium must therefore take his chance, and cannot complain, if by the phenomena being disbelieved there is an implied reflection cast upon his character.

In the next place he had formed the opinion that in investigating these things you could not easily dispense with the services of professional mediums. If you did dispense with them you would obtain very few phenomena to investigate. At the same time he thought there was one point in which justice had scarcely been done to Mrs. Sidgwick. He agreed with her that it was extremely desirable that experiments should be so arranged as to avoid the necessity for continuous obser-

vation. If a medium can obtain certain extraordinary results under certain conditions, and yet, if he fails to obtain any results when the conditions are slightly varied, so as to avoid the necessity for continuous observation, it is, to say the least, very unfortunate.

He agreed with those who thought the idea an unfounded one, that men of science, or of good observation, were not a match for conjurers. It was a point in favour of the mediums that slate-writing had been so long before the public, and that the means by which it was done had not been indisputably discovered. He had been present at two or three séances with Mr. Eglinton, when the conditions had been extremely simple. This simplicity was also a point in the medium's favour, and which would be further strengthened if conjurers should prove unable to explain how the results were obtained.

He called on Mr. Massey for any reply that he might wish to make to the remarks that had been made.

Several questions having been put, Mr. Massey stated, in reply to one by Mr. Podmore, referring to one of Zöllner's experiments which had been cited, that there was nothing to suggest that the particular experiment with the leather bands had been previously tried, though the analogous one of "knots in an endless cord" had already succeeded. It was not said when the bands were prepared for the experiment, but no doubt it would have been prior to the sitting. The experiment was not designed to correct defects in former conditions, but to clear up a doubt as between two théories of occult agency. The insinuation that Zöllner was insane before his death was absolutely unfounded; there was not the faintest ground for it. One of his coadjutors, the celebrated Wilhelm Weber, was old, but Zöllner himself was in middle life, and in the possession of all his mental powers. No value was to be placed on second or third-hand reports. No one has ever offered even a plausible explanation of the phenomena he recorded, and a celebrated German conjurer gave it as his opinion that they were not within the kingdom of prestidigitation.

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#### "PHANTASMS OF THE LIVING."

The price at which this book (2 vols. octavo) will be issued is one guinea. One copy will be supplied to every present Member of the Society who has paid his subscription for the current year, for 5s. 3d. and the cost of carriage or postage; and to every present Associate who has paid his subscription for the current year, for 10s. 6d. and the cost of carriage or postage. Members and Associates who desire copies of the work are requested to send their names to the Assistant-Secretary, at 14, Dean's Yard, S.W.

## CASES RECEIVED BY THE LITERARY COMMITTEE.

(Continued.)

[The Literary Committee will be glad to receive well authenticated evidence of phenomena belonging to any of the following classes, specimens of which are from time to time recorded in this Journal:

L. Phantasms of the Living.

G. Phantasms of the Dead.

M. Hypnotism, Mesmerism, and Clairvoyance.

P. Monition and Premonition.

S. Miscellaneous phenomena of the kind sometimes described as "Spiritualistic."

Personal experiences of "sensory hallucinations" of any sort will also be welcome.

The Committee print such cases as *prima facie* seem to them likely to throw light on the subjects investigated by the Society, or to serve as material for profitable criticism and discussion.

Communications intended for the Literary Committee should be addressed to Edmund Gurney, Esq., 26, Montpelier Square, London, S.W.; or, to Frederic W. H. Myers, Esq., Leckhampton House, Cambridge.]

The following incidents were described to Mr. Gurney *videlicet* by three of the four ladies who have since supplied written testimony. This testimony was in the form of letters to Mrs. Brietzcke, an Honorary Associate of the Society, to whom in the first instance we owe the case.

G.—477.

From Miss P. M.

1885.

MY DEAR MRS. BRIETZCKE,—As I have promised, I must write you an account of the things we saw in our old house in Edinburgh; but remember, I put them down to indigestion or else neuralgia. The house was very damp, and had been unlet for a long time before we took it, which was in 1871.

I believe I was the first who saw anything unusual, and it must have been in one autumn afternoon, about 4 p.m. I was passing through the hall from the dining-room to the schoolroom, where two doors faced each other, and I saw the figure of a woman, above the medium size, standing on about the fourth step from the bottom; she had her arms folded, and was draped all over (head included) in white; she seemed to be watching me, and the thrill that ran through me made me fly into the schoolroom; but almost immediately after I ran out again to see if it was only fancy; and found it had disappeared. I never mentioned this to the others, or the servants, as I was so ashamed of myself; but told my mother only; but as it proved eventually, it appeared to nearly all in the house. I can only recollect seeing it about six or seven times altogether, I think, and it was nearly always in daylight. One evening when the upper hall was dark I saw it, and had the courage to follow it, and ran straight against a shut door, which shock brought me to myself, and it disappeared. Another afternoon

I saw it in the drawing-room, and it was crouching over the fire ; but I am sorry to say I was too great a coward to go up to it, as I could understand things appearing at night, but when they came in daylight I could not make head or tail of it.

Another peculiar incident took place. Our store-room was upstairs, as the basement was so damp, and my sister had gone upstairs to get some wine. We heard a tremendous fall, and running out, found my sister lying at the bottom of the staircase surrounded with broken bottles and *débris*. The first thing that attracted my attention was this same figure standing just at the bend of the staircase, and, naturally enough, thought she had seen it there too, and in her fright had fallen ; but when she came to, she said that somebody had pushed her at the bend and she had fallen headlong. I did not mention what I had seen then, as some visitors were with us, but afterwards told her ; and she said she had not seen anything, but had had a blow in her back, and had fallen so marvellously that she had not hurt herself. Some time before this happened she had felt a hand laid upon her head in the schoolroom, and turned sick, and had seen a white figure going out of the door. Each one of us saw this figure without telling the other, and each new servant also. Our names were often called, and the voice nearly always came from the dining-room. Often and often we had answered and gone into the room to find it empty, servants likewise. On going up and down stairs, with our hands on the banisters, we sometimes imagined a cold soft hand was laid on them, so that I avoided touching the banisters at all. We had our heads often touched, and in my case I used to feel all five fingers distinctly.

One afternoon, while studying at the school-room table, I had stopped up my ears with my fingers ; I felt my head seized very roughly, and noticing my sister had gone to the cupboard behind me, thought it was her who had touched me, so I moved my head about to escape her, and said "Don't," and was recalled to myself by the governess, who touched me, and asked what on earth was the matter with me ; and I found out that my sister had been back to her place for some time ; that was the most distinct time that I felt it. I saw many other things, but they had no sequence, and so will not be interesting. Our cat was sometimes in a great fright, her hair all standing on end, and growling ; but at those times we saw nothing, but of course felt "skeery."

The bath-room first attracted my attention. We had all a great repugnance to enter it, and I was so certain that there was something uncanny about it, that I asked mamma if there was a story attached to it. She said "No." Not content with that, I investigated the room, and found out the door had been forced ; and it proved that the lady who had had the house before us had drowned herself in the bath. Now this is a thing I cannot account for. One night, mamma as usual went at the usual hour to have her bath ; and finding to her surprise the door locked, rattled it, and said, "Come, Emmie, I want to come in." Emily replied from the next bedroom that she was not there. She tried the door, and then went to see where my other sister and I were. We all came out and had a try at it. I must say I could have sworn the door was locked ; it might have got stuck in some peculiar way, but anyhow, after we had all left it

alone it half opened itself. My mother certainly was puzzled at that, and she was a very practical woman. She never would acknowledge that she saw anything, but heard all the noises that we heard, and said she would move out of the house earlier than she intended, because the servants declared the house was haunted, and said they would not stay; and she was afraid of its having a bad effect upon us.

Nothing would induce the servants to stir out of the kitchen or their bedroom after 10.30 at night; they barricaded up their door. One night the cook, a new servant there, was taking up some hot-water bottles to our rooms, and on drawing herself up when she came to the top landing, found herself in front of this white figure; she turned tail and flew for her life to the kitchen. Hearing the noise, I ran down to see what was the matter, and we found her white and scared in the kitchen. We had not told her anything about the house; it is possible the other servant may have done so, although she declared she had not. We heard the rustling of leaves, or of a silk train on the staircase at nights, and that was the only noise that was heard in the lower regions. The dining-room flat was the noisiest; we heard doors opening and shutting, or at least what sounded like it, for I used to go down sometimes to try and discover what it was. The noises were too substantial to be cats or rats, it was more like the big heavy table in the dining-room, and the chairs being bumped about. At about six in the morning a heavy bump sounded, which shook the whole house; in the different rooms it sounded in different directions; and we never could find out what occasioned it, although we tried to investigate it over and over again. The shock may have taken place in some other house, and our foundations being very old, and I daresay shaky, it travelled along, and so we heard it; it was like a miniature explosion. We had a great aversion to the drawing-room, too, and never would sit there alone; for we had a peculiar feeling that somebody was in the room with us; I often thought I was touched, and felt somebody moving about the room. It was in that room that I saw a tall blue shape with what looked like eyes; but I kept looking at it, and it slowly disappeared; this was in daylight also. Those sort of ghostly things did not terrify me much, and especially at the last, for I was so certain that some trick was being played upon us; and tried to find out how they appeared. But one evening I was terrified by something out of the ordinary.

I was all alone in the dining-room one night, as the others were all out at a concert, and the little one had gone to bed. It must have been about 9.30 or 10. I was working, and was opposite the press, or cupboard, the door of which was open. Gradually the feeling came over me that I was not alone in the room, and that I was being watched, so that I could not help raising my head, and exactly opposite me, just appearing round the press-door, was the face of a man—the most wicked and evil-looking face I have ever seen, more like a demon's face than anything else. The skin was of a yellowy colour, and it had black hair, moustache and beard. The eyes were fixed upon me, and even as I looked, this awful head projected more round the door, and I saw the neck. There we gazed at each other. I was perfectly frozen with horror, and could not move or speak. As soon as my senses began to collect themselves, I thought, that can't be a ghost, for it

isn't transparent like the others ; it seemed a solid head, for it hid the part of the door it was in front of ; so I thought the best thing was to appear not frightened, as I had read in story books ; so after gazing at me for what appeared a quarter-of-an-hour in my great horror, the head suddenly drew back. I still sat petrified, expecting it to come out again ; and there I sat until the others came home, and only then went up to the door, and was not a bit surprised to find nothing behind, because the press was filled with shelves, and it was an impossibility for anybody to get into it ; so it must have been a bit of my brain in an excitable condition. That was a substantial ghost, as I call it.

I saw one other, but it was a most natural one. Passing through the hall, I saw an old woman standing by the hall door ; and going to mamma I asked her who she was, and what she had come for. Mamma said she did not know anybody had come ; so going out into the hall I saw her (the woman) still there, and went down to tell the servants that somebody had come, and to go and see what she wanted. When I came back, the woman had disappeared. I immediately went to the hall-door, found it locked, and opening it went into the garden, looking for the woman ; but she was not to be seen. The servants, too, did not know anything about her. I had not any fear or surprise at seeing her, because I did not guess for a moment that she was not real. Now I have told you all as well as I can remember it ; but we put a great deal of it down to a damp house and neuralgia, and indigestion. I was constantly suffering from neuralgia there, and that, I daresay, was the cause of all my apparitions. I hope, though, that these ridiculous notes may be of some use to you.

P. M.

From Miss E. M.

1885.

I have been a long time in writing out my account. I hope now it is done it will prove to be something "not too utterly ridiculous." It seems so foolish for a sensible creature like myself to commit to paper things so perfectly puerile. My contempt for ghosts passes description, and I am very angry that I did see that mournful white thing by the dressing-table, as I have to put it down ; but I attribute it, like Mr. Scrooge, to "a piece of undigested beef, or speck of mustard," from which delicacies Old Marley was supposed to have been compounded.

In accordance with Mrs. Brietzcke's request, I send an account of my experiences at our old house in Edinburgh.

I was quite a child when we first went there, and was told nothing as to the rumours afloat about the house, or the earlier experiences of my sisters.

I "felt" long before I "saw," but thought it was merely the natural childish fear of dark rooms, and solitude, but as I grew older and stronger, I lost the fear, but not the "feeling," which was distinctly attached to certain portions of the house ; namely, the drawing-room, the dining-room, and the staircase.

In the drawing-room the sensation was of someone pacing the room hurriedly up and down, pausing now and again, then continuing. On one occasion my eldest sister left the piano at which she was practising, from the distinct impression of someone passing continually behind her chair.

In the dining-room I have frequently experienced the sensation of some-one bending over my shoulder, a distinct feeling of the air being disturbed. The cat has often risen from the rug, on which it was sleeping; with hair and tail erect, in evident horror at something; and we had several cats in rotation, and each in turn exhibited symptoms of fear occasionally.

The staircase seemed to be the happy hunting ground of the ghosts, and here repeated phenomena took place.

Descending one evening, a small cold hand was laid upon mine, which was resting on the banisters. Each finger I felt exactly, soft and cold, and could hardly believe that nothing was visible. Others in the house frequently saw the white figure on the staircase, but I never did, and refused to believe in it at all, till one afternoon I was sent into my mother's room to report if the fire were burning satisfactorily. Being disturbed in the middle of my singing, I went to execute the errand in a frame of mind, not exactly calculated to "see ghosts."

It was dusk as I entered the room, and everything was more or less in shadow, which perhaps served to throw out in bold relief the tall white form of a woman, leaning against the window curtain by the dressing-table. It was supernaturally tall, and stood with arms folded, looking straight at me, with a most heart-broken expression in the eyes. Even at the first glance it did not look real, as the dark blue curtain was visible all through it, but less so at the face and shoulders. The face was so sad and sweet I did not feel very frightened, but walked straight up to the curtain, and grasped it in my hands, shook it, and looked behind it, but there was nothing there. I was frightened then, and ran out of the room. I never saw it before, and never saw it after that.

My room was at the end of a passage which led from the staircase landing, and passed the bath-room door; it was only separated therefore from the bath-room by the wall, and although I knew later on what tragedy had occurred in that room, its close proximity did not disturb me in the slightest. My room was distinctly one of the clear spots in the house. I was always glad to get into it and close the door, as it always felt "safe."

This feeling did not prevent me from hearing what occurred in the rest of the house. One night I started up in bed from a sound sleep. I do not know what woke me, but I heard a soft rustling sound descending the stairs. I could not account for it, and could only compare it to dead leaves being swept down the steps. Soon after, the hall clock struck 1 o'clock. The next morning, the cook and housemaid told me (of their own accord) that as the clock struck 1, they heard "a soft rusty kind of sound come down the kitchen stairs, sweep into the laundry, run round three times, then there was a great bang!" The cook described the sound as "a lot of dead leaves like!" This is very remarkable, as my room was two storeys above the kitchen, and the time and description of sound tally exactly.

I was present when the door of the bath-room refused to open, and was about to try to open it myself for the third time, when it opened gently and resistlessly without any effort on my part. I was the only one in the house however who never heard the "morning bang" as we called it, though the German governess and various visitors all heard it. We left the house earlier than we intended, as the servants refused at last to remain, and

became very troublesome, never venturing about the house except in couples, and no power upon earth could have induced them to quit their room after half past 10, which from their account was in a sort of besieged garrison condition, the door being securely barricaded from within, so any disturbance which occurred during the night could not possibly be placed, as some have supposed, to their account. I do not think I have anything more to say. We were all glad to leave the house, and a month or two after, we went over it one day with some friends, and the feeling of gloom and oppression was appalling, and were glad to get back into the sunshine, and all unhesitatingly pronounced it "haunted."

It must have been fearfully damp; a bonbon left on the shelf of the cupboard in my sisters' room would be completely melted in two days, and boots and shoes, unless constantly worn, were apt to get all mouldy and damp.

I cannot account for anything which happened, and can safely affirm that anything which I saw or felt was certainly not due to fear or nervousness, as I unhesitatingly would go to any portion of the house all alone, in the dark.

My "double" or "wraith" was twice seen upon the bend of the staircase, once by my sister, and once by a friend, at different times, but upon always the same place.

The cook who was with us at the time of which I speak is dead, and we have lost sight of the housemaid. As I have nothing more to say I will end.

E. M.

From Miss K. M.

*December 4th, 1885.*

MY DEAR MRS. BRIETZCKE,—In compliance with your wishes, I send a few lines to add my testimony to that of my sisters' about our "haunted house" (?) in B— Place. The only time I saw any sign of an apparition was in the year 1872. I was in the school-room preparing my lessons (about 5 o'clock) for the next day when I suddenly became unconscious, and on recovering I saw the figure of a tall woman draped in white going out at the door. I could not see the face, but the figure was tall and elegant, and from what my sister P— describes, must be the same figure she saw sometimes. That was the only time I ever saw her; but one day, years after (about 1878), I was coming downstairs when I suddenly became unconscious, and fell the whole length of the stairs. My sister P— rushed out from the dining-room and found me lying at the foot of the stairs; saw the figure of this woman at the top, and imagined I had seen her, and fallen in terror; but I did not see anything, and never can to this day account for the peculiar way I fell, just as if I had been pushed with great violence. Our servants declared they saw ghosts and heard peculiar sounds, and all this acted on our nervous systems, and no doubt made us sensitive and alarmed at the least sound, and a ray of moonlight was no doubt transformed into the figure of a ghost (!) One other remarkable incident was in connection with the bath-room (where Mrs. S. had committed suicide a few months before we took possession of the house); our mother tried to open the door one evening as she wished to take her bath, and tried in vain to get in, so concluded some other member of the family was in there, but on inquiry



we found that no one had entered the room, and my sister made a sign of the cross on the door and it was immediately opened! This sounds like an impossibility, but we were all there, and mother, who had not an atom of fear, and no belief in spirits, was somewhat puzzled, and we can never account for it.

This is my valuable (?) testimony. It looks uncommonly as if I were weak in the head, and given to tumbling down whenever the spirits were gracious enough to come and visit me. But since we left B—— Place I have given up coming down stairs head foremost, and *now* if I found a door refuse to open I should send for a picklock.

K. M.

From Miss Z. M.

1885.

I was 10 years old at the time I saw this figure, and my mind was far from ghosts, as my mother had never allowed anyone to speak to me of such things. One day I was let out of the school-room for half-an-hour's play at 12 o'clock. My playroom was upstairs, and as children often do, I ran upstairs on all fours, that is on my hands as well as my feet. As I reached the middle of the stairs a peculiar feeling made me look up to the top landing, and standing close to the first step of the stair was a tall white figure of a woman, and it seemed to be above the usual height. I could see the form distinctly, but at the same time I saw through her. It looked at me for a few seconds, then turned and walked into the passage leading to the bath-room. Not knowing what it was, I had not the slightest fear, and I followed it there. Of course, when I got there, the room was empty. It was then for the first time that I felt, as the Scotch say, "uncanny." I told my mother what I had seen, but she laughed at me, and soon I forgot all about it. This is the only time I saw the figure, but I often heard myself called from a sunk press in the dining-room, but that may have been an echo. Very frequently in the morning, about 6, my mother and I heard a loud thud against the inner wall of the house (it was a house standing in its own grounds); it shook the whole house, and for a long time my mother took no notice of it; she thought it was the servant cleaning the school-room below, and after pulling out the grand piano to clean behind, had rolled it back with too great a force, and knocked the wall. My sisters heard it, too, but in different parts of the house. One morning my sister went down to find out if it was the servant; but she found her at the grate cleaning the irons. She said she had been there fully 10 minutes, and had never heard the sound herself. A great many of our servants left us because of these sounds and sights. One cook we had was taking the hot water bottles up to the beds one night and she saw this figure on the middle of the stairs, and she was so frightened that she did not know she had let one of the bottles fall on her bare arm till she got downstairs again and found her arm most frightfully burnt. Except for hearing strange sounds, which I was told to put down to rats, and having a peculiar depressed feeling come over me when I entered the house, nothing else happened to me that I can remember.

ZOL.

Y

## MR. EGLINTON.

Mrs. Sidgwick desires to say that all the accounts received by her of sittings with Mr. Eglinton were printed in the last number of the *Journal*, with the exception of two, the writers of which desired that they should not be printed.

In the course of last winter, Mr. G. T. Sachs, an expert in conjuring, was requested by a few members of the Society for Psychical Research (who at the time were unaware of the statements made in 1878 by Archdeacon Colley—see *Journal* for June) to hold some sittings with Mr. Eglinton at their expense, and to report the results. He consented, and said that he would get Dr. G. Herschell, also an expert in conjuring, to accompany him. Mr. Sachs has not yet sent in his report. The following letter has been received from Dr. Herschell:—

37, Moorgate Street, July 3rd, 1886.

DEAR MR. GURNEY,—I have hitherto delayed sending in my report as to the conclusions that I have arrived at by my sitting with Eglinton, as on account of illness I have been prevented from finishing the series of experiments I was making as to the possibility of imitating psychography. I must confess that I am unable to discover any method for producing writing on slates without instant detection by the spectators if they are conjurers, and even then only under an absence of the conditions under which Eglinton works.

I find that I can only produce, even after some months of practice, one or two words upon the slate held simply under the table, but any observer of ordinary acumen could not fail to detect the necessary movements. I am unable to do anything at all with the locked slate, and I find that there is no invisible ink in existence which can imitate slate-pencil writing.

So that taking into consideration the rapidity with which the writing came at my first sitting (reported in *Light*), and the fact that Sachs and I were watching him closely, and did not detect any of the movements I find it now necessary to make, I am driven to the conclusion that the writing is produced by some other method than "by the agency of Eglinton's muscles." This is the conclusion to which I have come after an exhaustive series of experiments that have left me no loophole of escape. Hoping that you will excuse the length of time I have taken, but I wished to give a fair trial to my methods before I confessed myself beaten,—Believe me, yours truly,

GEORGE HERSCHELL.

In a second communication Dr. Herschell adds:—

I assure you that I have not arrived at the conclusion that I have without a hard struggle, as I was biassed the other way, as you know very well.

The following letter from Dr. Herschell had previously appeared in *Light*, for June 26th, 1886, p. 290:—

37, Moorgate Street, E.C., June 18th, 1886.

DEAR EGLINTON,—In answer to your note just received, I may say that if Mrs. Sidgwick has ever seen me do any slate-writing, it has been part of

an ordinary entertainment of sleight-of-hand, and produced under conditions quite different from those under which your psychography takes place. When I have given such exhibitions it has been for the sake of showing how little prestidigitation could do towards imitating slate-writing, and never with the pretence of showing how you produced it.

For some time after my first sitting with you, I candidly confess that I worked very hard, both by myself and in consultation with well-known public performers, to find out a method of imitating psychography, and I do not think that there is a way that I have not tried practically. I have come to the conclusion that it is possible to produce a few words, on a slate if the minds of the audience can be diverted at the proper time (a thing perfectly impossible under the eyes of conjurers, who know every possible way of producing the result by trickery, without instant detection). Beyond this, conjuring cannot imitate psychography. It can do nothing with locked slates, and slates fastened together. It cannot write answers to questions which have not been seen by the performer, as you are constantly doing. At the best it only produces a mild parody of the very simplest phenomena under an entire absence of all the conditions under which these habitually occur at your sances.

Allow me also to take the present opportunity of thanking you most sincerely for the opportunities you have given me of satisfying myself of the genuineness of psychography by discussing openly with me, as you have done, the various possible ways of imitating the phenomena, and of letting me convince myself, in detail, that you did not avail yourself of them.

I hope that you have had a successful visit to Russia, and that your health is now quite re-established.—With kind regards, yours sincerely,

GEORGE HERSHELL, M.D.

W. Eglinton, Esq.

#### DETERMINATION OF THE TIME OF SLATE-WRITING.

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

SIR,—In the June number of the *Journal*, Mrs. Sidgwick, referring to the various length of time during which observation has to be kept up, remarks :—“ At other times it may be comparatively short, but manifestly in no case can it be determined merely by reference to the time at which the writing seems to be done” (p. 332). *In no case.* This was so much at variance with my general recollection of experiences of my own with Slade and Eglinton, that I had the curiosity to go through the evidence printed in the same number of the *Journal* (which elicited Mrs. Sidgwick's remarks), with special reference to this point, though with little expectation of finding that a critic usually so careful had made so positive a statement in direct contradiction to evidence under her eyes at the time. It is so, however, as the following references will show. For there is one way in which the time of the actual writing can be determined by reference to that of the sound as of writing, which is when a question is put by the sitter and answered on the moment on the slate. At p. 301 Mr. G. A. Smith gives the following sentence as obtained on the slate :—“ If you like to try it we will

be happy to do our best for you, for you know you do not dictate your own conditions." "The last word," says Mr. Smith, "appeared to have been very hastily and carelessly written, and we were uncertain what it was intended for; so the slate was held beneath the table again, with the request that the word should be re-written more legibly. *Immediately*" (italics are Mr. Smith's) "we heard writing, and the word 'conditions' was found occupying the whole width of the slate." It may be presumed that the slate was withdrawn for examination as soon as the sound ceased; and unless it is suggested that the word was written on the reverse side to that of the sentence, and had been previously prepared (the question being led up to by an intentional illegibility of the last word of the sentence), we have here a case in which the time of the actual writing is exactly determined by the sound. The little possible doubt in this case does not exist in the next—Mrs. Brietzcke's—at p. 294:—"I said, 'Please write the figure 4.' *In a moment* we heard writing, and on lifting the covering slate there was a bold 4."

Again: "I said 'Write Man.' Miss L. added, 'So that it can be seen.' *Instantly* we heard writing, and when the slate was exposed 'Man' was found written in very large letters."

Again: "I said, 'Why did you not write for Professor Barrett the other day?' The written reply, *obtained in a few seconds*, was 'Because he dictates his own conditions.'"

In Mr. Harold Murray's evidence, at p. 296, four questions are mentioned, to which answers came in (1) "three to five minutes," (2) "two to three minutes," (3) "one and a half minutes" (answer of 12 words), (4) "almost at once" (14 words). There seem to be other instances in the same collection of evidence, but I think these seven or eight are enough to show that the period of continuous observation can often be defined as of extreme brevity, and that sometimes the moment of actual writing can be determined by that of the sound. *Estimates* of temporal intervals are no doubt little to be depended upon, but "instantly," "in a moment," &c., are not estimates, and Mr. Harold Murray's times seem to have been carefully computed and distinguished, and the third of them is stated as precise.—Your obedient servant,

C. C. MASSEY.

July 9th.

SIR,—I am glad that Mr. Massey has called attention to what, as he had misunderstood it, must I fear be an ambiguous sentence of mine in the last number of the *Journal*. I will endeavour to explain my meaning more fully. In speaking of "the time at which writing *seems* to be done," I mean in most cases the time when the sound of apparent writing is heard, and the only reason I had for using the less definite phrase was that I wished to include possible cases where the apparent time of writing may have been suggested in some other way, though I do not think any such cases are recorded among those given in the *Journal*. Now it seems obvious that as the sound of writing can be imitated, it affords no indication that writing is being done. I never intended to deny that the real time of writing may, in some cases, coincide with the time when we seem to hear it, though I do not think we have any grounds for thinking that it did so coincide in the cases referred to

by Mr. Massey. What I did wish to express was that the *seeming* to be done affords us no help whatever towards determining when it is done.

And the cases which Mr. Massey quotes are as good illustrations of this as any other. They are—at any rate, several of them—cases where the interval of time during which continuous observation was required was what I have called comparatively short; but what enabled me to assert this has nothing to do with when the writing seemed to be done. It is that at one end the limit of time is given by the asking of the question (assuming, of course, that this was not led up to) and at the other end by the seeing of the answer on the slate. As to the duration of the time between these limits, I have no hesitation in saying that it was short compared with that during which continuous observation would sometimes have to be kept up, but I should be afraid to say that it was short compared with the time a conjurer would require to distract the attention in order to accomplish the necessary writing; partly because I cannot agree with Mr. Massey in regarding “instantly,” “in a moment,” as many people use the expressions, as anything more than vague subjective estimates of time; and partly because even in Mr. Murray’s case we do not know when the time was measured from, *e.g.*, whether it was from the moment when the question was written down, or from the moment when the slate was put under the table. In Mrs. Brietzcke’s record there are indications that “in a moment” refers only to the time after the slate was placed in position, and that this does not include all the time during which continuous observation was required, for her words as to one case are, “I said, ‘Please write the figure 4,’ and the same slate was placed as before. In a moment,” &c. I do not think that the words I have italicised can be intended to describe anything that occurred in the “moment.” In Mr. Smith’s case it is pretty clear that “immediately” refers to the time after the slate was in position under the table, but we cannot tell that a specially favourable opportunity for writing the word did not occur before that—when they were discussing the illegibility of the previously written word.—I am, Sir, &c.,

ELEANOR MILDRED SIDGWICK.

To the Editor of the JOURNAL OF THE SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.  
Knockderry Castle,

Cove, Dumbartonshire, N.B.

12th : 7 : 86.

SIR,—In the *Journal* for last month, June, there appears a large number reports on sittings held with the well-known medium, Mr. Eglinton, two or three of which were sent in by myself. I would not venture to trespass on your space and time in asking you to publish some additional remarks upon these, but that I hold Mrs. Sidgwick’s criticism of them to be both superficial and inexact, as, in a slight degree, I will seek to show presently.

Mrs. Sidgwick says she has “no hesitation in attributing the performances to clever conjuring.” So far as she herself is concerned she is welcome to think of my sittings as she likes; but I have a decided objection that others, who may have read them with less bias and more caution, should swallow her statements as immutable and scientific fact. Her hasty judg-

ment, however, surprises me the more as coming from one who presumably admits and accepts the tremendous issues at stake in the Newnham case (see the *Journal* for May, 1885). There is no such exceeding difference between the Newnham marvels and Mr. Eglinton's "conjuring." In the one case when Mrs. Newnham is the medium (or writer), we have answers given to questions which are quite and demonstrably unknown to her by any of the accepted channels of sense. These answers are, besides, apparently quite incompatible with her ordinary phases of consciousness and normal good character; so much so as to suggest to Mr. Myers his quaint theory upon the action of the second half, a quite immoral half, of the brain. In the other case, when Mr. Eglinton is the medium or writer, there are, as before, questions unknown to him answered with a knowledge that seems separate from his, the medium's ordinary powers, with but one addition—that the answer is made by means of a pencil not visibly governed by the medium's muscles, instead of by a planchette; so, to accept the Newnham case in its entirety is hardly, it seems to me, a greater step away from scientific orthodoxy, than from the basis of the Newnham case to admit the possibility of slate-writing or occult powers. At any rate, a believer in the one, as Mrs. Sidgwick, I should expect to be more careful in condemning the other. I do not either know, if there be some immorality connected with mediumship (I am not referring to the instance quoted by Mrs. Sidgwick in the *Journal*) whether the immorality in the one case is much worse than in the other, or of a quite unallied nature. Be it understood I do not in any way impugn Mrs. Newnham, or at least the better half of her brain, of any conscious sin. I have however properly nothing to do but with the facts that came under my own notice in Mr. Eglinton's presence, and now proceed to Mrs. Sidgwick's criticism of these.

She writes in conclusion: "I can hardly imagine being myself convinced that it" (the slate-writing) "was genuine except by evidence of a different sort, to wit, the testimony of thoroughly competent and trustworthy witnesses that in several cases it had been produced under circumstances which dispensed with the necessity of continuous observation."

As to my own personal competence I can claim nothing beyond average common-sense and some custom as an art-student to study closely every-day life both in its matter-of-factness and in its greater subtleties and mysterious possibilities of expression, which may in certain ways be quite as fitting a preparation for the finding of some truths as the absorption of any amount of scientific materialism. But if scientific competence be in question, few higher authorities than Professors Crookes, Wallace and Zöllner could be named, who have testified to the genuineness of the forces brought into action through mediumship; and further, Mrs. Sidgwick seems entirely to ignore the report in this same *Journal* of last month made by the Russian Professors, Wagner, Boutlerof, and Dobroslavin. And if, again, the evidence of adepts in conjuring is required, such has been already given and notably within the last week by Dr. Herschell in *Light*, than which nothing could be more precise, and more favourable to Mr. Eglinton. Mrs. Sidgwick next requires trustworthiness in witnesses, which apart from competence means nothing less than a general honesty of purpose and an unbiassed sincerity in observation. As I am personally known to Mrs. Sidgwick and

other leaders of the Society, presumably their acceptance of my reports implies their trust in my sincerity (though I may be a dupe); otherwise there would have been already a gross breach of duty on their side towards the less active and irresponsible members of the Society. Finally Mrs. Sidgwick requires "testimony that it," the writing, "had been produced under circumstances which dispensed with the necessity of continuous observation," and it is to this last sentence I wish mainly to make answer.

I insist that the condition of prolonged and therefore probably fatigued observation was absent in my test of an answer given to a question unknown to those in the room, being one chosen at random from six mixed within an envelope, all of which were written some days before on six identical slips of paper. To make the test clearer I will explain it at greater length. The slips were cut from blank note-paper, and all clipped down to an identical exactness of appearance. On each was written a very simple question, the answer to which was evident, and could be given only in one way by one or more words of a direct nature, thus avoiding all chance of guess-work or ambiguity such as might arise in a general answer prepared by Mr. Eglinton on a slate as an evasive reply to most questions. After the sitting had commenced, and writing been obtained in the ordinary way, I suddenly proposed this test to Mr. Eglinton who at once agreed to see what could be done. A slate was placed on the middle of the table with a morsel of pencil—in full daylight of course—and upon it I put one of the slips, question downwards, my finger pressing the slip to the slate till withdrawn as another slate closed it down, thus securing the slip from all observation. The slip so placed was chosen at random from the envelope just then taken from my pocket containing six. It is, I think, therefore legitimate for me to conclude that as long as this slip was in my fingers, under my own eyes, blank side uppermost, I could myself only guess as to which of the six questions it might be, and further could be certain that none other in the room knew anything at all of its nature. Five seconds may have elapsed from the moment I chose the slip at random out of the envelope until my finger was withdrawn from a secure touch upon it, and certainly not two seconds more could have passed from the moment my finger was withdrawn until the second slate covered it over securely. My hands, with those of Mrs. C. P. and the medium were then placed firmly above both slates, always in the middle of the table. Five minutes went by while as related in the last *Journal*, the particular question was answered correctly; then came another period of—say two seconds, during which the upper slate was removed and I found my slip as I had left it at one end of the slate with the required answer. As once our hands closed the two slates down, all conjuring became impossible until a change of position and as I am certain none could read the question chosen until it left my hands (if ever), I contend that the only two critical periods for observation were those of two seconds each:—as I withdrew my finger from the slip to permit the upper slate to close it down, and as similarly this upper slate was withdrawn a little later. The circumstances here seem to me to be those which dispense with the necessity of continuous observation. Furthermore, the required test was presented suddenly as I have said to Mr. Eglinton, and contained such inherent difficulties to be overcome as must have fairly taken an ordinary conjurer or prestidigitateur by surprise, who does not as

a rule submit to improvised alterations on his programme, and searching inquiry or indeed interference of any kind from his audience. If the reports sent in by Mr. G. A. Smith and myself be consulted, several other instances will at once be found where the necessity for continuous observation was dispensed with, and where sudden difficulties were overcome on the spot by Mr. Eglinton, such as for instance the copy made on a transparent slate of an underlying drawing. I know very exactly how long it would take an ordinary draughtsman to make such a copy, and what amount of direct vision would be required to see to trace, which combination of time and vision Mr. Eglinton never attained.

I might go on to point out innumerable other instances where Mrs. Sidgwick's criticism amounts to nothing less than a shirking of facts as recorded. Knowing well that others will have more and better words to say on the subject, but trusting I may at least induce some of your readers to see for themselves instead of accepting the verdict of Mrs. Sidgwick on so important a point,—I am, yours very truly,

J. MURRAY TEMPLETON.

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

SIR,—May I be allowed a brief reply to the above reported remarks of Mr. Myers on a part of my paper?

For the point in question, I am not at all concerned to dispute the comparison with Socrates, nor did I suggest, as Mr. Myers appears to suppose I did, that Mrs. Sidgwick's recognition of her own inadequate powers of observation implied any *inferiority* in that respect to the average of mankind. Indeed, I was quite aware that Mrs. Sidgwick had expressly, and in the same sentence, included "others" (the world in general) in her disparagement. But my argument only demanded that her self-estimate should be fairly correct in the *positive* sense in which she wrote, and I wanted no admission of it from her in a *comparative* one. For if her self-estimate is confirmed by the actual experience she adduces in proof of it—with the amateur slate-writing conjurer—Mrs. Sidgwick may certainly be regarded as no *better* in respect of continuous observation than the majority of those who witness the phenomenon of slate-writing with Eglinton. Her superiority, arising from self-knowledge,—her Socratic wisdom,—would consist in attaching little *importance* to her own evidence, but it would not prevent her *getting* the evidence, for what it might be worth. The conjurer's chance would be just as good with her as with others. She would not be so much impressed by the result, but would be quite as unable to explain it by anything actually observed. I was only meeting, by the case of Mrs. Sidgwick, the suggestion that Eglinton's failures are due to the want of opportunity with a few superior observers. Upon her own showing, his three failures with her could not be well explained in that way.—Your obedient servant,

C. C. MASSEY.