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SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.

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NEW MEMBERS AND ASSOCIATES.

MEMBERS.

TRAVERS, JOHN CORY, F.L.S., Wood Lea, Bedford Hill, Balham, S.W.
 MALCOLM, THE HON. MRS., Achnamara Bellanoch, Lochgilphead,
 Argyleshire, N.B.

ASSOCIATE.

ASHCROFT, REV. THOMAS, 185, Lansdowne Terrace, Chorley, Lancashire.

MEETING OF COUNCIL.

At a Meeting of the Council held on the 30th ult., Professor H. Sidgwick in the chair, the following Members were also present:— Messrs. Walter H. Coffin, Edmund Gurney, Richard Hodgson, F. W. H. Myers, and Frank Podmore.

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

Two new Members and one new Associate, whose names and addresses are given above, were elected.

Some books were on the table as presents to the library, which are acknowledged in the Supplementary Catalogue, and for which votes of thanks were passed to the donors.

The monthly cash account was presented in the usual form, and the necessary amounts passed for payment.

It was agreed that a General Meeting of the Society should be held at the Suffolk Street Rooms on Friday, the 29th of October. The chair to be taken at the usual hour, 8.30 p.m.

The next meeting of the Council will be held on Friday, the 15th of October.

HOW AND WHAT TO OBSERVE IN RELATION TO SLATE-WRITING PHENOMENA.

By ANGELO J. LEWIS, M.A. ("Professor Hoffmann"), Author of
Modern Magic, &c.

Having for some years made a special study of the subject of Natural Magic and of the methods of conjurers, I have been requested (as an expert, and in a quasi-professional capacity) to read and criticise a series of reports (appearing in the *Journal* of the Society for June) of sittings with Mr. Eglinton. I am asked to say whether, and to what extent, the phenomena described are consistent with trickery, and to indicate any points wherein the observation of the witnesses is likely to have been defective or misdirected.

It seems to me, however, that a paper confined strictly within the above lines would be too speculative to be of much practical value. Upon the hypothesis of trickery, these accounts must be taken to represent (as do all descriptions of conjuring effects by uninitiated persons) not what the witnesses actually saw, but what they believe they saw, which is a very different matter. The main outlines of each narrative are probably correct; but if the description could be compared with the reality, it would be found that there was a little omission here, a little inaccuracy there; here a circumstance that was not noticed, there another that has been forgotten. I am not seeking to disparage either the good faith or the general acuteness of the witnesses, but merely stating a defect which is inseparable from *all* descriptions of conjuring tricks of which the secret is not known to the describer. I myself claim no exemption from the rule. For the last quarter of a century I have taken every available opportunity of witnessing conjuring performances, and have made a practice of immediately afterwards taking a careful note of any novel combination or effect. In so doing I frequently find the greatest possible difficulty (even where the general working of the trick has been clear to me) in recalling *exactly* what was done—the precise sequence of given movements, and the like. Very often a second visit has shown that my first impression was wrong in material particulars. If such is the experience of a person practically familiar with conjuring, and able to make a pretty close guess at the *modus operandi* of the trick, what chance has an outsider, however acute, of giving a precisely accurate description? It must be borne in mind that the observation of the witness has been *ex hypothesi* intentionally misled, it being the main aim and art of the conjurer to lead the attention of the spectator away from material points, and to direct it upon unimportant matters. I have frequently been favoured by friends with descriptions of magical feats they have

witnessed, and, knowing the real facts, have been intensely amused at the wide discrepancy between the romance and the reality. Upon the hypothesis of trickery, therefore, it may safely be assumed that even the most accurate of these accounts vary more or less from the actual facts; but, on the other hand, it would be obviously absurd for any person not an eye-witness to profess to say precisely how far they are accurate, or to pronounce dogmatically on any given point that the *soi-disant* eye-witness was mistaken, and that the true fact was so and so.

It seems to me that I shall best serve the end in view by offering investigators a little practical counsel as to how and what to observe in relation to slate-writing generally, calling attention to the possible means of deception, and illustrating my remarks, where practicable, by reference to the series of reports before mentioned.

It must be taken that the sole point at issue for the purpose of the present paper is simply whether the effects seen are produced by human artifice or not. If not, there is still room for considerable difference of opinion as to the agency by which they *are* produced; but this is a branch of the question with which I have at present no concern. My observations will be directed solely to the best means of sifting wheat from chaff, and detecting trickery, if any such be employed.

In the first place, in order to have a fair chance of detecting the *modus operandi* of a conjuring trick, it is necessary to see it several times repeated. The keenest expert will often be puzzled by a new trick, the first time of seeing it. But on a second visit he will note that some slight and apparently accidental movement, say the mere dropping of a handkerchief or slate, or the turning aside to a table to pick up some object, which occurred (and attracted no particular notice) on the first occasion, is again repeated. It is a reasonable inference that this supposed accident is in reality of the essence of the trick. Having got thus far, his next inquiry will be, What is the object of this particular movement? It may take two or three more visits satisfactorily to answer this question, but at each additional visit a little more of the veil will be lifted, the inferences drawn will be more certain and more precise, till at last the whole process becomes clear to the patient observer.

The same process should be applied to the examination of alleged Spiritualistic phenomena. It cannot be too strongly insisted on that any single manifestation, however startling and apparently inexplicable, is inconclusive in a scientific sense. If, however, the same phenomenon is again and again repeated at short intervals before the same witnesses, each successive repetition increases the likelihood of detection, if the

effect is produced by trickery. If, in the course of several repetitions, no suspicious circumstance has been noted, the probability of the genuineness of the manifestation may be said to increase in geometrical progression. The first items of advice, therefore, that I should give to investigators would be:—

1. Sit repeatedly, and at short intervals.
2. Try over and over again for the same kind of manifestation.
3. Note if any apparently accidental circumstance has a tendency to repeat itself; and if so, fix your attention keenly on that circumstance, and find out what it covers.

The chief advantage of the expert over the outsider in such a matter is that the former, from his knowledge of the general principles of conjuring, knows better what form of trickery is likely to be used, and is less liable to overlook seeming trifles. In the case of slate-writing produced by trickery there are five alternatives, which practically cover the whole ground.

1. The writing may be then and there executed by the medium.
2. A slate, on which writing already exists, may be substituted for the one first shown.
3. The slate used may already have writing upon it, but at the outset invisible, and rendered visible either by the application of some chemical re-agent, or, as in the case of marks made by an agate stylus, rendered invisible by washing, but again becoming visible as the surface dries.
4. A slate may be used with a movable face, which may be discarded at pleasure, and reveal a written surface beneath it. In the case of a folding slate, the movable portion may be made to drop from the one side into the other; leaving two new faces exposed.
5. The characters may be "printed" by the medium from some prepared surface. This may be done in the act of drying the newly-sponged slate with blotting-paper, the characters being previously written thereon, reversed, with a special description of chalk. This on the white surface of the paper attracts no attention. *

It will be observed that the four last alternatives are dependent upon previous preparation, and these may, therefore, be disregarded where an answer indicating special knowledge (not a mere "yes" or "no" or other answer of general application) is obtained to a question not previously known to the medium. Similarly in the case of a given word written in reply to a request made by the observer, on the spur of the moment, for that particular word. In such cases, therefore, the

* This is the method adopted by a well-known French conjurer.

whole vigilance of the spectator may be directed to one point, viz., to ensure that the characters are not then and there written by the medium himself. Such writing may be effected in various ways:—

(1) By a minute piece of slate pencil or crayon inserted under the thumb or finger-nail.

(2) By a sort of thimble, carrying pencil or crayon, and slipped on the end of the thumb or finger.

(3) By a point of pencil or crayon attached by wax or other means to the under surface of the table, the slate being moved against such point in order to produce the writing.

If there is an honest desire to exclude all these possibilities, the best plan, assuming that the slate must be placed under the table at all (as to which I shall have more to say hereafter) is to attach it firmly, by means of screws or screw-clamps, to the under surface of the flap. This does not in the least interfere with the medium's making contact with the slate in the usual manner, while on the other hand it is obvious that it must save him much fatigue.* The slate should be attached and removed by the investigator himself, and the question to be answered or word to be written should not be stated until the slate is actually attached as above. It is as well in all cases that the slate used should be the investigator's own property.

In the case of a "long message" filling the slate, the precautions to be adopted are of a different character. Here it may be taken for granted that the message will *not* be written by the medium under the eyes of the witnesses, and the vigilance of the spectators must be directed against the use of an already prepared slate. The best way to exclude this is to insist on the use of the spectator's own slate, coming direct from his own custody, and so unmistakably marked as to render it absolutely impossible that any other could be, even temporarily, substituted for it without attracting instant attention.

With these few hints for the general guidance of investigators, I pass to the consideration of the body of evidence before us, and in the first place, I would pause to remark upon a fact to which, I think, the experience of most inquirers will testify,—indeed, it is repeatedly noticed in these reports. Where a single word is actually written in response to request, or an answer of two or three words is given to some question formulated on the spot, it usually occupies a very peculiar position on the slate, namely, *close to the frame, and with the tops of the letters*

* At my two last sittings with Mr. Eglinton, I attached the slate in this manner, Mr. E. assuring me, in reply to a question, that the so doing would not at all affect the conditions. But if so, why is not such a very convenient arrangement (not merely as a test, but in the interest of the medium himself) always adopted?

towards the medium. (See diagram of slate in the case of Messrs. Bennett and Vicars, p. 320.) Now this at first sight would appear to be a proof of non-intervention on the part of the medium. It might be argued, with some show of reason, that, even if he produced the writing himself, he could hardly do so at the remote end of the slate, and still less upside down. Granted, but if he turned the slate round in its own plane (by no means a difficult matter), then wrote the words, and once more reversed the slate, that is precisely the position they would occupy.* Again, the single word or short message is generally in a weak, scrawly, scarcely legible handwriting. This was the case with the only word which has ever been written in my own presence (see p. 328), and in the "I do like you" written by "Joey" in compliment to Miss Symons (p. 312) it is stated to have been uncertain whether the second word was "do" or "did," a tolerably clear indication as to the general character of the writing. Now this feeble, struggling sort of writing is just what we should expect if the words were written by the medium himself, under the obvious difficulties of having with the same hand to support the slate, and at the same time to conceal the fact that he is writing. On the other hand, where one of the long messages, filling the slate, is produced, in which case it may be safely inferred that the writing is *not* then and there produced by the medium himself, two points are usually noticeable. First, the wording of the message is of a vague, general character, having no special reference to the immediate circumstances of the case, "a sort of general treatise on Spiritualism" (pp. 293 and 314); and, secondly, it is in a bold, flowing hand, with none of the weakness and effort perceptible in the shorter communications.† These two characteristics are exactly what one would expect in a message written at leisure beforehand, and either rendered visible by chemical means, or exchanged bodily for the slate previously in use.

Another point which strikes an expert in conjuring as suspicious is the request to sitters to talk of indifferent matters, and *not*

* In the report of Professor Lodge and Mr. Gurney (p. 291) it will be noted that at the first sitting the writing was "at the end of the slate furthest from Mr. Eglinton, and upside down in relation to him," but at the subsequent sitting (p. 292) where the slate was attached by a string to Professor Lodge's middle finger throughout (and the slate therefore could not possibly be turned round as suggested) "the writing was at the end of the slate nearest Mr. Eglinton, and was turned towards him."

† In the account given by Mr. Murray (p. 296) he says, "All writing except Answer 8 was in one style, *i.e.*, the same hand. No. 8 was different." All save No. 8, it will be found, were short messages. As to No. 8, Mr. Murray says, "Two slates held on upper surface of table. Mr. Eglinton asked for 'some communication of interest.' The slate was filled with writing in less than one and a-half minutes."

specially to fix their minds on the work in hand. If, as suggested, the writing be the work of some intelligence gathering power from the surplus force of the sitters, it would seem that the result would be likely to be promoted by a fair degree of concentration, if not active exertion of will, on their part. On the other hand, the greater part of a conjurer's power lies in the misdirection of attention, and if the object were to divert the notice of the sitters from any personal manœuvres of the medium, the request to talk and think about indifferent matters would be readily intelligible.

In this connection I may pause to remark on an assumption which runs through the majority of these reports, and which is habitually accepted by casual inquirers, namely, that the writing, as a matter of course, *takes place when the sound of writing is heard*. To the mind of an expert in conjuring the assumption should rather be the other way. Writing on a slate can be effected without any appreciable sound, and on the hypothesis of trickery the supposed sound of writing would probably not be audible until the necessary manipulations were concluded, and it became desirable to call attention to the writing as then proceeding. This observation suggests a possible explanation of a class of cases which have hitherto seemed to me more than ordinarily "staggering"; those, namely, in which writing is said to have been produced between two slates while laid, not under, but upon the table. To the production of writing on a slate simply held by the medium under a table, I should attach very small importance, such production being, I should say, with practice, within the reach of any conjurer; but when I have been told by credible witnesses of writing being produced between two clean slates held between the medium and another person in full light above the surface of the table, I have hitherto been compelled to own myself unable to suggest any natural solution of the phenomenon. I note, however, in the present series of reports, that in one or two instances the witnesses mention that the joined slates were held under the table for some time (professedly with no effect), and being afterwards brought into full view, the sound of writing was heard, and on examination writing was found upon them.

Now why, in the cases referred to, were the two slates put under the table at all? The placing of an uncovered slate in that position (at all times a suspicious and unsatisfactory proceeding from a scientific point of view) is justified by the supposed necessity of producing a certain amount of darkness. But in this case two slates are placed one upon the other. The space between them is already dark and shielded from observation; the placing of the slates under the table adds absolutely nothing in these particulars, and the writing is

professedly produced, *not* while the slates are under the table, but after they have been again brought into full view above it. Why then, if not to facilitate trickery, were the slates placed under the table at all? I have sought in vain for any satisfactory answer to this question. On the hypothesis of fraud, the placing the slates under the table is intelligible enough. It may be reasonably supposed that the writing is really executed while the slates are under the table, the spectator being deceived by the sound subsequently produced into believing that it is executed at the later period. This view of the case seems to have suggested itself to Messrs. Hodgson and Hogg (p. 290); but it is one which would certainly not strike the majority of unskilled observers, and it is conceivable that in many of the cases in which writing is alleged to have been produced between joined slates in full view, the fact that the same slates have been previously held under the table for a time has been suppressed, in perfect good faith, by the witnesses, either from forgetfulness, or from regarding the circumstance as unimportant, seeing that, in their belief, nothing took place until after the slates had again been brought into view.

Any Spiritualist who is honestly desirous (as I am persuaded the majority are) of excluding the possibility of trickery, will do well to insist that all slate-writing manifestations shall be produced with the slate *on* the table, turned face downwards if need be, or covered with another slate, but never, even temporarily, placed *under* the table. This is not making any inadmissible demand, for Spiritualists assert that writing is frequently procured under the circumstances named. If so, let them abandon altogether a more than doubtful class of manifestations, and stick to conditions under which fraud is, if not impossible, at any rate infinitely less likely.

With regard to the class of cases in which a given word of a certain book (page, line, and number of word being chosen haphazard) is written on the slate, they scarcely carry conviction to the mind of an expert in conjuring. I pass over the familiar conjuring expedients for "forcing" the choice of a given page or word, as I think there is tolerable evidence that no such expedient was here employed; but the table, again, plays a very suspicious part in connection with all these cases. The book is laid upon the slate, and the slate placed out of sight under the table. Robert — Houdin was able, in full view of his audience, and using his left hand only, to open a borrowed watch, read the number, and again close it without attracting suspicion. It would surely be a less difficult feat, under cover of the table, to open the book (usually, be it remarked, a light and thin one) at the given page, and note the word

demand. If the medium can do this, the elaborate precautions with which the word is selected are obviously immaterial. In every case in which the "book test" appears in these reports Mr. Eglinton was avowedly cognisant of the page, line, &c., demanded, and, therefore, the marvel in these cases reduces itself simply to the issue, "Could he, without the knowledge of the sitters, have got a sly peep at the required word?"* Mrs. Brietzcke (p. 296) and Messrs. Smith and Murray (p. 301) are quite sure that he could not, but it is proverbially a difficult matter to prove a negative; and the evidence in reality simply amounts to this—that they did not see him look at the page, and do not believe he did. But the book was under the table, on the side next to Mr. Eglinton, and even a momentary diversion of attention on the part of the witnesses might suffice to give the necessary opportunity. We may take it for granted that if Mr. Eglinton did take a peep, he did *not* do so while the witnesses were looking straight at him. The exact time during which the slate (with the book on it) was held, apparently without result, is not noted, and it might well be that the extreme vigilance which the witnesses are so sure that they exercised, really began after the necessary information was in fact obtained.

An incident related to me by a gentleman who sat for this same "book test" is rather suggestive. A page, line, and word were chosen after the usual elaborate manner. The book, a small pamphlet, was laid on the slate, and the "spirits" were invited to write down the chosen word. The reply was, "The page is not cut," which was found to be the case. This reply merits careful consideration. The theory of the Spiritualists is that the book, though laid on the slate, is never opened; and, obviously spirits, claiming to possess a clairvoyant faculty, have no need to open a book in order to look at a given page. The fact of the pages being uncut should, therefore, be quite immaterial

* Since writing the above, my attention has been called to the report of the Russian Professors (pp. 329-331), which was not before me in the first instance. Here, if the report of the witnesses is correct, Mr. Eglinton was *not* cognisant of the page or number demanded. It is, however, to be remarked that this is merely the report of a single sitting, not confirmed by repetition of the experiment, and as I have already stated, even an expert in conjuring cannot fairly expect to detect a new trick on first exhibition.

I note by the way a rather curious circumstance in connection with this report. The answer is produced between two *papier mâché* slates, without frames, tightly screwed together (with a piece of pencil between) at the diagonal corners with a pair of small brass thumb-screws. The pencil must therefore have been jammed tightly between the two slates, but an answer is nevertheless procured. "The crumb of pencil on examination was found to be worn at one corner, and the lower surface of the upper slate, pressed as it was upon the pencil, was without a mark of any description." Surely the obvious inference is that the writing was somehow effected *before* the slates were joined together, and if so, the learned Professors were a little hasty in their somewhat effusive "conclusion."

to them. If, on the other hand, the word is read by the medium's own eye, and written by the medium's own hand, it is obvious that the fact of the page being uncut would present a very serious difficulty, and that the above is just the answer that might be expected.

The failure to write down the number of Mr. Wedgwood's or Mr. Bennett's watch, though the number of a railway ticket was revealed without difficulty, is open to a similar observation; the latter feat demanding much less personal dexterity than the former, though to anyone possessing a genuine clairvoyant faculty the one should have been as easy as the other.

To render this class of experiments scientifically valuable, the book used should in the first place be either placed in a sealed envelope, or encircled by cross ligatures of string or gummed paper, in such manner as to exclude all possibility of a peep within. *This done*, the page, line, and word should be selected. The best way to do this, to exclude all possibility of trickery, is that each sitter should privately write down a number at pleasure, the total of the numbers so written down being then divided by the number of sitters in order to fix the page; the same plan (with any variation that may suggest itself) being repeated in order to decide on the line and word. The expedient of taking a number of bits of pencil, wax lights, or the like, though apparently excluding the possibility of pre-arrangement, is capable of a good deal of "management" in skilful hands.

I now pass to a class of cases of a still more startling character, namely, the alleged passage of matter through matter. It is noteworthy that in the only cases, in the present batch of reports, in which this is alleged to have taken place, the receptacle from which, and the receptacle to which, the change is made, are in every case Mr. Eglinton's own property, which fact, from a conjurer's point of view, is quite sufficient to deprive the incident of any "miraculous" character. Miss Symons (p. 309) wishes coins removed from her own sealed box, but the "power" is not adequate to do this. Mr. Wedgwood (p. 312) brings his own slates, fastened together; but nothing can be done with these. A card, however, disappears from Mr. Eglinton's own folding slate, (locked, and with a slip of paper gummed across the opening), and appears in another piece of apparatus, a box with glass sides, prepared ostensibly for a different purpose. This celebrated "folding-slate," which figures in so many accounts of séances with Mr. Eglinton, is one of his most familiar "properties." On the first occasion of my visiting him it was lying on the table, and I have seen it probably on half-a-dozen subsequent occasions. I have taken it up and examined it (as I have no doubt nine out of ten

sitters do), and I believe it (*i.e.*, the slate I saw) to be a perfectly honest, straightforward slate, innocent of any special mechanism or preparation. But the freedom with which it is left (not to say placed) in the way of inspection is, to the prestidigitatorial mind, a little suggestive. What if there be in Mr. Eglinton's possession a twin-brother, not quite so honest, of this very honest slate; and what if the very honest slate, of whose good faith the visitor has assured himself at half-a-dozen visits, is on a given occasion replaced by the twin-brother, exactly like it in appearance, but having some secret speciality designed to facilitate trickery? Suppose, for instance, that the slate used on the occasions spoken of by Miss Symons and Mr. Wedgwood, were so adapted (as any conjuring trick-maker could readily adapt it), to open at the hinges, as well as in the ordinary way. The card is placed therein, and the slates closed, a slip of paper being gummed across the opening. This ensures that the slates shall not be opened in the ordinary way, but does not affect the hinged side. The pressure of a spring or some similar expedient may make the slates open sufficiently to let the card drop into the performer's hand, whence to slip it into a glass box with a sliding lid (it is not stated that this was sealed or secured in any way) would scarcely present even a nominal difficulty. The reproduction of Mr. Wedgwood's penknife (embezzled by the "spirits" on a childish pretext at a previous materialisation séance) within the folding-slate, and the disappearance of a piece of paper therefrom may be explainable in like manner.

In the cases last mentioned the specially adapted folding slate (if any) may have been introduced at the commencement of the sitting, but in others, as, for instance, where a long message has been produced professedly on the folding slate, the slate first shown may have been exchanged for another of similar appearance during the actual course of the sitting. The fact of the slates being every now and then held under the table, and the occasional dropping and picking up of a slate, a fact mentioned by many of the witnesses, would tend greatly to facilitate such an exchange. The dropping of a slate is a perfectly natural accident, and may frequently occur in the most honest and unintentional way, but for this very reason it would be the more likely to be made use of as a conjurer's artifice, to facilitate a desired "change."

There are some few incidents in this series of reports—as indeed in many which I have read and heard—for which, *as described*, I can offer no plausible explanation. The value of these cases will depend on the precise accuracy of the witnesses' testimony. For instance, the multiplication of two unknown figures by another number (as described on p. 294) seems, on the assumption that Mr. Eglinton did not know

what numbers had been written down, inexplicable on any natural principles. It is, however, noteworthy that Mr. Eglinton himself indicated the multiplier, and that the celebrated folding slate was used. A good deal might turn, therefore, on the possibility of Mr. Eglinton's knowing, or being able to discover, the numbers to be multiplied, and the narrator is not a very accurate witness. At the outset of her report (p. 293) she says that she took to the séance a *folding slate* of her own. Two lines later she speaks of "the slate," presumably the same. Two lines later "*the slates* having been cleaned, and a chip of pencil put *between two*," the spirits are asked, "Will you write on Mrs.—'s slate by-and-by?" A lady who introduces so much confusion into half-a-dozen lines of her narrative is hardly to be depended on as a witness in a scientific matter. In the report of Miss Symons and Mrs. L. (p. 308) they speak of an answer to a question, unknown to Mr. Eglinton, being procured on his locked slate, without the slate being "removed from the table or out of sight for a single instant. Mr. Eglinton merely rested one hand upon it." If the ladies are correct in their account of the incident I can suggest no explanation which will meet the case. The account given by Mr. Wedgwood of writing produced between two slates hermetically attached together seems equally incapable of explanation, save that it is noteworthy that an interval of some months appears to have elapsed between the first and second attempts. The slates seem to have remained sealed up, for Mr. Wedgwood says that he took them "as they were." It would be very desirable to know where and in what condition the slates were in the meantime, and whether there was any possibility of their having been tampered with by any person. On the other hand, Mr. Wedgwood's account of writing produced on a card in a book, *identified by a corner torn off it*, looks very like a new version of a familiar conjuring trick, and it is possible that some little circumstance may have been, in perfect good faith, omitted from the respective accounts of the more startling experiences which would give them a different complexion.*

Having thus examined the evidence from a prestidigitatorial point of

* As an instance of the possibility of the medium's now and then acquiring a little useful knowledge without the cognisance of the spectators, I may refer to Mr. Harold Murray's testimony at p. 297. A twofold question is written. Mr. Murray says: "Mr. Eglinton asked aloud, after two to three minutes, 'Will you kindly give us an answer to this question?' Directly afterwards he dropped the slate on the floor; he picked it up and replaced it under flap of table. I watched him narrowly, but could not see him look at the message. However, after complaining of the weight of the slate, he repeated his request for an answer, but modified his words, 'Will you kindly give us an answer to these questions?'" And the questions were answered accordingly.

view, and indicated to the best of my ability certain items in which the effect deposed to may reasonably be supposed to have been produced by trick, I feel that I ought not to shirk the question whether it is likely that *the whole* of the facts alleged by this numerous body of witnesses are explainable on that hypothesis. Candidly speaking, I entertain a very grave doubt on the subject. I think there is a great deal to suggest that trickery is now and then employed (*pro re nata*, as the doctors say). I find many circumstances which would tend to favour its employment, and some for which it is difficult to account on any other hypothesis. On the other hand, I do not believe the cleverest conjurer could, under the same conditions, use trickery in the wholesale way necessary to produce all these phenomena, without exposing himself to perpetual risk of detection. Many of the witnesses have fulfilled the condition which I have indicated as the most important towards the discovery of trickery. They have sat repeatedly, at short intervals, with their attention turned particularly in the direction of the expected phenomenon, and the effects sought have been again and again repeated. No conjuring trick, however well disguised, will stand frequent repetition before the same spectators, and if conjuring were the *only* explanation of the slate-writing phenomena, I should certainly have expected that their secret would long since have become public property.

I regret exceedingly not to have been enabled to form a distinct personal conviction on the subject, but my experience has been unfortunate. I have had in all twelve sittings (the last ten as an expert on behalf of the Society for Psychical Research) with Mr. Eglinton. No one could possibly have commenced an investigation with a more open mind; indeed, I had heard so many startling accounts from persons on whose assurance in other matters I should not hesitate to rely, that I was quite prepared for the occurrence of remarkable phenomena, and disposed to investigate them in the most impartial spirit. I sat, in every case save the first, with gentlemen in whose presence Spiritualistic manifestations had previously occurred with freedom. We had a series of extremely pleasant séances, conducted on the most amicable footing, but the spirits obstinately declined to manifest. I cannot charge myself with the failure. I made no difficulties, dictated no embarrassing conditions. We used Mr. Eglinton's own slates, held under the table in his ordinary manner, and on each occasion only asked for the writing of *a single word*, named by myself on the spur of the moment. The first nine sittings were absolutely blank. At the tenth (an afternoon sitting), just as the daylight was failing, a single word was written—*how*, I do not pretend to say. I had not detected Mr. Eglinton in any suspicious movement. He had shortly before dropped

the slate, but I do not attach any significance to the fact in this instance, and save for the peculiar position of the word on the slate (to which I have already adverted), there was nothing to suggest trickery, but from the circumstance of the imperfect light the manifestation was of no value in a scientific sense. Having thus made a beginning, I hoped for further manifestations, but was determined that any future success should be of a character to constitute really reliable evidence, and accordingly at our two next sittings, I used my own slate, clamped to the table as I have described. Again a single word was asked for, but no result was obtained, and I at last gave up the investigation in despair. I may truthfully claim that I was not an unfriendly inquirer, and it would therefore seem that my conjuring knowledge was, in some shape or other, the bar to my obtaining any satisfactory evidence.

Meanwhile, however, two gentlemen of my acquaintance, Dr. Herschell and Mr. Sachs, both skilled amateur conjurers, paid a visit to Mr. Eglington. He was not aware, to the best of my belief, of their prestidigitatorial knowledge, and they were therefore the more favourably placed for detecting trickery, if any were used. Writing was repeatedly produced, and no trickery was detected by either of the witnesses, who came away completely staggered, and subsequent visits have, I am informed, confirmed them in the belief that at any rate the greater part of the manifestations they saw were not produced by any trick, but were really the work of some unknown force.

I may here anticipate a possible question. Why, it may fairly be asked, if there are such things as genuine Spiritualistic manifestations, should any medium take the trouble, or run the risk, of using trickery? A little reflection will show, however, that the two things are by no means incompatible. It is admitted, indeed asserted, by Spiritualists themselves that the phenomena are irregular and uncertain. On the other hand, the reputation and emoluments of a professional medium depend upon the comparative certainty and regularity with which they are produced under his mediumship. There must therefore be a constant temptation, when genuine phenomena run short (and the sitters are not too vigilant), to supplement them by a few conjuring tricks. It is not safe to assume, be it remembered, that what has happened once happens always. Both sides are too apt to fall into this error. The sceptic, hearing that a particular medium has been detected in trickery, is confirmed in the belief that *all* Spiritualistic manifestations are necessarily produced by dishonest means. The average believer, on the other hand, having once witnessed what he regards as unmistakably genuine manifestations, is thenceforth prepared to accept all similar phenomena as genuine. The logic is bad in both cases. The fact that A. was caught yesterday *in flagrante delicto* does not prove that B. is

an impostor, nor is it even conclusive proof that A.'s manifestation of to-day is produced by a trick. The fact that C. has produced writing without human intervention to-day does not at all preclude his employing a little hanky-panky to-morrow. It is quite possible for one half of the alleged phenomena of Spiritualism to be genuine, and for the other half to be produced by the grossest possible trickery. I was much struck by an observation made some time ago in my presence by a well-known and leading Spiritualist, to the effect that, in his belief, there was not a single professional medium before the public who would not use trickery when occasion offered. Such a declaration, made by a gentleman of high culture and trained acuteness, who after much patient investigation is still fully convinced of the genuineness of a great part of the Spiritualistic phenomena, carries a two-fold lesson to inquirers:—in the first place, to bring a fair and judicial spirit to their task—not claiming *à priori* to decide what is possible and what is not,—and in the second to accept nothing as *proof* save the most absolute and conclusive evidence, fenced about by such conditions as to render fraud not merely improbable, but impossible.

ANGELO J. LEWIS.

P.S.—Since the above paper was originally drafted, my attention has been called to the reports of Mr. Gurney and Professor Lodge (pp. 290-292), an additional report by Mrs. Brietzke (pp. 294, 295), the report of Mr. Murray (p. 296), that of Messrs. Smith and Templeton (pp. 297-304), and that of the Russian Professors (pp. 329-331), which were not included in the "proof" series originally submitted to me. I have revised the paper so as, where necessary, to touch upon these cases. I have also had the opportunity of reading in the *Journal* for June the conclusions of Mrs. Sidgwick in relation to the matter. I cordially agree with her as to the extreme difficulty of continuous observation, and the desirability of adopting such conditions as shall tend to obviate the necessity for unremitting personal watchfulness; but it will be seen that I do not go so far as Mrs. Sidgwick in asserting that the whole of the manifestations are attributable to conjuring. I have indicated certain points which seem to me to suggest the employment of trickery, and bearing these in mind, and using the safeguards I have suggested, it should be the easier for investigators to prevent or detect its use. If I have put a wrong interpretation upon innocent circumstances, the fact that I have shown them capable of such interpretation should put the honest Spiritualist on his mettle to avoid, by the precautions indicated, even the possibility of such misconstruction for the future.—A. J. L.

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 experience of "sensory hallucinations" of any sort will also be welcome.

*The Committee print such cases as *primâ 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.]

[It is impossible to decide in which class—L. or G.—the following case should be placed, as we do not know the time relation between the percipient's experience and the death. For convenience the case is numbered G.—478.]

From Mrs. Clark, 9, South View, Forest Hall, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

January 6th, 1885.

I send you a short account, describing what I experienced at the time of the apparition of my friend, who was a young gentleman much attached to myself, and who would willingly (had I loved him well enough) have made me his wife. I became engaged to be married, and did not see my friend (Mr. Akhurst) for some months, until within a week of my marriage (June, 1878), when in the presence of my husband he wished me every happiness, and regretted he had not been able to win me.

Time passed on. I had been married about two years and had never seen Mr. Akhurst, when one day my husband told me he (Mr. Akhurst) was in Newcastle and was coming to supper and was going to stay the night. When my husband and he were talking, he said my husband had been the more fortunate of the two, but he added if anything happened my husband he could leave his money to who he liked and his widow to him, and he would be quite content. I mention this to show he was still interested in me.

Three months passed and baby was born. When it was about a week old, very early one morning I was feeding her, when I felt a cold waft of air through the room and a feeling as though some one touched my shoulder; my hair seemed to bristle all over my head and I shuddered. Raising my eyes to the door (which faced me), I saw Akhurst standing in his shirt and trousers looking at me, when he seemed to pass through the door. In the morning I mentioned it to my husband. I did not hear of Mr. Akhurst's death for some weeks after, when I found it corresponded with that of the apparition, and

though my father knew of it before, he thought in my weak state of health it were better I should not be told.

He was found lying on the bed with his shirt and trousers on just as he had thrown himself down after taking a sleeping draught.

I myself am quite convinced that Mr. Akhurst's thoughts had been so concentrated upon me, before the draught proved fatal, that his spirit visited me on its way to that glorious land where it shall dwell in the presence of Him Who said "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest."

To me the memory of Mr. Akhurst will always be as of a dear brother, greatly esteemed and deeply regretted.

EMILY CLARK.

May 13th, 1885.

My husband will certify as to my mentioning to him seeing the apparition before I heard of Mr. Akhurst's death, but I am sorry I cannot tell you where it happened, nor the exact date of the death, but I remember when we heard about it my husband and I traced it to about the time of my "vision."

I will ask my husband to write you a few lines, and I am sorry I cannot give the time and place of death; it is nearly five years ago, and on account of my not knowing personally any of his family I am not in a position to ascertain.

July 23rd, 1885.

I never experienced anything of the kind before. I think Mr. Akhurst's death happened somewhere in Yorkshire. What makes me think the time corresponded with his death, was, my asking how long ago it was from my hearing of his death, and the actual occurrence; and then knowing the time of my little girl's birth, I came to the conclusion it was about the same time. I think this is all the information I can give you. I shall ask my husband to send you a few lines to-morrow.

From Edward Clark, Solicitor, County Chambers, Newcastle-on-Tyne,

July 24th, 1885.

At the request of my wife, Mrs. Clark, of 9, South View, Forest Hall, I beg to inform you of my knowledge of the supposed apparition of Mr. Akhurst. Shortly after my wife had been confined of my second daughter, about the end of September, 1880, my wife one morning informed me she had seen Akhurst about one o'clock that morning. I of course told her it was nonsense, but she persisted, and said he appeared to her with only his trousers and a shirt on, and the remark she made was that he was just dressed as she had seen him in the Corsican Brothers (he was an actor). She also described her feelings at the time. I tried to persuade her it was a dream, but she insisted that it was an apparition.

As near as I can remember, about six months after, I met a mutual friend of Akhurst's and my own, and in conversation I inquired after Akhurst. He said, "Don't you know he is dead?" I said, "No, when did he die?" He said, "I don't know the exact date, but it was about six months ago"; and further informed me that he died about one o'clock in the morning in the dress as my wife described him, from an overdose of chloral. I have endeavoured to

see my friend to find out the place (Bradford, I think), but he is now in America. His name is John Brown, and he is the son of the leader writer to the *Chronicle* here. If I meet him again I will try to get accurate particulars and forward them to you.

(Signed) E. CLARK.

August 21st, 1885.

. . . . My wife has, I find, no reason to think she has been mistaken as to the time when she supposed she saw W. J. Akhurst, as the date is fixed by the birth of my second little girl, which took place in September, 1880.

* * * * *

Era Almanac for 1881. Obituary for 1880, p. 93.

"Akhurst, Walter James, Actor, aged 24, July 12th."

The *Era* newspaper of July 18th, 1880, gives an account of the inquest. Mr. H. W. Akhurst gave evidence to the effect that he and his deceased brother went to the chemist's on Saturday (i.e. 10th), and procured a sleeping draught. Deceased complained of pains in his body, and of feeling lonely. The next day, Sunday, he only got up to have his bed made; Monday he died. W. H. Cope, Surgeon, attributed death to suffocation caused by heart disease. The verdict returned was "Death from natural causes."

G—479. Transitional.

The following, obtained through the kindness of Miss Porter, is from a lady who does not wish her name mentioned.

August 8th, 1885.

On the 2nd November, 1876, I arrived at my brother's house. My journey had been a long one—from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. I sat up late talking to my sister-in-law, and about 12 o'clock went to my room. There I spent some time arranging my belongings. I found I had left something I wanted down in the hall, and feeling restless, I suppose, thought I must get it then, and not wait until the morning. So downstairs I went. The house is a large one; the passages long. My room was in the third storey, and I had to go to the entrance hall. It took me some time. On returning and entering the corridor in which my room was, I saw, standing *beyond* my doorway, a figure. It looked misty, as if, had there been a light behind it, I should have seen through the mist. This misty figure was the likeness of a friend of ours who I knew to have been on a voyage to Australia. I stood and looked at "It." I put my hand over my eyes and looked again. Still it was there. Then it seemed to pass away, how I cannot say. I went on and into my room. I said to myself, My brain was tired out; and I hurried to bed so as to get rest.

Next day I told my sister-in-law what I had seen. We laughed about my ghost.

I was away from my home three weeks. On my return, my mother showed me the account in a newspaper of our poor friend's body having been cast on shore at Orfordness and buried as unknown castaway the very time that I saw this figure. We were the only friends he had in England, but why I saw him I cannot tell. It did no good to anyone. One thing I should tell you, I had not been thinking or speaking of him.

The following is from the Parish Clerk of Orford, near Wickham, Suffolk.

January 23rd, 1886.

Sir,—In reply to your inquiries I send you a copy of the head-stone :—

“ In Memory of Fredrick Gluyas Le Maistre, 2nd Officer of the barque ‘Gauntlet’ of London, native of Jersey Channel Islands, aged 24 years and 5 months, whose body was found near Orfordness Harbour, October the 22nd, 1876, his death having been occasioned by falling from on board the above named vessel in the Downs on the 27th of September of the same year.”

JAMES LING.

[I have seen the percipient (January 21st, 1886), and she tells me she has never had any other hallucination whatever. She is a sensible and practical person.—E. G.]

CORRESPONDENCE.

July 25th, 1886.

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

SIR,—In the monthly report of December last, there is a letter by myself, describing some private psychography. This morning, on opening the slate, which has been shut up in a drawer, padlocked, and the key in my pocket always, I found the word “no” in very bold outline, as though written in one stroke, thus—



I had asked, in writing, that some word or words should be written, and in reply, I get the same word repeated, twice the size, showing great increase of power. The word being a series of loops is easy to write. In this, as in other matters, I am contented, so long as I convince myself of the truth of occult slate-writing.—I am, Sir, yours truly,

GEORGE RAYLEIGH VICARS.

[The experiment, as it stands, is quite inconclusive. The first hypothesis that suggests itself is that Mr. Vicars himself did the writing, while in a state of somnambulism. To exclude this hypothesis in future experiments, it would be well if he committed the key to someone else, whom he can trust, and who does not reside in the same house. He should, of course, be sure that he has no second key which would fit the lock. Other possibilities might perhaps be sufficiently guarded against by sealing the slate up in a large envelope, secretly marked, the seal being one of which he knows the colour and remarks the exact outline, so as to be able to detect an imitation. The packet should be looked at every day.—Ed.]

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.

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

72, Stornedale Road, West Kensington Park, W.

August 4th, 1886.

SIR,—Since sending on my letter to the *Journal*, I have seen the friend who went to Mr. Eglinton's with me, and told her what Mrs. Sidgwick had said regarding my words, "instantly" and in "a moment," and she said most emphatically exactly as I have stated, that "we hardly held the slates before we heard the writing," and we both have suggested words to be written after the slate was held by us, and therefore E. could not possibly trick us.—I am, Sir, yours obediently,

H. K. BRIETZCKE.

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

Cambridge, August, 1886.

SIR,—In a letter printed in the *Journal* for July, Mr. Templeton expresses surprise that a believer in telepathy should feel any difficulty in accepting Mr. Eglinton's phenomena as genuine. I do not suppose that Mr. Templeton can mean that anyone taking one step away from scientific

* Mrs. Brietzcke's original letter to us was destroyed in the fire which burnt the premises of the National Press Agency; and the copy given above is taken from *Light* (August 7th, 1886, p. 361), to the Editor of which Mrs. Brietzcke had sent it, with an accompanying note, in which she says: "I now send you almost exactly the letter I have sent to the Society for Psychical Research."

† The account, as printed in the *Journal* for June, has been again compared with the original MS. The words which described the slates as "having been cleaned" are Mrs. Brietzcke's.—ED. *Journal*.

orthodoxy—accepting as a truth anything not generally admitted by scientific men—is logically bound to believe everything else. And yet it seems clear that if information can be conveyed from one mind to another independently of the senses, that in itself affords no presumption that movements of material objects can be effected independently of the known forces of nature. And further, even were the possibility of such movements proved, it would still, in my opinion, be reasonable to regard Mr. Eglinton's performances as conjuring.

The argument for regarding them as conjuring depends on four propositions. These are (1) that in 1876 and in 1882 he produced spurious "phenomena," and there is no reason to suppose that he has ceased to do so; (2) that all the evidence for the genuineness of his "phenomena" depends on continuous observation and accurate recollection; (3) that the numerous attempts made to obtain evidence independent of these have invariably failed; (4) that the only clear line that can be drawn between "phenomena" which may possibly be due to conjuring and those which certainly cannot, is defined by saying that the latter are independent of continuity of observation and accuracy of recollection. The argument put shortly comes to this:—Mr. Eglinton is capable of trickery; he cannot produce phenomena which are clearly not due to trickery; the natural inference is that the phenomena which he does produce are due to trickery.

My proposition (4) is disputed by Mr. Massey, but any further discussion of the subject by me is better postponed till the paper which I read in May and Mr. Massey's paper are before the world. Both are, I understand, to appear in the forthcoming number of the *Proceedings*. I will only say now that the idea of the importance of obtaining evidence independent of continuous observation and accurate recollection is not a new one invented *à propos* of Mr. Eglinton; for ever since I began the investigation of Spiritualism twelve years ago, I have sought to exclude the possibility of conjuring by evidence of this kind, and many others have done the same. What is new in my position is that I am convinced by the accumulation of evidence of various kinds which we now have about Mr. Eglinton, that he has had a fair trial and that there is no hope of obtaining evidence through him thus excluding conjuring.

What Mr. Templeton disputes is my proposition (2), for he considers that in his own experiences the necessity for continuous observation (I suppose he would hardly say also accurate recollection) was dispensed with. I shall not attempt to explain Mr. Templeton's experiences. If I did, my explanation would probably be wrong—at least the small success of my attempts to explain avowed conjuring tricks, which depended, as I suppose Mr. Templeton's experiences did, on a use of accidental and unthought-of opportunities, has not been encouraging. Besides, I am quite ready to admit, as I said in June, that some *bond fide* and careful accounts of séances—like some equally *bond fide* and careful accounts of conjuring tricks—make them seem inexplicable. Indeed, I should expect this to happen simply because, so far as the writer observed or remembered the circumstances, they were inexplicable. It cannot be expected that he should always betray to a critic a loophole, the significance of which he himself failed to detect, nor that loopholes which he

does betray should always be those actually made use of. But, however much Mr. Templeton may believe that his experiences were inexplicable, not only as he remembers them, but as they really happened, he would not, I think, maintain that they were independent of continuity of observation unless I had failed to make clear what I meant by continuous observation. For, in his own opinion, the evidence depends, among other things, on his having observed (I do not limit observation to the sense of sight) that the same slates lay on the table and were not written on from the time he put the question between them till he read the answer. That he conducted, or intended to conduct, part of this observation by keeping his own and his friend's hands on the slate does not affect the question of its needing to be continuous.

Perhaps I should make clearer what I mean by evidence independent of continuity of observation or accuracy of recollection, if I described an experiment which would secure such independence. In such an experiment, the skill of the investigator is mainly shown in its selection and preparation, and the most important part of the observation has to be done before and after the séance. The conditions to be fulfilled in an experiment of this kind in "psychography" are: (1) the surface to be written on must be ascertained to be blank before the séance; (2) this surface must be inaccessible except by undoing fastenings which it is impossible to suppose the medium could undo without subsequent detection, however little he was watched; (3) the possibility must be excluded that the medium can prepare a similar surface similarly rendered inaccessible, to substitute for the investigator's. Numerous unsuccessful experiments of this kind are mentioned in the *Journal* for June, and were enumerated by me on page 333; but the details of the precautions taken to secure the above three conditions are not given in any detail, presumably because, the experiments having failed, the precautions were of no general interest. The example I will take is different from any of these, and is selected on account of its simplicity, which makes it easy to describe. I may say that the credit of inventing it is not due to myself. Let a glass test-tube or flask be hermetically sealed, with paper and pencil inside it. Let its weight and its form, or its weight and its volume be recorded. Its form might be sufficiently recorded by means of a mould, or by noting certain measurements; its volume can be ascertained of course by weighing the water it displaces. Let competent and trustworthy witnesses depose before the séance that these things are correctly recorded, and that the paper within is not written on. It may be taken as certain that the medium, even if left alone with a blow-pipe, could neither open and close this vessel without altering it, nor produce a facsimile as to both weight and form, or both weight and volume. If the experiment succeeds, witnesses should verify the identity of the glass vessel, and attest that the paper has now writing on it. The evidence thus obtained for "psychography" would be practically independent of the investigator's attention during the séance; and probably no one, however much he believes in the possibility of continuous observation, will deny that such evidence would be more complete and satisfactory than Mr. Templeton's, or any other given in the *Journal* for June.

The question then has to be answered, Why does Mr. Eglinton never obtain phenomena under conditions such as these? The answer that at once suggests itself, especially in the case of a person of Mr. Eglinton's known antecedents, is that conditions such as these absolutely exclude the possibility of conjuring, while the less stringent conditions do not.

What other reason can there be? The better kind of experiments have been too often tried for the failure to be attributed to chance, and it will scarcely be denied that they have been tried in too great variety for the failure to be attributed to physical causes interfering with the occult agency. Had, for instance, only the glass-covered slate experiment been tried (see *Journal* for June, p. 324), such an interfering physical cause might have been surmised in the glass, though it would have been difficult for those who believe in the genuineness of the occult passage of platinum into hermetically sealed glass tubes, said to have occurred in Professor Hare's laboratory, to maintain this view. But if glass is the cause of failure, why does not writing occur in the case of slates covered with wire gauze? And so we might proceed through the various experiments that have been tried, finding it more and more difficult to escape the conclusion that the failure common to these experiments has no common physical cause unless it be that the conditions were specially well adapted to the exclusion of conjuring. The failure cannot be attributed to the investigators, for the same investigators have been very successful in obtaining phenomena under inferior conditions. Turning to purely psychological explanations, it has, I believe, been suggested, with reference either to Mr. Eglinton or to another medium, that the suspicion evinced in using such tests affects the medium injuriously and interferes with the phenomena. But the better tests show no more suspicion than the inferior ones, and the inferior tests—those with Mr. Eglinton's own locked slate for instance—do not interfere with the phenomena. Nor can we suppose that Mr. Eglinton's imagination is affected by the difficulties to be overcome, and that this has a bad effect on his mediumship, for how can he imagine it to be more difficult to write in a folding-slate that is sealed than in one not fastened at all, if neither is to be opened during the process? A Spiritualistic explanation has been suggested, namely, that the independent intelligences with whom we have to deal will not produce the phenomena under the best conditions. I do not know of any grounds for entertaining this hypothesis, but of course it cannot be disproved. If, however, independent wills and intelligences govern the phenomena and desire to prevent our obtaining proof of their occult nature, it is clearly useless to continue the investigation. It is of no use fighting against beings so obviously masters of the situation.

In the meanwhile, until some plausible explanation is offered of Mr. Eglinton's invariable failure to exhibit phenomena under conditions independent of continuous observation and accurate recollection, I must continue to regard him as a mere conjurer, though doubtless a very clever one in his own line.—I am, sir, &c.,

ELEANOR MILDRED SIDGWICK.

"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 are requested to send their names to the Assistant Secretary, at 14, Dean's Yard, S.W. The issue of the work will now be delayed for a couple of months, as, on the very eve of publication, most of the sheets and blocks were destroyed in the recent fire at the premises of the National Press Agency.

The issue of Part X. of the *Proceedings* has been delayed in consequence of the fire. It is, however, nearly ready for publication.

SUPPLEMENTARY LIBRARY CATALOGUE.

The following additions have been made during the last two months.

- GREGORY (Wm., M.D., F.R.S.E.) *Animal Magnetism; or Mesmerism and its Phenomena.* (3rd Edition). *A Second Copy* London, 1884§
Life and Teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Arranged as a Continuous Narrative..... London, 1886‡
 THWING (Edward P., M.A., Ph.D., M.D.) *Handbook of Anthropology* New York, N.D.†

- CAHAGNET (Alphonse) *Thérapeutique du Magnétisme et du Somnambulisme* Paris, 1883
 CHEVILLARD (A.) *Etudes Expérimentales sur certains Phénomènes Nemaun et solution rationnelle du Problème spirite* (2nd Edition) Paris, 1871
 DUVEAU (A.) *Notes Bibliographiques pour servir à l'histoire du Magnétisme Animal* Paris, 1869
 EDARD (Professeur G.) *Vitalisme Curatif par les Appareils Electro-Magnétiques* Paris, 1885*
 MESUET (Dr. Ernest) *De l'Automatisme* Paris, 1874
 PERRONNET (Dr. Claude) *Force Psychique et Suggestion Mentale* Paris, 1886‡

- FRANZOLINI (Fernando) *Del Somnambulismo: Studio Medico-Forense letto all'Academia di Udine nel 19 Nov., 1880* Udine, 1882

§ Presented by Mrs. F. A. Moulton.
 * Presented by Mme. de Morsier.

† Presented by the Author.
 ‡ Presented by the Author.