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ANNOUNCEMENT OF GENERAL MEETING.

The next General Meeting of the Society will be held at the Rooms of the Society of British Artists, Suffolk-street, Pall Mall, S.W., on Friday, the 29th of October, when a paper will be read by Mr. Frederic W. H. Myers on "Multiplex Personality." The chair will be taken at 8.30 p.m.

ON THE REPORTS, PRINTED IN THE *JOURNAL* FOR JUNE, OF SITTINGS WITH MR. EGLINTON.

BY RICHARD HODGSON.

I propose in the following paper to discuss in some detail the evidential value of the reports printed in the *Journal* for June, concerning sittings with Eglinton. This, it may be said, has already been done in the admirable paper by Mr. Lewis in the *Journal* for August. But Mr. Lewis has dealt very slightly with the reports in question after the manner in which I shall endeavour to treat them.

I am convinced that the reports, as a whole, are not reliable, and that they are no more unreliable than we should expect them to be if the slate-writing in all the cases recorded was the result of conjuring; in other words, that they are completely in harmony with the supposition that the slate-writing throughout is due to conjuring. Few rational inquirers would deny the tenability of this position if I could produce a similar series of reports where the slate-writing was known independently to be the result of conjuring; many will refuse to admit its tenability unless such a series can be produced. There are, unfortunately, several difficulties in the way of obtaining adequate reports of this kind.

Among the difficulties to which I refer are these. In the first place, Eglinton has had much greater practice and experience than any person who is likely to be available for a long series of sittings at which he will

produce the slate-writing phenomena by the aid of conjuring. Proficiency in the production of apparently "occult" slate-writing requires not only practice in the manipulation of slates, &c., but a lengthened experience of sitters, which cannot be acquired in a short time by a person who is chiefly occupied with other business.

In the second place, it is impossible to induce the same peculiarity of mental attitude in the sitters with a professed conjurer, as they would have assumed had they been sitting with Eglinton. I think I may safely say that not a single person of all those whose reports were published in the *Journal* for June felt certain beforehand that Eglinton's performances were explicable by conjuring; indeed, I may go further and say that nearly all, if not all, thought it not improbable that the phenomena were genuine, and that most of them had been strongly impressed by reports which they had previously heard or read. Now the evidence of a person holding this attitude is likely to be of decidedly less value *ceteris paribus* than that of a person who fully believes that he is watching a conjuring trick. I do not mean that there is a reluctance on his part to say or do anything which may imply a direct suspicion of the honesty of the "medium," or that, so far as his attention is directed at all, it is directed to the observation of the conditions at the time when the "occult" agency is supposed to be actually producing the writing; though from these causes also, in many cases, his testimony is likely to be less reliable. What I mean is that the idea of communication from the "spirit-world," or of some supernormal power in the "medium," will, in most persons, possess activity enough, even before any results are obtained, to interfere more or less with the observation of the conditions involved; and after the results are obtained, the dominance of the idea will frequently be great enough to contribute very materially to the naturally speedy oblivescence of many details of the sitting which were hardly noticed at the time of their occurrence, which in the course perhaps of an hour or two have dimmed out of recollection, but which, nevertheless, would have suggested the secret of the trick. Under this head I may also refer to the fact that the conversation held by the sitters with a professed conjurer will probably be of less avail in distracting their attention than if they were sitting with a "medium" with any the smallest expectation that "occult" phenomena might occur. In the former case they are well aware that the conversation is for the express purpose of distracting their attention from the movements of the conjurer; in the latter case, they endeavour to a certain extent to occupy the mind with matters foreign to the sequence of events then and there transpiring.

In the third place, comparatively few persons are willing to write out reports of slate-writing experiences with a full account of

the supposed test conditions, if they have any suspicion that the writing has been produced by mere conjuring. They are afraid of appearing ridiculous, and in this dread, if they are persuaded to write reports at all, they write them with a meagre allowance of detail, and with an abstention from dogmatic statement. No doubt the fear of ridicule has deterred many persons from writing reports on behalf of the professed "medium," but I cannot disguise from myself the fact that when this fear has been overcome by the enthusiasm which often accompanies the formation of a new belief, the reports then are less to be trusted, by reason of that very enthusiasm. Analogous to that undeliberate warping of evidence which arises from the desire to justify the adoption of a new faith and to aid in proselytising others, is that which arises from the desire to strengthen the grounds of a conviction which has already been fully formed. Possibly a wider experience may result in our finding a counterpart to this in the testimonials to professed conjuring performances, but my experience hitherto leads me to think that such a result is highly improbable.

Notwithstanding these difficulties, however, I believe that sufficient evidence will eventually be forthcoming to convince any intelligent and impartial inquirer of the justice of the conclusion which Mrs. Sidgwick has expressed, that she has now no hesitation in attributing Eglinton's slate-writing performances to conjuring. I think it will appear that those who do hesitate to place them in the category of conjuring are prejudiced in favour of ordinary human powers of observation and recollection under—it is to be remembered—exceptionally adverse circumstances; and that they are thus prejudiced simply because they have never made any special experiments with the view of ascertaining exactly how much reliance can be placed upon the reports of even acute and intelligent observers of the slate-writing performances of a conjurer known as such. They have decided *à priori* as to the capacity of human perception and memory under quite peculiar conditions, and most of them, I venture to say, have thus decided, not only without possessing any familiarity with the various modes of producing slate-writing by conjuring, but without possessing any familiarity with conjuring tricks in general, and without being aware of the extent to which we are all subject to *illusions of Memory*, which, in relation to the reports before us, are far more deserving of consideration than even illusions of Perception.

In saying this, I am as far as possible from wishing to maintain an attitude of superiority. In fact, our absolute deficiency, as to both Perception and Memory, was strongly impressed upon Mr. Hogg and myself when we wrote the report of our sittings with Eglinton in June,

1884. Since then I have had a somewhat considerable and varied experience in comparing the testimonies of numerous *bona fide* witnesses to events belonging to the class of conjuring performances. The most instructive to me in the first instance were the different accounts which I heard from eye-witnesses of the tricks of the Hindoo jugglers. I saw many of these performances, and saw them frequently, and having learnt secretly from the jugglers themselves how they were done, I was thereafter in a position to compare the accounts of them with the actual occurrences. The incident which impressed me most in this connection is one which I have often related, but which I now recount in writing for the first time. I regret, for obvious reasons, that I was not foreseeing enough to make a careful record when the incident happened, and obtain the signatures of the lady and gentleman concerned.

The juggler was sitting upon the ground immediately in front of the hotel, with his feet crossed. Two small carved wooden figures were resting on the ground, about two feet distant from the juggler. Some coins were also lying on the ground near the figures. The juggler began talking to the figures, which moved at intervals, bowing, "kissing," and bumping against each other. The coins also began to move, and one of them apparently sprang from the ground and struck one of the figures. An officer and his wife, who had but recently arrived at the hotel, were spectators with myself, and we stood probably within two yards' distance of the juggler. I knew how the trick was performed; they did not know. The officer drew a coin from his pocket, and asked the juggler if this coin would also jump. The juggler replied in the affirmative, and the coin was then placed near the others on the ground, after which it betrayed the same propensity to gymnastic feats as the juggler's own coins. Two or three other travellers were present at dinner in the evening of the same day, and in the course of the conversation the officer described the marvellous trick which he had witnessed in the afternoon. Referring to the movements of the coins, he said that he had taken a coin from his own pocket and placed it on the ground himself, yet that this coin had indulged in the same freaks as the other coins. His wife ventured to suggest that the juggler had taken the coin and placed it on the ground, but the officer was emphatic in repeating his statement, and appealed to me for confirmation. He was, however, mistaken. I had watched the transaction with special curiosity, as I knew what was necessary for the performance of the trick. The officer had apparently intended to place the coin upon the ground himself, but as he was doing so, the juggler leant slightly forward, dexterously and in a most unobtrusive manner received the coin from the fingers of the officer as the latter was stooping down, and laid it close to the others. If the juggler had not thus taken the coin, but had allowed the officer

himself to place it on the ground, the trick, as actually performed, would have been frustrated.

Now I think it highly improbable that the movement of the juggler entirely escaped the perception of the officer—highly improbable, that is to say, that the officer was absolutely unaware of the juggler's action at the moment of its happening; but I suppose that although an impression was made upon his consciousness, it was so slight as to be speedily effaced by the officer's *imagination* of himself as stooping and placing the coin upon the ground. The officer, I may say, had obtained no insight into the *modus operandi* of the trick, and his fundamental misrepresentation of the only patent occurrence that might have given him a clue to its performance debarred him completely from afterwards, in reflection, arriving at any explanation.

Now I hope to succeed in showing that it is the universal mental weakness of which the above incident is an illustration, that forms one of the main sources of error in the reports of Eglinton's slate-writing. There are of course other sources of error, notably the distraction of the sitter's attention to such an extent that he is not aware at all of certain actions performed by the "medium"; but the source of error which I now desire in particular to press upon the reader's notice is the perishability, the exceeding transience, the fading febleness, the evanescence beyond recall, of certain impressions which nevertheless did enter the domain of consciousness, and did in their due place form part of the stream of impetuous waking thought.

It is, moreover, not simply and merely that many events, which did obtain at the sitting some share of perception, thus lapse completely from the realm of ordinary recollection. The consequence may indeed be that we meet with a blank or a chaos in traversing the particular field of remembrance from which the events have lapsed, but this will often be filled by some conjectured events which rapidly become attached to the adjacent parts, and form, in conjunction with them, a consolidated but fallacious fragment in memory; on the other hand, the consequence may be that the edges of the *lacunæ* close up—events originally separated by a considerable interval are now *remembered* vividly in immediate juxtaposition, and there is no trace of the piecing.

Another source of error which bears a kinship to this depends partly upon the absence of a prolonged carefulness in writing out the original record of the sitting. Events which occurred during the sitting, which made a comparatively deep impression, which have not, at the time of recording, sunk beyond the possibility of recall, nevertheless do not appear in the report, because they were *temporarily* forgotten; and having been thus omitted, the temporary forgetfulness

is likely to become permanent, owing to the very coherence given to the defective account by the recording.

Less than a month ago I spent many hours recalling and writing notes of a slate-writing séance. The task occupied me some six or seven continuous hours on each of the two days following the evening of the séance. Taking the first page of my mss., I find, among what are plainly interpolations* after the page was originally completed, an exceedingly noteworthy passage.

I had held the slate against the table instantaneously after the "conjurer" had placed it in position; the slate was shortly afterwards withdrawn, and the chalk which had been placed upon it was found crushed. The chalk marks were cleaned off. A second time I held it similarly, and on withdrawal a dash was found on the slate, which was again cleaned. After noting these and other directly connected events I had originally written, placing the occurrence before the production of writing: "He then turned the slate over, and put the nib of chalk on, and asked me to hold." My alteration of this reads: "After holding some time, he asked me to put my holding hand upon his other holding B's, so as to complete circuit. With this exception I held the slate in each case against the table. Later, he asked me to hold again." I had nearly omitted this most important exceptional circumstance here described, correctly described—as I have since learnt from the "conjurer." I may further notice that it occurred *before* the first writing was obtained, as I rightly placed it. The "conjurer" did turn the slate over as I originally wrote, on three subsequent occasions during the sitting, but he did *not* do so previous to the appearance of the first writing. My temporary forgetfulness thus involved the temporary insertion of a conjectured event. Or, since the event thus inserted did actually occur later in the sitting, the insertion of it in the wrong place may be regarded as an illustration of the tendency to transposition, to which Mr. Lewis has also drawn attention (*Journal* for August, p. 362), in referring to the difficulty of recalling in their proper order such events as those in question; it is almost impossible to avoid confusing the sequence if the events are crowded, even if they appeared at the time of their occurrence to be of special importance.

In addition to the mistakes which thus originate from the lapsing

* I recollect, as I think, my surprise at finding, while I was engaged in making the record, that I had so nearly forgotten at the moment such an important incident as that referred to in the interpolation; but apart from this, the passage was undoubtedly written afterwards, as appears from its position, &c. I may add that I had probably spent an hour or two in originally noting the first page.

of certain events beyond recollection, there is the further mistake to which we are liable, of unwittingly inserting events between others which occurred in immediate sequence. This of course also depends upon the weakness of memory; the events as they originally occurred may have acquired only a loose coherence in consciousness, so that an event afterwards *imagined* usurps easily a place in the series and becomes fixed by recording and repetition.

I make no excuse for reminding the reader of these facts concerning the treachery of memory, because they seem to me to have been almost entirely overlooked by the antagonists of Mrs. Sidgwick's view. It is impossible to estimate rightly the value of the reports in the *Journal* for June without giving due weight to the influence of such illusions as I have briefly specified,—without inquiring in detail, after experimental knowledge, how far these reports may be rendered untrustworthy by the faults of simple omission, of substitution, of transfiguration, and of complete interpolation.

Suppose that we are considering the testimony of a witness to his own separate and complete examination of a slate immediately previous to the apparent production of writing. Then, according to what I have been saying, we have—with a perfectly *bond fide* witness—four possibilities to consider besides the one that his impression is correct. It may actually be that no examination at all was made by the witness; it may be that, although made, the examination was not made in the perfect manner now described; it may be that the examination, although faultless and made at the sitting, was not made on the occasion alleged; or it may be that although the examination was made as described, and on the occasion alleged, events, perhaps unnoticed or regarded by the witness as insignificant, intervened between the examination and the apparent production of the writing.

I repeat that the deficiency which I am emphasising here concerns primarily the trustworthiness of memory, *under circumstances*—be it remembered—*of exceptional difficulty*. But I am aware that mere general statements will neither produce conviction nor raise definite issues, and I therefore proceed to suggest, by somewhat detailed comments, *how much* the reports printed in the *Journal* for June must be inaccurate if we refuse to regard them as exhibiting satisfactory proof of the production of "occult" slate-writing.

I shall endeavour, as to the cases with which I deal, to point out how the trick may have been performed. I do not affirm dogmatically that the trick was actually performed in each case in the manner I may suggest. No doubt my suppositions would in many instances prove to be erroneous, had we any means of testing them by the real occurrences. But even if in no single instance could my detailed

hypotheses be justified, it would in no way affect the object which I have in view; this not being to show how Eglinton performed the trick in each particular case, but being to show how far I think each report may fail of being a full and accurate description of the sitting. I propose to construct hypotheses as to what actually occurred, supposing Eglinton to be a conjurer, so that we may estimate the amount of distortion in the reports, owing chiefly to mal-observation and illusions of memory on the part of the witnesses. The question will then be, not whether the witnesses made the very identical mistakes which I attribute to them hypothetically, but whether they made mistakes of the same character and quantity as these,—and this without impugning either their sanity or their veracity. Further, since we are not in a position to ascertain with any approach to certainty what mistakes the witnesses did make, and since the majority of the witnesses are doubtless unaware of the untrustworthiness of ordinary human perception and memory *under the peculiar circumstances involved*, and will be unwilling to admit the possibility of the more serious lapses which I shall attribute to them, we shall be compelled to fall back upon the inquiry:—How much distortion should we find in the reports of similar witnesses of analogous performances? By similar witnesses I mean—persons whose general intelligence, mental attitude, emotional state, knowledge of conjuring, powers of observation and retentiveness, &c.—so far as we can judge of these—entitle them to be placed on the same level as the writers of the reports printed in the *Journal* for June; and by analogous performances I mean—unquestionably conjuring performances which resemble in their main aspects those which I suppose to have occurred at the sittings with Eglinton described in those reports.

This inquiry, as it seems to me, can receive a complete answer only after a somewhat complete experimental investigation, in the way of which, however, there are certain obstacles, to which I have referred in the early part of this paper. But I think we may insist that the reliability of the testimony offered, *under the circumstances involved*, cannot justifiably be assumed as adequate to prove the genuineness of “occult” slate-writing—without some such investigation as I suggest. Such an assumption is illegitimate in the face of the ordinary performances of conjurers, whose *modi operandi* are undetected by the witnesses of the tricks; and I have not learnt that any attempt has been made, by those who think so highly of the reports in the *Journal* for June, or other similar reports, to compare the actual occurrences at conjuring performances with the misdescriptions given of them by the uninitiated, for the purpose of reaching a just conclusion as to the evidential value of the reports in question.

From these considerations let us now pass to the examination of the reports in detail, and in the first place let us turn our attention to any obvious indications, in the reports themselves, of the faults which I have specified. We may expect to find these, if anywhere, by a comparison of accounts by different persons of the same sitting. There are unfortunately only two instances in the whole series of reports where this comparison is possible. These are the reports of Mr. Smith and Mr. Murray Templeton, pp. 299-303 (*Journal for June*), and the reports of Miss Symons and Mr. Wedgwood, pp. 310-311.

Mr. Templeton begins his report by saying :

As Mr. Smith will probably provide a detailed account of this our last sitting with Mr. Eglinton, I shall do no more than record what I consider to be the main factors in the conditions and succeeding results.

The various omissions, therefore, of events which we find mentioned in Mr. Smith's report cannot be urged as instances of mal-observation or lapse of memory on the part of Mr. Templeton, even supposing that they were correctly recounted by Mr. Smith. It is otherwise however where Mr. Templeton mentions events which are either described differently, or not described at all, by Mr. Smith. Thus Mr. Templeton writes :

Then three differently-coloured morsels of crayon having been placed on the slate, and the slate pressed against the table, Mr. Eglinton asked Miss P——, which crayon she would choose to have used in the writing of any number she might name. She fixed on the number 9 to be written in green, I desired 99 in yellow, and Mr. Smith 12 in red. The numbers and colours were arranged while Mr. Eglinton held the slate against the table ; and no change in the position of the slate or his hand took place till the writing was heard, and we found the numbers in their respective colours correctly written out.

Mr. Smith writes :

Three small pieces of crayon—green, yellow, and red—were placed upon a slate together ; Miss P——asked that the figure 9 might be written in green, Mr. Templeton proposed that 99 should be produced in yellow, and I voted for the figures 12 in red. The slate was then placed beneath the table-flap, and writing was soon to be heard.

It is of course impossible to determine whether Mr. Templeton is right in affirming that the slate was already held against the table in position *before* the numbers and colours were chosen by the sitters, or Mr. Smith right in describing the slate's having been placed under the table *after* they were chosen. Mr. Templeton does not give any estimate of the time which elapsed after the slate was held under the table before it was withdrawn with the numbers written upon it. Mr.

Smith's estimate is indefinite; "writing was soon to be heard"; he uses a similar expression in connection with the next incident described in the same report: "soon we heard," and in Mr. Templeton's report this appears as "probably 10 minutes." Hence, without assuming any error on Mr. Smith's part, we may suppose that the slate was held under the table 10 minutes by Eglinton, and that in that interval he found the opportunity, or opportunities, of writing the numbers. No reliance can be placed on Mr. Templeton's statement concerning no change in the position of the slate, &c., when we remember the difficulties both of continuous observation and of accurate recollection.

In the next incident (the tracing, on a "child's outline drawing-slate," of part of a leg) the slate, according to Mr. Templeton, was under the table "probably 10 minutes," and then, after the "soft scratching" sound, "part of a leg had been accurately copied, we found," or, as Mr. Smith writes: "a portion of the leg had been roughly but correctly traced." This does not seem to have been a feat very difficult of accomplishment. It would appear from Mr. Smith's account that they had requested "the leg" to be traced, and part only was traced, an operation which surely would occupy but a very short time, not more than a few seconds; and Mr. Templeton scarcely adds to the value of his testimony by his later confident statement (*Journal* for July, p. 360):

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.

The accounts of the next incident described by Mr. Templeton are instructive. Mr. Smith writes:

We now expressed our desire to get something written which could be regarded as outside the knowledge of any of us—such as a certain word on a given line of a chosen page of a book; and we proposed that the "controls" should be asked if such an experiment would be likely to succeed.

From which the reader will hardly infer that the test was proposed by Eglinton himself. Yet Mr. Templeton writes:

Next the final and most crucial test was proposed by Mr. Eglinton. It had been suggested to his own mind by a former test of my own, &c.

It may often happen that the recorder describes an experiment as suggested by himself when it was either suggested or "led up to" by Eglinton. Thus, Mr. Templeton, in describing the choice of the page and line, says:—

As the theory of the medium's mesmeric influence over the sitters had been more than once put before me as a not impossible explanation I suggested we should fix the line by the number of crayons in a box before us,

which gave us the 18th line; and in a similar way, from a separate heap of slate pencils, we obtained the number 9 for page.

This suggestion may have been led up to by Eglinton; and it is important to observe the difference between this account and Mr. Smith's, who says:

This point Mr. Templeton and I decided by each taking a few crayons and pencils from the table by chance, and counting them; Mr. Templeton had possessed himself of 18 pieces of crayon, and I had seized 9 pieces of pencil, we found on counting them; we therefore decided that the "controls" should be asked to write the *last word of line 18 on page 9 of the book.*

Now if Mr. Templeton's account is correct, Mr. Smith's is certainly incorrect. Taking the number of crayons in a box is a very different thing from taking a few crayons from the table by chance. The number of crayons in the box might well have been arranged by Eglinton. Similarly the number of "pieces of pencil" may have been arranged by Eglinton. Nothing is said about how the choice of the *last word* was made; this might have been suggested by Eglinton, who might have previously ascertained that the last word of line 18 of page 9 of the book decided upon was "bunhodesed" (misspelling it in the reproduction), in the case that the chooser of a book might take the *red-covered* one Eglinton desired—not such an improbable case as some of my readers may suppose; and he may have already written, during the sitting, the words afterwards found, so that the message may have been on the slate at the time when the slate and book together were placed under the table. Of course I do not consider that the possibility is excluded that Eglinton actually looked at the book under the table and found the word required and then wrote the message, as I have no doubt he has done on other occasions; I cannot place any reliance upon the confidence of the sitters that he did not do so. The interval was not improbably a considerable one, notwithstanding Mr. Templeton's phrase—"after some slight waiting"; Mr. Smith notes especially, in connection with this incident, after the slate with the book was placed under the table, "We then commenced conversing"; and the very form of his after-statement:

—it is easy for us to say with confidence that all his movements were so carefully watched that the slightest attempt on his part to open the book, or even to touch it, would have been detected almost before the attempt was made,

suggests that he was not aware of the difficulty of continuous observation under such circumstances. But while Eglinton may have looked up the word required, under the table, I mention the "forcing" method as well, in view of the discrepancies between the two accounts, and

particularly of a serious omission on the part of Mr. Smith, to which I now draw attention. He says:—

I then went to the bookshelf, took a book at haphazard, without of course looking at the title, returned to my seat, placed the book upon the chair, and sat upon it whilst we were arranging the page, line and word to be asked for.

* * * * *

Of course, the test would have greater value as such had we been able to use a book which we could be certain he had never read; but if this point tells against the result, the fact that by a happy chance my selection caused a Hungarian book of poems to be used should surely counterbalance this evidential flaw to a great extent, and reduce the chances of his having memorised the position of every word in it to a minimum. That I was not forced to take this special book from its being in a particularly handy and prominent position, and that page 9 and line 18 were not "led up to" by Mr. Eglinton is obvious—from the fact that I made my selection without looking at the books; and that the page and line were determined by chance, then and there, as I have described.

Now it is clear, from Mr. Templeton's account, that Mr. Smith, at the time of writing this report, had *entirely forgotten* an incident which he ought to have regarded as of the utmost importance. Mr. Templeton says:—

On taking a book Mr. Smith asked Mr. Eglinton if he knew what it was. Mr. Eglinton answered "Yes," and that as it was a rather trashy novel it might be better to choose another. Mr. Smith then took a small red-covered book from the opposite shelf, and this Mr. Eglinton said he did not recognise.

Yet Mr. Smith builds up an express argument which depends chiefly on two circumstances—that the page and the line were determined by chance, which is by no means certain, and that the selection from the book was entirely at haphazard, which is also by no means certain, since the first book chosen was rejected by Eglinton, and the phrases—"without looking at the books" and "without looking at the title"—are not specific enough and not reliable enough, in view of the omitted incident, to warrant us in saying that Mr. Smith's attention was not caught by the red-covered book. Not merely is there no allusion whatever in Mr. Smith's report to this rejection of the first book, but his argument forbids the supposition that he had any recollection of it when he wrote his report. Suppose that we had not received Mr. Templeton's report of the sitting, and that I had suggested that Mr. Smith's report was quite unreliable,—that although he described himself as taking a book at haphazard, returning to his seat, &c., he had probably forgotten to mention that he had first taken another book and had asked Eglinton if he knew it, that Eglinton had replied in the affirmative, saying that he knew the books on that set of shelves, and that Mr. Smith had better take a book from the opposite side,—

upon which Mr. Smith had turned to the opposite shelf and had taken the first book that struck him, which "happened" to be the small red-covered book desiderated by Eglinton. I think it not unlikely that if I had made such a suggestion, it would have been scouted as absurd by many persons, who would reject as intolerable my assumption that a witness of Mr. Smith's intelligence and acuteness could have so completely omitted all reference to such an incident, and could have used an argument which strictly excludes its occurrence.

Am I not justified in assuming, then, that a witness may forget that the locked slate, for example, was taken under the table, or that another slate was not examined on some particular occasion, or that some other incident which might be of special importance originally formed part of a series of events, the description of which, with the incident omitted, now runs on unbrokenly in the report without the least shadowy hint that such an incident occurred?

I must here again remind the reader that I do not affirm that the trick, in the incident we have just considered, was arranged in its details beforehand. But whereas, dealing with Mr. Smith's report alone, I should suggest that Eglinton used opportunities of finding the word and writing on the slate while the slate and book were under the table, I should also suggest, dealing with Mr. Templeton's report, that Eglinton had previously arranged most of the details, succeeded partially in "forcing" the book, and completely in "leading up to" the seemingly chance choice of the page, &c. No capable conjurer familiar with the possibilities of "forcing" would attribute any value to the "book-test" in this particular instance, in the light of the statements made by Mr. Templeton, in relation to which I may quote a passage from the article by Mr. Lewis (*Journal* for August, p. 370): "The expedient of taking a number of bits of pencil, wax lights, and the like, though apparently excluding the possibility of pre-arrangement, is capable of a good deal of 'management' in skilful hands."

I have dealt with this "crucial test" incident at some length because it furnishes an illustration of what has no doubt frequently happened in reporting sittings with Eglinton, especially where *long* messages have been obtained, whether on a single slate, or on a double slate, or between two slates. If we were to regard the description of the witness as reliable, any hypothesis involving previous preparation on the part of Eglinton might be entirely out of the question; but a report, as we see, may be marred by the gravest omissions and other misdescriptions, a knowledge of which might fundamentally change our explanation of the "manifestations" at the sitting.

Finally, we must bear in mind that in all probability the discrepancies, as to important points, between the two reports, would have

been still more striking had Mr. Templeton set out with the intention of writing down every detail of the sitting, instead of recording (and this after three days' interval) only what he considered to be "the main factors in the conditions and succeeding results."

Let us now turn to the reports of Miss Symons and Mr. Wedgwood, (pp. 310-311). We may first compare the two accounts as to the positions of the slates during the sitting, I analyse the statements of Miss Symons as follows:—

- (1) The locked slate was left on the table.
- (2) Another slate was taken by Eglinton below the table.
- (3) Not long after ten minutes or a quarter of an hour had elapsed (during which there was no reply whatever), the slate under the table was withdrawn, and the words "We will try," were found written upon it.
- (4) The locked slate was held under the table by Eglinton, and he let it drop from his hand to the floor. On picking it up he *opened it*, but no writing had come. [We are not told how Miss Symons knew that no writing had come.]
- (5) The locked slate—*presumably*, from the account—was left on the table.
- (6) Another slate was held by Eglinton below the table, upon which the word "Patience" was almost immediately found.
- (7) The locked slate was *opened a second time* by Eglinton, and Miss Symons satisfied herself "by slightly moving the cards," that there was then no writing on either side of the slate.
- (8) The locked slate was never out of the sight of Miss Symons, was never removed from the table, and Miss Symons' hand as well as Eglinton's rested on it till the sound as of writing was heard, closely followed by the third inspection of the slate, when the names of the cards in question were found as required.

Looking for these points in Mr. Wedgwood's account of October 8th, we find that there is no reference of any kind, express or implied, to (2) and (3); and his description of (6) suggests that while he was writing his recollections to Mrs. Sidgwick, he had entirely forgotten (2) and (3), and this, be it observed, although his account was written soon after the sitting: "I am this moment returned from Mr. Eglinton's." The opening of the locked slate—(4) and (7)—is mentioned by Mr. Wedgwood, *but in the postscript*, from which it would appear either that he had temporarily forgotten the incidents, or that he had attributed little significance to them—(probably the former, since in the main part of his account he speaks of the key as having been "all the time on the table and before him"). Further, Mr. Wedgwood's account—such as it is—of the opening, *implies* that immediately before each opening the locked slate was under the table:—"twice in the course of waiting for the writing, Mr. Eglinton *brought up* the frame and opened it before us"; he never mentions *expressly* that it was held

under the table at all. Miss Symons, it will be noticed, mentions that the locked slate was held below the table during *one* interval; but if it was taken under the table a *second* time, as the statement of Mr. Wedgwood implies, there is a most serious omission in her account. I think it highly probable that the slate *was* held under the table during two separate intervals, the second of these occurring, I suppose, between (4) and (8), and,—more exactly,—between (6) and (7). This supposition is perhaps strengthened by the fact that according to the report of Miss Symons as it stands, the following incidents formed a strangely rapid succession.

- a. Eglinton opens the slate.
- b. Eglinton holds another slate under the table and asks a question, and "Patience" is the "almost immediate" reply.
- c. At *this point* Eglinton opens the slate again!

I think that *this point* was determined, in the mind of Miss Symons, rather by what followed than by what preceded, and that after the injunction "Patience" the locked slate was again held under the table for some time, but that Miss Symons had forgotten this when she wrote her report, just as Mr. Smith had forgotten the incident of the rejection of the first book by Eglinton. But, it may be urged, however justifiable this emendation may be,—harmonising, moreover, as it does, the statement of Mr. Wedgwood,—is it not immaterial whether the locked slate was held below the table a second time or not, if Miss Symons inspected it afterwards and found that there was no writing upon it? To this I reply in the first place that what is immaterial in one case may be very material in another, and the taking of a slate below the table should in every single instance have been regarded by the writers of the reports as a most noteworthy* circumstance; and in the second place that Miss Symons did not take sufficient care to ascertain that there was then no writing upon it. She says:

I satisfied myself by slightly moving the cards (though, I need hardly say, without turning them up) that there was then no writing on either side of the slate.

The writing, it appears, was eventually found "*under the cards.*" The question is, (on the supposition which I have taken that the locked slate was twice held under the table), did Miss Symons, on the occasion of the second opening of the slate, move the cards enough to ascertain truly that the names of the cards were not already written? On the contrary, I suppose that *she did not then move them at all,*

* See *Journal* for August, pp. 367-8: "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," &c., &c.

but that she moved them on the occasion of the *first opening* of the slate—number (4) in the analysis p. 422. It is not improbable that in consequence of the dropping of the slate, the cards were somewhat displaced, and were arranged by Miss Symons; and I conjecture that she afterwards *rightly* recollected having moved the cards when the slate was opened, but *wrongly* recollected on which occasion she did so. This, too, would explain the fact that she does not tell us, with reference to her inspection on the first opening of the slate, how she knew that no writing had come; that being the appropriate place, after the dropping of the slate on the floor, both for her moving of the cards and for her conviction that nothing had been written.

Again I remind the reader that my explanation is hypothetical, and that other suppositions might be made. For example, Miss Symons may be mistaken in her belief that after the second opening of the slate it remained continuously on the table, in her sight, and under her hand; it may have remained thus for some time previous to the sound as of writing, but it may have been taken below the table immediately after her last inspection, *i.e.*, between (7) and (8), then written upon, and then, no sound as of writing having been heard, replaced upon the table, and thenceforth closely guarded as she describes.

But I shall not burden the reader by detailing various suppositions all of which might be made without, in my opinion, attributing more inaccuracy to the reports before us than we are warranted in doing by the defects of perception and memory which must almost inevitably characterise such reports, notwithstanding the conscientiousness and care of the witnesses. I may now, in accordance with my first supposition, amend the report of Miss Symons in the following way, using her words as far as possible. The corresponding passage in her report will be found in the *Journal* for June, p. 310.

This being so far satisfactory, Mr. Eglinton next held the locked slate under the table, but being, I suppose, heavy, he let it drop from his hand to the floor. On picking it up he opened it, and I satisfied myself by lightly moving the cards (though, I need hardly say, without turning them up) that there was then no writing on either side of the slate. He then held one of the smaller slates again under the table, and asked whether there was any chance of the test succeeding. "Patience" was the almost immediate reply. Mr. Eglinton then held the locked slate again under the table, and after an interval of conversation [during which he found opportunities to look at the cards and write their names, covering the writing with the cards] replaced it on the table and opened it a second time, but no writing had come. [But Miss Symons did not then look *under* the cards.] From this time up to the moment when we next heard [a sound as of] writing, the slate was never out of our sight for an instant, nor was it once removed from the table; in fact, Mr. Eglinton's hand and mine rested on it throughout.

Returning to the statements of Mr. Wedgwood—it is, I think, to be *inferred* from his letter (and postscript) of October 8th, that his impression about the locked slate was that it was taken under the table for the experiment. This appears in the passage I have already quoted from the postscript—“twice in the course of waiting for the writing, Mr. Eglinton brought up the frame and opened it before us,” and in the passage—“Mr. Eglinton then put the slates before Miss Symons, who sat next him”—when taken in conjunction with the last sentence of his letter of October 15th, a sentence which seems intended to correct a former impression that the locked slate was under the table when the “sound of writing” came. If this interpretation is right, there is a further implication in Mr. Wedgwood’s first letter that the locked slate was taken a second time below the table as I have supposed, *viz.*, in the statement: “The answer came up, ‘Patience,’ so we went on and presently heard the sound of writing.” If Mr. Wedgwood, when he first wrote, thought that the “sound of writing” came when the slate was below the table, the *we went on* would apparently mean that Eglinton held the locked slate under the table again at the stage where I have inserted the occurrence in the report of Miss Symons.

It may be regarded as a needless task to consider at greater length these accounts of Mr. Wedgwood, where the most important events are mentioned so vaguely, or left to be gathered from implications only. It is obvious, that where—as in watching a conjurer’s performance—the most careful and continuous scrutiny, combined, I should perhaps add, with keen and quick vision, is required—I do not say for detection of the trick, but—for merely apprehending the apparently insignificant yet possibly all-essential details; and where a most intense and prolonged concentration of memory is demanded for the due recollection of the events which were actually observed; it is obvious, I say, that where these are primary requisites for the production of a report that shall represent even approximately what happened at the sitting, a report by Mr. Wedgwood must be in a very high degree unreliable. That Mr. Wedgwood’s accounts, *prima facie*, can have but little evidential value, may be further shown from certain other statements of his on p. 311. Thus he writes:

There was no possible room for sleight of hand, as the frame was locked all the while that it was in Eglinton’s hands, from which it seems that Mr. Wedgwood trusts to the locking of Eglinton’s own slate! And although he stated on October 8th that Eglinton opened the locked slate *twice*, and although he afterwards signed the account written by Miss Symons in which she also described two openings of the slate by Eglinton, he writes,—later still, apparently,—on October 15th:

I said that Mr. Eglinton opened the frame twice in the course of the sitting to see whether anything was written, but on seeing Miss Symons' account and talking the matter over with Mr. Eglinton, I am satisfied that it was only once.

Yet it cannot be denied that Mr. Wedgwood is a most conscientious witness, and has endeavoured to make his report as accurate as possible.

Not less instructive than a comparison of independent accounts given by *different* observers of the same sitting, might be a comparison of (as far as possible) independent accounts given by the *same* observer, especially if a considerable interval has elapsed between his two accounts. A partial instance of this is now before us in the reports of Mr. S. J. Davey, who sent different accounts of the same sittings to *Light*; all of these are printed in the present number of the *Journal* (pp. 431-438).

Mrs. Brietzcke, by her recent letters to the *Journal*, also offers one or two points for comparison.

The great lack of detail in Mr. Davey's account quoted from *Light* of July 12th, 1884, is in itself enough to show that he was then entirely unaware of the difficulties to be surmounted before either himself or his readers could form a true judgment of what actually occurred at the sitting. He does not indeed introduce so much *manifest* confusion into his account as we find in Mrs. Brietzcke's—and simply because his confusion is not so patent the reader of his account is the more likely to receive an erroneous impression—but the confusion in both instances is of the same nature, and is due primarily to the omission of facts which can hardly be described as absent from the minds of the writers even while their reports were being written.

Mr. Davey says: "I give the conditions under which we obtained the messages," and he then proceeds—well, to *not* give them. The reader may infer from his first statement about the slates that all the messages appeared on the two which he himself had taken; but that other slates were used would be *suggested*, to a careful student of his account, by the expression: "I put a crumb of pencil on the slate and then put *another* slate over that." This may be compared with Mrs. Brietzcke's expressions* in her report (p. 293) of her sitting on the 13th June. Several slates were then used which, apparently, were not taken by Mrs. Brietzcke. Had her report been written in greater detail, we should no doubt have been explicitly told that one or more of these other slates belonged to Eglinton. Similarly in Mrs. Brietzcke's report of her sitting on July 19th. She there writes:

We were late as I went to Hammond's in the Edgware-road and bought

* See also the *Journal* for August, p. 372.

three new slates. We found Mr. Eglinton waiting for us, and we immediately "sat" (the slates having been cleaned) in the following positions :

The reader of this naturally infers that the slates thus "cleaned" were Mrs. Brietzcke's. It seems at any rate clear that Mrs. Brietzcke drew this inference on reading her report in the *Journal* for June, and being certain that her slates had remained uncleaned, she suggested, as I understand, that the apparently erroneous statement was due to the Editor of the *Journal*. Finding however that the statement was undoubtedly her own, she concludes, as I presume, that she must have meant to say that "Mr. Eglinton's slates were cleaned." I infer from this that some of Eglinton's slates were in use at her sitting of July 19th in addition to his *locked* slate, which is the only slate of Eglinton's explicitly mentioned by her in her report. I should probably have inferred that Eglinton's slates were used to some extent at the sitting in question, as *thirteen* writings were obtained, and moreover Mrs. Brietzcke herself wrote upon a slate on *three* separate occasions, and her companion, Miss L., on *two* separate occasions. The locked slate was written upon only once, so that there remain 17 writings to be accounted for,—on (probably) ordinary slates. Still, all these writings may have been, and still may be, on Mrs. Brietzcke's own slates, as I do not find that more than three slates are described as in use at the sitting at one and the same time. And perhaps Mrs. Brietzcke's slates, which apparently are still "uncleaned," contain *twelve* "occult" writings; she tells us in the *Journal* for August (p. 380) that she had "almost all the writing done on *purpose*" on her three new *uncleaned* slates, and that as she "wanted these *particular* slates used, they were placed and replaced."

But although Mrs. Brietzcke's later communications throw some light upon her original reports as regards the slates used, they are more interesting from an allusion to another matter. In her report of July 19th (pp. 293-4), among the writings which she requested to be produced were the word *cat* and the figure 4. There is absolutely nothing in the report to suggest that these requests were not spontaneous, that they did not suddenly occur to Mrs. Brietzcke without having any connection with previous incidents in which Eglinton had been concerned. But what do we learn from Mrs. Brietzcke's letter to the *Journal* for August? That Professor Barrett had asked for *cat* and 4 to be written—at the sitting of July 15th?—and "had been refused." Mrs. Brietzcke desired to succeed where Professor Barrett had failed, desired to get the words which Professor Barrett "had been refused"; and it is not unlikely that she expressed her desire to Eglinton. Plainly, this information which Mrs. Brietzcke has given us in her letter affords a new aspect altogether to the incident

in which these writings accrued, and Mrs. Brietzcke did not appreciate its significance when she wrote her report. It is indeed a serious omission, though perhaps less serious than the one we found in Mr. Smith's report. We may suppose that the word *cat* was already upon the slate, when the slates were placed, *finally*, in position; and we may suppose also that the figure $\frac{1}{4}$ was already upon the slate when it was placed in position.

In relation to this incident I may remark that there is absolutely no reference to any specific examination of a slate in the whole of Mrs. Brietzcke's reports. In two of her reports she mentions, generally, the preliminary cleaning of the slates, without stating who cleaned them or to whom they belonged. In another instance, an ordinary slate is spoken of simply as "clean" (p. 295) in a way which indicates clearly enough that no complete specific examination of it was made by Mrs. Brietzcke. After these considerations I think we may say that the writing of *cat* and $\frac{1}{4}$ can scarcely have occasioned Eglinton any serious difficulty. One of the warnings we may draw from our increased knowledge of the incident is the danger of supposing hastily, in other cases, that Eglinton was precluded from writing an answer beforehand (*shortly* beforehand and during the sitting, as well as previous to the sitting) to a given request; inasmuch as he may have been quite aware what the request would be, though no indication of this is given by the witness.

Let us now turn again to Mr. Davey's accounts, bearing in mind what we have learnt from Mrs. Brietzcke. And we may first consider, independently and briefly, those published in *Light*. In these accounts Mr. Davey, like Mrs. Brietzcke, whose reports they curiously resemble as regards both positive statements and omissions of details, describes no specific examination of a slate other than that implied in the one specific cleaning which he mentions. Moreover, as we find also in Mrs. Brietzcke's reports, he seems, notwithstanding his precaution of the inked pencil grains, to have taken for granted "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." (*Journal* for August, p. 367.) Hence Mr. Davey's statement in his first account, that "the idea of trickery or juggling in slate-writing communication is quite out of the question," must have been the outcome of incompetence for the inquiry; and he unintentionally admits as much by grounding his assertion on the study—not of conjuring—but of "psychological subjects," by which he meant (as appears from an earlier passage of his communication to *Light*) investigations such as those made by "Crookes, Wallace, and Varley," and others.

I have already drawn attention to an indication that other slates were used in addition to the two Mr. Davey himself procured, and

which, he says, "did not leave my possession during the séance." This statement cannot be accepted as meaning more than that the slates were, as he thought, within his perception during the séance, so that they could not, in his opinion, have been written upon surreptitiously by Eglinton; and we know, were it only from the account given by Mr. F. Podmore at the general meeting on July 5th (see *Journal* for July, pp. 342-3) that such a statement cannot be trusted. He continues: "At first we obtained messages by simply putting a piece of slate-pencil on one slate, and holding the slate on the table." "*On the table*" is no doubt a slip or a misprint for "*under the table.*" The conditions of the holding, the modes of taking and withdrawal and re-insertion of the slate, are none of them specified. As concerns the long message, there is no reference to any examination of the slates beforehand, and were we compelled to suppose—as we are not—that Mr. Davey actually did take the slates himself, as he describes, the message may have already been on one of the slates. I think, however, that Mr. Davey did not take the initiative to such an extent as he imagined, either in this instance, or in others of which he gives an account.

I suppose—as one of several perhaps equally satisfactory suppositions, all of which I should regard as not infringing the limitations which I have imposed on my hypotheses—that at least three of Eglinton's slates were upon the table, and that two of these were originally in use for this experiment. Mr. Davey may have examined both of these and placed them together himself, and his own hand as well as Eglinton's may have held them together; but after a short time Eglinton removed the upper slate and placed it on the table, apparently to see if any writing had come; possibly he lifted the crumb of pencil, if it was unworn, and substituted for it, near the corner of one of the two slates, a worn piece; over this slate he then placed the *third* slate (on the under surface of which the message was already written); then lifting and turning the slates together he asked Mr. Davey to join again in holding them and to make his request. The illusive sound as of writing could have easily been produced in various ways; the crumb of pencil may have been found near the termination of the message, and Mr. Davey may have accepted without hesitation the suggestion of Eglinton that it was "left at the very end of the flourish of the signature." As for his question whether he should "ever become a medium," it was probably suggested or led up to by Eglinton. He seems further to have regarded the communication as a test because it referred to the "seizures" in his own family circle; yet he had probably mentioned these at the interview which he had with Eglinton on the occasion (or occasions) of which he speaks prior to the day of the sitting,—and afterwards forgot that he had done so, or accepted Eglinton's statement to the contrary.

Turning to his second account taken from *Light*, we find that Mr. Davey expressly refrains from giving "minute details"; and it is just the absence of "minute details" that makes so many reports evidentially valueless. Thus it is obvious that no importance can be attached to the statement that answers were obtained to "questions, often beyond the knowledge of the medium" unless we know what the questions and answers were. In the experiments with alternate colours of crayon and the previously inked pencil the slates were probably taken under the table; Mr. Davey does not mention what became of them. I do not know on what date Mr. Davey wrote his account (the sitting was on October 9th, and the date of publication in *Light* was October 25th), but even if it was immediately after the sitting, we cannot rely on his statement that after his request for "the intelligences to write,"—"they immediately did so." There may have been a considerable interval between his request and the sound as of writing. Or he may have made the request more than once, and it may have been immediately after he *repeated* the request that the sound as of writing was heard. His meagre account of the messages on Eglinton's own locked slate requires no special comment except that, like Mr. Wedgwood, he seems to have trusted the locking. The case is otherwise, however, with his description of the taking of the large slate upon which the long message was afterwards found. I suppose that the message had been previously prepared by Eglinton, and the request for a lengthy message, "partly in Greek," suggested by him to Mr. Davey. We found in Mrs. Brietzcke's case that certain requests were not spontaneous, though she had omitted from her reports all reference to the circumstances which induced her to make them. Similarly, if we could listen to the conversation—possibly one of the "minute details" which Mr. Davey expressly refrained from giving—which took place on this sitting of October 9th, we should very likely not be surprised either at Mr. Davey's request or at its being so readily complied with.

I have little doubt that it was Eglinton who took the slate, which was either not then cleaned at all, or else on one side only by Eglinton himself, that Eglinton placed it under the table, and that then for the first time Mr. Davey—at the request of Eglinton—assisted in holding it there. The initial "taking" and the careful "cleaning" described in his account were incidents of Mr. Davey's *imagination* (as regards at least that particular slate).

At the same time, I have no doubt that the accounts were written in perfect good faith, and I need not point out in detail how the errors which he made are exemplifications of the tendencies which I have described in the first part of my paper.

(*To be continued.*)

MR. EGLINTON

The three reports which follow, by Mr. S. J. Davey, Associate of the Society, were sent to Mr. Hughes, the Secretary of the Committee for Physical Phenomena, in 1884. They were, however, mislaid, until Mr. Hughes, who was under the impression that he had sent them to Mr. Gurney, found them among his papers at the end of June, 1886. We have since obtained permission to print them. Mr. Davey, however, wishes it to be understood that he now regards the reports as of no value whatever for the purpose of proving that the slate-writing "phenomena" which occurred were produced by other than ordinary human agency. He further informs us that the reports were drawn up from notes made within a few days after each sitting respectively. They were all written, he thinks, in October or November, 1884, and were written independently of the reports of the same sittings which he sent to *Light*, and which we here subjoin for the convenience of our readers.

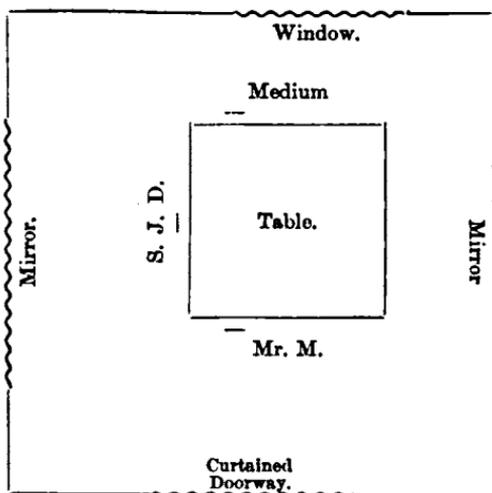
SEANCE No. 1.

On June 30th, 1884, I went with my friend Mr. Munro to see Wm. Eglinton, of 12, Old Quebec-street.

I was extremely sceptical of the phenomena said to occur in his presence, and I determined if possible to put the matter to the best tests I could devise.

We bought four slates all of one uniform size, viz., $9\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

We sat in the positions the following diagram will show :



I grasped the medium's right hand with my left hand, and my friend held my right hand in his left, whilst with his disengaged left hand the medium

supported one of our slates against the flap of the table in the following manner. [Illustrated by a diagram.]

We were of course most careful in examining the table, and we could find nothing unusual in its construction.

Having asked a simple question, and having placed a small grain of pencil between the slate and the table, in the course of some 10 minutes we heard the sound of writing, the same continued for about 20 seconds, and then stopped, and three taps were distinctly audible.

On removing the slate, I found a short and legible reply in a peculiar handwriting, the writer styling himself by the name of JOEY.

I was, however, by no means satisfied, and I requested permission to be allowed to hold the slate with my own hand against the table. The medium at once assented to this request, and the circle was formed by my friend joining hands with Mr. Eglinton whilst I, having one hand thereby disengaged, supported the slate against the table.

In this manner we likewise obtained writing in answer to our questions.

After we had sat for about three-quarters of an hour the writing came with greater rapidity, and I placed various coloured chalks between the slates and obtained the writing in the same colour as the chalks.

During the movement of the pencil, I used my best endeavours to notice any movement of the medium's hand, and entirely failed to detect anything.

After all our slates had been written upon, a message couched in the following words was received in the same peculiar handwriting: "Try the medium's slates."

Although I was convinced that what I had witnessed was by no means ordinary trickery, I felt suspicious, and therefore determined to use the other slates in question after the utmost scrutiny.

The medium produced two ordinary-looking slates, and my friend and myself examined them most carefully: we failed to find the slightest sign of anything unusual upon them. After cleaning them, to preclude the idea of anything having been prepared upon them, I asked if any word or any sign could be written by my request, and having agreed that this should be done we placed the two slates in exact juxtaposition.

They were then held above the table by the medium and myself, and having placed a small grain of pencil between them, I abruptly asked for the figure 9 to be written.

Instantly we heard a scratching noise and three sharp taps, and on removing the slates we found a large figure 9 written on the slate.

We then again examined the slates and having selected a grain of pencil and *carefully* examined the same we placed it between the slates and asked a question.

The scratching noise again commenced and continued for upwards of a minute. We could distinctly hear it travelling over the surface until it arrived at the end of the slate, and then I was puzzled to hear it again commence as though from the top; it then ceased and the usual three taps were received, and on removing the top slate we found a message containing 126 words. It was a complete reply to my query, and the writer signed himself "Ernest." The hand was a very different one to that before mentioned and was of a flowing rapid style.

It was also written in a remarkable manner, as the signature appeared at the top corner of the slate as the rough sketch* herewith may serve to illustrate. I was careful to notice the grain of pencil was nearly worn out and was at the last part of the word Ernest, as indicated by a red mark in the sketch.

I then cleaned one of my own slates, and when the medium was out of the room I wrote the name of a deceased relative upon same. I then put the slate against the flap of the table in such a manner that it would have been utterly impossible for Eglinton to have seen what was written.

When he returned I requested an answer to my question. I myself held the slate against the table and no one else but myself knew what I had written. The usual sound of writing commenced, and on removing the slate I found the following answer: "Your Uncle A (giving the correct Christian name) is not present."

Now it was utterly impossible for Mr. Eglinton to have seen what I had written and he could not therefore have known by any ordinary agency that I had written "A — T — brother to my mother," and therefore it must have been by some occult manner my query was seen and correctly answered.

After a while the answers to our questions became more and more illegible and we were informed that the power was becoming much weaker. On one or two occasions we had to request the messages to be written over again, and this was always assented to, and after sitting for nearly two hours the writing suddenly stopped.

William Eglinton appeared much exhausted. [S. J. D.]

I certify that the above as stated by Mr. Davey in reference to myself is correct. H. A. MUNRO.

Remarks by Mr. Munro.

[Mr. Munro had apparently intended to make some comments here, but did not do so. See his statement, p. 438].

SÉANCE No. 2.

On October 8th, 1884, I visited Wm. Eglinton with Mr. Munro. We sat in the same position and room as described in Experiment No. 1, except that during part of the time Mr. Munro changed places with me and sat next to the medium.

Although the conditions appeared exactly similar as on our previous experiment nevertheless we failed to obtain the slightest manifestation of any kind, and although we sat for two hours and tried with the medium's own slates we failed to obtain a single word. [S. J. D.]

Mr. Davey's statement as above is correct.—H. A. MUNRO.

SÉANCE No. 3.

On October 9th, accompanied by Mr. Munro and X—, I again visited William Eglinton, and as X— had never experimented before we deemed it best he should sit next to the medium. With this exception our positions were similar as to Diagram in Experiment No. 1.

* We have thought it unnecessary to reproduce this.—Ed.

X— having brought a folding slate we commenced our experiments with this.

Between the said slate an answer to our query was received, and we then tried in the method before described in *Séance* No. 1, p. 4.*

I had also brought a number of pencil grains, and on the previous evening we had soaked these in ink, so that if the writing was done by the identical pieces we had put in, we should have a certain proof of same, in the ink on the faceted points of the same being visibly worn off.

In every case when we used our own pencil grains we found this to be the case.

On one of our own slates X— wrote a question unknown to any one but himself, and then having placed the slate in such a manner as precluded the possibility of anyone seeing the same, he requested a reply. This being satisfactorily answered, I unlocked the folding slates (of the late Prince Leopold) and unknown to any of the other sitters wrote a question. I then fastened the Brahma lock and placed the key in my pocket.

For some minutes no sound of writing occurred and I unlocked the slate and placed one of my inked pencil grains within and then again re-locked same, and putting the key in my pocket held the slate over the table. Although we fancied we heard sound of writing it was impossible to exactly certify to it as it was extremely faint.

We then requested the intelligence to let us know if it would comply with our conditions, and answer our question between the locked slate. On one of the ordinary slates held by X— and the medium we were informed that our request should be granted as soon as sufficient power was procured.

A few seconds after this the sound of writing was most distinctly audible in the locked slate; it then stopped after a short time and on unlocking the Brahma lock I found a most emphatic answer doubly underlined, my inked pencil being nearly half worn away.

I then placed between one of our slates a grain of pink and a grain of dark blue crayons and I requested an answer to my question to be written in alternate colours under the same conditions as *Ex. 1. P. 4.*,* X—'s hand holding the slates.

This experiment was also satisfactorily carried out.

I then requested to sit next to the medium, and changed places with X— for that purpose.

Selecting a large slate $12\frac{1}{2} \times 9$ inches I requested a long answer to be written in reply to my query that it should be something of interest and I also said under these conditions I should like some Greek.

I then held the slate in exactly the same position as *Ex. 1. P. 4.*

INSTANTLY the sound of writing became audible and whilst holding the slate I looked under the table and saw that Wm. Eglinton's hand was perfectly still. I could distinctly hear the pencil travel over the slate. When it was some three quarters of the way to the bottom it suddenly stopped and commenced again after the lapse of a few seconds.

At the time I remarked this to my friends. After some 60 or 70 seconds

* See the paragraph beginning "I was, however, by no means satisfied."—Ed.

from the commencement the usual 3 taps were given and on removing the slate I found a long message signed J. L. or S. ? the writing was entirely different to any of the other hands I have seen.

The most remarkable part of this experiment was about three quarters down the slate as a quotation occurs 3 lines of well written Greek with accents, a language of which the medium professes himself entirely ignorant.

The letters are all marvelously regular and the lines are all perfectly straight. The rough sketch herewith may serve to show the manner and position in which the Greek occurs.

Then taking two of my own slates and placing them in exact juxtaposition I requested writing.

X—— and Mr. Munro held the slates over the table, Mr. Eglinton grasping one corner of the same.

Writing was then audible for a few seconds and on removing the slate we found "good bye" written in the centre of the upper one.

[S. J. D.]

I certify that the above statement by Mr. Davey in reference to myself is correct.

H. A. MUNRO.

All that Mr. Davey has stated here in reference to myself is correct.

"X——"

Though I fail to understand the force by which these messages were communicated, I must in candour admit that I was perfectly satisfied with the results obtained, and by the methods adopted.

I was sceptical, and therefore critical, but failed to detect anything either in the medium, or his surroundings, of a doubtful character.

November 12, 1884.

"X——."

The following passage is from a letter written by X—— to Mr. Davey, on November 2nd, 1884 :—

I have not the least cause to suspect Eglinton, from what I saw of him—nay, I was perfectly satisfied with his manifestations. But what I meant you to understand was—I was much impressed by what I saw at the time—too much impressed to reason the matter calmly. Now that the first *vivid* impression has been in a measure effaced, I can recall the scene, and though not feeling sceptical, I can recall things which some people would at once take objection to.

I will mention one or two things which have occurred to me.

Eglinton seems to have the same power no matter what the position of the slates. If investigating the matter therefore, I should *insist* that all communications were made with the slates upon the table, and *not underneath* it—to this he can have no objection.

The convulsive movements which he has have rather a bad effect on a sceptical mind, particularly when his convulsions move the slate about too much.

The placing the slates beneath the table at all seems to me the worst part in the matter. For what object are they placed beneath the table

Therefore, see that all your communications take place *from the first* in view of all.

I think also it would be wise to think of questions beforehand, and so to frame them that no living person but yourself could answer them—a question for instance about a subject known only to yourself and a departed person.

Our questions were far too general the other day, and could have been answered by anyone, if they had the power of writing. You see, if the thing is genuine, such questions will be answered as easily as others.

I do not know that I have more to say on the matter. The subject is a profound mystery to me, and well worthy investigation. Before I am *convinced*, however, I shall require to get communications myself, or with the aid of a few friends. When Munro returns, cannot we three try? If we get any result it would be direct evidence.

Extract from a letter published in "LIGHT," July 12, 1884.

By S. J. D.

Having made the acquaintance of Mr. Eglinton, I introduced to him a friend of mine, and we agreed to try a daylight séance on Monday, June 30th.

* * * * *

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

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

ERNEST.

Now I ask the thinking reader how could a communication like the above be written in about forty seconds, and how could any human being have

done it by trickery when in broad daylight I had both slates held firmly together in my own hands, and how could the medium have known about the seizures which occurred in the privacy of my own family circle and of which I had not told him? I may mention that Mr. Eglinton was so affected by convulsive seizures during the latter part of the séance that I wished to give it up, but he begged us to continue as he was as much interested as we were. However, after about three-quarters of an hour of constant communication we were informed by the intelligences that the power was nearly exhausted, and the messages became difficult to decipher, and at last we were told by raps they could write no more, and even these became fainter and fainter. I must say Mr. Eglinton appeared somewhat exhausted, and as I had also lent much power I felt I had done enough, specially as one of my unseen friends had advised me in a written message that I was not sufficiently physically strong to try too severe experiments. I could give numerous other messages here, but as they were mostly of a private nature, and only interesting to myself and friends, I shall not do so.

Report published in "LIGHT," October 25th, 1884.

By S. J. D.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Not to test Mr. Eglinton's honesty (for of that all who know him are assured), but for the purpose of rendering the experiments more complete, I put in a small grain of pencil, the tip of which I had previously prepared by immersing it in ink. With this piece of pencil, between two slates of my own bringing, I requested the intelligence to write.

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

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

After sitting for upwards of an hour, we concluded that a most successful séance was at an end. The medium, however, continued under control, and taking a large slate, after carefully cleaning it, I placed it under the flap of the table, holding it closely there, and requested that, if possible, a lengthy

message might be written, also hinting that if it were partly in Greek it would be very interesting.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“*Ἀφετε αὐτούς· ὁδηγοὶ εἰσι τυφλοὶ τυφλῶν· τυφλὸς δὲ τυφλὸν εἰς ὁδοῦν ἄμφοτέροι εἰς βόθυνον πεσοῦνται.*”

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

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

“J. S.”

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

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

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

The next statement has just been received from Mr. Munro.

October 8th, 1886.

The following are a few details not mentioned by Mr. Davey in his accounts of séances with Mr. Eglinton, which appeared in *Light* of July and October, 1884 :—On one occasion the piece of pencil, which had been put into Mr. Eglinton's locked slate was missing when we opened the slate. Mr.

Eglinton explained this fact by saying "Joey" had dematerialised the pencil; I have often noticed Mr. Eglinton shake the locked slate, as if to see whether the pencil was still inside.

We never got a long message on our own slates, nor upon Eglinton's slates when they were marked.

We frequently received answers to early questions, when we had subsequently asked others, and were intent on getting the *latter* answered; so that we were sometimes unable for a time to understand the answer we received.

Previous to Mr. Davey's asking for some Greek writing, Mr. Eglinton had been telling us of a long Greek message he had received at another séance.

Mr. Davey asked the question "Shall I become a medium?" several times before it was answered, and I *rather fancy* it was originally suggested by Mr. Eglinton himself.

On one occasion we got two lines of writing running into one another, the last line being partly written over the first.

During the séances Mr. Eglinton kept us frequently engaged in conversation, and requested us not to keep our minds too intent on getting writing. Mr. Eglinton's own conversation was upon interesting and exciting topics, and frequently related to events that had taken place at his séances.

The packet of inked crumbs of pencil was shown Eglinton early in the séance, and the pieces of pencil themselves were left about the table throughout the séance. Our employment of them cannot therefore be considered a proper test.

We on no occasion got any information, beyond what Mr. Eglinton himself might have gained from a perfectly natural source.

Once or twice in the middle of the séance Mr. Eglinton had to leave the room to attend to someone at the door.

H. A. MUNRO.

CORRESPONDENCE.

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

SIR,—I am sorry that I misunderstood Mr. Templeton's letter in the *Journal* for July, but it never occurred to me that he attributed to me a "hasty judgment" as to the possibility of the physical phenomena of Spiritualism, for on this point I have never expressed any decided opinion; indeed I tried to make clear in the paper which I read in May, and which will appear in the next number of the *Proceedings*, that on this point my judgment is in suspense. I supposed, therefore, that Mr. Templeton's charge of "hasty judgment" must refer to the only conclusion I had expressed in the article to which he was replying—namely, that *Mr. Eglinton's phenomena are not genuine*.

It appears that I have also misunderstood Mr. Templeton's reference to Mrs. Newnham's experiences, supposing that he alluded to the thought-transference so curiously exemplified therein, and not rather to the combination of this with unconscious cerebration and automatic writing. I did so because I regarded unconscious cerebration and automatic action

as facts recognised by science, while a belief in telepathy is as yet a departure from "scientific orthodoxy." No doubt there is still much to learn about unconscious cerebration, and we may find therein the key to much that now puzzles us. But no amount of discovery about the psychical processes involved in experiences like Mrs. Newnham's—not even evidence that an external intelligence could produce directly through our organisms effects (e.g., writing) in the external world—would justify us in inferring that either our conscious or unconscious selves, or an external intelligence, could produce similar effects without our organisms, or by means of some subtle and hitherto unknown "nerve force." The possibility of this, if it be possible, must be proved independently. What Mr. Templeton calls "only an extended or additional invisible as well as unconscious power over a pencil" is just what constitutes the enormous difference, as it seems to me, between the automatic and the physical phenomena of so-called Spiritualism.

But it is not, as Mr. Templeton still seems to think, on general considerations as to possibility that I base my judgment of Mr. Eglinton's performances. It is—as I tried to make clear both in my remarks in June and in my reply to Mr. Templeton in August—on very definite and particular grounds connected with Mr. Eglinton's antecedents and the nature of the phenomena described, that I have "now no hesitation" in attributing his performances to conjuring.

I am glad Mr. Templeton thinks the hypothetical experiment described in my last letter a good one, and—though this has of course no direct bearing on the subject of Mr. Eglinton,—I should be interested to learn which he considers the equally striking proofs in Professor Zöllner's and Mr. Crookes' books.

Perhaps, in conclusion, you will allow me to say a few words in reply to Mr. Wyndham, since his letter seems to concern me fully as much as it does "Mr. A."

I am not at liberty to say anything that might tend either directly or indirectly to throw light on Mr. A.'s identity, and I can therefore neither affirm nor deny that he is the same person as "S.J.D." I am not, however, without hope that when Mr. Wyndham has had an opportunity of reading my paper, which will appear in the forthcoming number of the *Proceedings*, he will agree with me that the question, so far as my argument is concerned, is unimportant.

I am led to suppose that when he wrote his letter, Mr. Wyndham had heard only some second-hand and incorrect report of what I said at the meeting in May, by his assumption that Mr. A. is a "writer," and his apparent implication that I have availed myself of statements made by Mr. A. He will find, however, that in my paper Mr. A. is introduced only as a conjurer whose performance I witnessed, and that I have availed myself of no statement of his except the statement that his own performance was conjuring. This being so, I am unable to see how what I say would be in the least degree affected by a knowledge of Mr. A.'s identity, or of his opinions and previous experiences.—I am, Sir, &c.,

ELEANOR MILDRED SIDGWICK.

September 25th, 1886.