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

(*Continued.*)

BY RICHARD HODGSON.

Having thus, as a preliminary, acquired some certain knowledge from a consideration of those few of the very reports at issue which permit of direct comparisons, we may now proceed to deal with the remaining reports, bearing in mind the faults to which we are all liable, and of which we have just obtained such indubitable illustration.

The first of these reports is that rendered by Mr. Hogg and myself.

I shall first state some of my remembrances concerning this report for what they may be worth. Mr. Hogg and myself had a short conversation in the street immediately after the sitting of June 27th, and found that we were both independently of opinion that Eglinton produced the writing himself without the intervention of any extraordinary agency. Each of us, moreover, had thought it not unlikely that the other would attribute the writing to "occult" agency, in consequence, chiefly, of the illusion of perception caused by the sound as of writing, and the tendency to forget the circumstances which had previously occurred, and which suggested how the writing was actually produced. The report which we presented is strictly a joint report; we drew it together, sentence by sentence. There were several matters which we did not directly mention, because we were not in entire agreement as to the actual facts. Some months ago I was under the impression that I had made a list of these points, with details, on one of the sheets used in the original draft, as well as a list of other points upon which we did agree, but which we thought not worth mentioning in our report. On referring to the draft, the only notes which I can find not incorporated in our report, belong to the latter class, and are as follow:—

1. Extra cautiousness of Hogg at beginning of sitting. [*i.e.*, Mr. Hogg, who was originally sitting next to Eglinton, did not allow his attention to be apparently drawn away from Eglinton's hand holding the slate; and hence, I afterwards inferred, Eglinton's request that Mr. Hogg and myself should change places.]

2. Furtive glances [of Eglinton under the table when the slate was out of sight].
3. Convulsive movements *before*, but not *during* [sound as of] writing,— and no convulsive movements afterwards.
4. Manifest display of legs on Saturday. General carelessness. [i.e., on the part of Eglinton. The “successful sitting” was on Friday; on Saturday no result was obtained.]

I shall now briefly comment upon some of the details of our report.

“He then brought a wet sponge, with which we washed the slates.” I infer from the generality of this statement that we did not take care to ascertain that all six surfaces (of the three slates) were washed. In our description of the manner in which Eglinton first placed the slate under the table, we make no reference to the position of the marks which we had made on the frame. I still possess the slate, and find that the marks are on the same end and side as the first writing, so that, supposing the slate to have been placed originally in the same position as it occupied when the sound as of this writing was audible, Eglinton must originally have held the slate at the end which was not marked. In connection with our change of places, we say nothing whatever as to what became of the slate in the interim, whether it was still held under the table, or withdrawn and re-inserted, &c. Later, we use the expression, “There being no result”; from which I infer that the slate was probably withdrawn and looked at; yet the details of the withdrawal and inspection and re-insertion are not mentioned in the report.

I suppose that it was during the “another short interval of conversation” mentioned, that Eglinton used the opportunity of producing the first writing, and that he then requested the quotation to be repeated. Although we very specially note in our report that Eglinton sometimes changed hands during the sitting, and that his hand and the slate were “at times quite out of sight below the table,” we do not state exactly when these events occurred.

Our account of the second writing is ludicrous from its lack of detail. “Another trial was made with the other side of the same slate, and under similar circumstances the word ‘Ernest’ was found written.” We say nothing as to any examination of this “other side” before the slate was again placed under the table, from which I infer that no examination was made, so that the word “Ernest” may have already been upon the slate before it was re-inserted; and further we say nothing as to how it was re-inserted, a most important consideration. I find that the word “Ernest” is written not only on the “other side,” but at the *other end* of the slate, i.e., on that portion of the slate which was in contact with Eglinton’s fingers under the table and which could therefore have been easily written upon by him during the first “experiment,” even with his thumb and the edge of the slate in sight, and without any visible movement on his part. I think it not improbable that the word was so written, and that Eglinton replaced the slate in such a manner that the word escaped our observation.

Concerning the experiment with the two slates, we say nothing about any examination of them immediately previous to the experiment, from which I

infer that no examination was then made. It is probable that the experiment was made at the suggestion of Eglinton, though we do not say so. The careful reader will see that we do not make any positive statement concerning the manner of production of the third writing—but I have now little doubt that the possibility we suggested is the correct explanation. Why did Eglinton take a third slate and hold it *under* the table, “hand and slate being quite out of sight,”—when our experiment was with the two slates *on* the table? Why did he drop it on the floor? Why did he move the upper of the two slates *at least twice*, no sound as of writing having been heard, though this is usually so “distinctly audible” when the writing is supposed to be in process of production? Our report does not specify *how many* times he did this, nor whether even the *ordinary* pencil was between the slates at the conclusion of the experiment;\* further it does not state *expressly* that the two slates were taken by Eglinton below the table, that he complained of their weight, and that he transferred them from one hand to the other before requesting me to assist in holding them, though these events appear to be clearly implied by our account. It is obvious that when we wrote our report we were in some uncertainty as to Eglinton’s treatment of the three slates on the table; but, as I have said, I adopt the supposition which we suggested, viz., that Eglinton wrote upon the third slate while it was under the table, that he substituted this for the upper of the two slates, and afterwards turned both slates over together. I have a strong and clear “remembrance” that I saw Eglinton turning the slates over at the time he changed hands, and that the slates were somewhat displaced in the process, so that the pencil, or pencils, might have fallen out from between them before the simulated production of writing; but I place no reliance whatever upon this “remembrance,” and think it just as likely that Eglinton may have previously removed the red pencil, and that the ordinary pencil was between the slates at the conclusion of the experiment. Nevertheless, although, as it happens, Mr. Hogg and myself observed enough and remembered enough to produce in us the conviction that the phenomena at our “successful” sitting were the result of trickery, there are, as we see, many important omissions in our report due to deficiencies in probably both observation and recollection; and I believe that had we asserted that the production of the writing by ordinary agency was precluded, instead of the contrary, I should, in the face of these omissions, and with the knowledge which I have since attained of the absurdity of accounts given by uninitiated witnesses of conjuring performances, class such an assertion among the rash and unwarrantable judgments of unqualified investigators.

*Reports of* PROFESSOR LODGE, MR. GURNEY, *and* PROFESSOR  
BALFOUR STEWART.

The next report is that of Professor Lodge and Mr. Gurney, who state “that they do not regard their experiences as conclusive, or even as affording any important support to the theory that the writing is not produced by ordinary human agency.” This statement extends apparently to their report

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\* According to my remembrance we discussed these two points when writing our report, but felt uncertain about them.

of a later sitting at which Professor Balfour Stewart was also present ; they say further that "The only success which was really difficult to explain occurred at their first visit." On this first visit the writing obtained was the single word *Bob*, for which Professor Lodge had asked. It was found in the usual position on the slate, "precisely the position" it would occupy, as Mr. Lewis has pointed out (p. 366)—both generally and in regard to this particular case,—if Eglinton "turned the slate round in its own plane (by no means a difficult matter), then wrote the words, and once more reversed the slate." No statement in the report of Messrs. Lodge and Gurney, even apparently, precludes this supposition. They say :—

The slate was held under the table by Mr. Eglinton, who held it with his right hand by one corner—his thumb being in view throughout. His left hand was held by Professor Lodge. The test mark was on the upper surface of the rim, next the table ; was for most of the time visible, but was occasionally covered by Mr. Eglinton's thumb. We are absolutely convinced that that surface remained uppermost throughout the experiment.

They do not assert that the same *end* of the slate was always near Eglinton, and they do not assert that the slate throughout was pressed firmly against the table. The test-mark, presumably on the side near Eglinton (and presumably *not* at the end where the word was found) "was occasionally covered by Mr. Eglinton's thumb" ; that is to say, it was not visible, and the slate may, on one or more of these occasions, have been quietly revolving in its plane. There appears to have been a considerable interval during which Eglinton may have found the opportunities of performing the operations required ; the writers mention "about a quarter of an hour of waiting," during which Eglinton held the slate alone ; but the withdrawal of the slate which is previously said to have taken place "after some minutes," seems to have occurred during this "quarter of an hour" ; and I presume that after the re-insertion of the slate there was an interval of eight minutes for Eglinton to turn and re-turn the slate and write the word *Bob*. I understand, moreover, that at this sitting, as usual, those present were engaged more or less in conversation ; and unless the attention of the sitters was directed without intermission towards the slate, not much importance can be attributed to their statement that Eglinton's thumb was in view throughout. It is worth noting that one highly important incident is mentioned only parenthetically, *viz.*, the withdrawal and inspection of the slate, when "there was no writing."

The writing described in the next record—a P, with an attempt at an e,—did not, as we have seen, impress Messrs. Lodge and Gurney as being "really difficult to explain," so that I need not consider the case in detail.

The report begins : "Professor B. Stewart sat a little apart, in a position where he could watch the slate and hands" ; but we should not be justified in inferring, from this vague description of where Professor Stewart was sitting and what he was doing, either that he *did* watch "the slate and hands" persistently throughout, or that his position enabled him to see the portion of the slate and Eglinton's fingers *under the table*. We may notice in passing a

significant fact which the sitters were careful to mention, that at this sitting the writing was "at the end of the slate nearest Mr. Eglinton and was turned towards him," an unusual position, which was probably owing to the circumstance which Mr. Lewis has emphasised (p. 366, *note*), that "the slate was attached by string to Professor Lodge's middle finger throughout." We are not told how long the string was, and to what portion of the slate it was attached, but I suppose, with Mr. Lewis, that it prevented Eglinton's turning the slate, at least without running great risk of detection.

#### Reports of MRS. BRIETZCKE.

I have already referred (p. 428) to the omissions in Mrs. Brietzcke's reports as regards the examination of the slates used at the sittings. Her general description of the cleaning at the commencement of the sitting on June 13th leaves no difficulty in the way of supposing that *yes* was already upon, say, the under surface of the top slate when it was placed above the other (the slates being turned over together in the act of placing them under the table, as I have explained in other instances). According to Mrs. Brietzcke's account, the first three questions were asked by Eglinton himself, and the answers were merely *yes*. The fourth writing was also a *yes*, the *assumed* answer to the question addressed by Mrs. Brietzcke to her father D.S. as to whether he knew that A. and J. were in Jamaica; but it is hardly necessary to suppose that at that time Eglinton had seen the question. We may suppose, however, that when the not very specific answer *yes* was obtained, Mrs. Brietzcke exhibited her question to Eglinton.

—then a whole side of another slate *was filled* with a message, in a neat close hand, dictated by my father, who was unable to write himself as the conditions prevented; the message was a sort of general treatise on Spiritualism.

How did Mrs. Brietzcke become assured that this message was dictated by her father, &c.? It would also be interesting to know how much she afterwards said about the characteristics of her father's handwriting, and how she was led to the conclusion that a later message was "in his handwriting, with his signature." It is not unlikely that Eglinton seized the opportunity while the attention of the sitters was rapt in the long message, to prepare the next writing received by Mrs. Brietzcke. The long message was followed by a change in position of the sitters, which may also have afforded Eglinton opportunities of "manipulating" the slates. The first writing received after the change of position purported to be from some one who knew Mrs. Brietzcke in New York; and Mrs. Brietzcke tells us emphatically that she had never been in New York. Probably Eglinton, after hearing or seeing Mrs. Brietzcke's question whether her father "knew that A. and J. were in Jamaica," tried a "shot," which happened in this instance to be beside the mark. (Another unsuccessful "shot" was made at one of the sittings recorded by Mr. Bennett, where the word *for* was erroneously stated to be contained in an envelope which had been sealed up, with enclosures, by Dr. A. T. Myers.) The incident suggests that some "shots" of this kind on Eglinton's part may have been successful, and shows again the importance of recording as far as possible all the details of

the sitting. (If Mrs. Brietzcke had been in New York and known persons there, she might have identified the scrawling name which she was unable to read, as something which it *wasn't*. A scrawl which allows some scope for imagination may at times have been employed by Eglinton very effectively.)

Mrs. Brietzcke says: "After my change of position took place *all* the messages written took place in mid-air with the slates held by Mr. Eglinton and myself"; but I think it is clear that this statement was made by Mrs. Brietzcke on the assumption which appears throughout her account, that the messages were being written while the sound as of writing was audible.

It is unnecessary to give detailed consideration to the *thirteen* "occult" writings (and the *five* writings of the sitters) described by Mrs. Brietzcke in her report of the sitting of July 19th. We have already learnt indirectly from Mrs. Brietzcke herself (see *Journal* for October, pp. 426-423) that much additional light might have been thrown on the events of the sitting by the record of "incidents" and conversations to which Mrs. Brietzcke, doubtless, attributed little importance. For example, the questions about Professor Barrett and Mrs. Brietzcke's mediumship may have been led up to or suggested by Eglinton; or he may have inferred, from the conversation at the sitting, that Mrs. Brietzcke would ask them; so that the "answers" might have been upon the slates before Mrs. Brietzcke put the questions.\* In any case we could not assign much value to Mrs. Brietzcke's remembrance of the time-intervals, even on the supposition that when she wrote her report she used her expressions rigorously, in the record of a sitting where Eglinton's writings were so many, and Mrs. Brietzcke's important omissions yet manifestly more; we have already seen (*Journal* for November, p. 466) how an appreciable time-interval may dwindle out of recollection. I suppose that the figure 2, and H. K. B., were read by Eglinton under the table, the slate being turned or a mirror being used, and then "reproduced on the other side." In the following instances, the absence of *much* detail is conspicuous, and Mrs. Brietzcke's language very strongly suggests that she has given us here but a few fragmentary peeps at a series of highly important incidents.

- 1, hiding a slate, told Mr. Eglinton I had put a figure on it. Miss L. did the same on another slate and kept it. Mr. Eglinton now put a bit of slate *and* a bit of red pencil on the slate, and said: "Multiply Mrs. Brietzcke's and Miss L.'s figures by 4." We heard writing, and on uncovering saw "68" in slate, and "272" in red; 6 and 8 were Miss L.'s and my own figures respectively. I now asked Mr. Eglinton to try his *locked* slate, and I wrote a private question on another slate, letting no one see it, and turning it question down on the table at my side. On the locked slate we soon heard writing. My question was "Can you advise for the

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\* At the sitting of June 13th Mrs. Brietzcke was told that she was a medium. Miss Symons received similar information concerning herself at the first sitting recorded by her (p. 307); and at her second recorded sitting, she, somewhat like Mrs. Brietzcke at the sitting of July 19th, made an inquiry as to how she could "best develop." This suggests that the sequence was a common one.

family of X. Y. Z. ?" (names in full). On opening the locked slate *myself* I saw written : "We cannot advise for the family of X. Y. Z." (names given in full).

Where was Eglinton when Mrs. Brietzcke was *hiding* the slate? Was he *out of the room*? Where did Mrs. Brietzcke *hide* the slate? Where did Miss L. *keep* the other slate? What precautions did the sitters take to prevent the numbers from being seen, or inferred (—e.g. from the sound), while they were in the act of writing them, (a) on the supposition that Eglinton was *in* the room; (b) on the supposition that Eglinton was *out of* the room? "Mr. Eglinton now put a bit of slate and a bit of red pencil on *the* slate." Which slate? The one on which the previous message had been obtained? When was the *locked slate* first introduced? Was it cleaned and examined by any one? What then became of it? We inferred (p. 427) from the later communications made by Mrs. Brietzcke, that "some of Eglinton's slates were in use at her sitting of July 19th in addition to his *locked slate*." Hence there were *at least six* slates about the table, five of which we may presume were ordinary. It would appear that "occult" writings were obtained on three (Mrs. Brietzcke's) at least of these; yet if we pass over the first writing and except one instance where Mrs. Brietzcke says : "the same slate was placed as before," no specification is given as to which of these three slates was used for each experiment respectively, and at whose suggestion it was used. Further, we are not told what precautions if any were taken to prevent the surreptitious use by Eglinton, during or between the experiments, of the slates regarded as not in actual use. I suppose therefore that Eglinton may have had opportunities of "manipulating" slates at times when they were not professedly in actual use, and that he may by means of a temporary substitution have found an opportunity of reading one or both of the numbers hidden, and Mrs. Brietzcke's question. Other suppositions will doubtless suggest themselves to the reader. As to the answers, I suppose that the *locked slate* was held by Eglinton under the table and there written upon; likewise, obviously, the slate upon which 68 and 272 were found. On the last slate used, *Goodbye* may have already been written before it was held under the table.

Mr. Eglinton, before we left, held a sheet of notepaper in his fingers; this he did lightly between his forefinger and thumb. I asked for six taps *on the paper*, and they were instantly given.

There is nothing to show that six taps were not produced by Eglinton himself by ordinary means, upon the sheet of paper held as Mrs. Brietzcke describes, or elsewhere.

I suppose that the word *no*, obtained at the sitting of September 22nd, 1884, was already on the slate when it was placed over the pencil chip. Mrs. Brietzcke apparently did not take the slate into her own hands for the purpose of examining it, and she might easily have been deceived to the extent of thinking that it was clean on both sides, even if she intended at the time to ascertain this. It might also be supposed that when Eglinton first took the slate, it *was* clean on both sides, but that he wrote the word while he "put a bit of pencil *on the table* and placed *this slate over* the pencil

chip." We should note that the question seems to have been asked by Eglinton himself, perhaps after he had waited in vain for Mrs. Brietzcke to ask it.

In Mrs. Brietzcke's report of the sitting of July 9th, 1885, some details are given concerning the "book-test," which was tried twice successfully. I suppose that Eglinton—while he was "much disturbed"—turned up the page and found the word or words required and wrote them, while the book in each case was on the slate under the table. Mrs. Brietzcke says:—

The book was placed on the slate and held by me (it was a heavy one), as well as Mr. Eglinton, in position under the table.

I suppose that Mrs. Brietzcke did assist Eglinton in holding the slate, but only during the latter part of the time of waiting; that is to say, after the real performance was over. In connection with Mrs. Brietzcke's final sentence it will suffice to refer to the remarks made by Mr. Lewis in the *Journal* for August, pp. 368-370.

#### Report of MR. HAROLD MURRAY.

Mr. Murray says: "All slates used were cleaned to our satisfaction, before us, with a damp sponge and a dry cloth." This suggests that Eglinton himself cleaned the slates, a fact which is of special importance as regards Experiment 8.

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.

I suppose, with Mr. Lewis (p. 366, note), that this writing was prepared beforehand; and Eglinton himself asked for the "communication." Mr. Murray may have intended originally to assure himself that every slate used for an experiment was clean immediately before the experiment; yet he may have omitted in one or more experiments to satisfy himself on this point, and afterwards forgotten the omission; or, although he satisfied himself, his satisfaction may not have been justified, since Eglinton, instead of cleaning the two sides of a slate, may have cleaned *one side twice*, not turning the slate over, but only *appearing* to do so; and even if the cleaning was complete, a prepared slate may have been substituted for the one just cleaned.

Similarly, in Experiment 9.

Two slates held away from the table but below its level, by Mr. Eglinton and Mrs. M. Verbal question by myself. "Can my father himself give us some message?"—A., almost at once, "Good-bye. He can write no more. He sends you both his dear love."

I should suppose that the "answer" was already upon the slate before the question was asked, and was intended originally to serve merely as a "communication."

Possibly Eglinton first held the two slates under the table alone and wrote the "answer," and then, no sound as of writing having been audible, asked Mrs. M. to hold them with him as described, and Mr. M. to repeat his question. But I prefer the first supposition; the assumed "answer" does



not appear to me to be of such a nature, considering the previous questions, that it could not have been written beforehand, even if Mr. M.'s question was spontaneous. If Mr. M. desired by his question to obtain a message in his father's handwriting, the statement—"he can write no more"—would be rather odd, inasmuch as he had not written at all. On the supposition that the "answer" was on the slate before the question was asked, it was probably written while the sitters were studying the "communication of interest."

In Q. 6, as also in Q.'s 1, 2, and 3, I suppose that the slate was written upon by Eglinton while it was under the table, and that in the two cases where the questions were *written*, Eglinton acquired a knowledge of them, also while the slate was under the table, notwithstanding Mr. M.'s precautions. We do not know what the precautions were; and if they had been exceptional, as in the use of a string by Professor Lodge, which seems to have prevented the turning of the slate, I think that Mr. M. would have described them. In the case of Q. 4, Mr. M. himself apparently concluded that, notwithstanding his careful watching, Eglinton acquired a knowledge of the question written on the slate.

In Q. 5, and Experiment 7, taken together, it is evident that the locked slate, upon which Mrs. M. had written a question, was held *under the table* during six to eight minutes, and in this interval I suppose that Eglinton read the question and wrote the answer. Mr. Murray says :—

No answer during six to eight minutes. It was then placed on surface of table in front of us, while we proceeded with other experiments, as Mr. Eglinton said he could hold it no longer on account of its weight.

But he does not say that he then *examined* the slate, and after recording an intervening experiment he continues :—

Locked slate, still unopened, I having retained key all the time, was held on upper surface of table. A., in two to three minutes, &c. ; from which it appears that he did *not* then examine it. Mr. M.'s description suggests that he, like most other witnesses, considered that the writing was not in process of production if the sound as of writing was not audible. I infer from his report that he made notes during the sitting, and to this I ascribe his careful reference to the fact that the locked slate was held under the table, though he seems to have been unaware of its great significance. I think there is little doubt that frequently, in cases analogous to this, where the locked slate may have been *on* the table for some time, within the direct perception of the sitters, the fact of its having been previously *under* the table, and not subsequently examined, has been omitted from the record—in consequence either of its apparent triviality, or its lapse from remembrance at the time when the record was made.

In connection with Q. 4. there is a palpable lapse of some kind on Mr. M.'s part, but whether of his watchful readiness during the sitting, or his care in writing the report, or both, may not be so easy to decide. His account is as follows :—

Q. 4. Written, by Mrs. M. "Are O.'s present plans likely to lead to his future welfare, and will they bring him happiness?"—We had

to wait some time for an answer to this question. Mr. Eglinton asked aloud, after 2 to 3 minutes, "Will you kindly give us an answer to this question?" Directly afterwards he dropped the slate on to 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?*"—A., after waiting five to six minutes, "As far as I can see. Yea. They certainly should."

He writes previously :—

During the first four experiments I marked the pieces of pencil used, and carefully noticed the ends, before and after each experiment. Before, they were rough and unworn; after, they were found with one end lying at the extremity of the finishing stroke of the writing, and that end had a smooth worn facet which corresponded in size with the thickness of the thicker strokes of the writing produced.

Except in answer to Q. 4, all writing took place in a position upside down to Mr. Eglinton; and when the writing was short, at the end of the slate furthest away from him.

Q. 4 presents no difficulty as regards the reading of the question (or questions—see p. 464) and the production of an answer, as the slate was held under the table by Eglinton alone; and concerning the unusual position of the answer, the reader may speculate for himself; but *what became of the marked fragment of pencil when the slate was dropped?* Was any remark made as to its whereabouts? Was any search instituted for it? Did it mysteriously stick to the slate the whole time? Or, after the dropping, was the slate placed on the table? Was it examined? Was another piece of pencil noticed and marked, and placed on the slate? Or, did Mr. Murray speak of *four* experiments instead of *three*? And did he *not* mark a pencil for Q. 4? And if so, what became of the *unmarked* pencil? &c., &c. We should do least violence to Mr. M.'s report if we supposed that Eglinton was holding the pencil when the slate dropped, and that this greatest marvel of all, the re-appearance of the marked pencil, excited no surprise, simply because it never occurred to the sitters that the pencil should have dropped as well as the slate. A somewhat analogous oversight was committed by Mr. Hogg and myself at our first sitting; it was one of the points which led us in our report to comment upon our own inobservance. But if "Joey" could dematerialize the pencil (p. 439), possibly "Joey" might also patiently hold the pencil in mid-air pending the replacement of the slate.

After the preceding considerations I may deal as briefly as possible with the remaining reports, confining my remarks chiefly to the most important incidents in each, and treating these fully only when they are specially instructive, or require suppositions that may not occur at once to the ordinary reader unversed in the *modi operandi* of conjuring performances in slate-writing.

## Reports of MR. G. A. SMITH and MR. J. MURRAY TEMPLETON.

At the sitting in May, 1885, one writing was obtained, which consisted of the words, "The power is against us"; and the sitters appear to have regarded the "test conditions" of its production as exceptionally good. Their satisfaction seems to depend upon their remembrance that in this particular instance Mr. Templeton was himself pressing the slate firmly against the under side of the table-flap during the whole of the [last] interval when it was under the table; and I think it highly probable that their remembrance is true: for I suppose that the writing was already on the slate when Eglinton last lifted it from the table. The slate was one of Mr. Smith's book-slates, spoken of by Mr. Templeton as "folded (and bound) slates," and described by Mr. Smith as "a pair of ordinary slates fastened together with cord up one side so that they could be opened and shut but not separated entirely." Since they were fastened with cord, they could in all probability be shut in two different ways, so that what at one time were the outer surfaces might at another time be the inner surfaces. Now it is clear, from the accounts, that no examination was made of this slate immediately before Eglinton took it under the table *for the last time*. I suppose that he had taken it under the table *previously*, and then written upon it. Before the change of position, after which the writing was "obtained," the sitting had continued *for three-quarters of an hour*, during which apparently Eglinton *alone* had been holding slates under the table, and, as Mr. Smith tells us,

occasionally changing one slate for another, and sometimes placing a slate upon the table with a crumb of pencil or crayon beneath it. But no writing came, and we were on the point of giving up the trial. It was suggested, however, that as a last resource it might be advisable to alter our positions, and Mr. Templeton and I changed places accordingly. Mr. Eglinton then took one of my book-slates, &c.

We are not told how the sitters knew that "no writing came." Doubtless they heard no sound as of writing; they may have inspected some of the slates; they *may* have inspected *all* of them, but if so they probably inspected only the then inner surfaces—Eglinton having written on the under outer surface of the book-slate in question, which Eglinton afterwards folded the other way, possibly just after the inspection, so that the writing, eventually, occupied the position described by Mr. Smith.

I have already (*Journal* for October, pp. 417-421) dealt with the most important incidents which are described as having taken place at the sitting of June 11th, 1885, of which Mr. Smith and Mr. Templeton gave independent accounts. Among the other incidents are two, described by Mr. Smith only, which call for some notice. A message had been obtained, but the last word

appeared to have been very hastily and carelessly written, and we were uncertain what it was intended for; so the slate was held beneath the table again, with the request that this word should be re-written

more legibly. *Immediately* we heard writing, and the word "conditions" was found occupying nearly the whole width of the slate.

Mr. Massey (*Journal* for July, p. 356) says: "Unless it is suggested that the word was written on the reverse side to that of the sentence, and had been previously prepared (the question being led up to by an intentional illegibility of the last word of the sentence), we have here a case in which the time of the actual writing is exactly determined by the sound. The little possible doubt in this case," &c. I had already made the supposition myself in my rough draft of notes on the evidence, and I have little doubt that what seems so improbable to Mr. Massey actually did occur. It has probably happened frequently. Mr. Davey writes, in his report of the sitting of June 30, 1884: "On one or two occasions we had to request the messages to be written over again, and this was always assented to"; and a case not altogether dissimilar is recorded by Miss Symons (p. 312), who tells us that there was some discussion as to the indistinct writing, and that "*Mr. Eglinton said* it could be easily settled by asking to have the message re-written. Almost as soon as the slate was put under the table came the answer," which was not, however, the repetition of the message or of the indistinct word; Eglinton had apparently improved the performance by that time (October, 1885), and the answer carried with it a reference to the previous conversation.

The other incident in Mr. Smith's account which deserves some attention seems to me to be particularly suggestive. It is described as follows:

Eglinton took one of my book-slates, dropped a crumb of pencil between the leaves, and closing it, placed it in the usual position. It was then partly in sight, whilst we were chatting (and watching) and waiting for something to come. In the midst of the talking I thought I heard writing being done, and said so; but the others thought I was mistaken, and we continued to wait. Presently Mr. Eglinton dropped the slate upon the floor, and on his picking it up we found "Good-night" written at the foot of one of the leaves.

I suppose it was the sound produced by Eglinton surreptitiously writing, probably on the under surface of the underleaf, that Mr. Smith heard; yet the slate apparently was not withdrawn, a most suspicious circumstance (especially when we remember how ready Eglinton is to withdraw or uncover or unlock a slate on other occasions even when no sound as of writing has been heard by any of the sitters), presently followed by another suspicious circumstance, the dropping of the slate. If, when Mr. Smith said he thought he "heard writing being done," the slate had been withdrawn, —and, in consequence of his impression, he might at any moment have made a request for its withdrawal before Eglinton could find an opportunity of reversely folding the slate, —the writing might have been discovered on the under outer surface, just where Eglinton's fingers had been. This seems to have occurred to Eglinton, and hence the non-withdrawal and the dropping. It is noticeable that Mr. Smith does not say on which leaf the writing was found, or whether he had any means of identifying the position the writing must have occupied while the slate was held by Eglinton. Apart

from some special means, it may, owing to the structure of the slate, assuming this to be the same as that used at the séance in May (see p. 499), have been difficult to prove, *after the dropping*, on which of the surfaces, inner or outer, the writing had originally been produced.

Concerning the incident mentioned (p. 303) by Mr. Templeton as having occurred at "a former sitting," which he explains at greater length in the *Journal* for July, p. 359, where a slip of paper with a question on its under side was placed by himself on a slate and held there "till withdrawn as another slate closed it down," the slates being described as thereafter "always in the middle of the table," I suppose that the slates were held under the table for a short time by Eglinton, who then read the question and wrote the answer,\* but that this incident has been entirely forgotten by Mr. Templeton, who has not mentioned the date of the sitting, and whose letter suggests that he is unaware to what extent accounts must be regarded as untrustworthy in consequence of the lapse of memory.

Before leaving these reports I may deal briefly with the chief incidents described in a report printed in the *Journal* for May, 1885 (Vol. I., p. 399), which I understand was sent by Mr. Smith. The first incident is narrated as follows :

I bought a three-leaf book-slate on the way, one that had three loops and could be fastened with a stick of pencil, as small pocket-

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\* The question was "How many days and months has the year?" The answer was given, not in words, but *in figures*, so that they might possibly have been completely covered by the slip, and not seen unless the slip was moved, if the lower slate was, as it might have been, uncovered when Eglinton withdrew the slates from under the table. Compare the case of writing under the cards in the report of Miss Symons (see pp. 423-4). I may take this opportunity of referring to some remarks made by Mr. Templeton in the *Journal* for November, p. 470. He there offers an explanation "with regard to the incident of Mr. Eglinton's copy of a drawing on a transparent, child's, or toy slate," upon which I had commented in the *Journal* for October, p. 418. He says: "Mr. Hodgson seems to have overlooked the fact that any kind of drawing, under the circumstances, was much more than the ordinary writing," &c. I did not, however, overlook this fact, and, indeed, I quoted the passage from Mr. Templeton's letter in the *Journal* for July which drew special attention to it. The *mere drawing* could be produced on the slate, provided the slate and Eglinton's fingers were under the table out of sight, even while the "two close observers," as Mr. Templeton describes himself and Mr. Smith, were gazing at Eglinton's thumb visible and motionless above the table, and without any distraction of their attention at all. My supposition was, that during an interval of ten minutes the "two close observers" were for a few seconds inattentive enough to enable Eglinton to use his eyes after the manner Mr. Templeton describes. In bygone years I revelled in the possession of a child's drawing-slate, but not having one at hand when I was considering Mr. Templeton's testimony, I made some experiments in tracing on thin note-paper placed over the drawing of a leg held with one hand under the table, before making my comments on the case; I concluded that "a few seconds" was a time ample for the operation supposing it to have been one and continuous; if the tracing produced was not one continuous line, the intervals of inattention need not have been so great as I supposed, *i.e.*, not even "a few seconds," a phrase which Mr. Templeton now adopts, though he does not accept my supposition of his inattention during such an interval.

books are often made. The first trials Mr. Eglinton made were with his own slate, which I had previously cleaned, and marked with my name to avoid changing. With this nothing occurred. He then took my slate, I having inserted a crumb of pencil and seen that it was all secure. It was then placed on the corner of the table, and we both rested our hands upon it. Shortly, in answer to my question, "Are the conditions favourable?" the pencil could distinctly be heard writing inside the slate, and when the three taps indicated that the message was finished, I unfastened the slate, and on one of the leaves found, "Yes, the conditions are very good."

Mr. Smith does not say that he examined the slate throughout just before the experiment, and he does not say what became of the crumb of pencil, or on which leaf the writing was found. I suppose that the words were written surreptitiously on the slate on some occasion after Mr. Smith entered the house, and before the experiment was made. Eglinton himself apparently instituted the experiment, and I suppose that he suggested Mr. Smith's question. The next incident worth consideration is described thus :

Mr. Eglinton has a strong mahogany book-slate with a Brahma lock. On this I was requested to write the name of a deceased relation, mentioning the relationship, and asking a question. To make the thing as conclusive as possible. I took the slate into the adjoining room, stood away from all mirrors, windows, &c., and wrote, "Mrs. D—,—grandmother—are you present, and able to communicate?" I then quickly locked the slate, put the key into my pocket, and went back to Mr. Eglinton, never once letting the slate leave my hand. He then placed another slate half under the table, closely pressed against the under-surface; in a few seconds writing commenced, and the following was found :—"Your grandmother, Mrs. D—, is not able to write, but she sends her love." I then, for the first time, unlocked the slate, and showed him what I had written.

Mr. Smith's phrase, "never once letting the slate leave my hand," seems to me to refer to the interval which elapsed before he had actually reached the table on his return, rather than to any subsequent interval. Whether this is so or not, we have already seen (pp. 420-1) that Mr. Smith, in another report, has unquestionably omitted any reference whatever to a most important incident, describing a sequence of events, with the incident omitted, in much the same manner as in the above account; in connection with the comment which I there made, I asked if I was not justified in assuming that a witness may forget that the locked slate was taken under the table; and I suppose, in the above instance, that the locked slate was held under the table after Mr. Smith returned, though he has not mentioned the fact. I suppose also that the slate on which the answer was found was not held throughout as Mr. Smith describes, but only during the latter part of the time, probably after it had been *withdrawn* once by Eglinton, ostensibly to see if there was writing, but actually to turn it unobserved.

Mr. Smith's report continues :

At this point Mr. Eglinton was called away to two ladies, and I seized the opportunity to write on the Brahma slate: "Frank G—, —cousin—are you present, and able to write to me?" Then I locked it, and waited for Mr. Eglinton to return. Upon hearing what I had done, he took a slate—the one marked with my name—thoroughly cleaned it, with my help, threw a crumb of pencil upon it, covered it with another clean one, and gave me the two to hold with him. We were then sitting opposite to each other, each holding the two slates, and right away from the table. In a second or two I could not only hear the pencil, but could feel it writing, and could localise the sound and vibration as undoubtedly issuing from between the two slates. *In one minute* at the most, the signal of completion was given, and the underneath slate was found filled with writing, in three directions, and signed "Frank." I have the slate now, with the writing on it.

I forgot to mention that I always made a point of engaging Mr. Eglinton in conversation during the time the writing was taking place. I may also add that the communication purporting to come from "Frank" does not strike me at all as being the sort of thing he would write.

It is not unlikely that Mr. Smith may have omitted to record sundry takings of slates under the table, and on this hypothesis the reader may make his own suppositions. I shall myself here adopt a different hypothesis, partly for the sake of pointing out a precaution which I cannot find that any sifter has taken when Eglinton has been *out of the room*, and partly for the sake of showing how little inaccuracy it may be needful to suppose in the above description. I shall assume, then, that while Mr. Smith was writing his question, it was seen by Eglinton from a contiguous room. Mr. Smith tells us that the slate on which the long message appeared was marked with his name, but he does not say whether his mark was merely written on the slate, or cut into the frame, or even specifically whether he recognised his mark when the slate was taken, nor does he say whether his mark was upon the same side as that upon which the writing was found. Knowledge of these points might affect my conjecture as to Eglinton's exact dealings with the slates, but it would not affect the main part of my supposition, which I shall make on the assumption that Mr. Smith had written his name upon the frame of the slate, that he recognised, as he thought, his mark when Eglinton "took a slate," and afterwards found it on the same side as the message and again identified it. The slate, it should be remembered, was one of Eglinton's, and Mr. Smith had marked it, not immediately before the experiment, but at the beginning of the sitting. I suppose that Eglinton took it out of the room, and wrote the message upon it, that he marked another slate similarly, and brought them both back into the room when he returned. He then took the falsely marked slate, cleaned it, &c., and covered it with the one which Mr. Smith had originally marked, and upon the under, and marked, side of which the long message was written. He then turned both slates over together in the act of lifting them and presenting them to Mr. Smith to hold with him, after which all that remained for him to do was to produce a sound as of writing followed by a sound as of tapping. I desire the reader specially to

observe how little inconsistent my supposition is with Mr. Smith's account. I might almost say that there is only one expression of his which is at variance with it, *viz.*, "covered it with another clean one"; my supposition involves that the under surface of this slate was filled with writing at the time when Mr. Smith speaks of it as clean, but there is nothing, beyond the general statement quoted, to show that Mr. Smith examined it in any way; he may merely have looked at the upper surface, or Eglinton may have *appeared* to turn it and show both sides clean before placing it on the other slate.

*Report of MR. E. M. C., &c.*

The first incident that calls for consideration is that of the writing in the locked slate, which was to the effect that a folded paper which Mr. E. M. C. had placed unopened in the slate, was "a receipt of the Grosvenor Gallery Library, No. 21380, in large figures, which was perfectly correct." But since Eglinton held this slate "several times on the table and *under the table*," I need do little more than refer to the remarks of Mr. Lewis (*Journal* for August, p. 371), who suggests, in connection with another case, how the slate might have been opened on the hinged side, although gummed paper was stuck over the opening on the lock side, as in the case before us. Besides, the paper used here was "the edge paper off some postage stamps"; this does not adhere firmly to varnished or polished wood, and can be quite easily removed wholly or partially, without any risk either of tearing, or of leaving apparent signs of disturbance. If the paper is stuck over the opening of a polished double slate, but not affixed round both sides so as to form a clasp, the slate may easily be opened and closed unless a great deal of paper has been attached, without any touching of the paper at all by the operator. The reader can experiment with a polished box, and he will find that the adhesion of the paper does not put very much difficulty in the way of its opening. A little pressure with the finger may be necessary to make the paper adhere again. In any case, and even when the paper is affixed as a clasp, it is easy to unfix half the paper with the finger, open and close the slate, and refix the paper by pressing it; no re-damping is required to produce adhesion again if the operation is performed not later than a few minutes after the original attachment. By moistening the paper freely, and adjusting it lightly, the operation can of course be made easier, and it should be noticed that it was Eglinton apparently in this case who suggested the gummed paper, and who also stuck it on the slate. The report includes no reference to any examination of the paper and wood, before the unlocking of the slate, with the view of ascertaining if the paper had been disturbed in any way. In the report, after the passage quoted above, follow the words: "nothing came"; an expression which I take to mean that no sound as of writing was audible, as it seems clear that the slate was never opened—except by Eglinton under the table—after the gummed paper had been applied, until the opening which Mr. E. M. C. describes, when the gummed paper was cut through by Eglinton before he finished the unlocking which Mr. E. M. C. had begun.

The next incident is particularly interesting, because of the care with



which, in some respects, the record has been drawn up. It is plain that Mr. E. M. C. is not familiar with the different methods used for deceiving sitters for slate-writing, otherwise he could not have mentioned without comment, *precisely the three points* as to Eglinton's dealings with the slates, which at once suggest the exact *modus operandi* in this incident. These points are :

1. He put the initialed slate over the other and placed them before him on the table.
2. He lifted the top slate from the bottom. [This is mentioned only parenthetically.]
3. Mr. Eglinton said " We must hold the slates." The slates were held (part of the hand being between the slates and the table), &c.

For convenience, I shall speak of the two slates as *marked* and *unmarked* respectively. I suppose that the message (from " Ernest ") had been prepared beforehand, and was written on the under surface of the unmarked slate. The account of the incident begins thus :

Mr. Eglinton then said he would try another experiment. He took the initialed slate, cleaned it, took from the table at the back one of the other slates (which had all the time been lying there), *he also cleaned that*. [The italics are in the report.]

It is manifest that the writer believed, and I have no doubt rightly, that the unmarked slate was then handled by Eglinton alone, who, I suppose, cleaned only *one*—the upper—side, though he may have *appeared* to clean *both* sides. Thus, when Eglinton placed the slates before him, as described in (1), I suppose the writing to have been on the surface next the table. After lifting the marked slate from the unmarked slate as described in (2), probably turning the marked slate over, Eglinton placed the *unmarked* slate over the *marked* slate. (We are not told whether Mr. E. M. C.'s initials were on the upper or the under side of the " top " slate when originally placed in position over the other ; and no reference whatever is made throughout the report to the fragments of *slate-pencil* used.) The message was then on the under surface of the (then) top slate. During the process described in (3), Eglinton turned both slates over together, so that the marked slate was again at the top, and the *unmarked slate again at the bottom, but reversed, so that the writing was then upon its upper surface*. . The trick would be clear to an expert, though I have seen various intelligent witnesses\* who failed, either from mal-observation or lapse of memory, or both, to record even such obvious clues to the *modus operandi* as we find in Mr. E. M. C.'s report. Concerning the sound of " writing," and cessation of the sound when the circle was broken, see the report of Mr. Rait (quoted by Mr. Davey in the *Journal* for January, 1887), and *Proceedings*, Part X., p. 69.

In the last incident requiring notice,

Mr. Eglinton then took the initialed slate, which had been on the top and held it under the table—on it was quickly written that someone was there—that someone being mentioned by his Christian

\* See my reference, p. 491, to what Mr. Hogg and myself suspected (*afterwards*) to be an analogous incident at our own sitting.

name ; he had died some 15 years ago, was E. M. C.'s son, and his Christian name could not possibly have been known to Mr. Eglinton.

the reader may suppose that the words\* were written either while the slate was held under the table during the experiment, or just previously, while the attention of the sitters was engaged upon the long message. We cannot feel sure that Mr. E. M. C.'s conviction that the Christian name given on the slate "could not possibly have been known to Mr. Eglinton," was well founded, even if we could be quite certain that the name had not been casually mentioned by one of the sitters during the very séance recorded.

*Reports of Miss J. H. SYMONS, MRS. L., and MR. WEDGWOOD.*

As Miss Symons appears to have drawn up nearly the whole of these reports (excepting Mr. Wedgwood's independent account of one sitting), and to have been the most important witness, I shall use her name in connection with my remarks.

In the first report it might be supposed that in every case the words which appeared were written on the slate by Eglinton after he had taken it under the table for the experiment. But I think it more probable that in some cases the writing was actually produced by Eglinton on the under surface of the slate, while the *preceding* writing was presumed by Miss Symons to be in course of production. The *modus operandi* in such cases is, after cleaning off the preceding writing, to replace the slate with the other side uppermost, i. e., the side containing the "next" writing, not the side just cleaned. Thus, Miss Symons says, after describing a preceding message :

I then asked aloud if the "intelligence" would allow us to try some test, and "Yes" was immediately written.

The *Yes* may have been already on the (second) slate when it was placed under the table for this experiment, having been written by Eglinton while the sitters were noticing the answer to the first question ; and Miss Symons does not say that the first slate was used again. The three last writings at this sitting may likewise have anticipated the questions.

In relation to the "book-test" the reader should observe that Eglinton held the book and the slate under the table alone, for "about a quarter of an hour," during which time he "appeared to be somewhat convulsed." While the sitters were turning up the reference in the book, Eglinton may have written the *next* message—"I am a guide of the medium"—unobserved, if he had not written it earlier, this then becoming "a quick reply" to "our question, 'Who is the intelligence who has just communicated with us?'" In similar fashion perhaps "Joey" became "immediately written" in reply to the question "we next asked, 'What is your name?'" No reference whatever is made to any examinations or cleanings of the slates after the séance began, a statement which applies equally to the next record.

In the report of the sitting of September 24th, Miss Symons appears to

\* The writing on the slate seems to have been in the form : "——— is here," the additional details given in the report being apparently the explanatory remarks of Mr. E. M. C.

have established the then inability of "Joey" to read Spanish or—possibly—French. She describes also a writing in Eglinton's locked slate, in reply to a question which Mrs. L. had written therein, and says: "We locked this slate ourselves, it was never removed from the table, or out of our sight for one single instant." I suppose that this statement is erroneous, and that the sitters forgot that the locked slate was held under the table by Eglinton, who used the opportunity to read and answer the question, after which he allowed it to rest a short time upon the table before producing the sound as of writing. That lapses of this kind undoubtedly occur, and that a conjurer's manipulations of the slates might not have been detected by Miss Symons,\* is sufficiently shown by the accounts of equally competent witnesses quoted by Mrs. Sidgwick in *Proceedings*, Part X., pp. 67-70; and it may be worth pointing out that in reports which bear indications, in other respects, of having been drawn up with much greater care than those of Miss Symons, and which include experiments with the locked slate, the writers mention that the locked slate was held under the table; I refer in particular to the reports of Mr. Harold Murray, Mr. E. M. C., &c., and Mr. F. W. Bentall.

Concerning the next incident, where a "prompt reply" was obtained in answer to a question by Miss Symons as to how she could "best develop" as a medium (see p. 494, note), I suppose that the question was directly or indirectly suggested by Eglinton, and that the "reply" was already on the slate when it was placed on the table, having been written by Eglinton while the sitters were absorbed in the previous communication. In relation to this supposition, the account of the incident which followed is suggestive.

Whilst we were looking at the writing and the pencil, with which apparently it had been written, Mr. Eglinton again held a slate under the table, and before we had time to put a question, writing was heard. On Mr. Eglinton's withdrawing the slate we read in the same handwriting: "I do like you." We asked, verbally again: "Which of us do you like?" "Both," in large letters, and three times underlined, was the immediate reply.

*I do like you* may have been written whilst the sitters were engaged as Miss Symons describes, and *Both* may have been written on the under surfaces of the slate while that "writing was heard," which Miss Symons assumed to be the writing of *I do like you*, the slate being reversed as it was again placed under the table, and the question suggested by Eglinton. I have seen the operation performed repeatedly before intelligent witnesses without detection; and that Miss Symons was not prepared for it, is, I think, sufficiently obvious from the mere fact that she never states whether any message on a single ordinary slate was obtained on the same side of the slate as the preceding message or not.

According to the next report (pp. 309, 310) a card and a small bit of chalk, both of which were brought and marked by the sitters, were placed

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\* There is, as I have shown (II., pp. 422, 423), some slight independent evidence in another instance, that Miss Symons omitted to record the taking of the locked slate a second time under the table.

“between the pages of a book,” which was held under the table by Eglinton. A slate upon which Miss Symons had written a request “that the word ‘watch’ might be written on the card,”—a request not then shown to Eglinton,—was afterwards held under the table with the book.

After about a quarter of an hour, during which time the medium appeared to be in great pain, he lifted the book, and we proposed inspecting it; on doing so we found that one stroke had been made nearly halfway across the card,—a broad steady stroke, not in the least as though the chalk had rolled—and there was an indistinct scribble in one corner, which on close inspection looks something like a man seated on a mound! The nib of chalk was however gone. It is possible that it dropped out of the book during Mr. Eglinton’s writhings; it certainly did not do so when the book was carefully opened on the table, neither were we able to find it anywhere on the floor. During this time Mr. Eglinton’s thumb, and the corner of the book had been always visible.

Miss Symons’ supposition that it dropped out of the book would be rather an extreme one to make if we regard as correct another statement made by Miss Symons, viz., that “during this time [about a quarter of an hour] Mr. Eglinton’s thumb, and the corner of the book had been always visible.” If Miss Symons had *made experiments* before conjecturing what became of the nib of chalk, she would probably have found that under the conditions which she describes, it would be much easier for Eglinton to seize the nib of chalk and mark the card, than for the nib of chalk to have dropped out of the book. Possibly, on this occasion, the proposal for inspection was *not* made by Eglinton, who may have intended, when he lifted the book, to disencumber himself of the slate, and again take the book alone under the table; but as the absence of the chalk was noticed, the best idea that occurred to him was to “dematerialise” it, and leave the explanation of its disappearance to the sitters. In connection with the second trial, we should note the observation that Eglinton “during his writhings had supported the book with his whole hand, his wrist only being visible.”

The next reports (of the sitting of Oct. 8th) have already been considered (II., pp. 422-426), and I need only add that Miss Symons does not say where she found the nibs of chalk when she made her examinations, or where they were found at the conclusion of the experiment.

The first message—“I do like you”—which *Miss Symons* obtained at the sitting described on p. 312, may have been on the slate when Eglinton first held it under the table, and the special remark she made, with which she connected the message, may have been led up to by Eglinton. This supposition will not appear improbable if we remember that her remark referred to a message received at one of her previous sittings. As for the writing which followed, in response to the request for a repetition of the message, see p. 500.

Concerning the transference of a card out of Eglinton’s locked slate into

Eglinton's red glass box, described pp. 313, 314,—see the article by Mr. Lewis (II., pp. 370, 371), to whose remarks I may add that a favourable opportunity for Eglinton to slip the card out of the slate might have been easily obtained while the glass box was being inspected, owing to the proposal “by one of us”—in this case, I suppose, Eglinton—“that we should just see whether anything had occurred.” The long message obtained at the same sitting I suppose to have been prepared beforehand, the possibility of which Miss Symons herself would apparently not dispute. She writes :

I wish to say that I did not, in this case, take the slate in my hand, and absolutely convince myself that there was no writing on either side of it before it was held under the table, but I certainly *saw* none as Mr. Eglinton took it up. It was, I must say also, to the best of my belief, one of the two slates which we had used throughout the séance, on which questions had several times been asked, and which I had *previously* assured myself were clean, though I did not *especially* observe at this particular moment.

The next and last incident recorded by Miss Symons is the following :

Another slate was now held under the table—the same on which we had previously put the watch, and which I am absolutely certain was clean on both sides—in case there should be anything further to communicate. In this case, as before, the writing came almost immediately, “Good-bye, dear Miss Symonds, I will try your box some day.”

Taken in connection with her previous remarks, the reader may think that Miss Symons means here to imply that she took the slate in her hand immediately prior to the experiment, and convinced herself that there was no writing on either side of it ; he may then suppose that the message was written by Eglinton after he held the slate under the table. I should myself however suppose that Miss Symons did not take the slate in her hand at that time and examine it, but only that she *previously* examined it,\* and that Eglinton wrote the message while the sitters were gazing at the “striking manifestation” which they had just received.

#### Reports of MR. H. WEDGWOOD.

The most important incident mentioned by Mr. Wedgwood is the production of writing between two slates which he had sealed together. For a discussion of this incident, see Mrs. Sidgwick's article in the *Journal* for December, 1886.

Concerning the next incident narrated, Mr. Lewis remarks (p. 372): “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 I may refer to *Proceedings*, Part IX., p. 269, for a suggestion of the *modus operandi*. It is true that Mr. Wedgwood says :

\* Miss Symons appears to be particularly liable to that form of memory-illusion which I have called transposition, in recording sittings for slate-writing. See the report quoted by Mr. Davey in the *Journal* for January, 1887.

He gave me a blank card, from which *I* [italics mine] tore off a corner, and put it in my pocket.

Nevertheless, I suspect that the corner was torn off by Eglinton. The event seems to have occurred in the autumn of 1883, and Mr. Wedgwood's account is dated September 27th, 1885. We cannot place reliance upon the details of an account written so long afterwards. And comparison with another account by Mr. Wedgwood which appeared in *Light* of March 28, 1885, is enough in itself to show that Mr. Wedgwood may easily describe himself as having performed an action which was really performed by Eglinton. In *Light* he says :

It was in the autumn of 1883, soon after Mr. Eglinton had moved to Old Quebec-street. I was one of a party of eight, sitting round the table, with the gas full on. Mr. Eglinton gave me a blank card, from which I tore off a corner and kept it in my pocket. He put the card in a book, together with a morsel of black lead, and, turning to a sitter on his right, laid the book on the table, with both their hands on it. As nothing ensued, Mr. Eglinton removed the book, and laid it between him and me, and we placed our hands on it.

Comparing the two accounts it will be found that in the March account—"He [Eglinton] put the card in a book"; in the September account—"The card . . . was then put inside a book."

In the March account—"Mr. Eglinton removed the book, and laid it between him and me." In the September account—"He took the book away and gave it to me. I [Mr. Wedgwood] laid it on the table."

In the next incident (which I gather did not occur at the same séance), the drawing of a female figure on a card placed in Eglinton's locked slate, we might suppose that the locked slate was taken under the table to enable Eglinton to mark and substitute a second card on which the drawing had been previously made; or we might suppose that Eglinton had this second card in his hand, and imitated Mr. Wedgwood's initials and small mark, which I understand was a little circle, while Mr. Wedgwood was actually engaged in making the mark, and that he placed this between the slates instead of the one which Mr. Wedgwood had just initialled. It is not improbable that the initials were made by Mr. Wedgwood at the suggestion of Eglinton, who may have had initials already on the card with the drawing, so that only the addition of the circle may have been required.

The next "operation," described by Mr. Lewis (p. 371) as "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," needs no further comment.

The three cases, at three different sittings, of the "book-test" described in Mr. Wedgwood's next account, are easily explicable, as the book and slates were held under the table in each case. In the first and third cases Mr. Wedgwood observes that the time of waiting was considerable; in the second case apparently the time of waiting was much less. It is therefore worth noticing that in the second case Eglinton "held one of his own slates under the flap, instead of Captain James'," whose slates, a special folding

pair perhaps not easy to manipulate, had been used in the first case ; in the third case a folding pair of Mr. Wedgwood's was used, which he says he tied "firmly together with a double turn of strong twine." I may remark that a double turn of twine is sometimes easier to slip off (with one hand or two) than a single turn ; for the longer the string, the greater the amount of extension, and this may be applied to one turn at a time. One passage in Mr. Wedgwood's description of the first case deserves a brief comment.

At first I sat next to Eglinton, but as a considerable time elapsed without any signs of writing, Eglinton suggested that James and I should change places, and the table seemed to show its approval of the change by much violent jumping about. Soon afterwards Eglinton, finding his hand cramped by holding the slates so long under the table, asked James to join with him in holding them ; and before putting them beneath again he opened them to see whether anything was written, when I saw that there was not. After this the slates were held by Eglinton and James under the flap, and were not brought up again until the writing was accomplished, so that it must have been done while James had hold of the slates, and he avers that he held the closed slates the whole time up against the flap in such a way as to make it impossible to write on them from without in any way.

All that we need suppose here is a slight transposition in the sequence as regards the opening of the slates, and I suggest the following amendment, which seems otherwise, moreover, to represent a somewhat more appropriate order of events than Mr. Wedgwood's account.

. . . approval of the change by much violent jumping about.

During the change Eglinton held the slate and book above the table, and before putting them beneath again he opened the slates to see whether anything was written, when I saw that there was not. Soon afterwards, Eglinton, finding his hand cramped by holding the slates so long under the table, asked James to join with him in holding them. James did so, and avers . . .

On this supposition the word was found by Eglinton during the "considerable time" before the change of seats, and afterwards written by him on the slate before he asked Captain James to join in holding them.

#### *Reports of MR. E. T. BENNETT, MR. G. R. VICARS, &c.*

I should, I think, have judged these reports, from internal evidence, to be exceptionally free from some of the forms of memory-illusion to which I have drawn attention, and I understand that Mr. Bennett took shorthand notes during the sittings. The reports require little comment, as it seems that in every case where writing was obtained, the slate or slates had been held under the table by Eglinton alone ; and in this connection a statement made at the end of the first report calls for special attention.

While the writing\* was going on, part of Mr. Eglinton's thumb holding the slate was always visible, and generally the end of it was on the top of the table. This was specially noticed.

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\* At the beginning of the report Mr. Bennett spoke more cautiously, saying—"a sound as of writing."

I think it is to be inferred from this that Mr. Bennett observed that there were occasions when the end of Eglinton's thumb was *not* on the top of the table.

I shall quote the details of one incident given in the first report, chiefly to illustrate Mr. Bennett's use of the word *immediately*, and the phrase *no result*.

The two slates, being seen to be quite clean, were then placed together, with a bit of pencil between them ; and the question asked whether Mr. V. would get any more writing himself. No result following immediately, Mr. Eglinton drew the slates from under the table and held them at arm's length just at the back of Mr. V.'s neck. No result following immediately, and the position being rather tiring, Mr. V. said, " You can rest them on my head if you like." Almost immediately the sound of writing was heard between the slates. It is inconceivable to Mr. V. and Mr. B. that there could be any doubt as to the place from which the sound of writing came. On its ceasing and the slates being examined, at the end of the lower one farthest from Mr. Eglinton, were the words : " You will have other writing. Patience."

Now it might be supposed that the question was suggested by Eglinton, that no complete examination of both slates was made by the sitters immediately prior to the experiment, that the writing was already on the under surface of the upper slate, and that both slates were reversed together by Eglinton while in the act of placing them " at the back of Mr. V.'s neck." But we might also suppose that the answer was written by Eglinton after he placed the slates under the table, since Mr. Bennett by the phrase " no result " apparently means *no audible sound as of writing* ; and we may fairly assume the phrase " following immediately " to imply an interval quite long enough to give Eglinton opportunities of writing the message, since in the next sentence it implies a sufficient interval for a position to be found tiring.

#### *Report of MR. F. W. BENTALL.*

The first writing received by Mr. Bentall was on one of Eglinton's slates which Mr. Bentall had marked. Eglinton

held it with the marked side uppermost under the flap of the table with his right hand, his thumb appearing above the table. He then placed his left hand on F.'s left hand, F.'s right hand being held in both mine. This is the ordinary mode of obtaining phenomena and will hereafter be referred to as " the usual way." In this particular instance F.'s left hand assisted to hold the slate up to the table. This however is not customary. When the slate was in position I requested that the word " Heybridge " should be written on the marked side of the slate, &c.

I suppose that Eglinton held the slate alone for some time, during which he wrote upon the slate, afterwards requesting F. to assist in holding it ; and this supposition is even suggested by the first part of Mr. Bentall's description.



The long message obtained at the next sitting I suppose to have been prepared beforehand ; Mr. Bentall does not say that he took any precautions to prevent the use of a previously prepared slate. (These statements may also be made concerning the long message received at the sitting of May 28th.)

The descriptions of the later sittings are said to be "recounted from notes made after each sitting." It would be interesting to compare these notes with what I presume to be the fuller descriptions in the report. Some of the omissions which I have to suppose, might possibly be due to the fact that the complete report of each sitting was not made immediately afterwards. Thus, Mr. Bentall describes an incident at the sitting of May 8th as follows, the two slates used being his own :

After sitting some time with this closed slate with no result, we suggested that we might perhaps get writing between our other two slates. These I took out of their case and placed on the table. Between them I put a small square piece of slate-pencil newly fractured at each end, and then handed them to E., who took them by one corner in his right hand, F. holding the opposite corner in his left hand. E. then placed his left hand on F.'s left, and F.'s hand I held in both mine. I then asked why our closed slates could not be written in. A scratching, apparently between the slates, was soon heard, followed by three taps. E. at once removed his hands, and F. laid the slates on the table. On removing the top slate we found the words "There is no power" written on the upper surface of the bottom slate under where F.'s thumb had been. The slates were held above the table in full view all the time, and the pencil was abraded at one corner as if with writing.

I suppose that Eglinton first held the slates under the table, and wrote the words, and then, no sound as of writing having been heard, held them above the table, and asked F. to hold them with him.

At the sitting of May 12th, a triangle, at the request of Mr. Bentall, was obtained underneath a tumbler "inverted over a piece of pencil on a clean slate" held under the table by Eglinton. Mr. Bentall says :

We soon heard scratching, and both suddenly looked under the table thinking we might see the pencil in motion. F. saw it fall directly he looked at it, I saw nothing on account of the light shining on the surface of the glass. On raising our heads the scratching recommenced and finished with three taps. E. then lifted the slate on to the table, and underneath the tumbler we saw the figure of a triangle. In the centre of one side was a break in the line as if the stroke had been interrupted.

I suppose that the triangle, with the break in one side, was drawn before the sitters looked under the table, and that they looked under at the suggestion of Eglinton. F. may have seen the pencil in motion—it can scarcely have *fallen* very far—; but the movement of the pencil could have been produced by Eglinton (see the accounts of Mr. Rait, Mr. Limmer, &c., in the *Journal* for January, 1887). In the description of the "book-test" obtained at the same sitting Mr. Bentall says :

F. went to the bookcase and took out a book at random. This he placed without looking at it, together with a piece of slate pencil on a clean slate held by E. underneath the table. I then made a verbal request, at the same time writing it on a slate. "Please write the last word of the third line on the fifty-first page of the book under the table," and at E.'s suggestion also asked that the name of the book might be also written. The word, line, and page, I put down as I happened to think of them at the time, after the book was under the table. This second slate was placed above the book and we then took up our usual positions, F. holding the slates as well as E. as in our first experiment. We soon heard the scratching and the taps.

We are not told that the second slate was placed under the table immediately after Mr. Bentall had finished writing his request; and we may suppose—since Eglinton had previously taken the other slate and the book under the table, and Mr. Bentall had made his request verbally, as well as by writing—that Eglinton found the word and wrote the answer *before* the second slate was placed above the book by (—I should suppose—), and at the suggestion of, Eglinton.

The only other incident worth noting occurred at the sitting of May 13th, and is described as follows :

We brought with us a sealed envelope containing a paper on which certain words had been written by a third person, we not knowing what they were. This we put with a piece of pencil between two of E.'s clean slates on the table, and I then took E.'s Bramah locked book slate and wrote in it the following question, taking care that E. should not see what was written : "Will you kindly copy the figure below" (I had drawn a cross on the slate under the question) "between the slates held by Mr. Eglinton" (those containing the envelope), "or better still write the words on the paper inside the envelope on one of these slates?" I then locked the slate and kept the key in my hand. We sat in our usual order, E. sometimes holding the locked slate above or below the table, sometimes the other two slates. His left hand was always in F.'s custody. Finally he put all the slates in a pile on the table, the locked slate being uppermost.

Eventually, on examining the slates, after the "scratching sound and the taps," the sitters saw that "the cross was copied on the bottom slate"; the envelope was found in the locked slate. For this performance it was only necessary that Eglinton should (1) abstract the envelope from between the two slates (which he seems to have been holding—probably under the table—while Mr. Bentall was writing on the locked slate) and place it, say, between his knees; (2) take the locked slate under the table, read the request and insert the envelope; (3) take the two slates under the table and draw the cross. I assume that if Eglinton wished to avoid the risk involved in manipulating the slates or the envelope above the table, it was probably necessary that either the two slates, or the locked slate, should have been held at least twice under the table; necessary, that is to say, for the trick

phenomenon ; I do not mean necessary for such a phenomenon if it were genuine. And that this probably necessary condition of Eglinton's performance was satisfied is, I think, sufficiently plain from Mr. Bentall's statement that Eglinton *sometimes held the locked slate above or below the table, sometimes the other two slates.*

*Report of PROFESSORS WAGNER, BOUTLEROF, and DOBROSLAVIN.*

The "book-test" incident described in this report is the only one requiring special mention. The book used was an English book, "a small volume of 130 pages in a linen binding."

Mr. Eglinton, on seeing the book, but without touching it, proposed to try an experiment which he had made elsewhere. Handing a slate to Professor Boutlerof, he requested him to write the number of a supposititious page, Professor Wagner the number of line, and Professor Dobroslavin the number of a word. This was done, and the slate was laid upon the table upside down without Mr. Eglinton having seen the figures. He next took another clean slate, and putting it under the table, asked if it were likely the proposed experiment would be successful. After some minutes, writing and the three raps were heard, and on the slate was found the word "Yes." The medium then laid upon this slate the English book and the sealed envelope, and placed it under the table as before, his right thumb remaining above the table. His left hand was clasped in that of Professor Boutlerof, as in the previous experiment. After a rather long interval of, say, five minutes, no writing was obtained. Mr. Eglinton withdrew the slate twice, but nothing was found upon it. He then put it upon the table with the book and the envelope, both resting in the same position, and took the *papier-maché* slates provided by Professor Boutlerof, placing between them a fresh piece of slate-pencil ; at the diagonal corners he tightly screwed the slates with small brass thumb-screws, and held them with his right hand, fastened in the manner described, upon the left shoulder of Professor Boutlerof.

\* \* \* \* \*

When the slates were unscrewed by this gentleman, on the upper surface of the lower slate was found written in a firm and legible writing : "The word is compound chimney-glass." . . . 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.

Various suppositions will doubtless occur to the reader as to Eglinton's exact dealings with the slates ; and it will suffice if I give the details of only one of these. Eglinton might have inferred, from the sound made and the movement of hand or pencil, what figures were being written upon the slate ; but I will assume that he did not know the figures when the slate on which they were written was placed writing downwards on the table. The three points of the trick were (1) To read the numbers on the slate, (2) To find

the word specified, (3) To write the answer. Now it appears that the sitters had provided two sealed slates, two *papier-maché* slates, and three common school slates, and I infer that all these slates—a complication particularly favourable for a conjurer—were lying on the “ordinary card-table” round which the party were seated. No mark of any kind is stated to have distinguished the slate upon which the numbers were written, and I suppose that Eglinton took this slate under the table for some time with the book, putting, meanwhile, another in its place on the table. I shall suppose that he did this after the first of the two withdrawals (at which times I suppose the slate and book to have been placed on the table, and the book lifted for the slate to be inspected), which were apparently made during the “rather long interval of, say, five minutes,” and that on the occasion of the second withdrawal he re-changed the slates—having, in the interval between the two withdrawals, read the figures and discovered the word. Such a substitution and re-substitution as I have supposed can be accomplished by an expert without detection, unless the attention of the witnesses is specially directed—as it evidently was not, in the instance before us—to guarding against such a procedure. Further, I suppose that Eglinton, after having found the word, seized an opportunity to write the answer on one of the *papier-maché* slates, an operation which could have involved little difficulty, since the attention of the sitters had probably never been given at all to these until Eglinton openly took them and screwed them together; he may have slipped one of them below the table for the purpose of writing upon it, though this was perhaps unnecessary. It is noteworthy that it was apparently Eglinton himself who took the initiative in all the preliminary dealings with the slates used in this experiment; and it was he who took the *papier-maché* slates, and placed between them “a fresh piece of slate-pencil.” I suppose this piece of pencil to have been already “worn at one corner” when it was inserted; no specific examination of it then is described; indeed, *fresh* may be intended to signify merely that it was not the piece (if there was a piece) used in the preliminary trials under the table. Finally, it seems plain that the *papier-maché* slates were not examined by anyone immediately before Eglinton took them to screw them together; and at this stage I suppose that the answer was on the under surface of the upper slate, both slates being afterwards reversed together in the process of screwing and placing them on the shoulder of Professor Boutlerof.\* I may add that Mr. Lewis evidently attaches little importance to this incident; see his remarks in the *Journal* for August, 1886, p. 369, *note*.

\* The remaining incidents in this report are thus described:—

After this, in answer to the question as to whether writing could subsequently be produced between the sealed slates, the reply was “Yes,” autographically written upon a common slate in the ordinary way; and instead of an answer being obtained to another question, the words “Good-bye” were written upon the slate in bold characters.

I quote this because, according to *Light*, September 25th, 1886, a condensed account of this sitting of the Russian professors appears to have been given in *Neue Spiritualistische Blätter*, the “principal occurrences” only being mentioned; the following translation is given in *Light*:—

At the first of these séances direct spirit writing was obtained in sealed ordinary slates and in cardboard slates, tightly screwed together, be-

*Report of MR. ANGELO J. LEWIS ("Professor Hoffmann").*

Mr. Lewis had two sittings with Eglinton (both of which were blank,— see p. 373) before the ten mentioned in his report. At each of the twelve sittings he asked for a word (figures on one occasion) to be written, the word being suggested by himself on the spur of the moment.

The slate was held under the table by Eglinton in his right hand, in what he stated to be his usual manner, the thumb being sometimes above and sometimes below the table; but the thumb and corner of the slate were always visible, at any rate to the person sitting next to Mr. Eglinton. No special test or condition was suggested (until the last two sittings), my primary object being to get *some* positive result which should serve as a starting point for more minute investigation.

Nine sittings, including the two which Mr. Lewis had had previously, were blank. At the tenth sitting, October 15th, 1885, the word which Mr. Lewis had asked for at that sitting was obtained. The sitting is described as follows:—

October 15th, 1885. Sat with Mr. Marcus H. Lewis, from 4.30 to nearly 6 p.m. I asked for the word "unpalatable" to be written, and after sitting for about 40 minutes, as it began to grow dusk, Eglinton was seized with the customary "shivering," a sound of writing was heard, and on the slate being drawn from under the table, and the gas lighted, the required word was found written upon it, in a faint scrawly handwriting, and one angle of the little piece of pencil which had been put upon the slate was found to be abraded. The position of the word (very close to the frame at the opposite end of the slate, and with the tops of the letters to the medium) was precisely that

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longing to Professor Butlerow. Morsels of pencil had been previously inserted and the slates marked by all the professors present.

Professor Dobrostawin [*sic*] took from his pocket a book, *Bernay's Chemistry*. The book was not shown to Mr. Eglinton, and from this book, without looking in it, Professor Butlerow selected the forty-sixth page, Professor Wagner the twelfth line, and Professor Dobrostawin the fifth word to be given. The slate with the question written upon it was laid upon the table with the writing downwards. Mr. Eglinton took the cardboard slates, laid them upon Professor Butlerow's shoulder, and writing was soon heard, followed by three soft taps inside the slates. The latter were opened and these words were found written, "The word is compound—'chimney-glass.'" When the sealed double slates were opened, the words "Good-bye" in large letters were found written.

I do not think it will often happen, in the case of a *bonâ fide* witness, that writing obtained on an ordinary slate is described, after two or three months have elapsed, as having been obtained between sealed double slates; this mistake is probably due to a mistranslation by the "condenser." But the deliberate omission, on the ground, I suppose, of their presumed unimportance, of Eglinton's preliminary dealings with the book and slates, to which I have drawn attention, and which offer clues for an explanation of the *modus operandi* of the trick,—is typical, I believe, of the treatment to which the events of a sitting have been more or less subjected by the witnesses themselves, in the vast majority of Spiritualistic records.

which it would most probably have taken if the slate had been secretly turned round in its own plane, and the word written by the medium himself, but there was no evidence in support of such a supposition. My brother, who was seated next to Eglinton, and was able to command a view of the corner of the slate, did not observe any suspicious movement. On my remarking to Eglinton the possible inference from such a position of the writing, he said that this was the most frequent position, but that it would also appear in any other position, as might be called for. We sat for half-an-hour longer, but without result.

N.B.—My reason for selecting the word “unpalatable” was that the same word had appeared, but with a redundant *e* (unpalateable), in a long message procured at a sitting a few days before by Messrs. Herschell and Sachs. I was curious to see whether the misspelling was repeated, and found that it *was so*, in the word as written for us.

Mr. Lewis seems to have thought it possible that Eglinton turned the slate in its own plane and wrote upon it himself, the weakness of the light being specially favourable for such an operation without detection. I am however inclined to prefer another supposition. In correcting the proof of his report Mr. Lewis made the following addition, which unfortunately was received too late for insertion :

Eglinton had in the course of the sitting, shortly before this, twice dropped the slate on the floor.

I understand that Mr. Lewis added this after reading the other reports printed in the *Journal* for June, proofs of which had been sent to him for his opinion on the evidence, and his consideration of which led him to think that the dropping “*may* have had more significance than ‘*he*’ at first supposed.” Now as regards these two droppings, various hypotheses may be suggested. The word may actually have been written by Eglinton after the second dropping, in the way suggested in the report, and the two droppings may have been due to the fact that Eglinton had at least twice previously lowered the slate for the purpose of writing on it, when the attention of one or both of the sitters became again concentrated on the slate, which Eglinton at once dropped, to avoid the possible observation that he had purposely lowered it enough to write upon it. I should rather suppose, however, that he dropped it on the first occasion in order to see whether Mr. Lewis would then take it into his hands and examine it carefully, look for the piece of pencil, examine and mark a fresh piece, &c. Finding that Mr. Lewis did not take the initiative in this way (as, I need hardly say, it was not his cue to do, whether he supposed Eglinton’s phenomena to be genuine or fraudulent, since his object was, in his own words, “to get *some* positive result which should serve as a starting point for more minute investigation”), Eglinton then wrote upon the under surface of the slate, and then dropped it again, picked it up, perhaps even ‘carelessly’ showed both sides of it, trusting that the “faint scrawly” word would not be seen in the imperfect light,—and placed the prepared piece of pencil on it as he put it again, writing upwards, under the table. I should suppose that he next waited long

enough, as he thought, to avoid giving the impression to Mr. Lewis that the writing was connected in any way with the dropping, and then produced the "shivering" and the sound as of writing. This dropping of the slate appeared to me to be so important as a possible indication of trickery, that I wrote to Mr. Lewis on the subject, suggesting that the word may have been written by Eglinton on the under side of the slate before the dropping,\* and that the slate was reversed by Eglinton as he replaced it under the flap. Mr. Lewis said in his reply: "On the assumption that the word was written by Eglinton himself, I think your theory is as likely as any to be the correct one." In a later letter Mr. Lewis wrote:

"In reply to your inquiries, E. twice dropped the slate during the 'unpalatable' sitting; but the first occasion was at an early period of the séance, and *certainly* had no bearing on the writing, save that E. remarked that he had had several sittings that day and that his hand was very tired. This of course *might* be to pave the way for the second 'drop.' To the best of my recollection the second 'drop' was some six or eight minutes, or more, before the actual production of the writing, and I did not in my own mind, connect the two things, though it is of course quite possible that there may have been an intimate connection between them."

Mr. Lewis thus admits the possibility of my explanation.

But my readers may say: Why should I thus trouble myself to explain an incident for which Mr. Lewis has already suggested a rationalistic explanation, and to which no one attaches any importance as evidence of "occult" writing? I have done so in order to show once more that we may be justified in assuming, in the consideration of accounts of a slate-writing séance, that important clues to an explanation have been omitted. Suppose I had, with only the original report of Mr. Lewis before me, as it appeared in the *Journal* for June, suggested that perhaps the slate had been twice dropped and replaced without any minute inspection of it, and that in this dropping might be found the clue to the trick, should I not have been regarded by many as doing at least as much violence to his report as to that of any other report which I have commented upon? No doubt if Mr. Lewis had thought the manifestation of any value 'in a scientific sense,' his report would have included a reference to many details which are not mentioned in any way. Still, if Mr. Lewis, an expert in conjuring, and with some special knowledge of "slate-writing," can, when writing an account of a séance, attach so little importance to circumstances which may—not improbably—be the very nodus of the trick on the occasion in question, that he thinks it unnecessary to allude to them,—are we not justified in thinking it far more probable that an ordinary observer will be liable to make such omissions?

I may now repeat what I endeavoured to make clear in the *Journal* for October, 1886, that I do not of course affirm that my particular suppositions are correct, concerning either Eglinton's operations or the

\* At that time I was only aware of the one dropping mentioned by Mr. Lewis in the *Journal* for August.

mistakes made by the recorders owing to mal-observation, memory-illusion, &c. Whether they are correct or not is immaterial for my present purpose, which is to show "how far I think each report may fail of being a full and accurate description of the sitting," and that this deficiency prevents the suggestion of an 'occult' origin for the phenomena reported. It may be regarded by some as an impossibility that the witnesses could have made such mistakes as I have attributed to them; but, as I have already pointed out, I cannot see that such an opinion can be justified on *à priori* considerations; some experimental investigation is required for the purpose of estimating the trustworthiness of human perception and memory under the special circumstances at issue; and it may suffice here for me to say, for my own part, that the suppositions which I have made involve no assumptions as to the untrustworthiness of the records which are not justified by facts that have come within my own experience, and that the plausibility of many of them is established, as I have shown, by omissions and discrepancies in cases where we have more than one independent account of the same séance.

There are various details in the reports, to which I have not specially adverted, which are positively suggestive that the performances described were conjuring. For the present, however, I *shall* postpone any consideration of these. I may deal with them in a future paper, when I may also endeavour to compare the value of human testimony under ordinary circumstances, with the value of human testimony under the exceptional circumstances which constitute the matrix of the majority of the records of the "physical phenomena" of Spiritualism.

#### THE SECOND VOLUME OF THE JOURNAL.

The second volume of the *Journal* ends with this Supplement, and a title-page and index will be issued with the February number. Covers will be ready about the middle of January, and may be purchased at 1s. each. Application to be made to the Assistant-Secretary, 14, Dean's Yard, S.W.

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