

# JOURNAL

OF THE

## SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.

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### NEW MEMBERS AND ASSOCIATES.

#### MEMBERS.

- DAKIN, REV. EDWARD, Kingstanley, Stonehouse, Gloucestershire.  
 FALCKE, DUDLEY C., 5, Pump Court, Temple, London, E.C.  
 NAIDU, C. V., Downing College, Cambridge.  
 WESTLAKE, ERNEST, F.G.S., Fordingbridge, Salisbury.

#### ASSOCIATES.

- CAUDEE, MISS EMMELINE, Buffalo, New York, U.S.A.  
 DOUBLEDAY, MRS. FRANCES G., Washington, D.C., U.S.A.  
 EDGE, H. T., King's College, Cambridge.  
 ELTON, OLIVER, Belvedere, Kent.  
 EVENS, JOHN, R.E., Oldbank, Enniskillen, Ireland.  
 GESSMANN, GUSTAV, Jun., 11, Burg-gasse, Vienna, VII.  
 LOEWENTHAL, LEOPOLD, 78, Elgin Avenue, St. Peter's Park, London, W.  
 MARSHALL, HENRY WILLIAM, Quorn, South Australia.  
 MELLOR, W. P., King's College, Cambridge.  
 MUNRO, HENRY ACLAND, New College, Oxford.  
 NORRIS, S. J., Riverton, South Australia.  
 STACKHOUSE, MRS. M. F., Stackhouse, Settle.

### MEETINGS OF COUNCIL.

An interim Council Meeting was held on the 22nd of December, at which the following Members were present:—Messrs. Walter H. Coffin, Edmund Gurney, Richard Hodgson, Frank Podmore, and H. Arthur Smith. Mr. Coffin was voted to the chair.

The minutes of the previous meeting having been read and signed as correct, and four new Associates elected, whose names are included in the list given above, the special business was brought forward, which was the election of a treasurer in the place of Mr. Alexander Calder,

who had resigned. On the proposition of Mr. Gurney, Mr. H. Arthur Smith, of 1, New-square, Lincoln's Inn, W.C., was appointed to that office.

The date of the Annual Business Meeting was fixed for Friday, the 28th of January, the Council to meet at its close. It was also resolved that a General Meeting be held on the evening of the same day, unless it was found practicable to hold it at a little later date.

The thanks of the Council were voted to the donors of two presents to the Library, and to Mr. W. H. Coffin for his present of an electro-magnet.

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At a meeting of the Council on the 28th of January, the following members were present: Professor W. F. Barrett, Professor H. Sidgwick, and Messrs. Edmund Gurney, Richard Hodgson, F. W. H. Myers, Frank Podmore, and H. Arthur Smith. Professor Sidgwick took the chair.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and signed as correct.

The Council was informed that at the Annual Business Meeting, no nominations having been sent in other than those included in the notice convening the meeting, the following had been declared duly elected Members of Council: Professor Balfour Stewart, F.R.S., Edmund Gurney, Esq., Professor Macalister, F.R.S., Frank Podmore, Esq., Professor H. Sidgwick, H. Arthur Smith, Esq., Professor J. J. Thomson, J. Venn, Esq., F.R.S.

The following were unanimously elected officers of the Society for the ensuing year: President, Professor Balfour Stewart, F.R.S.; Hon. Treasurer, H. Arthur Smith, Esq.; Hon. Secretary, Edmund Gurney, Esq.

On the proposition of Mr. Edmund Gurney, Mr. Walter H. Coffin was elected a Member of the Council, in accordance with Rule 17.

Donations to the funds of the Society were reported from Mr. Edward Grubb, an Honorary Associate, £1 1s., from Mrs. Russell Gurney, £2 18s., and from "C. D.," £5. Resolved that votes of thanks be given to the donors.

One present to the Library was on the table, for which a vote of thanks was awarded to the donor.

The usual cash account was presented for the month of December, and also for January, made up to the previous day, and the necessary accounts were passed for payment.

The House and Finance Committee reported that arrangements had been concluded with Dr. Stone for the continuance of the existing arrangement until Michaelmas, 1887, without any additional pecuniary liability for the six months.

The following Committees were appointed with power to add to their number :

COMMITTEE OF REFERENCE.—Professor Balfour Stewart, *ex-officio* as President, Professor Adams, Professor Barrett, Mr. Edmund Gurney, Professor Lodge, Lord Rayleigh, Dr. C. Lockhart Robertson, Professor Sidgwick, Professor Thomson and Mr. J. Venn.

LITERARY COMMITTEE.—Messrs. Edmund Gurney, Richard Hodgson, F. W. H. Myers, Frank Podmore, Professor Sidgwick and Mrs. H. Sidgwick.

LIBRARY COMMITTEE.—Dr. A. T. Myers and Mr. F. W. H. Myers.

HOUSE AND FINANCE COMMITTEE.—Messrs. Richard Hodgson, H. Arthur Smith, and J. G. Stapelton.

Four new Members and eight new Associates, whose names and addresses appear above, were elected.

The list of the Corresponding Members of the Society having been read over, it was resolved that the following be re-elected for the ensuing year :—

- PROFESSOR H. BEAUNIS, 29, Rue des Ecuries d'Artois, Paris.  
 PROFESSOR BERNHEIM, Hôpital Civil, Nancy.  
 PROFESSOR H. P. BOWDITCH, M.D., Harvard Medical School, Boston, U.S.A.  
 PROFESSOR NICHOLAS MURRAY BUTLER, Columbia College, New York, U.S.A.  
 PROFESSOR DOBROSLAVIN, M.D., Imperial Medical Academy, St. Petersburg.  
 DR. FÉRÉ, 37, Boulevard St. Michel, Paris.  
 PROFESSOR G. S. FULLERTON, Pennsylvania University, Philadelphia, U.S.A.  
 PROFESSOR STANLEY HALL, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, U.S.A.  
 DR. EDUARD VON HARTMANN, Gross-Lichterfelde, Germany.  
 PROFESSOR W. JAMES, Harvard University, Cambridge, U.S.A.  
 PROFESSOR PIERRE JANET, Havre, France.  
 MAHĀDEVA VISHNU KĀNĒ, B.A., Dharwar, Bombay.  
 PROFESSOR KOVALEVSKY, The University, Kharkof, Russia.  
 DR. A. A. LIÉBEAULT, Nancy.  
 PROFESSOR LIÉGEOIS, Nancy.  
 PROFESSOR E. C. PICKERING, The Observatory, Cambridge, U.S.A.  
 TH. RIBOT, Office of the *Revue Philosophique*, Paris.  
 DR. CHARLES RICHET, 15, Rue de l'Université, Paris.  
 H. TAINE, Menthon St. Bernard, Haute Savoie, France.  
 PROFESSOR N. WAGNER, Imperial University, St. Petersburg.  
 REV. R. WHITTINGHAM, Pikesville, Maryland, U.S.A.

The list of Honorary Associates having been read over, it was resolved that the following be re-elected for the ensuing year :—

- BEARD, SIDNEY H., The Chestnuts, Torrington Park, North Finchley, N.  
 BIRCHALL, JAMES, Kirkdale, Liverpool.  
 CREERY, REV. A. M., B.A., Victoria-terrace, Murray-street, Higher Broughton, Manchester.  
 CURTIS, MISS MARY, Laugharne, St. Clears, South Wales.  
 FRYER, REV. A. T., 4, Upper Vernon-street, London, W.C.  
 GRUBB, EDWARD, Rye Croft, Fulford-road, Scarborough.  
 JAMES, CAPTAIN, 68, Hereford-road, Bayswater, London, W.

JENKINS, E. VAUGHAN, Ferndale, Revington-road, Oxford.

KEULEMANS, J. G., 34, Matilda-street, Barnsbury, London, N.

MACDONALD, REV. J. A., 25, Clifton-road, Birkenhead.

NISBET, E. T., 51, Eldon-street, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

SAXBY, MRS., Mount Elton, Clevedon.

SCUDAMORE, MRS., The Grove, Pluckley, Ashford, Kent.

SUGDEN, REV. E. H., B. A., B.Sc., Prospect House, Great Horton, Bradford, Yorkshire.

BEILBY, J. WOOD, Beechworth, Victoria, Australia.

The next meeting of the Council will be on Friday, the 4th of March, at 4.30 p.m.

### REPORT OF GENERAL MEETING.

A General Meeting of the Society was held on the evening of January 28th, at the rooms of the Society of British Artists. Professor Barrett took the chair at 8.30.

Mr. F. W. H. Myers read a paper on "Automatic Writing:—Some physiological and pathological analogies"; of which the following is a brief abstract.

In pursuing our study of automatic writing it is still desirable to postpone the more complex problems,—those which relate to the *content* of the messages, and their possible source external to the automatist,—until we have learnt more as to their mechanism, and considered what analogies exist to this apparent multiplication of personalities, with none of which the automatist consciously identifies himself. [A case of Mr. Schiller's serves as a good example of these messages.] If we consider any of the familiar forms of recurrent psychical disturbance, we find in each case a tendency to the formation of a new personality expressive of that disturbed condition alone, and isolated from the main current of life. This tendency shows itself first in the gradual concatenation of a specialized chain of memory, acts done in the abnormal state being remembered during the next recurrence of that state, but forgotten in the interval. This view is supported by certain phenomena of dream, (example sent by Mr. Keulemans) of somnambulism, of drunkenness, (example of negro servant sent by Mr. Keulemans,) of epilepsy, (example sent by Professor Barrett,) and of those profounder severances to which Krishaber gave the name of "névropathie cérébro-cardiaque," (example from Dr. Mesnet). Recent experiment on hypnotic subjects, moreover, has shown that in some cases a stratum of consciousness, profounder than any which can find expression otherwise, is reached through writing of a quasi-automatic kind. (Examples from Professor Janet, of Havre, one of them hitherto unpublished, and sent expressly by Professor Janet to the S. P. R.)

Still further, the phenomenon of automatism cannot be said to be *per se* any indication of morbid process. Automatic action (as in the expression of the countenance) tends, as civilisation advances, to assume a higher relative proportion to voluntary action. Most of our acts of importance contain a large element either of primary or of secondary automatism; and as life goes on we increase in delicacy as automata, though we lose voluntary muscular power. On the whole, therefore, we see that parallels may be found to most of the perplexing characteristics of our automatic messages. We need not treat as unique either their origination during normal health, or the continuity of the quasi personages whom they introduce, nor their co-existence with ordinary consciousness, nor even the fact of their permanent exclusion from the ordinary channels of memory. Considering all these partial, these alternating, these intercurrent consciousnesses, these memories ravelled into a many-stranded rope,—we can no longer draw a marked line between the conscious and the unconscious. With regard to any manifestation, at the time apparently automatic, the question will be whether it has subsequently been included, or seems capable of being included, in any mnemonic chain, belonging to any phase of the agent's personality. It will be difficult to answer this question in any case with a decided negative. The next phase of the discussion must turn upon *cognate forms of automatism*,—table tilting, trance speaking and the like; after which we shall be better prepared for a scrutiny into the actual substance of the messages given through any of these channels. In the mean time there is urgent need of fresh experiment, fresh observation. The two years during which such evidence has been earnestly invited have produced some important cases, such as Mr. Newnham's and Professor Janet's, making for explanations other than the spiritualistic. On the spiritualistic side of the inquiry, those years have been almost wholly barren,—scarcely any trustworthy cases pointing to the agency of disembodied spirits having been either communicated to the present writer, or given to the world elsewhere. It is greatly to be desired that a strong effort should be made by those who hold the spiritualistic view to acquire and publish any attainable evidence pointing towards so momentous a conclusion.

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### PHANTASMS OF THE DEAD.

BY MRS. SIDGWICK.

In the paper on "Phantasms of the Dead," in *Proceedings*, Vol. III., I commented (at p. 53) on the absence of any apparent object or intelligent action on the part of the ghosts haunting houses of which accounts have reached our Society. The familiar ghost of fiction who

wanders restlessly about his former abode until he finds someone to whom he can reveal missing documents or hidden treasure, and then for ever disappears, has scarcely presented himself for our investigation. There was, however, as I thought it right to mention in a foot-note, a single exception to this rule, in a story which I regarded as insufficiently evidenced. This story, G. No. 173, relates how, when a certain man died, his will could nowhere be found. The relations with whom he had lived were in danger of being deprived of his property, when a new servant entered the family heralded by prophetic dreams, and from the day she came, began to see a figure which was invisible to others, but which they ultimately identified from description as their deceased relative. Guided by signs made by this figure, they found the will in an old book.

This story was sent by a young lady residing in the Channel Islands, who professed that it was written by her mother, and narrated as a personal experience of the latter, and five signatures were appended. Certain improbabilities, however, both psychical and non-psychical, in the details, led us to regard it with great suspicion, and this was strengthened by the form of some of the signatures, *e.g.*, "Dr. Fitzgerald, LL.D.," with no Christian name. The young lady had been introduced to us by the editor of a magazine to which she had been a contributor, but beyond this we knew nothing of her. It was felt, therefore, that the story was of no evidential value without further inquiry.

Since my paper was published, information has reached us which makes it practically certain that this story is a forgery. And we have further learnt that an article appeared in *Sunday Gems* for June 26th, 1885, exposing other frauds committed by the same person, who, it appears, was in the habit of competing under various aliases for prizes offered by magazines, and among other things sent under the alias of "Enid May Fitzgerald," a story purporting to be an original composition and accompanied by a certificate, purporting to be signed by "Dr. Fitzgerald"—another alias—to the effect that his daughter Enid had received no assistance in the writing of this tale. The editor of *Sunday Gems* discovered that the story sent had been copied from the magazine *Belgravia*, and on making inquiries in Jersey he ascertained that no person or family of the name of Fitzgerald was known on the Island, and that all letters addressed to the above mentioned names and to several others, were delivered to our correspondent, who was a young girl of 18, living with her aunt. On careful examination, the hand-writings of the young lady's letters to us, of the story stated to be written by her mother, and of the different signatures, appeared, though superficially different, to be all the work of the same hand, with

the doubtful exception of one of the signatures. I have not mentioned the young lady's name, because it is now over two years since she sent the story, and a year-and-a-half since the article exposing her frauds appeared in *Sunday Gems*. She was then young, and we may hope that, having had her lesson, she has since amended her ways. From the point of view of human nature, the above facts are depressing, but from the point of view of Psychical Research, they are, I think, the reverse. For it is satisfactory that the only case which we have ascertained to have been fraudulently sent to us should have contained intrinsically improbable elements which rendered it suspect from the first. The exceptional character of this story adds another item to strengthen a conclusion which is, I think, gradually forcing itself on all members of the Literary Committee, namely, that waking experiences of the kind they have been investigating are not likely, if genuine, to diverge widely from certain well marked types, which by no means coincide with the types which the literary imagination, as manifested in magazine stories, tends to produce.

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### CORRESPONDENCE.

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

SIR.—So far as I understand the general intention of Mr. Grignon's letter in the February number of the *Journal*, it is to point out that I have not shown myself competent to deal impartially with the evidence for the "physical phenomena" of Spiritualism, and that therefore it is natural that Spiritualists should feel hurt at my tone, and should dread to expose themselves to possible criticism by me. And, as far at least as the Eglintonian evidence is concerned, he extends the objection to Mr. Hodgson, who, while applying to this evidence a more searching and complete criticism than mine, agrees in my conclusion with regard to it.

The question of the competence and impartiality of either Mr. Hodgson or myself is of little importance to those who may be able to furnish evidence to the committee which, under the auspices of our President, has recently been formed to examine such evidence—since we are not members of that committee. Still, for my own sake, I should like to discuss some of the points raised by Mr. Grignon, and such discussion may help somewhat in the elucidation of this difficult subject of "physical phenomena."

It is difficult perhaps to judge impartially of one's own impartiality, but I think that some evidence that I have not been eager to arrive at a conclusion hostile to the physical phenomena of Spiritualism may be found in the amount of time and thought which I have given to the investigation, and in the fact that notwithstanding the continual disillusionment which has attended my personal experience, and notwithstanding my growing conviction of the inadequacy of most of the evidence presented, my judgment is still in suspense:—I still believe, as I said in my paper

(*Proceedings X.*, p. 72), that there is some evidence which ought not to be set aside, and I still hope that more and better evidence will be forthcoming.

However, it will be more to the purpose to meet the specific charges which Mr. Grignon brings against me.

He thinks that I should not have mentioned a "discovery which impugns Mrs. Jencken's truthfulness"—viz., that she or her "spirits" are willing to claim as Spiritualistic phenomena, accidental occurrences quite unconnected with her presence—without giving my grounds for this conclusion. The omission, due to a desire to shorten the necessarily long account of my experiences, may be remedied now by giving the following extract from the account of one of my séances with her. The séance took place on April 22nd, 1885, at 14, Dean's-yard, and there were seven persons present, besides Mrs. Jencken and myself. I wrote the account on April 30th, 1885.

"Séance at first in the dark.

"During the earlier part of the séance two single raps occurred on the drum which lay on the table. After a time, Mrs. Jencken, with Miss B. and Mr. W., withdrew to the door, and while they were there the same rap on the drum was heard again. The 'spirits' claimed to have produced them, but unfortunately we afterwards ascertained that they were caused by water dropping from the gas lamp." [The gas lamp over the table was one of those which shorten and lengthen telescopically, with water in the outer tube to prevent escape of gas. It had been rather overfilled, so that when it was pushed up out of the way before the séance, water overflowed, and some of it remaining on the branches of the chandelier was dripping very slowly and irregularly on to the drum.]

Mr. Grignon complains that the next paragraph of my paper is also, as it stands, not science, but rhetoric, by which I understand him to mean that I have given only an abstract of the investigation of Professors Flint, Lee and Coventry, with regard to the raps occurring in the presence of Mrs. Jencken's sisters, and not the full details. I have, however, referred the reader for these, which it would occupy too much of your space to reproduce here, to E. W. Capron's *Modern Spiritualism*; \* and I think that any one who reads with care the details there given—whether he agrees with the conclusions of the three Professors or not,—will agree that what they say cannot be summarily dismissed as "worth nothing as evidence." It is not a sufficient reason for discrediting what appear to have been experiments conducted in a scientific manner by three medical professors, that certain other doctors unnamed behaved improperly to Dr. Elliotson, and rejected his conclusions on insufficient *à priori* grounds.

I observe that my description of the "raps" occurring in Mrs. Jencken's presence, as "loud double knocks acquiring a special sound from the table,

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\* Mr. Capron does not profess to quote the whole of the Professors' statements. The full account of their theory is, I believe, to be found in an article by Professor Austin Flint in the *Buffalo Medical Journal* for March, 1851, and the same with additions was published in pamphlet form by Mr. George H. Derby, of Buffalo. These I have been unable to refer to, but as Mr. Capron wrote as a Spiritualist and entirely disagreed with the Professors, it is to be presumed that his quotations are not unfair to the mediums.



floor, door, or other object on which they appear to be made," seems to Mr. Grignon "extraordinary," not merely, I gather, on account of the style, but on account of the meaning. Yet from the facts that the floor, door, &c., give a character to the sounds, and that simultaneously a vibration may be felt in these objects, we should surely not be justified—on the Spiritualistic hypothesis itself—in affirming that knocks are really made on these objects. We could not say more than that they appear to be made. And that we certainly cannot say more on a non-Spiritualistic hypothesis will be clearly seen if I explain a little further the theory of the American doctors, which Mr. Grignon appears not to have understood. It will be remembered that they based their theory partly on experiments with a lady who could make similar sounds by rapid partial dislocation and restoration of the knee joint. They make the following statement about this lady:—

"The visible vibration of articles in the room, situated near the operator, occur if the limb, or any portion of the body, is in contact with them at the time the sounds are produced. The force of the semi-dislocation of the bone is sufficient to occasion distinct jarring of the doors, tables, &c., if in contact. The intensity of the sound may be varied, in proportion to the force of the muscular contractions, and this will render the apparent source of the rappings more or less distinct." [? distant.]

By resting the end of a stick—say a walking-stick—firmly against the floor, the door, an earthen pot, a metal vase, &c., and then knocking on the other end with a hammer, or with the knuckles, a rough imitation of what occurred with this lady may be produced, the vibration caused by the knock being carried along the stick, as the vibration caused by the sudden displacement and restoration of the joint was presumably carried along the leg-bone. Raps so made would appear to a person who had no means of knowing what was being done, to be made on the objects against which the stick rests; and if Mr. Grignon will try the experiment he may satisfy himself that raps may acquire a special sound from objects on which they only appear to be made. It is not necessary that the hard end of the stick should be in immediate contact with the object that is to give character to the sound. A few thicknesses of paper—say a small pamphlet—may be interposed without materially affecting the result. It may be well to add that, in my experience, Mrs. Jencken's peculiar raps have always seemed to proceed from some point close to her, so far as I remember; if she wants to make the sound on the door, for instance, she stands by the door. It is, of course, however, probable that if she be an impostor, she can sometimes succeed by suggestion &c., in making them seem to come from more distant parts of the room.

Mr. Grignon next observes that "the admirable method adopted by the Society in dealing with alleged phantasms hardly seems to have been applied here," *i. e.*, to the investigation of "physical phenomena." Now the only evidence about "physical phenomena" collected in any sense by the Society, which has, so far as I remember, been printed at all, is that about Mr. Eglinton's slate-writing. I presume, therefore, that it is to this that Mr. Grignon refers. The treatment of it has differed in two important respects from that of phantasms of the living. (1) It has not been discussed by a

committee. (2) The whole of it, so far as we were permitted to publish it, has been printed, and the discussion and criticism applied to it have been applied in the *Journal* before the whole Society; while in the case of phantasms the discussion and criticism have been carried on in private by the Literary Committee, and a large amount of the evidence in consequence rejected without being laid before the Society as a body at all.

But I do not think that these are the differences of treatment to which Mr. Grignon alludes. I think he means that the method of dealing with the evidence has in itself been different—apart from the persons by whom it has been applied, and the publicity given to it. And this, so far as general principles of treatment are concerned, I cannot admit. In detail, of course, differences must exist;—thus the laborious inquiry into dates, so necessary in the case of phantasms of the living, has no place in the question of the nature of Mr. Eglinton's slate-writing; and any investigation into the possibilities of conjuring is in general irrelevant to a discussion of the connection of a hallucination with a death. But the broad principles of treatment have been the same, and have consisted in (1) obtaining first-hand testimony from as many witnesses as possible—(it is mainly by obtaining this that percipients of phantasms have been able to strengthen their evidence); and (2) in carefully examining whether known causes of the observed phenomenon are adequately excluded—without which, of course, no advance can be made towards proving the existence of the alleged unknown cause.

As to (1) it would hardly seem that any first-hand testimony is possible in the cases of Mr. Eglinton's slate-writing recorded in the *Journal* for June, except that of the persons present—and this has in the great majority of instances been obtained—either in the form of independent accounts, or of signatures to one account. And except in the matter of corroboration, it does not seem to me that such evidence as that in the *Journal* for June can be strengthened. Wherever the value of one's testimony depends on the accuracy of observation and recollection of what occurred during the experiment, which is, I think, the case in all the June *Journal* evidence, it is dangerous to attempt to go beyond or behind one's own notes. This is true of experimental investigation in general. If on examining one's notes it is found that some important observation has been omitted, it is generally better, even if one thinks one recollects making it, to repeat the experiment, rather than to allow a gap to be filled by later memory. *A fortiori* is this the case where what has chiefly to be guarded against is the possibility of intentional deception—of an intentionally produced illusion. However, whether this view of mine be right or wrong, the witnesses have, I presume, had every opportunity since June of saying in the *Journal* anything which they thought tended to strengthen their evidence.

The second point—examining whether known causes of the phenomenon have been adequately excluded—involves the destructive criticism of which Mr. Grignon complains. But similar destructive criticism has been freely applied in the case of phantasms, and must always be applied in all scientific investigation. Rigid search for and exclusion of known causes is the only method by which unknown causes can be established. The criticism applied to cases of phantasms of the living has been most destruc-

tive. Mr. Gurney tells us incidentally in his book (Vol. I., p. 137), that it has swept away more than two-thirds of the spontaneous cases of alleged telepathy, and in experimental telepathy it has led to the rejection of the whole class of cases of the willing-game type—experiments, that is, where the agent and percipient being in contact, the agent “wills” the percipient to do something involving movement. The treatment of this last class of cases illustrates well the way in which the slate-writing evidence should, I think, be regarded by those who consider that I have not sufficient grounds for my own conclusion that Mr. Eglinton is a conjurer pure and simple. In rejecting the willing-game experiments it is not improbable that a number of genuine telepathic cases have been rejected. But the experiments of Mr. Sugden and others have shown that it is impossible to lay down the limits of sensibility to slight muscular and tactile hints, and consequently, as Mr. Gurney says (Vol. I., p. 17), the best willing-game cases “could never be wholly conclusive, and mere multiplication adds nothing to their weight. By some the theory of muscular guidance is undoubtedly strained; but then it ought to be strained, and strained to the very utmost before being declared inadequate, and it would always be a matter of opinion whether the point of utmost strain had been overpassed.” Similarly in slate-writing, Mr. Hodgson has shown by comparing the accounts of different witnesses, and Mr. Davey has shown experimentally, how little human observation and memory can be trusted under conditions such as obtain at Mr. Eglinton’s séances; and therefore we cannot infer from the impossibility of explaining by conjuring the slate-writing as described, or as we seem to ourselves to have witnessed it, that it was really produced by occult means. (Mr. Grignon need not be afraid that all reliance on human testimony, or on the evidence of our senses must therefore be abandoned, since the conditions of a conjuring performance are rarely even approached in ordinary human experience.) After reading Mr. Davey’s experience it does not even seem necessary to suppose malobservation &c., going materially beyond what can be shown to have occurred, in order to explain the “psychography” of Messrs. Slade, Eglinton and others. But granting that the conjuring hypothesis had to be strained, I should hold, as Mr. Gurney does in the case of muscle-reading, that we are bound to strain it—to strain it so as to allow a considerable margin beyond what can be proved possible for a conjurer—and that, therefore, to prove occult slate-writing it must be obtained under entirely different conditions; just as to prove thought-transference it had to be obtained without any contact at all.

I am sorry that in the *Journal* for June I stated my belief that Mr. Eglinton’s performances are merely clever conjuring; not because I have at all changed my mind, but because I think the statement has tended to confuse the minds of Spiritualists as to the real point at issue. It is of very little importance to the world whether Mr. Eglinton is a conjurer pure and simple or not—and of absolutely no importance what I happen to think about it—so long as he does not produce phenomena which can be clearly distinguished from conjuring. Of course I do not mean that the evidence that Mr. Eglinton has tricked is unimportant. It is important because it makes the solution of a further problem unnecessary. This further problem is the

one which would arise in the case of "physical phenomena," due to a medium whose honesty in the matter was above suspicion. It would then be necessary, in order to obtain the full moral weight of the evidence for the occult nature of the phenomena, to consider whether the possibility was sufficiently excluded of an abnormal state in the medium—a state in which the actions required to produce the observed result might be unconsciously performed. It seems not unlikely, for instance, that in the case of the hysterical girl described by Mr. Myers at the last meeting of the Society, "Adrienne" might have rapped on the table or written on the slate, while her conscious *alter ego* "Louise" was quite unaware of it. Where trickery must be assumed probable such investigation into abnormal states is of course unnecessary.

And this brings me to Mr. Grignon's complaint that I have not allowed weight to the "fact" that Mr. Eglinton has never been "exposed";—I presume he means in slate-writing. I certainly think that, had this been a fact, it would have been a reason for still hesitating to pronounce Mr. Eglinton a mere conjurer, though it would not prove that his performances were beyond the limits of possible conjuring. It would, in fact, have introduced some amount—it is difficult to say how much—of improbability into the conjuring theory. Two years ago I believed with Mr. Grignon that there was no evidence that Mr. Eglinton had been thus detected; but, when I wrote my remarks about him, I had learnt that such evidence existed, and was sufficient, in my opinion, to show that more than one person had detected him in tricks connected with slate-writing. I could not, of course, avoid being influenced by this evidence, though I thought it undesirable to mention it, as I was unable to produce it. It must not be assumed that everyone who detects a medium at once rushes into print. It requires in general some public spirit, or genuine interest in Spiritualism, to induce a person to take the trouble and run the risk of annoyance involved. "Mr. Eglinton might make himself very disagreeable," as one detector said. Other motives also operate to prevent people publishing such evidence, *e.g.*, the view which some Spiritualists seem to entertain that it is good for the cause to hush up scandals of the kind—a most disastrous view, as it seems to me, if the cause be a genuine one. However, I quite admit that, to meet the force of Mr. Grignon's argument, it is needful to put the public in possession of some evidence on this point, and I hope this will be done before long.—I am, &c.,

ELEANOR MILDRED SIDGWICK.

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

SIR,—Will you allow me space for a few words by way of reply to your strictures on my letter in this month's *Journal*? You say:—"1. The writer seems to ignore the possibility of failure of observation and memory in *bond fide* witnesses." This may be so. But allowing for the fact, if it be a fact, all the importance which may seem to you necessary, the great difficulty which I wished to bring before you remains untouched. This difficulty is found not in what Mr. Davey was supposed by others to have *done* during the séance, but in what he himself is reported to have *said* after the séance

was over. That the word Boorzu was written on the slate by some means or other—this, I presume, we may accept as an undisputed fact. Now, on the testimony of one of the witnesses when this word was discovered on the slate, Mr. Davey (Clifford) “was positive he had never heard it before.” On the same testimony he had also forgotten Mr. Padshah’s request to get his (Mr. Padshah’s) name written on the slate. And this testimony is adduced by Mr. Davey himself without contradiction or comment. He does not even insert a mark of interrogation, as he does elsewhere when he considers that some statement of a witness is not strictly accurate. We have no choice therefore. We are forced to the conclusion that, as I stated in my last letter, “Mr. Davey can detect the word that lurks in another mind and write it in a locked slate without himself being conscious of having done so,” and that too by his own unaided powers as a slate-writing conjurer. This is his own unvarnished testimony, and to it you do not hesitate to attach your *imprimatur* when you speak of the records of Mr. Davey’s witnesses as “the *bona fide* records of tricks.”

I do sincerely hope, Sir, that the S. P. R., whose *raison d'être*, it is acknowledged, is the pursuit of *science*, will not find it necessary to make any unreasonable demands on the *faith* of its members. At present it seems to me that what is offered us is simply the choice whether we shall believe Messrs. Davey and Hodgson, or, for instance, Messrs. Eglinton and Farmer. Whether this be inevitable or not, it is surely hardly in accordance with the requirements of science. I may be wrong, and, if I am, no one can be more ready to be set right, but if I am *not* wrong, we are here called upon to believe a thing before which the wonders of Spiritualism sink into insignificance, and that, too, on the testimony of one man. Of course I do not forget that you have told us that another, viz., Mr. Hodgson, “having been initiated into the trick, has been able to observe the whole process.” But has Mr. Hodgson been able to observe how the word Boorz or Boorzu was written in the slate without Mr. Davey’s knowledge? If so, then Mr. Hodgson must be regarded as a greater adept as to the *modus operandi* of Mr. Davey’s tricks than Mr. Davey himself. But if Mr. Hodgson and yourself, sir, have got into the heart of the mystery, surely the members of the S. P. R. may fairly expect something more than “the pronouncing of some doubtful phrase, as, well, well, we know, or, we could and we would,” and so on. I acknowledge, indeed, that you hold forth a promise in your note that you will “discuss these subjects further in the *Proceedings*, and that you will point out where the chief failures of some of the witnesses occurred.” But for my own part, I may say that the pointing out of the failures of the witnesses seems to be a matter of very secondary importance. I presume it will not be denied that the name *Boorzu* was written by some means or other, and that Mr. Davey said about it what Mrs. Russell reports him to have said. The one point, therefore, which I, for one, am anxious to have cleared up is—how that word Boorzu was written.—I remain, &c.,

GEORGE HARPUR.

February, 1887.

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

DEAR SIR,—If there can be discerned in the agent’s mind in thought-transference any factor which seems especially conducive to success, it would

follow, I suppose, that this factor is also of special efficacy in spontaneous telepathy. I therefore venture to put a few questions for solution, if not by past, then by future experience. And I do not think that the undoubted difficulties which an agent would find in self-observation are insurmountable.

1. Is it ever found to be the case that a thought, by an innate power in itself simply, is transmitted to the percipient ?

2. Or must there accompany it the idea of its being transmitted and of its arising in the mind of the percipient ?

3. Is it essential there should be a desire that it should be transmitted to the percipient ?

4. Must there be an expectation, more or less confident, that the thought will be transmitted to the percipient ?

5. Must there be will ? If so, are any shades of difference noticeable between willing that is successful and willing that is unsuccessful ?

I must explain. Question 5 to my mind is only questions 2, 3, 4 in combination. In the active will my own introspection discovers only a desire of the act, a thought of the act, and a confident expectation or belief that the act will take place.

In the so-called passive will there seems to be a positive and negative desire of the act, a neutrality of desire ; a thought of the act and a weak belief or expectancy that it will take place.

And if a weak belief, in the case of the passive will, suffices to produce, say, a feeble bodily movement, then one would suppose that a stronger expectation would produce a more vigorous movement, and that a confident expectation or a belief would produce a movement indistinguishable from that produced by the active will. And I know at least one case in which an attempt having been made, the will being passive, to move the arm by expectancy, at first a feeble movement was produced, which grew stronger as the expectation grew stronger ; till at present the movement by full belief is hardly distinguishable from that by the active will. It would be surprising if this were not the case with most people, if they could only get themselves to expect and believe. If not, perhaps desire is necessary to render the thought sufficiently vivid to enable them to realise, believe, and act.

It may be, nevertheless, that though desire in ordinary experience always accompanies the will, what constitutes, or is at any rate the prime factor in, the will is confident expectation or belief. It comes last in the psychical series preceding the sense of effort. It is well known that a man who firmly believes he cannot move, really cannot, however much he may desire. And, finally, that belief is a great force is sufficiently exemplified by the phenomena of "miraculous" cures.

If, then, the will were necessary in thought-transference, this might mean, after all, only that confident expectation or belief in the success of each experiment is the condition of mind which the agent should cultivate. For "hard willing," so far as it is apt to be only strongly desiring, would seem to be of little use. This so far would oblige an answer in the affirmative to the fourth, and, inclusively, to the second question.

But I prefer to leave the questions to your readers' consideration, without expressing any opinion as to what solution might be arrived at. I may, however, mention an experiment. I was operating behind a percipient's

back with cards. I turned up the ace of spades, and this was my state of mind: "Now, if you guess anything, you will guess this" (unspoken), and it was immediately guessed. I ascribed this success to the special state of expectancy; but, of course, without any certainty.

If expectancy should, possibly, be discovered to be of special efficacy in thought-transference, then, to perceive it operating in spontaneous telepathy, one would probably have to pierce through an element of still greater obscurity. But as it is not proved, and I do not assume it to operate in the first, it would be absurd to speculate upon its operation in the second.

But, I may ask, does it, or belief, *exist* in the mind of the agent in telepathy? The agent's mind is always, more or less, in a dream state, because in his case there is always more or less absence of mind, or, if it be preferred, presence of mind in a very narrow channel. But in dreams is there belief or not?—Yours sincerely,

C. DOWNING.

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#### THE *JOURNAL*: NUMBERS II., III., IV., V., VI., AND VII.

These early numbers of the *Journal* having become scarce, Members or Associates possessing copies of any of them, which they do not care to retain, would confer a favour by sending them to the Assistant-Secretary, 14, Dean's-yard, S.W. One Shilling each is offered for copies in fair condition. No. VII. is specially desired.

Through a mistake, the proper title-page for Vol. II. of the *Journal* was not sent round last month. Persons desiring to have their numbers bound can have a fresh title-page and index, on applying to the Assistant-Secretary, 14, Dean's-yard, S.W.

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#### ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING.

The Fifth Annual Business Meeting of the Members of the Society was held at 14, Dean's-yard, London, S.W., on the 28th of January. Professor Sidgwick occupied the chair. An audited balance-sheet of the receipts and expenditure of the Society during the year 1886 was placed before the meeting, and appears on the next page. A letter from the auditor was also read, expressing his satisfaction with the way in which the books were kept. From a statement of the assets and liabilities at the end of 1886, it appeared that they nearly balanced, independent of the value of the Library belonging to the Society, and of the stock of *Proceedings*. The number of Members of all classes on the 1st of January, 1887, was 661, showing an advance of 13 in the year 1886.

No additional nominations for Members of Council having been sent in, those gentlemen whose names were included in the notice convening the meeting were declared duly elected.

