

# JOURNAL

OF THE

## SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.

### CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Professor Balfour Stewart .. .. .	197
Spurious Mediumship .. .. .	199
Case supplied to the Literary Committee .. .. .	207
Correspondence .. .. .	209

### PROFESSOR BALFOUR STEWART.

The newspapers will have informed our members of the sudden death of our eminent and esteemed President. He had passed through an unusually laborious term's work at the Owens College, but appeared perfectly well and in good spirits when he left his friends in Manchester to join his family in Ireland. At the death of his uncle he had inherited, a year or two ago, a pretty country residence, with some 500 acres of ground, at Ballymagarvey, near Drogheda; here he spent his vacations, which, however, were merely change of scene without the much-needed relaxation of his work.

On Saturday, December 17th, he arrived at his Irish home, and on Sunday, without any apparent cause—except perhaps that he had a somewhat rough passage across the Channel—a sudden effusion of blood on the brain took place, which proved fatal in a few hours. At his funeral the Senate of the Victoria University, and the Professors and Students of Owens College were represented by Professor Osborne Reynolds, Professor T. H. Core, and Mr. Haldane Gee. The Physical Society, of which Professor Stewart was President at the time of his death, was represented by Professor G. F. Fitzgerald and Professor W. F. Barrett, the last-named also representing the Society for Psychical Research. Professor Balfour Stewart was also President of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester, and a Fellow of numerous scientific societies.

Professor Stewart was born in Edinburgh on November 1st, 1828, so that he had only entered on his 60th year at the time of his death. In his youth he studied at the Universities of St. Andrew's and Edinburgh, and became assistant to the Professor of Natural Philosophy in Edinburgh University. Devoting himself with enthusiasm to

meteorology, he was appointed Director of the Kew Observatory in 1859. In 1870 he received the appointment of Professor of Physics in the Owens College, and on his way to Manchester to undertake the duties of his chair he met with a frightful railway accident at Harrow. From the effects of this terrible collision he never fully recovered, being permanently lamed and passing in a few months from the prime of life to grey-headed old age. But, as Professor Tait truly remarks in *Nature*, in spite of this awful blow, his characteristic patience was unruffled. Happily his intellect remained unimpaired.

In 1862 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society, and in 1868 received the Rumford medal from that society for his remarkable and important discoveries in Radiant Heat. Later on, the University of Edinburgh conferred upon him the honorary degree of LL.D., and from numerous home and foreign scientific societies he received marks of distinction.

The amount of work Professor Stewart accomplished from the time of his appointment in Manchester was most remarkable. In addition to the duties of his chair, he wrote his famous *Treatise on Heat*, which is still the standard work on this subject; his admirable *Lessons on Physics* in Macmillan's series; his *Elementary Physics* for beginners and, in conjunction with Mr. Gee, an excellent handbook on *Practical Physics*. Besides these he wrote a popular work on the *Conservation of Energy*, a lengthy and exhaustive article on "Terrestrial Magnetism" in the new edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and, in conjunction with Professor Tait, the well-known work on the *Unseen Universe*. The twelve editions through which this last-named book rapidly passed are sufficient evidence of the profound interest it excited and the general appreciation with which it was regarded by the public. *Paradoxical Philosophy*, the companion volume, by the same authors, which followed, did not excite the same widespread interest, though it is a work that deserves to be more generally read, and doubtless would be if it had not been written in the tiresome form of dialogue. All this literary work, together with numerous original memoirs to scientific societies, was only possible to a man of most methodical habits, and of indefatigable labour, and these were eminently Professor Stewart's characteristics. He had, moreover, a simple-hearted and lovable nature, which endeared him to all his friends.

Like Faraday, Clerk Maxwell, Stokes, and other eminent men of science, Stewart found scientific knowledge consistent with a humble Christian faith. In fact, the object of his work on the *Unseen Universe*, and of more recent efforts in which he was engaged, was to establish the fact that Christianity rightly regarded, was not inconsistent with, but the only intelligible solution of, the profounder problems of physical

science. Whilst a cautious and careful investigator, he was also an intrepid thinker, and has led the van in some of the most abstruse and difficult regions of physical and metaphysical inquiry. Of his services to our Society, it is needless to speak; they are fresh in the memory of us all, and testify to his courageous devotion to truth.

The following extract from the obituary notice of Professor Balfour Stewart which appeared in *Nature* will be read with interest, as it is from the pen of the distinguished Professor of Physics in the University of Edinburgh, Professor P. G. Tait:—

“In the genial Manchester Professor the scientific world has lost not only an excellent teacher of physics, but one of its ablest and most original investigators. He was trained according to the best methods of the last generation of experimentalists, in which scrupulous accuracy was constantly associated with genuine scientific honesty. Men such as he are never numerous; but they are the true leaders of scientific progress: *directly*, by their own contributions, *indirectly*, though (with rare exceptions) even more substantially, by handing on to their students the choicest traditions of a past age, mellowed by time and enriched from the experience of the present. The name of Stewart will long be remembered for more than one striking addition to our knowledge; but his patient and reverent spirit will continue to impress for good the mind and the work of all who have come under its influence.”

In conclusion, Professor Tait adds a personal testimony, which the writer of this notice can heartily endorse:—

“Of the man himself I cannot trust myself to speak. What I *could* say will easily be divined by those who knew him intimately; and to those who did not know him I am unwilling to speak in terms which, to them, would certainly appear exaggerated.”

W. F. B.

---

### SPURIOUS MEDIUMSHIP.

By S. J. DAVEY.

On September 30th, 1887, the *Newcastle Daily Chronicle*, and the *Newcastle Daily Leader*, contained reports of a private view of “Slate-writing,” given by a person calling himself “Mr. Wilson.” From a careful perusal of these reports, it would be difficult to form any other conclusion than that the phenomena of Mr. Wilson, “the most renowned psychographic medium of America,” are identical with the tricks of Dr. Henry Slade. That Dr. Slade should have elected to visit England under a disguised name is not surprising, when past circumstances in his history are taken into consideration. Apart from the prosecution by Professor Ray Lankester at Bow-street Police-court, there are other records connected with his career that seriously compromise his pretensions to “mediumship.”

In 1883, according to the *Belleville (Ontario) Intelligencer*, Dr. Henry Slade was exposed in a most complete manner, and the mark of his guilt in the shape of a prepared slate was retained by his exposers. He then confessed his crime, subsequently pleading, however, that "the gentlemen had made him drunk." On being allowed to leave the town of Belleville, and having made good his escape, he circulated a report that the exposure had not taken place with the genuine Dr. Slade, but with some one falsely bearing his name.

The *New York Sunday Times*, of July 5th, 1885, contains a noteworthy exposure by a lady Spiritualist, and again in the *Boston Herald*, February, 1886, an article appeared entitled, *Exposure of a Writing Medium. The celebrated Dr. Slade comes to grief in Weston, W. Va., writes upon slates which lie upon his knees, under the table, and moves tables and chairs with his toes.* It is further recorded that Mr. E. S. Barrett, a Weston Spiritualist, publicly denounced Slade before a concourse of people, in the Justice Hall, and in the medium's presence explained how his imposture had been detected.

Passing over numerous other exposures, the *Report of the Seybert Commission*, recently published in America, devotes upwards of 20 pages to a discussion of the artifices employed by Dr. Henry Slade during his séances before the Commissioners. It has been alleged that although Dr. Slade has been clearly exposed on many occasions, it is possible that his recent performances are perfectly genuine. It is, however, worthy of note, that there exists a complete exposure of the fraudulent methods used by "Mr. Wilson" at a private séance he recently held at Newcastle-on-Tyne.

I have personally discussed this exposure with the medium. He explained that the allegations of trickery on his part must be false, since he suffered from paralysis on the right side. His subsequent behaviour, however, betrayed the absurdity of the excuse.

Some amount of prominence was recently given in the pages of *Light* to the report of "Mr. Wilson's" performance as given in the *Newcastle Daily Chronicle*, September 30th, 1887.

At first sight the record is "a fair one to all seeming," but for the benefit of those interested in the question, I reproduce another report of the same sitting from the *Newcastle Daily Leader* of September 30th, 1887.

For my part, after a careful comparison of these reports, I feel that the difficulty of estimating the value of human testimony under certain peculiar conditions, is well demonstrated by the writers. I have italicised some of the points, consideration of which will, it seems to me, prove instructive.

NEWCASTLE DAILY CHRONICLE, September 30th, 1887.

No. 1.

SPIRITUALISM IN NEWCASTLE.

[A] Yesterday afternoon, Mr. Wilson, "psychographic medium," gave a select slate-writing séance at his apartments in Newcastle, to which representatives of the Newcastle Press were invited.

[B] Mr. Wilson states that the manifestations given by him are given under the control of Dr. Davis, who was a physician at Manhattanville, now New York, above 100 years ago, and that he is also controlled by other spirits. Our reporter gives the following account of what took place :—

[C] The slates used were sent direct on Wednesday from the North of England School Furnishing Company, and the table at which the visitors and the medium were seated was an ordinary deal table, about three feet by three.

[D] The parties having joined hands, silence reigned for a few minutes. It was broken by the medium, who stated that spirits were then in the room. This was confirmed by a Spiritualist present, who, being a clairauditor and clairvoyant, stated that he saw the spirit of the venerable Wesley present, and that he also saw a gentlemanly-looking man in a frock coat, and otherwise beautifully dressed, standing by the side of the medium. The latter remarked, "Yes, that is Dr. Davis." "Will you consent to write for us?" was the question put to the spirits, and there was an immediate knock underneath the table. The next question was, "How many are present?" and the correct answer was rendered by a number of knocks.

[E] *The medium then proceeded to arrange for slate-writing. A couple of slates, which were first of all critically examined by those present, were placed together, one on the top of the other, a piece of chemical pencil, about a quarter-of-an-inch in length, being placed between them. The slates were entirely new, quite dry, and absolutely free from marks or writing. They were held at arm's length by the medium, in the full light of day, and placed with one end on the shoulder of a gentleman present. Meanwhile, the company had entered into a conversation on Spiritualism, in the course of which the doubts of the public, and even the shams that had been perpetrated in the name of Spiritualism, were discussed.*

[F] *The medium stated in the course of this debate that he had often to complain of the suspicions aroused in certain minds regarding manifestations such as that taking place that afternoon, but he hoped to show to those present that there was no trickery in what he was about to do, but that it was the work of powers beyond him.*

[G] *While he was talking, there was, to the astonishment of everyone present, the sound of vigorous writing between the slates. It was impossible that the medium could be writing, as both his hands were to be seen, and it was equally certain that the sound of the writing proceeded directly from between the slates. It proceeded rapidly for a time; there was the sound of a stroke being made, and then again the writing went on as rapidly as before. "There are several doing it," was the remark of the medium, and the finish of what was evidently another stroke was supplemented by a knock indicating*

that the writing was done. The slates were removed from the shoulder of the gentleman on which they had rested, were laid on the table, and one was removed from the other. When this had been done, the under slate was found to be covered with expressions, divided by almost straight lines. The wording of these expressions was as follows :—

Un homme sage est au-dessus de toutes les injures qu'on peut lui dire.—L. de Mond.

The best answer that can be made to such outrages is moderation and patience.—Dr. Davis.

Davis.—Sie haben nicht unrecht.—J. S.

[H] Quanto sinio felici di avere un tempo evoi bello la preyo de muii rispetti a tutta la di lei cara famiylia.—Z. E.

[I] The writing was of a good kind, and it was clearly in different styles of caligraphy. The first and second sentences had a direct bearing on the conversation that had previously taken place, and referred evidently to the part where the suspicions of the outside world had been referred to. Other slate manifestations followed. At times the hand of the medium shook as if he could scarcely hold the slate, so great, stated he, was the spirit influence upon it, and at another time it was removed from his hand under the table and transferred to the hand of a person sitting opposite.

[J] A question, "What profession are two of the inquirers present?" brought the words on the slate, "They are all present." This, however, was not the right answer, and the slate, after being under the table again, held nearly fast to the corner by the finger and thumb of the medium, returned with the word "Pressmen," which was correct.

[K] *The question was written, it should be explained, by one of the sitters, and was handed to the medium, with the writing downwards, so that he could not possibly see it, or know what it was.*

[L] While these manifestations were going on, a heavy iron bed suddenly shifted its position to the extent of about three feet, a chair was thrown from a position near the wall in the direction of the table, and raps were experienced on their legs and knees by the sitters. One of the Spiritualists present, after throwing his hands up in an agitated way, suddenly had his eyes closed, and stated that he could not, despite all his efforts, open them again. He stated, however, that Wesley and other spirits were still in the room, and that he was asked by one to state that these manifestations were given by the spirits to people on earth in order to prove that mind could never die, and was eternal. He was also asked to thank the gentlemen of the Press for their presence, and to state that the spirits had often received great favours at their hands. One of these gentlemen, he said, was both a healing and a seeing medium. When this question, however, was put to the spirits, the answer on the slates was, "He is not a medium," and with respect to another gentleman present the words written were, "He can be a medium."

[M] The slate was taken from the medium's hands, and transferred to a person in the room, but the latter, it is only fair to state, expressed the belief that he could transfer the slate, if he placed it on his foot, to the

medium at the opposite side of the table, and succeeded in doing so at the second and third attempts.

[N] The slate had been previously transferred to persons seated in a position that it seemed impossible for the medium either with his legs or his hands to reach. A most remarkable thing in connection with the proceedings was that, when any of the sitters put their hands under the table, a strong current of air was felt—a current that could not be perceived at any other part of the room. The manifestations, in short, seemed in several instances to be beyond the power of the medium, and it is equally certain—for the visitors were particular in examining everything—that Mr. Wilson had no confederates whatever in the room. Everything was done in open daylight, and the removal of the bed and the chair, together with the writing on the inside of a slate, covered with another, and held openly to view, contributed considerably to baffle the thoughts of the non-Spiritualists present. There was mystery in nearly all they saw and heard, and, unless the doctrine of Spiritualism has more in it than the majority of people allow, they were unable to form any conclusion whatever for the things they had witnessed. Whether the results were due to natural or supernatural means, the sitting, which lasted about an hour and a-half, was full of interest to all present. It is the intention of Mr. Wilson, we believe, to remain in Newcastle for a few days longer, and any communications for him are to be addressed to Mr. W. H. Robinson, bookseller, The Market, Newcastle, secretary of the Spiritual Evidence Society.

---

NEWCASTLE DAILY LEADER, *September 30th, 1887.*

No. 2.

VISIT OF A PSYCHOGRAPHIC MEDIUM TO NEWCASTLE.—INTERESTING  
MANIFESTATIONS.

A "Press view" was given yesterday by the most renowned psychographic medium of America, now travelling *incognito*, and at present on a short visit to Newcastle. [A] The Spiritualistic power of "Mr. Wilson" is in slate-writing, and those who would see the manifestations must be introduced, as we were introduced, through Mr. W. H. Robinson, the secretary of the Spiritual Evidence Society, at his bookstall in the Market. The latter, like the worthy alderman and presiding deity at the Art Gallery, has received "the light," and "sees visions" and "dreams dreams"; they know what they know. If a Chippendale or a Huxley would be equally knowing, here is a grand opportunity, under such guides, for studying really astounding phenomena. There were no pretentious expectations on the part of the medium. True, it came out casually that his travels had been world-wide, that he had been at one time with the Czar in St. Petersburg, and at another with the settlers in the backwoods of Australia, [B] always, as appeared, accompanied by his "familiar" or influencing power, the spirit of a Dr. Davis, to which time and distance were as nothing. He had died more than 100 years ago in Manhattanville (now New York), and, by long practice through the medium, was an expert in manifesting by writing. Mr. Wilson is an elderly gentleman, of English, French, and Scotch descent; that is to say,

his maternal grandfather was a Scotch general in France and his father an Englishman. He survives all his nearest kinsfolk, as well as two wives, to both of whom he was so attached that their shades are frequently with him, and the secretary of the Spiritual Evidence Society had scarcely sat down before he, being a "seer," startled us by the visions present to him. The saintly John Wesley was there an interested observer, and one he described and named was identified as a wife of the medium.

The two strangers saw nothing, although both the medium and secretary felt the "influence" to be strong, the room being perfectly peopled by ghostly visitors! In this pleasant condition of affairs the strangers sat down at one side of a square deal table, which was enlarged by the raising of two wings on supports, while the medium sat at the head and the secretary at the foot.

[C] Several new slates, freshly imported from a shop in town, were laid down, with tiny fragments of slate pencil, made square, as was explained, to keep the writing material from rolling off the slate.

[D] Our quartette formed, presumably, a "charmed circle," with their hands on the table, and immediately tappings were heard on a slate, rappings under the table, on the floor, and on the backs of the chairs, and specific knocks made by the medium, such as with the close and open hand, were exactly imitated. Asked as to how many spirits were prepared to manifest, the slate tapped out "four." All this time the medium was restless, and appeared to be suffering more or less from the control which, by-the-way, he claimed to have had all his life. He believed the influence of the spirits had been born with him, as his parents were gifted as "seers."

[E] *Chatting went on quite freely at the table, while the medium seemed to be forcing a slate with a bit of pencil under the leaf of the table. Failing in doing this at the time, another slate was placed on the top of it, frame to frame, with the little bit of pencil between. It was held over the left shoulder of the writer in his and the medium's right hands, the left hands remaining in the circuit on the table.*

[G] *Almost immediately the sound of slate pencil work was heard between the slates so held, and whenever the medium lifted his left hand from the table the influence seemed broken and the sound of writing ceased, to recommence immediately on the hand being replaced. The action was like the elimination of the safety fuse in an electric circuit, the psychic force, or mysterious power being gone. A tap on the slate informed the medium that the task, or rather request, was done, and on opening the slates the side of one was seen to be covered with writing, as even as if it had been done on ruled lines. According to Pope—*

Heaven first taught letters for some wretch's aid,  
Some banished lover, or some captive maid—

but here was a use little dreamt of in that poet's philosophy. It had been stated that there were four spirits prepared to manifest, and there were the examples of their "handiwork." The first was in French:—

*Un homme sage est audessus de toutes les injures qu'on peut lui dire.—L. de Mond.*

[The wise man is above all the injurious things said of him.]

The next paragraph was in bold English, and seemed to bear out the assurance of the secretary that the viewless apparitions in the room were much interested in our conversation. It was :—

*The best answer that can be made to such outrages is moderation and patience.—*  
*Dr. Davis.*

Again the cosmopolitan character of the assembly was manifested, and a German had his say, although the writing was not in the native characters :—

*Davis—Sie haben nicht unrecht.—J. S.*

[Davis—You are not wrong.]

The fourth was in a language we were not musician enough to understand, but as Artemus Ward would say, it was “somethin’ to this effek” :—

[H] *Quanto sinito felici di avere un tempo evoi bello. La preyo de miei respetti a tutta la di lei cara famiglia.—Z. E.*

[L] The slate-writing feat appeared to have excited the unseen calligraphists, for on a sudden a large heavy bedstead in a corner of the room was turned half-way round ; the secretary was agitated, and, saying they had “sealed his eyes,” appeared to fall into a kind of trance ; the writer felt like a hand grip his right knee, and looking at his neighbour discovered the latter turning an equivocal look at him as much as to say “none of your larks,” yet our hands were all on the table. Then the chairs on which we sat got shifted a bit by no visible means, an empty chair on the opposite side of the table was turned round, and altogether things were, for a little, somewhat lively and pleasant. The medium ever and anon cried out suddenly, as if he had received a shock from an electric battery, yet we, the strangers, felt in no way discomposed, and nothing happened when we ventured upon a little laugh—quite natural and not at all hysterical, it may be explained—on our own account.

[M] The medium, in attempting to get more writing under the table, this time said he felt the power pulling the slate from him, and passing out of his hand it emerged at the opposite corner and was impelled with some force back towards him, both his hands being above the table. The secretary and the other observer had it passed to them, and before receiving it, oh ! gruesome to relate, affirmed that they each felt as if a chill breath—“the cold wind rushing” spoken to by Mrs. Hemans, perhaps—was being blown upon their hands ! All the same, one of the strangers fancied the slate might be so passed on the foot and tried it, but no such movement could be detected on the part of the medium. We were asked to write a question unseen by the medium on the slate with a view to an answer.

[J] The question was, “What is the profession of the inquirers at the table ?” After some little time there was writing on the slate which read, “All of you.”

[K] *Another trial, but it is only fair to say after the question had been told to the medium, it was correctly answered.* The most mysterious part of the séance, which took place, of course, in broad daylight, was the writing between the slates. A bit of chair-turning awoke the secretary from his trance, and relieved his closed eyes, after which “Good-bye” was written on the slate, and the extraordinary phenomena ended. We asked the

medium why the writing could not take place above as well as below the table, and in our clear view? His answer was that the human eye, the reflex of the mind and will power, had an influence which destroyed that of the manifesting spirits, and he illustrated this with the case of a bird fascinated by the eyes of a serpent. There was a vital power transmitted that could not be seen, it could only be felt! This is the latest if not last and great mystery, and, much puzzled, we quitted the scene.

In report No. 1 [C] we are told:—"The slates used were sent direct on Wednesday from the North of England School Furnishing Company." No. 2 [C] says:—"Several new slates, freshly imported from a shop in town, were laid down." It appears probable from the above statement that the slates had previously been sent direct to the medium. If we compare the statements marked [E] and [G] we find that reporter No. 2 made a note of an important point not recorded by reporter No. 1. We find that "chatting went on quite freely at the table, while the medium seemed to be forcing a slate with a bit of pencil *under* the leaf of the table. Failing in doing this at the time, another slate was placed on the top of it, frame to frame." This does not appear such a straightforward proceeding as that described by the *Newcastle Daily Chronicle* reporter. Again, reporter No. 1, in the passage marked [I], remarks that some sentences in the long message had a direct bearing on the conversation that had recently taken place, but it is noteworthy that the medium himself took a leading part in this very conversation.

Reporter No. 1 in passages [J] and [K], mentions that the medium could not possibly see or know what the question was, and he alludes to the subsequent correct answer, and *actually* omits to record the important fact, mentioned by reporter No. 2, that it was not until the question *was told to the medium that it was correctly answered.*

[M] It does not appear that a special experiment was devised to exclude the possibility of slates being moved under the table by the medium's foot, after the discovery made by one of the sitters that with practice he could repeat himself one of the movements. We are simply told that in previous experiments the slate had been moved in a way that seemed impossible.

During a subsequent séance at Newcastle-on-Tyne, "Mr. Wilson" was detected in the act of moving a slate in the manner indicated. At the time he was wearing a sock cut down so as to admit of a free working of the toes of his right foot, which, by reason of his wearing a low shoe, could be easily brought into play. This method is well known as being somewhat peculiar to Slade, and there is evidence to show that he has been detected on several occasions in its employment.

"Mr. Wilson" informed me that he was the originator of

"Slate-writing"! I believe this statement to be correct. In conclusion, I may remark that I addressed a letter to the Editors of the *Newcastle Daily Chronicle* and *Newcastle Daily Leader*, in which I stated my conviction that the "phenomena of 'Mr. Wilson,'" as recorded in the above-mentioned papers, were identical with the tricks of Dr. Henry Slade, and I requested the publication of my statement to that effect. In reply I learnt that "my surmise was believed to be correct." That Dr. Slade has a repertoire of adroit as well as barefaced methods of imposition seems universally admitted by Spiritualists and sceptics, hence it is right that the public should be warned in regard to the so-called "spirit manifestations" of "Mr. Wilson."

S. J. DAVEY.

---

#### CASE SUPPLIED TO THE LITERARY COMMITTEE.

G  
—308

t  
From the Rev. W. S. Grignon, of The Grove, Pluckley, Kent.

*April 5th, 1887.*

I send you herewith some details of a first-hand record of two apparitions of the same deceased person to two persons, relatives, at intervals of two to four years after the death, apparently on the same spot. The case came to my knowledge through the uncle of a pupil now with me, a retired colonel of R.E., to whom the two percipients stand in the relationship of aunt and uncle's wife respectively. Through him I sent some questions to these two ladies, and with the replies received a letter from one of them, Mrs. J., from which it appeared that she was an acquaintance of my own, mother of two boys who were under me at Felsted. I knew her late husband also very well. She gives reasons, not flimsy and fanciful, but practically connected with the past and present ownership of the house in question, why great trouble and annoyance might arise for herself and her sister-in-law if the facts were to "leak out" in connection with the real names, and binds me not to disclose them. I am compelled, therefore, to ask you to rely upon my word for the following account of the parties concerned. The initials which I have given are not the correct initials of the persons described. Mr. J. was a professional man of high character and good position in a country town of no great size, which I call X. "Miss R. J." is his sister, a lady now far advanced in life. "Mrs. J. S. J." is his widow—a sensible woman—not, I think, likely to be fanciful and credulous in such a matter. The father of my friend, Colonel B., of the R.E., married a Miss J., sister of Miss R. J. and Mr. J. above mentioned. Miss F. B. is his sister (Colonel B.'s), now deceased. The old lady who is supposed to have appeared was the mother of Miss R. J. and of Mr. J. I made such inquiries as occurred to me, but can send more, if there be any questions which you would care to put.

WILLIAM S. GRIGNON.

## STATEMENT OF MISS R. J.

After two years since the death of my mother, when all sad recollections were gone, I was walking one day, at 10 a.m., downstairs by myself. All of a sudden I heard a kind of scuttle, and turned round to see what it was, and there saw distinctly my late mother coming out of her morning-room, dressed as usual, black silk dress, large white apron and collar, white stockings and black shoes. I watched for a moment or two, and saw her turn to go up a pair of stairs to her late bedroom, when all of a sudden her head went off and the apparition disappeared. I related the fact at the time, and it was considered nonsense. I only saw it once, and hoped I should not again.

Miss R. J. has kindly replied to certain questions sent to her as follows:—

1. "Where is the house situated, and has it any special name?"

High-street, X.

2. "Have any peculiar and unaccountable sounds ever been heard by yourself or by others?"

No.

"Could you sketch, however roughly, a plan of the part of the house where the apparition was seen, marking the points where it first appeared, and where it disappeared?"

Can't draw, and have left the house some time.

4. "Did you recognise the apparition by the face or only by the dress, or by dress and figure?"

By the face, dress, and figure.

5. "Did you mention the apparition at, or shortly after, the time of its occurrence to any persons who could now state their recollections of the circumstance?"

I mentioned the occurrence to my sister, who is dead, and another, who is dead also, and was not believed.

6. "Has this appearance ever to your knowledge been seen by any person other than yourself? If so, when, and by whom?"

I believe so.—J. S. J.

7. "Have you on any other occasion seen an apparition of the same, or of any other person?"

No.

8. "Had your mind just before been in any special way turned towards the deceased?"

No, not in the least.

## STATEMENT OF MRS. J. S. J.

On leaving the nursery, about eight o'clock in the evening, I saw the apparition of an old lady going slowly up a few stairs at the end of passage. There was no light where I was, but there was partial light on the stairs from the hall gaslight. I stood still, astonished, knowing there was no one in the house like her. She vanished before reaching the top stair. Some weeks after I mentioned the circumstance to a young lady, F. B., who was on a visit to us, and described the apparition. She said, "That is my grandmamma." (Died August 3rd, 1855.) I never saw the old lady in her

lifetime. I did not keep a date of the occurrence, but, as far as I can remember, it was the winter of 1859.

Mrs. J. has also kindly replied to questions.

1. Question as above.

High St., X. No especial name in the time of the J. family.

2. Question as above.

Have no idea of drawing. Passage 40 feet long. Six stairs at end of this passage, leading up to bedroom. Apparition seen from other end of passage on second stair, moving feebly up that stair and two next—disappeared.

4. "Did you see the face or the figure and dress only? Could you give now the description of the appearance which induced F. B. to say, 'That is my grandmamma'?"

The lady had her back to me, an elderly lady, rather small, a dark dress, a little shawl or something light about the shoulders, a cap.

5. Question as above.

I mentioned it to Miss F. B. some weeks after the occurrence. She was not in the house at the time. Miss F. B. is now dead.

6. Question as above.

Miss R. J. : I have only known this lately.

7. Question as above.

I have only seen the old lady in question once.

8. Question as above.

No.

I will put down on paper the length of passage, and the number of stairs where I saw the apparition. These few stairs led to the bedroom this old lady used in her lifetime. [A plan accompanied the account.]

As I said in my former letter, I had never seen the old lady in her lifetime, but from Mr. J. (my husband) I had heard a great deal of her goodness and kindness, so that the sight I had—for I felt at the moment who it was—gave me some astonishment but no fear. I think it right to add the reason I did not communicate to others what I had seen. We were a large family party, and some members of the same were of a highly nervous temperament, and I had two little children who went up and down this passage daily. If what I had seen had become known, we should have had endless trouble with the children.

I made my communication some weeks after to Miss F. B., sister of Colonel B. She was on a visit to me, and I made her promise not to tell "the J. family." She died some few years ago, and it is only just lately that I became aware she had mentioned the circumstance to her family.

---

## CORRESPONDENCE.

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

SIR,—May I once more ask you to allow me space for a reply to Messrs. Wetherby and Fry's letter? I am reminded of assuming too much when I referred to your correspondents as being sceptics. It is evident they are so by their own admission. For to be "open to conviction" means that

although not as yet convinced they might become so upon certain conditions. Judging from the tenor of Messrs. Wetherby and Fry's last letter, it appears that the conditions required for their acceptance of the truth of spiritual phenomena have not as yet been supplied to them. Hence, I maintain that Messrs. Wetherby and Fry are still sceptics, and most likely will remain so for a long time to come.

Their memories, as regards certain statements of my own, may be corroborative; but this does by no means prove that their memories are not at fault. I presume, in fact, I feel certain, that after their visit the subject was further discussed and the principal subjects of our conversation recapitulated. That is the very time when confusion comes in. I am positively certain that if the after talk had been held in my presence, many slight corrections as to details would have been introduced. I do not go so far as to pretend to recollect the whole of a conversation occupying fully two hours' time, no more than I do pretend to remember what I had for my lunch or dinner on that particular day. And I would not venture to again remind your correspondents of the fallacies of human memory were it not that but for notes kept of my personal experience I should have forgotten many incidents and many details. But I have a perfect recollection of my personal experience as an investigator, experience of which I have, in almost every case, kept record and to which I can refer; and I most emphatically deny ever having quoted as examples of my own experience cases which did not happen to myself. Nor was I anxious, as Messrs. Wetherby and Fry suggest, to convert others by exaggerating my facts; because I have invariably referred inquirers to the mediums with whom I was acquainted in order that they might judge for themselves. I remember recommending Messrs. Wetherby and Fry to the séances with Husk as medium, so as to afford them the opportunity of witnessing the very phenomena I had described to them. Instead of following my advice, Messrs. Wetherby and Fry went to a public séance at Williams's, where they did not meet with these phenomena. If they failed to verify my statements it is certainly not my fault. I object to the insinuation that I (perhaps unconsciously) (*sic*) exaggerated my facts in order to convert others, although being, by my own admission, a dupe. I was not then aware that mediums cheated, and could never have admitted having been duped. Such derivations are utter nonsense. The facts are, and I am in a position to prove it, that from the moment I found that premeditated fraud on the part of mediums was clear beyond a doubt, I withdrew from public séances altogether. My letter in the June number on professional mediumship was written immediately after my discovery of undoubted trickery, and was forwarded to you some 18 months before its publication. I think this letter is a sufficiently clear warning against—rather than a recommendation in favour of—the Spiritualists' pretensions.

As to the pictures to which your correspondents refer, true, I only described one because one was specially mentioned. I hope Messrs. Wetherby and Fry are not so exacting as to expect a separate description and explanation of each. There were "14" of my pictures in the room! The space of the *Journal* cannot be sacrificed to the introduction of a subject which

scarcely interests its readers, and be filled by a catalogue of pictures which few (if any) members of the Society have seen. Besides, I do not know which of the pictures were—and which were not—seen by your correspondents ; there have been as many as 23. But since Messrs. Wetherby and Fry again point to a special subject, viz., the “spirit” with the eagle claws, I will give them the explanation they desire. At the same time, I beg to inform your correspondents, in case they are interested in the history and origin of all the drawings, that further information must be obtained, not through the pages of the *Journal*, but upon personal application to myself.

The figure designated by Messrs. Wetherby and Fry as the “spirit with claws like those of an eagle” (an ornithologist would have said, “nails like a pigeon”) represented a subject exactly as it was presented to me. I do not now regard that “form” as a visitor from the “world unseen,” or as a representative of a distinct type of some ultra-mundane creature, but rather as the medium in an abnormal condition. This may appear a startling declaration, perhaps not much better than an admission that it was a “real spirit.” But, strange as this statement may appear, I still adhere to previous assertions that genuine phenomena occur at times ; and that although such a “presentation” does not necessarily imply the presence of a temporarily visible spiritual being, my picture represented an occult manifestation. The results of investigation may demonstrate that so-called materialisations are not what Spiritualists believe them to be, but it has not as yet been definitely settled what these manifestations really are. And if there were not “something” extraordinary in these manifestations, Spiritualism and its phenomena could not have lasted a single month.

It is perfectly true that I advised my visitors (Messrs. Wetherby and Fry) not to believe in anything (Spiritualistic) until they had absolutely satisfied themselves of its truth. I remember having told them that I could not help believing in the reality of what I had witnessed over and over again. Is there, may I ask, anything extraordinary either in my advice or in my remark ? Does not everyone believe in what he considers to be true ? It does not follow, however, that A should necessarily be satisfied with the same evidence which convinces B. If all *my* personal experience had been shared by Messrs. Wetherby and Fry they *might* have arrived at the same—partly erroneous—conclusions, or they *might* have by this time been converted to the most orthodox form of Spiritualism ; or, assuming the other extreme, found out all the trickery at a moment's notice. To make use of an example :—Did not the whole of thinking and observing humanity up to the time of Copernicus and Galileo believe that the heavens moved and the earth stood still ? Did the ocular demonstration that the sun rose in the east and set in the west satisfy Copernicus ? and did the evidence of the latter satisfy the Church and priesthood of his time ? Would Messrs. Wetherby and Fry, like a modern Copernicus, prove that I am wrong and point out my fallacies, I would be thankful indeed.

As to the statement of the spirit-child, which your correspondent, Mr. Fry, insists in distorting into a parody, permit me to refer him to my answer on that subject in the letter addressed to yourself about a year ago. It may afford Mr. Fry a certain amount of delight to turn my description of an

incident into an absurdity, but he must not expect that I shall answer it in that form. Let him give my proper version and I will give my reply. But you will notice from that letter, in which I gave you my explanation, that Mr. Fry has mixed up the details of two distinct cases, and draws conclusions from facts belonging to the wrong case. His conjectures are, as you will see, based upon false premises. I certainly do not believe in the possibility of any human head presenting such striking anatomical abnormalities as those he suggests, whether it be the head of a daughter of a medium or of any one else. I might as well ask Mr. Fry whether he believes that, if one friend of his has sailed to the Antipodes and another friend had jumped a ditch, the former could jump the distance between England and Australia.—I remain, yours truly,

J. G. KEULEMANS.

8, Primrose Hill Studios, N.W. January 1st, 1888.

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

SIR,—I have read with a certain amount of interest the criticisms of Mr. S. J. Davey on the slate-writing performances of professional mediums, which have appeared in the *Journal* of the Society.

He attributes them to trickery, and shows by testimony that he has completely deceived a number of persons by producing apparently identical effects through the agency of pure conjuring, adding that there are several ways of obtaining these deceptions, but gives no clue to the *modus operandi* of even one.

Now, a large proportion of inquirers, at the very outset of their investigations, arrive at this conclusion, though they are unable to detect the method adopted.

Beyond confirming this view to some extent, these papers give no information from which a fresh start in the inquiry can be made.

I therefore submit that they are unsatisfactory. What is wanted is just that which is omitted, and that is how these writings can be produced by sleight-of-hand.

Perhaps, however, Mr. Davey contemplates enlightening the Society on this point in another paper, though I still think, and many will, I believe, agree with me that the article would be much more complete had the omitted information been embodied in the account already published.—I am, sir, your obedient servant,

GEORGE G. BEAZLEY.

74, Redcliffe-square, S.W.

November 1st, 1887.