

195.

"BRINGING IT TO BOOK :"

FACTS OF SLATE-WRITING

THROUGH MR. W. EGLINTON.

EDITED BY

H. CHOLMONDELEY-PENNELL,

Late Director of Commerce for the Interior : Egypt.

BEING

LETTERS WRITTEN BY THE HON. RODEN NOEL, CHARLES
CARLETON MASSEY, ESQ., BARRISTER-AT-LAW, GEORGE
WYLD, ESQ., M.D., THE HON. PERCY
WYNDHAM, M.P., AND THE EDITOR.

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NOTE BY THE EDITOR.

The object of this collective re-publication is to present in a corroborative form a simple statement of facts, as facts, and without expressing any opinion with regard to the causes of their occurrence, beyond the absolute and unanimous conviction of the writers that the effects described were not caused by the visible 'physical body' of the Psychic.

For any expression of opinions outside the above limit each writer is individually responsible.

These letters were originally written without any communication between their Authors.

“BRINGING IT TO BOOK.”

BY H. CHOLMONDELEY-PENNELL.

When the recent movement of critical inquiry into the various psychical phenomena broadly passing under the name of “Spiritualism” began, I took a deep interest in its progress, hoping to find in it at least a key to unlock the mysteries of much of the old world “occultism”—to use the fashionable expression in its widest sense. I made acquaintance with all the principal mediums, amateur or professional. I went to séances at their houses, and held séances with them at my house. After several years, however, of patient and frank inquiry I gave the whole thing up. Not because I felt sure there was no truth in it, but because, supposing it to be true, I found it impossible to *bring it to book*. Almost every so-called “manifestation” that I personally witnessed was found to be inconclusive. There was always an “if,” or a “but” in the logical sequence of facts when honestly marshalled; a “missing link” that made the chain of evidence worthless from a scientific standpoint.

I say nothing of the gross and palpable frauds—some publicly unmasked, and others hushed up—by which, then as now, Spiritualistic circles were not infrequently scandalised. There are, of course, black sheep in every flock; still a hundred cases of imposture, proved or suspected, should not, and to a logical mind would not, invalidate the scientific results of a single *bonâ fide* and *repeatable* experiment. I say “repeatable,” because I hold that a solitary

experience in such novel investigations would usually be quite insufficient for purposes of accurate observation.

There are, of course, amongst differing characters, different degrees of mental receptivity and "impressionability." What will suffice for one, predisposed perhaps to conviction, wholly fails to satisfy another whose bias is of a more positive or sceptical turn. I am free to confess that my own mental attitude *vis-à-vis* the whole of the alleged phenomena of so-called "Spiritualism" is—or rather was—allied to the sceptical. Not by any means that I did not desire—really and strongly desire—to be satisfied that the facts or some of them, were as stated to me, but that my idiosyncrasy—my "psychical condition" if you please—would not *allow* of my being personally convinced without the most positive, repeated, and complete personal ocular demonstration. . . . And without impugning the motives or logical "methods of conviction" pursued by others, it may be maintained that in dealing with phenomena which claim to set aside the recognised laws of matter, that is a most philosophical, legitimate, and, I might also say, inevitable attitude for every educated mind to adopt: Perfect openness to conviction; upon perfectly conclusive evidence—and upon none other.

Having failed personally to obtain such evidence, the result of my three or four years' investigation was a mental verdict of "Not proven": I could not bring the thing to book.

And yet now, after an interval of about a decade, and rather owing to the result of accident than intention, I find myself in a position unreservedly to reverse the above judgment—I HAVE BROUGHT IT TO BOOK. . . . And, what is more, I am satisfied that the same undeniable evidence which was available in my case is accessible to any one in a similar frame of mind, and willing to take the necessary steps to investigate for themselves. Indeed, the

interesting letters recently published in "LIGHT" from Mr. C. C. Massey, the Hon. Roden Noel, Mr. Gledstanes, and others, shew that I am only one of many to recognise the almost unique character, for the purpose of systematic and rigorously-tested experiment, of the phenomena in question: I refer to the Psychographic, or Slate-Writing manifestations, produced, so far as my experience extends, with unequalled regularity and reliability through the mediumship of Mr. Wm. Eglinton, of 12, Old Quebec Street, Hyde Park.

During the past three weeks I have had opportunities of witnessing and critically observing these slate-writing phenomena six times,—three times at the house of Mr. Eglinton, and three times at my own house, and on no one occasion has there been a failure in their production.

The conditions of my experiments and their results were as follows (I am obliged to give them somewhat in detail in order that nothing shall be omitted of importance to the argument):—

1. The sitters were never less than three nor more than five, medium included; and comprised seven different men and three different ladies—all old personal friends of my own, and who, with one exception, had never seen Mr. Eglinton before.
2. The three séances at Mr. Eglinton's house were in each case held during the whole time in broad daylight; and the three at my house in every case in full lamp-light.
3. Except in the first séance *the only slates used have been my own*, bought by myself, marked (signed) by myself, as well as by the other sitters, and never taken out of their paper wrapper or shewn to the medium or to any one else, between the time of purchase and the commencement of the séance.

4. In five out of the six *séances* intelligent writing has been produced between the two slates, previously free from marks, placed in exact juxtaposition, one on the top of the other, *and when both were in view of all the sitters.*
5. The slates were usually held between the medium and the right-hand sitter, but sometimes also between the medium and the left-hand sitter.
6. During the six *séances* writing was obtained when the slates were held by and between five different sitters and the medium.
7. The slates were never at any time, during either of the *séances*, taken away from the table by the medium or by anyone else, except on the first occasion when four slates were employed, and those not actually in use were placed for convenience on a chiffonier within reach (without the medium quitting his place at the table), and where the slates still remained in full view of all.
8. The slates were invariably carefully cleaned in full view of all, after each manifestation—sometimes by the medium, sometimes by the sitters, sometimes by the sitters first and by the medium afterwards, and sometimes by the medium first and by the sitters afterwards.
9. The cleaning was done, when at the medium's house, with a moist sponge, and the slate rubbed hard and thoroughly over again with a dry one; and at my house, once by a damp sponge (mine); once by a silk pocket handkerchief *dry*; and once by the medium's, pocket handkerchief, damped there and then.
10. The slates were all exact pairs, fitting accurately when placed one on the other, and were in every experiment scrupulously and watchfully kept in that position.

11. A fresh pair of slates were used at each séance ; and with one exception (when they were kept by one of the other sitters) I have them all still untouched, with the writing upon them.
12. The instrument of writing was in each case a minute piece of slate pencil, about 3-16ths of an inch long, placed between the two slates. The slate pencil used was in three instances supplied by the medium, and in three by myself.
13. A sound as of writing by slate pencil was distinctly audible in every case, proceeding, apparently, from between the slates, and three slight taps, as if with the point of the pencil, at the finish, indicating that the writing was completed.

[Localisation of sound being extremely difficult I give this evidence as collateral rather than direct. Its force is, however, greatly added to in this case by the synchronous vibrations of the slates corresponding with the duration of the sound. These were distinctly felt and pointed out at the time in more than one instance, and were several times noticed in the case of the final " taps."]
15. The small pieces of pencil always shewed such marks of "wearing down" at the side of the point as would naturally have been produced by writing at the usual angle.
16. The writing was in different "hands," and of very different sizes, as also of various degrees of neatness and of length—length, that is, of the "message" or writing produced. Once the entire slate was completely covered in a small running hand, and the writing finished off by a circular line surrounding the whole.
17. What was written was invariably intelligible and properly expressed ; and when in answer to a question was always germane to such question.

18. In the case of the long message (16) which was signed "J.G.," I asked what was the full name and that it might be given. *This was immediately done, whilst I was holding one end of the two slates together above the table, between the medium and myself.* The name thus written—a double surname corresponding with the initials—is very peculiar in spelling, and also uncommon, though perfectly well-known to me.

On another occasion I asked that the figure 2 might be written, which was also done, the slates at that time being, as I have said, in full view and lying flat on the upper surface of the table, one exactly on the top of the other.

Now referring to the writings described above, under paragraph 18; if, in spite of the rigorously severe precautions observed, there could remain any reasonable possibility of the slates being tampered with and the writing produced by the employment of chemical or other analogous means, the circumstance that, on at least two occasions, *the writing was immediately produced in the form of answers to impromptu demands or questions from myself*, would effectually dispose of such an hypothesis.

The argument is clearly unanswerable. And looking at

The following are the more important details of each of the six séances referred to :—

Séance A. (Medium's house.) First writing, when slates were held between medium and right-hand sitter, one hand each, just below level of table, but outside and in full view. Second writing, slates held about a foot above centre of table between medium and left-hand sitter—one hand each.

Séance B. (Medium's house.) Slates laid flat on top of table between medium and right-hand sitter; medium's two hands and left wrist on top of slate and sitter holding his left hand.

Séance C. (My house.) Conditions same as B.

Séance D. (My house.) No writing on top of table; and only once under, when slate was placed flat under the edge or flap, both medium's hands being wholly or partly in view, and both actually touched or held by sitters, *one of whom also assisted in holding the slate.* [This séance is merely mentioned in order to account for the entire series, my observations in this communication being strictly limited to the writing which took place *between the slates*, and whilst both were in full view.]

Séance E. (Medium's house.) First writing, when slates were *sat upon* by right-hand sitter; both edges in view, which edges medium held with fingers of one hand. Second writing, same as "B." Figure "2" written under these conditions at my request.

Séance F. (My house.) Slates laid flat on top of table; medium's two hands and left wrist resting on slates, and his right hand held by sitter.

the whole of the actual facts verified—not once, merely, but over and over again—and at the stringent conditions under which the experiments were conducted, can it be denied by any candid mind that the evidence fulfils the description predicated—that it is *conclusive*?

“Perfect openness to conviction; upon perfectly conclusive evidence.” That is the (strictly philosophical) bargain as between Demonstrator and Investigator. The Demonstrator having fully and completely fulfilled his part, it remains for the Investigator to frankly fulfil his. That I accept the position without the slightest hesitation or reservation, this letter is the best proof.

Further, I have submitted these phenomenal facts to several eminent men, scientists, chemists, and conjurers, and, granting them to be facts, no one has been able to suggest the slightest “feasible” explanation or clue to the mode of their production. . . .

“*But are they ‘facts?’* That is the point!” I hear some one say. . . .

Well, either they are facts, or else the senses of nine different persons, of both sexes, on five different occasions, under changed conditions of light, and in varying circumstances of locality, must have conspired to play them false; must have signally failed to perceive and appreciate that which ought to have been simply, easily, and palpably perceptible and appreciable by the most rudimentary intelligence. There is no escape from the position except by a point-blank challenge of the accuracy of the statement of conditions premised:—

“I say your slates were not bought and marked as “asserted; or, if they were, they were not really those “used at the séances. . . . I deny that any writing “was ever, in fact, produced upon them, or if it was “it was put there before the slates were placed in position. “. . . It is useless to assure me that the slates were

“always first of all examined; your eyes, which could see the writing on them plainly enough after, were evidently incapable of seeing it before. . . . When you assert that the whole of the sitters’ hands, medium’s included, were in every case in full view whilst the writing was going on, that is another instance of optical delusion. . . . The sound of writing corresponding with the vibration of the slate?—a trick of the imagination. . . . Well then, if in spite of all you will obstinately persist in adhering to your absurd propositions, you must be (pardon the impoliteness), but you really must be all lunatics or liars—or both! . . . Still unsilenced? You say that if I like to take some little—very little—trouble I can see the same things for myself? I tell you that if I did see them I should mistrust my own senses—the thing is on the face of it impossible,—and however simple, obvious and conclusive the ocular demonstration you propose, I could not, and, in such a case, would not believe my own eyes.”

* * * * *

Well, then, my dear sir, or my dear madam, if that really be so, I can only say that I am sincerely sorry for you. As it is only by trusting, within certain well-defined limits, to the guidance of the senses nature has given you that the business of your existence is carried on in the world: that you are conscious that there is a world: that you have, in short, any proof *that you are, at all*, you are really to be pitied! And as “pity is akin to love,” I again affectionately invite you to re-consider the libel you have indited against your own faculties, and to *try them*, just for once in a way, frankly and fearlessly, upon the simple—almost childishly simple—proposition suggested.

Whether, however, you will or will not take my advice,

I assert to you that the conditions of the practical experiments I have described are *absolute* ; that there is no loophole or crevice left for imagining fraud ; and I assert further—limiting the assertion to the strict sense of the words—that the results of these experiments conclusively establish the existence of some objective, intelligent force, capable of acting externally to the medium, and in contravention of the recognised laws of matter.

6, Wellington Mansions,
Hanover Gate, Regent's Park.

21st May, 1884

PSYCHOGRAPHY THROUGH MR. EGLINTON.

I am able to report a successful and perfectly satisfactory psychographic séance with Mr. W. Eglinton. On the afternoon of Thursday, the 10th, I met Mr. Roden Noel by appointment at Mr. Eglinton's rooms. We sat for some time with but indifferent success, getting but a word or two written on the upper surface of a slate clasped underneath and against the table by Mr. Eglinton with his right hand, his left joined to my left on the table, my right hand with both Mr. Noel's. Of course a single word, under perfect test conditions, would be as conclusive as a volume; and as I was thoroughly satisfied on this, as on a former occasion when Mr. Eglinton was at my own rooms, that the medium did not himself write the words, the phrase "indifferent success," must be taken, so far as I am concerned, to refer only to the quantity of the phenomenon, and not to its quality. Nor was Mr. Noel at all dissatisfied; but as he sat on my right, and the medium's left hand was stretched across to grasp my left hand, the arm rather intercepted Mr. Noel's view of Mr. Eglinton's right hand as it grasped the slate. So that as to these single words, my testimony must, I think, be taken alone, and for what it is worth.

There was a pile of Mr. Eglinton's own slates upon the table, and it was always upon one or other of those that the writing was obtained. Of the two that were used, I cleaned one, after it had been well wetted, with a dry sponge,

myself, on both sides ; the other I saw similarly treated by Mr. Eglinton. Of course I watched to see that there was no unobserved change of slate, nor did Mr. Eglinton rise from his seat during the séance, except once, to write down an address I had given him. It will be understood that we sat in broad daylight.

We noticed two facts, one of which, certainly, could not result from any voluntary act of the medium. This was the lowering of the temperature of the hand which held the slate, just before and after the writing. The other fact was the cessation of the sound of writing when Mr. Eglinton broke the contact of his hand with my own.

Mr. Eglinton now laid one of the two equal-sized slates (10½ inches by 7½) flat upon the other, the usual scrap of pencil being enclosed. Both slates were then, as I carefully assured myself, perfectly clean on both surfaces. He then forthwith, and without any previous dealing with them, presented one end of the two slates, held together by himself at the other end, for me to hold with my left hand, on which he placed his own right. I clasped the slates, my thumb on the frame of the upper one (½ inch), and three of my fingers, reaching about four inches, forcing up the lower slate against the upper one. *We did not hold the slates underneath the table*, but at the side, a little below the level. Mr. Noel was thus able to observe the position. Mr. Eglinton held the slates firmly together at his end, as I can assert, because I particularly observed that there was no gap at his end. I also noticed his thumb on the top of the slates, and can say that it rested quite quietly throughout the writing, which we heard almost immediately and continuously, except when Mr. Eglinton once raised his hand from mine, when the sound ceased till contact was resumed.

When the three taps came, denoting that the "message" was finished, Mr. Eglinton simply removed his hand from

the slates, leaving them in my left hand, also quitting contact of his other hand with my left. I took off the upper slate, and we saw that the inner surface of one of them—(which, I cannot positively recollect; perhaps Mr. Noel, to whom I send this account, may supply the omission)—was covered with writing; twenty lines from end to end written *from* the medium, and one line along the side by the frame, the “Good-bye” on the other side. The writing was in straight lines across the slate, all the letters slanting from left to right. I now give the whole message :—

“ We shall be most glad to co-operate with you in any experiments you may care to enter upon, or to answer any questions propounded by you and your friends. Our purpose in manifesting is as much to aid in honest inquiry as it is to merely demonstrate our power to write under exceptional conditions. We find in the atmosphere constantly pervaded by our presence more scope for work than in your rooms. There we may not at all times be sure of our power to manifest. *Les esprits médiocres condamnent d'ordinaire tout ce qui passe leur portée*, according to Rochefoucauld, but we are happy to see that such is not the case with you and your friends. Good-bye.”

One circumstance about the writing on this slate is to be remarked. It begins about an inch from the top; from the bottom it is continued along one side (one line), and then there are three lines in the space at the top, written in the reverse direction to that of the body of the message. The ability to produce the writing in any direction is thus shewn. The writing is flowing, easy, and with a distinct character, as of an educated penman.

I took the slate away with me, and it is now in my possession.

I am as satisfied that these facts occurred exactly in the manner I have stated as I am that the words on this paper are of my own writing.

C. C. MASSEY,

1, Albert Mansions, Victoria Street, S.W.

19th April, 1884,

Every word of this account I am able to endorse. My *impression* is that the writing was on the lower slate, but of this I am not sure. I also fail to see how the physiological condition testified to by Mr. Massey could be produced at all. I equally fail to see how the medium, while his thumb was observed by us to be stationary on the frame, could himself write a slateful of words in reverse directions, those at the sides being at right angles with, and those at the end being topsy-turvy to, those on the body of the slate, even had not the other conditions as here related precluded such a possibility ; for he only touched the slate with one hand.

I may add that, in the early part of the séance, as on a former occasion at Mr. Massey's rooms, and on his own slate, we obtained written answers to our own questions, and these could not have been written previously on the slate.

RODEN NOEL.

To the above I should like to add that as writing by the medium himself at the time is absolutely out of the question, there are only three other conceivable suggestions as opposed to occult agency. One of these must suppose that a change of slate was effected, unobserved by us, at the last moment, one already written upon being substituted for one of those just before ascertained to be clean. As to this, I have only to repeat what I said in the introduction to my translation of Zöllner, that while some allowance must be made in every account for defects of observation and memory, there is a point at which such defects would be so gross as to be inconsistent with ordinary sense and intelligence, and at which, if probability is to be our guide, it would be more rational at once to dispute the *veracity* of the witnesses.

The second suggestion is that of concealed writing

brought out by heat, which it has been said may be supplied by the hands. One has only to look at the slate-pencil-writing to laugh at this supposition. Nor could any heat be obtained, except upon the little detached surfaces—perhaps one-tenth of the whole—represented by so much of our fingers as would be in contact with the under surface, while our thumbs pressed on the frame of the upper slate. And the writing is *uniformly* distinct.

The third suggestion, which would question our *veracity*, we must leave to the judgment of others.

C. C. M.

SLATE-WRITING PHENOMENA.

We sat at Mr. Eglinton's table at 12, Old Quebec Street, and I assisted in washing and cleaning four slates. Mr. Eglinton then began by holding a slate *below* the flap of the table and closely pressed against the flap, the usual crumb of slate pencil being on the slate, when, on my asking the question, "Shall we obtain information as to the source of the late threatening messages against the medium?" the word "Yes" was written.

Mr. Eglinton then placed the slate *on the top of the table* and the bit of pencil being placed thereon he covered this slate with another slate. He then placed his right hand on a corner of the upper slate, and I, taking his left hand in both of mine, pressed the three hands firmly downwards on the slates. Almost immediately we heard the writing going on. The time occupied seemed, to both of us, to be about one minute, and I therefore expected to receive only a sentence; my surprise was therefore great when I found the slate covered with fine writing from top to bottom.

We read the communication, and, finding it unfinished, Mr. Eglinton took another slate, and held it by one corner close below the flap of the table, while I held his other hand. Again we heard the busy writing, and then the three taps indicating that the message was finished. The time occupied was again about one minute, and again we found the slate covered with writing, the last part of the message being carried all round the slate next to the frame.

The first slate, as I have stated, was on the top of the table, under my own hands and eyes, and although the second

slate was close *below* the flap of the table, it was yet held in its position by the fingers and thumb of Mr. Eglinton's right hand only, which were visible to me the whole time. I therefore assert that these slates were written on by an occult process, and of this I am as certain as I am of my own existence. If further evidence were required, it could be found in the fact that the writing on the two slates was completed in about two minutes, more or less, and that on experiment I find it takes about twenty minutes to copy it in quick writing.

GEORGE WYLD, M.D.

41, Courtfield Road, S.W.,
15th May, 1884.

THREE THEORIES OF PSYCHOGRAPHY.

BY HON. PERCY WYNDHAM, M.P.

On the 23rd May, 1884, I had a sitting with Mr. Eglinton, at 12, Old Quebec Street, for slate-writing. My son accompanied me. We sat at a deal table, in full daylight, Mr. Eglinton opposite to myself, my son between us, to my left and to Mr. Eglinton's right. The slate was at first held under the corner of the table between my son and Mr. Eglinton, by the pressure of the fingers of Mr. Eglinton's right and of my son's left hand, both their thumbs being on the upper surface of the table and the wrist and greater part of Mr. Eglinton's hand being visible to my son. Mr. Eglinton's left hand and my son's right were joined above the table, and my two hands on theirs. To the usual question, "Is anyone present?" the reply "Yes" was written. At Mr. Eglinton's suggestion, my son took a clean slate, and going into the adjoining room, wrote a question on it, and left this slate in the adjoining room. The purport of this question was unknown to myself or to Mr. Eglinton. A slate was held as before. We soon heard the sound of writing, and on looking at the slate, found the piece of pencil at the end of the last letter, and the writing was in this and in each other instance reversed from Mr. Eglinton, the tops of the letters being towards him, and the writing as if written by a person facing, as I myself was.

The answer to my son's question was as follows :—

"We cannot tell as ——" (giving the initial and surname of a deceased friend of my son) "is not here."

We then put two slates together, Mr. Eglinton and my son pressing them *on the upper surface of the table in full*

view, when the following message was written very audibly and with great rapidity :—

“MY DEAR SON,—I am very glad to be able to accept the opportunity afforded me of dictating a message through the guides of Mr. Eglinton, but you will believe me when I say I am nevertheless present in spirit. There is much I would like to say to you, but I must defer it all until I get stronger to communicate through this (*sic*) means. Your father sends you much love, as does your affectionate mother

“M. F. WYNDHAM.”

Stops and commas as in the original. Being uncertain as to the initials, and as to who the writer purported to be, two other slates were put together on the table, and on my asking for the name in full, “Mary Fanny Wyndham” was written immediately.

I then asked what was the nature of her death, and the reply was immediately written, “sudden” (correct). I then asked if they could tell me the name of a relative of mine who had recently come to London. The reply was immediately written “Blunt.” This closed the séance.

Now, as there is some difficulty in finding a theory that covers all the facts and manifestations of Spiritualism or of alleged Spiritualism, I am in the habit of keeping my judgment in abeyance as to the particular cause of any particular effect

Taking up the attitude of conviction in these matters, even when one is fully convinced, has the effect, I think, of shutting out from our minds considerations which, though they may at first sight appear to controvert one’s conviction, may, in the long run, tend to confirm it.

There are at least three “theories” as to how the information conveyed by slate-writing is obtained, and the writing itself effected :—1st. The theory that the information is supplied by conscious or unconscious Thought-reading on the part of the medium of what is in the sitter’s mind, while the writing itself is effected by an abnormal power

exercised unconsciously by the medium beyond the limits of his material body. 2nd. The theory that the information is supplied by the intelligence of "spooks" or "elementals," who gain their knowledge by reference to the impressions on the astral light of the individual sitter, in which light we are told the acts of his life are photographed. 3rd. The theory held by Spiritualists that the information is supplied by the "guides" of the medium, or by the spirits of the departed, speaking through them, while the writing is effected by the guides making use of power derived from the medium and the sitters.

It may be interesting to inquire towards which of these theories my experience on this occasion would tend.

My son's question was written in the adjoining room. I had no idea at the time what it was; indeed, from the conversation that preceded it, my impression was that he was going to ask a question in mathematics. It ran as follows :—

"Can you tell me the contents of a letter I received the other day from the father of a friend of mine? His name is—
———" (initial and name of deceased friend).

The reply I have given above.

"We cannot tell as— ——" (giving the initial and surname of a deceased friend of my son) "is not here."

My son had received the letter three days before, and the contents of the letter were fully impressed on his mind. This being so, if the substance of the message is the result of unconscious Thought-reading on the part of the medium, it seems strange that this power was in this instance non-effective. Secondly, as my son's life had been intimately connected with that of his friend, in duties, occupations, and amusements; if, as Mr. Judge says in your impression of the 17th, "*All the acts of life are photographed upon the astral light of each individual—the astral light retains all those peculiar things which occur to you from day to day,*"

it is perfectly certain that my son's relationships with his friend must be so photographed. If the substance of the message is supplied by "spooks" and "elementals" reading in the astral light, it surely would not have been necessary to allege that "we cannot tell as —— is not here."

If no reply had been given at all it would have been a different matter, but a reply was given which shewed that the Intelligence had, in a manner incomprehensible to us, read and understood the question put. The theory, therefore, to which the facts point here seems to be the simplest one, namely, that the Intelligence, whatever it may be, can derive no more knowledge from the question itself than is contained in the terms of the question, and that the "spirit" of the person to whom the letter referred not being present, the Intelligence could not tell us the contents of the letter relating to him.

Previous to and during the writing of the longer message, signed, "M. F. Wyndham," I was engaged in a discussion with Mr. Eglinton on the nature of the phenomena. At the time the message was being written, I was saying that I thought there was a good deal to be said in favour of the theory of unconscious Thought-reading on the part of the medium of what was, whether consciously or not, in the brain of the sitter, and I went on to quote an opinion that if we were clairvoyant we should see a hand projecting beyond the material hand of the medium writing on the slate, and that this might account for the convulsive physical effort on the part of the medium and subsequent exhaustion. When the message was completed I asked Mr. Eglinton not to remove the top slate until I had made a surmise as to the nature of the message. I then said, "We have been discussing the cause of this writing. You have taken one side and I another. I am inclined to think that the ideas you express may be, unconsciously to yourself, written on the slate, and my expectation is that the message just written

will controvert what I have been saying." A reference to the message will shew that this anticipation was fulfilled, and this so far tells in favour of the Thought-reading theory. The message purports to come from my mother. She was not in my mind at all. During the latter years of her life she did not sign herself Wyndham. As my father's signature would not during the later years of his life have been Wyndham either, we were puzzled to know from whom the message could purport to come.

I dwell on these details because they controvert, in my opinion, the theory that the information contained in the message is supplied by Thought-reading on the part of the medium of what is at the time consciously in the brain of the sitter. My mother was not in my mind until her two Christian names were written at length.

The next message was in answer to my question "if they could tell me the name of a relative of mine who had recently come to London." The name of Blunt was given immediately. My relative, Mr. Wilfrid Blunt, had lately come to town, and had some day days previously paid me a visit; but he was not in my mind at the time. My question referred to a sister who resides in Italy, who had just come to London, and whom I had seen the day before. This experience again tells against the Thought-reading theory. It tells neither for nor against the reading in the astral light theory.

It also tends to the conclusion, already suggested above, that the Intelligence, whatever it be, gains no information from the question beyond that which is contained in the question itself, and that neither "spooks," "elementals," "guides," nor departed "spirits" can see what is passing in my mind; otherwise the former would have known the peculiar thing in my astral light to which my question referred, and the latter would have known that my question referred to my sister and not to my cousin.

44, Belgrave Square, London,

May 27th, 1884.

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