

OFFICIAL.

A REVIEW

OF THE

REPORT OF THE SEYBERT COMMISSION

APPOINTED BY

THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

TO INVESTIGATE

MODERN SPIRITUALISM.

ISSUED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE

AMERICAN SPIRITUALIST ALLIANCE.

BOSTON :

COLBY & RICH,

NO. 9 BOSWORTH STREET.

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EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTES :

AT a regular meeting of the American Spiritualist Alliance, held on the evening of September 23th, 1887, Professor Henry Kiddle presented the report of the Committee appointed to examine the " Preliminary Report of the Seybert Commission," and prepare a review of the same.

On motion, it was unanimously resolved that the Review as submitted be adopted by the Alliance, and that it be forwarded to the BANNER OF LIGHT for publication, and be also printed in pamphlet form, for general distribution.

NELSON CROSS, *President*.

J. F. JEANNERET, *Secretary*.

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REVIEW.

THE "Preliminary Report" of the Seybert Commission, recently published, has attracted general attention, and has received quite copious notices from the newspaper press, both secular and religious, not only throughout this country, but also in Great Britain and other countries; and in nearly all these notices, the work of the Commission has been held up as a fair, thorough, and especially acute and able examination of the claims of Modern Spiritualism, by ten distinguished and learned men, the result being the almost utter annihilation of those claims, and a demonstration that all professional, or public, mediums—if not private also—are only tricksters and impostors, and that there are, in reality, no phenomena presented through them that can properly be called *spiritual*, the whole investigation being merely a "simple question of legerdemain."

Remembering that Modern Spiritualism has been before the world for nearly forty years, has extended into every civilized country of both hemispheres, in most of which it has now its journalistic exponents and organs, has made millions of converts, among them distinguished representatives of every learned profession, and of every branch of science and literature, that its phenomena, physical and

mental, have been subjected to repeated investigations by some of the best scientific experts in the world, resulting uniformly in the endorsement of the reality of these phenomena, and usually in the complete conversion of the investigator, however hostile previously, to a belief in the claims of Spiritualism—bearing these facts in mind, the American Spiritualist Alliance could not but feel very great surprise at the published account of this late inquiry, ostensibly by the ten distinguished gentlemen who append their names to this report.

The Alliance has, therefore, through a committee of its appointment, caused a careful examination of this report to be made, to discover the novel facts which it has disclosed, at this late day, in regard to this interesting subject, differing so widely from those attested by so many other explorers; and, as its members are anxious only for the truth, to ascertain whether it may not be necessary for the Alliance, after this revelation, to disband, its deluded members acknowledging their errors, and retiring from the whole movement, with which many have been connected for over a generation, wiser if not better and happier men and women. After, however, a careful analysis of this "report," the result of which we here submit to all our fair-minded fellow-citizens, and to all unprejudiced friends of truth and justice everywhere, we have concluded not to suspend the work of the Alliance, because we have been more thoroughly convinced than ever by the contents of this volume, called the report of a fair and thorough investigation of Spiritualism, that this organization was never more needed than now for the vindication and diffusion of SPIRITUAL TRUTH.

First, we will call attention to the

ORIGIN OF THE SEYBERT COMMISSION.

The Seybert Commission was appointed in 1883, on the receipt by the Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania, of an offer by Henry Seybert, a wealthy gentleman of Philadelphia, to donate by bequest to that institution, the sum of \$60,000, in order to found a chair of philosophy, to be named, in honor of Mr. Seybert's father, the "Adams Seybert

Chair." Coupled with this offer was the condition, "that the *incumbent of the chair* should, either individually or in conjunction with a *commission of the University Faculty*, make a *thorough and impartial investigation of all systems of morals, religion, and philosophy*, which assume to represent the truth, and *particularly Modern Spiritualism*."

In accepting this offer, the Board of Trustees, July 3d, 1883, appointed a commission to carry out the wishes of the donor, consisting of the following named persons: Dr. William Pepper, Provost of the University, and, ex-officio, chairman; Rev. George S. Fullerton, Professor of Moral and Intellectual Philosophy; Joseph Leidy, M. D., Professor of Anatomy; Robert E. Thompson, Professor of History and English Literature; and George A. Koenig, Ph. D., Professor of Chemistry. All these were, as will be seen, members of the Faculty, as the terms of Mr. Seybert's offer required. The ten signers of the report are these five members of the Faculty, and five other persons not belonging to the Faculty. These are all facts which the report omits to mention.

The Trustees, in accepting the "gift" of Mr. Seybert, requested the Provost to return thanks to the donor, and to state that they accepted his "liberal gift" subject to the conditions mentioned in his letter (as above stated).

The decease of Mr. Seybert occurred a short time afterward, and his will was found to confirm the gift by bequest.

T. R. HAZARD AND THE COMMISSION.

The relation of Mr. Thos. R. Hazard to the Commission may best be explained here; and it is necessary to do so, as he is the only friend to Spiritualism whose testimony we are able to invoke in regard to any of the circumstances of the investigation. Fortunately, we have Mr. Hazard's own exact statement of the facts that occurred previous to his being obliged to leave for the Pacific coast, early in May, 1884. This statement is found in his well-known Protest (dated Santa Barbara, Cal., May 5th, 1885), printed in the *North American*, of Philadelphia, under date of May 18th, 1885. Mr. Hazard gives the following explanation of his connection with the matter:

"For some weeks previous to his decease, Mr. Seybert was in the practice of consulting me in matters germane to his establishment of the 'Adams Seybert Chair,' both before and after the arrangements were completed; and the \$60,000 was, or is, to be paid over to the trustees of the University only upon the condition that 'the incumbent of said chair, either individually or in conjunction with a commission of the University Faculty, shall make a thorough and impartial investigation of all systems of morals, religion, and philosophy which assume to represent the truth, and particularly of Modern Spiritualism.' Mr. Seybert had repeatedly solicited me to become his representative and assist in the proposed investigation, which request I always declined for reasons given, until a few days before his decease, when I was called upon by a special messenger from Mr. Seybert, asking me to come to his home and meet Dr. William Pepper, the Provost of the University. Shortly after my arrival at his house, Mr. Seybert earnestly renewed his request, which I finally consented to comply with, with the full, distinct understanding that I should be permitted to prescribe the methods to be pursued in the investigation, designate the mediums to be consulted, and reject the attendance of any person or persons whose presence I deemed might conflict with the harmony and good order of the spirit circles."

This proposition was agreed to, Mr. Hazard alleges, and he cites the following letter from the Provost in confirmation thereof:

"NEWPORT, R. I., *July 27th*, 1883.

My Dear Sir: I have yours of the 27th. The Commission has had no meeting, and of course no plan has been adopted for proceeding in the investigation. As you are aware, I have already informed you that I shall expect your advice in reference to the subject, and in accordance with our conversation at Mr. Seybert's, I shall be pleased to receive any assistance in the work of the Commission that you may be able to render. Yours truly, WILLIAM PEPPER.

To Thomas R. Hazard, Esq."

Mr. Hazard also says, in this paper, after enumerating the above-mentioned *five* Commissioners:

"To these have since been added the present chairman [called in the Report the "Acting Chairman"], Horace Howard Furness [one of the trustees of the University]; and, according to the statement made in the *North American* of the 14th inst. [May, 1885] Mr. Coleman Sellers, whom I have never had the pleasure of meeting or see-

ing to my knowledge. The first meeting of the Commission that I attended was at Dr. William Pepper's house, on the 8th of February, 1884, on which occasion all the original members were present. Since then at all the official meetings with mediums that I have attended, or am aware of being held previous to my leaving the city, early last May [1884], Messrs. Koenig, Fullerton, Leidy, and Furness were alone present."

THE REPORT MISLEADING.

In the Report, these facts are not mentioned, indeed they seem to be carefully suppressed. It says, after merely mentioning the gift of Mr. Seybert and the condition annexed to it (in part only), "a Commission was *accordingly* appointed, composed as follows : Dr. Wm. Pepper, Dr. Joseph Leidy, Dr. Geo. A. Koenig, Prof. R. E. Thompson, Prof. Geo. S. Fullerton, and Dr. Horace Howard Furness ; to whom were afterward added Mr. Coleman Sellers, Dr. James W. White, Dr. Calvin B. Knerr, and Dr. S. Weir Mitchell."

CONDITIONS OF THE BEQUEST VIOLATED.

Now the fact is, that the Commission originally appointed in 1883, as Mr. Seybert was duly notified, consisted of only the Provost and the four professors first mentioned in the above list, and could not properly have contained the other five, as they were not members of the Faculty, the language of Mr. Seybert's expressed condition being that "the incumbent of said chair, either individually or in conjunction with a commission of the Faculty," should make the investigation, which he evidently desired to be made by the learned representatives of the University, not by this, that, or the other physician, dentist, civil engineer, or other person, who might be called in to satisfy the notions or schemes of particular individuals. Mr. Seybert was a man of education and culture, and as the Report says, "an enthusiastic believer in Modern Spiritualism"; and he evidently was convinced that a thorough and fair examination of its claims by members of the Faculty, whom he thought he knew to be honorable and enlightened men, could not but result in showing the truth of Spiritualism, as every other such examination had previously resulted ; and thus the *truth* would

receive the endorsement of one of the great American universities. Indeed, if this investigation had reached the result anticipated by the testator, his design would nevertheless have been frustrated; for the very first point made against it by the opponents of Spiritualism would have been that the investigation was not made, according to the condition of the gift, by a committee of the Faculty.

Moreover, the "incumbent of the Adams Seybert Chair," either himself or with the assistance of such a committee, was to make the required investigation—a fact which has been sedulously kept out of the Report; neither is there the slightest allusion to any such incumbent, or to the appointment of any, or the establishment of any chair such as the bequest and its conditions call for. This it was that constituted the chief point of Mr. Hazard's protest in the *North American*, which we here cite in proof:

"I hereby most emphatically object and protest, in the name of justice and my deceased friend, Henry Seybert, against his money or bonds being retained by the Trustees of the Pennsylvania University, or paid over and delivered to the Board by the executors of Mr. Seybert's will until after the aforementioned sum of \$60,000 has been fairly earned by said Trustees, through a full and faithful performance of all the requisitions and conditions specified in the contract legally entered into by my deceased friend Henry Seybert, on the one part, and the Board of Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania on the other part; the terms of which contract clearly imply that the aforesaid Board of Trustees are strictly bound by the terms of the gift to see that *the occupant of the Adams Seybert Chair is, in every respect, including the allowance of a sufficiency of time, to perfect a thorough and impartial investigation of the phenomena and philosophy of Modern Spiritualism, and that said occupant of the Chair shall make the investigation singly or in conjunction with a commission of the University Faculty, whose qualifications in all respects are as fitting for the purpose as his own.*"

This protest was unheeded; on the contrary, other persons not members of the Faculty were added to the Commission. This being the case, it would clearly appear that the whole investigation, with the so-called report, is, legally, a nullity, as the condition of the bequest has been grossly violated.

A DELUSIVE REPRESENTATION.

In the Report, the names of the ten persons who signed it are mentioned as if they had all been originally appointed, and had served from the beginning, which as has been shown is not the case. Mr. Hazard says a meeting was held on February 8th, 1884; but Mr. Fullerton's minutes, as printed in the Appendix to the Report, mention no meeting earlier than March 13th, 1884, at which he says the "Commission" were present, clearly implying that the whole ten signers were present, while, in fact, only five were present, including Mr. Furness, who was not a member of the original commission, and, as it would appear, had no legal right to serve at all. How, when, or why Messrs. Sellers, White, Knerr, and Mitchell were added to the Commission does not appear anywhere in the Report. The minutes, however, show that Mr. Sellers did not attend any meeting previous to Nov. 5th, 1884; and Messrs. White, Knerr and Mitchell attended no meeting till Feb. 19th, 1885, nearly a year after the commencement of the investigation. Nevertheless, these four persons append their signatures to the Report as if they had participated in the whole inquiry; while in the Report which they signed we find the statement, "*We decided that, as we shall be held responsible for our conclusions, we must form those conclusions solely on our own observations.*" [Italics ours.] In the Report, Mrs. Patterson, Mr. Briggs, Mrs. Kane, and Dr. Slade are all condemned, and placed before the public as mere tricksters and vulgar charlatans and cheats; and these four honorable gentlemen sign it without having attended a single meeting of the Commission when those mediums were examined. Comment is unnecessary.

REV. MR. FULLERTON'S MINUTES.

By a simple analysis of the reverend secretary's record of the proceedings, it is designed to correct the misleading representations of the Report, by means of which the public have been made to believe that there were *ten* investigators; while, in fact, there were less than half of that number. It is quite fortunate that we possess these minutes of the pro-

ceedings in order to correct the general statements of the Report proper.

THE WORK OF THE COMMISSIONERS.

These minutes show that whatever work was done was, in the main, performed by only three of the commissioners—Messrs. Fullerton, Furness, and Sellers (the latter after the first six meetings), the others having attended but a small number of the *eighteen* meetings, or sittings, at which the mediums were examined. In this regard the facts are as follows :

Dr. Pepper attended *six* of the eighteen meetings ; Dr. Leidy, *ten* ;* Prof. Koenig, *nine* ; Mr. Fullerton, *twelve* ; Prof. Thompson, *eight* ; Mr. Furness, *sixteen* ; Mr. Sellers, *eleven* ; Dr. White, *five* ; Dr. Knerr, *four* ; Dr. Mitchell, *three*.

Mr. Furness was the only one that attended all the six sittings with Slade ; Messrs. Pepper, Leidy and Fullerton attended one each ; Koenig, White, Knerr, and Mitchell, not a single one. This will serve to show to what extent they “formed their conclusions solely on their own observations.” “*We distinctly saw*” the processes adopted by the medium (Slade), is the statement of the Report, leaving the reader to believe that there were ten pair of sharp eyes fixed upon him, while the Appendix shows there was only one pair that could see all he did, and four that saw nothing ; while the commissioner who could see all that was visible was too deaf to hear what was audible. Yet this Commission has been lauded to the skies for its superlative competency for the task which it assumed.

THE VERDICT OF THE COMMISSION.

There are, however, other circumstances that invalidate its claims to consideration as based on the number, standing, and accomplishments of its members. All that they, as a *Commission*, claim to have done is to have held eighteen sittings with seven mediums, extending over more than two years—from March 13th, 1884, to March 30th, 1886. This con-

* He says, in his letter in the Appendix, “a dozen” ; but the minutes show only ten at which mediums were present.

stitutes the whole boasted investigation, by means of which, the secular and religious newspapers have told their readers, all the claims of Modern Spiritualism, accepted during the last forty years by some of the most acute and accomplished minds in the world, have been totally and definitively disproved, and all mediumship has been demonstrated to be nothing but delusion or trickery. The reviewer of *The New York Tribune*, apparently not having noticed these facts, remarks :

“The Report is of such a character that it would appear hardly worth while to carry the investigation any further. The conclusions reached almost involve the judgment that Modern Spiritualism, in so far as it rests upon what are called ‘physical manifestations,’ is a gross delusion, fostered by the most palpable, coarse, clumsy, and impudent fraud that was ever systematically practiced.”

This indeed is the impression given by the Report to those who cursorily examine it, and readers in general do no more. The reviewers of the Press seem not to have looked beyond the few pages that constitute what is printed as the Report.

The commissioners, it is true, have been careful not to *assert* positively and directly as much as this (though they permit their reverend secretary to assert it); but, in guarded and qualified language, they say that as far as they have gone, this is the result. “We have not,” says the Report, “been cheered by the discovery of a single novel fact.” Not even, we may ask, by the fact, as alleged, that spirit-mediums are only tricksters? If not, they must have had the conviction before they commenced the inquiry, and they were, therefore, unfit, by previous bias of mind, from serving on the Commission. This, it is quite evident, was actually the case.

Outside of the Report, and going beyond his coadjutors, which was certainly a gross impropriety, to say the least, Secretary Fullerton takes occasion to interject into the preamble to his printed minutes of the proceedings, the *opinion* that “Spiritualism presents [to him] the melancholy spectacle of gross fraud, perpetrated upon an uncritical portion of the public.” That is to say, Hare, Crookes, Wallace, Varley,

De Morgan, Gregory, Robertson, Mapes, Edmonds, Brittan, Sargent, Trollope, Whately, Elliotson, Thackeray, Lord Lyndhurst, Prof. Challis, Aksakoff, Wagner, Butlerof, Zoellner and his associates, Du Prel, and Hellenbach, with Houdin, Jacobs, Bellachini, Hermann, and Kellar—the great masters of prestidigitation—all these, including some of the brightest lights in science, medicine, law, literature, theology, and prestidigitative art, are pronounced “uncritical” by the Rev. Geo. S. Fullerton, Professor of Intellectual and Moral Philosophy in the University of Pennsylvania!

Certainly it would be of very little importance that any one of these eminent persons had been attending a few séances with mediums, and had arrived at the opinion that the phenomena called spiritual had no real existence, being wholly resolvable into “legerdemain,” as this Report states, because vastly more thorough examinations, by entirely competent experts, and under incomparably superior conditions, have invariably resulted in showing the contrary. This Report, however, though in the main a mere statement of individual opinions, based on individual examinations, is issued under the fallacious appearance that it represents the united researches and consentaneous convictions arising therefrom of ten persons, while the fact, as we have partly shown, is far otherwise. A statement of the

WORK OF EACH COMMISSIONER

will clearly demonstrate this. It appears from the Record that Dr. Pepper attended six scattered meetings—two in 1884, and four in 1885. That was the whole of his investigation. Dr. Leidy attended ten of the meetings, and individually three promiscuous séances with public mediums. It is a curious fact that Dr. L. should speak of attending with his fellow commissioners séances with four materializing mediums, when the minutes show that the Commission did not examine into materialization at all. He also speaks of attending with the Commission “two séances with as many rapping mediums,” while Mrs. Kane was the only medium at both séances. This serves to show with what indistinct-

ness some of the signers of this Report remembered the incidents of the so-called examinations that occurred between March, 1884, and March, 1886, when they, in May, 1887 (more than a year after the last sitting), solemnly appended their signatures to the document, and thus attested their personal knowledge of its truthfulness and accuracy.

Dr. Koenig attended seven séances with other commissioners, and individually one séance, at Col. Kase's house, in Philadelphia, with Mrs. Thayer and Mr. Copeland, at the end of his account of which, he exclaims "*Quelle betise!*" That was the whole of his investigation.

Rev. Geo. S. Fullerton attended thirteen out of the eighteen sittings, and individually one séance with Mrs. Wells, one with Mrs. Beste, and one with Mrs. Thayer. Besides this, he undertook a mission to Germany in order, as it seems, to prove that Prof. Zoellner was not in a sane condition of mind when he conducted the investigation with Slade described in "*Transcendental Physics.*" To this reference will be made further on.

Mr. Furness attended sixteen out of the Commission's eighteen séances, being absent from one of Mrs. Patterson's sittings and one of Mr. Briggs's. Besides this, in a jocose and bantering spirit, he experimented individually with Dr. Mansfield and three other mediums for answering "sealed letters"; and, in the same temper of mind, attended some promiscuous materializing séances. Under the instruction of the medium Caffray, he tried, he says, to become a medium himself for independent writing, using magnetized paper supplied by Caffray to facilitate the process. As a part of the report of the Commission, with a singular want of logic and propriety, he publishes three articles giving an amusing burlesque of the subject rather than a serious account of his experiences.

Dr. Knerr attended only four of the investigating séances, but individually had a private sitting with Mrs. Patterson. Mr. Sellers, Dr. White, and Dr. Mitchell made no individual examinations. Nothing was done by the Commission in its collective capacity between March 30th, 1886, and May, 1887,

the date of the Report. It does not appear that the articles giving an account of these individual experiences were at all of the nature of reports to the Commission, or that the latter formally authorized them, or adopted them as a part of its proceedings; and therefore the publication of them as in part the basis of the Report was wholly irregular, illogical, and improper, and betrays a spirit of antagonism to the cause under investigation, and a determination to crush it, if possible, at all hazards.

The above summary of the work performed by the several members of this much-lauded Commission shows how futile and inadequate its so-called investigation has been, as compared with that of other scientific explorers, whose work they choose to ignore. For example, Prof. Zoellner had at least twenty-five carefully arranged sittings with Dr. Slade, employing a great variety of ingenious scientific devices to test the reality of the phenomena presented, and to exclude all possibility of delusion on his own part as well as deception on the part of the medium; while the Rev. George S. Fullerton, Dr. Pepper, and Dr. Leidy after a single sitting, are ready to accept, without any personal verification, all the statements of the two or three commissioners who were present at the sittings, and to brand the medium as an impostor. From what is here adduced it will be quite obvious that the honorable Commissioners *did not make the investigation which they allege in the Report that they made*; and that this much vaunted document, signed by these ten distinguished gentlemen, is, therefore, a *misrepresentation*.

In the next place, it will be obvious to every careful and dispassionate reader that the

REPORT IS NOT SUSTAINED BY THE MINUTES, in the sweeping verdict of condemnation which it pronounces upon the mediums examined, and in fact upon all mediumship. There were, as the minutes show, manifestations at the sittings which could not be fairly attributed to fraud or legerdemain. It is obvious that, in spite of all their protestations to the contrary, these commissioners were determined to ignore, or explain away, by any con-

struction however forced and irrational, every phenomenon that seemed to antagonize the preconceptions of their prejudiced minds. A fair and critical analysis of their own minutes, fortunately appended to the Report, shows that their published conclusion is grossly unjust to the mediums whom they consulted, and whom they now hold up to undeserved reprobation as cunning and conscienceless tricksters. We wish to say here that it is not our design at this time to defend these mediums, except as far as this Review may indirectly do so. We express no opinion as to their character or claims, as this is not the place for such expression.

In this analysis, we will begin with Mrs. Patterson, the first medium examined, with whom there were four sittings: the first of which was attended by four members of the Commission, Messrs. Leidy, Koenig, Fullerton, and Furness;* the second, by the same; the third, by Leidy and Furness; and the fourth, by Koenig and Fullerton; so that Pepper, Thompson, Sellers, White, Knerr, and Mitchell had no knowledge at all of what occurred at these sittings, except from information. In regard to these occurrences, however, we fortunately have the additional testimony of Mr. Hazard.

The minutes of the first meeting say there were "no results," and Mr. Hazard states that they "sat two hours without getting a scratch on the slates." The same was the case at the second sitting;† but at the third there was a manifestation, which the commissioners endeavor to explain away, by insinuating, not alleging, trickery. The minutes state:

*The minutes say: "On Thursday, March 13th, 1884, the Commission met at 508 S. 16th street, for the examination of Mrs. S. E. Patterson," and thus imply that the ten signers were present. Incidentally Mr. Furness, Dr. Leidy, and Mr. Hazard are referred to; but the latter, in his published statement says: "All four of the acting members [Leidy, Koenig, Fullerton, and Furness] were present."

† In regard to this sitting Mr. Hazard says: "As the gentlemen of the Commission were leaving the house, I returned with the medium to the séance room, when it was almost immediately written on the slate—'There was nothing that could be remedied. We could not overcome the influences that were about.'"

"The slates used belonged to the medium, and were, as she told them, in daily, almost hourly use. The frame of one of them was far from sound, and the hole which admitted the screw [the slates were fastened together by a screw] was more than well worn. Within these slates, after being held for a long while by both hands of the medium under the table, two or three barely legible words appeared. The screw was by no means as tight after the writing as before. This fact, together with the prolonged concealment, rendered it impossible to attach any real importance to the attempt to write, as far as could be made out, the name of *Henry Seybert*. Under the same conditions our colleague, Mr. Sellers, produced writing for us very satisfactorily."

That is, Mr. Sellers, who had attended none of these sittings, was able to produce a counterfeit of what he had not seen, which, of course, gave great satisfaction to the two commissioners who had attended the sitting, and who were in that remarkable manner fully convinced that, while the medium was holding the slates with both hands under the table, she took out the screw, separated the slates, wrote upon one of them, put them together again accurately, and inserting the screw fastened them together, leaving only the screw a little loose in the "well worn" hole; and yet none of this, or any indication of it, was seen by these alert examiners, and they could only *infer* it from the fact (if it was a fact) that the screw was a little loose. Obviously, there was a "screw loose" somewhere, especially as we notice that the published minutes of this important sitting are signed by "Geo. S. Fullerton, Secretary," although Mr. Fullerton *was not present*. Who informed him of the proceedings is not stated; but it seems to us quite a "novel fact" that the minutes of so important a meeting should have been prepared by an absentee on information from an unknown source. Who is responsible for the statement that the screw was loose, or that there were any grounds for the suspicion entertained, which alone militated against the absolute fact that the name "*Henry Seybert*" was written between the slates by some superhuman power and intelligence?

Fortunately, we have the published testimony as to what

occurred of one who was present, and whom we may accept as at least a veracious reporter. Mr. Hazard says :

“The Commission [*i. e.*, Messrs. Leidy and Furness] brought two new slates, hung on hinges, within which a small piece of slate pencil was placed, when the Commission fastened the slates so tightly together by means of a screw that nothing whatever could pass between the frames. In a very short time the pencil appeared on the outside of the upper slate, when the Commission removed the screw, and on opening the slates a *plainly written sentence* was on one of the slates, thus giving a fair test in slate writing, and proving at the same time the power spirits possess to pass solid matter through solid matter.”

Now between this statement and that of the unknown informant of Secretary Fullerton there is a wide and serious discrepancy, involving, indeed, a question of veracity. Mr. Hazard was too earnest an observer to make so great a mistake, and most certainly was an honest and truthful man. Did the Rev. Mr. Fullerton make a mistake in drawing up the minutes of a meeting which he did not attend ; and if so, why did not Dr. Leidy or Mr. Furness correct him ? The record is, however, seriously impeached ; but even as it stands, it shows that there was a manifestation, which only a forced and unfair construction of the facts, based on mere suspicion or inference, could invalidate ; and on this suspicion they positively, in the report proper, brand this woman as an impostor. They dare to say :

“There is really *no step* in the bare process of producing this writing, *as we have observed it*, which might not be accomplished by trickery or by legerdemain.”

This sentence, as will be seen, is craftily constructed so as to give the impression that it positively states a fact of observation, while it only expresses a mere opinion or suspicious inference.

What, we ask, if Mr. Sellers could subsequently show his genius for, or accomplishment in, trickery, or in imitating what he never saw, does that, according to the logic of these learned Commissioners, prove Mrs. Patterson a trickster ? Do they know that this woman was as expert in sleight-of-hand as the accomplished civil engineer ? We have no proof

that the conditions were the same in both cases as stated; for the assertion is made by a man who was not present.

At the fourth sitting, attended by Messrs. Koenig and Fullerton, the minutes prepared by the latter say: "The medium declared herself unwell. No results were obtained."

Mr. Hazard says:

"The next day Mrs. Patterson extended through me an invitation to Messrs. Fullerton and Koenig to come to her rooms and accept a séance gratis. This invitation the Commission declined to accept."

This meeting, of April 17th, was the last at which there was any friend of Spiritualism present.* There is, however, in the minutes of the subsequent meetings considerable material to support the proposition that heads this section—material which a fair construction of the facts indubitably affords.

We will refer to the case of Mr. Fred. Briggs, to whose "examination" two sittings were given—the first on the 26th of March, 1884, and the second on the 30th of March, 1886—two years apart. At the former sitting, three of the Commissioners were present—Messrs. Leidy, Furness, and Fullerton, together with Mr. Hazard, and, a part of the time, Dr. Koenig. There was an attempt to obtain slate-writing. The minutes state:

"Mr. Furness now put his hand under the table on the hand of the medium, which was pressing the double slate up against the table. Mr. Furness declared that he heard a certain buzzing noise. The slate being taken out, there was found written on the inside of the under slate: 'I will help you all. R. Dale Owen,' and something that looked like 'Henry Furness is here.' The slate on the floor being examined, there was found on the *outside* (it was a screw slate), 'I am here with you. I will help you. R. Dale Owen.' Some other [*sic*]

* Mr. Hazard, as already stated, had been obliged, on account of his health, to seek a more genial climate. At the commencement of this investigation he was in his eighty-eighth year. His decease took place in March, 1886. It is much to be regretted that he did not survive the publication of this Report, to reply to the statements of the Commission in which he is so disparagingly referred to. We feel assured that the gentlemen who belonged to the Commission at the time of his connection with it did not, in their imperfect knowledge of the subject, understand some of his remarks and suggestions.

illegible marks were found on the slate. Nothing was obtained on the inside of either screw-slate. The handwriting on the two slates purporting to be from R. Dale Owen was much alike."

In this case neither the Commission nor the Secretary makes any attempt to impugn the genuineness of this manifestation; nor does the account which is given of it afford any basis for the imputation of trickery. The direct writing on the slate held jointly by the medium and Mr. Furness, and simultaneous with it that on the slate lying on the floor, constitute a *fait accompli*, which obviously could not have been done by the medium under the circumstances. Let us examine it analytically:

1. The medium and Mr. Furness were holding the folding-slate, *pressing* it against the under side of the table.

2. Mr. Furness heard a *buzzing* sound; but as he is deaf, it might have been the sound of the writing.

3. The writing appeared on the *inside* of the under slate—not a mere mark, but eight legible words, and four others somewhat illegible.

4. During the same time, a slate lying under the table was inscribed with twelve words and some "illegible marks."

5. These inscriptions were ostensibly from the spirit of R. Dale Owen, being so signed; and the handwriting in each was "much alike."

And yet this Commission—not only the *four* present but with them the *six* who were not present—allege in the Report that nothing was exhibited in the sittings which was not explicable by the suspicion of trickery. Mr. Briggs is included in the general statement:

"All that *we* [the whole ten] *are sure of* is that the writing down of these communications, be their substance what it may, is performed in a manner so closely resembling fraud as to be indistinguishable from it."

We cannot refrain from remarking that, in view of their own record, that positive statement so closely resembles a positive untruth as to be "indistinguishable from it." Besides let it be kept in mind that of the ten persons who signed that statement there were four who did not attend a

single sitting held by the Commission for investigating the reality of independent writing ; for the second sitting with Mr. Briggs was a "dark séance" for physical manifestations, though there were occurrences of independent writing in the course of it.

Secretary Fullerton's minutes of the second meeting contain the following statements :

"The medium asked Dr. Ledy to put his hand also upon a slate which the medium was holding under the table. Attention was then called to the scratching sound, which might have been writing. The slate was taken out by Dr. Ledy and the light turned up. The following was written upon it : 'John Smith is with you like a young son. John Lydy.'" The minutes add : "It was of course possible that the writing was done before Dr. Ledy put his hand on it, as the slate was not then examined."

What foolery was this on the part of the sagacious commissioners ! Why, we may ask, was not the slate examined, so that such an objection could not have been made ? Was it in order to afford them this loop-hole to creep out of ? But certainly, they have no right to assume fraud, in the positive words of the Report, when, through their own negligence, they possess no certain knowledge of the actual result of the experiment.

Again, in regard to the same séance, we have the following minute :

"The light was then turned low. A slate was held under the table by the medium. He breathed hard, and made no little noise for some time. [What if he did ?] Then Dr. Koenig was asked to put his hand on the slate. A scratching was heard. When the light was turned up, the slate contained the message : 'I will help you all. Dr. Benj. Rush.'" "

Here again was a *fait accompli* entirely ignored by the Commission a year later when they made and signed the Report. The Rev. Fullerton disregarding it wholly, wrote in the Appendix that "Spiritualism presents nothing but gross fraud," which his own minutes show to be false—to be, indeed, a libel on the cause which he was under a solemn obligation to investigate impartially. The minutes ("copied from notes taken during the séance," says the Reverend

Secretary) afford no indication that the manifestation was regarded as fraudulent at the time of the sitting. How, indeed, could it have been when the slate was held by Dr. Koenig? It is thus obvious that the commissioners were predetermined to condemn in spite of evidence.

This spirit is very manifest in the sittings with

MRS. MARGARET FOX KANE,

A medium that during nearly forty years has undergone innumerable tests all showing indisputably the genuineness of the phenomena presented through her organism. No hostile report can now effect these thoroughly established facts. The minutes show that, at the two sittings with this medium (Nov. 5th and 6th, 1884) the rappings were copious; and it is obvious that they were audible, because the commissioners questioned, by the alphabet and otherwise, the spirits that purported to be present. The objection they make is that the raps were always near the medium. The minutes say:

"Raps were produced as members of the Committee stood with the medium around the desk in the library, and close to a bookcase. Raps were produced, according to the medium, on the glass door of a bookcase, upon which Mr. Sellers placed his hand. Mr. Sellers felt no vibration on the glass, but *raps were heard somewhere in the vicinity.*"

At the second sitting, of which we have a "stenographic report," the minutes say:

"The 'spirit rappings' varied materially in quality and character, being at times faintly, and at other times distinctly audible."

Mr. Sellers, who seemed to be extremely skeptical and captious, and constantly manifested a sneering, bantering spirit, at last remarked to his colleagues:

"It has been very clearly shown to-night that certain sounds, of greater or less volume, have been produced. *We have heard the sounds.* We are conscious that they are raps. It is exceedingly important, in deference to the medium herself, that we should prove that she has nothing to do with the production of the sounds other than in a spiritualistic capacity. I would like to ask her if there is any test that she herself can propose which would be capable of satisfying us that she does not produce the sounds."

The medium replied:

"I could name a great many tests, but they might not be satisfactory to you; for instance, the one of standing on glass tumblers, where the raps are produced on the floor."

This glass tumbler test was accepted; and while preparations were making for it, Mr. Sellers remarked to the medium:

"Will you repeat the experiment of last night, that of standing near the table and not touching it, to see if the same character of sounds then produced can be again heard? Last evening *we had a very satisfactory exhibition of that.*"

Thus it is admitted that the raps were produced under that condition, and that the manifestation was satisfactory—hence, obviously, not fraudulent or seeming such.

In the first and second experiment with the glass tumblers, there was no success, but in the third there was, rapping being heard several times. At one time Mr. Sellers said he thought the rapping came from the wall behind the medium, and asked, "Will the spirit rap again?" When the medium invoked Mr. Seybert to rap, the minutes say, "Three raps were distinctly but faintly heard"; and Mr. Sellers remarked, "I heard them. They sounded somewhat like the others." When the raps were repeated, Mr. Furness "placed his hand upon one of Mrs. Kane's feet," and then exclaimed: "This is the *most wonderful thing of all*, Mrs. Kane! I distinctly feel them in your foot. There is not a particle of motion in your foot, but there is an *unusual pulsation.*"

This closed the investigation as far as Mrs. Kane was concerned, or as far as it had any reference to the rapping phase of manifestation. . . . "The Commission," it is stated by Mr. Fullerton, "commissioned Mr. Furness to lay before Mrs. Kane the question of continuing or closing the investigation, so far as she was concerned." Mr. Furness reported to Mr. Fullerton that he told the medium that the Commission had come to the *conclusion* that "the *so-called* raps are confined wholly to her person; whether produced by her voluntarily or involuntarily, they *had not attempted to de-*

cide." They held themselves "ready to meet her again"; but, Mr. Furness says, "I felt it my duty to add that in that case the examination would necessarily be of the *most searching character.*" [Italics in all cases ours.] No wonder that the lady declined to put herself again into the hands of these "searching" commissioners.

The minutes, however, show that, in spite of the repressive psychological conditions of these two sittings, more or less distinct and audible rappings were heard by the commissioners present, and sometimes in answer to their questions, though the replies were of no great importance. (This point is not here considered.) These sounds seemed to proceed from a locality not far from the medium, but at one time "somewhere in the vicinity of the bookcase near which the medium was standing"; at another time, as the medium was standing on glass tumblers. In the latter case, the medium being personally examined by Mr. Furness, it was ascertained, he alleged, that, while the raps were produced, though her foot was motionless, he felt in it an "unusual pulsation"—of what kind, we may ask—arterial, muscular, nervous, or what? Is the Shakspearean scholar an anatomist or a physician? Is he competent to examine, physiologically or anatomically, a lady's foot? Perhaps he might be *æsthetically*. In spite of this curious discovery—the "most wonderful thing of all," exclaims Mr. Furness—namely, an *unusual pulsation* in a motionless foot—the whole Commission *regretfully* report that they "have not been cheered in their investigations by the discovery of a single novel fact"—wonderful, extremely wonderful, and unusual, but not *novel*!

Here, according to the signatures, we have on this remarkable Commission, a professor of anatomy, a distinguished physician and neurologist, and a medical specialist; and yet no one, but the Shakspearean critic, examined into this physiological, if not pneumatological, mystery, so as to explain it. It is true that the physician (Dr. Knerr) and the medical specialist (Dr. Mitchell) had not up to November, 1884, and for four or five months afterward, attended any

meeting of the Commission, probably had not been appointed; but they sign the Report, which says of these two examinations of the famous rapping-medium:

"To the subject of 'spirit-rappings' we have devoted some time and attention, but our investigations have not been sufficiently extensive to warrant us at present in offering *any positive conclusions*. The difficulty attending the investigation of this mode of spiritualistic manifestation is increased by the fact, familiar to physiologists, that sounds of varying intensity may be produced *in almost any portion of the human body by voluntary muscular action*. To determine the exact location of this muscular activity is at all times a matter of delicacy."

That the "fact" referred to here is "familiar to physiologists," or that it is a fact at all, is indeed quite a "novel fact," though the Commission may not be "cheered" by its discovery. It is, indeed, but an attempt to revive the toe-joint or knee-joint theory, slightly modified, which was exploded many years ago. Such a statement is but a confession of ignorance, and a proof that the persons selected for this Commission were, and still are, totally incompetent to discharge the duty assigned them—as much so, indeed, as would be a commission of persons entirely ignorant of modern astronomy, appointed to investigate the truths of that science. Of course, if, like these ten *savants*, they ignored all the work and all the discoveries of others, they would necessarily report the exploded doctrines of the Ptolemaic System, these being more in consonance with the ordinary observations of uninformed persons—of unenlightened common sense, which the Greek philosopher taught is "but little better than no sense at all."

But these commissioners, though they say, in the paragraph quoted, that they are not "warranted in offering any positive conclusions," yet are bold enough to speak of the matter as follows:

"What we can say, thus far, *with assurance* is that, in the cases which have come under our observation, the theory of the purely physiological origin of the sounds has been sustained by the fact that the mediums were invariably and confessedly cognizant of the rappings whenever they occurred, and could at once detect any

spurious rappings, however exact and indistinguishable to all other ears might be the imitation."

It requires a very nice discrimination to discern the difference between this "assurance" which these gentlemen thus avow and the "positive conclusion" which they disclaim. Their theory of the origin of the sounds, in the "muscular activity" of some portion of the medium's body (which in the case under examination delicacy prevented them from prying into), is, in the last degree, absurd; and furthermore the physiological origin of the "raps" has been positively disproved by an amount of recorded experience that cannot be gainsaid. The English paper *Light*, edited by two men of high culture and long experience in mediumistic investigation, in regard to this absurd *dictum* of the Report, says:

"It is an indication of the perfect ignorance with which the gentlemen forming that Commission approached their investigation that they should have thought it wise to say anything so simple."

THE COMMISSION AND DR. SLADE.

We pass now to a brief consideration of the dealings of the Commission with the famous medium Dr. Slade, the destruction of whose reputation seems to have been a special object and *desideratum* with its leading members. Hence, it is in quite a triumphant tone that the Report, signed by the ten commissioners, announces the verdict of the eminent jurymen:

"However wonderful may have been the manifestations of his mediumship in the past, or elsewhere, *we* were forced to the conclusion that the character of those which passed under our observation was *fraudulent throughout*."

The general reader of this Report will naturally suppose that this conclusion, so unfavorable to Dr. Slade, is supported by the observations of the ten signers of the Report, for there is nothing in the document to indicate the contrary; but the minutes published in the *Appendix* show that this is very far from being the truth. The fact is, the "we" in the sentence which we have quoted, represents only three persons—Messrs. Furness, Sellers, and Thompson, these alone

having attended a sufficient number of the six séances with Slade to be entitled to entertain any opinion of the facts. Mr. Thompson attended four of the sittings; Mr. Sellers, five; Mr. Furness alone attended all. Messrs. Pepper, Leidy, and Fullerton attended one each; while Messrs. Koenig, White, Knerr and Mitchell were present at none of them; and yet they could not only sign the above condemnatory statement, speaking of that as having passed under their observation which they never saw, but also attest that the Report "describes the processes which *we* [the signers] *distinctly saw this medium adopt*"; and also allege that "every step in the process *we have distinctly seen*." All these statements, as will be noticed, are, as far as the four absentee Commissioners are concerned, absolute falsehoods, as they could see nothing; nothing at all came under their observation. Measurably, they are also false as regards Messrs. Pepper, Leidy and Fullerton, who attended but one sitting out of six. Only one man (Mr. Furness) could be truthfully and honorably able to allege that "the manifestations were fraudulent throughout."

Nothing can more conclusively show the prejudiced and hostile *animus* with which this investigation was entered upon and conducted than this unwarranted attestation of so serious a charge by those who really had no knowledge of what they certified to as true of their own observation.

If a sub-committee were necessary, as seems to have been the case, the public should have been presented with a report of the members who did really see the alleged "fraudulent manifestations"; for the Report, as it now stands, looks itself very like a "fraudulent manifestation"; it is, certainly, untrue and misleading, being signed by *false witnesses*.

It is a legal maxim, as regards principal and agent, that *qui facit per alium facit per se*; but the Commission seem to have made it a rule of evidence that *qui videt per alium videt per se*, which is truly a "novel fact," though not a "cheering" one for him whose reputation was under trial. The verdict against Dr. Slade in the main rests, however, upon

that preposterous dictum, which reminds us of the "crown-er's quest law," or that of the court of the immortal Dogberry.

The account which is given us of the conference meeting held by the Commission a week after the last of the Slade sittings (who were present is not stated), is a stenographic statement of "written notes and verbal comments upon the séances," chiefly by Mr. Sellers, Mr. Fullerton furnishing the minutes of the second sitting, the only one he attended. This "compilation" as it is called is, indeed, a curious conglomeration of somewhat contradictory verbal testimony and opinion; yet, at the close, a resolution was unanimously adopted, as follows:

"Resolved, That the reports [?] of the Slade séances held in Philadelphia, as described by Messrs. Fullerton, Furness, Pepper, and Sellers, are in accordance with the observations of each of the members of the Commission who were present."

The record shows that no such correspondence of observation and unanimity of recollection and opinion existed; but it seems that there was an agreement that whatever one of the commissioners should allege that he saw, all the others, present or absent, would solemnly affirm that they "distinctly" observed also. In this way the public are favored with a unanimous verdict from ten learned and respectable gentlemen against all the mediums examined, and against phenomenal Spiritualism.

The Report describes with great particularity the processes employed by Dr. Slade, the chief of which is that he substitutes for the slate exhibited to the sitter, or sitters, one upon which he has previously written a prepared message. This substitution the Commission positively assert they have seen, and always when a long message is written; the shorter ones, they say, he writes himself, while he holds with his right hand the slate under and against the table, his left hand being placed upon the sitters' hands resting on the table. "Every step of this process" they say they have seen. The minutes show conclusively that they *did not see* any such process, but that they merely inferred that

this was done from certain appearances or circumstances which excited their suspicion. The "steps" of which they so confidently speak were merely conjectural, or purely fictitious conceptions, perhaps we may say *inventions*. It is true that, in the "compilation of notes and comments," we are told of incidents and circumstances that were calculated to excite suspicion, but they are capable of quite another construction; and we must bear in mind that these "notes and comments" are not, by any means, the combined conclusions of careful and impartial observers, but of certain *individuals* whose minds were not only filled with a suspicion of fraud, but with an intense desire to confirm their preconceptions, and even convictions, that mediumship is fraud, and that only. This is rendered indubitable by the character of all the proceedings. Thus in the "compilation" we find a "special minute" of the stenographer in which we are told that "a slate which had been noted as standing against a leg of the table and behind the chair of the medium, but conveniently within his reach, was dexterously substituted by the medium for the slate taken from the table and the one upon which ostensibly writing was to appear. *This was observed by one member.* In another instance a member (Mr. Sellers) observed the same substitution, *so far as the motion of the medium's hand and arm was concerned.*" That is, the substitution was merely an inference from a circumstance that seemed suspicious. The stenographer's note also says :

"By certain private marks, adroitly applied, the same member noted the fact that the slate on which the writing was exhibited was not, as the medium represented it to be, the same slate which had been taken from the table."

Why then, we ask, did not that member call the attention of his colleagues to the fact at the time, and confront the medium with it? As it stands in this remarkable "special minute," it was an incident *not observed* by the other members—a mere individual device and observation, and could not be adopted, as it was, as a part of the Commission's testimony, without the stultification of its members.

But this "special minute" is entirely invalidated by the following parenthetical note signed G. S. F.:

"The foregoing note by the stenographer is somewhat incoherent, owing to his unfamiliarity with Slade's séances; yet we prefer to let it remain as it is."

Thus we see what that evidence amounts to. We should like very much to cross-examine these learned gentlemen under oath in a court of justice.

We will here, for the sake of illustration, transcribe the next few paragraphs from this interesting "compilation":

"(Mr. Sellers adds, parenthetically): That is, I watched the medium's operations specially with a view of informing myself whether the slate used in both instances was the same.

"(Resuming, from notes): The medium proposed that the Committee should retain the slate upon which the long message appeared. The slate was accordingly retained by the Committee. [That is the slate with the "private marks"; but we are not told what they are, nor whether the other members saw them.]

"Professor Thompson (addressing Mr. Sellers): Was not that slate the one I held at the time referred to?

"Mr. Sellers: It was. The slate *held by you at the same time that it was held by the medium.*

"Prof. Thompson: Then there is an additional fact to be noted in regard to it. That fact is this: When the sounds indicating the writing process had ceased, I endeavored to pull the slate away from under the table, but the medium resisted my effort, and by powerful exertion jerked the slate out toward himself. The substitution of one slate for the other was probably made at this time, and the slate so substituted was then placed on the table."

Thus it is evident that Mr. Thompson knew nothing, and saw nothing, of any substitution. He inferred it as "probable" from the medium's "jerking the slate out toward himself,"* *after* Mr. Sellers asserted it. But Mr. Sellers is

* As Prof. Thompson made this "jerking" of the slate by the medium the basis of his assertions that there was an exchange of slates, we would refer to page 53 of the minutes in which this jerking occurred under very different circumstances, no one holding the slate but the medium. This we refer to farther on. We transcribe also as pertinent to the matter the following from notes of séances held in Germany, and reported to Prof. Zoellner. (*Trans. Physics*, p. 191):

"Occasionally at a sitting we saw a materialized hand; it would tear the

evidently ready to assert anything, for he remarks in continuation :

"That is true, most assuredly. I saw the substitution, and Mr. Furness also saw it plainly. From his position Mr. Furness saw the medium take up the other slate."

But Mr. Furness at once corrected his colleague Sellers, and made an explanation which showed very clearly what Mr. Sellers's testimony, or positive asseveration, as to what he saw is really worth. The minutes go on :

"NOTE.—An explanation was here made by Mr. Furness to the effect that his knowledge of the substitution here spoken of *was inferential*, but that at another period of the séance he did distinctly see the medium *grasp an unused slate*."

So that we can readily estimate at its proper value the positive statement of these commissioners as to what *they saw*. They saw whatever they wished to see, and whatever one was willing to say that he saw all were eager to say they saw likewise. It was a delightfully homogeneous and harmonious Commission.

The minutes, however, show that writing was executed in a manner that precluded the possibility of substitution. In the minutes of the first sitting, prepared by Mr. Sellers (page 53), we find the following statement :

"Taking a slate in his hand, Slade held it beneath the table level to his right, when almost immediately there was a succession of faintly audible sounds such as would have been made by writing on the slate under the table. A knock indicated that the writing had ceased. The medium then attempted to withdraw the slate, but in this encountered a seeming resistance, and *only succeeded by a jerk*, as if wrenching the slate from the grasp of a strong person who was below the table. Upon the slate, which was at once inspected, appeared in a fair, running handwriting, and as if written with a pencil held firmly in hand, the following : 'My friends, look well to the truth, and learn wisdom. I am truly, James Clark.'"

Now this statement is entirely in conflict with that in the

slate forcibly out of Slade's hand under the table; it appeared suddenly at the side of the table, and quickly vanished again; it was a strong hand, quite like one of flesh and blood."

Very many have seen that hand at Slade's séances.

Report signed by the ten commissioners. There was, manifestly, no such process as is there elaborately described. There was no substitution after the slate was held under the table; and if the slate so held was not the slate shown to the three commissioners present (and this they do not claim), they must have been strangely stupid and derelict. Yet the writing was executed with no delay, after the sounds described. It is not a question here who "James Clark" was, but was the writing executed by Slade himself. This, in the instance referred to, is not alleged by the witnesses.

Again, Mr. Sellers states :

"The writing was obliterated from it [the abovementioned slate], and the slate again held under the table, when the question was asked [by the commissioners], 'Will you do more?' An interval of perhaps one or two minutes elapsed when the slate was exhibited, and upon it appeared the word 'Yes.'"

Here again is a manifestation explicable by no such theory as the Report offers—by no legerdemain; for how could Slade write upon the inside of the slate, or even the outside, while holding it against the table with his right hand while his left was upon the table, in full view? The committee make a point against it that the writing was different; but that is totally, and absurdly, irrelevant. As they have chosen to describe this incident, there was no substitution; there was no legerdemain. It is a question of something very different from either. Thus the report is again discredited and contradicted by their own minutes. We shall spend no more time at present upon this most extraordinary exhibit of how prejudice and hostility can dim the intellectual perceptions and eclipse the reason of even learned and cultured men, so as to render it possible that so monstrous an abortion as this so called Report should be presented to the public as the combined work of ten distinguished scholars. Dr. Slade's mediumship had previously been proved to be genuine—so clearly proved that nothing which this Commission could report, or declare, *pro or con*, could affect it in the least.

As a contrast, we will cite a brief passage from Prof. Zoellner's great work, "Transcendental Physics," premising that the investigator had purchased a number of slates of such dimensions—the length being about thirteen inches, and the width four inches—that it would be physically impossible for any human hand to hold it and reach every part of its surface with one of the fingers. The following occurrence is related by the eminent scientist :

"Slade now desired me to take two of the new slates, to lay a splinter of slate-pencil between them, and then to *seal** these two slates firmly together. I did this, after having again satisfied myself that the slates were perfectly clean. The sealing was in four places on the long sides, and now I laid these slates, with the bit of pencil between them, on the corner of the card-table *most remote from our hands*. The latter we joined over one another on the table, so that Slade's hands were covered by mine, and were thus prevented from moving. Scarcely had this happened when the untouched slates were raised many times upon one of the edges, which was clearly perceived by us both by the bright light diffused by a candle standing on the middle of the card-table. Then the two slates laid themselves down again on the card-table in a somewhat altered position; and now writing between the slates began to be immediately audible, as if with a slate-pencil guided by a firm hand. After the well-known three ticks had announced the conclusion of the writing, we sundered our hands, which up to this time *had been continually and firmly joined*, closed the sitting, and betook ourselves with the double-slate, which I had immediately seized, to the next room, where Herr von Hoffman and his wife awaited us. In presence of these persons the slate shortly before sealed by me was opened. *Both sides were completely written over with English.*"

The following is the complete message :

"This is a truth—not for select—but for all mankind—without respect of rank or race—no matter how one may be insulted or persecuted by his investigation—it will not take from them the truth, no more than a blind man's words; by saying there is no sunshine, it does not prevent the sun from shining or bring darkness at noon-day; the blind man can say there is no sunshine, for he cannot see

* We are told in the Commission's minutes (page 66) that Slade stated that he had been "forbidden to write upon sealed slates." But here the sealing was at his own suggestion.

the light of the sun. The man that says this is not true, he says so because *he* has not had proof of its being true; people that cannot see do not chide them, but help them by showing them the way to this divine truth; we are not able to say more now as our space is now full; go on in your investigation, and you will receive your reward."

Even the defects in the expression of these thoughts may be instructive to the honest and candid inquirer, as indicating the difficulty involved in this mode of communication. This is but a small specimen of the testimony given by one of the most eminent scientists in the world, confirmed by several witnesses, but which this Commission has sought to discredit by sending Mr. Fullerton to Germany to find proofs of Zoellner's insanity.* It is unnecessary for us to review the statements made by the reverend emissary, or the conclusion which he reported, as they have received a sufficient refutation in the published reply by Mr. C. C. Massey, of England. If this *honorable* Commission had studied the able scientific record of Prof. Zoellner, and allowed themselves to be guided by his experience, they might have been "*cheered* by many a novel fact"; and spared the ignominy of presenting to the people of this and succeeding generations, a Report so manifestly untruthful, unscientific, and self-contradictory. They, moreover, would not have misrepresented Prof. Zoellner's methods, as they have done in the following paragraph in the Report:

"We think it worthy to be recorded that, in reply to a question, Dr. Slade said that Prof. Zoellner watched him closely only during the first three or four sittings, but that afterwards Prof. Zoellner let him do just as he pleased, fully and unreservedly submitting to all the conditions demanded by the spirits."

As far as this implies, as it is designed to imply, negligence or over-credulity by Zoellner, it is shown to be false

* We may be excused for asking why this Commission especially selected a *deceased* eminent scientific witness of the truth of spiritualistic phenomena. Hare was thus stigmatized before his death; but we have Crookes and Wallace and many others still living, whose testimony it would be worth while to invalidate. It isn't, however, quite so safe and easy to attack the living as the dead.

by the record contained in the book. The experiments, of which we have given an example, were such as involved a most complete test, and were perfectly scientific, though in some cases they were suggested by the spirits themselves.

The records of the séances held with the

OTHER CONDEMNED MEDIUMS

afford similar proofs of unfairness, prejudice, and injustice. Though the minutes of the proceedings record no *facts* upon which their condemnation could be based, they are all, in the Report, joined in the general verdict as tricksters and impostors. The Report refers especially to Mr. Keeler, and the manifestations are positively ascribed to a "trick"; while the record clearly shows that there was no proof of it; it was merely the conjectural opinion of the writer of the Report, endorsed by the other Commissioners, three of whom were not present at the seance. The "trick" spoken of rests upon the *supposition* that the medium disengaged his hand from the arm of the lady—one of the circle; but the lady herself alleged that he did not, so that the basis of the Commission's strong accusation is merely the *supposition* that the lady was mistaken. Whether the performances described as having taken place behind the curtain at the back of the medium—the movements of the guitar, the twirling of a tambourine, the drumming with clothes-pins, and the writing of notes and throwing them over the curtain from behind—whether all these things could have been accomplished by the medium, even if his right hand had been disengaged, without a manifest effort and contortion of body, may well be questioned. Of course, the Commission had the logical right to deem the proof insufficient, and to demand further investigation in order to clear up uncertain points, and to satisfy their conjectures; but they had no right to report as an observed and established fact what was merely a supposition, and it may be a very unreasonable supposition, by saying: "The trick is simple, and highly deceptive." He is very far from being a truthful witness who reports as a fact of observation

what he knows to be only a conjecture of his own mind, however plausible such conjecture may appear to him.

The same remark is applicable to Mr. Rothermel's séance. The medium in this case had both his hands tied by Dr. Thompson, and a lady member of the circle "sewed the ends of the ribbon and tape with which he was tied." "His right hand was also fastened to his right leg and his left hand to his left leg." Similar performances to those of Keeler's séance occurred behind the curtain at his back. Still the Commission *conjecture* that his hands were disengaged, and that all was done by himself; and they again *allege* trickery. The Report says :

"We had no means of knowing whether the tape was cut at the beginning of the séance or not. When the muslin envelope was removed, Mr. Rothermel's hands were certainly free. The bands were cut, and we had *no difficulty in believing* that the hands which were dexterous enough to play the zither *with very remarkable skill*, under such conditions, behind the curtain, were deft enough to sever the cords."

Here we have a "begging of the question" that would be a disgrace to an unlettered peasant. If his hands were free, he could play the zither; and if he could play the zither with his hands tied, he could certainly cut the bands and set his hands free; *ergo*, he severed the cords, set his hands free, and played the zither himself; no ghost was needed, and none was there; Spiritualism is ruled out, and trickery demonstrated! Is this, we may ask, the logic taught in the great University of Pennsylvania? But it would seem that spiritualistic truth is not entitled to receive the benefit of the simplest fairness and justice, or the most rudimentary logic. Let respectable conventionality hoot it off the stage. The guiding text of the Reverend Mr. Fullerton and his learned compeers seems to have been the remarkable words of St. Paul to the Romans :

"For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner?"

The answer to that question may come hereafter.

In the case of Mrs. M. E. Lord the inconsistency between

the minutes and the Report is reversed, as the Report speaks of this medium quite respectfully, while Mr. Fullerton in his minutes attributes all the manifestations at her séance to the meanest and most contemptible and heartless trickery. Thus the Report says :

"Our séances with Mrs. Maud E. Lord were acknowledged by the medium herself to be altogether unsatisfactory. This is much to be regretted. Mrs. Lord is one of the few professional mediums whose excellence is acknowledged by all Spiritualists alike, and who, in her attitude toward the Commission, displayed every desire to aid a full and complete investigation into the manifestations peculiar to her mediumship, and furthermore without remuneration."

In the minutes Mrs. Lord is a trickster *par excellence*, or else the phenomena are genuine spirit manifestations. Mr. Fullerton finds no difficulty, with this alternative before him, in making a *proper* interpretation of the incidents of the séance. Mrs. Lord sits in the middle of a circle of eighteen persons, placing her feet against those of a member of the circle, and keeping up "an almost continuous clapping of hands." Mr. Fullerton adds, "The noise was not loud, but sufficient to aid in hiding any rustle of the medium's dress, or creaking of a chair." Mrs. Lord describes spirit forms present and gives names—but the Secretary says, "The number of successes, compared with the number of failures, was not *striking*." This is very indefinite, certainly. It seems, however, there were *successes*. Whispers were heard—but they were only "one at a time," "never simultaneous with the remark of the medium"; and the Secretary observes:

"In the interval between the whisper and the succeeding remark by the medium, I distinctly heard, on many occasions, a rustle of clothing, and once or twice a *slight creak* of the chair, as though the medium had moved her body from one side to the other, which she could easily have done without taking her feet away from those of the person she faced."

Lights appeared and disappeared—but they were "apparently phosphorescent, and passed so quickly that they could not be examined"; or "such as can be produced in a dark

room by rubbing a match-head, or by exhibiting an object rubbed with a match." All these conjectural observations, it must be borne in mind, are but the opinions of a single individual. There is no record that they were discussed and compared with those of the other commissioners; there is no record that these minutes were ever even read to the Commission, in meeting, and formally adopted. This is but a specimen of the unscientific character of the investigation, and the looseness and irregularity of the proceedings. Unless the manifestations presented through Mrs. Lord, "without remuneration," were genuine, she is an abominable impostor, entirely undeserving of the respect with which the Report, as well as "all Spiritualists" treat her. Of course the manifestations were "unsatisfactory" to her, as she is accustomed to so much better; otherwise her "excellence" would not be "acknowledged by all Spiritualists." These commissioners, however, know too little of the subject which they undertook to investigate, to be aware that the manifestations always depend—even through the finest instruments—upon the character of the circle—upon the state of the spiritual and mental atmosphere in which they are given. After reading this so-called report, and learning from the proceedings which we have here reviewed the mental and spiritual condition of these commissioners, no failure, with the best of mediums, would have surprised us; rather are we surprised that any medium was permitted to sit for them, or that any attempt at the production of phenomena was made. But it was a good thing to give them an opportunity to display to the public their pretentious ignorance and ineptitude, and to make a record, which, however worthless *per se*, is yet capable of teaching some useful lessons.

The Report tries to make a strong point of

THE REFUSAL OF MEDIUMS

to appear before the Commission; but, after looking at this record, there can be but little difficulty in solving the mystery. Of course the Commissioners consider this reluctance, or refusal, on the part of the mediums to submit the

evidence of their "spiritual gifts" to the august Seybert tribunal to be a proof of fear that the dishonesty of their claims would be exposed by persons of so great and unusual a perspicacity. The Commission could scarcely be made to see that, in complaining that they were shunned by the mediums, they condemn themselves. Mere tricksters would have been willing to exhibit their expertness, as Kellar was; and as the Commissioners could not see through his tricks (though they at once saw through Slade's and the other mediums'), so they would have been "baffled" by theirs. But being mediums—intermediaries between embodied and excarnated spirits—instruments employed by those who are no longer of this world to communicate with those still belonging to it—they must be, as such instruments, dependent upon the will of those who employ them, at least as far as the spirit manifestations are concerned; and, like the Athenian sage, they are under guidance, and must listen to the monitory voice that tells them what to avoid.

The Commission could not, logically, ignore this consideration in dealing with this subject, whether they accept the fact or not. They must treat the mediums as possessing the mediumistic function in order to test the existence of that function. This in part they did. They talked to the spirits, accepting for the time their mode of communication; though the colloquial efforts of the Commission were scarcely of the wisest. When spirit Seybert announced his presence, they dealt with him in the most puerile manner: "Will you rap here, Mr. Seybert?" "Will you rap there?" "Does Mr. Seybert know the names of the Commission?" "Will the spirit rap again?" And other such trivial questions. Probably, had they conversed rationally with him, as if believing in the presence of their friend and benefactor, they would have obtained the proof that many others have received.

When the Commission treat the mediums as if they are mere tricksters, they beg the whole question. The fact, as it indubitably appears to us, is, that these instruments of

those who, in the spirit world, are working for the spiritual enlightenment of mankind, were purposely withheld from this Commission, because it was clearly seen by these invisibles that, with so unfair and prejudiced a set of men, nothing could be done of any use to the world—that Truth would be assassinated, while the mediums would be insulted and disgraced, as, indeed, every one was that appeared before them, notwithstanding the protestations of these gentlemen that the mediums were fairly and courteously treated. This courtesy was of the thinnest kind—a mere veneering of conventional refinement, covering feelings of disrespect and dislike, often plainly showing through. The mockery with which the mediums were beguiled into giving expressions of satisfaction with the treatment received, in order to impart an appearance of fairness and impartiality to the proceedings, and cover up the prejudice and hostility really existing, is one of the most disgusting features of this whole matter. One of the commissioners really displayed a high degree of talent for this kind of polite dissimulation; but through this feline softness and purring geniality, the sharp claws sometimes emerge, and make some fearful scratches and tearing of the flesh—all, however, in seeming play and exuberant mirthfulness. We shall have more to say of the fairness and impartiality of this Commission farther on; that the mediums shunned its flattering attractions and its seductive advertisements seems to us strong proof of the genuineness of their gifts, and the excellence of their guidance. If the treatment received was not “harsh,” it most certainly was “antagonistic,” to a very high degree, as the proceedings show throughout; and only ignorance on the part of the Commission can excuse the psychological repression which was brought to bear on every medium, and which, in a measure, paralyzed the efforts of the spirits to manifest. The minutes give unmistakable evidence of this fact; and it was against this that, in the early portion of the proceedings, Mr. Hazard very properly protested.

We will now take up the consideration of the boasted

fairness and impartiality of the Commission; and shall point to facts that show conclusively that it was

A PACKED AS WELL AS A BIASSED JURY.

The Report states (page 5):

"As a befitting preliminary, at one of our earliest meetings, each member in turn expressed his entire freedom from all prejudices against the subject to be investigated, and his readiness to accept any conclusion warranted by facts; one of our number, the Acting Chairman, so far from being unprejudiced [*sic*], confessed to a leaning in favor of the substantial truth of Spiritualism."

The last clause of this statement seems to be a *humorous* stroke of the always humorous acting chairman Furness, in view of the part which he took in the proceedings.

But when was the meeting referred to held? There is no allusion to it in the published minutes, nor do we know who were present. There were, as we have stated, originally only five Commissioners appointed; Mr. Furness was added before the investigation commenced. Mr. Sellers attended his first meeting Nov. 5th, 1884; and the other three were present at no meeting previous to February, 1885. Who then made that avowal of impartiality? Evidently, the statement of the Report is only in part true.

In connection with this point, it is a very significant fact that the Philadelphia papers were constantly kept informed of the proceedings of the Commission, and each article published was an attack upon Spiritualism, or announced a hostile intention or conclusion of the Commission. No one but the members could have been the informants and instigators of the press in these publications. Thus just after the appointment of the Commission, we find a notice in the papers, in which it is stated that "a committee has been appointed to do the work [of investigation], which will be in the nature of an attack, since the members are to attempt the exposure of frauds in mediums." So, after the Slade séances, special Philadelphia dispatches appeared in the papers announcing what had taken place; and the Kellar exploit gave rise to extended notices condemnatory of Spiritualism.

Prof. Thompson must have been known to be hostile to Spiritualism, as he said in 1880, in *Penn's Monthly* :

"Even if Spiritualism be all that its champions claim for it, it has no importance for any one who holds the Christian faith. The consideration and discussion of the subject is tampering with notions and condescending to discussions with which no Christian believer has any business."

Dr. George A. Koenig was quoted by Mr. Hazard as saying to a representative of the *Philadelphia Press*, some time before his appointment on the Commission :

"I must frankly admit that I am prepared to deny the truth of Spiritualism as it is now popularly understood. It is my belief that all of the so-called mediums are humbugs without exception. I have never seen Slade perform any of his tricks, but from the published descriptions I have set him down as an impostor, the cleverest one of the lot. I do not think that the Commission view with much favor the examination of so-called spirit mediums."

Thus the Commissioners are contradicted by one of their number ; and we see why this man attended none of Slade's séances. His mind was made up. He was, emphatically, a biassed jurymen.

Prof. Fullerton, in March, 1885, delivered a lecture at Cambridge, in which he endeavored to discredit or explain away the spiritualistic phenomena. No wonder that Mr. Hazard said, in his memorable protest :

"Without aiming to detract in the slightest degree from the unblemished moral character that attaches to each and every individual of the Faculty, including the Commission, in public esteem, nor to the high social and literary standing they occupy in society, I must say, that through some strange infatuation, obliquity of judgment, or perversion of intellect, the Trustees of the University have placed on the Commission for the investigation of Modern Spiritualism, a majority of its members whose education, habit of thought, and prejudices so singularly disqualify them from making a thorough and impartial investigation of the subject, which the Trustees of the University are obligated, both by contract and in honor, to do, that had the object had in view been to belittle and bring into discredit, hatred, and general contempt the cause that I know the late Henry Seybert held nearest his heart, and loved more than all else in the world beside, the Trustees could scarcely have selected more suitable in-

struments for the object intended from all the denizens of Philadelphia than are the gentlemen who constitute a majority of the Seybert Commission. And this, I repeat, not from any causes that affect their moral, social, or literary standing in society, but simply because of their prejudice against the cause of Spiritualism."

This arraignment was brought especially against Messrs. Fullerton, Thompson, and Koenig; but we see, now that the evidence is all in, that it is applicable to all the members of the Commission as then constituted, as well as to the four others subsequently added.

Why were these added? Let us see whether this question can be answered to any extent from the Report, or rather from the material bound up with the Report though not really belonging to it? Mr. Sellers seems to have been selected as a special expert in the detection of trickery, which every kind of phenomena seemed to suggest to his mind; and in some cases he was very apt in reproducing some of the simplest character, on the principle that any performance which could be achieved by Mr. Sellers under his conditions it would be the height of folly to attribute to spirit intervention under any circumstances. One of the reasons adduced for condemning Mrs. Kane was that Mr. Sellers counterfeited the raps in her presence, and she detected it. How should she know, they asked, whether it was Mr. Sellers or the spirits who rapped, unless she made all the raps for the spirits? The Commission, with the object which they had in view, certainly had a strong ally in Mr. Coleman Sellers.

In regard to Dr. Knerr, there is quite a significant fact, indicating perhaps how he achieved the fame and good fortune of belonging to the renowned Seybert Commission. The Report says (page 15):

"In Independent Slate-Writing, in our experience, there is a period, of longer or shorter duration, when the slate is concealed. During this period the investigator's eye must not watch it. [This is very far from being a universal fact.] When the slate is held under the table, knees and feet and clothing exert no deleterious effect [why should they?], but the gaze of a human eye is fatal to all spiritual manifestation [a singular error on the part of the learned

Commission]; although to *one of our number*, on three occasions, a pocket mirror, carefully adjusted, unknown to the medium, gave back the reflection of fingers, which were clearly not spiritual, opening the slates and writing the answer."

Such a piece of testimony is, indeed, self-condemnatory of the witness, inasmuch as a person must be strangely obtuse to afford any such chance of imposition. Spiritualists are not thus made. Finding this statement in the Report, we naturally looked all through the minutes to learn the particulars of this extraordinary incident, but we could discover no reference to it. Reading, however, the accounts of the individual experiences given by some of the members, we found a narration of this incident in the article furnished by Dr. Knerr; and, singular to say, it refers to what he says occurred to him in 1884; whereas he attended no meeting of the Commission till February, 1885. We naturally asked ourselves, had this incident anything to do with the "addition" of Dr. Knerr to the Commission at that late period? Was this the cause of his being received into it?

But what are we to think of the conduct of the Commission in inserting in their Report as a fact of their investigation, the unconfirmed statement of a person in regard to an alleged experience that occurred before he was a member, and with which the investigation had no actual connection, and could have had no seeming connection except by making the observer a member? Was this the act of fair-minded, impartial investigators? Especially was it the act of persons who had resolved to be influenced only by the result of their own observations? It really looks as if they were ready to grasp at anything that seemed calculated to strengthen their arraignment of Spiritualism before the public. In regard to the mirror incident we believe that Dr. Knerr was entirely mistaken as to what he saw, or else he must have been a wholly incompetent investigator. [See our citation from Zoellner.]

Dr. White's appointment seems also quite mysterious, made as it was about the same time as that of Dr. Knerr, as

appears from the minutes ; though there is nothing in the Report to indicate that he did not participate in the entire investigation. Looking into a work that emanated from the same Philadelphia press as the "Preliminary Report," and nearly at the same time, we seemed almost to stumble on a solution of what appeared so singular. The first paragraph in this work supplies the basis for at least a very probable conjecture. We read :

"Dr. W., a friend and acquaintance of the writer of these pages, a relation which has existed for thirty years, *is the medium* in the spiritistic illustrations here offered. This gentleman is an active member of the Seybert Commission."

Looking farther into the contents of this volume, we find an account of phenomena similar to those presented through mediums, achieved, as is alleged, by means of the wonderful adroitness and ingenuity of Dr. W., who, far from claiming mediumship, affirms that these astonishing feats were performed by him solely by means of an acquired skill in legerdemain. All this being antecedent to the Seybert investigation, we again ask ourselves, can this professed ability on the part of Dr. W. to produce or counterfeit the spirit-manifestations by means of legerdemain, have been the reason for making him a member of the Commission, so long after the commencement of the investigation? The record is very far from showing that Dr. White was an "active member," as we have already made evident. He attended but four of the eighteen seances, nor does he *report* any individual experiences. But was it his private counsel and influence that led the Commission to report that the "investigator has to deal only with a simple question of legerdemain," in inquiring into the genuineness of "independent writing"? However, be this as it may, it is obvious, from the facts we have here stated, that the Commission was, like a "packed jury," constituted by the original appointment and subsequent addition of those known to be biassed against the subject which they were to investigate. As for Dr. Mitchell, he essentially took no part in the investigation, but showed his hostile zeal, if not his

honorable feeling and love of truth, by being willing to sign a series of statements as of facts coming under his own personal observation which yet he really had no opportunity of observing or knowing at all, except by information. This would be sufficiently reprehensible, even if only abstract propositions were concerned, but when it is tantamount to the reckless signing away of several persons' reputation, holding them up to the scorn of the world, or, as Dr. Furness might say, making them

"Fixed figures for the time of scorn
To point his slow unmoving finger at"—

it approximates very closely to what the law regards, and punishes, as a criminal act.

The Commission triumphantly report the

FEAT OF A PROFESSIONAL JUGGLER

as if it were an *experimentum crucis* which must definitively establish the truth of their reported statement, that in "independent writing" we have only an act of legerdemain. "For one of our number," says the Report, "the juggler subsequently repeated the trick, and revealed its every detail." Why, we may properly ask, were not these details given to the public, or at least to the full Commission, so that all might have been able to judge whether or not the counterfeit was really a *fac simile* of the original; whether, moreover, the process was capable of "baffling" those who were not willing, and did not expect to be baffled; and whether the juggling performance was truly "far more remarkable than any which we have witnessed with mediums"; so that the Commissioners might have *truthfully* attested the fact by their signatures? Only three of the Commissioners witnessed Kellar's performance—Furness, Thompson, and Fullerton—of whom the latter had no right to make a comparison between Kellar and Slade, as he attended only one of the latter's six séances; and *most* of the remaining members attended the séances of neither the juggler nor the medium. We have therefore only the opinion of the three men who were "baffled" as to the perform-

ance, and that of one man as to whether "every detail" of the trick was revealed. As described in the minutes it must, indeed, have been very simple legerdemain. Mr. Kellar was permitted to give the performance in *Egyptian Hall*, the scene of his nightly trickery; "nine slates were found lying on a small stand," all of which the conjurer seemed to wash on both sides, and placed on the table; then, the guileless Secretary innocently records:

"A slate was taken from the pile, both sides washed, another slate placed upon it, and both held together under the edge of the table. A long communication appeared upon one of them (*or what seemed to be one of them*) [Well interjected, Mr. Fullerton.], purporting to come from the spirits." [False; it had no such purport, but was ostensibly a *crafty trick*.]

In continuation it is said:

"Two more slates were taken and *apparently* both sides washed," etc. . . . "Writing was produced in similar manner on two other slates without the committee detecting the manner in which it was produced."

One of these slates was found to have upon its surface writings in various languages, the last being, "*Ich bin ein Geist und ich liebe mein Lagerbier—Hans Schneider*." This latter funny travesty seems to have given the *grave and wise* Commissioners great satisfaction, as they quote it in full in their dignified Report, in which they are particular to disclaim solemnly all "indifference or levity."

In this account of that mock séance held in the "professional juggler's" own workshop, with all his paraphernalia about him, with *nine slates* of his own choosing (none of which the Commissioners appear to have scrutinized), and with his own table and stand, with besides three spectators, eager to overlook any and every suspicious circumstance, no wonder the prestidigitative artist should have achieved so great and *useful* a success. The only wonder is, that he should have been put to the trouble of "repeating the trick and explaining every detail" to the "one of our number" who was honorably elected to be the faithful depository of so profound and valuable a secret in the trade of legerdemain. We are reminded of Horace's sage remark:

"Dum stulti vitant vitia in contraria currunt."

Had these Commissioners given but a slight attention to the records of Modern Spiritualism, so as to prepare themselves for the task which they so rashly undertook, and far more rashly reported on, they would not have placed themselves in so ludicrous position as that in which they now stand in the view of every intelligent student of this important subject. They would scarcely have wholly disregarded the experiences of such investigators as we have referred to, and employed as a part of the basis of a report, intended to be scientific, the mere trick of a "professional juggler." They would have known that nearly "every detail" of this "baffling" trick was totally at variance with the test processes employed by competent investigators in establishing the fact of "independent slate-writing"—that such investigators often supply their own slates, seal them, and often hold them continuously in their hands, or keep them in view, during the whole process of writing, leaving no opportunity whatever for the exercise of legerdemain. We recommend to the perusal of these gentlemen a work entitled "Psychography" (London, 1878), by one of the most cultured gentlemen of his time, and at present one of the editors of *Light*; also "The Scientific Basis of Spiritualism," by the late Epes Sargent, of Boston; for evidence as to the reality of direct writing by the spirits.*

As to this contemptible trick of the "professional juggler," it was but an absurd travesty of a genuine case of such writing, through Slade, that occurred in Berlin, and was described by Prof. Zoellner in "Transcendental Phys-

* There are many published works that treat of the subject of *direct spirit writing*, that is, writing accomplished without the intervention of any human hand. We need not go back to the account, in the ancient Scriptures, of the writing in Belshazzar's palace, but may confine ourselves to the records of Modern Spiritualism. Among these works one of the most interesting and convincing is, "*La Réalité des Esprits, et le Phénomène merveilleux de leur écriture directe démontrés, par le Baron de Guldenstubbé*" (Paris, 1857). Recently a work has appeared written by Mr. Theobald, a Spiritualist of London, and presenting a large mass of very interesting testimony as to this phenomenon. It is entitled "Spirit Workers in the Home Circle," the phenomena being due exclusively to mediums belonging to Mr. Theobald's family.

ics." Zoellner states that the slate, "written upon in six different languages," was "never in Slade's custody at all, nor was there the smallest opportunity afforded for effecting an exchange." How different this from the Egyptian Hall feat, in which the conjurer had the means to manipulate nine of his own slates, all "apparently" washed, with the opportunity to select by dexterous legerdemain the one previously prepared.

As we have already shown, only three of the Commissioners really witnessed the phenomena presented through Slade, and of these only one saw the whole; while as a sub-committee they attest nothing. There was no proper *report*; there was only a "compilation of notes and comments"! As a contrast to that very unscientific performance, we cite the following "*Report of the Observers of the Sargent Experiment in Psychography in Boston, March 13th, 1880*":

"At the house of Epes Sargent, on the evening of Saturday, March 13th, the undersigned saw two clean slates placed face to face, with a bit of slate pencil between them. We all held our hands clasped around the edges of the two slates. The hands of Mr. Watkins, the psychic, also clasped the slates. In this position we all distinctly heard the pencil moving, and on opening the slates found an intelligent message in a strong masculine hand, in answer to a question asked by one of the company.

"Afterwards, two slates were clamped together with strong brass fixtures, and held at arm's length by Mr. Cook [Rev. Joseph Cook], while the rest of the company and the psychic had their hands in full view on the table. After a moment of waiting, the slates were opened, and a message in a feminine hand was found on one of the inner surfaces. There were five lighted gas-burners in the room at the time.

"We cannot apply to these facts any theory of fraud, and we do not see how the writing can be explained unless matter, in the slate pencil, was moved without contact."

This careful and definite statement is signed by F. E. Bundy, M. D., Epes Sargent, John C. Kenney, Henry G. White, and Joseph Cook.

But the learned and honorable Commission, who are will-

ing to sign even what they know nothing about, positively aver that this mysterious writing is only a question of "simple legerdemaïn."

But what does the

TESTIMONY OF PRESTIDIGITATEURS

themselves show? Houdin, in a letter to the Marquis de Mirville, said: "The more I reflect upon them [the spirit-manifestations] the more impossible I find it to rank them among those which belong to my art and profession." Hermann, Jacobs, and Samuel Bellachini made similar statements. The latter, the court conjurer at Berlin, made an affidavit, in which he declared that he had witnessed the phenomena occurring in Slade's presence, "with the minutest observation and investigation of the surroundings"; and that he had not, "in the smallest instance, found anything to be produced by means of prestidigitative manifestations, or by mechanical apparatus," and that "any explanation of the experiments which took place by any reference to prestidigitation is impossible."

Even Harry Kellar, the very performer of the great "baffling" feat in legerdemaïn, so exultingly reported by the Commission, is stated to have placed himself, in 1882, in the same category with the other distinguished experts in legerdemaïn. In a letter to the *Indian Daily News*, under date of January 25th, 1882, Mr. Kellar describes certain manifestations which he had witnessed at the residence of a private gentleman of Calcutta, the evening previous, through the mediumship of Mr. Eglinton. His letter concludes with the following paragraph:

"In respect to the above manifestations I can only say that I do not expect my account of them to gain general credence. Forty-eight hours before I should not have believed any one who had described such manifestations under similar circumstances. I still remain a skeptic as regards Spiritualism, but I repeat my inability to explain or account for what *must have been an intelligent force that produced the writing on that slate*, which, if my senses are to be relied on, was *in no way the result of trickery or sleight-of-hand*.

(Signed)

HARRY KELLAR."

In view of these facts, we may conceive of the quiet laugh in which the great conjurer must have indulged at the expense of the "three wise men" of the famous Seybert Commission quietly and sagely standing in Egyptian Hall to be fooled, or as they say, "baffled," by a juggling exploit, which he knew, and had solemnly attested, was but the "counterfeit presentment" of a great reality; and he must have grimly smiled as he pocketed his fee, paid out of the \$60,000 which the zealous Philadelphia Spiritualist had given to the Pennsylvania University for a thorough, scientific, and impartial investigation of the cause he believed in, and had so much at heart. The logic of the proceeding is so worthy of such an eminent and scholarly set of men:—the possibility of a counterfeit is a conclusive proof that the original does not exist!

We pass over, for the present, the articles at the close of the Commission's published volume, which recount the various adventures of some of its members, in the "roving commission" on which they were permitted to go, after the close of the investigation at the Briggs séance in March, 1886. They have no proper connection with the inquiry which these gentlemen were appointed to make. They might, as individuals, go round among the mediums, and amuse themselves, with the humorous phases of the subject; they might even contribute, as Commissioner Furness so cleverly did, to the amusement of the occasion by his funny shams and pretences with the seeming intent to *bamboozle* the innocent "spirits"; but what has this to do with a serious investigation of a subject to which so many able minds, during the last forty years, have given their serious attention, devoting years to its careful exploration and study, and giving it, at last, the endorsement of their fullest belief? The Acting-Chairman might have gathered similar material for the exercise of his exuberant mirthfulness by making the round of some of the churches or religious meetings where ignorant, uncouth, and simple-minded people display their methods of religious devotion—the Salvation Army assemblies and practices, for example;

but he would scarcely have inserted his experiences in a serious treatise on the evidences of Christianity. "As a piece of humorous literature," the New York *Epoch* mildly says, "this book is a great success, but as a report of scientific investigation it is open to criticism." This is especially true of the Acting-Chairman's part in it; and his is the largest part. His attempt to develop himself into a medium, under the tutelage of the notorious Caffray, if true, as described, displays another feature of his character, besides that of the humorist; but we suspect that the whole matter, description and all, is but a "big joke"—a piece of amusing fiction, that would have been far more suitable in a volume of light literature than in a work claiming to be the serious report of a scientific Commission.

What is to be thought of a man who, in an *addendum* to a report of this character, and apparently as a sacrifice of unpopular truth to conventional respectability, burlesques and turns into ridicule what in private circles he has witnessed with the recipient feelings of an "almost persuaded" neophyte—agitated sometimes with irrepressible emotions—affected even to tears by the clearly-manifested presence of the "loved and lost" through mortal intermediaries?

"Who but must laugh, if such a man there be?

Who would not weep, if Atticus were he?"

This criticism might be extended much farther, but it is unnecessary. We have already shown that,

1. There has been no sufficient or proper compliance, on the part of the Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania, with the terms imposed by the founder of the Adams Seybert Chair and the conditions prescribed by him, and agreed to by the University on the acceptance of the fund of \$60,000 bequeathed by Mr. Seybert, on the condition that the "incumbent of the Chair," aided or not as he desired, by a "Committee of the Faculty," should make the investigation.

2. It was a gross violation of those conditions, after the original appointment of five members of the Faculty to act as a Commission, to appoint five additional persons who

were not members of the Faculty ; and especially to appoint four of these persons, not connected with the University at all, several months after the investigation had commenced.

3. The Commission were obligated to investigate the claims of Modern Spiritualism not merely as to its phenomenal basis but as a system of "morals, religion, and philosophy"; and this they have not even commenced to do ; but have only, in a most unfair, superficial, inconsiderate, and we might almost say irrational, manner, examined the manifestations of a few mediums, whom they have, most unjustly, according to their own record, held up to public scorn and indignation. Under such circumstances, to rush into print with conclusions so lame, imperfect, and ill founded, should subject them to the censure of every impartial and intelligent mind, as we doubt not it eventually will.

4. They have presented to the public a series of statements, called a Report, crude, imperfect, sweepingly condemnatory, and wholly unscientific, neither correctly representing the facts of their own investigation, as a Commission, nor making those distinctions and discriminations as to incidents, principles, and methods which a proper knowledge of the subject would have dictated.

5. Their Report is contradicted in many essential particulars by the minutes of their proceedings, which they have chosen to keep in the background, and away from the general reader, by inserting them in an Appendix.

6. Instead of conducting the investigation by sub-committees, whose carefully constructed reports could have been attested by the signatures of those making them, they have been guilty of the gross impropriety of presenting a Report signed by ten persons, which contains statements that only three or four could truthfully attest. In this way they have misled the public, and especially the newspaper press, and given a seeming importance to their investigation and the Report which they do not really possess.

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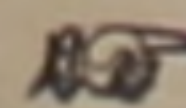
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