

**"A SPIRIT MEDIUM."**

**TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.**

Sir,—In *The Times* of the 16th inst. Professor E. Roy Lankester states that I am personally responsible for the reading of Professor Barrett's paper before the Anthropological Department of the British Association, and that my supposed conduct is "more than questionable." May I be allowed to show that this accusation (for such it amounts to) is wholly without foundation?

The paper in question was brought before the Committee of Section D by the secretary, before which time I had never seen it. A member proposed that it should be reported on, but after a full discussion this was negatived. The paper then passed to the Departmental Committee where it was again discussed, and, on division, was left to be read in due course. Professor Lankester is evidently ignorant of the fact that the reading of this paper was decided after a vote taken in two Committees, and he was therefore, not justified in making the unqualified statement that, "in consequence of the more than questionable action of Mr. Alfred Wallace, the discussions of the British Association have been degraded by the introduction of the subject of spiritualism." As to Professor Lankester's opinion as to what branches of inquiry are to be tabooed as "degrading," we have, on the other side, the practical evidence of such men as Lord Rayleigh, Mr. Crookes, Dr. Carpenter, and Colonel Lane Fox—none of them inferior in scientific eminence to Professor Lankester, yet all taking part in the discussion, and all maintaining that discussion and inquiry were necessary; while the close attention of a late President of the Association and of a crowded audience showed the great interest the subject excited.

As I have now shown that Professor Lankester commenced his letter with an erroneous statement of fact, and a "more than questionable" statement of opinion, it is not to be wondered at that I find the remainder of his communication equally unsatisfactory. His account of what happened during his visit to Dr. Slade is so completely unlike what happened during my own visit, as well as the recorded experiences of Serjeant Cox, Mr. Carter Blake, and many others, that I can only look upon it as a striking example of Dr. Carpenter's theory of preconceived ideas. Professor Lankester went with the firm conviction that all he was going to see would be imposture, and he believes he saw imposture accordingly. The "fumbling," the "manœuvres," the "considerable interval of time" between cleaning the slate and holding it under the table, and the writing occurring on the opposite side of the slate to that on which the piece of pencil was placed, were all absent when I witnessed the experiment; while the fact that legible writing occurred on the clean slate when held entirely in my own hand while Dr. Slade's hands were both upon the table and held by my other hand, such writing being distinctly audible while in progress, and the further fact that Dr. Slade's knees were always in sight, and that the slate was never rested upon them at all, render it quite impossible for me to accept the explanation of Professor Lankester and Dr. Donkin as applicable to any portion of the phenomena witnessed by me.

Yours faithfully,

Glasgow, Sept. 18.

ALFRED R. WALLACE.

**TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.**

Sir,—Under the above heading Mr. Lankester and Dr. Donkin give an account of a *séance* with Slade which differs so widely from my experience that I trust you will, in common justice to Slade, allow me to state some of the points of difference:—

1. Slade sat on my left, facing me, and in such a position that not only his legs and feet, but his whole body, as well as both hands and arms, was in full view during the whole *séance*, except when he was avowedly holding the slate under the table, when one hand and forearm were concealed.

2. The writing always came on the upper side of the slate.

3. On one occasion I wrote a question on one side of the slate, holding it in such a position that Slade could not possibly see what I was writing, not that it would have made any difference if he had done so; for, after I had turned the slate so as to have the writing downwards, Slade took hold of one corner, while I still held the other, and while both were thus holding it we passed it underneath the table, when Slade immediately let go, and placed both his hands on the top of the table. Under these circumstances I got a distinct answer to my question written on the upper side of the slate.

4. I was repeatedly touched on the right side of my body, and two or three times while I was looking at the place. During this time Slade's feet, on my left, were always in sight and generally in contact with mine, and both his hands on the table under mine. Twice I was bodily pushed forward, chair and all, along the carpet slowly, about four inches. From our relative positions it was perfectly impossible that Slade could have done this or have written on his knee without my seeing him, or that he could have produced any "gentle kicks" or any of the touches which I have referred to, and which were equivalent to a pressure of six or eight pounds. Nor could he have overturned a chair which stood at a clear yard's distance from him; still less have brought it back again from a distance of about three yards after I had satisfied myself that there was no connecting hair or wire, and without his having moved from his seat. Yet these things occurred. "Raps and movements of the table" I say nothing about; they are easily produced.

Yours faithfully,

A. JOY, M.L.C.E., late R.A.

Junior United Service Club, London, S.W.

**TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.**

Sir,—I fear I must submit to be considered as "lost to reason" for notwithstanding Professor Lankester's exposure (?) of Dr. Slade I still believe in him, and I must beg a few lines of your space to give my reason. I had had three sittings with Dr. Slade, and at none had detected anything like imposture. After reading Professor Lankester's letter I resolved to go again; I have just returned, and will state as briefly as possible what occurred.

I took with me a book slate, i. e., two slates joined down one side so as to close like a book. I first examined Dr. Slade's fingers, the nails were cut down so low that I do not believe he could have picked up a pin, and there was no mark of a piece of pencil having been pushed between the nail and the flesh. I then inspected Dr. Slade's slate, which was on the table, and initialed one corner, it was then immediately placed close against the under side of the table at the corner, in such a position that I could see Dr. Slade's thumb on the rim of the slate projecting beyond the edge of the table nearest to him, while the corner of the slate with my initials was just visible beyond the side of the table nearest to me. A scratching was at once heard, and, on removal, a message was seen written on the upper side where my initials were. I need hardly say I kept my eyes on the visible portion of the slate all the time.

I then produced my own slate, perfectly clean, a tiny piece of pencil was placed between the flaps, the slate was closed, and at once placed beneath the table. I could see by one end that it was kept closed; a message was written inside, the writing was left, and the piece of pencil placed on the inner surface that remained clean. This time Dr. Slade, on the slate being closed, raised it, and rested one corner on the point of my left shoulder, the slate projecting to the front, so that by turning my head I could see the whole of it. It was moved directly from the table to my shoulder, and I did not lose sight of it for a second. A scratching began, and on the three taps being heard, the slate was placed on the table, and opened, when on the previously clean surface was seen written "Cannot do more; let this be proof. Allie." Perhaps I may as well mention that no raps or kicks occurred to distract my attention.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

GEORGE C. JOAD.

Oakfield, Wimbledon-park, W., Sept. 18.