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APPENDIX C.

A well-known amateur conjurer and writer on Natural Magic, a member of our Committee on Physical Phenomena, writes as follows:—

*February 13th, 1889.*

I have read and considered Home's *Life* from the conjurer's point of view, but find it extremely difficult to give any safe opinion upon it.

Assuming the general good faith of the witnesses, I should still make very large deductions for mal-observation and looseness of description. Many of the facts asserted are not, as described, explainable by any conjuring expedients

within my knowledge, but this is by no means conclusive; experience teaching that, upon any question of the marvellous, ordinary observers are absolutely untrustworthy as witnesses. I have frequently had minute accounts of admitted conjuring tricks which, *as described*, I could not explain; though, when I have subsequently seen the thing done, the solution has been perfectly clear. People describing magical illusions tell you not what *was done*, but what *they think was done*, which is often a totally different matter.

Referring to a remark of Mr. Myers, anent the "accordion" manifestation it seems to me clear that, in some, at any rate, of the instances given, Home did *not* use an accordion of his own, but this would not necessarily exclude trick. One of Dr. Monck's stock feats was to place a musical-box on the table, and cover it with a cigar box, after which it played or stopped playing at command. Suggested explanation, "Spirits." Real explanation, that the box in question did nothing at all, the sound being produced by a second box strapped to Monck's leg above the knee (inside the trouser), and set in motion by pressure against the under surface of the table. It is *possible* that the accordion-playing might in Home's case have been produced by some similar expedient. To assert that it *was* so produced, in the absence of fuller information, would be childish, and the same difficulty meets one throughout the book.

The item to which I attach most importance is Mr. Crookes' experiment of the board and spring-balance. Had the apparatus been devised and constructed by Home himself the experiment would have had very little value, but as described (and putting aside the hypotheses of untruthfulness or hallucination on the part of Mr. Crookes), it seems to me to be distinctly outside the range of trick, and, therefore, to be good evidence, so far as we can trust personal testimony at all, of Home's possession of some special power of producing motion, without contact, in inanimate objects. This does not, of course, involve the admission of the Spiritualistic hypothesis. Possibly a series of sufficiently delicate tests would show that the operative force (whatever it may be) is common to all persons in a greater or less degree.

ANGELO LEWIS ("Professor Hoffmann.")

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