Is not this the veriest farce and mockery of justice imaginable? and would not drawing lots, as I have suggested, be far better, as it would be far more expeditious and much less costly? If we desire authority for this last method of deciding cases, we have such authority, much older than that of the Romans, which is so often quoted. "The lot causeth contentions to cease and parteth between the mighty." Prov. xviii. 18. It will be seen that I object entirely to those persons being called experts in any case who have not prepared themselves to give scientific testimony (in the full meaning of the word science, *e. g.*, knowledge certain and evident); not only in cases involving the validity of written documents, but wherever the nature of the case is susceptible of this class of evidence.

I use the word opinion in this discussion in its legitimate sense as used in the courts, *e. g.*, "an opinion is an idea or thought about which doubt can reasonably exist, as to which two persons can without absurdity think differently." Out of this system of admitting opinions as testimony in courts of justice, it seems to me, has grown the practice of heaping up such testimony in a certain class of cases, and also the efforts to impose upon the jury by numbers of witnesses, or by some fancied superiority of one witness over another, through the quackery of sounding names or titles, or of *ex cathedra* authority on the part of such witnesses. At a recent trial, a so-called expert was asked what offices he had held which gave him a right to such title. He replied, "I was president of the State Microscopical Society; I am president of the Academy of Sciences," and this statement was pleaded as good reason why his opinion should have great weight in deciding a question of handwriting.

In a recent case involving a large sum of money, in which the writer was engaged, the facts of the inviduality of the handwriting, identity of ink and time, were all required as evidence. Here some ten witnesses, experts and others, were sworn on each side; some actually stating that they had seen the signature of the endorser (which alone gave the note any value), affixed to it by his own hand. This note purported to be nearly six years old. It was written with two different kinds of ink, and the writing, though having a somewhat faded appearance, still was perfectly legible, so that I had no difficulty in making a copy of every letter, and of getting one also by the photographic process. Upon making a micro-chemical examination of the ink, I found it was quite fresh, and moreover, that both kinds used were of such a nature as to grow old rapidly, as seen by the unaided eye, or under direct light, when viewed by aid of the microscope.

Here the experts and other witnesses swore as positively in favour of the sides on which they were employed, as is the usual fact in such cases, and the court remarking that "no court in the world had to do so much guessing as this court," decided in favour of the genuineness of the note. The case was appealed, and a year elapsed before it came to trial. At this time, when the paper was again presented for examination, many letters and several whole words, even, had become totally illegible, thus confirming the conclusions to which I arrived on my first examination, that it could at that time have been but a few months or weeks old. The very astuteness of the skilled forgers in this case contributed to their defeat; they having selected, or more probably made, these inks themselves for the very purpose that they might rapidly grow old in order to appear so when presented for payment.

There is another point of view from which I desire to notice this case. It was carried in the first instance, as said the court, by guessing, or by the balancing of the opinions of experts and others, based upon the comparison of handwritings, under the rulings of the courts. My own testimony was not admissible in this respect, as I had never seen the endorser of the note write. I had in my possession hundreds of documents of his, consisting of cheques, notes, deeds, etc., of which I had made most careful examinations, and yet I was not sufficiently acquainted with his handwriting to give an opinion in the case; while a mere labourer in his employ, who had once seen him sign his name when receipting a bill, was fully competent to testify, that is, to give an opinion in the case.