by abundant experimentation and experience, and the ingenuity of the optician has provided standard instruments, giving results that speak for themselves to the layman as well as to the expert."

The striking contrast of the new legal precedents with some of the ancient practice in the proof of documents is conclusively shewn in numerous recent American opinions. Two notable opinions in the courts of the State of New York shew this change in a striking manner. In *Venuto* v. *Lizzo* (1911), 130 N.Y. Supp. 1066, the opinion says:—

"While the testimony of expert witnesses is carefully weighed and accepted with caution, the law allows such evidence. The conclusion of a handwriting expert as to the genuineness of a signature, standing alone, would be of little or no value, but supported by sufficiently cogent reasons, his testimony might amount almost to a demonstration. While the court in this case did not directly refuse to allow the experts to state their reasons, as was done in the case of *Johnson Service Co.* v. *MacLernon*, 142 App. Div. 677; 127 N.Y. Supp. 431, the effect of allowing constant trivial objections and of the erroneous rulings was virtually equivalent to such a denial . . . We might not reverse this judgment for a particular ruling, standing alone; but the cumulative effect of all the rulings and of the constant interruptions of counsel on trivial grounds is such as to induce the belief that the defendant has not had a fair trial, and that, in the interests of justice, she should be permitted another opportunity to present her defence. The order should be reversed and a new trial granted, with costs to appellant to abide the event. All concur."

In the opinion referred to in the foregoing opinion, *Johnson Service Co.* v. *MacLernon*, the court says:—

"The witness was then asked to state the reasons for his opinion. An objection to this question was sustained, and the plaintiff duly excepted. This was error. It is a rule of general acceptance that an expert may always, if called upon, give the reasons for his opinion."

" 'Whenever the opinion of any living person is deemed to be relevant, the grounds on which such opinion is based are also deemed to be relevant.' Chase's Stephen's Digest (2nd ed.), 156.

" 'On direct examination, the witness may, and, if required, must point out his grounds for belief in the identity of the handwriting on the principle already considered. Without such a reinforcement of testimony, the opinion of experts would usually involve little more than a counting of the numbers on either side.' 3 Wigmore on Ev. 2014.

"In this State the practice of permitting handwriting experts to give the reasons for his opinion, and even to illustrate upon a blackboard, has been distinctly approved; *McKay* v. *Lasher*, (1890) 121 N.Y. 477, 483; 24 N. E. 711. The reasons for the expert's opinion, if he had been permitted to give them might, and probably would, have added great force to his testimony; for the mere expression of opinion, standing alone, has little probative force. For these errors, the judgment and order appealed from must be reversed and a new trial granted with costs to appellant to abide the event. All concur. *Johnson Service Co.* v. *MacLernon* (1911), 127 N.Y. Supp. 431."

The words ". . . even to illustrate upon a blackboard" in the foregoing opinion is an unqualified expression of the fact that evidence of this class