

The Original Mysterious Lady

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In 1907, intent on proving that Robert-Houdin was not, as he claimed, the inventor of the second-sight trick, Harry Houdini rummaged through his massive personal collection and extracted advertisements and handbills for (as he wrote in *The Unmasking of Robert-Houdin*) a “Mysterious Lady, who offered second-sight tricks in the eastern part of the United States in 1842-43. Her name was never stated on the programmes, but the latter, together with a clipping dated Boston, February 20th, 1843, will suffice to prove my claim that she was offering second-sight before Robert-Houdin did, and therefore could not be copying his trick. She also appeared in England fully a year before Robert-Houdin ‘discovered’ second sight.”¹

Houdini could not identify the Mysterious Lady, and magic historians have, from time to time since the publication of *The Unmasking of Robert-Houdin*, wondered who the Mysterious Lady might be, or assayed her identification.²

The Mysterious Lady was, we believe, Julia Anne Hanington. Her maiden name was Huè; she was born of French parents in England either in 1800 or 1804; and she gave her father’s name as Gregory Huè, and his occupation as “soldier.” Julia Ann traveled extensively -- first to the United States from London in 1833 and later to other parts of the globe -- always accompanied by one Robert Hanington, her companion and promoter, and

¹ Harry Houdini, *The Unmasking of Robert-Houdin* (New York: Publishers Printing Company, 1908), 217. http://iapsop.com/ssoc/1908_houdini__unmasking_of_robert-houdin.pdf Houdini had first published the material on The Mysterious Lady the previous year in “Robert Houdin’s Proper Place in the History of Magic,” *Conjurers’ Monthly Magazine* 7.1 (March 1907): 213-214, including the engraving of her sitting and facing away from the audience that is reproduced here.

² See, for example, David Price, *Magic: A Pictorial History of Conjurers in the Theater* (New York: Cornwall Books, 1985), 112, 440-441; and, more recently, Edwin A. Dawes, “A Rich Cabinet of Magical Curiosities: ‘The Mysterious Lady’ and the Mystery of Mrs Matthews,” *The Magic Circular* 107.1169 (December 2013): 368-371.

later her husband, who was born in England in 1793 or 94, the son of a plumber and glazier named John Hanington.

As an adult, Robert Hanington was a touring showman, exhibiting a variety of popular amusements that included legerdemain but centered on trained animals -- especially dogs -- performing stunts that would seem to have required human or even clairvoyant intelligence, and large-scale illustrations and dioramas. We find Hanington -- likely at the start of his career -- in the late fall of 1826 exhibiting "the justly celebrated Grecian Dog APOLLO" along with another canine performer named Minerva, at the establishment of a Mrs. Dawson, in Park Street in Windsor. He and his dogs, he announced in his advertisement, "had the honour of performing before most of the Royal Family and nobility in London."³

[Apollo's] education having been rather superior, he will answer question in Astronomy, Geography, and Arithmetic; will also play a hand at Cards with any of the company; and what is most surprising, he will spell any person's name by Calculation of Figures, and select any Card touched by any of the company, although the Dog is out of the room at the time the Card is touched,—in fact, he must be witnessed to be believed.

Robert's two brothers also operated in the exhibition trade. Robert's first trip to the United States, in 1827, made in the company of his brother Henry John Hanington (c1800-1857), featured a performing tour, beginning in May at the American Museum in New York City, in which he exhibited "Grecian dog Apollo" as well as another dog named "Don Carlo," along with canaries trained to play dominoes.⁴ The Haningtons were not, particularly, innovators,



³ "Now Exhibiting," *Windsor and Eton Express*, 28 October 1826.

⁴ Robert and Henry, listed as "musicians" (perhaps they were), arrived in the port of New York on June 7, 1827, aboard the ship *Eliza Grant*; New York, U.S., Arriving Passenger and Immigration Lists, 1820-1850.

and other dogs from London appeared on Broadway at essentially the same time. In June of 1827, at Peale's Museum, a Mr. Munn, "just arrived from London," began exhibiting his "Wise Dog Toby" and "Curious Dog Minetto." Minetto jumped through flaming hoops and did other stunts familiar to circus goers, but among Toby's abilities were several tests that investigators of somnambulistic clairvoyants at the time found determinate:

The wise dog Toby perfectly understands Arithmetic, Mensuration, Geography, Surveying and Astronomy, and will perform blindfolded. He will tell any person the time to a minute by the watch; will select any card called for by the company, and will perform a number of tricks with the face of the card downwards, and what is more astonishing, will point out the card thought of by any one of the company, and when asked will give an immediate answer.⁵

Hanington's act did have innovative elements. In addition to his trained animals, he included a batch of physical illusions -- an "enchanted lyre," automatons that juggled and danced, and a device referred to as "the Delphic Oracle" that seems to have answered audience questions.⁶ These he wove into the canine fabric of his act: one of Apollo's feats was "declaring the exact position of the three moveable figures in the celebrated Box of Hallycarnia, which the company privately transpose and close the lid, thereby proving his superior penetration."⁷

Based on what we can see of his later career, we believe Henry's role in the business was predominantly as the booking agent and property manager for the act: Robert was the public face of the show, and the animal trainer. Their tour throughout the States lasted two years, from 1827 until 1829, and had a certain fluidity: at the end of the tour, in 1829,

⁵ "Extraordinary Exhibition at Peale's Museum," *New York Evening Post*, 30 June 1827.

⁶ "Exhibition of Extraordinary Novelties," *Baltimore Gazette and Daily Advertiser*, 27 September 1828.

⁷ "Just arrived from the American Museum ..." *Baltimore American and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, 18 April 1828.

Hanington's advertisements focus on a series of dominoes competitions between each of his dogs and "the Bird Fairy," one of his canaries.⁸

At the end of the tour in 1829, Robert returned to England, and Henry appears to have remained in New York City, where he and their brother William (c.1803-1871) established themselves as painters, glass workers, decorators and theatrical suppliers. W. J. and H. Hanington, as they often labeled themselves in public, exhibited extraordinarily large and intricate dioramas of such subjects as "The Deluge" and "The Russian War" in the neighborhood on Broadway around P. T. Barnum's American Museum.⁹ William and Henry built a presence in New York City, and in entertainment circles, that Robert would later leverage, when he chose to return to the US.

Back in England, Robert continued training and exhibiting his "intelligent" animals. He displayed, "by special command," his trained, "philosophical" canine, "Don Carlos," to King William IV and the royal family on December 17, 1831, at the Royal Pavilion in Brighton.¹⁰ Don Carlos (sometimes referred to as Don Carlo), like all the animals Hanington trained for his exhibitions, derived its seeming intellectual abilities from its carefully-developed abilities to follow minute physical or vocal cues supplied during the performance by Hanington: a prefiguration of Hanington's second-sight act that shared with that later act the invisibility of the coded communications that made the act work.

The Christmas holidays of 1832 found Hanington exhibiting at a Mr. Boswell's Drawing Rooms, in Church Street in Liverpool. There, Hanington displayed not only "Don Carlos," but also a canary named "Tippoo Saib," which performed tricks. These shows were

⁸ The tour made it as far as Havana; see "Arrived This Day," *New York Commercial Advertiser*, 22 May 1829, which informed the public that the Brig *Serah* had arrived in New York from Havana with passengers including H. J. Hanington and Grecian Dog Apollo. We should understand "the Bird Fairy" to connote "the bird named Fairy," rather than other possible constructions.

⁹ Both Henry and William most often chose to spell their last name as "Hannington." For the curious, the brothers published an illustrated pamphlet to advertise one of their 1837 exhibitions: *The African Glen, from the Colosseum, London, now exhibiting at the Zoological Institute, 37 Bowery, under the direction of Messrs. W. J. & H. Hanington* (New York: 1837). http://iapsop.com/ssoc/1837_hanington_hanington__the_african_glen.pdf

¹⁰ "Amusement for the Christmas Holidays," *Liverpool Mercury*, 21 December 1832.


all about variety -- in addition to the now-stock dogs and birds, Hanington performed a range of other effects, some of which fell well within the realm of magic and mentalism:

A Challenge is offered to any Gentleman to perform tricks on the cards with him. He will also select the handsomest lady in the room, according to his judgment, (which is seldom questioned,) the eldest or youngest person, or a question put by the company, and the Gentleman most partial to the Ladies. Likewise to be seen, the French MAGICAL DANCING FIGURES, which being placed on the floor, will commence Dancing or Waltzing to any tune proposed. Also to be seen, MAGICAL PIPES, SNUFFERS, CANDLESTICKS, and a variety of other articles, which will dance in their turns.

R. H. will also introduce his astonishing CHANGEABLE CARDS, with which a number of amusing tricks may be played. LESSONS given in the now highly-fashionable Art of LEGERDEMAIN.¹¹

The promise of private lessons in legerdemain indicates, to us, that Hanington was fully aware of the standard practices of the mesmeric performers of the late 1820s and early 1830s, during the early period of the so-called

EXHIBITION
OF EXTRAORDINARY NOVELTIES,
*Now open at Mr. Barr's Concert Room, Fountain Inn,
Light street Baltimore.*



From the great satisfaction given by the novel contest match at Dominoes between the Grecian Dog Apollo and the Bird fairy, in which the little warbler came off the victor another match will be played this evening by the Bird Fairy and the justly famed Spanish dog Don Carlo, and in order that no one may be disappointed by the crowded state of the room, superior accommodations have been made for the company.

JUST arrived from London, and never before exhibited in America, a most surprising, self playing musical instrument, called the ENCHANTED LYRE, which hangs suspended from the centre of the large room, and of its own accord, plays an endless variety of National Airs and other pieces, at the bidding of any of the company. It is the only instrument of the kind ever made.

THE DELPHIC ORACLE, from the great rooms, Spring Gardens, London, will amuse the company by singing and conversing to them, answering any questions proposed, and by describing the dress and the persons of those proposing them, &c. It seems to possess the Eyes of an Argus and yet is so diminutive in Stature as not to be seen by any individual.


Also, **THE TURKISH FEMALE AUTOMATON JUGGLER**, (the size of life) which will produce a variety of objects at the word of command and change them with the greatest facility after the manner of the celebrated Ramoo Samee, the Indian Juggler.

The unrivalled BIRDS OF KNOWLEDGE from India and the Canary Islands, will next delight the company by performing in a most astonishing manner with Cards, Dominoes, Figures, &c. advancing and returning at the word of command.

N. B.—The Birds belong to and were taught by the celebrated teacher of the "Grecian Dog Apollo."

Likewise, the amusing **MAGICAL DANCING FIGURES**, which, after being handed to the company will, on being placed on the floor, commence dancing to any tune, varying the step or stopping at command without any visible means of being set in motion, (they are for sale with conditions.)

THE CANINE PHILOSOPHER,



DON CARLO.

To conclude the exhibition the most wonderful Spanish Dog **DON CARLO**, will exhibit his matchless acquirements with Cards, Dominoes, &c. &c. Admission to the whole 25 cents.

Doors open at half past 7, performance commence at 8 in the evening.

The **BIRDS** will perform to private parties at their own houses in the day time.

47—An English **BLACK BIRD**, in full song; and a fine English **STARLING**, for sale. se 27

¹¹ *Ibid.*

Mesmeric Revival. These performers -- almost wholly male -- mounted often extensive geographical tours with one or several (usually, female) clairvoyante subjects, staging performances that began with a lecture on mesmerism of some length, followed by live demonstrations of clairvoyance -- blindfolded readings, apparent telepathy, sometimes medical diagnosis in trance -- and usually closed with a solicitation focused on private lessons in mesmerism, to be had of the mesmerist at the hotel or rooming house in which he was typically ensconced for several days.

At the beginning of November 1831, just at the time when we see Hanington surfacing again in the British press performing with his uncanny canines, a sensational novelty began exhibiting at Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly, in London. It was billed as "The Second-Sighted Phenomenon," and consisted of an (allegedly) eight-year-old boy, named Lewis Gordon McKean and his father, "just arrived from the Highlands of Scotland." The exhibition was what can now be easily recognized as a two-person code second-sight routine:

The child, or phenomenon, stood at a chair in a corner of the room, with his back turned to the company, and a handkerchief over his eyes; his father then went round to the company, and on a schoolboy's slate, which answered for a plate, collected from the company any thing they chose to put on. Some put money -- some a trinket -- some a button, and some a glove. The father then took the articles severally in his hand, calling on the Phenomenon to describe each, which he did, or appeared to do, in the minutest particular; and even when an attempt was made to mislead him, he instantly detected it.¹²

¹² "The Double-Sighted Phenomenon," *Morning Advertiser*, 2 November 1831. For more on the performances of young Master McKean, see Pierre Lamont, *Extraordinary Beliefs: A Historical Approach to a Psychological Problem* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013) and Elsa Richardson, *Second Sight in the Nineteenth Century: Prophecy, Imagination and Nationhood* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

Robert Hanington changed his act during the period immediately following the McKean's exhibition, and we believe it very likely that he witnessed that exhibition at Egyptian Hall and saw how it was accomplished: his own act with his dogs, after all, also relied on communicating with his "partner" in ways that were overlooked by his audiences. Presumably, because of the various mesmerized female clairvoyants being brought before groups of "investigators," whose seeming abilities were being debated in the press, Hanington may well have appreciated how much more of an impact it would make on his audience, to exhibit a pretty young woman than a "Highland lad." Our suppositions aside, however, it is certainly the case that, in early 1833, Hanington introduced as the headliner of his act an otherwise unnamed "Mysterious Lady," performing what the audience would have recognized as clairvoyant or mesmeric feats, with the by-then well-known, tried and true "Don Carlos" following. And the success of that fundamental change in his repertoire -- catering for the public's significant interest in what we would now term psychic phenomena -- explains why, soon thereafter, the Mysterious Lady became the centerpiece of Hanington's act: a (apparently) solo wonder, with his trained menagerie and magic tricks sequestered, and then for a time abandoned entirely. Hanington's new act was, for all intents and purposes, what would become a classic two-actor second-sight routine, in which Robert acted as the uncredited "master of ceremonies," working the audience and speaking-in-code to Julia, the Wonderful Lady, to enable her apparently clairvoyant insights.

Julia was never named in advertisements: a move calculated, it would seem, to heighten the wonder of her performance, but also interestingly at odds with Hanington's practice of giving his animal performers proper names, personalities, and backstories. As nothing more tangible than "young and interesting," Julia performed with Robert in London in 1833, at the Saville Palace, on Leicester Square, shortly after -- they claimed -- giving a private performance for the royal family. Julia's demonstrations at the Saville Palace were "very fashionably attended," a writer for one London newspaper describing the experience as follows:

... at a considerable distance from the company and completely out of hearing, sitting with her back towards us, she told the color of the dresses of the spectators, named the

various articles produced by them -- repeated the lowest whisper with unerring precision and in fact performed so many extraordinary feats, that we feel ourselves incapable of doing her justice in the description.¹³

Robert was somewhat reluctant, we think, to commit solely to "The Mysterious Lady"; as late as March 1833, Hanington was still exhibiting "Don Carlos," the "French Lilliputian Figures," and so forth, in addition to the The Mysterious Lady second-sight act. But it was that portion of the show that seized the attention of journalists.

The double sighted mysterious Lady ... gives proof of intelligence perfectly unaccountable; our most secret actions, nay our very thoughts and unexpressed wishes were known to her, and such answers given by her to questions, as made us almost believe in the repudiated idea of supernatural agency.¹⁴

The same writer noted that that Hanington was then (March of 1833) "on the point of leaving for the United States." It would be some months before that happened, however, because Julia Anne was at that time pregnant with their first child. Their daughter, Julia, was born in London in September, and baptized at Saint Martin in the Fields in Westminster.¹⁵

Shortly after Julia's birth, the family -- still common-law -- left England for the US. The first notices found of the Mysterious Lady in the United States appeared in newspapers in the Northeast almost simultaneously, on January 1, 1834, the *Boston Post* remarking that:

¹³ Quoted from the handbill for "The Mysterious Lady" for her 1834 performance in Washington, D. C. There, it is attributed to the *Times* (of London) in an article, "Singular Exhibition at Saville Palace," but without a date, and we have been unable so far to find the original, which may not exist.

¹⁴ This, too, is quoted from the same handbill in the previous note, attributed to an article, "Extraordinary Exhibition at the Assembly Rooms," *Dublin Times and Morning Post*, 25 March 1833.

¹⁵ London, England, Church of England Births and Baptisms, 1813-1920.

A “Mysterious Lady” from London, is exhibiting wonderful “mental feats” at N. York. She can see things which are invisible to her -- repeat what people say, when she does not hear them -- and divine their thoughts, when they do not speak!¹⁶

Four days later, the *Sunbury (Pennsylvania) Gazette* added the details that she was a “late importation from London,” and that she was “being exhibited at the Masonic Hall” in New York City. It described her performance, by quoting from one of Hanington’s handbills:

The Mysterious Lady! This surprising and distinguished foreigner, by the exertion of a faculty, hitherto unknown, is enabled to perform apparent impossibilities, to describe minutely, objects which are placed in such a situation as to render it utterly out of her power to see the whole or any portion of them, to repeat sentences which have been uttered in her absence, to divine the very thoughts of individuals, and to perform many other *paradoxical* feats of mind. It is impossible by words to convey any tolerable idea of this curious performance, suffice it to say that it is at once interesting, surprising, and instructive.¹⁷

Julia’s first appearances were indeed at the Masonic Hall, “where many ladies of distinction paid a visit to the Sybil, probably to consult about the future; to learn the destiny of a lost ring or the steps of a devious husband,” a description that is deliberately evocative of the newspaper advertisements of clairvoyants and fortune-tellers of the period.¹⁸ By the end of January 1833, P. T. Barnum acquired Julia for his American Museum, along with Robert’s animal and automaton acts.

¹⁶ *Boston Post*, 1 January 1834.

¹⁷ *Sunbury Gazette*, 4 January 1833. This is evidence that the act then contained a segment in which Julia went out of the exhibition space while audience members whispered their questions to Robert and, upon returning and being asked by her husband what various people had said, answered correctly. It was very much like Grecian Dog Apollo’s ability to select which cards audience members had selected while it had been taken offstage, and involved an implicit misdirection: the idea that Julia’s – and Apollo’s – phenomena had something to do with what they could *see*.

¹⁸ *New York Star*, 23 January 1833.

Their second-sight act required a considerable amount of space because of the size of the New York crowds wishing to see this “pretty little English woman, with rosy cheeks, [and] a soft blue sleepy eye”; by the beginning of February, the act was moved from the American Museum “for the better accommodation of the public” to the City Saloon, next door.¹⁹ By then, “many thousands” had witnessed her performances.

At the height of public interest, Julia and Robert departed New York City in February of 1834, and played in Philadelphia at Washington Hall beginning from February 11-22, where the act included “the interesting performance of the Canine Philosopher, Don Carlo, taught by the original owner of the Grecian Dog Apollo.”²⁰ The Haningtons then moved south to Washington, D. C., where “The Mysterious Lady” performed on March 22 and 24 at Carusi’s Saloon.²¹

By autumn, they were playing to large crowds in New England. They arrived in Boston in October of 1834, performing from October 21 through November 3.²² In Boston, Julia’s performances came to the attention of a medical community still shot through with interest in, and commitment to, phrenology and mesmerism, and deeply interested in cases of apparent somnambulism. An anonymous writer in the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* (later to become the *New England Journal of Medicine*) -- likely Jerome V. C. Smith, M. D., then the (orthodox, and skeptical) editor of the periodical -- attended one of Julia’s performances, and interviewed Robert Hanington as well, writing up his impressions in a two-and-a-half-page unsigned article published in the journal.²³ That article was in its turn widely-circulated and read, and was reprinted in whole or in part in many newspapers around the



The Mysterious Lady,
Julia Anne Hanington, 1834

¹⁹ *New York Evening Post*, 4 February 1834.

²⁰ *National Gazette (Philadelphia)*, 10 February 1834.

²¹ “Extraordinary Exhibition of the Mysterious Lady,” *Washington Globe*, 17 March 1834.

²² “The Mysterious Lady,” *Boston Daily Atlas*, 21 October 1834.

²³ “The Mysterious Lady,” *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* 11 (29 October 1834): 195-197.

country, due in part to the journal's prestige, and in part to the fact that the article revealed the identity of the *Mysterious Lady* and her husband:

Mrs. Hanington, familiarly called the *Mysterious Lady*, whose maiden name was Julia Ann Hue, born of French parents, in England, and now in her twentieth year, is an intelligent woman, of small stature -- rather taciturn, though agreeable in conversation. ... Her faculty of memory, we were informed by Mr. Hanington, is quite as remarkable as anything hereafter to be related, enabling her to repeat long poems, biblical readings, &c. without the slightest effort, after having once read them. We noticed, however, no phrenological indications of such a memory -- her eyes by no means being more prominent than they should be to harmonize effectually with the rest of her fair features.

Smith then described the performance, assuring his readers that somnambulism and ventriloquism could be ruled out as an explanation for it. The day following Smith's attendance, Mr. Hanington called on him to ask him what he thought of it. Their conversation was also mentioned in the journal article:

He [Hanington] assures us that it is but a short time since he made the discovery that Mrs. H. possessed this rare tact, and that it is as unaccountable to himself as to all others. He further informs us that very frequently, after retiring from an exhibition, in which she has been considerably excited, as soon as her eyes are closed in sleep she fatigues herself exceedingly by rehearsing chapters from the bible, and other readings, of which she had no recollection when awake. Many other curious and perplexing anecdotes were related, to convince us that no deception had been practiced.

We have neither comments to make nor theories to advance, in explanation of the apparently mysterious operations here related. That there are tricks in most exhibitions of the kind, is generally admitted; but whether there are any in this, remains to be proved by further observation.

That Hanington had ventured to call upon Smith the day after the performance, and, further, had seemed to impose on Smith's credulity with tales about Julia's recently developed mental powers, irritated one citizen of Boston, who called himself only "A Yankee," to public action. He hurried into print a pamphlet entitled *Humbug: or an Exposé of 'A Faculty Hitherto Unknown,' by which 'The Mysterious Lady' is Enabled to Perform Apparent Impossibilities*,²⁴ which reached Boston readers in early November of 1834, just as the Haningtons had departed Boston for their next engagement, in Worcester.

"A Yankee" had, it seems apparent from his pamphlet, attended a number of the Haningtons' Boston performances, and was thus able to give a good six-page description of the verbal codes employed in the Haningtons' second-sight exhibition. "A Yankee" saw his duty ("as an American and a Yankee") in publishing his pamphlet thusly:

... to disperse the mists which encompass the "Mysterious Lady," and expose the impositions which he [Mr. Hanington] is practicing, and so prevent any insolent boast that may be made, after he shall have returned to his own country, that he "gulled the Yankees" most essentially from "Maine to Georgia." If Mr. H. had been satisfied with the simple effects produced by the exhibition of his wife, and had suppressed his own very extraordinary comments upon it [to Smith, the journal editor], this exposition would never have been made; and we *guess* that he thinks with us, that in future it will be best not to attempt to impose too much upon the kindness and credulity of the American public.²⁵

Less than two weeks after the pamphlet was published, the editor of the Boston *Columbian Centinel* wrote, referring to it:

Those who have been deluded, and particularly a writer in the Medical Journal, who seems to have been deeply in for it, may be completely unfogmatized by reading this little book. It is all sheer humbug to pretend there is any thing supernatural about it,

²⁴ (Boston: Russell, Odiorne & Metcalf, 1834).

http://iapsop.com/ssoc/1834__a_yankee__humbug_or_an_expose.pdf

²⁵ A Yankee [pseud.], *Humbug*, 6.

and for the good of the public, we caution people not to make ninnies of themselves by paying money for deceptions.²⁶

The pamphlet's publication had little effect, as far as our researches allow us to see, in diminishing the size of the audiences eager to attend the Haningtons' performances. The Mysterious Lady continued to tour the US for years, and the Haningtons eventually made Brooklyn, New York their home base. It was there that they had two more children, Ellen (1835-1899) and Robert William Hanington (1836-1910).

Between the years 1835 to 1844, Robert and Julia's lives centered on New York City and Brooklyn, with periodic tours around the country featuring the Mysterious Lady, and Robert's intellectual dogs. Between those tours, Robert appears to have worked closely with his brothers Henry and William in their various "museum" exhibitions, organizing amusements for Broadway venues, and developing his skills in ventriloquism and magical effects.

In 1836, the Haningtons took the Mysterious Lady into the South, ending in Mobile, Alabama in March, where Robert raffled off the smart dog he had carried with him for the act—a Siberian wolfhound named "Beaver"—for two hundred and fifty dollars.²⁷

In 1838, Robert opened Hanington's Dog Repository, a kind of emporium, where he held canine performances, and sold what we would now think of as pure-bred dogs.²⁸ The Dog Repository gave Robert the opportunity to show off and sell his finest canines, and to provide entertainments that included some of his legerdemain:

Now Exhibiting at R. Hanington's, 300 Broadway, near Duane street, some of the most gigantic breed of the Mount St. Bernard Mastiff Dogs, with five remarkable fine Whelps of the above breed. The frame of these noble animals is a perfect model of strength, the

²⁶ "The Mysterious Lady Unveiled," *Columbian Centinel*, 15 November 1834.

²⁷ "The 'Mysterious Lady' (Mrs. Hannington) ..." *Spirit of the Times* (New York), 12 March 1836.

²⁸ See, for example, "DOGS—DOGS—DOGS," *New York Daily Herald*, 9 February 1838. It is worth noting that Hanington was an early – if not the first – importer of Newfoundlands and St. Bernards into the US; see "Gigantic Newfoundland Dogs," *English Gentleman*, 11 March 1827.

countenance terrifically grand, and their roar is truly awful; they are a perfect terror to evil doers—likewise the largest and most beautiful Newfoundland Dog ever exhibited in this country. Together with a choice collection of Birds, Beasts and Reptiles, all of which are alive. To keep the Exhibition select, the price of admittance is 25 cents.

The above living Stock are all for sale.

Also a variety of amusing and pleasing performances for gentlemen to amuse the Ladies in the Winter Evenings by R. HANINGTON.²⁹

Later in 1838, he moved his emporium, now called Hanington's Giant Dog Establishment to emphasize his specialties in dog-breeding, to 552 Broadway, near Niblo's Garden. That location was not, we think, coincidental: his brothers Henry and William had provided Niblo's with decorated glass ornamentation for Niblo's seasonal grand opening on one or two occasions in 1833 and 1834, and Henry was often engaged by Niblo's management to organize the entertainments there, which included bands, instrumentalists, singers, European folk dancers, displays of exotic animals, singers, fireworks displays, "duels" between magicians, and so forth.³⁰ The Mysterious Lady herself, early in her US career, had headlined the entertainment there on occasion during the summer of 1834, and during October and November of that year. Her performances there had been sophisticated; she had been able to key them to Niblo's varying audiences, allowing her to be seen by "thousands in this city."³¹

²⁹ *Courier and New York Inquirer*, 17 January 1838.

³⁰ See, for example, one of his earlier shows, "Rare Combination of Attractions at Niblo's Garden," *New York Evening Post*, 25 August 1835. Among other attractions, it featured "The Rival Magicians, Signor [Antonio] Blitz, and Rahab-Ben Abel Marchael [William Marshall, otherwise known as the Fakir of Ava]" and a section of the garden decorated by Hannington to represent a transparent fairy palace. A later, similar show at Niblo's organized by Hannington ("Another Benefit," *Commercial Advertiser*, 25 August 1836) had Blitz "duelling" against "Rahab Bonbobbins Bonbobbinnnet."

³¹ "Niblo's Gardens – Great Attractions," *New York Evening Star*, 5 July 1834; "The Mysterious Lady at Niblo's Garden," *New York Evening Star*, 14 October 1834." We note that this latter performance occurred very close to the Hanington's adventures in Boston followed by the publication by "A Yankee." This suggests either that they were commuting around the Northeast very rapidly at the time, or (just perhaps) Robert had explained the act to his brother Henry, who worked with another woman as the "Mysterious Lady" for the Niblo's performances.

The year 1843 was an especially active one for the Mysterious Lady. In February, the Haningtons performed the second-sight at Concert Hall, in Boston.³² In March, they were in Norwich, Connecticut and Newburyport, Massachusetts. An enthusiastic reviewer saw the Norwich performance, and wrote that “[a] few minutes attendance, last evening at a private exhibition, has convinced us that witchcraft is no longer incredible, and that magnetic clairvoyance can never come up to the perfection and mystery of this wonderful action of the human mind.”³³ In June, the Haningtons performed in the Baltimore Museum, where the Mysterious Lady shared the stage with Robert’s performing dogs and birds, and with the magician and ventriloquist John Wyman (known as Wyman the Wizard).³⁴

In 1844, the Haningtons took their second-sight act abroad. They arrived in England late in the year, and Julia began her performances as the Mysterious Lady in December 1844, at Brighton. A review in the *Brighton Gazette* described a week-long series of lectures on mesmerism and clairvoyance given in Brighton at the Old Ship:

Before closing this notice, we may mention that we have also visited the “Mysterious Lady,” who is exhibiting at an adjoining house, and have there *seen* specimens of Clairvoyance of a more astonishing description than we ever heard a lecturer on Mesmerism *describe*. This lady with minuteness and accuracy describes objects behind her back, in a manner which defied all efforts at detection. It may be said that we are comparing a science with a system of acknowledged deception. We know that all lecturers on Mesmerism have disavowed deception, although few of them have hesitated to denounce many of their predecessors, Mesmer himself among the number, as quacks; and we advise all those who are unable to account for the partial success of the Clairvoyants, as detailed above, to visit the “Mysterious Lady” before they rashly become converts to the system of Clairvoyance.³⁵

³² “Municipal,” *Boston Daily Bee*, 14 February 1843.

³³ “We earnestly recommend ...” reprinted in the *Newburyport Morning Herald*, 11 March 1843.

³⁴ “Baltimore Museum,” *Baltimore Sun*, 21 June 1843.

³⁵ “Mesmerism and the ‘Mysterious Lady,’” *Brighton Gazette*, 12 December 1844.

The *Gazette* writer noted that the Haningtons were staying in Ship street in Brighton, where “Mr. Hannington frankly admits that it is all deception; but the deception is so skillfully practiced that the mystery cannot be unveiled.”³⁶ The exhibitions were (intentionally, in our view) directed not only at the audiences attending the mesmerism and clairvoyance lectures next door, but also at small parties of the social elite; Julia was called to attend and perform at parties given by “Lady Langford, Lady G. Seymour, the Marquis and Marchioness of Ely, and several other noble and distinguished families,” where she gave “extreme satisfaction.”

At this time, the Haningtons were exploiting, rather than creating, a market with pronounced appetite for “clairvoyance” as entertainment. As a rough measure, consider the fact that the term “clairvoyant” appears in the British Newspaper Archive’s database -- the largest database of UK newspapers we know of -- a mere 106 times between 1830 and 1839, and more than 4,000 times between 1840 and 1849. Twenty-five percent of those mentions, during the 1840s, occur in London-based newspapers. By 1844, when the Haningtons arrived in the UK, the market in mesmeric entertainment had been made for them. Lecturers on, demonstrators of, and opponents of mesmeric phenomena abounded throughout the kingdom. Public intellectuals like James Braid, and canny popularizers like W. J. Vernon, Edwin Lee and Robert Collyer, published texts making mesmerism’s case (often rebranded with awkward neologisms like neurypnology to distance the new (para)science from the old mesmeric imposition), and promoted those – and themselves – with lectures. *The Zoist*, the standard-bearing journal for mesmeric medical practice and the hospital system it fueled, was in full flower, and medical societies debated the reality of clairvoyant and somnambulistic phenomena with vigor and acrimony. Phrenologists rehabilitated orthodox phrenology as phrenomesmerism, focusing on the excitation of cerebral organs via the magnetism of the phrenological practitioner. And J. B. Marcillet had already made his first (almost wholly private) trip to the UK with his clairvoyant, the soon-to-be-famous Alexis Didier, demonstrating in the salons and private homes of the upper classes, with audience members including Sir Bulwer-Lytton, playwright and author

³⁶ “*Fashionable Chronicle*,” *Brighton Gazette*, 26 December 1844.

Edward L. Blanchard, editor Samuel Carter, writers Harriet Martineau and Charles Dickens, and politician Benjamin Disraeli. In the climate produced by this mesmeric renaissance, the accessibility and drama of the Haningtons' second-sight act would find a large and well-paying audience.

A further stage in the evolution of this Transatlantic market of such ideas would occur between 1849 and 1852. Catalyzed in part by the publication of Alfred Smee's *Elements of Electro-Biology* (a treatise on "the relation of electricity to the vital functions" within the human body), but ultimately driven by popular mesmerists' ability to turn nearly any scientific novelty to their sensational ends, itinerant electrobiologists (almost all of them former mesmerists, and many of them American) began touring the UK in 1850. They "biologized" audience members (rather than a coadjutant) with metal disks, coins and other props, and willed these apparently-hypnotized subjects to perform in various comic ways: imitating animals, constructing impromptu tableaux and pantomimes, exhibiting extreme emotions, and answering impertinent and salacious questions from the electrobiologist. Alfred Smee – who saw himself as a serious, pathbreaking scientist -- was dismayed, and ultimately angered, by the ways in which his neologism was hijacked by mesmeric showmen, but he was unable to prevent or ameliorate it.

One of these electrobiologists, an American proprietary medicine manufacturer and mesmerist named G. W. Stone, toured the UK from mid-1850 onward, and made a great deal of money from this "great variety of the most extraordinary and amusing experiments ... given in the newly-discovered science of electrical philosophy," as his advertisements often read. On Stone's return to the US in late 1851, he was able to convince a colleague, William R. Hayden, that similar sums might be collected by returning to the UK in 1852 with an example of the latest mesmeric novelty, in the form of Hayden's wife, Maria, who was an early and prominent Spiritualist medium. The two men took her to England in the late fall of 1852, selling access to her phenomena at a guinea a head for private séances, and making Maria the first American medium to demonstrate the phenomena of Spiritualism's new dispensation to the English.

In February 1845, soon after the Haningtons first began exhibiting in England, they moved from Brighton to London, performing at the Royal Saloon at 213 Piccadilly.³⁷ There, apparently, Queen Victoria paid her a visit to see her perform and was “greatly amused.”³⁸ In the heart of London’s performance subculture, the Haningtons’ act began drawing curious crowds:

The Mysterious Lady—An American lady, now exhibiting at No. 213, Piccadilly, promises to excite no little attention among the lovers of the mysterious and the wonderful. She is apparently endowed with the faculty of second sight, for she turns her back upon you, and yet is able to speak of everything that takes place with the most unflinching accuracy. If you throw up a couple of dice, touch a strange card, or even lightly whisper a name, she tells you in a moment what is done or said, and that without difficulty or deliberation. We saw this *clairvoyante* personage yesterday, and, in common with some others who were present, were thoroughly puzzled as to the means by which the senses were cheated; for a more satisfactory system of mystification has, we believe, never been before seen. There is an interlocutor employed, who shuffles the cards and receives the whispers; and he, probably, is the Asmodeus who transmits, in some occult way, the necessary intelligence to the lady; but the collusion is so well concealed—the part that he takes is so incidental, and so seemingly natural—that the spectator’s penetration is completely at fault. No matter what questions are asked, the lady answers. If Mr. [Thomas Slingsby] Duncombe were to hold up a letter she would tell him whether it came from a tailor or an opera dancer; in fact, she “sees” without eyes, and “hears” without ears. During the intervals of her performances, which may well be called extraordinary, her coadjutor entertains the company with sleight-of-hand tricks, and his skill is surprising.³⁹

³⁷ “Punch’s Guide to the Exhibitions,” *Punch* 8.2 (February 1845): 148.

³⁸ “The Queen and the Fortune Teller,” *Railway Bell and London Advertiser*, 22 February 1845.

³⁹ “The Mysterious Lady,” *London Evening Standard*, 13 March 1845. Demonstrating the short memory of journalism, Julia is now “an American.” The reference to Duncombe is jocular; he was a Radical member of Parliament who created a political sensation in June 1844 by bringing Parliament’s attention to the fact that letters addressed to Italian

In the *London Morning Post*, readers were informed that “The Mysterious Lady, after a lengthened tour in both the Americas, including the West Indies, and also through the continent of Europe, has lately returned to England and is now holding her Levees at 213, Piccadilly.”⁴⁰ The *Morning Chronicle*’s contemporary advertisement was worded somewhat differently:

The Mysterious Lady, after a lengthened tour through the continent of Europe, and the greater part of America, has just arrived in town from Brighton, where she had the honour of being introduced to her Most Gracious Majesty, who expressed herself highly gratified at her astonishing performances, which have hitherto completely mystified all by whom they have been witnessed, throwing completely into the shade the wonders of Mesmerism and Clairvoyance. Performances daily from ten to six o’clock, at the Royal Saloon, 213, Piccadilly, opposite Messrs. Swan and Edgar’s.⁴¹

Only days later, on March 29, 1845, the *Illustrated London News* printed the engraving of the Mysterious Lady that found its way into Houdini’s personal collection,

revolutionist Giuseppe Mazzini, then in England, had been opened by the British Post Office and the information in them passed on to the authorities in Naples. The Post Office was “under the warrant” of Sir James Graham, who defended its actions. This eventually led to a spoof article, reprinted in the *London Era* (30 March 1845): “The Mysterious Lady in Piccadilly—This deceptive exemplification of ‘second sight’ is to be conducted by Sir James Graham, who will allow any lady or gentleman to write a letter, seal it, and place it in a box, ‘secured by Government.’ Sir James will then, to the great amazement of the writer, repeat the contents of his letter without any person having seen him read it.” That is surely a good measure of how our Mysterious Lady had become the famous, common property of the urban newspaper-reading public.

⁴⁰ “The Mysterious Lady,” *London Morning Post*, 25 March 1845. This also reveals that she was doing five shows a day.

⁴¹ *London Morning Chronicle*, 11 March 1845. It is certainly possible that Julia and Robert had indeed performed their act in Europe -- specifically, France -- after leaving America and before showing up in England, or on an earlier trip there. (“La Dame Mystérieuse”?) They had brought their children to France when they were still young for them to attend boarding schools.

along with the information that she was exhibiting in Piccadilly. It was Julia who, as the Mysterious Lady, Houdini – and others after him – could not identity.

Julia Hanington, always identified only as “The Mysterious Lady,” continued to offer daily exhibitions at 213, Piccadilly through the spring and summer of 1845, until September, when the Haningtons traveled to Dover. There they gave performances at Warren’s Assembly Rooms. By October, they had traveled across the country, and were offering exhibitions in Liverpool, at 100, Bold Street. Liverpool advertisements suggested that, once again, Her Gracious Majesty had visited her. There, in Liverpool, on November 10, 1845, the couple -- with years of cowering and cohabitation, and three children, between them -- were legally married, at the church of St. Martin in the Fields.⁴²

From Liverpool, the Haningtons crossed over the Irish Sea, to Dublin. In December 1845, the Mysterious Lady was exhibited at the Rotunda in Dublin, where her stock description was amended to become “The Mysterious Lady, The Living Wonder of the World.” Her performances in Dublin continued into February 1846.⁴³ Limerick was her next venue, where the Haningtons’ act was featured in early March at the Philosophical Rooms on Glentworth Street.⁴⁴ In later March, the Haningtons arrived in Cork, where the Mysterious Lady -- now also “The Living Wonder of the World who Puzzles



⁴² Liverpool, England, Church of England Marriages and Banns, 1754-1935.

⁴³ An example of her advertisements there: “The Mysterious Lady, from the United States ...” *Freeman’s Journal*, 9 December 1845.

⁴⁴ “Exhibition of the Mysterious Lady ...” *Limerick and Clare Examiner*, 28 February 1846.

all Nations and who defies the World to produce her equal" -- exhibited at the Mechanics Institute, well into April.⁴⁵

The Cork performances were, as far as we can determine, the last performances by the Haningtons in Ireland. "The Mysterious Lady," announced the *Morning Post* on May 20th, "after a lengthy tour through the provinces, has RETURNED to the Metropolis, where she intends to remain for a short time previous to her ultimate return to America."⁴⁶ The Haningtons' London performances took place in Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly, where, during the same period, Barnum's General Tom Thumb also exhibited. The booking at Egyptian Hall is of



The Egyptian Hall, London

special interest to magic historians, since Egyptian Hall would subsequently open its rooms and stage to such famous magicians as Alexander Herrmann, and, from the early 1870s, under its occupation by J. N. Maskelyne, would become the veritable central sun and nucleus of magical performance in England.⁴⁷

Contrary to her first advertisements for her performances at Egyptian Hall, which announced that she intended to return to America soon, Julia Hanington's run there began there in late May of 1846 and extended until about December of 1848. But the market had changed, and Julia now had two imitators: other persons presenting themselves to the public as "The Mysterious Lady," offering a second-sight act in an effort to benefit from Julia Hanington's brand and renown.

The first, and most notable, of these pretenders was Georgiana Elizabeth Eagle (also later known, combining the last names of her successive husbands, as Madame Gilliland Card, 1836-1911), the daughter of magician Barnardo Eagle. At least as early as April of

⁴⁵ "The Mysterious Lady," *Cork Examiner*, 25 March 1846.

⁴⁶ *London Morning Post*, 20 May 1846.

⁴⁷ John Booth, "The Egyptian Hall in London: Center of a Magical Universe," *Genii* 43.2 (February 1979): 124-129.

1845, young Georgiana had been offering a second-sight segment, called “Clairvoyance Unmasked,” in her father’s act, where she was billed as “Infant Plato.”⁴⁸ In early February of 1846, at the time the Haningtons were performing in Dublin, audiences in and around Staffordshire were invited to witness the performance of “The Mysterious Lady and Mr. Barnardo Eagle,” who was then calling himself “The Royal Wizard of the South.”⁴⁹ The Staffordshire performances were the first for which Barnardo Eagle advertised a “Mysterious Lady” in his act. In March of 1846, advertising under the title “Necromancy,” the Eagles -- “Wizard & Mysterious Lady” -- were booked for two days at the Music Hall in Leamington Spa in Warwickshire.⁵⁰ That Barnardo’s eleven-year-old daughter Georgiana was his “Mysterious Lady” (although not named as such) is implied in a reviewer’s description of the act:

A young female, introduced as *the Mysterious Lady*, is seated upon the platform, with her eyes blindfolded, and a variety of articles of dress, coins, keys, knives, &c. are collected from different parts of the room, and upon being asked to describe each article, she does so with the greatest degree of accuracy, even down to the value and date of the pieces of money collected together, some of which are not unfrequently foreign coins. She is also equally fortunate in guessing the colour of the dress worn by any person alluded to by the Magician, and in more than in one stance, surprised her audience by her “community of taste,” evidenced by gentlemen being desired to think of any particular wine, or liquor, of which they would like to partake, and on being asked, without any apparent communication with her interrogator (Mr. Eagle), whether she knew the beverage of each, she was invariably successful. The “Mysterious Lady” must be seen to be appreciated—she is really an astonishing girl.⁵¹

⁴⁸ “Town Hall, Regent Street, Cheltenham,” *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 10 April 1845.

⁴⁹ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 31 January 1846.

⁵⁰ *Leamington Spa Courier*, 14 March 1846. The advertisement also promised a performance in Warwick during the races.

⁵¹ “The Wizard of the South,” *Leamington Spa Courier*, 14 March 1846. The phrase “community of taste” in the advertisement is drawn directly from the parascientific literature on mesmerism and magnetism, as one of the subclasses of “community of sensation.”

The Eagles traveled thence to Banbury at the end of March, with “The Mysterious Lady” sitting on stage blindfolded amidst Barnardo’s setting of his “Temple of Magic.” A reviewer commented, “That it is all delusion we of course know, and such Mr. Eagle states it to be, but it is not the less clever for all that; and those who would be fortified against the belief in clairvoyance, cannot do better than witness the performance of the Mysterious Lady.”⁵² This clarifies that Georgiana Eagle’s performance, at the time, was offered as an acknowledged counterfeit of clairvoyance, an antidote for believers: a playbill for their performance in Ashby had described “The Mysterious Lady” as “The Gigantic Destroyer of the Fraud of Clairvoyance.”⁵³ Next, they offered performances in Oxford for six nights at the Star Assembly Room, where Georgiana was misleadingly advertised as the “Mysterious Lady (from the London Theatres).”⁵⁴

Two weeks later, in April 1846, “Mr. Barnardo Eagle, the Royal Wizard of the South” appeared at the New Public Hall in Reading. That week’s booking included the “First appearance of MADAME DE COSTA, the American Anti-Clairvoyant and Mysterious Lady.”⁵⁵ This would seem to be Georgiana, again, given another name and title that would suggest she was the “American” whom the public had come to know as “The Mysterious Lady.” The likelihood of that is increased by the fact that, less than a month later, in May, Georgiana’s name had finally risen into their advertisements. Those for Barnardo Eagle’s performance at the Theatre Royal in Southampton in May of 1846 read as follows:

Also, the first appearance of Miss Georgiana Eagle, surnamed the MYSTERIOUS LADY, introducing CLAIRVOYANCE UNMASKED. Discrimination of Metals, Colours, Community of Taste, Attraction, Human or Metallic, Obedience to the Operator’s will, Intro Vision, Extro Vision, Phreno-Magnetism, &c. to the utter astonishment of all believers and pretenders to Mesmerism, &c. to the utter astonishment of all believers

⁵² “The Wizard of the South,” *Banbury Guardian*, 26 March 1846.

⁵³ Price, *Magic*, 63.

⁵⁴ *Oxford Chronicle and Reading Gazette*, 28 March 1846.

⁵⁵ *Reading Mercury*, 4 April 1846.

and pretenders to Mesmerism, Clairvoyance, and Animal Magnetism, she being securely blindfolded, and standing with her back to the audience.⁵⁶

Barnardo and Georgiana were playing in Southampton when Julia and Robert Hanington began exhibiting at Egyptian Hall. We need not follow the long career of Georgiana Eagle as a performing magician and mentalist, under several names, to understand how, why and when she acquired the title “The Mysterious Lady” in 1846, and we can see clearly in the primary evidentiary record that she was not exhibiting under that name before Julia Hanington made it famous and crowd-attracting.⁵⁷ What is most important about Georgiana’s stint as the Mysterious Lady is that she was exhibited by her father as a challenge to, and implicit exposure of, putatively genuine clairvoyants such as the famous French seer, Alexis Didier. Barnardo’s playbill for a performance in York in December 1846 explicitly points to Didier (by naming his magnetic operator) and implies that all magnetic operators and their clairvoyant subjects are in fact magicians, masquerading:

Mr. Eagle will give four entertainments at the Theatre Royal, York, during the Assize Week, to prove that the so-called science of Clairvoyance, Animal Magnetism, &c., produced by Mesmerism, is altogether like the Conjuror’s delusions, A COMPLETE TRICK.

At the time Mr. Mancelot [sic—Marcillet] was exhibiting his pupil Alexis, the French youth, in London, Mr. Eagle made it his study to see him, and has now concocted the same Acts of Clairvoyance for his little Daughter, eleven years of age, with many others attached to them, which she goes through every night, and proves that all she does is a SHEAR [sic] DECEPTION from beginning to end, and the public will see by the following

⁵⁶ “Theatre Royal, Southampton,” *Hampshire Advertiser*, 9 May 1846.

⁵⁷ Magic historians please note; she was not presented as “The Mysterious Lady” until 1846. Georgiana was immediately popular with the public: In July 1846, on the Isle of Wight (Barnardo and Georgiana’s home), Queen Victoria presented her with an engraved watch.

description that her performance does not vary one item from those of the Clairvoyance patients, as she is thoroughly blindfolded and her back turned to the audience.⁵⁸

Despite the anti-occult positioning that accompanied the Eagles' performances of "The Mysterious Lady," audiences' tastes shifted, and Georgiana's exhibitions of her act switched sides, as it were, during 1849. In May of that year, a gentleman who attended their performance described it in a somewhat ambiguous way, not as a bold rebuke to clairvoyants: "Here Mr. Bernardo Eagle and his daughter appeared to great advantage, but claimed no more than a surprising degree of skill, no conjuring in fact, but a proof of the march of intellect."⁵⁹ That seems to have been a half-step from how "The Mysterious Lady" as Georgiana originally played her, to becoming "The Prophetic Lady," who would make her first appearance in December of that year. Then, Georgiana performed essentially the same as before, but now played it as if she were her father's mesmeric "patient," his somnambulistic subject with genuine clairvoyant power. An ad in the *Dover Telegraph* announced it under the bolded title, "Mesmerism and Clairvoyance":

Mr. B. Eagle presents his compliments to the Nobility, Gentry, &c., and begs to inform them that the PROPHETIC LADY will appear at the undermentioned towns with her CLAIRVOYANT VISIONS OF THE MIND, which have caused the greatest sensation in every town in which she has had the honor of appearing. MISS EAGLE will appear at the Royal Oak Concert Room, Deal, on the 10th, 11th, and 12th of Dec.; at the Apollonian Rooms, Folkestone, on the 13th, 14th, and 15th of Dec.; and at the Assembly Rooms,

⁵⁸ "Theatre-Royal, York," *York Herald*, 5 December 1846. Whether Barnardo ever really did observe Didier, the language in the ad makes it clear what sense he wished the audience to make of what they were to see. A side note here: Georgiana's "Mysterious Lady" did her act blindfolded, but Julia performed without a blindfold, although, like Georgiana, she faced away from the audience.

⁵⁹ "The May Fairs," *Hereford Journal*, 23 May 1849. The phrase "the march of intellect" appears to point to the notion, much bruited about by believers in the genuine powers of clairvoyants (and, later, spiritualist mediums), that the human race was advancing in its evolutionary climb toward higher and more spiritual mental powers.

Sandwich, on the 17th, 18th, and 19th of Dec. Full particulars will be announced in day-bills.⁶⁰

Georgiana Eagle's "Mysterious Lady," therefore, passed out of existence in December 1849, and her "Prophetic Lady" emerged simultaneously. The first was an anti-clairvoyant; the second was a "genuine" clairvoyant, whose stage act would almost immediately become indistinguishable from those of the soon-to-appear Spiritualist mediums.⁶¹ In 1853, after they had appeared at the Leicester New Hall, the editor of the local newspaper wrote an indignant piece reviewing it, entitled "Clairvoyance, or Trickery," noting that they had presented nothing different from what they had done before as a kind of conjuring act, but had now impudently chosen to present it as a manifestation of genuine preternatural powers:

In their former calling there was no pretence to anything scientific; but Mr. E. professed to deceive the public by his ability in his peculiar vocation, and simply termed the performance of his daughter "mysterious." Now, however, he takes higher ground, and, in addition to his magic, professes mesmerism, and introduces his daughter as a *Clairvoyante*.⁶²

After describing the performance in considerable detail, the editor added, "We need hardly say that Mr. Eagle refused to put any questions *except in his own words*, and in almost all

⁶⁰ "Mesmerism and Clairvoyance," *Dover Telegraph*, 8 December 1849.

⁶¹ For a description of her performance of "The Prophetic Lady," see "Ramsgate – Clairvoyance," *South Eastern Gazette*, 1 January 1850.

⁶² "Clairvoyance, or Trickery," *Leicester Journal*, 6 May 1853. Italics in the original. In the article, the editor referred his readers to the harsh judgment given to Eagles' performances previously in Edinburgh and other places, and cites, as an example, the article written by William Chambers, "The Clairvoyante Imposture" (*Chambers' Edinburgh Journal* n.s. 19.470 (8 January 1853): 25-26), which, in turn, referred to the explanation of the principles of coded signaling in second-sight acts, Frederick Marshall, "Double Vue," *New Monthly Magazine* 96.384 (December 1852): 417-423, which contains some inaccuracies about the beginnings of the second-sight act, but which includes the memorable statement that "conjurers would starve if the World were as wise as they."

cases, himself required a full knowledge of the information sought before he made inquiries for such information from the lady."

The Eagles were neither the first nor the last performers to play on both sides of the open border between stage magic and the occult, choosing their framing and positioning based on their sense of just where it was that their audience's sympathies lay.

The other "Mysterious Lady" sometimes confused with Julia Hanington, and operating after the beginning of Hanington's public career in England, was the wife of the budding magician and ventriloquist James Thomas Matthews (1819-1880), possibly named Mary.⁶³ In September 1846, the Matthews appeared on stage together, he as "Professor of Natural Magic" and she, perhaps for the first time, as "Mrs. Matthews, surnamed the MYSTERIOUS LADY."⁶⁴ Their performances differed from both the Haningtons' and the Eagles' and were offered as a kind of extended scientific lecture and demonstration of "natural magic," with Mr. Matthews demonstrating wonders that included ventriloquism and legerdemain, mixed with lectures on the scientific principles that made them possible. He also included a demonstration of mesmerism, in which he believed, and clairvoyance, which he discounted as a fraud. To amplify this latter point, Mrs. Matthews, as "The Mysterious Lady," would then be brought on stage, and the Matthews would perform a second-sight turn, on the model of the other Mysterious Ladies, Hanington and Eagle. The Matthews did not reveal how their effects were accomplished, but Mr. Matthews was clear in his communications with the audience that the effects were the result of trickery -- what looked like clairvoyance was actually an illusion. That point was of sufficient importance to the Matthews that their entire second-sight entire act was titled

⁶³ Mrs. Matthews' name eludes us. When James Matthews' will went to probate in 1880, his then-widow was named Mary. When she was later interred in his grave in Old Camberwell Cemetery, the burial record gave her dates as 1829-29 April 1912. But whether she was the wife of James in 1846 when the Matthews' version of the Mysterious Lady is unknown.

⁶⁴ "Novelty and Attraction Extraordinary," *Salisbury and Winchester Journal*, 19 September 1846. See also, *Dorset County Chronicle*, 3 September 1846; they performed in the Assembly Rooms in Blandford, Dorset; and "Blandford," *Salisbury and Winchester Journal*, 29 August 1846.

“Clairvoyance Unmasked.” It is that title, which was identical to what the Eagles had already been using to exhibit Georgiana’s act, that demonstrates that the Matthewses derived their “Mysterious Lady” name as a kind of already-generic title for what they were doing.⁶⁵

James Matthews was a harbinger of the modern magician, operating at the boundary between stage magic and the parascientific occult. He combined the skills of a professional magician, with a commitment to the scientific debunking of parascientific claims and the marketer’s ability to draw and please audiences. No doubt due to that combination of skills, Matthews became attached to the Royal Polytechnic Institute on Regent Street in London for decades, giving his demonstrations there (along with his wife as “The Mysterious Lady”) as well as offering exhibitions elsewhere around the country. Matthews’ shows at the Polytechnic Institute were so popular that he was able to acquire the sole license for a time to demonstrate the “Pepper’s Ghost” illusion.⁶⁶ During his long career as a magician, and, even as late as 1879, a year before his death, Mrs. Matthews would often be an integral part of his performances, appearing as “The Mysterious Lady.”⁶⁷

Because of this multiplication of Mysterious Ladies, in the vicinity of London from 1846, we cannot determine precisely which of them was being advertised at different venues during the next few years following. The Haningtons were almost certainly aware that Julia had imitators; that seems the most likely explanation for the extension of her

⁶⁵ The name “Mysterious Lady” did in fact become a generic one; see, for example, the advertisement in the *Morning Post* (8 January 1853) for a “Miss Pauline, the Secret Electro Telegraphist, or Mysterious Lady,” exhibiting on Fleet Street. By that time, a second sight interlude had become practically *de rigueur* for many of the top rank of magicians, including, for example, John Henry Anderson, Jr., son of the great “Wizard of the North,” whose sister Helen, did a segment of their combined show in which she appeared as the “Second-Sighted Sybil of Delphi” (“Theatre Royal, Williamson Square,” *Liverpool Mail*, 22 November 1862).

⁶⁶ For an illustration of an 1864 handbill announcing a show in Shropshire by James Matthews featuring Henry Pepper’s Ghost (but without “The Mysterious Lady,” see the Swann catalogue, part 1, for its 2005 public auction sale of the Christian Fechner Collection of American and English Magic, page 111.

⁶⁷ For James Matthews’ death notice, see *The Era* (London), 5 September 1880.

sobriquet “The Mysterious Lady” to include challenging superlatives: “[t]he Living Wonder of the World who Puzzles all Nations and who defies the World to produce her equal.”

We believe that the Mysterious Lady who “now unriddles our characters at the Egyptian Hall” as reported in the London *Morning Post* on July 22, 1846, was Julia Hannington.⁶⁸ Some later adverts mentioning (for example), “For a Few Days Only, The Greatest Wonder of the Age! The Mysterious Lady, from the Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly, London, begs to announce her intention of holding Daily Levees, at Mrs. Vivean’s Toy Warehouse, Marketplace, Salisbury,” seem to us, given the new venue, to perhaps point to either the Eagles or the Matthews, commandeering Julia Hanington’s reputation.⁶⁹

In December of 1846, the editor of *The Critic* reported that he had attended the exhibition of “The Mysterious Lady” at Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly, and found it worthy of compliment.⁷⁰ But on January 16, 1847, not long afterwards, at the Scientific Institution in Broadmead, appeared “The Greatest Wonder of the Age! The ‘MYSTERIOUS LADY,’ from the Egyptian Hall, London, under the patronage of her Majesty and Court, &c.”⁷¹ The ad says, “One or two persons assume her title, but sink into insignificance before the ‘GREAT ORIGINAL.’” Yet the show is entitled “CLAIRVOYANCE UNMASKED, or Mesmeric Deception Exposed,” and this almost certainly points to the Matthews, especially since this “Original Mysterious Lady” was performing with the “Great Eastern Magician,” one of the titles James Matthews employed at the time.

The public was not entirely unaware that there were competing mysterious ladies’ by this time. A reviewer in the *Monmouthshire Merlin* wrote, “A conjurer, named Matthews, has been delighting the Merthyr public with his tricks, and exhibiting the accomplishments of one whom he pretends to be ‘The Mysterious Lady,’ *par excellence*. Whether she be the

⁶⁸ “Literature,” *Morning Post*, 22 July 1846.

⁶⁹ “For a Few Days Only,” *Salisbury and Winchester Journal*, 3 October 1846. Eagle did the same trick with titling with his ads for their performances at the Theatre-Royal in York in December: “... the First appearance of the celebrated MYSTERIOUS LADY, Late of the London Theatres, Miss GEORGINA EAGLE ...” *York Herald*, 5 December 1846.

⁷⁰ Reprinted as “The Mysterious Lady,” in the *Hereford Journal*, 9 December 1846.

⁷¹ “Scientific Institution,” *Bristol Mercury*, 16 January 1847.

real Simon Pure or not, she has been moderately successful, and given satisfaction.”⁷²

Similar ambiguity surrounds this October 1847 notice:

On Thursday last the Queen Dowager honoured the “Mysterious Lady” by an order to attend at Marlborough-house on that evening, that she might witness the extraordinary powers of that lady. There were present on this occasion, besides the Dowager, his grace the Duke of Cambridge, Prince Edward of Saxe Weimar, the Duchess, Lord and Lady Howe, Lady Clinton, two young Princesses, and other persons of distinction. They expressed much astonishment and were highly gratified by such wonderful inspiration.⁷³

What we know with more certainty is that the Haningtons’ son Robert W., who became a painter (of landscapes and, significantly, of prize animals) of some note in the 1870s, was schooled for some years in boarding schools in France and then England, as were his two sisters, while their parents were exhibiting the Mysterious Lady.⁷⁴ Also, Robert Hanington, Sr., during the family’s time in England in the 1840s, had started to purchase art, with a view to exhibiting and selling the paintings. And Robert Sr. was, even at this late date, true to his first love: at Julia’s first appearances at the Royal Saloon, Piccadilly in early 1845, a writer in *Punch*, describing her exhibition, noted the somewhat incongruous display in the room of a painting of “a mammoth dog, who, we were told, used in his day to knock a man down by the mere wag of his tail.”⁷⁵

When the Haningtons moved their performances into Egyptian Hall in 1846, the number of paintings accompanying their exhibition increased. Toward the end of their tenure there, Robert acquired a water-color painting by James M. Burbank entitled “The

⁷² 13 March 1847.

⁷³ “The Mysterious Lady,” *Bucks Gazette*, 16 October 1847.

⁷⁴ “Robert William Hanington, Landscape Painter,” *Phrenological Journal* 6.450 (June 1876): 440-444. That article, based on a phrenological reading and an interview with Robert W., declares that, “He is remarkable, indeed, for his intuitiveness, a quality which he inherits mainly from his mother, as he does also the tendency in general of his mind and intellect.”

⁷⁵ “Punch’s Guide to the Exhibitions,” *Punch* 8.2 (February 1845): 148. Robert Hanington also seems to have offered to show the visitor some live specimens of animals, including rattlesnakes.

Angel delivering Daniel from the Lion's Den," and displayed it in their exhibition space. Its salient point of wonder was its sheer size, with Hanington advertising that, measuring twelve feet by twenty feet, it was the largest water-color painting in the world. The advertisement for the attraction – which dropped the Mysterious Lady into second place – also announced that "One Hundred Oil Paintings for Sale, by the old masters."⁷⁶

In December of 1848, the Haningtons quit Egyptian Hall, but did not leave London; they merely removed to 4, Leicester Square, where they continued exhibiting both the Mysterious Lady and the giant watercolor painting. At the bottom of their newspaper notice of their new location, Hanington added, "N.B. A curious little performing dog also."⁷⁷ The last advertisement we see of the Mysterious Lady in Leicester Square is dated April 9th, 1849, in the *Morning Post*.

The whole Hanington family returned to the United States together on the ship *Yorktown*, arriving in New York City on September 12, 1849.⁷⁸ They arrived just in time to find much of the country newly electrified into conducting spiritualist séances triggered in part by the press reports of the Fox Sisters the year before, allegedly establishing contact with spirits of the dead. The Haningtons settled in Brooklyn, where Julia was baptized into the Dutch Reformed Church in April 1850.⁷⁹ As far as we know, she ceased, on her return to the US in 1849, to perform as the Mysterious Lady. Robert continued to organize traveling exhibitions, advertising a display, in Charleston, South Carolina in January 1850, of his gigantic watercolor painting of "The Angel delivering Daniel from the mouth of the Lions."⁸⁰ He and his son Robert W. also opened the "New York Academy of Design and Gallery of Fine Arts" on Broadway, a space where Hanington could display the paintings he had

⁷⁶ "Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly," *Morning Post*, 3 May 1848. See "Fine Arts," *Morning Post*, 20 May 1848, for an art reviewer's assessment of the painting at Egyptian Hall (as well as his appreciation of the Mysterious Lady). Burbank had painted (and exhibited it) a few years previously, as an experiment to test whether water colors could sustain a large and serious subject.

⁷⁷ "The Mysterious Lady has Removed ..." *Morning Post*, 7 December 1848.

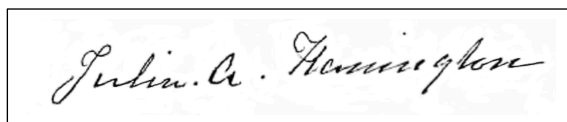
⁷⁸ New York, U.S., Arriving Passenger and Crew Lists, 1820-1957; list 1263, Line 38.

⁷⁹ U.S., Selected States Dutch Reformed Church Membership Records, 1701-1995.

⁸⁰ "The Grand Historical Water Color Drawing," *Charleston Daily Courier*, 19 January 1850. This was probably arranged with the help of his brother Henry, who, at this time, was very active in arranging exhibition tours around the country of his own dioramas, especially "The Creation and Deluge."

collected in Europe, with the intention, we have no doubt, of selling every last one of them.⁸¹ Hanington had followed a path since well-worn, and become an art dealer. The accumulated years of hustling and touring took its toll on him, however, and he died at home in the Williamsburg neighborhood of Brooklyn in the fall of 1852.⁸²

Robert William Hanington went to work after his father's death with his uncle William J. Hanington, who was still in Manhattan directing a large shop that painted and produced decorative glass and theatrical backdrops, and for a time at least exhibited massive dioramas.⁸³ Hanington's daughter Julia Hanington married around that time, and his second daughter Ellen remained unmarried, living with her mother Julia Anne in Brooklyn at least until 1877.⁸⁴ Ultimately, they moved to Tom's River, Ocean County, New Jersey. There, on February 15, 1892, the original Mysterious Lady died, and was buried in Riverside Cemetery, on Main Street in Tom's River.



Robert-Houdin first offered his version of second sight (or “seconde vue”) in London at the St. James Theatre in the spring of 1848, with his young son Émile as the blindfolded seer. It was while Robert-Houdin was performing there that a young student of music named William Henry Palmer saw Robert-Houdin's performance and decided to pursue a joint career in piano performance and magic, under the pseudonym Robert Heller. He

⁸¹ Perhaps Hanington deliberately chose the name to resemble that of the highly esteemed National Academy of Design, founded in New York City in 1825 by Samuel F. B. Morse.

⁸² For his Charleston exhibition, see “The Grand Historical Water Color Drawing,” *Charleston Daily Courier*, 19 January 1850. For his death date, see New York, U.S., Wills and Probate Records, 1659-1999; his will was registered into probate on October 6, 1852. His brother Henry's very busy year — managing the tour of “Donetti's comic troupe of acting monkeys, dogs and goats, in serious and comic pantomimes” — was interrupted in early September in Boston, and did not restart until late November, suggesting to us that Robert Hanington probably died in early-to-mid September of 1852.

⁸³ Robert's brother Henry, who had continued as a theatrical promoter and exhibitor (becoming an agent for P.T. Barnum, for example, during Jenny Lind's tour of the US), died in Manhattan in 1857; his brother William, still attending to his painted glass business, died in Manhattan in 1871.

⁸⁴ Julia became a naturalized US citizen in 1888.

would become renowned for his second-sight act. But even before Robert-Houdin's engagement in London in 1848, Compars Herrmann, at practically the beginning of his magic career, had appeared in February 1848 at the Adelphi Theatre in London, where among other tricks and illusions, a "Madame Herrmann" performed a turn, entitled, "Second Sight, Anti-Magnetism." A London reviewer, explaining her performance to his readers, wrote, "Madame Herrmann guesses, blindfolded, the description of any article submitted to her, *much in the same style as the 'Mysterious Lady' at the Egyptian Hall*" [Italics added].⁸⁵

The advertising copy was, as much as anything, the situating of Madame Herrmann's performance within a recognizable tradition, as well as a reminder, for the audience, of Julia Hanington's path-breaking second-sight act in London. Some of Herrmann's onlookers may also have been led to recall Master M'Kean's second-sight exhibitions in 1831. And a very few aficionados of rare effects might even, watching Madame Herrmann in the dark, have remembered Robert Hanington's Grecian Dog Apollo, intelligently selecting playing cards called for by the audience, back in 1826.

UPDATE (November 21, 2021)

Shortly after posting this essay online, we were made aware of a two-part article on the Mysterious Lady, published by Peter Brunning, which we had not seen. Mr. Brunning had already ploughed much ground that we crossed in our research, and had come upon Mr. and Mrs. Hanington.

Peter Brunning, "The Mysterious Ladies; or, an investigation into three early mindreaders," *Ye Olde Magic Mag* 5.3 (June 2019): 116-126; and 5.4 (September 2019): 178-186.

⁸⁵ "Theatre Royal, Adelphi," *Morning Post*, 15 February 1848.

HANINGTON'S United Attractions

Just arrived from London, and Last from *New-York.*

Extraordinary Exhibition of the Mysterious

LADY

Interesting performance of the Canine Philosopher.

DON CARLO.

And other Amusements
EQUALLY SURPRISING.

TO BE EXHIBITED AT

Cornwall Assembly Rooms
FOR *2 Night* DAYS ONLY.

(owing to other Engagements.)



This surprising and distinguished Foreigner, by the exertion of a faculty, hitherto unknown, is enabled to perform apparent impossibilities, to describe minutely, objects which are placed in such a situation as to render it utterly out of her power to see the whole or any portion of them, to repeat sentences which have been uttered in her absence, to divine the very thoughts of individuals, and to perform many other PARADOXICAL feats of mind. It is impossible by words to convey any adequate idea of this very curious performance, if only half was written in its favor that it deserves the air of improbability it would wear, might deter many from visiting the exhibition who otherwise would, the Proprietors therefore prefer the public judging for themselves and refer the reader to the London and New York Editorial remarks (on the OTHER SIDE,) as to the general character of the Exhibition,—suffice to say, it is the first exhibition of the kind ever seen in America and independent of its novelty, is at once interesting, surprising & instructive.

For the amusement of the Juvenile branches of families, will be added the curious performances of the Canine Philosopher,

DON Carlo

Taught by the original owner of the Grecian Dog Apollo,

This is perhaps one of the greatest instances of Canine Sagacity ever presented to the notice of the public, and shows to what extraordinary perfection even a dog may be educated by perseverance and gentleness.


Several amusing Experiments will be taught, for a moderate compensation, by applying to Mr. Hanington.

**Admission to the whole 50 Cents.
Children half price.**

Front Seats reserved for the Ladies.

Tickets can be had during the day.

Performances to commence at 7 o'clock, evening

 **Turn Over.**

Editorial Notices.

From the New York Star, Jan. 24.

THE MYSTERIOUS LADY.—This around "Delphic Oracle" is likely to become quite a Lion, or rather a Licenser, amongst us. She had her headquarters lately at Masonic Hall, where many ladies of distinction paid a visit to the Sybil, probably to consult about the future; to learn the destiny of a lost ring or the steps of a devious husband. She has, however, with the view of becoming more generally known, taken up her abode at the American Museum, corner of Ann street, and last evening feeding in a kind of Paul Pry's honour, we determined to pay her a visit. We found the saloon so very crowded, that, preferring to wait for a second representation, we amused ourselves with looking at the Cosmorama, Mummies, Glass Blowing, and other attractions, until the audience had retired and a new one had assembled. We invariably, that is we and the public, associate the idea of witches, warlocks, seers, bogles and fortune-tellers, with something horribly ugly and terrific; we always think of the witches in Macbeth—

"What are these—so withered and so wild
In their attire—that look not like
The inhabitants of earth, and yet are on it."

So we expected to see the "hag" with wrinkled brow and "skinny fingers," but was most agreeably disappointed when a pretty little English woman, with rosy cheeks, a soft blue sleepy eye, entered the arena, curtseying gracefully to the audience, and seating herself on a chair in the middle of the room. "Ah ha, says I, she is a handsome witch at any rate, and I have no objections to show her the lines in the palm of my hand." I observed among the audience several old ladies, who had a kind of Connecticut look, and who no doubt had come up to town to discover something new in the art and mysteries of divination. The manner of developing her powers is by answering certain queries, as thus—The master of ceremonies, her back being towards him, and at some distance from each other, touches certain articles rapidly on different persons in attendance, which she instantly names—such as hats, gloves, seals, branches, feathers, muffs, &c. &c. This, however, may be the result of a settled plan of arrangement; but he asks a person to name to him in a whisper any particular favorite article of food, which she instantly repeats aloud. In it there can be no understanding between the parties; and so he goes round the company, asking a variety of questions from each, which she immediately repeats, though with her back turned and at a considerable distance from the parties. How this is done, or where the art is concealed, we know not; and it would be improper if we did know to state it; because, although it is surprising and extraordinary, still we must not believe there is any thing supernatural in it. Yet as it is amusing and innocent, we advise the folks to spend half an hour in witnessing the exhibition. They will not be disappointed.

From the Dublin Times and Morning Post, March 25th, 1832.

EXTRAORDINARY EXHIBITION AT THE ASSEMBLY ROOMS.

"Dogs are honest creatures, and never betray their masters."

We have paid a visit to the Assembly Rooms, and were much surprised at the wonderful sagacity displayed by Don Carlos, a beautiful Spanish and exhibitor's power beyond mere instinct approximating in fact to the reasoning of a human being. We always had a high opinion of the canine race, but really Don Carlos's achievements far exceed our expectations, and seems to be a freak of nature far beyond our comprehension. The double sighted mysterious Lady, too, (we beg pardon for mentioning the lady last,) gives proof of intelligence perfectly unaccountable; our most secret actions, nay our very thoughts and unexpressed wishes were known to her, and such answers given by her to questions, as made us almost believe in the regulated idea of supernatural agency. The beautiful experiments of the French Lilliputian Figures, who without any apparent mechanism, move correctly to music; the changeable pictures and the vanishing paper are managed so adroitly, that of themselves are well worth the price of admission. Want of space prevents us from going farther into detail, and we must refer our readers to the exhibition itself. It is with regret we observe that the proprietor is on the point of leaving for the United States—our good wishes attend him—and we strongly advise all who have the least spark of curiosity in their composition, to avail themselves of the present opportunity of gratifying it.

THE MYSTERIOUS LADY. The novelty of this lady's pretensions, induced me to pay her a visit at the Masonic Hall; I had formed an opinion that it was the *Invisible Lady*, under a new name; but on entering the Saloon was agreeably disappointed; at a distance from the company sat the "Mysterious"—young, beautiful and interesting. I found the place thronged with the most respectable and fashionable company. The exhibition on the whole, was of so extraordinary a character, that, had I been told only one half of what I there saw and heard, I should have treated it as fabulous. Among other feats, she readily told (although at a distance of at least thirty feet, with her back towards the company, and blind folded) the name of any article produced by me, or any of the company; the wine first drank, or partial to; favorite fish; game or meat, &c. In order to try if there was any pre-arrangement, I whispered to a friend my partiality to *whales*; I was requested to ask the lady my choice; I did so, when she smilingly told me, that it was a "great curiosity," but presumed I was a *whaler*: this quite satisfied me. In fact the famed oracle of Delphos, one of the *has been*, sinks in obscurity before this living oracle of the present day. The performance is conducted in a very creditable manner, and well deserves the encouragement it is daily receiving. *New York Star.*

From the New York Courier and Enquirer, January 17th, 1834.

THE MYSTERIOUS LADY. A few evenings since I was induced to drop in at the Masonic Hall, for the purpose of having an interview with this extraordinary foreigner; and although predisposed against the title *mysterious*, must confess I never was so astonished or gratified. The lady, sitting with her back towards the company, at about thirty feet distance, with a handkerchief tied over her eyes, told correctly the color and quality of my dress, ornamental appendages, even to the rhyler on my seal. She speaks without the least hesitation. During the exhibition, I was asked to name any particular fish, joint of meat, game or wine I was most partial to. Having done so, in a whisper scarcely audible to myself, I walked up to her, enquired of her my choice, when, much to my surprise, she repeated my own words. As there was not the slightest possibility of any communication being made to her, she possess a power far beyond my comprehension. Among other things, one of the company privately selected a card from a full pack, asked her its name, which she immediately declared. I am not a believer in the *supernatural*; but am willing to give credit where credit is due. The whole exhibition is very ingeniously managed, and in a manner perfectly respectable. If she is a witch, she has the advantage of being young and beautiful. By what means she has acquired her surprising powers, is indeed a mystery. At all events, she appeared to be reaping a rich harvest, being crowded with company, who cannot but speak highly of the exhibition.

From the London Times.

SINGULAR EXHIBITION AT SAVILLE PALACE.

Although limited for room, we cannot refrain from devoting a few lines to her Mysterious Ladyship, who like the Delphic oracle of old, clouded in mystery, nightly surprises and delights her visitors at Saville Palace. Among the host of public exhibitions in London at the present time, for extreme interest and novelty, this should most certainly take the precedence.

We were ushered into the splendid saloon, in the midst of which, sat this singularly talented lady; observing remarkable in her appearance, save that she is young and interesting; at a considerable distance from the company and completely out of hearing, sitting with her back towards us, she told the color of the dresses of the spectators, named the various articles produced by them—repeated the lowest whisper with unerring precision and in fact performed so many extraordinary feats, that we feel ourselves incapable of doing her justice in the description. The exhibition was very fashionably attended. To all who have not been, we strongly recommend an early visit. At a private performance before their Majesties last week, the utmost satisfaction was given.

From the New York Evening Star, Jan. 27.

THE MYSTERIOUS LADY will, as we learn, leave for the South in a few days; those who have not yet paid her a visit at the Museum, corner of Ann street and Broadway, should embrace the present opportunity, as she is anxious to reach Washington, and her presence there at this particular crisis may excite as much curiosity as the celebrated Madame Krudner did at the Court of Alexander, of Russia. Every member of Congress will doubtless pay her a visit, and if she could give us a touch of her art on the deposite question, she would be applauded to the very echo.