

# FACTS AND FANTASIES:

A SEQUEL TO

## Sights and Sounds;.

THE

MYSTERY OF THE DAY.

BY

HENRY SPICER, ESQ.



—We grow into thought,—and with inward ascensions,  
Touch the bounds of our being—  
We lie in the dark here, swathed doubly around  
With our sensual relations and social conventions,—  
Yet are 'ware of a Sight—yet are 'ware of a Sound—  
Beyond hearing and seeing—  
Are aware that a Hades rolls deep on all sides,  
With its infinite tides.—

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

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## FACTS AND FANTASIES.

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"God brings good out of evil ; and therefore it were but reason that we should trust God to govern his own world."—TAYLOR.

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THE wide-spread interest which, since the publication of *Sights and Sounds*, has attached itself to the subject on which that work enlarges, induces me to offer a few supplementary facts and observations, partly with the purpose of filling up the picture of which the former book was intended merely to furnish an outline; partly with that of vindicating myself from the views and sentiments ascribed to me by the periodical press; whose pre-conceived hostility to the subject appears to extend itself to all who do not, like themselves, ignore or condemn.

There is an ancient saying to the effect, that any gentleman desiring to sup with a nameless personage, must come provided with a spoon of no ordinary dimensions. The same rule should certainly prevail with regard to the pen with which an author ventures to defy his critics of

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the press ; forasmuch as the latter possess not only the advantage of reiterating attacks at their pleasure, but can shelter themselves under that convenient incognito which admits of the indulgence of much pleasant personality unalloyed by the slightest hazard. If a writer is bound to accept, without murmuring, the decision of those literary tribunals to which he has himself appealed, he has surely a right to expect, on the other hand, that the subject be not pre-judged ; that the book be read ; and that the avowed opinions of the writer, however challenged or condemned, are not misrepresented.

I trouble my friends with these observations simply in reference to the fact that several influential publications, *Blackwood*, *Athenæum*, *Observer*, *Leader*, *Literary Gazette*, &c., &c., though universally silent on the merits of the actual controversy, have shown a disposition to make my work, in some degree, its scapegoat ; and, as though in order to do so more effectually, attributed to me opinions which I not only never professed, but which I declare to be alike repulsive to my taste and reason. It is one thing to be the "apostle" of the Rappers, as some one has named me (in allusion, probably, to mine being the first English work on the subject), and another to be their "martyr ;" and so decidedly objectionable is it to be victimised for any opinions but

one's own, that, with every deference to the gentlemen to whom I have alluded, I beg leave to remark that, no passage in my book can, fairly construed, justify the assertion that I coincide in the spiritual solution of the rapping-mystery.

I said, indeed, that I conceived that mystery to have its origin in no mechanical skill ; in no human intelligence ; no recognised law of physics ; no material organism, whatsoever. Nor has it ; since not one, nor all of these, can cover the whole body of phenomena developed in the exhibitions in question. The surmises respecting a new physical agent had not, at the time I wrote, acquired a sufficiently definite form ; and the popular, or spiritual, theory, I left precisely where I found it ; for until the real secret be satisfactorily demonstrated, however we may dissent from, we cannot absolutely *disprove* the counter-conclusions.

The hostility of the English press, as regards these manifestations, is rather remarkable, and will hereafter form not the least curious feature in their history. In our liberal age, it is rare indeed to find any proposition, indicative of great results, fighting its unassisted way to notice and popularity—no single voice uplifted in its favour ; while any individual but venturing to suggest a patient hearing, is either taxed with partaking the extremest views, or lampooned as a mad, ec-

centric individual, for whom a brief sojourn in the immediate neighbourhood of Hanwell or Colney Hatch, is the lightest predicable destiny. The open invective of the press is more easily understood than its profound silence; the announcement of "spiritual" manifestations, whereby direct communications from the departed were obtainable by any and everybody, at so much a head, being, no doubt, justly calculated to alarm the prejudices and awaken the susceptibilities of religious and rational persons.

It might have been remembered (for the fact was notorious) that the said manifestations came among us stamped with the belief of very many of the most pious and enlightened minds of America, who had only acquiesced in the "spiritual" solution of the difficulty, after every other theory of explanation had proved inadequate to the point at issue. It seemed to be overlooked that the announcement of the phenomena as spiritual was rather an expression, than a dictation, of faith. It was perfectly competent for any one, so inclined, to investigate the matter on wholly mundane principles, and to test the demonstrations by purely physical laws. "Our convictions," (wrote Mr. Hayden, husband of the medium) "binding none but ourselves, it is not required that any inclination towards them should accompany inquiry. \* \* \* \* We are satisfied to



invite attention to the manifestations, *as though mere natural phenomena, forming, in their operation and application, a most extraordinary chapter in the psychological history of mankind.*"

A fair and candid proposition, and one which certainly merited a better answer than was conveyed in puerile cries of "humbug," and "imposture." The medium and her friends courted rational inquiry, and were met with barren abuse.

Some few parties, however, *did*, it appears, avail themselves of their unquestioned right to test the manifestations by other than spiritual rules (see *Household Words*, *Zoist*, and *Leader*), and the result of their perquisitions was to add to the lighter literature of the age, a paper or two, teeming, indeed, with the choicest witticisms, but unhappily glancing wide of the phenomena they affected to elucidate. And no wonder, since it appears, by their own showing, that the brains of the "investigators" were still labouring through the mass of rejected fallacies, toe-cracking, shoe-tapping, &c., &c., the mere refuse of the very earliest inquiry, long since scattered to the winds. No one, be he sceptic or believer, who peruses the report of the various parties alluded to, can escape the impression that not only was the cause pre-judged, but the most unwarrantable "traps" laid to catch (see *Leader*) the "unsuspecting medium" in discrepancies (from which it never

was pretended that the phenomena are wholly freed), and then proclaim them to the world as *proofs* of the imposture ! Tremendous are the shouts raised at every failure, yet not a syllable is said of the *successful* demonstrations, nor a hint propounded as to the real character of the mysterious physical agent by which they are accomplished. Dr. Mesmer failed to influence the “tough subject” selected for him as a test ; yet who now doubts mesmerism ? Even before the declared presence of a medium on this side the Atlantic, more than one paper had determined to regard the subject as “tabooed” and condemned ; in relation to which circumstance, I may, perhaps, be permitted to observe that it is little wonder the elderly female, from whose pen the more snappish articles in the *Athenæum* are understood to emanate, should assail me for being “neither hawk or buzzard,” and feel deeply aggrieved at an impartiality widely enough contrasted with her *own* practice.

Perhaps the most remarkable essay that has yet appeared in England on the subject of the manifestations, is contained in the *Zoist* (for April), a serial, which—from Dr. Ashburner’s known connexion with it—might have been expected to treat the subject with some degree of candour. It bears strong internal evidence of having been communicated by an elder sister of

the venerable person above referred to, as attached to the *Athenæum*, with the additional disadvantage, that she has forgotten her spectacles, and been thereby betrayed into errors which might easily have been avoided.

Some attention has, nevertheless, been attracted to her lucubration, owing to the practical jesting of the *Examiner*, which patted the drivelling old creature on the shoulder, and, declaring her to be “the best of the exposures”—(as indeed, in one sense, she undoubtedly *was*)—copied a considerable portion of her little scold into its columns—errors and all !

“With ladies can you *think* that I would jest?”

says naughty Mephistopheles,—and we must forgive our poor old simple Martha for failing to detect the *Examiner's* covert sarcasm.

For the benefit, however, of those who may not have seen the essay in question, it may be remarked, that she regards the whole secret as being comprised in something considerably smaller than a nutshell. Here is the pith of her argument :—

“The petticoated medium”—(she is particularly anxious to impress upon us that the medium is no Bloomer)—“*sits with her feet under the table!!*” In the name of politeness, dear old soul, where did you *expect* her to place them?

. . . . She continues—"As to the raps, they are successfully made with the foot against a leg of the table or a chair."

Raps, my dear madam, are the not uncommon result of collision between any two hard substances. You may—and no doubt *do*—rap the lid of your snuff-box, while chuckling over the nativity of one of your own successful discoveries in the science of rapping—and you may even continue that amusement for a month of Sundays—but they are not *the* raps, nor will they resemble them more closely than does your mob-cap the Queen's crown.

I entreat of you to believe, my dear lady, that I do not impugn your motives. You are sincere—I know it—in desiring to expose what your gifts—such as they are—induce you to believe a humbug; but when zeal quickens into enthusiasm, our reason is apt to take French leave, and truth to bear him company. The crimes, lamented by poor Madam Roland, as committed in the name of liberty, are nothing to the falsehoods uttered and disseminated in the service of truth.

The following little discrepancies must therefore be laid either to the charge of intemperate zeal or insufficient opportunity. The reader, and more especially those who have themselves witnessed rapping phenomena, will decide. They are mere examples.

Mrs. ZOIST.

The inquirer places his head under the table, and, that moment, the rapping ceases. He raises it, and the rapping recommences. He looks under again, and there is the like cessation.

The medium keeps a sharp look out at your eyes, or your hand, or both, and listens anxiously if you speak.

It is a pity that the spirits will not dispense with tables!

We have felt it an important duty boldly to raise our voice in condemnation of this vile and unblushing imposture. In so doing, we shall doubtless excite the temporary enmity of many who are at present believers, &c.

Mrs. FACT.

This ducking process, though not in universal practice, has been tried, and may be again, at pleasure, without any cessation in the sounds.

The most startling and curious replies have been obtained when the alphabet has been held in a position to screen it from the medium, when the latter's face has been *averted* from the inquirer, or when she has been in conversation with another party, during all which time the rappings continued.

My dear madam, they *do*. Thousands have heard the rappings on floors, on window-frames, hearths, pillows, &c. A recent instance was stated in the *Critic* (May 2), in which the sounds declared themselves, no circle being formed.

Nonsense. You have fulfilled your imperative duty like a brave old gentlewoman; and now, having proved yourself admirably qualified to make converts—go, with Miss Olivia Primrose, “help your mother make the gooseberry pie!”

The more important organs of the press seem to have entered into a compact to treat the subject with a silence even more inexplicable than abuse. While the choice appears to lie between the acknowledgment of a wonderful discovery, and the exposure of a colossal humbug, it is difficult to conceive how a journal, faithful to its public trust, can evade *both* courses. The *Times*, nevertheless, declines to pollute its pure and virtuous pages even with advertisements of rapping-*séances*; and another morning paper, after agreeing to the insertion of a long and favourable notice, takes fright at the last moment, and suppresses it. *Blackwood*, affecting complete ignorance of the world-wide theme, assumes to have been suddenly awakened to it by my narrative—*Sights and Sounds*,—and (betraying a familiarity with the subject most startling, since intuitive), founds upon those slender materials, an article whose ability, differently directed, would have sufficed to analyse and demonstrate the remarkable elements in question, and to direct the energies, not only of the dupes who listen to, but those greater dupes who practise, “spirit manifestations,” into more wholesome and legitimate channels of inquiry. With the honourable exceptions of the *Leader* and *Critic*, no paper has, I believe, opened its columns to counter-statements, however fair and temperate, on this

much vexed question; and it will be another curious reminiscence of the controversy, that public interest should have been attracted to it principally through the instrumentality of those agreeable *farceurs*—*Household Words*, *Punch*, and *Diogenes*. Henceforth, who can say that we may not glean philosophy from the gambols of a pantaloon?

The annoying, but necessary, ordeal of opposition and ridicule has now well nigh completed that work, which (through the apathy of science,) devolved upon it. Universal attention has been drawn to these singular phenomena; the laugh and the invective have lulled, and it is highly probable that a word may shortly be got in on the hitherto unpopular side of reason, candour, and philosophy. *Then*, my dear madam, it will be found that the marvels so repugnant to your sensibilities, that you can find no milder terms for them than “vile imposture,” and “mendacious trickery,” are not irreconcilable with the worthiest and holiest aspirings of our nature, and of that religion which sanctifies it; that they are, in fact, referable to purely natural causes, demonstrable by experiment, and the forerunners of discoveries in a branch of philosophy hitherto sealed to many an anxious inquirer.

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Perhaps the worst consequence of the press hostility is felt in the extreme reluctance, on the part of persons of station and eminence, to connect their names, publicly, with what has been openly branded as an imposture. This has had the effect of retarding any organised means that might have been adopted for the due development of the mystery. Had a committee been formed, to meet at intervals, and avail themselves of opportunities of inquiry similar to those so freely afforded in America, a very brief period would have sufficed to decide whether the matter was, or was not, deserving of notice. But although such support and encouragement as could be furnished by stolen visits to the *medium*, were unhesitatingly accorded, few of the visitors cared or condescended to acknowledge their convictions ; but, satisfied with comparing notes in confidence, held aloof from all such open inquiries as might possibly introduce their honourable names into the pages of our dear old friend of the *Zoist*, and her gossiping sisterhood.

It was singular, that, although Mrs. Hayden possessed an acquaintance, ranging from the highest ranks of the peerage to the simple individual who swept the adjacent crossing, nobody seemed over prompt to acknowledge the poor lady. Two hundred *séances* at her own residence, fifty more at those of the nobility and gentry



(including in all at least one thousand persons), must have been given to shadows and nobodies. This page might be adorned with at least a score of coronets, whose distinguished wearers, actuated, it must be feared, by less praiseworthy motives than good Mrs. Gilpin, preferred alighting from their emblazoned vehicles some "three doors off," and dismissing those tell-tale panels to a spot, sacred to the half-hearted and irresolute, *i. e.*, "round the corner," where dwells a bewildered baker, ever at a loss to comprehend why so many dazzling equipages perpetually draw up, with no other object, as it appears, than that of affectionately contemplating his fancy bread !

This pusillanimity—for it deserves no milder term—is strangely contrasted with the conduct of the eminent and scientific in America. Here are twenty names, out of hundreds, of those who hesitated not an instant in commending to public attention the phenomena their own experience pronounced deserving of it:—Hon. G. Bancroft (the historian, late minister at the court of St. James's), W. C. Bryant (the poet), H. T. Tuckerman, N. P. Willis, J. Fenimore Cooper, Horace Greely, Epes Sargent, Rev. Drs. Griswold, Hawkes, Peabody, Phelps, Drs. Francis and Marcy, Hon. J. W. Edmonds (Judge of the Supreme Court of New York), Dr. John Ware (President of the Massachusetts Medical Society),

Dr. W. Owens, Professors Buchanan, Hill, Bush, Brittan, Hon. R. Johnson (late of the United States Cabinet at Washington), &c., &c.

On our side of the Atlantic, the advocates of fair play have been few and faint in their appeals ; indeed, with one or two honourable exceptions, anonymous writers in the serial publications have been its only champions.

Dr. Ashburner publicly announced his belief that, not only was there no deception in the case, but that the whole subject was worthy of the deepest investigation by the unscientific, as well as the scientific, world.

Sir Charles Isham (Lampport Hall, Northampton), regardless of ridicule in a cause he believed to be that of truth, contributed his public testimony to the genuineness of the manifestations.

Mr. Chas. W. Hoyland, M.R.C.S.L., testified that, to the best of his belief and judgment, no deception was practised, and that the phenomena were deserving of the strictest investigation.

Mr. Ryan, and others, gave similar testimonials.

Perhaps the most interesting tribute to the singular and forcible character of these manifestations, is afforded in the testimony of the well known Robert Owen, philosopher and Socialist, hitherto, it is to be feared, sceptical as to the

conscious existence of the departed spirit, but now rejoicing in the hope of a glorious immortality :—

“I have patiently traced the history of these manifestations, investigated the facts connected with them, testified to, in innumerable instances, by persons of high character, have had fourteen *séances* with the *medium*, Mrs. Hayden, during which she gave me every opportunity to ascertain if it were possible there could be any deception on her part.

“I am not only convinced that there is no deception with truthful *media* in these proceedings, but that they are destined to effect, at this period, the greatest moral revolution in the character and condition of the human race, &c.

“ROBERT OWEN.”

In addition to these testimonials, such efforts as are implied in the following certificate, were made, to invite attention to a subject so replete with interest :—

“We, the undersigned, having had full opportunities of witnessing the so-called spirit manifestations, coincide in opinion as follows :—

“Not to dwell upon the utter failure of every theory of explanation hitherto applied to them in America, a failure which nevertheless renders the hasty solution by a portion of our periodical

press of little value, we consider that the manifestations possess in themselves features of sterling and peculiar interest; and in spite of certain errors and discrepancies which occasionally perplex inquiry, we still (without committing ourselves to any especial theory) believe the phenomena *genuine*, and deserving of the most patient, serious, and earnest investigation.

H. DANIEL, M.D., 36, Clarges Street.

CATHERINE CROWE, 37, Brook Street.

WM. SMYTH, Manor House, Battersea.

J. FORBES, 31, Bury Street, St. James's.

HENRY SPICER, 100, Mount Street,  
Grosvenor Square.

ALFRED WILLIAM HOBSON, M.A., of St.  
John's College, Cambridge.

Sir J. LILLIE, 105, Pall Mall.

WESTLAND MARSTON, 22, Rochester  
Road, Camden Road Villas."

It may be observed, *par parenthèse*, that Dr. Daniel, whose signature appears above, had been previously one of the most distinguished scoffers at the new "intelligence;" and his sudden secession exposed him, as might have been expected, to no small amount of *badinage* in various social circles where his opinions were accustomed to command respect. The doctor, nevertheless, stood to his colours, and propounded his newly acquired convictions with the calmness and deci-

sion of one who has derived them, not from impulse, but from reason.

In the mean time, that is, while we have been engaged in the lighter and livelier occupation of vituperating each other, the actual subject of the manifestations has been calmly weighed and considered by reasonable beings. One by one, the great majority of controversialists have subsided into quiescence, and the question has resolved itself into one of two direct modes of explanation, represented, respectively, by the advocacy of Mr. Charles Beecher and Mr. E. C. Rogers; the former in his lately published "Review of the Spiritual Manifestations,"\* the latter in his "Philosophy of Mysterious Agents."†

These two works, both, in their differing views, scholarly and profound, come opportunely to rescue my superficial one from the imputation of directing attention to a subject beneath the notice of philosophy; nor could any book, assuming to present a history of the "spirit" manifestations, be complete, without devoting some pages to a brief *précis* of their views, since to one of

\* "Review of the Spiritual Manifestations, read before the Congregational Association of New York and Brooklyn." By Charles Beecher, Pastor of the First Congregational Church, Newark, New Jersey. Putnam, New York. Bosworth, London.

† "Philosophy of Mysterious Agents, Human and Mundane, or the Dynamic Laws and Relations of Man." By E. C. Rogers. Jewett and Co., Boston.

these two reasoners every one must ultimately come.

In *Sights and Sounds*, (page 412), I gave a slight sketch of Mr. Rogers's theory, but (his entire work being at that time unpublished), I had not the means of entering so minutely into his views and hypotheses, as it must now be owned they deserve. The reader will, it is to be hoped, bear in mind the almost impossibility of doing justice to an abstruse work of 336 pages, in the space of *ten*.

Mr. Rogers believes in the existence of a *new physical agent*, distinct from electricity, but closely allied with animal magnetism, to which the name of *od*, or *odyle*, was given by Baron Reichenbach; and considers that the whole body of mysterious phenomena, sounds, movements, speech, writing, doctrines, prophecies, revelations, &c., are referable to cerebral or mental action, through the medium of the *od*, or *odyle*, aforesaid. They are, to use his own words, produced by "a physical force associated with the human organism; and, under peculiar conditions, this physical force is made to emanate from that organism with a most terrible energy, and without any necessary conjunction with either spiritual or psychological agency."

The conditions alluded to for the emanation of the force producing the sounds, are physical,

a fact demonstrated by the observations of Mr. Ballou and others, to the effect, that changes in the nervous system, consequent upon the state of health of the medium, destroyed, or greatly reduced, the power that produced the phenomena. The force is, consequently, not under the general control of the will, but the mere agent of the unconscious organs, and playing its part automatically, as the cerebral organs are affected.

The material agent is thus controllable by the peculiar changes that take place in the organs of the brain.

That every thought, emotion, or passion, is accompanied with a change of the motion of the brain, is one of the most undisputed facts in physiology.

It is the prerogative of every man's mind or spirit, to control the motions, and consequently, the changes, of his brain, within prescribed limits. But in certain conditions of the latter, such as mesmeric trance, catalepsy, sleep, cerebral inflammation, passiveness of mind and will, and a thousand others, the man's own personality is suspended in its prerogative action. The predominant influence upon it then becomes *material—sensuous*.

Here the reflex action of another's brain will readily take place. Another's wish or request will act like a law. Hence a request mentioned by Ballou, that certain questions be answered

*thus* and *so*—were given back to him in raps accordingly.\* He found, he says, that the *will* of the medium varied the results in several cases. But this, as Mr. Rogers proves, could not have taken place *directly*.

It appears, then, that a fictitious personality may, under peculiar circumstances, be induced in the brain, and represented independently of the conscious personality, reason, and will, of the individual.

Here are some conditions :—(a) The *operator's cerebrum* must be *active* under the influence of the mind's purpose. (b) This active state of the operator's brain must be exactly propagated to the *medium's* brain. (c) The medium's brain or cerebrum must be *susceptible*, or in a condition to receive the propagated influence. (d) There must be some sort of medium or conductor, through which this influence from the brain of the one will be propagated to the brain of the other. (e) This influence received by the medium's

\* In a meeting described in the *Leader* (March 12), Mr. G. H. Lewes mentions his having put the following courteous question to the "spirits :"—"*Is Mrs. Hayden an impostor ?*"—Having received the desired affirmative, this gentleman brands the whole affair as a hoax. The reader will perceive that, on the contrary, if the experiment prove anything, it goes to justify Mr. Rogers's philosophical argument. Mr. Hayden is of opinion that the question, "*Is Mr. Lewes a booby ?*" would have, in all probability, produced a *second* affirmative. Not at all. For, query, whether the reflex action of Mr. L.'s brain would have lent its aid to the reply ?



cerebrum, must perfectly represent itself there (as the face of a man is perfectly represented on the daguerreotype plate, or as a thing is imaged on the retina.) (*f*) This must be an action of the medium's cerebrum, of a specific character. (*g*) This specific action of the medium's cerebrum must give a controlling influence to the agent that we have demonstrated to have emanation from the human organism, under peculiar conditions. (*h*) Or the medium's organism must be in the condition to act an involuntary pantomime, and thus represent the action in the brain. Thus, the "raps," or involuntary movements of the medium, will represent the "wish" or "will" of the operator.

"It therefore follows, as an inevitable result, that the specific action of one person's brain may be unconsciously propagated to another's brain, and there be exactly represented in a *second cerebral action*. This may propagate itself to the automatic centres in the spinal axis, and thus exactly represent itself in the involuntary play of the muscles, or (if the person is a "rapper") play upon the agent that emanates from the organism that produces raps or moves tables, and there represent itself in automatic play, as on the muscles. "This," concludes Mr. Rogers, "is no fancy sketch. We challenge its refutation as a logical deduction."

The condition required of a person in order to be what is termed a *reliable* medium, is great *susceptibility*. Mr. Rogers presents testimony, even from his opponents on the spiritual side, showing that the individual must be *passive* to the agency influencing him; the reason and will must exert no controlling influence over his cerebral organization. The same condition is observed in producing mesmeric or pathematic phenomena.

"We have known persons, on first becoming subjects of the "intelligent" phenomena of the "raps," to exercise a conscious control, as to the character or manner of phenomenal developments; but, on becoming more deeply inducted, the brain became subject, in specific ways, to external influences, *entirely independent* of the "desire," or "wish," or "will," of the medium. Then all seemed so foreign from the real personality of the individual, as to induce him to believe himself subject to the influence of heavenly visitants. The same thing has been observed by Mr. Ballou. 'It is a remarkable fact,' says he, 'that some media, who, during the first few days or weeks of their mediumship, knew themselves to have considerable power over the manifestations, have gradually become clear and *passive*, and found themselves, at last, utterly unable to affect the responses and communications made through them. I have in my mind a worthy friend,

of unquestionable veracity, who stated to me that this was the case with him. For several weeks after he found himself a medium, he could get very much such answers to questions as he pleased. During that stage of his mediumship he felt quite confident the whole thing was but a new species of 'mesmerism.' But, after a while, he began to fail of controlling the agency, and at length found it operating entirely independent of his most determined '*wishings* and *willings*.' "

Mr. Ballou, and the spirit advocates, conclude that *here* commences the operation of spiritual power; the hypothesis presupposing that there is no power inherent in man, adequate to the production of phenomena lying out of his consciousness.

Mr. Rogers considers this as contradicted by *facts*.

These facts prove, from every-day experience, that the brain may play its part automatically, without the reason, desire, will, or knowledge of the mind. Some persons whistle or sing unconsciously, others imitate movements they are witnessing, while their thoughts are far remote from the scene of action. A printer was in the habit of solving problems, or planning schemes foreign to his labour, while his eyes unconsciously reverted to the copy on the case, and his hand selected the proper type. Such phenomena are of the commonest occurrence.

Mr. Rogers then adduces remarkable testimony respecting the reflex or automatic action of the brain, from Dunglenson's "Human Physiology," from Laycock, Sir Charles Bell, J. J. Wilkinson, &c. &c., and sums up as follows:—

"1st. It is evident, then, that the external world is constantly affecting the brain, constantly producing impressions; and yet but comparatively few of these impressions pass to the mind, and are known through the consciousness. As Wilkinson says, 'Many of our impressions are unconscious, nay, perhaps, all through the longer part of their course, though travelling along the cerebral lines.' We have already given numerous facts, which plainly evidence this; and we shall have occasion, by-and-by, to present another class of interesting facts to the same purpose.

"2nd. It is still further evident, from the facts we have advanced, that these unconscious impressions may, and indeed do, daily play back, as reflex actions of the brain, without involving the slightest action of the mind; except, it may be, in cognizing the ultimate results, as when the 'medium,' like any other spectator, witnesses the movement of the object, hears the sounds, or observes the movement of his own hand in its involuntary motion.

"3rd. It is precipitate, therefore, in view of such facts as these, to attribute to the influence of

disembodied spirits that which so evidently lies within the sphere of the human organisation, and human relations, and mundane agencies.

Mr. Rogers next proceeds to show, still from facts, how the human organism may be influenced by drugs, &c., so as to alter its conditions; and argues that, inasmuch as the agent, the substance upon which it acts, and the new condition, are purely physical, it must be absurd to suppose that the *results* are anything more or less than physical.

It follows, therefore, that visions, somnambulism, ecstasy, the so-called clairvoyance, predictions, mediumship, &c., which are pathematically effected, and also effected by the influence of drugs upon the organism, *are the results of the material conditions of the organism.*

And that, as the brain and nervous system are automatic, whose action represents *mind*, and as their condition is readily affected by the agency of drugs (see cases quoted by Mr. Rogers), and as, in the instances adduced, the medium's phenomena represented intelligence, *it follows that we have not the least warrant for supposing the latter to be by the agency of disembodied spirits.* He challenges the contrary to be shown.

I have already intimated that it is far beyond the limits of a mere supplement to enter fully into this writer's arguments, far less to quote

from the immense mass of undoubted testimony he has accumulated in support of them. I have therefore, confined myself, almost exclusively, to his deductions, and will merely add his concluding remarks, because they not only afford an additional illustration of his views, but appear calculated to throw some light on the astonishing rapidity with which the belief and interest in these phenomena continue to diffuse themselves over, at least, two quarters of the civilized world.

According to Mr. Rogers, this very circumstance is no more than the natural operation of the law of specific sympathetic influence on the nervous system, in relation to the mundane agency.

It is shown by Dr. Kerner, that those susceptible persons who came *en rapport* with the Seeress of Prevorst, became afterwards tormented with the rappings . . . . The same has been everywhere manifested in the present epidemic. "Persons would, on returning from a visit to a medium, and on calling upon supposed spirits, receive the raps as from the spirits."\*

\* Sir Charles Isham, Lamport Hall, Northampton, writes to the medium, Mrs. Hayden, as follows :—

" Lamport Hall, March 26, 1853.

" My dear Madam,

" I have great pleasure in informing you, that upon my return to Lamport, and following the directions concerning the circle given me by my spirit friends through your mediumship on the 3rd inst., not

“It is well known to all who have practised the art of mesmerising, or pathetizing, that those individuals whose nervous systems have once been subjected to its control, are more or less liable to

only myself, but nine persons with me, were enabled distinctly to hear sounds similar to those produced in your presence. They were considerably fainter but no less unmistakable.

“Three others of the party, besides myself, were also found sufficient to elicit them, each one alone; and one of them I hear has since transferred it to a fourth.

“With myself, and I believe with all of us, they almost entirely ceased after about the fifth day.”

The lady of a writer of our time, eminent in a branch of literature which keeps his popular name almost constantly before the public, has favoured me with the following:—

“A few days since, we had been passing the evening at the house of a friend, when, the subject of the manifestations having been alluded to, my husband expressed his doubts of their spiritual origin.

“After we had returned home, and had been sitting a short time together, we both distinctly heard *two deep-drawn sighs*. No living being was present but ourselves. My husband requested that if it were a spiritual presence, three knocks should be given. This was done (as it appeared) on the window-pane. A further request to knock *six* times was in like manner obeyed. I remarked that I considered this a message to my husband, to prove the reality of the manifestations.

“A week after, I went to call upon Mrs. Hayden—not, however, intending to communicate with the ‘spirits’—and was in the act of relating what had occurred at home, when we were startled by raps upon the table (which stood at a distance from us) breaking in upon our conversation. On going to the table to inquire, I found the communication was addressed to myself, purported to be from the spirit of my mother, and was as follows:—‘I made the sounds to convince Mr. — of the reality of spirits.’”

fall into the same, or a like state, spontaneously. Now, there are hundreds of such cases in every section of the country,—persons who have been inducted into this extreme sensitiveness by the thousand and one lecturers on ‘Electrical Psychology,’ ‘Electro-Biology,’ ‘Mental Alchemy,’ ‘Etherology and Magic Eloquence,’ ‘Neurology,’ ‘Pathetism,’ ‘Mesmerism.’ The way has thus been prepared for our present epidemic. Indeed, this is acknowledged by the believers in spiritualism—by the most intelligent among them. They concede that the conditions required for eliciting the “manifestations” are magnetic or mesmeric conditions.

“In the ‘History of the recent developments in Spiritual Manifestations in Philadelphia, by a member of the first circle,’ the writer informs us that the means made use of to induct the medium ‘are of a magnetic or mesmeric character,’ and which, as they are applied, ‘carry the subject deeper and deeper into a state of insensibility.’ These influences were brought to bear upon the nervous system of the medium in a circle expressly formed for the purpose of inducting media and obtaining the ‘manifestations.’

“This process of eliciting the phenomena by means of the magnetism of an organised circle is an important fact, which should by no means be



left out of sight, as it has led to the development of many curious phenomena.

“These circles have been formed in all parts of the country, and it has been found that where there was a perfect unity of feeling with regard to the object of the circle, phenomena of a more or less wonderful character have been evolved; not, however, without the presence of such persons as were readily subjected to the influence of physical and human influences. In order to prepare a ‘medium,’ or a person who shall exhibit the phenomena, it is required that he shall ‘give up all self-control, all resistance, and resign himself or herself to the entire direction and control of foreign agencies—agencies supposed to be spirits. ‘Sometimes the process of preparation or development is easy and quick, at other times protracted and difficult, but it is always rendered more easy and much quicker by perfect resignation and entire non-resistance.’

“Thus we have two classes of mediums: those who are quite naturally so,—who are spontaneously inducted on reading some marvellous account of the rappings, or who instantly catch the infection on visiting a medium,—and those who have to be inducted by a more or less protracted process of magnetizing, or pathetizing.

“And this is the specific pathematic agency that in every instance has inducted the medium,

whether by entrancing or without entrancing. It was this that inducted the Fox family, so as to enable them to obtain answers to questions. The mundane agent stood in the same relation to them that it does to a person who is a medium for the phenomena of rhabdomancy. The questioning of the sounds brought the brain into specific relation with the mundane power. For, as we have seen, it is only by the mundane emanations that the physical phenomena can be obtained, and only by the brain being brought into exact harmony with that power that the physical phenomena can be made to represent intelligencè.

#### “ DEDUCTIONS.

“ *First.* It follows that, as all the conditions upon which the so-called manifestations of the present day depend are human and mundane, and opposite to the state of true manhood, we can in nowise attribute the phenomena to disembodied spirits.

“ *Second.* That, inasmuch as the present phenomena exhibit the same law of specific sympathetic propagation and nervous epidemical contagiousness of other nervous contagions, we can see in it no more than what past ages have developed, both in similar epidemics and in single and isolated cases.

“*Third.* Hence the whole body of phenomena, including the past and the present, offer to the philosopher a new view of man and his relations to the sphere in which he lives, by neglecting which the deepest mysteries of human being are left unsolved.”

Mr. Beecher’s “Review of the Spirit Manifestations” was prepared and read at the half-yearly meeting of a body entitled the *Congregational Association of New York and Brooklyn*, in accordance with a rule of that Society, which provides that such lectures be limited to (among other topics) “a review of some published work or existing controversy.” It appears that the association, though not unanimous in support of the lecturer’s views, recommended the publication of his paper, as a contribution towards the sober investigation of a subject which had gained such an indisputable notoriety.

Mr. Beecher, handing over to our learned philosophers of the Willes, Lewes, Chambers, and Zoist schools, the whole mass of exploded argument of a mechanical and collusive character, to which these gentlemen adhere with such fond tenacity, divides his subject into the two surviving hypotheses of the controversy, viz.:—

1. The *pneumatic*, or natural law with spirits.

## 2. The *apneumatic*, or natural law without spirits.

He reviews the latter theory, as demonstrated by Mr. Rogers and others, and points out, with great perspicuity, the defective points in their chain of argument.

He considers the theory of *automatic central action* objectionable, because similar arguments might be used by materialists against the existence of the *soul*. For example:—as Mr. Rogers proves that the brain and nervous system, the conditions of mediumship generally, are affected by the agency of drugs, &c., so Dr. Cooper, writing on materialism, makes the same point with equal force against the soul—*e. g.*

“Our ideas, also, are produced and modified by substances exhibited to us, and acting medically; but, as Judge C. has said in his Medical Jurisprudence—‘*How can you exhibit a dose of glauber salts to the soul?*’”

The apneumatic argument, therefore, proves too much, and fails.

It is further objectionable, because *automatic contingent* operations involve a self-contradiction.

For brain to discharge sentences drilled in, is one thing; to adapt answers *not* drilled in, quite another. Automata cannot be constructed to act *ad libitum* . . . . Equally impossible

is it for the odic current to break and renew itself, so as to move a table, contingently, in reference to the emergencies of a shifting conversation.

“That mind, separating itself partially from the body, even during life, should be able to energise at a distance, though mysterious, is not incredible. Cicero recognises it. Jamblichus builds on it. It is easy to conceive a law by which it should be.”

But the lecturer denies that physical phenomena can be effected by such a process; and pronounces the “facts” adduced in scientific treatises, as unsustained by evidence, ending with Cicero’s remark, that “there is nothing can be mentioned so absurd as not to have been said by some one of the philosophers !”

Mr. Beecher proceeds to the attack of automatic *mental* action, or “the attempt to prove that intelligent manifestations (such as spelling, &c.) can be produced unintelligently.” There must be either intentional, or involuntary, deception. The former theory is abandoned, the latter involves the before mentioned contradiction of “*involuntary contingent* adaptation.”

It is an admitted principle of science, that that theory is preferable which accounts most naturally for all the facts known. The pneumatic theory accounts for all facts alleged by the other

theories, as well as either of them ; for some, better ; and for many which they cannot account for at all, without absurdity.

It is therefore, probably, the true hypothesis.

The lecturer contrasts Isaac Taylor's saying, that "we ought not to reject the almost universal belief of occasional supernatural interference, till we can prove an *impossibility*," with Hume's sophism, that "no testimony can establish an alleged fact which is at variance with common experience ;" inferring, that scepticism on the subject can only be maintained with the aid of such dogmas as the latter.

He then defends his hypothesis on scriptural grounds.

The reality of necromancy is admitted in the Bible, and its belief sanctioned by divine legislation, the practisers of it being described under eight distinct names, all, however, evidently belonging to one general class ; *odylic* operations, or subjects, the hypothesis being, that *spirits can only obtain access through prepared odylic conditions*. These, therefore, were no pretenders, but real practisers of a forbidden art.

The learned writer's remarks and researches into the nature of the heathen oracles, prophetic inspiration, the Baalim, or demons of the New Testament, possession, &c., &c. ; and the multitude of odylic phenomena attendant upon these,

are deserving of the most sedulous perusal. Any attempt to condense them into the limits I have at command, would be as useless as unfair. Enough to say that he considers that "the pneumatic theory, established by the facts of the Bible, supplies to them a law by which they are seen to fall within the scope of mental and physiological science. Hence it is the better theory. It is not enough that a theory can by great effort embrace the phenomena of clairvoyance, rhabdomancy, apparitions, oracles, rappings, &c. It must also take in the facts of the Bible. . . . Whatever physiological law accounts for odyllic phenomena in all ages, will in the end carry itself through the whole Bible, where it deals with the phenomena of soul and body, as mutually acting and reacting."

The claims, standards, origin, and ethics of the spirit-movement form an interesting chapter.\* The writer refers to the challenge of St. Paul: "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things I write unto you are of the Lord." And, if any spirit, rejoicing in the name of Paul, appear to tell us he has progressed, and altered his opinions since writing his epistles, let us reply in his own words:—"Though we, or

\* See Rev. Charles Beecher's *Review of the Spiritual Manifestations* (page 43). London: *Bosworth*, Regent Street.

an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, than that ye have received, let him be accursed."

After a brief and able chapter on the "theology of spiritualism," Mr. Beecher arrives at his conclusion, viz., that the "present pneumatic movement" is to be referred to the category of Rev. xvi. 16, the "spirits of devils, working miracles," &c.—since, in claiming to supply the lacking evidence of immortality, needed to convert infidels and atheists, they indirectly deny, in sundry points, the doctrines of Scripture. "Invoking the presence of many mediators, they revive the essential element of both Pagan and Papal apostasy; denying the one mediator, Christ, by whose blood alone we live, and by whom alone we approach unto God; claiming to be the *avant-couriers* of millennial glory, yet denying, with few exceptions, 'that blessed hope, even the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ,' they incur the almost certain stigma of false Christs which should precede his coming."

The new influence, antagonistic though it be to the Scriptures, is deeply fascinating to the multitude, inspired with eager curiosity to penetrate the secrets of the grave; the unutterable longing of bereaved hearts for the unforgotten, and the ecstatic delight of souls suddenly restored to converse with the idolised, whose loss made



life a desert. If a moral Armageddon is assembling against the simple Gospel of Christ, here is *one* agency eminently adapted to assist its progress. Time must prove this. Meanwhile, how must the movement be met?

“Obviously, with kindly courtesy; let the spirits be heard; and if they can logically destroy the authority of the Word of God, let them do it.”

The concluding paragraph of this brief but interesting *brochure*, breathes a wise and liberal spirit, and is couched in a tone so rare among us, as almost to need a short translation out of dignity into English. But it shall take its chance in the original.

“As to the gentlemen and ladies engaged enthusiastically in what appears to them a good cause, they are to be met with respect and Christian consideration. If they are in error, it is an honest one; the evidence before their mind is very specious, very strong. If it be a delusion, it is certainly a very strong delusion. Christian humility should teach us, that if we have not been deluded, it is of grace, and that we be not high-minded, but fear. *We should meet them with argument.* We should admit all facts sustained by proper evidence, and show them that the Word of God has a deeper foundation, and a broader basis in the nature of things, than they, or we, have hitherto been aware. And if the result shall

be to lead Christians to a more patient and profound re-investigation of the doctrine of the resurrection and future life, and connected themes, God, who brings good out of evil, may bring benefit out of even this."

The calm sense and dignity of this appeal will, it is to be hoped, engender a more becoming spirit among our controversialists; and instruct them to abandon theatrical spasms of virtuous rage, as offensive to good taste as they are futile in effect, for the more efficient weapons of argument and reason. On themes like these men will not yield up their judgment to the mere force of declamation, nor admit that, because Mr. Lewes, or *Mrs. Zoist*, disapprove of such and such phenomena, as an innovation upon established laws, *there* must at once be an end of the matter! It is within the range of possibility that the intellect of those public censors who, like our friend *Zoist*, feel it an "imperative duty" to make as much noise as their organs can furnish,—may be incompetent to grapple with a subject that has bowed to the dust many a gifted and glorious mind, with a sense of inferiority, akin to that which compelled Newton to acknowledge that he had but gathered, here and there, a shell cast up from the unfathomed ocean of truth.

The subject of the "spirit" manifestations has taken too deep root in the public mind to be dis-

lodged from thence by anything short of *demonstration*, either of their non-existence as supernatural revelations, or of the guilt and peril incurred in resorting to them.

The facilities for attaining this most desirable end, are greatly enhanced by the publication of Messrs. Rogers and Beecher's works, and few will read them without arriving at a fixed conclusion, based upon one or other of the conflicting theories.

Mr. Rogers, as we have seen, refers the whole mass of phenomena to mundane agency and the operation of dynamic laws ;—Mr. Beecher, considering that the utmost stretch of operation that can be conceded to such laws, would prove insufficient to cover the whole body of phenomena in question, inasmuch as they involve a self-contradiction,—calls upon us to embrace his pneumatic hypothesis, because it not only accounts for all the phenomena explicable by other theories, but those *they* cannot compass.

No doubt, certainly. It would be no easy matter to propound *anything* for which the pneumatic hypothesis has not room. Still, the latter has, on the other hand, its difficulties and objections also—which seem to render the conclusion a little too sudden.

It does not appear quite certain that, if full scope be given to Mr. Rogers' theory, it would

leave much unaccounted for, even without involving the contradictions alluded to by his opponent. The condition of brain in which the phenomenon of clairvoyance is developed, is that in which, also, the higher forms of intelligence in the rappings are obtained. Clairvoyance is ascribed, by Mr. Rogers, as the *sension of the brain of what exists in time and space, without the ordinary use of the senses*, and results from a susceptible condition of the brain, in which it stands in a general relation to the whole outward material world, subject to the influence of the new imponderable. "The representation in the brain of the external world, is not knowledge, but simply *sension*. When the mind takes cognizance of the brain's *sension*, *the cognizance is knowledge*."

There seems to be nothing startling or irrational in these opinions—and it is to be remembered that the new philosophy is yet in its infancy—the character and properties of the odyllic agent have yet to be fully determined. Until this is done, it is surely better to withhold our belief in the opposing theory; nor is it easy to acknowledge the justice of the remark which fixes upon the doctrines of a new philosophy the stigma of materialism, because it approaches the limits of the unrevealed world more closely than has hitherto been deemed permissible.

“Is it not more likely” (writes Mr. Rogers) “that Deity is opening to us the facts of our own wonderful nature, that we may learn wherein our highest nobility consists, than that He is sending legions of demons to make us bury our reasons, and become fanatics?”

Desiring to adhere as closely as possible to the narrative style adopted in *Sights and Sounds*, I will dwell no longer on this, the argumentative, portion of the subject, than is necessary to protect my own opinions against erroneous interpretations. Speaking from personal experience of no limited extent, I am bound to say, that while the phenomena I have witnessed have been marvelous enough to startle the most apathetic inquirer, no one of them has ever passed beyond what may be considered the range of average human intellect, subject to peculiar conditions, and operating through a novel agent, whose existence, indeed, is no longer questioned, but whose extent of development remains to be decided.

No *convincing* proof has, so far as I am aware, ever been conceded, that an intelligence wholly independent of parties present in the flesh, is originating the communications. I have, indeed, received replies so unexpected, yet so pregnant with significance and truth, as (habituated as I have been with these inquiries), to give my pulse

a quicker throb than common. Still a single moment has often sufficed to convince me that the reply was but an echo of some scarcely conscious thought ; or, if not native to my own brain, exhibiting strong features of a paternity not beyond the charmed limits of the circle in which I found myself.

The process by which not merely passing emotions, but defunct memories, are seized and revitalised, as it were, by this mysterious mental photographer, is, after all, less extraordinary than that such process should be effected without the parties concerned being sensible of its progress. Even this, however, does not absolutely overtask belief, inasmuch as the result is, after all, but a copy—a reproduction. The mirror unconsciously reflects the form of an equally unconscious passer, while the effect is only visible to a third and indifferent “party.” If the new imponderable, as it is the fashion to call it, be not mind itself, it is at all events so nearly related as to be on visiting terms with that true “imponderable,” and the curious phenomena (which any one can test), illustrative of the power of *will* (see hereafter), are good preparatives for the study of the novelty in question.

It is a fact unfavourable to the *spiritual* claims of the “intelligences,” that they seem unable to

penetrate precincts to which no present mortal brain has first been pioneer. Attempts to do so almost invariably fail.

I was informed, at a *séance* some two months since, that Dr. Channing had recently died at Boston, but that the tidings of that melancholy event had not yet reached England by the usual terrestrial route. No one then present, however, having conceived the idea of depriving Boston society of one of its most distinguished ornaments, the doctor survives.

Not to multiply examples, it will suffice to observe that my entire personal experience of these manifestations, whether in England or America, supplies no instance in which a correct answer has been returned, in reference to a subject absolutely beyond the information, or the memory, of every person present. Essentially mundane in idea, language, and even habits, these translated beings play such fantastic tricks as might make both men and angels weep, could the thought once be realised, that "dear, beauteous death, the jewel of the just"—(as old George Herbert hymns it), could indeed metamorphose great but ephemeral man into an eternal baboon!

An overwhelming majority of the communications bear the stamp of shallow, not misguided, intellect. Your grandmother, who taught you to spell, has herself relapsed into the very loosest

orthography, and is of opinion that “*d-o-u-t*” spells *doubt*, and “*e-g-a-r-t-i-s-t*” *egotist*. And if I am reminded that the spirits are responsible only for the *substance*, not the words, I am, at least, entitled to ask how it is that a message which must, before delivery, be so completely imbued with the medium’s personality, can undergo that process without her knowledge? Herein, at all events, the difficulty urged by the pneumatic philosophers may be retorted.

Answers to scientific or physiological questions are, usually, forced and *guessy* to an amusing degree; yet, withal, exhibiting a species of pretension that suggests the idea of a half-trained intellect boldly grappling with a subject too profound.

At the last *séance* but one, at which I “assisted,” a rather remarkable dialogue took place. The “intelligences” declined communicating with any one present, myself excepted. Accordingly, I took the parole:—

“Who is it?”

A Christian name was spelled out—a familiar diminutive. It was that by which we had been accustomed to speak of a near relation, deceased a month before, but of whose previous existence no one member of the circle, I firmly believe, had the remotest cognisance. Aware of this, I endeavoured, by analysing my recent thoughts,



to discover whether they had, in the most minute degree, prompted the intelligence. I could not decide so. The relation alluded to was one who, through a life protracted far beyond the usual term, had never shown to me, or those dearest to me, one individual act of kindness or affection. Many an open enemy has bequeathed more generous memories than did this gentleman, whom the simple ties of nature should have made a friend. I allude to this to show the improbability that his name should be occupying, in my memory, the room of things more honoured. Assuredly it did *not*, but came, wholly unsolicited, a sudden and unwelcome intruder.

Not particularly anxious to continue the conversation, I allowed it to be taken up by another party present, who proposed some queries relative to death and its sensations. Among these were the following :—

“ By what mode of exit did your spirit quit the chamber? By the window?”

“ No.”

“ By the door?”

“ Yes.”

“ Were you alone?”

“ No. . . . To every passing spirit a spiritual guide is allotted.”

(This, at least, was the substance of the reply.)

“ Who was yours?”

“ Brother.”

“ Which ?”

The Christian name of such a relative, who died, beloved and regretted, some six years since, was given with the rapidity of thought !

All the replies, indeed, were given with such promptitude, that the mere approach of the pencil to the letter needed produced an eager, impatient tap—thus proving the impossibility of the intelligence being prompted by pauses of the inquirer.

Some one desired to learn what method of locomotion was in use among the dwellers in the spirit-spheres. To this the reply was,—

“ *The will.*”

After which communications ceased.

The impression left upon one’s mind by converse with these assumed spirits, in effect, is, that (supposing them to be what they affirm), in the process of “ translation,” the beauty of the original must have suffered very severe depreciation. Intellectual grandeur—nobility of thought—and, worst of all, truthfulness, have departed from them, and strong, indeed, must be the testimonials produced before I, for one, will acknowledge their identity established.

In allusion to Mr. Beecher’s hypothesis, that they are spirits indeed, but evil ones,—although it must be owned that barefaced, detectable false-

hood, and drivelling idiocy, are not the most favourite forms of diabolism, there is no reason why the evil agency should not be pantaloons as well as priest, and angel for souls as well in one instance as the other. Mr. Beecher has himself suggested the only sure and never-absent safeguard, that sacred mirror, placed before which all false hues and aspects fade and drop away; and all nature, be it of man or devil, is revealed at once in all its naked deformity. Let us hasten to apply this test. In collecting the facts and opinions relating to this controversy, my first desire has been to show that there are circumstances connected with both the spiritual and anti-spiritual theory, too startling to be overlooked by the philosopher—too well established in the belief of the many—to be permitted to remain unanalysed and undemonstrated by those who love their kind.

The progress of the “table-movement” defies, as it assuredly does not need, narration. Scarcely a day passes without the addition of some new and undoubted testimony to the fact that inert, unconscious substances, yielding to the mysterious impulse imparted to them by odyllic currents evolved from the human system, become obedient to our mere volition. Though, as yet, less is known of the philosophy than of its fruits, there seems to be little doubt that the wondrous link

between mind and matter, whose existence, contested for centuries, Hippocrates asserted and Galen denied, is about to be at length demonstrated.

It remains to be seen whether or not this wonderful discovery be the first great step towards the development of the entire rapping mystification. At all events, it appears probable that, but for the notoriety acquired by the supposed "spirit" manifestations, no great attention would have been attracted towards the attendant phenomena of the moving tables. Let us hope that the same spirit of research and investigation, so liberally exercised in the latter case, will now be as frankly directed to the former.

Our leading chemical professors are understood to repudiate all acquaintance with the agent in question ; and, within these few days, a conclave of northern *savans*, convened by a noble duke, and presided over by Sir David Brewster, have declared their conviction that the whole tabular phenomena are attributable to "unconscious muscular action," resulting from intense and eager expectation on the part of the operators. In less elegant English, everybody, in his impatience, pushes the table without knowing it !

But this authority, high as it is, has no more tranquillised the table-movement, than the *facetie* of *Punch* have hushed the rappings. Experience

shows that tables move with facility where no eager expectation is indulged in ; and there are, as will be seen, collateral phenomena which place the existence and power of the magnetic current beyond the possibility of question. These, it must be concluded, did not engage the attention of the scientific meeting.

M. Drion, professor of medicine at the College of Orleans, pronounces an elaborate opinion, in which he refers the movements of the table to the slight adhesion of the operators' hands to the wood, caused by the moisture of the skin—when the least combined movement to right or left will suffice to draw the table with it. And he maintains that the experiment can only be regarded as successful when the parties remain immovable, and permit the table to glide under their hands without attempting to follow its movement. To demand this is to prescribe the conditions of a phenomenon which nature herself has already defined. We must, it appears, be content to see the tables charged by the only method in which their organisation can be interpenetrated by the subtle essence ; and rely principally upon the after-phenomena, incompatible as they are with any exercise of physical power, for our conviction of the truth of the experiment.

The establishment of this theory will strike out the spectre from many a thrilling tale, and reduce

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it to the mere hum-drum level of every day experience.

Poor Madame L——, who, in 1842, resided at Châtillon, was more than once startled and amazed, by noticing a strange jostling among her chairs and tables, as though imbued with vitality. After vain endeavours to elucidate the mystery, she called in the aid of M. Victor Dumay, the then celebrated clairvoyant. Being magnetised by M. Loison de Guinaumont, the clairvoyant presently affirmed that the strange phenomenon was merely the result of magnetic currents, concentrated in the immediate vicinity of the frolicsome furniture, and that, with a change of temperature, the phenomenon would be suspended. This prediction was fulfilled to the letter, and the circumstances were noted down by M. Guinaumont, to be published, among his papers hereafter.

The existence and character of the magnetic currents are ably illustrated in the experiments made by Dr. Leger with his magnetoscope (*Sights and Sounds*, p. 404) ; but it does not appear that any instrument or apparatus is needed to demonstrate their power. Perhaps the most convincing testimony of all was afforded by the case of Angelique Cottin, reported by Arago to the Paris Academy of Sciences, Feb. 16, 1846, wherein, after detailing the curious phenomena,

he stated that the *force* (which had a powerful emanation at his fingers' ends) had "no identity with electricity, nor with magnetism proper." The aged philosopher remarked, that it was "a curious inquiry, and may open to us new resources in the nature of man and the world, of which, as yet, we have hardly dreamed."

Here, after a seven years' interval, is the realisation of his prophecy, and the force which acted with such unusual power from the organism of Angelique Cottin, is found to be inherent in all. Two remarkable instances of its strong development are to be found in the circles of London society at this moment.

A lady, Mrs. O., can, by simply approaching her finger-points towards a friend's forehead, at the distance of several inches, repel the latter, as by physical force. The other example is in the person of a child of ten years old, the daughter of a lady now resident in London.

It has been affirmed that the existence of the magnetic current is demonstrable by a very simple apparatus. Affix a small fine needle, point upwards, in a slice of cork—cut a small disc of card, place in its centre a socket of metal or agate, and balance it on the point of a needle—then surround the whole, as much as possible, with the hand resting on the table, and the disc will immediately begin to revolve in a direction upwards

towards the points of the fingers. A little slip of paper, cut *with* the grain, and bent into an angle like a V, but more obtuse, will, when balanced like the card, attain a similar rotary movement. Inclosed with paper, with anything but the hand, no movement is produced. I am bound to admit, however, that I am not fully convinced that something in the structure and position of the hand may not create some imperceptible draught of air, sufficient, nevertheless, both to impart the movement and determine its direction.

The first European experiments, of any importance, in table-moving, were made in Paris, some two months since, and the results, as may be remembered, were reported in a letter written by an American gentleman to *Galignani*, and copied into the *Times* and other English journals. I received, at the same time, some additional details of the meeting, which, with due allowance for my correspondent's off-hand style (he did not intend it for insertion, and I hope he will not see this!) may interest the reader.

“Having secured one of the sweetest, prettiest, and best mediums”—(N.B. Personal attractions, it will be perceived, are regarded by my friend as among the conditions of success)—“I know of,—(of course, a countrywoman)—I tried the table, and at once succeeded. Having for two days practised the thing in every possible way, we



decided to give a grand *soirée*. We invited all the *savans* we knew and could find, and a pick of friends. You never saw such fun! I happened to be dining with Madame M. (academician's wife), with M. (historian), Lady E., Lady B., and others. All accompanied me to the *soirée* but M., who was unfortunately engaged. We had a nephew of A., and an *élève*, C., the government agent of the new science of pisciculture, &c. After four of us had a big table trotting, C. was requested to put his hands on the table, and silently say, "Gee up." To his surprise, it obeyed! A. and his friend alone made a little table dance, and were seen running about with it in an ecstasy of delight. Everybody was enchanted, and really convinced. Since then we have had it about in sundry *salons*.

"A very clever Hungarian, and one of the most powerful European magnetisers, says, with great truth, that the method of this action is in the vital principle of the wood—*which is organised to carry its modification of vital force as we can ours—and so our magnetism takes hold of its structure, and can give this dead vegetable organisation some of the principle of our living one.*

"This is perfectly true, philosophical, and pretty. I owe him one for that. His name is Count S ——— (so pronounced, at all events). His book I have read. It dogmatizes too much,

but has many good things. It would seem he has a really extraordinary natural power. Tables of different bits of wood, and of too close structure, do not take up the nervous force. This goes well with the count's theory."

The following are among the conditions usually found conducive to the success of the experiments.

An unequal number (not less than five) of operators, of both sexes, men under twenty, women under forty, years of age.

Parties united by the ties of blood, or mutual affection, to be placed together.

Table of *any* description of wood, size, shape, and weight—indifferent, except that the larger the table the larger must be the body of operators.

Experience shows that the table absorbs the fluid most readily when placed upon carpet.

Parties to be isolated—so that no one touches his neighbour, or the table, with hands, feet, or dress—his right little finger alone resting on the left little finger of his right hand neighbour.

Spectators to keep aloof. The interposition of a strange hand in the chain, breaks the current at once.

The more the attention of the operators is absorbed by the experiment, the more certain and rapid the result.

The first phenomenon is a sensation of heat,

affecting the hands, arms, and chest. The next, a pricking in the arms and fingers, ceasing and renewing at intervals.

Presently the hands become sensible of a singular movement—first faint, then stronger, in the table, something like the heaving of a wave. Then the fluid is distinctly felt *flowing* from the fingers and penetrating the table. The latter commences slowly to turn from left to right, and, if the chain be preserved, will accelerate the movement—heave, and move still faster and faster, north or south, according to the united volition of the party.

On the commencement of the movement, the spectators should withdraw the chairs, the operators standing and preserving the chain—pressing the fingers as lightly as possible on the table. If, by any chance, the chain be broken, the magic movement instantly ceases, and the chain must be entirely renewed.

The time required for the experiment varies with the susceptibility and nervous activity of the operators. It takes, usually, not less than twenty minutes, seldom an hour. The effects upon operators are different. Some grow sleepy, some fatigued—one lady has literally slept. Others experience a feeling of general uneasiness—in some cases so painful as to compel them to desist. Others, again, are conscious of no un-

common sensations. All strange feelings induced by the experiment cease with it, except, perhaps, in the instance, here and there, of an extremely sensitive temperament.

Experience, therefore, seems to prove that, in spite of rumours to the contrary, no evil consequences are to be dreaded from taking part in this interesting and remarkable experiment.

The actual motibility of tables, &c., by this newly-comprehended force, being thus fairly admitted, the yet more mysterious feature of their obedience to the operators' volition engages our attention. Unlike the rappings, in which the apparent physical phenomenon is sometimes observable, without the intelligence, the table movement is never obtained without its being as a consequence subservient to the will. Hundreds of cases have been made public, and so common had the amusement become among the volatile Parisians, that it is already, as I hear, the fashion among the *élite*, to append to the cards of invitation a notice that table moving will form no portion of the evening's amusement. My table is loaded with communications from all parts of the country, nay, from Rome, Venice, &c., eagerly announcing successes in the tabular demonstration. One friend describes the table at which his party had operated, as performing the strangest feats of agility, "like a wilful child." A clergy-

man in Devonshire saw a heavy table "conducted" through a suite of rooms, moving at the will, and touched only by the tiny finger of a little child. The latter experiment concluded by the child's *commanding* the table to enter an adjoining room, *the door of which was closed*. The docile wood "butted," as the reverend witness writes, against the obstacle, and did its utmost to obey.

The circumstance of the table obeying an oral command, is a very usual one ; and though, of course, no more than the mere interpretation of the actual motive power, adds a singular *bizarre* feature to the ceremony. I will quote but one communication, received this instant from a friend in Scotland, a highly accomplished lady, hitherto somewhat sceptical as to the possibility of success.

"I am happy to send you a most complete and triumphant result to our *séance* of yesterday. The chain was composed of five persons round a small six-sided chess table, which rested on a central pillar, terminating in a *triangular* base. It was fully an hour and a-half before the motion became *continuous* ; we had felt several slight stirs, but then long pauses ensued ; at length, just as our patience was nearly exhausted, it seemed to start into life, and commenced a rotary movement. Three of our party had full

power over the table individually and *separately*; we *spoke* to it, as being more efficient than the silent will, and our commands were obeyed *instantly*. It performed the following feats according to order: turned, stopped, turned in the opposite direction, tilted *to* or *from* the person commanding, *remained* tilted up, rose on *one* foot, and turned round on that foot, turned quicker or slower, and finally (by *my* order) rose on two feet and *walked*. Verily! walked to the door, advancing one foot before the other in distinct steps, and again walked in an opposite direction; this, with the power only of my hands. Well!! seeing is believing, but this beats anything I have seen.

“Every care was taken of fair play, and to avoid all muscular influence. I suppose *you* are quite accustomed to such things! Who can explain it?”

I have mentioned (*Sights and Sounds*, page 404) how the power of the will to move substances is evidenced in the experiments of Dr. Leger, with the magnetoscope. The doctor has, by long exercise of this will-control, acquired a complete mastery over the instrument, and regulates its movements through the agency of the magnetic currents at his pleasure. The exact process by which the will is put in action cannot be explained. It may, nevertheless, be acquired; although one who has attained considerable pro-

ficiency in this singular art, for such it is, can give no better description than that she (for it is a lady,) “wills through her fingers’ ends.” Thus the familiar saying, referring certain accomplishments to those particular extremities, seems likely to attain a new significance! But, in effect, the volition appears to follow the stream of the magnetic current, enter with it the organisation of the object to be influenced, and control both.

The positive power of will has no doubt been under-estimated. The reader may smile, if told that he himself, unpractised in the science of this species of mind-control, can suspend his watch by the chain from the top joint of his middle finger, and compel it to revolve, stop, change its motion, &c., by a simple effort of *will*. If there be, as Sir David Brewster affirms, unconscious muscular action obeying the impulse of the will, it has not hitherto been detectable by any ordinary means. Its exercise is bare assumption.

If, my dear friend, you need additional proof, go to the Princess’s Theatre. It is *Macbeth*. Seating yourself in the dress-circle,—single out, say, yonder fat farmer in the pit, whose entire bovine spirit is absorbed in the illusion of the scene. His eyes are dilated to the utmost dimensions, and he is marvelling whether the insertion of Banquo into the body of the stone pillar, at all

imperils the stability of the structure. Single him out, as I have said—fix your eyes upon him—require him, mentally, to return your gaze, and *persevere* . . . . In a few minutes you will see him rub his forehead. Again! Is it some floating cobweb that annoys him? Passing his brown hand across his eyes, he fixes his attention once more on the scene, but only for a minute. Some indefinable sensation forces him to look hurriedly round, as though he had lost, or heard, something. He is not ill, but uneasy. He no longer enjoys the play—grows hot and angry—gazes this way and that—at last (for it is no use, sir, you *must*)—turns suddenly round and gazes, over fifty intervening faces, directly in *yours*. But he has no suspicion that you are his tormentor; and his only impression is a passing one of annoyance that any one should happen to be scrutinising his movements, at a moment of restlessness and irritation.

Walk beside your friend, in the street, mentally singing some one of your favourite airs; require your companion, still mentally, to do the like. Even supposing that he does not hit upon the identical melody, if his thoughts do not presently reveal themselves as taking a musical direction, there is nothing in the power of the will.\*

\* In reference to this portion of the subject, I have had occasion, more than once, to mention the name of Dr. Leger. It is



A young woman, in the service of my friend, Miss S——, possessed this power in a remarkable degree. The influence of a lady's-maid is, in frequent cases, not to be despised; but this young damsel appears to have established a complete physical, as well as moral, dominion over her mistress! And not over her alone. Many instances might be adduced in which the singular gift was developed to a most surprising extent.

She had been sent on a message, one morning,

with sincere regret I now add, that this gentleman's researches in the cause of science have been brought to an untimely close, owing to a most dangerous, it is to be feared, hopeless, illness—accelerated, no doubt, by mental anxieties attendant upon the state of those mundane matters of which philosophers and literary men are, generally, the very worst custodians. Dr. Leger's case is one of almost unexampled hardship. The latter years of his life have been passed in preparing for publication a three-volume work, demanding immense research and careful experiment. Teeming with facts of the most extraordinary character—yet verified by the most satisfactory proofs—this curious work has arrived at its completion at a moment when the failing strength of the writer forbids his superintendence of the publication of that which would bring both fame and wealth to his impoverished home. The benevolence of some few generous persons, to whom the circumstances of the case were known, has been warmly exerted in his favour; but private charity necessarily has its limits, and still the unfortunate philosopher, shipwrecked in sight of home, languishes in forced inactivity; his intellect, meanwhile, vigorous as ever, and his mind consoled with, next to the hope of immortality, the belief that the new light now dawning on the most interesting field of philosophy, arrives in time to vindicate and confirm those views which *he* has, in truth, been the first to promulgate.

and becoming extremely hungry, walked into a pastrycook's shop, and took possession of a large and costly Christmas cake! She had not a farthing in her pocket; but, nevertheless, continued eating as much of the cake as satisfied her hunger; then, quietly depositing the remainder on the counter, walked out of the shop! On reaching home, she related this exploit, and being asked if she had not expected to be followed by the outraged proprietors, declared she had no such fear, as she had previously *willed* a circle round them, which she knew they could not pass. It is at least perfectly certain that no attempt whatever was made to detain her!

This girl, who was extremely susceptible of mesmeric influences, subsequently became a patient of Dr. Ashburner's, and was the subject of most extraordinary phenomena; remaining, on one occasion, in the mesmeric coma for ten days, during the whole of which period she performed all the usual household duties, besides needlework, &c.—her eyes being completely closed, and so collapsed as scarcely to leave their orifices visible.

To the story of the little Scotch medium, of Pathhead, mentioned in *Sights and Sounds* (p. 50), a curious sequel has since been added, which, as it seems to bear upon this portion of

the subject, may as well be mentioned here. A literary lady of celebrity informed me that she was dining one day, lately, at the house of a friend who had a Scotch servant attached to her household. The subject of mediums, manifestations, &c., having been discussed, during dinner, in the hearing of this servant, she told her mistress, on the following morning, that *she* had witnessed such occurrences in her native place. On being questioned, it proved that she came from the immediate vicinity of the Pathhead manifestations; and related the facts as follows:—

The little girl whose mediumship so astonished the honest neighbours, and puzzled the police, was proceeding to school one morning with several companions of her own age, each carrying a small basket with provisions for the day. On the high road they were encountered by a rough, strange-looking man, who stopped and took from them their dinners. The little girl from Pathhead, who happened to be possessed of somewhat more courage than the rest, shewed fight in defence of her dinner; when the man, finding it impossible to obtain the basket without more violence than he perhaps cared to employ—ceased his endeavours—but, telling her she should remember her resistance to her dying day, *drew a circle* round her on the road, and quietly walked away.

On that evening the rappings commenced—and thenceforth, wherever the child went, the manifestations, as in the case of Angelique Cottin and others, accompanied her.

Our latest “table returns” inform us that the attention of the Academy of Sciences of Paris has, at length, been drawn to the subject, and that M. Seguin has communicated a report detailing marvels so great as even to stagger M. Arago; who, nevertheless, read the report, but accompanied it with a vague expression of his belief that the phenomena were the result of unconscious, imperceptible, muscular action.

This high authority would, in the opinion of a correspondent of the *Literary Gazette*, set the matter completely at rest, and absolve the supposed odyllic agent from any share whatsoever in these mysterious transactions. Not so, however; for it must first be explained to us how, when a table or a hat be once charged with the magnetic current, the former may be tilted from the ground, and the latter lifted altogether into the air, by merely laying a passive finger upon the object. No muscular action is available *there*. Yet this result is of the very commonest occurrence.

M. Arago affirmed, no doubt with perfect truth, that the communication of movement to inert substances by invisible means, was no novelty; and appeared inclined to attribute it to the per-

severing vibrations of some adjacent object—communicated, it must be supposed, by atmospheric agency. Were this so, it ought to be, indeed, not only “no novelty,” but of daily and hourly experience. It is highly improbable that the odyllic theory will be so easily ignored.

The prevailing impression, however, at present, seems to be that the movement is imparted by what is called the ideo-motor power, in obedience to the admitted law, that the mind, concentrated for any length of time upon any part of the body, changes its physical action. Thus, if an idea exist that the table should move in a given direction, that idea would, without a conscious effort of volition, produce the effect.

The jumbling of false and true, the actual phenomena and the apocryphal results, sadly embarrasses the march of the positive investigation, and produces, frequently, that odd mixture of the real and ideal, of which a rather amusing exemplification occurred at a recent private *séance*. It shall be the last “rapping” experience with which I shall trouble my readers.

A young lady of the circle expressed a most solemn and fervent desire to put “one question—only *one*.” It referred to a subject on which very great doubt and anxiety was felt; and would the spirits be so kind as at once to set the matter at rest? The spirits having acceded, the young in-

quirer, with some agitation, and evidently the most implicit faith in the infallibility of the sub-tabular intelligence, gravely demanded—

“ *Who killed MR. TULKINGHORN?* ”

Whether any reply was lost in the shout of laughter that greeted this unexpected question, cannot now be ascertained. If so, it was the last effort at communication that day. An interesting question had been raised, and the circle opened at once, in support of their respective views as to the perpetrator of the atrocious deed in question. It was the Derby week, to which circumstance it may be attributed that the debate assumed a sort of “racy” tone, in which the “chances” of the various personages in the stirring history were canvassed, like those of the favourites for a cup! The prevailing opinion seemed to be that the race was yet open—Lady Dedlock, however, having a decided call. Judging from her stamina, there was little doubt that her ladyship could “stay.” The question was, whether her winning would suit the stable?

George—though nominally first favourite—and holding a corresponding position in the betting,—had few real admirers, and would, it was imagined, be started only to force the running for something else.

I do not hesitate to say that certain striking points of resemblance to the renowned Maria

Manning, induced me to place my whole confidence in Hortense, and ultimately, I believe, the general impression assumed very much the shape of the usual vaticinations: *i. e.*, LADY DEDLOCK, or HORTENSE,—with GEORGE, for what is popularly, but unaccountably, known as a “cock-boat,”—forming, on the whole, a tolerably safe book.

Such scenes as these, and many infinitely more ludicrous, are the frequent and inevitable result of the system, now too prevalent, of attending these *séances* for the sole purpose of gratifying curiosity. The parties who lend their presence and countenance to such assemblies are, in nine cases out of ten, precisely those who have the least business there. It was not to encourage such mock investigations, to put money into a *medium's* purse, that in my somewhat misapprehended work—*Sights and Sounds*—I bespoke forbearance for Mrs. Hayden and other *media*, and strove to attract a more general attention to these manifestations. American experience had taught me that their novelty, their *vraisemblance*, their insidious appeals to the feelings most deeply interwoven with our nature, would take too strong a hold upon the general mind, to be dislodged through the medium of abuse and ridicule, or anything less than their

absolute *dissection*, and demonstration on the principles of science and philosophy.

Such was my chief end ; and if, in labouring to compass it, I have been at times betrayed into expressions suggestive of any leaning towards the *media* and their peculiar views, my friends will, I trust, attribute it partly to the *gaucherie* of a pen wholly unpractised in controversy, and partly, though, perhaps, in a greater degree, to the indignation excited by the vile—unmanly—un-English attacks made upon Mrs. Hayden, a woman and a stranger ; herself as innocent, I firmly believe, though, it may be, as much in error, as those who resort to her and believe in the communications of which she is the apparent channel.

I do not know that it may be deemed altogether an unapt conclusion to a discussion, of which so large a portion has necessarily turned upon super-terrestrial topics, were I to add, by way of supplement to the examples quoted in my former volume, one or two remarkable instances, which, occurring in our own generation, and based upon irrefragable evidence, help to establish the utter impossibility of applying to such phenomena fixed rules of explanation.

Robert Plummer, Esq., a rich merchant of Newcastle-on-Tyne, related to a friend of mine the following singular dream. He was in London



at the time, residing at Islington, but having offices in the city. One night he *dreamed* that on going to his office in the morning he saw a letter lying on the table from a business correspondent in South America, containing a certain remittance on account of a long standing debt. The next morning, whilst walking down the City-road with a friend, Mr. Plummer recounted his dream, saying jocularly, "We shall soon see if it comes true."

On arriving at the office, there lay the letter, from the very man in question, and containing the exact sum seen in the dream !

My friend suggested to Mr. P. that he might have been thinking, before he went to bed, of this debt, which he had stated to be of long standing, and which he had never hoped to recover, and that his dream might have been a not unnatural result. But Mr. P. denied that he had been thinking at all of the matter ; and, what was still more note-worthy, *the sum dreamed of, and actually remitted, was not the amount of the debt, but only a part of it sent on account !*

In this case, it is but reasonable to suppose that, if he had dreamed of the debt in consequence of thinking about it, he would have dreamed of the entire sum.

The favourite theory that the intense anxiety of a dying person to communicate with some dis-

tant friend, has power to propagate itself to the brain of the latter in such a manner as to produce a spectral illusion, finds a remarkable contradiction in an experience related by the late Mr. J. C. Robertson, proprietor of the *Mechanics' Magazine*.

Mr. R. and his brother, when quite children, were in bed together, at their father's house in Edinburgh, when the elder brother was suddenly startled by seeing in the room a lady to whom their father (a widower) was engaged to be married. The lady died at that hour. But how do the supporters of the above theory account for the lady's appearing, *not* to the father, about whom it must be supposed she was thinking most, but to a little boy? It so happened that, soon after Mr. R. had related this circumstance to my friend, he died, and the latter attending his funeral, in company with his brother, Mr. A. Robertson, took occasion to question him as to the truth of this story, when the latter fully confirmed it, and added that he had been exceedingly alarmed at the time.

Predisposition to dread these visitations is asserted to be a prolific source of them. Here again we are met with examples to the contrary.

Within these few months, Dr. —, a London physician, and his brother, had occasion to travel north. The doctor is as little troubled

with nerves as those of his profession generally are; the brother, on the other hand, is timid and nervous to so painful a degree, as to render him unwilling to sleep alone. On their journey they had occasion to pass the night at a small inn, where they occupied the same apartment. In the course of the night, the doctor awoke suddenly, and saw a tall, dark figure, standing by the bed; he sprang up, but the figure retreated, and, as he followed, *melted* through the door, which was found secured as the doctor had left it! The same thing occurred an hour or two later, when the doctor awoke his brother, but he could see nothing. The illusion, it seems, reveals itself to the bold, careless brother, and not to him whose mind was predisposed to such impressions.

That these illusions are most general at the moment of the party's death there is no doubt, but it appears that the rule is by no means universal.

Some weeks only ago, a gentleman of property, living a few miles from town, was entering his house one evening from the garden, when his London agent suddenly met him, brushed rudely and hastily past, and quitted the house. On inquiry, no one had seen the visitor, but the next post brought tidings that he had sailed that morning for Australia, carrying with him a large sum of money belonging to his employer.

But here, indeed, is a tale which opens a wide field of conjecture and argument. "Show me," says *Isbrand*, in that sepulchral dream, the "*Fool's Tragedy* :"—

"Show me, if you will, some four-legged ghost ;  
 Rome's mother, the she-wolf ; or the fat goat  
 From whose dugs Jove sucked godhead ; anything ;  
 Pig, bullock, goose, *for they have goblins, too,*  
 Else *ours* would have no dinner."

Whatever uneasiness *Isbrand* might have suffered on this score in his generation, there would seem to be but little room for it in *ours*. Dr. A. has, among his numerous patients, one who is almost constantly attended by a spectral tabby ! The fond and playful animal not only sits behind him in his studious hours, but frolics after him about the house, more especially on the stairs, where its amusement is to slip in and out of the rails of the balustrade, working an imaginary *crochet* from the top to the bottom, arriving thither at the same moment as its master. It has been ascertained that no mortal cat of its apparent size, could possibly perform this feat. By far the most remarkable part of the story is, that the animal has been, on more than one occasion, visible to other eyes than those of the original seer.

Moreover, a gentleman, now resident in Lon-

don, enjoys the occasional society of a cat with a human face.

But let us proceed to the incident above referred to.

An old and valued friend of my own, now holding an important official situation, had in his possession, a few years since, a magnificent dog of the Pomeranian breed. Being on the point of quitting London for a brief holiday tour, and embarrassed as to the disposal of his dog, he wrote to a friend connected with the Zoological Society, Regent's Park, and requested that his favourite might be assigned a temporary refuge in the department devoted to the canine brotherhood. This being easily arranged, my friend departed. He returned home in about two months, and, the second morning after his arrival, was informed by a servant-maid, that she believed his great dog must somehow have effected his escape from the Gardens, as she had certainly seen him running round and round the house (it was in a suburb) as though seeking entrance.

Her master, well aware of the improbability of any escape from the well-secured pens of the Society, paid little attention to this, and even a *second* report of the like nature. Strange to say, however, while shaving one morning near the window, his attention was attracted by the apparition of a huge canine head and ears, which

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suddenly revealed itself above the garden wall, and as quickly disappeared ; the operation being repeated, as though the animal had been making ineffectual efforts to scramble up the wall. It was, beyond question, the remarkable head of his own huge Pomeranian ; and my friend, no longer doubting, hastened, when dressed, to open the garden door and admit the truant. But he was no longer visible.

A smart fall of snow, on the previous day, had covered the whole ground with a spotless sheet some two inches in depth ; and thereon my friend proceeded to track the animal's course. To his astonishment, not a trace of the immense paws (even at the precise spot where he had been seen attempting to scale the wall) could be distinguished !

Mr. ———, though clever and philosophic, is no visionary ; and, in spite of the undisturbed snow, never for an instant doubted that he had really seen his favourite in the flesh. He therefore, that very day, proceeded to the Regent's Park, and there saw the superintendent of the department, who informed my friend that he had been on the eve of communicating with him.

" Ah ! my dog is lost ? I know it."

" No, sir—*dead* ;"—was the reply.

A shade of suspicion crossed Mr. ———'s mind, that the animal had escaped through the

carelessness of some subordinate, who might have invented the story of its death to screen himself from blame. He requested to be informed of the date and particulars.

The other informed him that the dog had been seized with illness three days before, and, though receiving every care, died in his cage, and was buried the same evening in the grounds. Perceiving my friend's astonishment, he requested him to accompany him to the dog department, when the keepers fully corroborated the history. He then conducted Mr. ——— to the place of burial; pointed out the small tumulus under which the gallant Pomeranian was reposing; and even sent for a labourer with his spade to exhume the dog, in order completely to satisfy the doubting master. This, however, my friend deemed unnecessary; and returned home almost a convert to the poor Indian's belief that, perhaps,

——— "Admitted to that equal sky,  
His faithful dog may bear him company."

Of deeper interest, however, than this little canine mystery, are the details of the following narrative, communicated, not without some little reluctance, by a lady well known in the circles of wealth and fashion. A just and laudable unwillingness to give additional publicity to circumstances which might prove injurious to parties

beneficially interested, was, I believe, her sole reason for desiring to suppress any portion of the facts, authenticated as they are by the evidence of her own senses, as well as a large body of numerous and respectable witnesses.

It must be observed, however, that so generally were the circumstances bruited about at the time, that those who have already heard them will gain but little additional knowledge from their publication. On the other hand, those who have *not* heard the tale, will scarcely identify the locality. It is, moreover, understood that the strange occurrences which made the estate of L—— once so notorious, have ceased of late years; and that the present owners and occupiers enjoy a tranquillity denied to their predecessors.

“ I went to reside at L—— about the last week of August, 1844, having never previously heard of any unaccountable circumstances in connexion with the house.

“ A fortnight after our arrival, Mr. E—— and myself were sitting in the small study, at about half-past nine o'clock in the evening. The windows were closed and the door (leading into the hall) wide open. We were both reading, when we distinctly heard slow footsteps come across the hall, apparently from the dining-room; they stopped at the study door, and then appeared to sound more distant; at the same time we heard



bolts drawn and undrawn. At first, Mr. E——, supposing it to be the butler, merely wondered he stayed in the hall instead of coming into the room. Finding, however, that all was silent, we took the candles and examined each room; all was quiet, the windows closed and fastened for the night, and the doors shut. On the servants coming in to remove tea, we asked who it was that had been moving about the hall, and received for answer that all the servants had been at supper since nine o'clock, and no one had left the servants' hall.

"A few nights after this, I was awoke at about one or two in the morning by Mr. E——'s exclaiming that thieves were breaking into the house. I begged him not to go down himself, but to ring first for the butler, who that night happened to have the pistols; he did so, but on investigation being made, everything was quiet, and in the same order as it was left on the previous night; we also looked out of the windows, but could see nothing. We at that time slept in the drab room. I had heard nothing myself, being fast asleep; but Mr. E—— told me that the first noise that surprised him was the hall-door violently shaken, then the windows of the dining-room; afterwards a voice distinctly said, '*That will do; it is all right.*' There was no further

disturbance that night, and we concluded that the violent ringing of the bells and opening of the window had frightened the thieves away, but were very careful afterwards to have pistols in the room of a night, and also in providing the servants with fire-arms.

“During the ensuing winter and spring we used to hear footsteps pass the door at night, sometimes accompanied with rustling like a silk dress, also a noise below, as if the furniture in the dining-room was moved about; and, invariably, if awake between two and three in the morning, we always heard a noise as if a large chest were violently thrown down, sometimes once, but more frequently twice or three times. We never could tell whence this sound proceeded.

“We met with no further annoyances until the winter of 1845, and the spring of 1846. The noises then, during the day, were very loud, like people walking heavily and moving about furniture. I have frequently gone up stairs to desire the servants to be more quiet, but have found all the doors shut, and no one either in the rooms or on the landing; the noise was sometimes so loud as to make the chandelier in the drawing-room vibrate. My maid, E—— T——, was also much alarmed of a night by hearing, as she supposed, the drawers of the wardrobe in my dressing-room

(which joined her room) opened, and the furniture thrown about, but on going to the room she found everything quiet and in its place.

“ I do not know the precise day on which the following circumstance occurred, but it was on a Sunday at noon. I was very ill at the time, and obliged to remain up stairs. I was looking out of my dressing-room window, and saw a very tall man, dressed in deep mourning, standing with his back towards me, under the acacia-tree to the right. He appeared to be looking at a large bed of roses opposite. I knew that Mr. E——, some gentlemen who were staying with us at the time, and all the men servants, were at church, and I therefore felt much astonished to see any one in the grounds, particularly so near the house. I looked at my watch to ascertain the time; it was twelve o'clock, and, on looking up again, the person I had seen on the lawn was no longer there. It could not have taken me above two or three moments to see my watch, which I wore at the time, and there was a considerable space open, and without shrubs to impede the sight round the acacia-tree, which made the sudden disappearance of the figure appear very singular.

“ One day, when conversing on the various strange circumstances, we agreed that we should observe the time that we next heard anything in

the night, and mention it at breakfast on the following morning.

“ It so happened a few mornings after this, Mrs. E—— (then on a visit to us) said that she heard footsteps going heavily past her door, and up and down the stairs leading to the top of the house where every room was then unoccupied (but she did not know this circumstance); she also heard the handles of the doors near her room turned, and some one walked across the floor of the next room. She was not much startled, thinking that a servant slept in the room, and for some reason had gone up to bed late; but was much surprised when I told her that the carpet was up in that room (the centre room), and all the furniture removed for the purpose of its being cleaned. This, she said, was at about twenty minutes after twelve, and it is singular that a gentleman staying in the house, Mr. E——, myself, and also my maid, heard noises at the same time precisely, but in quite different parts of the house.

“ We left L—— on the 14th of July, 1846, but returned again on the 29th of August, for a week.

“ We found the annoyances during that short time very great. Our bed was shaken during the night, as was also that occupied by my maid in another part of the house; it appeared all night as if a great many people were conversing in loud

tones, but we could not tell where the voices proceeded from. Very often also, when in the dining-room, with the door wide open, we used to hear footsteps pacing up and down the hall, but could see no one there.

“ We returned to L—— on the 9th of June, 1847. I had engaged another maid, S—— B——, her predecessor having left in consequence of finding we were obliged to return to L——. We sent the housekeeper home previously to our arrival, with orders to prepare the rooms at the top of the house for us, and had furniture made for the three large rooms on that landing, hoping that our rest might not be disturbed as it had been on the floor below. We brought home only three of the servants we took out with us, viz., the housekeeper, coachman, and page. We occupied the centre top room. The one on the left was the night nursery; that on the right, my maid’s; on the opposite side the passage, were dressing-rooms and small bed-rooms, two of the latter being occupied by servants. The rooms on the floor below were all unoccupied, except when visitors occasionally stayed in the house.

“ I believe it was in the following August that we again heard strange sounds. One day, when Mr. E—— was in town, I was sitting in the study, when I heard a noise beneath, as if casks were rolling about in the cellars; it was very loud

indeed. I rang, and requested the butler to go down and ascertain what could occasion the noise. On unlocking the door, and going down, he could see nothing wrong, but on his returning, we heard it again, both in the drawing-room and study, and he went down three times, hoping to discover the cause.

“ The footman, at the same time, heard a loud noise in the drawing-room (when in the pantry). The nurse heard some one apparently sweeping all day, even when the housemaids were in their own rooms. Other servants in the house heard loud screams.

“ After this we were continually annoyed and disturbed, both in the night and day ; sometimes when sitting in the drawing-room at between one and two o'clock in the day, I used to hear persons walking about the hall knocking at the door, and on propping it open with a chair, to feel sure that no one could be playing a trick, I have heard the rustling of a silk dress, as if some one were ascending the stairs quickly. When first this happened, I used to call out, “ Who is that ? ” but on receiving no answer, determined to follow the rustling, and I have occasionally searched every room on the second and top landing.

“ On one occasion in particular, I was in my dressing-room, when I heard some one rush quickly along the passage, and open and shut the

door opposite to mine. I immediately opened my door and entered the opposite room, searched it well, and was of course much startled to find no one there; there was one other door in the room, but this was bolted *inside*.

“ I was also much alarmed on two occasions, both of which happened between eleven and twelve o'clock on Sunday mornings, when I had been prevented attending church, owing to a violent headache, to which I am very subject during the hot weather. The first happened thus : I was reading in the library at the top of the room by the window. The door into the hall was open, when I heard footsteps go through the hall very rapidly, and some one open and shut the drawing-room door. I immediately crossed the hall and opened the door, but could see no one. I returned to the library, when I heard a noise in the room above, as if all the furniture was being thrown about. Just then the nurse came in from the garden, and, as usual, brought my little girl to see me, before taking her up stairs. I asked her if she heard the noise above? She appeared quite surprised, and looked alarmed, remarking that no one was in the house but the servants, who were preparing the dinner in the kitchen. I begged her to go up and ascertain what was the matter, while I took charge of the child; she returned, saying the

room was in the same order as usual, and no one there.

“The next time I was alarmed on a Sunday, was a week or two afterwards. I went into my dressing-room, about twelve o’clock, to procure a book, and heard a noise as if all the walls of the room were falling in, accompanied with the clanking of chains. I was so much terrified that I left the room directly, and stayed in the hall until I saw Mr. E—— coming home from church, when I went and opened the door myself, feeling very glad that the household had returned.

“Of a night the sounds were most strange and peculiar. I used to be wakened suddenly by a loud knock on some of the furniture, and a noise proceeding from the night nursery, as if the nurse was walking about with a baby, or moving the rushlight. Thinking my little girl might be ill, I used invariably to get up and open the door softly. I then heard no noise, but found the nurse and child fast asleep. She has told me that she has also been so convinced that I was walking about my room of a night that, supposing me to be ill, she has once or twice listened at my door (the rooms joined), and on one occasion opened the door, intending to ask me if she could call my maid (B——) to my assistance, but was astonished to see me fast asleep.



“In the room on the other side occupied by B——, I used to hear a sound, as if servants were bringing in several dishes, and setting them loudly down on her table with the covers rattling ; sometimes as if she were moving all the furniture about, but invariably, on going gently into her room, I found her fast asleep.

“In the following January, 1848, I was obliged, through illness, to remain up stairs a few days. At about half-past one, while I was reading in my dressing-room on one of these days, I was surprised to hear people moving about in a loud and noisy manner on the small landing below (on the right from my dressing-room) ; then there were loud screams. I was much surprised, as I supposed the servants were all at dinner. I rang my bell, intending to inquire who had been there. I then opened the door to listen more attentively. The noise then ceased, and I heard a voice say, ‘*Hush!*’ three times. Each time it was repeated, it sounded more distant, and appeared to float away in a manner which I cannot describe.

“When Mr. E—— has been absent in town, and my maid sleeping in my room, we used both of us to hear things thrown on her table; and once, when he was away some days, we became so much alarmed that we had little sleep. We determined that she should leave nothing on this table; yet, although the door leading into my

room, and that opening on the landing, were bolted, we distinctly heard a noise in her room, and a violent knock, like some heavy substance thrown on the table.

“ I remember, one night, that Mr. E—— and myself were awoke by some one apparently running backwards and forwards through the room. There was a good light in it, and yet we could see nothing, though we searched several times; it was a sound such as would be made by a person in silk passing quickly up and down the room.

“ At this time, also (about June or July, 1848), I heard groans, of a night, sometimes at twelve o'clock, and occasionally between two and three in the morning; when in bed they appeared to proceed from the rooms below, but on opening the door to discover the precise direction in which I heard them, I never could tell if they proceeded from the landing below or not.

“ This circumstance was also to be observed in connexion with the footsteps. If they appeared close by you one moment, the next they would sound quite in a different direction, and a long way off.

“ About this time, we used to hear strange sounds in the drawing-room, particularly in the evening, as of some one moving about near us.

“ About the middle of July, 1848, we went to B——, and returned to L—— in the middle of

August. The noises were then very troublesome. One morning, about half-past one o'clock, while sitting in the drawing-room, I heard some one go rapidly through the hall, and saw a figure, clothed in white, pass the windows. I *directly* went out to ascertain who it was, but although I looked all down the long path leading to the flower-garden, I could perceive no one. The servants were all at dinner, and I went to inquire of the nurse if she had heard or seen any one in that part of the house ; she replied she had neither heard nor seen any one since the nursery dinner had been taken up at one o'clock ; being very near-sighted, and having no time to take up my glass, I cannot say what the figure was like. I merely caught sight of what appeared a white dress, after I heard the footsteps in the hall.

“ In September the noises were still more annoying. I think it was at this time that one night after my maid had drawn the curtains of my bed on one side, the noise was distinctly repeated on the other. This imitation of our actions has continually happened.

“ I now heard, for the first time, a noise that awoke me suddenly, and was one of the most unaccountable I had ever heard there. I can only explain it by saying that it appeared to be like a person walking very heavily on the landing below, or in one of the rooms. I never heard such walking

before. It was quick and loud, and seemed to shake the house. It passed from one end of the house to the other.

“Mr. E—— now determined to leave L—— immediately, with the intention of never returning.

“We left on the 20th of September. The night previously, I was awake at one o'clock by the noise of boxes being thrown about, and opened and shut; it proceeded from my maid's room (she then occupied the one previously the night-nursery). I knew that all boxes, &c., &c., had been sent down, on the day before, ready to be conveyed to the railway, and those belonging to the chariot were already mounted. I went directly to B——'s room, intending to ask her why she was still up, although I imagined the noise I had heard was as little to be accounted for as others.

“While I was getting up, I heard the loud stamping walk again, and Mr. E—— also woke, and said he heard footsteps about. I went to B——, who was fast asleep, and begged her, when she was awake, to stay with me while Mr. E—— went to call the police constable Smith, who had been in the house of a night for some weeks, watching in different parts, in order to ascertain, if possible, the cause of the disturbances. Just before Mr. E—— left the room, we heard a desperate struggle on the top staircase, as of two men

fighting; then all was still. Not being able to make Smith hear, although he called him loudly from the stairs, Mr. E—— returned, and we rang the bells. In about five minutes Smith came up, saying, ‘he had been sitting by the kitchen fire for the last ten minutes, as it was a very cold night, and the house was quite quiet when he left the top-landing about a quarter of an hour before.’

“We heard nothing more that night. On the following morning, while dressing, I was much annoyed by some one apparently walking about my dressing-room, and pushing against the wardrobe, but could see no one.

“On that day we left the house, and I have never entered it since.

“It would be almost impossible to remember all the strange noises that I heard, and still more to describe the various circumstances, in a short account.

“I have, at different times, heard voices in my room, of a night, sometimes that of a man, at others, like a woman, once imploring help; at another, a voice said, ‘*It is all true.*’ (This was on the last night.)

“I have heard groans, which appeared to proceed from behind the bed; sighs, as from a person close by me; a sound like a child’s rattle,

which Mr. E—— and myself have heard for half an hour at a time, towards the morning.

“I have had my pillow lifted, and felt what appeared to be a hand underneath it. I have seen the handles of doors turn round when there was no one on either side ; have heard knocks at the door continually, sometimes five or six times in half an hour ; the sound of carriages driving up the park when none were there ; a knocking during the day round the wainscot of the drawing-room, which would continue for some minutes, as if carpenters were at work.

“These strange occurrences did not continue for above a few weeks at a time. The house was often quiet for a month, but rarely for a longer period. This being the case, many people who have stayed with us heard nothing to alarm them ; but six friends, who at different times were our guests, have distinctly heard sounds which surprised them.

“This is a true account of what I experienced during my residence at L——, from August, 1844, to September, 1848.

(Signed) “L. E.

“February 7th, 1850.”

The following are the principal depositions by the police constable and servants :—

“Being on duty at L—— during the night of the 13th of September, between one and two o'clock in the morning, as I was sitting in the passage at the top of the house, I heard a door unlock. I waited some time, expecting to hear the door open; but it did not; I kept my seat, and heard nothing more. The next night I went on duty, and, a little after twelve o'clock, I heard heavy footsteps go across a room as if coming towards the door; I heard a door unlock, and the door open; as it opened, it seemed to drag along the carpet; I waited, expecting to see a light, and some person come out; as no one came, I went towards where the noise came from; but to my surprise I found all the doors shut excepting one, that is always left open. I commenced searching every door, and found all shut as I had left them the forepart of the night. I examined all the locks, and found only one lock had got a key in, and that would not lock or unlock that or any other door. I am positive no one could have shut the door again without my hearing it shut, and no one came on to the landing where I was sitting, for as soon as I found no one came out, I turned my dark lanthorn on, but no one appeared. The following night I was on duty. Between one and two o'clock in the morning, I heard very heavy footsteps go across a room at the other end of the passage on the same floor that the other

noises were heard, but nothing more was heard during that night. I remember, one night in the early part of July, I was sitting on the first-floor landing, and in the middle-front room I heard some person sob very loud three or four times. I have since ascertained that no one slept in that room. I am quite at a loss to know what caused the above disturbances, which I can attest on oath, if required.

“JAMES SMITH,  
“*Police Constable.*

“September 23rd, 1848.”

“Having been requested to write down anything which I have heard during my residence at L——, which could not be accounted for, I wish to state that, shortly after I went to live there, I frequently heard in Mrs. E——’s dressing-room a very loud ticking as of a large watch. On listening at the part of the room from whence the sound appeared to proceed, it invariably removed to a distance.

“I have heard knocking at the door, and supposed some person was there, but on saying, “Come in,” and finding no one did so, I have gone to the door, but could not see any person. On one occasion I was sitting at work, and a very loud knock came on my table quite close to me.\*

\* See No. 3.



"I recollect another time hearing a terrific scream \* (as of some person in great agony). I have also heard a kind of rustling noise as of a person moving about in a silk dress, and have gone up stairs thinking Mrs. — was ill, and would require my assistance. The above I have heard at different intervals, and during the day. The remainder I have heard when just gone to bed, or during the night.

"I once imagined heavy pieces of furniture were being thrown down stairs. I have also heard coughing. I remember once hearing a sound resembling a heavy waggon or dray, going over and crushing some substance.

"One night, whilst sitting up, it seemed as if some person was closing a shutter which required oiling ; it appeared to proceed from the entrance hall ; immediately after a sound, exactly like a broom falling, came from the servants'-hall.

"S. B——.

"*Lady's Maid.*

"Brighton, Sept. 28th, 1848."

(SECOND STATEMENT.)

"In writing out my statement of the different noises I have heard during the time of my residence at L——, I omitted that I have frequently heard a noise resembling carriages driving up the

\* See the butler's statement.

carriage-road in the park, and have gone up stairs to be in readiness to attend Mrs. —, and have found, to my surprise, that no vehicle of any description had arrived. I also forgot to say that at the time I heard that very loud knock on my table, I requested the butler (who is a powerful man) to strike the table with his full force ; he did so ; but though he produced the same kind of noise, it was *not nearly so loud*.

“ S. B——.

“ October 3rd, 1848.”

“ 34, O—— Place, Brighton.

“ I am requested to state in writing the annoyances I witnessed during the time I lived at L——, which were so numerous I cannot recollect them all, but the following I am prepared to substantiate on oath. The first month of my living there, I slept in a room on the first landing, facing the back stairs. One night, after I had been some time in my bed, I distinctly heard a groping on the pannels of the bed-room door ; I heard this more than once.

“ On another occasion, when I slept on the top landing, my door was thrown open in the night ; I was not asleep, in consequence of the toothache ; I heard the handle of the door turned.

“ At another time, about midnight, I heard a violent blow on the door-post ; it appeared to me

as if it struck with a heavy carpenter's mallet. On another occasion, when going through the rooms (after the family had retired for the night), to see doors and windows were properly fastened, going from the dining-room to the front hall, there appeared something rush from behind the door towards me, and back in an instant; I sprang to the door, and to my astonishment, no one was there. On several occasions I heard noises similar to the rolling of heavy shutters. One afternoon I heard one loud scream; the footman met me at the pantry-door, and said it is in the drawing-room; I hurried to the door; I heard Mr. E—— and Col. T—— talking very quietly. When Mr. and Mrs. E—— have been out to dinner or an evening party, I have heard the carriage coming, I have lighted the lamp, and have heard it stop; but, on opening the hall door, no carriage was to be seen. These circumstances I recollect perfectly, and can swear to the truth of the statement.

“W. J——.

“*Butler.*”

“September 23, 1848.

“Louisa S—— says, I am kitchen-maid at Mr. E——’s, of L——. I have lived with him seven months. I left a place in London to go to him. I have been annoyed, during my service with

Mr. E——, by disturbances of various kinds. I first felt the annoyance after I had been there a week. At first my bedroom was over the kitchen. I slept with a fellow-servant. One night, after going to bed, I heard walking, coughing, and moving about, as I thought, in the kitchen. It lasted half an hour. In the morning I spoke to my fellow-servants about it, but they denied having been in the kitchen at all. They did not tell me that the house was said to be haunted. On other occasions, sometimes after I had gone to bed—and sometimes before—I heard walking along the passage, and knocking at the door, and upon searching I could not see any person, nor discover anything.

“At another time I was awoke by a cold hand passing over my face, and, on looking up, I saw a large figure by my bedside, with an arm extended. I said, ‘I will know what it is, or I will raise the house;’ and the figure then slowly moved towards the window, and vanished.

“I should have jumped up and run out of the house, I was so terrified, but my fellow-servant calmed me. I complained to my master, and then, with my companion, went into another room.

“On several occasions I heard noises in a room that was not occupied, as of poking and throwing coals on the fire, and these noises would

continue for a long time. I have heard knocking at the door, often, and, on opening it, could see nobody, nor discover anything. I remember this, particularly on one occasion, when I determined, after first hearing the noise, to open the door on the repeating of the noise; which I did, but nothing could be heard or seen.

“Sometimes the noises were about the room, and I have thought it might be rats. At one time I threw my shoes from the bed into the middle of the room, thinking that would disturb the rats, but it had no effect, and I believe it was not rats. I always looked under my bed, and I never saw any one there, or in the closet, where I hung my dress. I always locked my door. I have heard the handle of the door turn, and have looked round expecting to see some one coming in, but nothing appeared.

“I remember, on one occasion, as I was sitting up, writing, after my fellow-servant had gone to bed, that I heard a loud and distinct knock on the table on which I was writing. I was so frightened that I at once jumped up and got into bed. I have forgotten to state, that, on the night I saw the figure, I had no light in my room. It was not a moonlight night. The figure appeared bright, and illuminated the room.”

Wm. T——. “I am groom to R. E——, Esq., and have been so since four years last 25th March.

Before then, I was groom to Lord F. R——, at G——. I lived with him three years and a half. When Mr. E—— came to L——, I came with him. I slept in a room in the stable-yard. A year ago last winter, *i. e.*, in 1846, Mr. E—— and his family, and all the servants, but Mrs. W—— and myself, went to Ramsgate, and were absent about eleven months. I was left in charge of the house. My wife and five children, and myself, slept in the house. Mrs. W——, the housekeeper, was also in the house for the first two months. Before Mrs. W—— left, I and my wife slept in the middle room, in the servants' suite of rooms. After she left, we slept in her room, which is the further room in the same suite. Soon after I first slept in the house we, *i. e.*, my wife and I, were disturbed at night by noises which we could not account for. We heard noises as if persons were rapping very loud, sometimes against the door, at other times in different parts of the room. Upon one occasion, about half-past one o'clock at night, my wife woke me, and said she heard some one walk past the door in the passage. I got up, and I heard the same, as if two or three persons were going by, as if they were in a hurry, and I heard whispering. I went to the door and opened it; and then I could see nobody, and the noises ceased. I thought somebody was in the house, and I took my pistol, and I walked across

the landing. I then heard the noises below as I heard them above. I also heard noises like the washing of silver after a party. I came down stairs, and went into every room below. Every door and shutter was safe, and I could see nobody. I then went to bed again, and after that I heard a noise, as if somebody pushed himself violently against the door. I then got up and looked into every room of the second landing. Everything was safe there, and I could discover nothing. I then went to bed. My wife heard these noises as well as myself. I told Mrs. W——, the next morning, what I had heard. I heard, during the whole time I slept in the house, from time to time, noises which I could not account for; rapping against the door, on the floor, and against the walls. I never saw anything. Upon one occasion, when I was awoke by the rapping noise, I heard a whizzing noise, as if something passed through my room. I said to my wife, ‘That is some fresh noise.’ I never heard anything of that kind since. After Mrs. W—— left, I slept in her room. I did not hear so many noises in that room as in the one I first slept in.

“My daughter Eliza slept in the kitchenmaid’s room; her two younger sisters slept in the same bed with her. She was then thirteen years of age. She was disturbed two or three different

times by something, as if it was a cold hand put upon her face. It was dark at the time. She did not see anything. It woke her out of her sleep. She could never account for it. She told us in the morning. She seemed as if she had been frightened. We told her to say nothing, as Mr. E—— did not wish it talked about. Another daughter, Emma, used to be afraid to go to bed. She said the chairs moved about the room.

“The noises were of an extraordinary kind, such as I could not make out. Sometimes, when I have heard a noise in one place, I have gone up to that place, and then the noise has appeared immediately to proceed from another part of the house. On going to that part the same thing has occurred in another part. I was not frightened, because I am not alarmed at such things. I do not now sleep in the house, but I should have no objection to do so.

“I did not, neither did my wife, name the subject of these noises to our children—we particularly avoided it. I am sure Eliza had heard nothing about them from us, before she told us of having felt what is above described.

“I do not think any tricks were played upon me, nor upon any of the servants. Some of the servants were much alarmed by these noises. I think E—— T—— left her situation on account of it. She said, before she went to Ramsgate,



that she would never come back to L—— to live there, on account of her having been so much frightened. I heard her say so, and she said so in allusion to the noises she had heard in the house.

“I have heard several of the servants talk of hearing strange noises in the house.”

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It was in a letter from Sir Charles Isham that I received the first intimation of certain extraordinary occurrences at Barby. So remarkable, yet so authentic, did they appear, that I felt a strong inclination to investigate the matter in person; and, accordingly, took an opportunity of visiting the scene of the story. My inquiries, however, only tended to amplify Sir Charles' statement, every point being fully corroborated by the various witnesses, and the whole forming as striking a testimony to the reality of preternatural visitations, even in this our own day, as can well be imagined or desired. I would not willingly make this strange and serious narrative the mere amusement of an idle hour; nor does it appear that any particular advantage is derivable from the promulgation of such histories, except in illustration of a principle, or for the purpose of assisting scepticism to believe that there may be, moving among us, powers, forces, and forms of

being, which all its wisdom can neither weigh nor guage.

Those, therefore, who feel no deeper incentive than barren curiosity, to know what has now been seen, and who saw it, had better pass over, wholly unnoticed, the story of the BARBY GHOST.

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The pretty, secluded little village of Barby, is situated about one mile from Kilsby, and seven from Rugby. It consists of a few small dwellings of the cottage class, and is innocent, if I remember right, even of a beer-shop. It is, perhaps, partly owing to this circumstance, that such inhabitants as Barby does possess, are unusually clean, sober, and intelligent. At all events, the five poor cottages I entered in the course of my perquisitions, were, each and all, models of neatness—redolent of soap and sand—and inhabited by persons whose easy civility, almost grace, of manner, would have done honour to many a polished assembly.

In this village died, on the 3rd of March, 1851, a Mrs. Webb, aged, at the time, sixty-seven. She was born and bred in the place, and, late in life, married a person of some wealth, who deceased a year before her, leaving her in easy circumstances for persons of her class, the cottage in which she resided forming a portion of her pro-

perty. She was, however, of a very penurious disposition; concealing to the utmost whatever resources she enjoyed, and allowing them to accumulate, in some investment, while she denied herself the common necessities of life, and that to such an extent (as I was assured) as to bring on the illness of which she ultimately died.

During this illness, the old woman was supplied with all she needed by her nephew, Mr. Hart (a farmer resident in the parish), and nursed and attended by her neighbours, Mrs. Holding and Mrs. Griffin,—her habits of avarice retaining so strong a hold upon her, that she, on one occasion, pretending to be penniless, sent Mrs. Holding to a neighbour to beg for sixpence to purchase brandy!

After a painful illness of six weeks, Mrs. Webb died. It was at two o'clock, A.M., on the afore-said 3rd of March. She had betrayed no mental disquietude, but, when turned in her bed by her two nurses, about three hours before her decease, expressed an opinion that she should not survive that night; adding, that she trusted it would prove so, and that, before another, she would be "in paradise with her blessed Jesus."

She had, some time previously, made her will, bequeathing everything, with the executorship, to her nephew, Hart.

It was about a month after the funeral, that

Mrs. Holding and her uncle, who occupied the house next door to that of the deceased, which had been shut up, were astonished by hearing loud thumps against the partition wall, also against the door of a small cupboard in the same wall, while doors were violently slammed, and sounds heard as of furniture violently dragged and thrown about. This latter circumstance was the more remarkable, since every single article, great and small, had been removed from the rooms. On entering the house, all was quiet. These noises generally commenced about two o'clock (the time of the old woman's death), sometimes, however, earlier, and caused so much alarm to the neighbours, that Mrs. Holding declared they never could bear to go to bed till eleven o'clock (an unheard of dissipation at Barby), in order that, when they *did* retire, they might be sure of sleeping through it all! One night the noises were so fearful, that Mrs. H. went in search of her uncle, who was absent. His consolatory comment was simply, "Well, missis, I do believe there's our Missis Webb come back!"

On the 9th of April, a respectable family of the name of Accleton, the husband a sawyer, came into the disturbed house, rather from necessity than choice, there being no other dwelling in the village available.

Mrs. Accleton informed me that she occupied the bedroom in which the old woman died, a rather lofty and commodious apartment (for I visited it), with, in the ceiling, a small trap-door, just large enough to admit a slender person, leading into a sort of loft among the rafters. Mr. Accleton was much from home, but the eldest child, a girl of ten, slept in a small bed in the corner, about three paces from that of her mother.

One night, soon after they entered, Mrs. A. was awakened, about two o'clock in the morning, by a tremendous crash in the room below, as though all the chairs and tables had been collected in a body, and then thrown violently down. Thinking it was her husband, who had gone to Hillmorton feast, returned home the worse for liquor, she called out, "Oh, so you've come at last, I hear!" No answer was returned; but the horrible noises were renewed, and continued, at intervals, until four o'clock. The husband returned about seven. Similar sounds were heard every night, in a more or less degree; but nothing was seen, nor was any effect of the disturbance noticeable.

At length, one night (or morning, for it was about *two*), the elder Accletons were awakened by loud shrieks from the child:—"Mother! mother! there's a woman standing by my bed, a shaking her head at me!"

The parents could see nothing, but, the child persisting, Accleton got up and approached the bed, saying—

“Nonsense, nonsense, girl; it’s only your mother’s cap and gown that I hung on your bed.”

(This, Mrs. Accleton explained to me, was not the case, being only said to pacify the child.)

The girl, however, insisted that she had seen a woman standing close beside her, and shaking her head at her. She had on a white cap and a mottled gown, and was very tall. The deceased, Mrs. Webb, was five feet eleven inches in height.

All then remained quiet until four o’clock, when the child, who had been lying with her face to the wall, shrieked out a second time, in an agony of terror—

“Mother! mother! here’s that woman come again!”

Nor could the poor little creature be tranquillised, until the parents placed her in their own bed, after which no further alarm occurred. The child declared that the woman had awakened her, on this second occasion, by turning the corner of the sheet over her face; or (as the mother told me) by “waving something lightly over her.”

The apparition appeared, on subsequent nights, to the little girl—in all, seven times; but though

her terror seems to have decreased, after the first alarm, the mother assured me that she had been seriously injured by the nervous shock, both in her mental and bodily health; still, by "the blessing of God, and with youth on her side," she would now get over it.

She is a pretty, blue-eyed, intelligent child, with a frank, infantine manner, the reverse of cunning. I questioned her as to the appearance and manner of the supposed spectre. She said it came, with a sort of low laughing, or singing voice—(perhaps as though striving to speak)—was surrounded by a "brown light,"—stood erect, sometimes with hands apparently folded, and gazed at her in a bold, firm manner.

Hitherto, though many had heard the noises, none but the child had seen the apparition, and some degree of incredulity existed among the neighbours as to the truth of her statement. This feeling the mother never partook, being satisfied that such an extremity of terror as the child (naturally bold and fearless) betrayed, on the first and second occasions, could not be simulated. But all doubts were soon to be set at rest.

Mrs. Accleton, who had engaged her mother to sleep with her, in the absence of her husband, was aroused one morning, about the usual hour of two, by a sudden light in the room. In an instant, the idea of the spectral presence crossed

her mind, and she at first closed her eyes, resolved not to see it, but, regaining a little courage, altered her purpose.

“ I said to myself,” she told me, “ the Lord’s will be done ! I never did her any harm. I’ll *look* at her. With that I lifted my head from the pillow, and there she stood, right before me, at the bed’s foot, and ‘ set ’ me, as firm and proud as if she was alive ! I looked at her for full five minutes ! I spoke to my mother, who was awake, and told her ‘ There was Mrs. Webb ; ’ but she only said, ‘ Lord help us ! don’t see it ; ’ and pulled the clothes over her head.”

Mrs. Accleton had previously declared her intention to address the spirit, should it appear, but it seems her courage failed ; though she told me (if I remember right) that it moved towards her with a gentle, appealing manner, and even slightly pressed the bolster, “ as though ” (she added) “ it would have said, *Speak, speak.* ” The form and face were distinctly visible by the misty light which was described as emanating from the figure itself. It was, beyond question, the presentment of the deceased woman.

The next eye-witness was a Mrs. Radburn, a stout, determined-looking dame of about three-score, who had enjoyed the dangerous honour of partaking Mrs. Accleton’s couch in the haunted room. She told me that she was aroused, one



night, by a pressure on her elbow. The room was light, and, thinking it was dawn, she was preparing to rise, when a clock struck *two*, and she became at the same instant aware of the presence of the apparition. It stood between her and the window, one of the bed-posts a little interrupting the full view of the face and figure, but the latter were identical with what had been already seen. The chamber was nearly as light as day, so that she could distinguish the window-leads through the curtains. Patches of light were about the room—like—like (“*stars*,” I suggested—but Mrs. Radburn insisted they were “*bigger*”—and I gave it up!) At all events, some sort of coruscations were visible on this, as on every similar occasion, while the spectre went, as one of the women observed, “*flustering*” through the apartment. On Mrs. Radburn’s closing and re-opening her eyes, the spectre was gone, and the room dark as before.

Witness fourth was another very well-mannered and intelligent woman, Mrs. Griffin, who, in company with Mrs. Holding, had nursed the deceased during her fatal illness, and performed the last offices to the dead. She too was aroused at the above hour, and became instantly sensible of the cause. She, however, possessed more nerve than her neighbours, for, though conscious of the presence of the apparition, she determined

to baulk it. "I 'sleered' my eyes through the room, sir, and said, '*Old wench, you shan't know I'm a seeing of you!*'" Something, nevertheless, compelled her to look; and there, as before, stood the spectre, "looking at me as bold and impudent as possible. She had on a dark mottled gown (*not* that she used to wear latterly), and a double-bordered white cap, such as we put on her, Betsy" (said Mrs. Griffin, appealing to her neighbour Holding), "when we put her in her coffin." Mrs. Holding assented.

The usual brownish light accompanied the appearance, and separate streams, or "ribbons," of lustre, pervaded the room, gathering towards that portion of the ceiling where the trap-door is situated, as though indicating the particular locality. The light diffused about the apparition prevented Mrs. Griffin from gazing at it for more than a few moments, and seemed, as she expressed it, to "fill her eyes with fire."

All these parties state that they repeatedly heard the moaning noise made by the spirit, even when it did not become visible. These sounds were continued for hours, and resembled the constant moaning made by the deceased, during the few days preceding her death.

Such were the principal circumstances attending the appearance of the figure, though many slight incidents have no doubt escaped my recol-

lection, a fact which will not astonish the reader, when I mention that, at one period of the inquiry, the four ladies (who had assembled with me in the haunted house) persisted in talking together, and it was only when, by a skilful manœuvre, I contrived to detach Mrs. Radburn (the loudest and most eager) from the circle, that it was possible to collect the circumstances in detail.

The most extraordinary feature of the story has now to be narrated.

The circumstance of streams of light pointing always towards the before-mentioned trap-door, coupled with certain suspicions engendered by the old woman's miserly ways, induced Mrs. Accleton to hint to one of her friends that money might possibly be concealed in the loft above; and, this being repeated to the nephew and executor, Mr. Hart, he shortly after proceeded to the house, and requested Mrs. Accleton, who was still its occupant, to assist him in a search. She readily assented; and, as she informs me, held the ladder by which he ascended to the trap, and crept through it into the loft. It was totally dark within, and the candle he used in his search was blown out three times before he could proceed; Mrs. Accleton remaining below, in eager expectation of the result. Presently he called out that he had found a parcel, and threw down into the room a bundle of "written papers" (pro-

bably old deeds, &c.) A minute afterwards he called out again, and hastily descended the ladder, bringing with him a large bag tied round the middle (“*not*,” put in precise Mrs. Radburn, “near the *top*”) with twine, and covered with dust and cobwebs! On opening it, notes and gold were found to a considerable amount; to *what* amount was, I believe, never known but to the finder, but he took out a handful of sovereigns and exhibited them freely to his companion.

On my asking if he did not appear surprised or elated at the strange discovery, Mrs. Accleton replied, that he displayed much agitation, cried, and said, that “*Now*, he trusted, the poor soul would rest in peace.” He likewise intimated his intention to make some compensation to his disturbed tenants, for all the annoyance they had undergone, on account, as it appeared, of the hidden treasure; but this liberal purpose remains, as I was given to understand, yet to be fulfilled.

Mr. Hart’s expectation that the disturbances would now cease, was destined to be disappointed. Three days, indeed, elapsed in quiet, but, on the fourth, the knockings, moanings, &c., recommenced worse than ever. Hart now proceeded to examine more closely into the affairs of the deceased, when certain debts were discovered still existing against her estate. These were immediately and scrupulously satisfied; after which

(the dead-year, as Mrs. Radburn called it, being up) all disturbance ceased, nor has anything unusual since occurred.

Such are the facts—open to all inquirers—of the Barby apparition. It remains to add, that the various parties with whom I conversed, gave their remarkable evidence with all the appearance of the most perfect sincerity and good faith. Without the slightest seeming eagerness to convince the hearer, one and all spoke of what they had witnessed, with a kind of sad and quiet earnestness that betokened their own settled conviction of its truth. They are respectable and (judging from their conversation) religious persons, impressed with the deepest reverence for things divine, and reliance upon the protection of the Most High. It may have been a fancy, but the idea certainly crossed my mind, that the wonderful visitation to which these poor people believe themselves to have been subjected, has had the effect of somewhat refining their coarse natures, and imparting to their language and manner a sort of dignity not usually characteristic of their class in life.

Understanding that the reverend rector of the parish had taken an opportunity of expressing his entire disbelief in the story, and his persuasion of the impossibility of such occurrences, I inquired as to this point.

"Yes, yes, sir," was the answer impatiently; "Mr. G—— may say so, and think so; but, *seeing is believing*, and not twenty Mr. G——s can convince us, four people, against the evidence of our own eyes and ears. Mr. G—— is a good gentleman, but *he has not seen what we saw.*"

In such a case as this, comment appears useless. The facts once established, most persons will proceed to draw the inference most in accordance with their spiritual impressions. The question then is, *are* the facts established? It is impossible to doubt that the witnesses *believe* what they relate. Questioned separately, their testimonies corroborate each other in the minutest particulars, and this wholly without that constrained aspect which always accompanies a studied story. Each describes the phenomenon, and the effect it produced upon her, in her own way, and in totally different words; yet, in comparing the various accounts, the spectral *tableau* preserves the strictest keeping, the most rigid individuality.

If, forced to believe them, we turn to the hypothesis of a trick, it must be remembered that no two persons, though together and awake at the moment of the spectre's appearance, could see it at the same time. The room that was light to the one was dark to the other. Again, it is impossible to urge that a mere illusion, prompted by

what they had previously heard, could, accompanied by so many peculiar characteristics, be propagated to three distinct imaginations, and deceive them all.

Add to these considerations, the extraordinary coincidence of the discovery of the treasure (never, certainly, to be sought for in the dwelling of one who had, on her death-bed, begged sixpence of her poorest neighbour), and we shall be surely somewhat inclined to give in our adhesion to the doctrine of the Rev. Mr. Beecher, as applied to equally marvellous phenomena, that it is better to accept an hypothesis which accounts, not only for every difficulty other theories can reach, but, moreover, all they cannot. Nor is it difficult to believe that the All-wise Disposer of events, who brings good out of evil, may have adapted this seeming deviation from his own established laws, to days of doubt, indifference, and scepticism; and, both in the ordering of the event, and the selection of its humble witnesses, "divided to every one severally as He will."

On the other hand, nothing is easier than to cavil, except to disbelieve; and, unfortunately,—

———— "It is the trick

Of these last livers to unbuild belief:

They'd rob the world of spirit. Then each look—

Aye—every aspect of the earth and sky—

Man's thought and hope, are lies."

In a former part of this volume will be found a full and final contradiction to the statement put forth by certain publications, hostile to the general subject, that my book, *Sights and Sounds*, was written in the interest of the *spiritual* theory of the manifestations, or in the persuasion of its truth. Unable to account for the unmerited success of that work, except by regarding it as a natural result of the attacks alluded to, I had determined henceforth to avoid all attempts to repel them, relying on the plain text of my book, and the reason of its readers, for the *true* interpretation of my views.

But even while the foregoing pages were printing, a new onslaught has been made,—and that of so decided a character as imperatively to demand one word in answer.

It is contained in a new serial, bearing the pretentious title of the *National Miscellany*, and published by Mr. J. H. Parker, 377, Strand, London. In it I am declared—*First*, to be the “hierophant” (elegant for *priest*) of the spirit-rappings. *Secondly*, to record certain ridiculous trash as real and actual revelations from the spirits of Washington, Franklin, Calvin, &c.!!! *Thirdly*, to accept the ravings of one Andrew Jackson Davis, *alias* the “Poughkeepsie seer,” as genuine religious inspiration. *Fourthly*, to “adopt” Swedenborg, Owen, Fourier, and I



know not how many more—but, at all events, a very large and extremely miscellaneous family. *Fifthly*, to be guilty of “*blasphemous temerity*.”

These five distinct accusations are five distinct falsehoods.

But that certain expressions in the article in question, suggest a bare possibility of its emanating from one whose profession should, more than any other, teach him the grace of charity—the “*measureless liar*” of Coriolanus would be a mere friendly compliment to the terms this gentleman might consider as applied to himself in reply—or may yet accept, should the above conjecture be happily incorrect, or he be willing to delegate to other hands the responsibility of his falsehood and slander.

If this mode of advertising a wrong appear to the good taste of my readers as partaking somewhat too freely of the “*Ercles vein*,” I entreat it may be borne in mind that we have, unfortunately, no police regulations extending to the arrest of the literary bravo. If, as usually happens, he be a coward also, pursuit is easily and invariably baffled; and should the practice of slaughtering literary and moral reputations be persevered in, we may, ultimately, be driven to some such measures as the following:—

“**CONCEALED or ABSCONDED.** The author of a certain libellous attack in the NATIONAL MIS-

CELLANY. He was last seen near 377, Strand, in the society of his employer, Mr. J. H. Parker, who declines to point out his retreat. Address, 100, Mount Street, Grosvenor Square," &c. &c.

I have quoted the falsehoods; now for the truth.

1. Readers will decide for themselves whether I am, or not, the hierophant of the rapping-spirits.

2. The stuff I am said to quote as genuine revelation, is committed in the book (p. 144) entirely to the judgment of the reader, except so far as the language in which it is so committed, is significant of the writer's own opinion of its worthlessness.

3. Not having studied the unwholesome lucubrations of Mr. Andrew Jackson Davis, the Poughkeepsie seer, (one of my "adopted"), with the same zest and interest with my assailant, I scarcely know what it is I have to deny. The truth is, I know nothing of the gentleman but what my critic has told me; viz., that "this Davis" is a pretended prophet. Will it be believed that the sole ground for identifying my opinions with those of the "seer" is *this*? . . . I had occasion to adduce some sensible remarks of a Mr. Fishbough (*Sights and Sounds*, p. 391, &c.), referring certain of the phenomena to causes analogous to electricity. This Mr. Fishbough, I now learn for the first time, had, at a certain indistinct

period of his history, some indefinite connexion with Andrew Jackson Davis ; but in what manner my quoting Mr. Fishbough's scientific remarks can commit me, not only to *his* religious opinions, but those of his ancient friend, I must again leave to the decision of the reader.

4. So far from "adopting" Swedenborg, I (p. 445) distinctly repudiated all adherence to his theology. Yet, in the bewildered wanderings of that beautiful soul, grander, nobler, in its delusions, than millions of his traducers, it is not impossible that he has made, occasionally, a nearer approximation to truths yet unrevealed, than has fallen to the lot of more orthodox teachers.

5. As this man can only convict me of "blasphemous temerity," in referring to the text of St. John (iv. 2), by first establishing his slanderous assumption—belief in the spirits, and subscription to the unholy doctrines of the "Poughkeepsie seer,"—the accusation falls to the ground.

Truly, there are both

"FACTS, AND FANTASIES."

LONDON :  
G. J. PALMER, SAVOY STREET, STRAND.