

# STRANGE THINGS

AMONG US.

BY

H. SPICER,

AUTHOR OF "OLD STYLES'S."

"Credimus, quia incredibile est."



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TO  
THE COUNTESS D'USEDOM,  
WITH COMPLIMENTS,  
AND KIND REMEMBRANCE,  
THIS LITTLE WORK  
Is Inscribed  
BY  
THE AUTHOR.



A VERY small portion of this work has been already before the public in the pages of "All the Year Round." Presented in its complete form, the writer's object—to inquire, not dogmatize—to suggest, rather than demonstrate—will be sufficiently apparent, to render needless any apology for the seeming attempt to treat of matters so important, within limits so confined. The book is, in fact, but a sketch—a study—a "*ballon perdu*," flung up experimentally among the currents which have of late set, somewhat steadily, in a direction of much promise.



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## STRANGE THINGS AMONG US.

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WHEN the evening lamps are lighted, or rather just antecedent to that operation—say in the little interval which follows the retirement of the ladies from the dining-room, and precedes the appearance of the laughing sceptics below—a grain of ghost-talk mingles, not inharmoniously, with the gentle domestic topics invoked by the subdued light and confidential feeling of the hour. The treatment of the subject is necessarily superficial. Twenty minutes will not suffice for a dive into philosophic deeps. Facts are simply adduced. Theme and proposition are laid bare, and left so, for any after-manipulations profounder thinkers please. Nevertheless, from the pabulum (often exceedingly raw) supplied by these little conversations, may be deduced a whole garden of thought, worthy the attention of the most earnest sage.

Whatever be the cause, the fact will hardly be

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disputed that a taste for the supernatural has greatly augmented of late among the educated classes of society. It has, indeed, as might be expected, abandoned its ancient form of bald credulity. We neither believe in the ghost, nor shoot at him. We require to know something of his nature who walks uninvited into our dwelling, and to learn what may be his immediate business there, but not with rudeness nor intolerance.

In a word, the indulgent spirit of the time is the welcome child of progress. As every age stamps itself upon the roll of time with the seal of some grand discovery—as every successive year reveals its half-suspected wonders, the mind becomes less and less inclined to impose limits upon that vast unexplored ocean, which, like the natural horizon, seems to know no bound but God—and man, as he grows wiser, grows humbler.

Well has it been written: "We know not the Alpha of creation. At the very threshold of natural knowledge we stumble and fall. Every day brings the conviction of some error or mistake. The more we study God's works the deeper is the feeling that the growth of wisdom is just the increasing knowledge of our ignorance. A lifetime is too short to understand the alpha of any single science upon earth."—(*Protoplast.*) Applying the remark to our present

subject, it is, no doubt, to this fruitful misgiving—which might in reality be termed a better discipline of reason—that we are indebted for many an interesting narrative which would else have never have passed the bounds of a family circle, or, in doing so, would have at least been carefully denuded of such corroboration as name, place, and time afford. In the incidents to be hereafter related these have been supplied without scruple, and without desire for any greater reticence than the writer's discretion might impose.

The circumstances of each case have been verified with unusual care, because another object than simple curiosity, or the making a readable book, suggested the inquiry. Still, it may be proper to call attention to the fact, that persons who have been, or who have conceived themselves to have been, the witnesses of so-called supernatural appearances, are, in recalling the occurrence, never wholly free from the dominion of that exalted feeling which accompanied it, and which is ill-calculated for minute and accurate detail. He, therefore, who undertakes to relate a ghost story at second-hand often incurs the difficult duty of rendering incoherences in such a manner as shall not, on the one hand, foster deceit, on the other, bring down unjust doubt upon what is more correct than clear.

To assist analysis, we must compare. To aid

comparison, the least possible reserve should unite with the closest possible adherence to facts, so far as (after passing through the ordeal of susceptible imaginations) facts can be fairly ascertained. Few things spread such snares for the truthful as a "ghost story." Owing to a certain family resemblance which runs through this class of narrative, the temptation to lay undue stress upon any point which presents a novel feature is proportionately strong. Such a point, perhaps in itself unimportant, thriving by notice, expands, by imperceptible degrees, into the leading incident of the tale. A new phenomenon is forthwith proclaimed, and walks abroad, scattering wild confusion among the ripening theories about, perhaps, to add another recognized law to the mysterious code of nature. Let the narrator then beware of the first dereliction from the plain truth of history ! As the careless treader in Alpine wastes sets his feet upon a lump of ice, and glances down—down—sixty feet at a bound !—who knows whither ?—so does one error launch the best-told tale, with all its stirring incidents, into the abyss of doubt for ever ! Be never tempted by the half-satisfied looks of a wonder-seeking circle to put into the mouth of your authentic spectre one syllable the latter did not deliver. On the essential subject of time be firm as rock, nor suffer the confessedly superior value of a

noontide apparition to beguile you into encouraging the faintest doubt whether it might not have been the meridian, instead of midnight. As a general rule, it is advisable to refrain from any voluntary testimony to the well-strung nerves of Mr. B. (the hero). In all probability, you know nothing about them; and, if you did, it remains yet a question whether nerves have much to do with the subject. Not, however, to pursue in a flippant tone matters well deserving the most serious notice, it need only be added that the observance of a few such simple rules as the above would greatly promote the chances of arriving at a reasonable understanding, since, as already hinted, the temptation to invest such narratives with a theatrical circumstance, not strictly their due, has removed to the realm of fiction many an anecdote that might have furnished honest material for reflection and discussion.

Perhaps the very shortest ghost-story on record was communicated to the writer, not long since, by a friend now occupying a distinguished post in the Federal army of America.

“My brother George, who was residing in England, looked into my tent one night, in India,” said Colonel J——, “to tell me he was dead.”

And so indeed he was. Only by cross-examination, were elicited the concurrent facts, that the

colonel had been lying broad awake—in conflict with mosquitoes, that he had sharply questioned the sentry, and adopted other means to assure himself that he was in full possession of his waking faculties, and also that the vision was perceptible to no eyes but his own.

“I don’t know *how* it happened,” was the colonel’s brief comment, “*I saw him.*”

This is the “*how*” into which we should inquire; and even were the extra-natural occurrences not demonstrable to every understanding, and should ultimately elude the grasp of any, there is at least nothing terrible, or revolting, in the pursuit. It is, for example, a simple, touching, and beautiful faith, that the last earthly regards of the liberated spirit should be fixed upon its best beloved. If such be the work of a mocking spirit, it wears a wonderfully heavenly dress, and little can be gained to the kingdom of the Evil One.

I am a ghost. Tremble not. Fear not me.  
The dead are ever good and innocent,  
And love the living. They are cheerful creatures,  
And quiet as the sunbeams—and most like,  
In grace, and patient love, and spotless beauty,  
The newborn of mankind.

(*The Fool's Tragedy.*)

More than one Christian writer has expressed his belief that there is ground for the blessed hope that



the spirits of departed saints are engaged, as are the angels, in offices of love and mercy, on behalf of those whose weary pilgrimage is not yet ended.

Nor is it easy to understand how some excellent persons object to inquiries of this nature, on the ground that we might be betrayed into the investigation of matters beyond the legitimate range of human philosophy. It would rather appear that a class of phenomena so frequently forced on our attention through the natural senses, and yet so vaguely understood, would form a peculiarly fitting theme for consideration and comment, and *that* without presumption towards Him who, while commending to our contemplation the more material wonders of His universe, has by no ordinance decreed that those of which we speak shall pass unchallenged. It is difficult to conceive how such a path of study can do otherwise than tend to the added glory of Him by whom all things consist. Whether, baffled and bewildered, we stop short in the pursuit, with a confession that such wisdom is indeed "too wonderful and excellent for us," or whether, guided by the intelligence He gives, we are enabled to trace back the questionable thing to the operation of some hitherto unrecognized law of nature, which is the law of God, He is alike glorified in the failure, or in the success.

“It is an *interesting inquiry*,” writes a pious and eloquent author, already quoted, “how far we are warranted by profane and sacred history to believe in the visitation of departed spirits in visible form. It is very curious that, whatever may be said of the credulity of the vulgar, men of great intellect have almost invariably been believers in what are commonly called supernatural appearances, and I never met a person of any strength of mind who set aside the mass of evidence which has accumulated on the subject.”—(*Protoplast*.)

The writer inclines to the opinion that supernatural appearances, occurring in close relation to passing events, have their origin, indeed, in the unhealthy action of the brain, but are used by the Omnipotent for a manifested purpose and a special end. In this manner he conceives the disturbed brain of the guilty Saul produced an image of Samuel, God using this circumstance as a means to make known the coming judgment; a more reasonable explanation than that the spirit of Samuel was directly sent by God, since, in the later case, he would not have murmured at the mission—“Why hast thou *disquieted* me, &c.?”

God still works wonders, but by natural means; nor need we be apprehensive that, in tracing out these means, our faith in the illimitable power which

created the laws by which it works will be weakened. As is the sameness of elementary matter to the chemist, who, while using the affinities of elementary substances for each other, never can transmute them, so, by whatever new and wondrous path we approach the Eternal Source, the end is the same—a something existent, insoluble—never to be demonstrated.

The keen-sighted hero who discovered that Providence, which conquers by many or by few, inclined, nevertheless, generally, to the side of “great battalions,” was, after all, not much in error, only overlooking the predestinating hand that beckoned those great battalions to the field.

Vast as is the amount of knowledge the united labour of fifty centuries has gathered in, an infinite harvest yet remains to reap. Has any science even ventured to imagine a limit to its sphere of search? Is, for example, the animal kingdom exhausted? Combinations of matter, new to *us*, are constantly producing new forms of life. Even with some whose generations have long since been denizens of this globe, we are yet imperfectly, if at all, acquainted; and, if one distinguished naturalist has taken upon himself to aver that Providence is incapable of creating an animal with the presumed appearance and habits of the sea-serpent, another, long resi-

dent in Central Africa, has lately assured us that, in the trackless wastes and forests, stretching south and east, there will unquestionably be found animals hitherto unclassified by the zoologist, not excepting the "fabled" unicorn.

So, in the rich abundance of the vegetable kingdom, how little is revealed, compared with what lies hid, of the powers and properties of those innumerable structures, every one of which, we have reason to believe, has its especial adaptation to the ever-changing, ever-recurring needs of man? The treasury of nature seems no poorer for the perpetual drain, and so will it probably remain, until the laborious pursuit of knowledge is lost in the light of infinite wisdom. Yet, it is good for us to gather up the "broken fragments of the feast" with which creation began, and he that would restrict that search by arrogant announcements that, in such and such a walk, there is nothing more to find—is false to his fellow-workers—false to nature, false to God.

"I see outspread before me the immense sea of the infinite wisdom of God. It is given me to dip my vessel into it, and fill it for my use; but I have no more idea of emptying that sea, than I have of emptying the waters of the ocean from their depth."

With this persuasion of the restricted character of

our acquaintance with things of lower nature, it is certainly strange that any new suggestion having reference to that complex structure, man himself, and seeming capable of analysis, should be almost invariably received with disfavour. The discoverer of a new material organ in the human frame would be hailed as a sort of benefactor to his kind. How much more does he deserve, who demonstrates powers hitherto latent in the nobler part of man? On what principle is examination deprecated? If the influence of an assumed discovery be beneficent, how much may not be lost? If noxious, the bare denial of its existence is but a partial remedy.

One example may suffice. Mesmerism—that singular art known familiarly in remote ages, revived seventy years ago, has fairly outlived the worst that invective and incredulity could effect, and, with its clairvoyant phenomena, now compels the attention of those who would fain have ignored the whole matter, recognizing in it the germ of a dangerous power.

It is far from the writer's purpose to defend the *practice* of mesmerism, since the utmost benefit to be expected from it by the most sanguine, would be infinitely outweighed by the evil that might arise from a power thus obtained by any human creature over the moral and mental being of another. Presuming that the imponderable substance by which

the mesmerist is understood to act, does exist, it has awakened the scruples and fears of many, not given to dream, lest an agent so spiritual and preternatural should be seized upon by the ever-watchful powers of evil, as a medium for the assault of human souls.

All, however, at present to be urged, is that an insufficient investigation is, generally speaking, worse than none at all. Thus, the French commission appointed to inquire into the claims of magnetism, and composed of the three celebrities, Bailly, Lavoisier, and Benjamin Franklin, together with two other members of the Royal Academy of Sciences, and four of the Faculty of Medicine at Paris, came to the decision that "all the effects produced by it could be elicited where it was not even pretended to be employed, that magnetism could produce no effects without the aid of an excited imagination, and that imagination, *when* excited, could effect all that was attributed to magnetism. They did not hesitate to ascribe all the wonders they had witnessed to the power of imagination, the tendency to imitation natural to all mankind, and the animal heat and friction employed by the magnetists."\*

With the decision of their brethren the scientific world remained satisfied. Not so the public, who continued to avail themselves of the magnetic reme-

\* "Cradle of the Twin Giants."—(*Christmas.*)

dies until the introduction of a new and singular feature, by the Marquis de Puysegur, a pupil of Mesmer—viz. the magnetic sleep—proved that the subject had *not* been exhausted. It is not necessary to remind the reader of the phenomena supposed to attach to this condition, or how the shutting out of external impressions quickened those within, until (in the words of Mr. Christmas) the patients “not only walked, talked, preached, advised, and prophesied, but were even able to transfer the action and power of the senses to parts not ordinarily capable of exercising them.” “Animal instinct (according to Oker) arose to the highest pitch admissible in this world. The clairvoyant became a pure animal, without any admixture of matter. His operations were those of a spirit,” &c.

The theory of Deleuze affirms that perception in magnetic patients is carried on by means of an internal circulation of the fluid, which transmits the impressions immediately, without the intervention of nerves, to the brain, an idea which subsequently gave rise to the practice of magnetizing the physician, instead of the patient, whereby the former obtained all necessary information as to what was wrong in the latter's frame!

Recurring once more to Mr. Christmas's excellent work, we find that, in 1825, a new commission of

admitted to be an important ingredient in the matter, these conflicting results leave the question almost as it was. The character and scope of the magnetic theory remains still to be solved.

“Inferences,” as Dr. Elliotson has truly noted, “are too often drawn in mesmerism, as in medicine, from imperfectly investigating, and from too few occurrences. The declarations of mesmerized patients, thought to be clairvoyant, upon those matters, is not worth a moment’s consideration. I am satisfied of the truth of clairvoyance—of an occult power of foreknowing changes in the patient’s own health that are not cognizable to others—of knowing things distant and things past, and sometimes, though rarely, things to come. But I am sure that most clairvoyants imagine much, speak the impressions of their natural state, or of those about them, and may be led to any fancy.”

Commenting upon these matters, Mr. Christmas has observed that “the only real difficulties with regard to the acceptance of mesmerism as a *whole*, are those which attend the clairvoyant phenomena, nor are these so great as they are usually supposed to be. If I may by means of one fluid—light—be made sensible of what takes place in a room separated from me by a glass-door, or, by another fluid—air—of what takes place in a room separated from



me by a partition of wood, why may I not attain a similar knowledge through the action of a third fluid, and call it neither sight nor hearing, but clairvoyance? The interposition of solid bodies is no necessary impediment, as we have seen in the cases already adduced. Distance is no hindrance, as we see daily by the electric telegraph. However wonderful, therefore, may be these cases of clairvoyance denominated 'mental travelling,' there is nothing which need strike us as in any high degree improbable."

The same writer—one of the fairest and most unbiassed who has ever essayed to deal with this vexed question—divides the clairvoyants into three classes, first setting the impostors aside.

There are the patients whose faculties are sharpened so that they are enabled to judge of probabilities much more accurately than when in their normal condition, and may be reasonably supposed able to predict with some accuracy such events as the crises of disease, &c.

Secondly, examples of persons who have heard scientific subjects discussed, and not understanding have forgotten them, until in the mesmeric state the half-comprehended sounds have rushed back upon the memory.

Thirdly, cases in which thought may be actually

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transmitted from mind to mind without the intervention of speech.

“We know too little,” he concludes, “of the inner life and nature of man’s spirit to be able to theorize on a subject so difficult as this, but the tenor of experiment induces us to believe in its possibility. . . . The opinions of those who refer all these wonders to satanic influence prove that they must surely have very unorthodox views of Satan’s character and purpose if they suppose him lending himself to good men, and employing his power to cure disease and alleviate suffering.”

Imperfect investigation is the bane of philosophy.

Less liberal than the inquirers of old, who met together expressly “to tell or to hear some new thing,” and while so doing caught the first beams of the glorious Christian day, the *savans* of our age evince a marked disfavour for *any* new thing that presumes to make its appearance unfathered by any recognized authority. The door of Areopagus is shut to nameless men, and the stamp of learned societies is necessary to render the new theory admissible within the pale of discussion. Should the poor bantling, born perhaps of some neglected student’s brain, become importunate, then (especially if the public evince a disposition to hear) he is either floored—and expected to consider himself

so—by one blow of a scientific bludgeon, or hustled back, with shouts of derisive laughter, into the obscurity from whence he came.

Let us instance “table-turning,” an experiment entirely distinct from “spirit-rapping,” although commonly associated with that most objectionable and imbecile practice, owing to an opinion that had got abroad, that a table once fully impregnated with a certain fluid force, radiating in streams from many finger-ends, constitutes a medium or element adaptable to intercommunication with those beings that hover round us, scarcely more ethereal than the agent itself.

To check the growing taste for such exhibitions, the honoured name of one to whose genius and research science is under the deepest obligations, was put forward with a view to disprove the existence altogether of the aforesaid fluid force, and to show that the table-movements were ascribable to the combined spontaneous muscular action of the operators. A table was suspended in the air, so accurately balanced that the very lightest pressure of a finger would suffice to produce a deflection, and betray the intrusion of physical force. It was asserted that *this* table was never known to move, nor was it very likely that it would, since it never was pretended that, without absolute contact, the

force was communicable, while, as has been said, the slightest touch, nay, the very action of a strong pulse, was enough to disturb the fine equilibrium of the instrument. Yet it was boasted that the experiment was exhaustive, and *this* table, at least, effectually turned upon the table-turners.

Electricity—powerful magnetoied currents—can, as every one is aware, be generated in the human frame, and there are well-understood instances in which the latter have been shown to be controllable by the will. Hence, “vitalized electricity,” to use its scientific name, has been the subject of considerable discussion and numerous experiments, to which the work of Dr. Dubois Reymond, of the Academy of Sciences, Berlin, led the way.

The fluid essence, associated with the inquiries of Reichenbach, known as odyle, more subtle than even electricity (itself seven hundred thousand times finer than air) besides producing analogous phenomena, further manifests itself in cases in which magnetism gives no evidence of its presence, in many chemical processes, in vitality, crystals, friction, sun and moon spectra, polarized light, &c.\*

To illustrate its operations, Mr. Rutter constructed his magnetoscope. The experiments by the late Dr. Leger, some few years since, with this simple machine

\* “Sights and Sounds,” p 413.

(chiefly as applied to the science of phrenology), were beginning to render it familiar to the public, when the premature death of the professor, leaving, unfortunately, his observations and analyses incomplete, withdrew the instrument and its capacities from general notice. It may not, therefore, be superfluous to mention that the magnetoscope consisted of a brass rod, crowned with a brass disc, and screwed upon an immovable base, such as a stone floor, table, or wall. From the top of the rod, beneath the disc, extended two arms, one composed of wood or metal (conductors of electricity); the other of animal matter, whalebone, or porcupine quill (non-conductors). From either arm depended a thread of equal length, with a pendulum of equal weight.

The operator places his finger lightly on the immovable disc which crowns the whole, when the pendulum attached to the conducting arm, acquires a violent movement; that depending from the non-conductor remaining perfectly still, thus proving beyond question that *the magnetic current—and that alone—imparts the action.*

Its existence established, the next extraordinary feature is the manner in which this subtle agent, after showing that it can govern inert matter, is itself governed by the mere *will*, thus leading to the conclusion that the will of man is in itself a natural force.

The mental process by which these currents are directed, involving a peculiar state of the nervous power, is difficult to explain in a few lines. It is dwelt upon at some length in Dr. Leger's interesting treatise. We are dealing rather with results, and it will be enough to say that the writer—among others—had many opportunities of witnessing the exercise of this will-power upon the instrument, not only by Dr. Leger himself, but by those who carefully followed his directions.

The doctor's own influence was indeed extraordinary. With his finger lightly resting on the immovable machine, he caused the pendulum to vary its oscillations, from rotatory to elliptical, from north to south, from east to west, according to previous announcement, or to the chance suggestions of a stander-by.

Concerning the adaptation of the magnetoscope to the purposes of phrenology, it is necessary to speak with more reserve. True, the doctor affirmed that to every phrenological organ there was found to belong one—and *one only*—of the seven different oscillations of the pendulum, viz., normal rotation, inverse rotation, elliptical (oval), N. and S., E. and W., N.E. and S.W., and S.E. and N.W. By placing the left middle finger on the organ to be examined, the right as usual on the brass disc, the doctor observed

that the pendulum began invariably to move in the direction belonging to that organ, the amount of movement furnishing the degree of development.

According to this evidence, therefore, it becomes practicable to ascertain with much accuracy a man's dispositions and character, without any knowledge of his previous history. Armed with this silent oracle, the doctor made the round of most of the gaols and lunatic asylums in the kingdom, astonishing governors and doctors with his precise biography of those under their charge; extending, in many cases, even to the very delinquencies for which the criminal portion had been made responsible.

Within these few weeks the writer has been indebted to a friend of the deceased professor for an opportunity of inspecting the reports of these examinations, most minutely tabulated by the former, and embracing no less than eight hundred and thirty-three cases. It is to be hoped that the Phrenological Society,\* to whom the value of these interesting materials must be apparent, will take measures for placing them on the table of general science, so that, with greater publicity, their actual intrinsic worth may be more impartially weighed.

One point of difficulty will naturally present itself,

\* The writer has since been informed that this society has ceased to exist.

on which, however, had the doctor's life been spared to complete his work, some light might have been thrown. Conceding that the magnetoid currents are subject to the operator's will, in what manner, when employed (for instance) in divining character, can a sufficiently independent action be secured to them?

Say that the doctor's subject for the time being happened to be a gaol ruffian of repulsive physiognomy, and strongly-developed malific organs, might not the former's secret conviction that his acquaintance was a consummate scoundrel, unconsciously prejudice the will that rules the currents that govern the instrument? Fine as was the adjustment of thine invention, dear doctor, far finer was the adjustment of that which thou didst *not* invent—the human will.

Regarding the existence of the magnetic currents as perfectly established, a few words as to their conditions and effects will conduct us towards the point at which we would arrive—a solution of some of the many so-called supernatural events of which our social and domestic history is full.

Although these currents are, of course, manifested in the healthy, as well as the morbid subject, it is in the latter only that their extreme development and irregular action attract attention; and hence it may be reasonably inferred that a diseased magnetic



condition of the brain, in which this fine fluid is generated, is the real parent of the phenomena.

“ Just as physiology is often indebted to disease for illustrating what should be the proper functions of the vital organs—so, also, can psychology learn important lessons from perverted or diseased mental action. Many truths respecting the various parts of the nervous system and their separate functions have been either brought to light, or finally *established*, by means of disease, &c. Thus we find that, when the nerves of *motion* are paralyzed, those of *sensation* often remain entire, and *vice versa*; that reflex action will continue unimpaired when consciousness is entirely destroyed; that undue excitement of the nerves will produce ghost-seeing, and other collateral phenomena. . . . . Insanity, again, frequently throws light upon the play of the mental faculties, inasmuch as it gives real examples of cases in which one set of functions is perverted, while others are wholly unaffected. . . . . Lastly, all those abnormal phenomena which are grouped together under the names, somnambulism, electro-biology, clairvoyance, and mesmeric states, generally give us a remarkable insight into the *instinctive operations* of the nervous system, and the power which ideas exert over the physical functions of the body. Abnormal though they be, they are often highly suggestive of very

important truths in connection with that dim and almost unknown region which lies between the conscious and unconscious life of man." \*

Those, according to Dr. S. Taylor, in whose system the before-mentioned "detached vital electricity" is eliminated, may be reduced to this singular condition—of losing all consciousness of any of the common operations of life immediately after their performance. Thus, for example, the mind wills, and the hand writes in obedience to its dictates; but that reflex current which perpetually returns to the great sensorium the consciousness of the hand's act, is wanting. It passes off from the person; and the curious question has been raised, whether it may not, by affinity, be attracted by, and made to act upon, the morbid system of another?

The former part of the proposition, at all events, is comprehensible enough, since all muscular action, and all sensation—seeing, feeling, &c.—are voltaic, or produced by the movements of electricity in the system over the nerves.

Is it not possible, then, that many of the pretended "spirit-writings" may have had their origin in this morbid characteristic? Persons, whose truthful lives forbid the very idea of a sensible deceit,

\* Morell's "Mental Philosophy."

have assured the writer that they had no consciousness of having conceived, or conveyed to paper, the remarks that lay upon the table, fresh from their very hands.

Is it not an admitted fact that, in the electric condition, persons are frequently unconscious of the phenomena occurring in their own frames?

“Such knowledge is by no means a *necessary* feature, but in the same manner as the human system is affected by invisible agents, such as atmospheric changes, noxious vapours, &c.; and as the mind, though stimulated by the sphere of unseen life and thought, cannot always distinctly perceive the spiritual presence, or recognize agencies, so the body is alike insensible to the presence of those agents which act upon its physiological condition.”  
—(“*Sights and Sounds.*”)

With respect to the second suggestion that has been offered—that which refers to the possibility of the detached force being attracted to the morbid system of another, so as even to affect the external senses of the latter, a field of consideration is opened, which, fairly examined, might lead to the explanation of a very large class of extra-natural incidents—such as, for example, the supposed warnings of another’s death.

From many illustrations, the following, as well

adapted to our argument, is selected, and given in the precise words of Colonel M.—, a French officer, in a letter to a friend :—

“ Left an orphan at an early age, I was brought up under the care of a kind-hearted friend and godmother, who could scarcely have cherished me more had I been her own offspring. She resided at Harfleur, and, being in easy circumstances, refused me nothing that could contribute to my youthful pleasure, keeping my pockets withal comfortably lined with that material which rendered my frequent visits to the Sunday fêtes in the neighbourhood doubly agreeable.

“ On one occasion I had started as usual, in company with a band of young vagabonds like myself, to attend a fête at Quillebœuf, on the opposite side of the Seine.

“ Contrary to my natural habit, I felt uneasy and depressed. An inexplicable feeling of gloom hung upon my mind, and neither my own efforts, nor the raillery of my companions, could drive it away. I had, indeed, left my good protectress confined to her bed by illness ; but I had no idea that she was in any danger. However, the cloud upon my mind, far from dispersing, momentarily increased. If I joined as usual in the different sports, I was slow and unskilful, and, in the war of wit that generally

accompanied our games, had not a word to say for myself.

“ We had engaged in a game of skittles. It was my turn to deliver the ball, and I was standing half-pensively poising it in my hand, when I distinctly heard a soft voice pronounce my name. I started, and turned round, hastily asking who had spoken.

“ ‘ Nobody,’ replied those around me.

“ I insisted that I had heard a woman’s voice say ‘ M——.’

“ ‘ Bah ! you are dreaming. Play away !’

“ Hardly had the ball quitted my hand, when, a second time I heard my name pronounced in a soft and plaintive tone, but fainter than the former. Again I inquired who called me.

“ No one present had heard the sound.

“ It struck me that some one of the party was playing a trick upon me, in order to increase my evident melancholy. Nevertheless, under the influence of some impression caused by the plaintive summons, I refused to play any longer, and presently returned alone to Harfleur.

“ On reaching my godmother’s house, I was shocked to learn that she had expired during the afternoon, pronouncing my name twice, and breathing her last sigh at the moment of the second summons I had heard. These facts are well known to

some twelve or fifteen people at Harfleur and at Quillebœuf, most of whom are still (in 1854) living, and, were *I* to live fifty years, the sound and the impression will never depart from my memory."

In stating, with a view to corroboration, that these facts, which had of course their common source in the narrator, were known to certain persons at Harfleur, Colonel M—— simply intended to appeal to the memory of his friends as to his unaccustomed demeanour and actions on the day in question, as to the death of his friend, and his own explanation, given at the time of the singular occurrence mentioned. For rarely indeed does that solemn sound or shadow extend its influence beyond *one* soul. As complete as it is mysterious, must be the preparation by which the receptive power is obtained.

That unaccountable feeling of gloom or uneasiness so constantly referred to as having preceded such visitations, merely indicates the latent process through which we are being insensibly drawn towards that sensitive magnetic condition which is essential to such phenomena. It is not answerable for their production. Infinitely more numerous are the instances in which nothing remarkable has succeeded these seasons of depression. Hence, it seems that the operation of another law is necessary to render

the phenomenon complete. The eye is ready, but the light has not dawned. In language the reverse of philosophic, it requires two minds to produce one "ghost." There must be, on the one side, the power of projection of the sound or image, through the agency described, on the other, that of receptivity.

Concerning the conditions of the latter power, there is yet little besides conjecture. Unquestionably it has been found that those most subject to illusory phenomena have been persons of variable health, sensitive and impressionable temperament, children who, at the age from seven to ten, have outgrown their strength, or individuals of riper years, in whom a feeble wasted body is hurrying to premature decay. Many interesting cases are on record (the writer himself has had personal knowledge of two) in which children, in the state described, have believed and declared themselves to be in daily familiar intercourse with beings not of this world; giving them fancied names, and speaking of appointments made, and discourses maintained, with them, as though they had been recognized members of the household. While in no single instance have these things appeared to have a painful effect on the minds of the little seers, their physical health has invariably suffered, until care and medical treatment,

aided by the beneficent operation of nature, have restored the normal tone.

Although our ghost-seers, as a rule, are, as has been noted, persons of sensitive and impressionable nature—we have apparent instances to the contrary—and, among the rest, a noticeable one in the person of the gallant Colonel M——, who perished, with a party of his men, in the lamentable burning of a transport, on her way to the Crimea.

M—— (with whom the writer was well acquainted) was a man of the coolest nerve, of the most imperturbable self-possession. It was his habit to sit up reading in the chamber of his invalid wife, after the latter had retired to bed.

One night, Mrs. M—— having fallen asleep, the door opened, and her maid, Lucy, who had been sent home ill, to the charge of her friends, a few days before, entered the room. Perfectly conscious, as he declared, from the first, that the object he beheld was no longer of this world, the steady soldier fixed his eyes on the apparition, careful only to catch its every movement, and impress the unexpected scene with accuracy on his memory. The figure moved slowly to the side of the bed,—gazed with a sad and wistful expression on the sleeper's face—and then, as though reluctantly, died away into the gloom. Colonel M—— then



awoke his wife, and related what had occurred. Together they noted the precise moment of the vision. It proved to be that at which the poor girl had breathed her last, murmuring her mistress's name.

In a treatise intended to be little more than hypothetical, it would be vain to discuss psychologically every example we intend to produce, with a view of reconciling conflicting features. It must suffice to indicate a path of inquiry, not apparently impracticable, and to supply such minutiae as may assist to clear the way. With regard to the case just quoted, it is to be observed that Mrs. M——, a naturally nervous person, had long been in delicate health. There subsisted a strong attachment between herself and the faithful attendant who had been compelled to quit her side. The absence of the latter might have pressed painfully on her mistress's mind, even in sleep, quickening the predisposing causes, and preparing, so to speak, an atmosphere for the reception of one of those mysterious pictures, to which, however, her outward sense was closed.

But then a further process would become necessary, before a third person, in whom no such predisposition is presumed to exist, can be witness of the vision. What, then, is this process? Is it

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possible to assign to the combined action of the meeting currents such a power as—dispensing with predisposition in the case of a third party—might mock the latter's senses with a spectrum, while his system retained its normal state, as, in chemistry, two other invisible subtle agents, carburetted hydrogen and phosphorus, will produce another that is visible—flame? If that were admissible, it would tend to the solution of a large class of incidents in which many eyes and ears have borne witness to the same phenomenon.

Pursuing the plan of illustration, we will quote, as an example, one of the most remarkable cases on record, for which the writer is indebted to a friend, the Rev. F. H——, of Cheltenham:—

The grandfather of this gentleman, while resident in the neighbourhood of Fort George, N. B., was in the habit of employing a woman, generally known as “old Helen,” on market-messages and errands involving the outlay of small sums, in the disbursement of which the old dame was probity itself.

On a certain occasion, however, old Helen did not return. A night and a day passed, and still there were no tidings of the faithful old messenger. It happened that the amount entrusted to her had been rather larger than common, and even some

of those familiar with her character began to be sensible of certain misgivings concerning old Helen's powers to resist the tempter. Others held that she had fallen into dangerous company, had been robbed of the money, and feared to present herself without it.

Towards the gloaming, on the second day, Mr. H—— and his lady were seated in a little trellised bower, thickly walled with luxuriant creepers. They had been discussing the disappearance of old Helen, and had subsided into silence, when the subject of their late discourse suddenly thrust her head through the leafy shield, and looked them alternately in the face ! There was a broad, deep crimson streak round her neck, and, without uttering a word, but with gestures that, in some mysterious manner, conveyed her entire meaning, she intimated to them that her throat had been cut, and that she had been buried in a certain outhouse, under a heap of stable refuse.

How the details were so clearly indicated, neither Mr. nor Mrs. H—— were able to explain, even to themselves. Their minds received the impression simultaneously, or nearly so, as the woman looked from one to the other, and just as distinctly as though by the agency of articulate words. There was, indeed, no opportunity at the moment for com-

parison of impressions, since so deeply was Mr. H—— affected by the occurrence, that he fainted on the spot, and it devolved on the lady to give the alarm, and relate what had happened ; her husband, on regaining self-command, confirming every syllable of her report.

The police were instantly warned, and the search that was instituted resulted in the discovery of the body of the unfortunate old woman, in the place, and in the condition, so strangely revealed. She had, in fact, been murdered by her own husband, who was subsequently convicted and executed, confessing his crime.

Supposing that this apparition had no producing cause independent of the imagination of the seers, how is it that they should have happened to attain, at precisely the same instant, that most peculiar mental crisis from which such a vision must proceed ?

It is very possible, might the doubters say, that a very ordinary external chance should have brought about this effect. It was towards evening. The parties were seated in the shadow of a thick arbour, their thoughts full of the subject of their recent conversation, already, it may be, pointing towards such a solution as that about to be so singularly revealed. Familiar acquaintance with the localities might unconsciously suggest the very spot where the

corpse was found, as one likely to be selected for such a crime, or for the concealment of its tokens, when, in the midst of that perplexity with which the mind conceives a new and painful idea, a thing so slight as the yielding of a branch, the intrusion of a large bird, &c., may have taken momentary form in unison with the mental prepossession — “momentary,” it may be called, because there is reason to believe that the lapse of time on these occasions, whatever it may appear to the confused visionary, does not often exceed a few seconds — *i.e.* a period sufficient for the reasoning faculty to resume its preponderance.

With such or similar comments the story of old Helen's ghost might have been dismissed into the category of explained events, had it not been for a sequel which, if true, necessitates an entirely new chain of explanation.

So strong had been the conviction that old Nell had fallen a victim to some cruel outrage, that, within twenty-four hours of her disappearance, Inverness had been searched for her, from end to end. Colonel G——, the officer then commanding at Fort George, had interested himself greatly in the inquiry, and on the second night this gentleman was in the act of stepping into bed, when he felt a gentle pressure on his foot.

Stooping down to look under the bed he dis-

tinctly saw the appearance of old Nell reclining at full length on the floor, with her throat cut from ear to ear! The object was visible but for a moment, yet within that space, and in the strange, wordless manner already described, an impression exactly identical with that conceived by Mr. and Mrs. H——, had stamped itself on the colonel's mind, viz., that old Helen had been waylaid, murdered, and concealed under stable-stuff in a certain out-byre.

Considering, however, that it is not positively ascertained whether the colonel had or had not been made acquainted with the vision experienced some hours earlier by Mr. and Mrs. H——, it would be scarcely wise to adduce this special instance as one on which to base an occult theory, when it might, in fact, be referable to [nothing more uncommon than an excitable fancy, influenced by a foregone conclusion.

Returning to the subject of the electric currents, the power of which to move substances has been abundantly shown (the old conjurors knew something of their value—see “*Les Bigarrures du Seigneur des Accords*”), need we search beyond their irregular action for an explanation of those remarkable incidents which have been known to accompany the last great change? Strange concussions, atmospheric movements, the ringing of bells,

&c., as the electric current darts along the readiest conductor, the actual displacement of heavy inert substances before the silent force of the gaseous combinations suddenly leaping into life—these, and such like phenomena, occurring in the hush and shadow of the chamber of death, may well have acquired a character of the supernatural.

It is not in such scenes that the mind readily inclines to philosophical investigations. The half-revealed realities of this perishable sphere lose their grandeur and interest as we stand gazing into the Infinite, whither a beloved soul is hastening, while the ever-prompt imagination avails itself of the temporary anarchy of thought to invest that which is, in truth, “such stuff as dreams are made of,” with the importance of a real thing. Thus, while a strange circumstance may be lastingly imprinted on the memory, the opportunity of tracing out its origin has, for obvious reasons, been permitted to pass away.

A faithful servant of the writer's family, who attended its two most cherished members in their last illness, declared that the decease of ooth was preceded by a low soft tolling, as of a distant silver bell. On the second occasion it had been noticed that she alone of all the attendants anticipated a fatal issue, and this, it afterwards appeared, was

owing to her having, as she believed, distinctly heard, in her midnight watch, the silver knell.

Some circumstances of a kindred nature are known to have attended the last moments of a gentleman distinguished in journalism and general literature—the late Dr. M——. For some hours preceding his decease a low incessant tapping sound was heard in the chamber, as though proceeding from the window, and defied all efforts to discover its precise locality and origin. This, however, might soon have escaped remembrance but for a more inexplicable incident which immediately followed the sick man's dissolution, when the sound as of a heavy step was distinctly heard to quit the room of death, and descend, stair by stair, passing the open door of the room below, but without revealing any object to the eyes of the astonished listeners.

A lady, known to the writer's sister, was, two or three years since, in close attendance on her father, who was suffering from an illness that almost forbade the hope of recovery. As she was one evening reading to the invalid, who was seated in his easy chair, she was interrupted by a tap at the door. Her "come in" not being followed by the entrance of any one, the reading recommenced, but was again interrupted by a more emphatic tapping. Still no result followed the



request to enter. Miss W—— then rose and opened the door herself. No one was to be seen! A little perplexed she returned to her seat, but had scarcely resumed her book when a third time the summons was repeated, and now, as it were, impatiently. The sick man rose from his chair.

“*That is for me,*” he quietly said, and, opening the door, went into the passage.

The next moment his daughter saw him sink upon the floor, and running to him, caught his last sigh.

An acquaintance of the writer’s, while watching by the death-bed (as it proved) of her sister, was perpetually disturbed by a strange sweeping noise, the origin of which it was impossible to detect, passing round and round the chamber.

It may not be unworthy of remark, that, in calling to mind the many well-authenticated instances of these domestic disturbances, it is generally found that the scene is laid in some old dwelling, often not entirely clear of ghostly imputations, even before the especial event which attracts attention. In Germany and Switzerland, where wood is largely used in the building process, creaks, thumps, and concussions of every description, are, particularly in edifices beginning to suffer from the infirmities incident to longevity, plentiful as wasps in peach time.

A curious example occurred recently at Vienna, where the British representative, Lord —, rented a noble old mansion, the Palace L—.

One fine suite of apartments had been for some years wholly disused, and although his lordship had been rather strenuously recommended to allow them to remain so, the exigencies of a large establishment compelled their re-occupation. For a short time all went quietly, till, one by one, the German domestics began to leave. Very soon the British also began to evince signs of uneasiness, and it was then ascertained that such extraordinary sounds were prevalent, both by day and night, in the newly-opened chambers, that a perpetual panic existed among those who inhabited them, and it was with much reluctance that any domestic even ventured within the doors.

Lord — himself had heard unaccountable noises. His own study was situated in the haunted suite, and he very quickly satisfied himself that the servants had by no means exaggerated the amount of disturbance. While engaged late at night in study, the hush would be suddenly broken by dull dead blows, such as caused the whole house to vibrate from roof to cellar, struck upon the wall; noises above, resembling the flinging together of ponderous articles of furniture; noises below, like the rumbling of heavy wains, &c. On one occasion, so fearful a

crash occurred that Lord —— actually leaped from his chair in alarm, imagining that the house was coming down. It could, as he declared in relating these facts to a friend of the writer's, be compared to nothing but the sudden giving way of the roof and walls of the apartment. Yet nothing was displaced, nor, to all appearance, was even a grain of dust disturbed.

Lord —— averred that he passed whole nights moving about the mansion, pistol in hand, unable to believe such very material sounds to be other than the work of some designing person, and resolved, if possible, to detect him.

The noises continued, with brief intervals of quiet, during the whole period of Lord ——'s tenancy, and were never traced to any definite cause. It was found necessary to re-close the "haunted" suite, as scarcely a servant could be induced to enter it, and a comparative tranquillity succeeded. But, as a haunted reputation, like the dry rot, is usually ineradicable by any means short of the destruction of the building, the noble lord was not sorry when a favourable opportunity occurred for effecting an honourable retreat.

The L—— Palace is one of the oldest in Vienna, and is very substantially built, the red pine being largely used in the frame-work and interior fittings

of the mansion. When it is added that the mysterious sounds almost always recurred at night, and at those periods of it at which atmospheric changes are most perceptibly felt, those who have dwelt in old houses may perhaps remember how their own dreams were now and again rudely interrupted by similar alarums.

If simple variations of temperature, &c., can alone produce such results, what may not be expected when powerful electric streams, subject to laws and conditions with which we are but imperfectly acquainted, contribute their eccentric influence?

Such phenomena, then, declaring themselves within the narrow limit of a house or chamber, might occasion no extreme surprise to the scientific observer. The difficulty is greater when we meet with an authentic example of the kind, in which space and time seem to be of no account. How at an immeasurable distance, can these all but immaterial agents act thus strenuously upon the material? \* Mind, indeed, according to philosophical definition, is self-moving force, but can it move anything else?

\* At the moment of writing, a local journal announces:—  
“Incredible as it may seem, it is said that experiments have established the fact that intelligible signals may be exchanged between distant stations without the intervention of any artificial conductor whatsoever, and with equal success, whether the intervening space be wholly or partially land or water.”

Thought may fly to thought, as the detached vital current, attracted by its affinities, shoots through the void, and reveals itself almost as an actual presence to one far distant, reaching the physical senses through the brain ; this may be conceived,—but how dull inert matter can be made obedient to an influence, essentially sympathetic, is a more perplexing question.

Facts are the best text, and though it has been truly said by Herschel, that principles and not phenomena are the fitting objects of study, it is not less true that the latter frequently guide the way to the former. Here is an example, perfectly authenticated, in which the organs of many members of a household were influenced simultaneously by a very ordinary channel indeed, that of the front-door bell.

Some twenty years ago (to begin at the beginning) the attention of Sir M—— and Lady S—— was attracted to the friendless position of a little orphan boy. So great was the interest with which he inspired them both, that they took entire charge of his future, giving him an excellent education, and at a proper age introducing him, on his own earnest request, into the navy.

Several years passed, during which the young man advanced rapidly in professional and general

knowledge, and was to all appearance on the outset of a prosperous career, when, one rude November night, about half-past twelve, the inmates of Lady S——'s country-house, at which she was then residing, in the absence abroad of Sir M——, were aroused by a loud ringing at the bell. Lady S——, herself awakened, heard the step of her steady old butler as he moved in person to ascertain who could possibly be arriving at such an hour. A furious gust of wind and rain seemed to burst in with the opening door. A long pause succeeded, after which the butler was heard reascending to his apartment.

Lady S——'s curiosity was sufficiently aroused to induce her to summon her maid, who slept in an adjoining room, and send her to question the butler as to the untimely visitor. The answer returned was that, on opening the door, no one was to be seen. The night, though rough, was not very dark, and neither on the gravelled approach, nor on the broad lawns, could be discovered a living thing.

Gradually the household resumed its repose, when, at two o'clock, a second summons startled everybody. There was no mistaking now, for the bell had not ceased its impatient vibrations, when the butler, with several other servants, set foot on the stairs. Again the storm dashed into the house, and nothing *but* the storm. No human shape was visible with-

out, nor were any footprints to be traced on the smooth gravel, sheltered by the porch. As they were about to close the door for the second time, Lady S——'s maid appeared on the landing, and beckoned, with a white, scared face, to those below—

“Come up, come up, somebody! My lady has seen Mr. D——. I dare not stay there alone!”

It was in effect as she had said. Immediately after the group of servants had descended the stairs, Lady S—— had seen the figure of young D—— standing at the foot of her bed. Believing at the moment that it was actually himself, she had accosted him :—

“What, Edward, you here?”

The figure immediately disappeared.

News shortly arrived that the young man had perished at sea on that wild November night, between the hours of twelve and two.

The late Mr. G——, a gentleman of large property in Norfolk, used to vouch for the following anecdote :—

His father held the family livings of B—— and K——, and was also next heir to those estates, of the latter of which his great-aunt, Mrs. L——, was yet in possession. The rectory grounds joined those of the hall, separated only by a park paling,

in which was a door never known to have been opened.

One evening, as Mr. G—— sat at his fireside, surrounded by his children, the narrator, then grown up, being one of them, the circle was startled by a sudden and terrific noise overhead, difficult to describe, but such as would probably be occasioned by a very heavy but soft substance falling from a great height, the entire building vibrating with the concussion. Some of the young people rushed upstairs, but found the apartment (which was unused and “packed away”) in its usual state.

On the following evening, exactly at the same hour, eight o'clock, while the party were assembled as usual, the extraordinary sound was repeated, with even increased effect, yet again without affording any clue to its origin.

This strange recurrence induced a sort of expectation as, on the third night, the hour of eight drew near, and Mr. G—— sat, watch in hand, awaiting the moment, when, as the clock struck, a man burst into the room, with a lantern in his hand, having broken through the disused park-gate, to inform Mr. G—— that his aged relative had a few minutes since expired in a fit.

Without pausing to catalogue the multitude of



alleged cases of pictures falling, clocks stopping, doors bursting open, &c. &c., which are believed to have been the heralds of a distant death, we cannot help instancing the very remarkable circumstances, of an analogous kind, which are known to have accompanied the death, at many hundred miles' distance, of Captain N——, a name rendered familiar to us, from its connexion with that of the greatest of our naval heroes.

The apartments this gentleman occupied, when in England, were, during his absence, kept in complete order, and placed under the guardianship of two trusty servants, who never permitted the keys to pass out of their possession.

On the day of the master's death, the female servant, hearing, as she imagined, a step crossing the apartment, hurried up to ascertain who could have obtained access. She found the doors closed, as usual—but, on entering, almost doubted the evidence of her senses, when she beheld the entire furniture of the room disarranged, and even scattered in wild disorder about the floor—chairs, tables, pictures, carpets, curtains, china, books—in short, every movable object in the room seemed to have taken part in the strange domestic convulsion. It was as though a giant hand had passed through, displacing, yet not destroying, everything within its

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reach. No loud noises had alarmed the household. It was not possible that any member of it, besides the two custodians, could have obtained admission unobserved. The singularity of the occurrence created some interest in the neighbourhood, which was increased by the old dame's reiterated asseveration that her master would be found to have died on that day—in whatever part of the world he might be—and this proved to be the case.

It is no doubt stretching the theory to a startling point, to intimate even a suggestion that, in the case of a man dying in the West Indies, the magnetic agent could exercise a disturbing power in his British bed-chamber. Nevertheless, if there be anything at all in the hypothesis, there may well be this, and more. As before-mentioned, it must always be held in mind, that, knowing as yet but imperfectly the conditions of these fluid agents, we cannot logically assign any precise limitation to their field of action. We have just referred to the announced discovery that electricity needs no intermediate artificial agent to direct it to a distant point.

It is known that magnetoid currents can be generated in the system. *Can be?* That they constitute, in fact, one of its essential features. It is known that, under certain rare conditions, they become detached—vitalized; and reveal themselves, almost

like a second being, to a remote independent sense ; while the source from which they spring remains—sometimes wholly unconscious, sometimes dreamily sensible, of their operation.

With the approach of the last hour of mortal strife, the faltering mind sinks down, as for a moment's rest, on some familiar scene ; "babbles" of its youth's green fields ; searches out hungrily a beloved face ; penetrates the chaos of now worthless things, to drag forth from its grave of many years some sweet remembrance. In such a moment, the lines are laid for the transmission of the swift and secret intelligencer. Sight—that delicate sense, most easily deceived, but also, sometimes, as Macbeth suspected, "worth all the rest"—recognizes its arrival ; soul speaks to soul ; the "spectre" is complete.

It is utterly impossible to resist the conviction that the great majority of such narratives as the following are, if not literally, at least substantially true. Types of a very numerous class of anecdote, they have been selected rather for their close authentication and recent occurrence, than for involving any very uncommon feature.

It must be premised that the heroine of our first illustration, Mrs. D——, is a lady well known in London society, and held in high esteem by a large

circle of friends. Having laid it down, hereinbefore, as a wholesome rule, not to lay too much stress upon the well-strung nervous system of our heroes and heroines, it shall be simply stated, on authority of many years' acquaintance, that Mrs. D—— possessed a serene, cheerful temper, and a peculiarly calm and steadfast mind.

When, five years since, this lady became a widow, it pleased the brother of her husband to dispute the dispositions of the latter's will—a proceeding the more annoying as the provision made for the widow was already extremely moderate. Ultimately, an appeal was made to Chancery. The suit lasted three years, and caused Mrs. D—— the utmost vexation and anxiety; when, at length, the law, finding those claims indisputable which should never have been disputed, decided in her favour.

Some short time after this, Mrs. D—— was residing in L—— Place, Brighton. A friend, Miss F——, usually shared her bed-room. Both were lying awake one morning, about eight o'clock, when Mrs. D——, with some surprise, saw her friend rise up suddenly in bed, clasp her hands, and sink back on the pillow, apparently in a profound sleep. Strange as seemed the movement, it was so evident to Mrs. D—— that her friend was really in a tranquil slumber, that she made no effort to disturb her.

A minute had scarcely elapsed, when the door quietly opened, and there seemed to enter a figure which she was convinced was supernatural. She describes her feelings with careful minuteness. Her impressions, as she afterwards remembered them, had not the slightest admixture of fear. She was conscious of a reverential awe, such as might well possess the witness of a revelation so far removed from the accepted laws of nature—united with a feeling of intense curiosity as to the object of the apparition.

Gliding through the subdued light, the figure had all the appearance, gait, and manner of her deceased husband; until, passing through the room, and sinking down into an arm-chair that stood nearly opposite her bed, turned slightly aside, the figure presented its profile, and Mrs. D—— instantly recognized her connexion, and late opponent, Mr. W. D—— at that time residing in the north. No sooner had the mysterious visitor sat down, than he raised his hands clasped, as if in passionate entreaty—but, though the spectral lips appeared to move as in harmony with the gesture, no sound was audible. Three times the hands were lifted in the same earnest manner; then the figure rose, and retired as slowly as it came.

Some nervous reaction followed its disappearance, for Mrs. D——'s maid, appearing a minute or two

later, found her mistress trembling violently, and much agitated. Nevertheless, she quickly regained her self-possession, and calmly related what she had witnessed both to Miss F—— and the maid; the former being unable to recall anything unusual, and only knowing that she had fallen asleep again, contrary to her own intention.

The succeeding day was cold and stormy, and neither of the friends quitted the house. In the evening some neighbours called. As they were taking leave, one of the party suddenly inquired :—

“By-the-bye, have you had any recent news from the north? A rumour has reached us, I hardly know how, that Mr. W. D—— is dangerously ill—some say dying, even—but it is only report—dead.”

“He *is* dead,” said Mrs. D—— quietly. “He died this morning at eight o’clock.”

“You have a telegram?”

“You shall hear.”

And Mrs. D—— related her story to her wondering friends.

As quickly as news could reach Brighton, she received intimation of Mr. D——’s death, at the hour of the vision.

A singular and suggestive statement is, that the

scene witnessed by Mrs. D—— at Brighton, was being enacted in the death-chamber of Mr. W. D——, hundreds of miles distant. His mind wandered somewhat, as the end drew near, but perpetually returned to the subject of the unhappy litigation. Mistaking his sister for Mrs. D——, he addressed to her the most fervent entreaties for pardon, avowing his bitter regret, condemning his own injustice and covetousness, and declaring that he could not die in peace, without her forgiveness. Three times the dying man had raised his hands in the manner she had noticed, and so expired.

Coupled with this, yet differing from it in one remarkable particular, is the following narrative, communicated to the writer by a friend of the heroine, Lady C——, from whose lips the former received it:—

One morning, some years since, the lady of a distinguished London physician was in bed, at her house in P—— Street. It was daylight, and she was broad awake. The door opened, but Lady C——, concluding it was her maid entering, did not raise her head, until a remarkable looking figure, passing between her bed and the window, walked up to the fire-place, when, reflected in the mirror which hung above, Lady C—— recognized the features of her step-son, Dr. J. C——, then attached to a foreign

embassy. He wore a long night-dress, and carried something on his arm.

“ Good Heavens ! Is that *you*, J——, and in that dress ? ” cried Lady C——, in the first surprise.

The figure turned slowly round, and she then became aware that the object he carried was a dead child ; the body being swathed round and round in a large Indian scarf of remarkable workmanship, which Lady C—— had presented to Mrs. J. C—— on the eve of her departure.

As she gazed, the outlines of the figures became indistinct, invisible ; vanishing in the grey light, or blending with the familiar objects in the room.

Lady C—— neither fainted nor shrieked, nor even rang the bell. She lay back and thought the matter over, resolving to mention it to no one until the return of her husband, then absent in attendance on an illustrious household. His experience would decide whether her physical health offered any solution of the phenomenon. As for its being a dream, it may be taken as an accepted fact that, though nobody is conscious of the act of going to sleep, everybody knows by the sudden change of scenery, by the snapping of the chain of thought, &c. &c., when he has been sleeping.

Very shortly after, Sir J—— returned home. On hearing the story, he immediately looked at the



tongue that related such wonders, and likewise felt his lady's pulse. Both organs perfect. Of her nerves he had seen proof. Touching veracity, she was truth itself. All his skill could devise nothing better than a recommendation to patience, and to see what came of it. In the mean time, the day and hour were noted down, and the next advices from T—— awaited with more than usual interest.

At length they came. Dr. J. C—— informed his father that their child, an only one, had died on such a day (that of the apparition), and that his wife, anxious that it should be laid to rest in the land of its birth, had begged that it might be forwarded by the next homeward ship. In due course, it arrived, embalmed, but enclosed in a coffin so much larger than was required for the tiny occupant, that the intervening spaces had to be filled up with clothes, &c. while the Indian scarf had been wound, in many folds, around the child's body.

In faithfully quoting incidents of this nature, not usually provocative of merriment, the mention of some absurd feature—such as the appearance of Dr. J. C—— in a costume which was certainly not that in which he walked abroad, has often tended to discourage serious discussion, and that close pursuit of slight clues which might ultimately reveal the positive action of some fixed law. It would, for

example, be interesting, and pertinent to the inquiry, to learn by minute comparison, whether, at the precise instant of the vision, the details of appearance, costume, manner, occupation, &c., were perfectly identical. In the majority of reliable cases, the spectrum is presented under the guise most familiar to the seer—the inference being that the latter's brain had by far the larger share in the production of the image. But in the instance last adduced, this rule did not prevail; the external aspect was *not* familiar. A figure in a night-dress, bearing a poor dead child, might indeed have moved about the house at T——, and no doubt did so, but by something more than imagination and the work of familiar ideas, must Lady C——'s mind have possessed itself of that unlikely image.

It is as though the mind were permitted to project itself for an instant into the actual scene to which it points, and to come back, enriched with direct and true intelligence, yet ignorant of the process by which it had been obtained; a sort of reflex action, in fact, somewhat resembling that described by Sir Charles Bell and others, as existing in the corporal frame, in relation to the independent action of the sensational and motor nerves.

The following was communicated not long since to the writer, by a gentleman now residing in London,

as having been related to him by his uncle, "a sensible, healthful unbeliever in the supernatural," and therefore entitled to the more credit :—

It appears that, the conversation having taken a psychological turn, the elder gentleman had been plainly asked whether or no he believed that spirits could appear. Instead of replying, as had been confidently expected, with a couple of negative monosyllables and a little sarcasm, he made some hesitating answer, and, moreover, betrayed such unwonted agitation, that the questioner hastened to change the subject. He was, however, stopped.

"Nephew," said the old gentleman, earnestly, "you have touched upon a theme very painful to me—more so than you can well understand ; still, I am not altogether unwilling to converse upon it ; and perhaps the doing so may somewhat lessen the melancholy impression I have conceived from a circumstance that lately befel me. Yes, I will tell it you ; but do not interrupt me with either doubts, suggestions, or queries. All this I have already done for myself.

"You know, well enough, that I am not a man given to fancies. I have a dull habit of regarding things as they *are*, not as they may possibly be. I ignore probabilities, and hate hypotheses. The facts of the world I have found numerous enough

to deal with, let alone contingencies. I make this confession, not for the sake of argument, but simply to enable you the better to appreciate what I am going to tell.

“ You have been long aware of the estrangement between my brother George and myself. It matters not for the cause. Blame, I am afraid, attached to both of us. It will be sufficient to remind you that we parted, ten years ago, in anger ; and that, up to the time of his death, last year, we neither saw each other, nor held intercourse of any kind.

“ One night, last December, I had gone to bed, as usual, about eleven o'clock, and had, I imagine, fallen asleep at once ; for I remembered nothing after getting into bed, till I was awakened by something that seemed to be lying across my feet at the bottom of the bed. Supposing that it was Brush, my dog, who did sometimes gain surreptitious entrance into my room at night, I called to him, and bade him get down.

“ As my speaking produced no effect, I sat up to see what it was that had disturbed me. I do not know if you will understand what I mean by seeing in the dark. Let me explain.

“ If you go into a totally dark room, where there happens to be a pure white object, you will, after a time, know in what part of the room it is ; and,

if you are patient, you will soon be able to distinguish it from the other articles. Again, if you are in the dark, and an object of light colour is near you, however minute, it will in a few moments become visible. You yourself are in darkness, yet you see. The object of your vision sheds no light on other bodies, however near. It is merely self-illuminating. So it was with me. I could not see the posts of my bed, nor the window, nor my own hand; and yet I saw that a man was lying across my feet, with his face turned towards me!

“I have more than once asked myself how it was I did not conclude him to be a robber. No such idea crossed my mind. I was not alarmed. Still, I made no effort to move, or question the intruder; and it was assuredly from no superstitious feeling, for the thought of anything preternatural never occurred to me until the figure raised itself up on one arm, and showed me distinctly the countenance of my brother George. *Then*, I own, I felt awe-stricken—as in the presence of something beyond our comprehension. I knew that the spirit of the dead was before me.

“I had not, as I have said, seen George for ten years. The once familiar face was again before my eyes, showing just the change that period must have made. The faint halo which seemed to encircle the

is derived from a lady, the daughter of Mr. B——, of L—— House, Wilts, who heard it from the lips of Miss Edgeworth, while a guest at her father's house.

The conversation turning, one evening, on the "unreal," the respected lady contributed to the stock of anecdote the following strange incident of her own experience :—

While at home in Ireland, in her early youth, it happened that the family were one evening seated round the fire, in momentary expectation of the arrival of a gentleman of the neighbourhood, who had promised to pass the evening with them. After waiting some time—and the weather, which had been rough all day, becoming worse and worse—it was concluded that their visitor had been compelled to abandon his intention; and the party drew round their tea-table, keeping, however, one chair vacant, in case he should, after all, arrive.

After the lapse of a few minutes, the conversation was interrupted by a violent ringing at the bell. No guest, however, appeared, and the circumstance was beginning to be forgotten; when, suddenly, the eyes of all present became rivetted on the vacant chair. *Not* vacant, for in it was seen seated the form of a nephew of Mr. Edgeworth's, a midshipman in the navy, who had left England, some months before, on

It is not to be presumed that all these cases are traceable to one fixed and absolute law. It would be a waste of time to attempt to reconcile the conflicting phenomena on any such hypothesis ; all that we can hope to achieve is a fair classification of examples, with an attempt at deduction ; therefore, once more reminding the reader that the scope of this treatise is rather to suggest than demonstrate, we proceed to the narration of two perfectly-authenticated instances, in which it will be perceived that the mind of the seer could not, by any possibility—at all events, by any aid of memory—have depicted the vision.

A pretty cottage villa, in the quiet little village of D——, about ten miles from London, has been for some years in the occupation of Mr. M—— and family, and was, two years since, the scene of an occurrence which made a profound impression on those who were in a position to bear witness to its truth.

It must be premised that Mrs. M——, though some time married, had never seen her husband's father, who resided in a distant county ; and, being somewhat aged and in indifferent health, rarely quitted his own house. The circumstance of their never having met, had been to both parties a source of much vexation and disappointment.

received the vision as a distinct and independent idea.

Innumerable are the instances of that strange intercommunication of the departing spirit with those to whom its earthly affections were most strongly bound. How is it possible to resist the multitudinous testimonies that such things have been, from pre-historic ages to the present, of constant occurrence? One is forcibly reminded of the words of Imlac, the Sage:—"There is no people, rude or unlearned, among whom apparitions of the dead are not related and believed. This opinion, which prevails as far as human nature is diffused, could become universal only by its truth."

Sometimes the impression is distinct and defined as the material being. Such was that appearance of Lord Lyttelton, at which Miles Peter Andrews was about to throw his slippers as at an untimely jester; a tale he was accustomed to relate, not without a shudder, when a guest at the house of the writer's grandfather, Sir George Prescott, of Theobald's Park.

Sometimes it is a vague, uneasy, intermittent consciousness, such as that experienced by the Count de M——, mentioned in Miss Knight's interesting autobiography:—

"The Count, when minister at Stockholm, was



staying at the house of the Count d'Uglas, after the Countess and her young daughter, who was in a bad state of health, had left him on their way to Paris. One morning, he told the Count and Countess d'Uglas that he had passed a very uncomfortable night, for that he had continually seen a kneeling figure—sometimes on one, sometimes on the other side of his bed—and that, though the back was turned to him, it perfectly resembled his daughter. The impression was so strong upon his mind, that he sketched the figure, which, in fact, did resemble hers. On comparing dates, it afterwards appeared that his daughter had died at that very time."

Miss Knight recounts this incident on the authority of the Countess d'Uglas herself.

A lady, within the circle of the writer's acquaintance, was residing at a watering-place in Kent, at many miles distance from the place where a near relative, to whom she was warmly attached, lay seriously ill. While sitting alone, one evening, there was a slight tap at the door. It was repeated, when the lady rose and opened the door. In the act of doing so, she distinctly heard a soft, familiar voice say, "It is I." At that hour, her friend had expired.

In the following additional example, the names of those concerned have been supplied to the writer—

coupled only with the stipulation that nothing beyond the correct initials should be made public.

The Lady J. T——, sister-in-law of the Duchess of L——, was much attached to her young nephew, Lord C. A——, the duchess's second son. This lady was sitting one evening, about six o'clock, in her drawing-room, when, looking up from her work, she saw Lord C. A—— (who was at the time a student at Oxford), standing before her.

"Ah, C——!" she exclaimed, astonished at his silent entrance. "How did you come hither?"

He made no reply, but began gradually to disappear, and, in a few seconds, was gone.

Much disturbed, Lady T—— drove over, early next morning, to visit her intimate friend, Lady S——, and related her vision; on her return, a messenger had arrived from H—— Castle, requiring her presence. Proceeding thither, she learned the sad news of Lord C——'s death, at Oxford, from the effects of an accidental blow received from his friend, the present Marquis of D——.

Readers may smile at a certain feature in our next little narrative; but we may not, on that account, deviate from the stern truth of history!

Mr. R——, an agent and solicitor in large practice, was, two or three years since, earnestly engaged in the prosecution of a matter of business of great

importance, affecting the property-interests of a deceased friend, Mr. N——.

In connexion with this affair, he had occasion to visit a certain county-town, and, being at the hotel, sat up late one night, busily writing, in company with his clerk.

About one o'clock, he dismissed the latter to his repose, and himself continued his labours for some time longer. Happening at last to raise his eyes, he saw his late friend, Mr. N——, sitting opposite to him at the table, in the position lately occupied by the clerk. Petrified with astonishment, R—— gazed upon the familiar features with open eyes and lips, but unable to utter even an exclamation. The figure seemed to smile upon him, as though in approval of the work in which he was engaged, and with an air and manner peculiarly characteristic of the deceased man, extended a *snuff-box* across the table! Mechanically, Mr. R—— put out his hand to receive it, but, at that instant, the vision began as it were to recede. The back of the chair became visible. It was gone.

Mr. R—— rose, and calling to his clerk who slept in an adjoining room, requested him to return for a minute. On his appearance, he inquired:—

“Pray, Mr. H——, what, when you left the room, did you do with your chair?”

"I put it back, sir, *there*, by the wall."

"But are you quite *sure* of that?"

"I am, sir, and for this reason. When I put back the chair, there was, lying by the wall, a volume of the 'Encyclopædia Britannica,' which I took up, and laid on the chair."

The chair was again at the table!

By far the most difficult class of incidents to deal with on any intelligible philosophical bases, are those which introduce to the seer, persons or events of which it is impossible they should have had the slightest previous cognizance.

Mrs. G—— resides in Devonshire, in a house which has more than once been the scene of mysterious events. Very lately, a gentleman, with his wife and two boys, visited Mrs. G——, and occupied what had been traditionally styled the "haunted" wing. About one in the morning, on the first night of their sojourn, a tremendous crash, as though the room were falling, aroused the parents, who hastened into the adjoining room, intending to calm the fears of the children, who might have been alarmed likewise.

The boys, however, were sitting up in bed, laughing heartily, and, on being questioned, said they had had "such fun." There had been a curious-looking old lady, standing at the foot of the bed, laughing and

grimacing at them. In the morning, when the boys went down to breakfast, a meal they were to take in the housekeeper's room, they uttered a shout of surprise, and, pointing to a picture on the wall, declared there was the funny old lady ! It was an old family portrait, which, from its rather grotesque aspect, had been banished to the housekeeper's room.

The last year (1861), furnishes us with an apt illustration, in the story attaching to a small villa residence, not many miles from London, which it will be prudent to disguise under the title of Holly Lodge, tenanted, down to the year 1854, by a lady named Sibbald.

At the latter period, circumstances compelling Mrs. S—— to resign her occupancy, she quitted the house with extreme reluctance, declaring to her friends, in a half-jesting vein, that whenever she died she should certainly return to haunt the residence in which she had passed her happiest hours.

Holly Lodge then passed into the temporary possession of Mr. R——, who resided there for several years, in fact until 1861. This gentleman made several alterations about both house and grounds, but eventually became tired of it, and at the beginning of the year named let it for six months to a Mr. and Mrs. L——, who had lately returned from India.

A few weeks passed, when one morning Mrs. L——'s cook presented herself in some agitation, and announced her intention of leaving immediately. She would on no consideration spend another night in the house.

Much astonished, Mrs. L—— demanded her reasons.

"Well, ma'am," replied the cook, bursting into tears, "I've *heard* of spirits before, but last night *I saw one!*"

Her mistress hastened to suggest the conventional explanations,—dream, fancy, &c.,—but the woman put them quietly apart as insufficient. She had not slept at all, nor felt the approach of such an inclination.

She proceeded to describe with great minuteness the appearance she had witnessed, which had the aspect of an old lady—"very nicely dressed, quite like the lady"—seated in a chair in the very middle of the room. She wore a very peculiar cap, had on spectacles, and seemed to be reading a book which rested on her lap, and was apparently a Bible.

While the cook still gazed, a dark cloud or mist seemed to intervene and shut out the vision.

Disbelieving the strange story, Mrs. L—— sent for the housemaid, and inquired if she were willing

to exchange rooms with the cook. The girl, being naturally of a fearless turn, and, moreover, partaking her mistress's incredulity as to the supposed vision, at once acceded. The cook, notwithstanding, left the house as she had proposed.

The next morning the adventurous maid appeared before her lady with an air considerably subdued, and declared that she also had seen the mysterious old woman, exactly as described by her fellow-servant.

Some time after Mrs. L—— related the circumstance to a gentleman who had lived many years in the neighbourhood. He asked her to describe as nearly as might be the outward appearance, features, dress, &c., of the ghostly visitant. When she had finished—

“That,” he remarked, “is, in every particular, the precise description of Mrs. Sibbald, long resident in this very house, and with whom I was well acquainted.”

It subsequently appeared that this lady died about the period of the vision.

Of a similar character is the following incident, likewise of recent occurrence, and as completely authenticated as the former:—

Miss M. F——, while on a visit to some friends at a country house, was one morning in her dressing-room, when her sister came to her

with a request to lend her a locket. She had to fetch it from a room at some distance along the passage, and in returning observed a woman walking before her, who presently turned into a small chamber adjoining that of Miss M. F——. Partly because of some peculiarity in the dress or bearing of the woman, and partly because she had happened to observe that the little room was unoccupied, the young lady on returning with the locket mentioned the circumstance to her sister, who said that she herself had heard the door open and reclose, as though some one had entered. The two girls thereupon looked into the little room, but found it untenanted.

Certain that whoever of mortal mould had gone into the apartment could not have quitted it again in that brief interval unnoticed, Miss M. F—— was induced by the strangeness of the circumstance to mention it to Dr. H——, a physician, then staying in the house, who pronounced it to have been an optical illusion.

That evening, as the young lady sat by the fire in her dressing-room, expectant of the summons to dinner, she happened to turn her head, and beheld standing in the open doorway the mysterious figure of the morning.

The expression of the woman's face was that of



one about or endeavouring to speak, but no sound became audible. Miss M. F——, on her part, strove with all her power to accost the intruder, but found herself incapable of uttering an articulate sound. She had risen from her chair on catching sight of the woman, and advanced a step or two in the direction of the door, but now, stricken with an instinctive feeling of awe, drew back, and resumed her seat. When she looked up again the figure had withdrawn. A few minutes later Miss M. F—— descended the stairs, when, at nearly the lowest step, the figure a third time presented itself, brushing past her so closely that she felt, or fancied she could feel, its touch.

Some time after this, as Miss M. F—— was relating the story to a circle of friends, one of them inquired whether the place was not called —— Court, or Lodge, and begged the young lady to describe, as minutely as she could, the appearance of the figure. Having done so, she was informed by her friend that the house had formerly been the property and residence of two sisters, known to the speaker, one of whom, whose appearance answered in every particular to the description given, had died abroad at the period of the vision; “and,” it was added, “if ever a woman’s heart was wrapped up in a beloved home, thus it was with *hers*.”

Our next example was furnished to the writer's sister by one of the heroines of the tale :—

The latter, with her parents and a sister, resides in a large old mansion near Payerne, on the road from Lausanne to Berne. Payerne, as many travellers are aware, was the residence of Queen Bertha of Burgundy, whose remains yet rest in the vaults of the church she founded, and this little town is known to have played a not undistinguished part in the old Catholic times. A large convent, likewise founded by zealous Queen Bertha, is at this time a venerable church. But to the story :—

The two young ladies, daughters of the proprietor, Mons. S——, were accustomed to occupy together a very large chamber, their beds being placed at either end. On a certain night in 1861, both being awake and engaged in conversation, the room also being very light from the moon, the elder sister suddenly beheld a figure gliding through the apartment. It was apparently that of a monk, with the cowl thrown back, exposing one of the most fearful countenances imagination can conceive. It absolutely froze the girl's blood with horror. She lay thus, with her lips apart, but unable to utter a cry, while her gaze, as though fascinated, followed the motions of the terrible visitor, as he seemed to stride in the direction of her sister's bed.

The latter, appearing to become suddenly conscious of the spectral presence, rose on her elbow, then, uttering a loud shriek, threw herself back, and gathered the bedclothes over her head. The phantom seemed to spring upon the bed, and, in that act, disappeared.

The spell of his presence being broken, the elder sister jumped from her bed, and running to her companion, clasped her in her arms, sinking on her knees at the bedside. It may seem singular, but such was the degree of horror experienced by both girls, that they remained in this attitude for more than four hours, without daring to trust their tongues with what they had witnessed! Shivering and sobbing, Miss S—— continued to kneel and grasp the other's trembling hand, till the slow daylight crept into the chamber, when she forced her lips at last to form the interrogation :—

“ Why did you scream ? ”

“ Did you *see* him ? ” was the rejoinder ; and the younger went on to relate that she had closed her eyes for an instant, when, opening them, she beheld a figure in a monk's frock, with a countenance too dreadful to describe (she used a German phrase—denoting that it could belong only to the Father of Evil) ; and thereupon shrunk back shuddering into the bed.

The apartment has not since been occupied by the family, and it has been found necessary to abandon a smaller chamber, adjoining, in consequence (as all affirmed who slept there) of noises that were perpetually recurring in what has been since called the "Monk's Room."

There was a tradition afloat, that a diabolical murder, committed by a monk, had at one period affixed a stigma upon the mansion, which time had nearly washed away. But, as a general rule, traditions which succeed phenomena, should be accepted with at least as much reserve as phenomena which follow closely on the heels of traditions. One thing is certain, that the circumstance just narrated occurred, in all points, as described, and could not, by any possibility, be referable to any mischievous device practised on the inmates of the mansion.

Our next noteworthy illustration is supplied by a lady now resident in London, whose family have for many years had connexions with Canada; the scene of the following incident :—

Her aunt was one of a family of ten children, who resided at M——, in Canada, where their parents owned a large country mansion.

This aunt, the subject of our story, was at that time about fifteen years of age, a handsome, healthy girl, by no means of a dreamy or imaginative turn,

but possessed of a remarkably clear intelligence, and (we are pledged to state all the facts) an uncommonly robust appetite, inasmuch as it has been left on record in the family that this fortunate young lady could eat eight or nine eggs for breakfast, "quite comfortably." A highly interesting circumstance, and in some sort material to our argument, as proving that, in Miss Caroline's system, no undue preponderance existed on the spiritual side !

The mansion, tenanted by her father, Colonel St. C——, had been originally built by a Dutch or French settler, and was a quaint old place, nearly covered with lichens and creepers of all descriptions. It was surrounded by a large, old-fashioned garden, at the end of which was an orchard, well stocked with apple, peach, and cherry-trees, and separated from the garden only by a low wall. The fence on the other three sides of the orchard, consisted of an oak-paling, here and there falling into decay. Beyond this, frowned the old forest, yet untouched by the arm of man.

Close to one point of the paling we have mentioned, or, as it were, growing against it, stood a very large old cherry-tree, loaded in the season with luscious fruit, and, consequently, a favourite resort of the younger branches of the establishment, especially Miss Caroline, who adopted the spot as her study,

and passed many hours, working or reading, upon the soft fine grass which cushioned a little mound at the very foot of the tree.

One summer morning of 1800, while the children were playing about as usual, Caroline, as the staid elder sister, lying on her favourite bank, deep in the pages of (the times were not fastidious) "Roderick Random,"—a strange, sudden impulse, such as she had never experienced before or since, caused the reader to look up, as if at a sudden call. There had been, however, no audible sound. All was perfectly still, the very voices of the playing children having died away into the woodland.

It should be mentioned that the oak-paling that ran beneath the tree, averaged some six feet in height, but, at fifty yards off, had sunk to the height of little more than one foot, when it again sloped upward, till, just beneath the tree, it regained the usual level.

Looking along the line of paling, Caroline observed, with some surprise, a young lady, apparently about seventeen or eighteen, and singularly attired, step suddenly upon the paling, and trip along that narrow bridge towards her. As this, however, was a feat daily practised by the sisters and their play-mates, Caroline's predominating feeling was rather one of curiosity as to who the stranger might be,

than any more stirring emotion. The dress of the young lady puzzled her a good deal ; she was in white, wearing what was formerly in fashion as a “ *negligé*,” and had, over her shoulders, a long blue scarf. She had light, wavy hair, falling back from her face, which was fair and pretty ; and as she held her dress up slightly, in stepping along, Caroline was able to note that her tiny feet were encased in high-heeled red-morocco slippers.

She walked lightly and steadily, gazing straight before her, and never once casting down her eyes, as to secure her footing. Having reached the cherry-tree, and being then close to Miss St. C——, she stopped, and looked up among the branches that overhung her ; then, calmly unwinding the blue scarf from her neck, she flung one end over an arm of the tree, secured it there, made a loop at the other end, and slipping the latter over her head, leaped from the paling.

Caroline uttered a piercing shriek, and fainted. Her cry, however, had brought children and servants to her assistance, and these soon restored her to consciousness, when her first eager question was for the poor girl who had attempted to commit suicide beside her. The hearers looked at her in amazement. She related minutely all that she had witnessed ; but it was, of course, attributed to a dream or illusion.

There was no sign of girl or scarf, and probably not a minute had elapsed from the time she had alarmed them by her shriek until assistance came.

Inquiries were made among the country people of the vicinity, but no clue to the mystery could be obtained; no person in the least degree resembling the figure described had ever met their eyes.

Many weeks afterwards, the story happening to be related at a neighbouring mansion in the presence of an old negress, the latter, who, though upwards of ninety years of age had all her faculties about her, evinced an extraordinary interest in the narration, and dropped so many mysterious hints in reference to the subject in question, that they finally reached the ears of Colonel St. C——.

Determined to sift the matter fully, the Colonel called upon the family with whom the old woman lived, and, with the assistance of her master and mistress, extracted from the “good old chronicle,” who had seen three generations in the house, the following curious explanation:—

The old mansion tenanted by Colonel St. C——, had, seventy years before, belonged to a German landholder, one Waldstein. This man had several children, and among them one very lovely daughter, a fair and delicate girl, with beautiful light hair. She was besides noted for the perfection of her little feet.



A young French officer, who came on a visit to her father, seemed much struck with the beauty and the winning ways of the innocent girl, and finally offered marriage, but added that it would be necessary, according to the requirements of the French law, that he should obtain the formal consent of his parents, who, unfavourably for the hopes of the lovers, belonged to a noble and haughty line, and were not unlikely to refuse it.

On this errand the young soldier hastened back to France, assuring his beloved that he would never rest until every obstacle to their union was fairly overcome.

What he did, or did not do, was never accurately learned. He never communicated directly, again, with her to whom he had vowed his life, but an unhappy rumour was conveyed to her, under circumstances which commanded belief, that he had married the young daughter of a house as noble as his own.

When the last corroborative testimony reached her, extinguishing her lingering trust in the promise-breaker for ever—the girl spoke not a word. She walked with a frightful calmness into the garden; none followed her, for they believed their darling had gone, as other proud mourners have done, to weep *alone*. But that light quiet step passed through the

familiar garden, into the orchard, to the very tree under whose shade she had so often sat with her faithless lover. Upon its branches she hanged herself with the blue scarf she wore, and on that spot beneath the tree, where the grass grows soft and fine, the old negress averred she saw her buried—in the dress in which she died.

One circumstance remains to be mentioned, one that adds not a little to the painful interest of the story. The young seer, Caroline St. C——, herself, died within two years of the vision, under very mournful circumstances, and, save in the act of self-destruction, not dissimilar from those above narrated. Could the vision have been intended as a warning? thought her friends, in recalling this strange incident of her life. Truly, the features of the mystery on this occasion set at nought the boldest philosophical speculations. It is impossible to imagine that the scene of despair was perpetually re-enacting, or that but one individual in a period of seventy years, should have derived, from natural causes, the capacity of witnessing it.\* If, on the other hand, we treat

\* This story, however, forcibly recalls a singular incident which, some years ago, created much interest in Paris, and obtained the greater notoriety in consequence of the association with it of the name of the amiable Archbishop of Paris, Monseigneur Sibour, subsequently assassinated by a half-mad priest.

it as a special interposition, and remember that there is on record no wholly fruitless miracle, how should the warning vision have been suffered to prove ineffectual?

A young German lady (still living) had arrived with a party of friends at one of the most renowned hotels in Paris, and occupied, for her part, an apartment on the first floor, furnished with unusual magnificence. Here she lay awake, long after the hotel was wrapt in slumber, contemplating, by the faint glimmer of her night-lamp, the costly objects in the room, until, suddenly, the folding-doors, opposite her bed, which she had secured, flew open, and the chamber was filled with a bright light, as of day. In the midst of this, there entered a handsome young man, in the undress uniform of the French Navy, having his hair dressed in the peculiar mode *à la Titus*.

Taking a chair from the bedside, he placed it in the middle of the room, sat down, took from his pocket a pistol with a remarkable red butt and lock, put it to his forehead, and, firing, fell back apparently dead! Simultaneously with the explosion, the room became dark and still, but a low soft voice uttered these words:—"Say an *ave Maria* for his soul."

The young lady had fallen back, not insensible, but in a far more painful state—a kind of cataleptic trance, and thus remained fully conscious of all she imagined to have occurred, but unable to move tongue or hand, until seven o'clock on the following morning, at which hour her maid, in obedience to orders, knocked at the door.

Finding that no reply was given, the maid went away, and, returning at eight, in company with another domestic, repeated her summons. Still no answer—and again, after a little consultation, the poor young lady was delivered over for another hour to her agonized thoughts. At nine, the doors were forced—and, at the same moment, the power of speech and movement returned. She shrieked out to the attendants that a man had shot himself there some hours before, and still lay upon the floor.

Here is a somewhat similar, but far more recent instance, furnished by a lady, Miss B——.

“On Saturday, the 21st of June, ——, being on a visit at K——, Scotland,” (at the house of a friend of the author), “I retired to bed rather earlier than usual, about ten o’clock. My maid had hurried on before me to light my candles. In passing through the lobby, which was rather dark, I noticed a figure which I concluded to be that of one of the other servants, and accordingly thought nothing more of it, until, having entered my bedroom, I saw the

Observing nothing unusual, they concluded it was the excitement consequent upon some terrible dream. She was therefore placed in another apartment, and with great difficulty persuaded that the scene she so minutely described had no foundation in reality. Half an hour later, the hotel-proprietor desired an interview with a gentleman of the party, and declared that the scene so strangely re-enacted had actually occurred three nights before. A young French officer had ordered the best room in the hotel—and there terminated his life—using, for the purpose, a pistol answering the description mentioned. The body, and the weapon, still lay at the Morgue, for identification, and the gentleman, proceeding thither, saw both; the head of the unfortunate man exhibiting the “Titus” crop and the wound in the forehead, as in the vision.

The Archbishop of Paris, struck with the extraordinary nature of the story, shortly after called upon the young lady, and, directing her attention to the expression used by the mysterious voice, urged upon her, with much fervour, the advisability of embracing that faith to whose teaching it appeared to point. In this, however, the good prelate was not successful.

figure again through the half-open door. It was standing still, and I was struck by the peculiar dress, unlike that of a servant. It was black, and profusely covered with something of a deep glowing red, the form and material of which I could not distinguish. She was tall and gaunt, and wore a large white mob cap. The face was constantly averted.

“Who is that woman in the lobby?” I asked, of my maid.

“Mrs. M——’s maid,” was the answer.

“But what a singular dress!—Why does she wear that immense cap?”

“Cap, ma’am?” said Harriet, looking surprised. “She never wears caps.”

“Then who *is* that very tall woman, in black and red, and a large white cap, whom I saw, not a moment since, in the lobby?”

Harriet turned very pale, and began crying and wringing her hands. After a few moments, she collected herself enough to tell me that it was not Mrs. M——’s maid, who was short and slight, but—

“Oh ma’am,” she exclaimed, “you’ve seen *something*, for that’s exactly as the ghost looks!”

“I had had no previous intimation of any ‘ghost,’ and was curious to know to what the girl alluded; but, as I was expecting a good-night visit from my

hostess, I restrained myself and dismissed the subject.

“On my friend appearing, I immediately related what I had seen, when, looking rather grave, she informed me that it was true that certain parts of the mansion had had the reputation of being ‘haunted,’ owing to a woman, who was a servant in the family, having, many years since, committed suicide there. The dress I had noticed was, including the mob cap generally worn by servants at that period, precisely that which she was accustomed to wear.

“My friend, Mrs. S——, added that she had had much trouble among her servants, in consequence of the unaccountable sounds that were frequently heard in the neighbourhood of the apartment where the unfortunate woman had expired. The sounds of footsteps were often heard within the room itself, sometimes, also, as if proceeding along the passages. They pass generally from end to end, but now and then seem to halt at a particular door. My friend mentioned three persons by name, who had been ear-witnesses of these singular noises, but very rarely had anything inexplicable been revealed to sight.”

A near connexion of the writer's, resident in the Isle of Sardinia, a few weeks since communicated in one of her letters an incident which may well find a place among those yet to be adduced, as one of the most

extraordinary, as well as authentic, cases ever offered to a reader.

After referring to some private matters, the letter continues : —

“ I have now something of a different kind to introduce to your notice : no less (do not laugh) than a most undeniable *ghost* ; You must prepare for a rather long history, but I think you will admit that it is worth the time and trouble, since it is rarely indeed, that an affair of this nature, at once so strange, and so strongly accredited, comes fairly under one’s notice. The particulars are extracted from somewhat reluctant sources, but are so unquestionable, that I do not hesitate to place the whole before you as a substantive fact, as far removed from the sphere of fraud or fancy, as the most accepted tale on record.

“ You must know, then, that, in the autumn, it is customary to remove the sheep from our colder regions, to the temperate pastures of the south. In accordance with this custom, in the last days of the autumn of 1860, two young men, whose names (the real ones) were Giovannico and Battista Ligas, being about to quit the snowy mountains of Aritza, the Switzerland of Sardinia, for the still verdant valleys of Morongia, paid (each without the knowledge of the other) a farewell visit to the house of a neighbouring farmer. This man had a beautiful daughter, with

whom both these youths had fallen passionately in love. You have heard something of the exaggerated form this sentiment attains, in the breasts of our fiery islanders, and may judge of the complications that were likely to arise from this unfortunate clashing of inclinations.

“It so happened that the girl, though liking both, had no especial preference for either, and, in consequence, the two lovers having no indications to guide them, each made his separate proposal. *Both were refused.* The young beauty did not need much solicitation to make known to them the grounds of her negative. They were reputed to be members of a sort of society, of which you may have heard as existing in these parts, a body of persons who believe that they possess the power of direct communication with the Prince of Darkness, for the purpose of obtaining from him, on conditions I need not particularize, any useful information he is in a position to afford, relative to the material mammon which is supposed to lie buried in the vicinity of the ancient burned and plundered cities of the island.

“To no man upon whose character rested this evil stain would the proud, beautiful Caterina yield her hand, and thus debarred from selecting either of the only two her heart could own as master, she determined to retire at once from the world, and actually



did so, entering the Capuchin convent of Santa Rosalia as a professed nun.

“It seems that the brothers made mutual confidence of their disappointment, and, compelled to own the truth of Caterina’s accusation, with heavy hearts took their departure for the south.

“Five months now went by without any communication between the absentees and their village, Aritza, and the time was approaching when it was usual to return to the mountain districts for pasture. The necessary preparations were accordingly made, and it fell to the lot of Giovannico Ligas to precede his brother by a few hours on the road, in order to select convenient spots for the repose and watering of the flocks.

“Fatigued with his first day’s walk, Giovannico halted and threw himself down on the brink of a spring called ‘La Mizza Velada’ (the Hidden Fountain), since become our property through an exchange of land.

“Having slaked his thirst with the sparkling water, Giovannico fell into a train of sombre, and, it must be added, remorseful thought. That kind of mysterious awe which sometimes visits us in woodland solitudes, more perhaps than in any other kind of scenery, crept slowly over him, bringing in its train feelings to which he had been for many years a stranger.

But, overshadowing all, came the remembrance that he had perhaps bartered for visionary wealth a life of love and peace seldom meted out to the pilgrims of this uncertain world. Caterina was lost to him. Nor was that the only sacrifice. His soul's 'immediate jewel,' not his own to deal with, he had been ready to pawn in unholy traffic for that wealth that cannot save, and even *that* wretched reward had evaded his grasp. Giovannico put his face to the ground, and wept.

"How long he remained in that position he could never tell, but when he again looked up the sun was sinking, and there, to his utter amazement, within a few feet of him, stood Caterina—the nun!

"For a minute he remained absolutely motionless with surprise, then, rousing himself, he rose, and throwing himself at her feet, besought her to listen to his suit.

"She made no reply in words, but, smiling kindly, raised her finger towards Heaven. At that instant there was a crashing through the underwood, and Battista, bursting into the open space, his eyes blazing with fury, and a knife in his hand, flung himself upon his brother. The latter leapt to his feet in time to avoid the deadly blow, and, closing with his assailant, caught and mastered the uplifted hand.

“ A desperate struggle ensued for the possession of the knife, in the course of which the unfortunate Battista wounded his own person so severely with the fatal instrument that he sank at length to the ground, his blood flowing in torrents. Giovannico hastily bound up the wounds, and having thus averted immediate danger, turned to look for Caterina. The girl was no longer visible.

“ Battista was conveyed with all care to the nearest village, but survived the unhappy occurrence only a few days. Before breathing his last, he called his brother, and faltered forth the following explanation :—

“ He declared that about an hour after Giovannico’s departure he suddenly saw standing before him the appearance of Caterina. She was silent and motionless. Overwhelmed with surprise, and utterly at a loss to comprehend how or whence she had come, Battista’s voice and limbs refused their office. At length the spell was broken by Caterina moving slowly away in the direction of the wood, which lay close at hand. Battista followed. She led him through the windings of the forest for some little distance, always preserving a space of about twenty yards between them, in spite of the varying pace by which Battista endeavoured to approach her. At length she suddenly disappeared altogether.

“Notwithstanding this, Battista had continued his bewildered way, deserting flocks and everything, until near sunset, when, just as he was on the point of retracing his steps, the sound of his brother’s voice in earnest supplication, struck his ear. Directed by the sound, he plunged through the thick under-wood, drawing his knife as he ran, and, frantic with jealousy and disappointment, threw himself, without a moment’s thought, upon his brother, whom he found, as he expected, at Caterina’s feet !

“After the funeral of Battista, Giovannico collected his flocks, and set forth for Aritza, in the secret hope that Caterina might yet become his bride. Arrived at the hamlet, he was not long in repairing to her cottage, where he found, seated in the porch, her father and mother. Their mourning garments and sorrow-stricken faces affected him so much, that it was with difficulty he forced his lips to pronounce the name of Caterina.

“‘Morta,’ was the fatal reply.

“It was too true; Caterina had died nearly a month before in the convent to which she had retired. Overcome with wonder and horror, the young man sunk down in a sort of fit, and was carried into the house, whither medical aid was immediately summoned. His doom was, however, sealed ; death was rapidly approaching. He lived long enough to

impart to his confessor a minute relation of the above facts ; and likewise to verify before a judge certain other circumstances by means of which the authorities were enabled to seize, and convict before a tribunal, the promoters of the secret society to which I have alluded.

“ These, consisting of a monk, a priest, and a layman, were engaged one night, in the vicinity of Cagliari, in their unhallowed occupation. A circle had been drawn, incantations made, and, previous to commencing their digging, a last invocation had been addressed to the Father of Evil, when a stern voice responded ‘ *Son qui* ’ (I am here), and a gendarme, sword in hand, and followed by four familiar spirits of a like order, leaped into the magic circle and captured the whole party, with all (to use the words of the report) their ‘ *attrizzi infernali* ’ (diabolical apparatus.)

Other members of the fraternity escaped to the mountains, but the three captured gentlemen are at this moment working out a fifteen years’ penalty for their infraction of a law which has, I believe, no precise parallel in England, and which I must translate ‘ Church scandal.’ ”\*

\* It must be understood that the supernatural features of this singular case were communicated to the priest, by the dying man,

We have cited, some pages back, an instance of an especial apparition presenting itself to two different persons at different times, but in the same locality, and with the same accompanying details. Another occurs to the writer, which was related to him some time since by a literary friend, as follows :—

“Captain Morgan, a gentleman of the highest honour and veracity, and who certainly was not over-gifted with ideality, arrived in London, one evening in 18—, in company with a friend, and took up his lodgings in a large old-fashioned house, of the last century, to which chance had directed them. Captain Morgan was shown into a large bed-chamber, with a huge four-poster bed, heavy hangings, and altogether that substantial appearance of good, solid respectability and comfort which associated itself with our ideas of the wealthy burghers and merchants of the times of Queen Anne and the first George, when so many strange crimes of romantic daring, or of deep treachery, stained the annals of the day, and the accursed thirst for gold—the bane of every age—appeared to exercise its most terrific influence.

“Captain Morgan retired to bed, and slept, but was

not under the seal of confession, but with the express desire of their publicity. The writer’s relative received them from the priest himself.

very soon awakened by a great flapping of wings close beside him, and a cold weird-like sensation, such as he had never before experienced, spread through his frame. He started, and sat upright in bed, when an extraordinary appearance declared itself, in the shape of an immense black bird, with outstretched wings, and red eyes flashing as it were with fire.

“It was right before him, and pecked furiously at his face and eyes, so incessantly, that it seemed to him a wonder that he was enabled, with his arms and the pillow, to ward off the creature’s determined assaults. During the battle, it occurred to him that some large pet bird belonging to the family, had effected its escape, and been accidentally shut up in the apartment.

“Again and again the creature made at him with a malignant ferocity perfectly indescribable, but, though he invariably managed to baffle the attack, he noticed that he never once succeeded in *touching* his assailant. This strange combat having lasted several minutes, the gallant officer, little accustomed to stand so long simply on the defensive, grew irritated, and, leaping out of bed, dashed at his enemy. The bird retreated before him. The Captain followed in close pursuit, driving his sable foe, fluttering and fighting, towards a sofa which

stood in a corner of the room. The moonlight shone full into the chamber, and Morgan distinctly saw the creature settle down, as if in terror, upon the embroidered seat of the sofa.

“Feeling now certain of his prey, he paused for a second or two, then flung himself suddenly upon the black object, from which he had never removed his gaze. To his utter amazement, it seemed to fade and dissolve under his very fingers! He was clutching the air! In vain he searched, with lighted lamp, every nook and corner of the apartment—unwilling to believe that his senses could be the victims of so gross a delusion—no bird was to be found. After a long scrutiny, the baffled officer once more retired to rest, and met with no further disturbance.

“While dressing, in the morning, he resolved to make no allusion to what he had seen, but to induce his friend, on some pretext, to change rooms with him. That unsuspecting individual readily complied, and the next day reported, with much disgust, that he had had to contend for possession of the chamber with the most extraordinary and perplexing object he had ever encountered—to all appearance, a huge black bird—which constantly eluded his grasp, and ultimately disappeared, leaving no clue to its mode of exit.’



The example we have next to adduce is one certainly not to be surpassed in the annals of domestic history, either for the demands it unquestionably makes upon a reader's faith, or for the accumulated testimony by which that faith has been often won.

The immediate authority upon which we give the following correct version of the extraordinary tale, will be better understood, if explained at its conclusion.

Mr. B——, a gentleman of German descent, was possessed of considerable property, both real and personal, in this country; but nevertheless resided, for the most part, in one of our West Indian colonies. At the period of the strange occurrence about to be narrated, this gentleman had formed an intimate personal acquaintance with certain of the officers belonging to the regiment which composed the garrison. Among these were Colonel Hutchinson and Captain Stewart.

It happened, one morning, that the two last-named gentlemen were sitting in their mess-room, in conversation, when—without any previous announcement—Mr. B—— walked suddenly into the room, and approached them as if to speak.

Observing that, as he advanced, his eyes were fixed on Colonel Hutchinson alone, Captain Stewart

instinctively rose and withdrew a few steps apart, leaving them to converse. Whenever his eyes chanced to rest upon the talkers, Stewart could not help noticing the singular expression of the colonel's face. It was as though he were vainly endeavouring to comprehend some startling or mysterious piece of intelligence which B—— was seeking to communicate. After several minutes, during which by far the greater part of the conversation seemed to be borne by the latter, the visitor turned away, and quitted the room, without taking the slightest notice of Captain Stewart.

This unusual bearing on the part of his friend completed Stewart's surprise. He walked up to the colonel—who was standing where B—— had left him, the puzzled expression still on his face—and inquired if that was not their friend B—— who had just quitted the apartment.

“To be sure it is!” replied the colonel. “How can you ask? But it's the most extraordinary thing! Surely, the man must be mad; for he evidently had not been drinking. He spoke collectedly enough, and there were business details. But what do you think were his first words? Just these: ‘I come, Hutchinson, to tell you that I am *dead*.’ Fancy a fellow telling you he's dead! Then he went on—‘I wish you to go to my house, and examine a bureau in

my bedchamber. In one of the drawers, you will find a bundle of papers tied up with red tape. They are deeds, &c., relating to some disputed property in England; which, without them, will be lost to my family. You will take them, and take also my son; and, as soon as you can go to England, deliver him and them to such a person—my agent, and guardian of my boy.’ Now what upon earth can he mean? ”

The two officers could arrive at no other conclusion than either that their friend had gone suddenly mad, or that he had thought fit to test their credulity by a well-acted bit of masquerade; but resolving to make sure, despatched a messenger to B——’s house, who presently hastened back, bringing the astounding intelligence that Mr. B—— had, in very truth, breathed his last that morning.

Search was made in the bureau, and the papers, as indicated by the apparition, were duly found.

In pursuance of the instructions so strangely imparted, Hutchinson, as soon as he could obtain leave of absence, started for England, in company with B——’s orphan boy, found the person described as the agent, and handed over the papers; by means of which the youth’s title to a property of great value was subsequently established.

The boy took up his residence with an old lady—

his nearest living relative—and was for some time the object of much interest, chiefly on account of the above singular tale, which was widely bruited about, and, authenticated as it was by two gentlemen of unquestioned honour, could hardly fail to command belief.

It was related to George III., upon whom, and his Queen, the occurrence made so strong an impression, that they desired to see the lad, evinced much kindly interest in him, and caused him to be sent to Eton, and educated with the Prince of Wales.

Young B—— subsequently took orders, and enjoyed an incumbency in Westminster. He was possessed of many accomplishments, and was a first-rate performer on the violoncello. This last acquirement was less fortunate; for, on an intimation being conveyed to the King that the reverend gentleman was a humble candidate for a vacant mitre, that conscientious monarch is said to have replied that, to *his* taste, “a fiddling parson was bad enough, but a fiddling bishop intolerable!”

And now for the authority. The Rev. Mr. B—— married an aunt of General Powney, who related the story to the writer’s friend and informant; the latter (a lady still living) having herself, forty years ago, been personally acquainted with Mr. and Mrs. B——.

A broad distinction, of course, lies between cases of mere cerebral excitement, and such as we have hitherto treated of. Hallucinations are as fully recognized, if not quite so common, as colds in the head.

Few of those who must have noticed the twitch or toss of the head peculiar to the late eminent counsel, Mr. B——, were aware that it was engendered by a perpetual vision of a raven on his left shoulder. But *this* ornithological specimen, unlike Captain Morgan's eagle, was revealed to no senses but his own.

A gentleman now residing in Broadway, New York, transacts business daily under the immediate supervision of his deceased great-uncle, who, in a laced coat and ruffles, occupies a large arm-chair, placed expressly to receive the honoured vision, without whose company, Mr. R—— declares, he could not now accomplish his day's work in comfort.

Intense application has frequently produced delusions of this kind, and when no relaxation has been afforded to the over-taxed brain, they have become permanent.

Similar results have attended extreme grief, or long-continued anxiety. Often, if a sense is not subjected to positive delusion, it is quickened almost to a preternatural degree. In times of imminent

danger, or apparently hopeless distress, the sights and sounds of rescue have revealed themselves, to the minutest particular, long before—according to the ordinary operation of natural laws—they should have afforded any token of their approach.

Not many days since, the writer heard a lady relating, in a mixed circle, a curious experience of her own, which bears upon this question. She stated that she had, one day, attended afternoon service at a little country church, in the neighbourhood of the house at which she was visiting.

Owing to some private sorrow which had for some time oppressed her mind, she found unusual difficulty in following steadily the sacred ritual. In spite of herself, the rebel thoughts would perpetually revert to worldly cares and crosses, and the heart swell with its daily grief, when, happening to raise her eyes, she saw, clearly and sharply written on the white panels of the singers' gallery, which but a moment since were blank, the well-known text—*"Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."*

While yet gazing on the reassuring words, which came so like an answer to her thoughts, they began to fade away, and presently became completely invisible.

Pondering on this strange occurrence, and unwill-

ing to doubt the evidence of her eyes, she repaired to the church on the following day, and, placing herself in the same position as before, fixed her eyes intently on the gallery. Nothing was to be seen ! She then ascended to the gallery itself, and, leaning over, examined the panel closely. Presently she was enabled to distinguish the forms of certain letters, which had at some previous time composed a text, since painted over. The closest scrutiny could not have established a continuous meaning, had not the impression of the day before guided the reader to the conclusion that the text she had so distinctly seen, had actually at one time been painted on the face of the gallery !

The following singular story, belonging, perhaps, more strictly to the realm of dreams than visions, and, though embracing some remarkable coincidences, referable, no doubt, to the same causes as those last quoted, was related to the writer, a short time since, by the lady of a distinguished German diplomatist.

A friend of the latter had herself a beloved and attached friend, who died after a brief but severe interval of suffering. A short time after, the spirit of the departed stood, in a dream, by the bedside of her friend, Madame L——, and, with a countenance distorted with indescribable agony, implored

the latter to interest in her behalf some "great, strong soul," that might wrestle for her in prayer, and emancipate the afflicted spirit, if it might be, from its present intolerable, and yet not hopeless, condition. This condition she depicted as one of eager longing to repent, but of perpetual contention with some terrible hindrance, only removable through the means suggested.

Much troubled in mind, Madame L——, after some deliberation, resolved to appeal to the strongest and most ardent soul within the range of her acquaintance, in the person of ——, sometimes called the "German Luther." To him, accordingly, she preferred her request. The good man consented, and redeemed his promise with characteristic promptitude and fervour.

Soon after, the apparition again stood beside the sleeping couch of Madame L——; this time with aspect more composed, but still marked with the traces of suffering and anxiety, and warmly thanking her friend for what had been already done, adjured her in the most touching language (repeated by the narrator with wonderful power and pathos), to prevail upon the zealous intercessor to engage once more—but once again—in prayer on her behalf.

Madame L——, deeply moved, did as she was requested, and wrote at once to ——, who happened



at this time to be absent, at the distance of two days' journey.

On the third night, the spirit appeared to stand, for the third time, by her friend's side, and surrounded with angelic radiance, declared that all was now well.

Two days more, and — burst into Madame L——'s presence, pale, and greatly agitated.

"Woman ! woman !" he exclaimed, "what have you done ? On no consideration that could be proposed to me, would I encounter such another season of conflict and agony, as that which my compliance with your request has occasioned me."

He then proceeded to relate that having—though with some reluctance—renewed his earnest intercessions, as he had been desired—he felt as though at once environed by all the powers of evil. Nevertheless, with reeling brain and bursting heart, and all but overcome, he steeled himself to the very utmost, and, struggling on through unutterable mental torture, at length regained his calm. But never more, for him, such fearful championship.

Without entering more deeply into discussion of this last example, it may be enough to hint that the readiest solution might probably be found in the collision of two ardent and impressible natures, devoted, for the moment, with intense eagerness, to a common object.

That conservative spirit which so honourably distinguishes the great landed gentry of England, extends even to the vindication of extra-natural privileges. The honour of being haunted, through successive generations, is no slight matter. If earl or squire be not insensible to the credit of a ghost in the western wing, or laurel avenue, much more keenly is it appreciated among his dependants. Many an ancient custodian would resent infidelity in the matter of his headless "woman in white," as sharply as an imputation upon the honour of the master himself. Therein, perhaps, lies the secret of the longevity of many of these immaterial appanages.

Of such, peradventure, is the great white bird (not classed by the naturalist), which, ever since the ploughman-prophet Nixon affirmed that—

"An eagle shall sit upon Vale-Royal house,"

has never failed to perch upon the battlements, whenever a descendant of that house is about to pass away.

Of such, it may be, is the brown lady whose appearance heralds death or misfortune to the noble house of L——. Many such appearances are said to be noted in the annals of the family. It is but six or seven years since, that a young married daughter of the house ran, pale and agitated, to her husband,

in his study, declaring that she had encountered the brown woman in the corridor. Comforted with difficulty, she set out on the morrow, with her husband, on a journey previously arranged, but arrived at their destination somewhat indisposed, and on the succeeding day expired !

Of such is perhaps the noise of wheels whirling up to the chief portal of any mansion wherein a member of another great county family may chance to be an inmate, when the head of that house is stricken with death. This especial phenomenon is claimed by more than one family, and has been, in more than one instance, strongly authenticated. Not long since, the following was communicated to the writer, by a friend who was well acquainted with the heroine of the tale :—

Mrs. — (a lady now living) was staying, some little time ago, with her daughter-in-law. One day, while dressing for dinner, her maid remarked, “*Madame, voita une arrivée !*” Both had, in fact, distinctly heard the sound of a carriage driving up the avenue, and stopping at the door.

Finding no new visitor in the drawing-room, Mrs. — asked her daughter-in-law who had arrived ?

“No one. We are not expecting anybody,” was the reply.

“That is strange,” resumed Mrs. —. “Both

my maid and myself heard a carriage drive to the door."

"Are you *sure* of that?" asked her young connexion, with great earnestness.

"Certain."

"Then there has been a death in our family. That sound of a carriage is always the forerunner of such an event."

On the following morning, a telegram announced the sudden death of the mother of the young lady.

Of the same description is the wild keen that still heralds the decease of the members of an old Irish line; and the softer wail that belongs to a noble house in Scotland, heard and marvelled at by persons now living:—

The strain was like the thrush's note  
Heard in sequestered Sgail,  
Or like the blackbird's chorus sweet,  
In Letter-legh's lone vale.

It was a song of sorrow;  
The lay of a broken heart,  
Murmured to weeping music—  
Artless—and void of art.

Murmured to weeping music,  
And blent with tears and sighs;  
Murmured to weeping music  
That drowns in grief the eyes.

Of the regular "banshee" we hear but little now.

Whether the old royal Irish lines have become, by process of time, so tainted with inferior blood that the wailing messenger cannot decide in whose veins the princely drop still lingers, or whether the utilitarian shriek of the railway-whistle has fairly drowned her own, the banshee is all but dumb. Notwithstanding, her warning cry has been heard in the living generation, and by one whose name it is allowable to mention—Dr. Kenealy—in truth, the representative of one of those ancient lines.

The death of this gentleman's only brother occurred when he—the doctor—was yet a boy, and that event, as well as the warning that preceded it, left a lasting impression on his mind. His brother's bedroom opened on a large and far-extending tract bounded by green hills. In this apartment most of the members of the family—the doctor among them—were sitting about noon, the sun streaming beautifully through the thin transparent air, when suddenly a strain of melody more divinely sweet than any earthly music they had ever heard, rose near at hand. It was the melancholy wail of a woman's voice, in accents betokening a depth of woe not to be described in words. It lasted several minutes, then appeared to melt away like the ripple of a wave—now heard, now lost in whispers—till “nothing lives ’twixt it and silence.”

As the song commenced, the dying boy fell into the last agony, but such was the effect of the circumstance upon those who stood around that their attention was almost distracted from the solemn scene, and one of them (the nurse) exclaimed involuntarily :—

“What a voice she has ! *That is the Banshee.*”

As the last note became inaudible, the child’s spirit passed away.

Dr. K—— refers to this never-to-be-forgotten circumstance in a recently-published work :—

“Here the Banshee, that phantom bright who weeps  
Over the dying of her own loved line,  
Floated in moonlight ; in her streaming locks  
Gleamed star-shine ; when she looked on me, she knew  
And smiled.”

Again :—

“The wish has but  
Escaped my lips—and lo ! once more it streams  
In liquid lapse upon the fairy winds,  
That guard each slightest note with jealous care,  
And bring them hither, even as angels might  
To the beloved to whom they minister.”\*

There are occasionally phenomena which, with every appearance of being ascribable to natural causes, defy the most careful scientific scrutiny.

\* “Göthe.”—A new Pantomime. A work of marvellous, but undisciplined power; tender and daring, exquisite—and lamentable.

Such was the little ray or speck of light, which haunted for many years the mansion in which the late Thomas Andrew Knight, the correspondent and associate of Sir Humphrey Davy, was born. The appearance of this lustrous little visitor greatly disturbed the inmates of the house, who were not reassured by witnessing the repeated discomfiture of Mr. Knight's attempts to discover its origin. He himself becoming piqued in the pursuit, hunted down the mystery with all the perseverance of a true philosopher. All, however, was in vain.

It seems that this domesticated *ignis fatuus* was accustomed to appear in a bedchamber on the second floor, and danced about the apartment or remained motionless, without being apparently influenced by anything the spectators might do. In many different positions Mr. Knight surveyed it accurately, without being able to detect any angle by which light could possibly be conveyed to that point. Few men were better qualified than Mr. Knight to investigate natural phenomena, and especially that class which ought to have included the luminous visitor we have described.

We come to a class of phenomena, which, belonging rather to houses than to families, attain proportions too great to admit of our assigning them to the operation of any natural law, to which conjecture

has yet pointed its unstable finger. If they be true, the solution lies within a realm among whose multiplied mysteries it behoves to search with reserve and deep humility, lest we transgress unadvisedly the limit apparently indicated, in certain directions, to human curiosity.

*If they be true !* The privilege of weighing testimony is at least accorded to all—and they are many—who interest themselves in these solemn questions. It is even in some sort a duty, in the interests of others, to analyse that which comes before us in a questionable shape, and reduce it, if possible, to the level of stubborn fact.

It is almost unnecessary to observe, that if a perfectly spotless reputation in the matter of legendary ghosts be required, the haunted mansions of England and its dependencies may be counted by the score. Very many of these have already figured in the graphic pages of Mrs. Crowe, Mr. Owen, and others, and conclusions, with which it is not our desire or province to meddle, have been drawn from these stirring narratives. Very many more have been left wisely to their own local fame, as not supplied with the credentials needful for their admission within the pale of printed history. Of the residue, we have gathered one or two, possessed of those desirable characteristics which are mentioned in our prefatory



remarks, viz. recent occurrence, and direct authentication.

The lady to whom the writer is indebted for the first of these examples, embodying an experience of her own, belongs to an old and distinguished family—a name were it permissible to mention it—probably familiar to most of the readers of this work. The narrative will be given almost literally in her own words.

“ On the fourteenth of May, 18—, I was at W—— near Weymouth. The house is a very old one, and has peculiarities of construction, some of which, in order to make my story clear, I must endeavour to explain.

The great drawing-room upstairs, is a singularly shaped apartment, having the door in one corner, and opposite to a large window opening on the balcony.

On the left-hand side of the door is one opening into a very small room, so small as almost to be termed a closet, having a window divided in the centre by a stone mullion, and a small place where there has once stood an altar, with a recess for holy water, proving that the little chamber had been formerly used as an oratory. The window looks down, at a great elevation, upon a flagged courtyard, and is over what was, in former days, the chapel, now

used as a pantry. From this oratory there are no means of exit, save through the drawing-room.

The door of the drawing-room opens on to a small landing, having the old winding stone-staircase on the right; and facing the door, is a wide corridor, on to which open all the bedrooms.

My daughter-in-law, being rather an invalid, had been reclining all day on the sofa in the drawing-room. Towards dusk, I was in the bedroom with the children, and, leaving it to prepare for tea, met my daughter-in-law coming from the drawing-room. Standing on the landing, she asked me the way to the morning-room, and I had just pointed down the winding stairs, when I caught sight of a man, tall, and with grey hair, passing across the drawing-room, from the fire towards the wall by the oratory. He passed between me and the lamp, which stood on the table near the window, and brightly lit up the whole room. I inquired who was the stranger that had been with her in the drawing-room. My daughter, with some surprise, denied that any one had come in; and presently left me. Conceiving, however, that she must have been mistaken, I remained where I was, every moment expecting that the man, whoever he might be, would come out, and, when I found he did not do so, wondering whither he could have betaken himself, since he appeared to me

to walk straight up to the wall, and (though the oratory door remained closed) there disappear. My first idea was that he was a robber, who proposed to conceal himself somewhere about the rooms, and I consequently determined to watch him.

Observing no place of concealment in the drawing-room, I went at once to the oratory, and, cautiously unclosing the door, looked in, half expecting to find myself grasped by the discovered marauder. No one was there ! Having searched every corner, and ascertained that no human being could have escaped by the window, I returned to the drawing-room, and, going out on the landing, still watching the door, I called to one of the young ladies of the house, and asked her laughingly if she had ever seen a ghost in the house.

“ Never,” was her reply, “ but you know that there *is* one !”

I had never heard so, but I now declared that I had certainly seen it, and that not many minutes since.

My friend laughed, and said :—

“ You don’t mean to say you have seen the old man ?”

“ What old man ?”

“ Our ghost !”

I described his appearance, and the manner in

which he had so strangely vanished. Miss M—— appeared much struck, and proposed a closer search, whereupon we lit our candles, and examined systematically every corner of the drawing-room, the oratory, and the balcony, but without success.

I am not what is called a believer in ghosts. I never before saw anything I could not account for, nor can I perceive any use or purpose in what I saw that evening. I only know I *did* see it, and that, standing in a dusky corridor, and looking straight into a well-lighted room, I cannot conceive that I was the subject of any optical illusion. As the face of the figure was averted, I cannot give a more minute description of it, but the apparition was so natural and palpable, that the last thing that occurred to me was that it might be “a dream of the feverish brain.”

We had just concluded our scrutiny, when the gentlemen, who had been smoking on the lawn, came upstairs, and were informed of what had occurred. One of the party immediately declared that it was *the* ghost of W——, and, on my pressing for further information, related that most extraordinary story, given, as I have been told, in an earlier edition of “Hutchins’ History of Dorset,” an exceedingly rare book, the greater part of the impression having been destroyed by fire, at the publisher’s.

W——, in 1660, was in the possession of Mr. Rickard. This gentleman was lying on what was expected to be his death-bed, when, one day, addressing his wife, who sat at his bedside, he begged her to leave him alone for a few minutes with the reverend rector of the parish, Mr. Bound, who was likewise in the room.

As soon as she had quitted them, Mr. R—— directed his friend's attention towards the foot of the bed, asking, at the same time, in a mysterious tone:—

“Do you hear what that old man is saying?”

Unable to comprehend him, Mr. Bound looked with amazement at the speaker, when the latter calmly requested him to bring pen, ink, and paper, and commit to writing what he was about to hear.

The reverend minister obeyed, when Mr. Rickard, with the manner of one following the dictation of another sitting at the foot of the bed, pronounced the following prophecy:—

“In the year 1665, more than ninety thousand persons will perish in London of one disease.

“In the succeeding year, there will occur such a fire in London, that the lead on the roof of Paul's will pour down like rain.

“On the 11th of June, 1685, a person will land west of Weymouth, who shall be the cause of great calamity and bloodshed, and involve many leading families of the west in trouble and ruin.”—(Monmouth’s rebellion.)

“In 1688, events will come to pass that shall entirely change the constitution of this land.

“And that you may know that what I tell you is true, though you are to-day supposed to be in a dying state, and unable to leave your bed, you will to-morrow be well enough to rise, and walk out upon your terraces. While there, you will receive three unlooked-for visits, one from a gentleman from Ireland, one from a person from Jersey, and one from your own son, whom you believe to be far distant abroad, and whom you had not hoped again to see.”

Thus ran this extraordinary communication; and, accordingly, on the following morning, the invalid really found himself so much better, that he was able to walk upon his terrace. While doing so, an old friend arrived, who had just come across from Ireland; another visitor appeared, who had landed at Weymouth from a Jersey vessel; and, finally, young Rickard, the unexpected, drove hastily to the door.

This wonderful statement was signed by Mr.

Rickard, and the reverend Mr. Bound, and verified before two magistrates of the county, one of whom was Mr. J. Strangways, an ancestor of the Earl of Ilchester. The name of the other I cannot recollect.\*

\* As the family tradition differs, in some slight degree, from that contained in one of the editions of "Hutchins' History of Dorset," we append the latter. In this version, the hero is described as Mr. "Sadler." It seems that the estates of W—— had passed into the hands of this family during the Commonwealth, but that the Restoration re-conveyed a portion of them to the former owners, or their assigns—a circumstance which preyed upon Mr. Sadler's mind, and induced the mental trouble about to be referred to:—

"This gentleman (Mr. Sadler) being, the year after the Restoration, under some distemper of mind, kept his chamber, and had his servant, one Thomas Grey, of the same place (W——), to attend him there. Then I, Cuthbert Bound, minister of the parish, coming to visit him, found him sitting up in his bed, his wife and servant being with him. He caused his wife presently to depart, and the door to be shut, and made his man to come to one side of the bed, and myself on the other, and looking steadfastly towards the other end of the room, asked whether we saw nobody, or heard any voice. We answered him that we neither heard nor saw anybody, but persuaded him to lie down and take his rest.

"He bid us be quiet, for there was a man who had great things to tell him, and spoke so loud that he did wonder we did not hear him; and presently ordered his man to fetch his pen, ink, and paper, and, looking towards the place where the man stood, he began to write, and so wrote on as if the man did still dictate to him, and, every now and then, would be asking whether it were so, or not. And, after he had ended the matter, he read the paper distinctly twice over, and at the end asked whether he

Not very long since, another inexplicable circumstance occurred at this same W——, the witnesses

had written true, and then caused us to set our hands to the paper, saying he (the man) would not be gone till he saw that done; and when we had done it, said, 'Now he is gone.'

"What he related to us was as followeth:—That there would die in the city of London so many thousand—(mentioning the number, which I have forgotten); that the city should be burned down, a great part of it; and that he saw St. Paul's tumbled down, as if beaten down with great guns. That we should have three sea-fights with the Dutch, and that there would appear three blazing stars, and that the last would be terrible to behold. That, afterwards, there would come three small ships to land, to the westward of Weymouth, that would put all England into an uproar, but it would come to nothing. That, in the year 1688, there would come to pass such a thing in the kingdom that all the world would take notice of. That, after this, there would come good times, and that I, Cuthbert Bound, should live to see all these things come to pass, but he and his man should die. And farther, that some wonderful thing would come to pass afterwards, which he was forbidden to make known. Lastly, that he should be able to go abroad the next day, and there would come three men to see him—one from Ireland, one from Jersey, and one (his brother, Bingham), from abroad. Who did certainly come, as he had told us. And I saw him walking, early in the morning the next day, in his grounds.

"Upon the report of this, his man, Thomas Grey, and myself, were sent for before the deputy-lieutenant of the county, and made affidavit of the truth of this, before Colonel Giles Strangeways, Colonel Coker, and many others yet alive, within three or four days after he told it me."

This narrative was communicated by the Rev. — Bingham, of R——, from a friend who has a copy of it, which has been carefully preserved in the family, signed by the above-named Cuthbert Bound.



being the young lady to whom I had called, on seeing *my* ghost, and her governess.

They were about retiring to rest, one night in the summer of 18—, and, before doing so, stood for a few moments at the open window, admiring the night's still beauty, and the moonlight glinting upon the little church, which, as is often the case in the West of England, stands but a short distance from the manor-house. On a sudden, the passing-bell began to toll. Surprised at this, since, in their little village, the fact of any one being in mortal sickness would almost, as a matter of course, have become known to them, the young ladies withdrew to bed, still wondering upon which of their poor neighbours the hand of death had been so suddenly laid. Early next morning, an express arrived, announcing the unexpected death of the younger lady's grandfather, who resided in the same county, but at some distance. He had expired over-night, at nine o'clock. This was the hour at which the passing-bell had tolled. The two circumstances were, however, in nowise associated together in the minds of the family, and, in the course of the day, inquiries were made by them, as to who had died in the little village on the previous day.

The clerk returned for answer that there had been no death in the parish, and that no bell had tolled.

A second message was sent, demanding who had obtained access to the church over-night, as members of the family had listened for some moments to the unmistakable knell; to which the clerk replied most positively that no one had visited the church, nor had the keys been out of his possession.

The mysteries of W—— are not even yet exhausted. There is still living the aged daughter of a former tenant of the T—— family, who for some time rented the manor-house. She remembers, on leaving school, in 1796, having the “haunted” room allotted to her for a bedchamber. It had then been nailed up for many years, and the circumstance of its being once more tenanted by beings of mortal mould created no small excitement and speculation in the neighbourhood, many persons soliciting permission to attend the ceremony of opening the door. The young lady’s rest was never disturbed by any unusual occurrence.

The Rev. E. B——, however, a gentleman long resident in the neighbourhood, relates a singular anecdote current in the annals of the old family:—

The Mr., or Sir C. T——, of a former period, had given a dinner in honour of two judges of the assize, one of whom enjoyed the hospitalities of his host with all zest and freedom, while the other, unable, as it seemed, to eat or converse, sat wrapped in gloomy

abstraction, broken only by moments of such evident uneasiness, that his colleague contrived to bring the banquet to an early termination ; soon after which, ordering their horses, the two learned brethren departed in company for the assize-town, D——.

Scarcely were they alone, when the melancholy judge informed his friend that during the whole period of the repast he had seen the exact presentment, double, or personification, of Lady T——, their hostess, standing behind that lady's own chair, imitating her every action ! That it was no optical delusion, arising from some natural cause, was evidenced by its not applying to any other person or object in the room, and the idea that it might betoken some fatal misfortune to their amiable entertainer, had dwelt so powerfully upon his mind, as to produce the unconquerable depression his friend had noticed.

He was yet speaking when they were overtaken by a servant of the house, who was proceeding at full gallop in search of medical aid, though without much hope that it would prove effectual, the unfortunate lady having, immediately on the departure of the guests, retired to her own apartment, and hung herself.

Pursuing, not without some sense of intrusion, our perquisitions in and about the haunted mansions

of England, we come to S—— Place, in the village of D——, Sussex.

S—— Place is the name of a fine old mansion of the time of Elizabeth, which is reported to have been at one period nearly double its present size, and was the property of an old family named D——, two of the last surviving members of which lie buried in the vaults of the small but pretty church, and to whose memory beautiful monuments were erected by the love and piety of their sister. This lady was the last of her house, and where she was gathered to her rest has never been ascertained.

The D——'s were "great-hearted gentlemen," determined royalists, and fought gallantly for their king in the wars preceding the commonwealth.

After the final discomfiture of the king's party, the last of the D——'s fled on horseback from the fatal field. He was, however, pursued so closely by some of Cromwell's troopers, that the latter had him actually in view as he spurred into D——, and, without drawing bridle, dashed through his own opened door into the hall. A few moments more, and the old mansion was echoing, from garret to cellar, with the tumult of iron-clad men, bursting into every place of refuge, furious at the escape of the fugitive, who seemed already in their hands. All

their efforts were fruitless. Neither the cavalier nor his horse were ever more seen. Hence, perhaps, arose the tradition that his ghost still haunted the home of his fathers.

A later occupant of S—— Place discovered in the kitchen a secret door, opening into a sort of chamber, from whence issued a subterranean passage, and through this outlet D—— had no doubt escaped, made his way to the coast, and embarked for France.

That there are most extraordinary noises in the house is indisputable, and few that have visited it have left again entirely unimpressed by the mystery that haunts the dwelling.

A lady who had been a guest there informed the writer that she had once been greatly alarmed. Before retiring to rest she had locked her door. To her great astonishment and consternation, before she had been many minutes in bed, and having yet felt no inclination to sleep, she distinctly heard the door open, and a step walk deliberately towards the dressing-table, which stood near the middle of the room.

Imagining that she had not completely fastened the door, and that a servant had entered in search of something, she spoke to the intruder, but received no answer! She heard and saw nothing more, for

being, by her own confession, no heroine in point of courage, her head was quickly enveloped in the bed-clothes, and, in the morning, she found the door as well secured as she had left it overnight.

On another occasion, two persons saw a figure, resembling a large white animal, glide quickly along by the wall from one end to the other of the saloon, and such positive testimony did their sense of sight bear to the presence of some such creature in the room, that the doors, which had been already closed, were locked and bolted, and a search instituted, which however resulted in no discovery.

Among the servants at S—— Place, it had been for years an article of faith that a tall cavalier, wearing his hat, was frequently seen walking about the apartments; but, as one of them remarked, they “did not care about it *now* they were accustomed to it.”

We arrive now at one of those inexplicable occurrences which, examined to their source, afford us no alternative but to believe either that gentlemen of high character and honourable position have united in the invention and dissemination of a gross falsehood, or that something that may fairly be called preternatural has really and truly been presented to our generation.

For several years past, singular rumours have got abroad, from time to time, relative to an old family-seat near F——, Somersetshire, which, however, despite its reputation, has never, up to the present moment, been without occupants. The circumstance most frequently associated with the rumours aforesaid, was that, on almost every night, at twelve o'clock, something that was invisible entered a certain corridor at one end, and passed out at the other. It mattered not to the mysterious intruder *who* might be witnesses of the midnight progress. Almost as regularly as night succeeded day, the strange sound recurred, and was precisely that which would have been occasioned by a lady, wearing the high-heeled shoes of a former period, and a full silk dress, sweeping through the corridor. Nothing was ever *seen*,—and the impression produced by hearing the approach, the passing, and withdrawal of the visitor with perfect distinctness, while the companion-sense was shut, was described as most extraordinary.

It was but a day or two since, that the brother of the writer chanced to meet at dinner one of the more recent ear-witnesses of this certainly most remarkable phenomenon, and, with the sanction of the latter, the adventure shall be given nearly in his own words.

“I was visiting, about two years ago, at a friend’s house, a few miles from F——, when my attention was attracted, one day at dinner, to a conversation that was going on, having reference to the haunted character of B—— House, near F——. The subject seemed to interest the speakers so much, that I begged to be informed of the details, and learned that a particular corridor of the mansion in question was, every night, at twelve o’clock, the scene of an occurrence that had hitherto defied all explanation. One of the party had himself been a visitor at B—— House, and, being sceptical and devoid of fear, requested permission to keep vigil in the haunted gallery. He did so, witnessed the phenomenon, and ‘nothing on earth,’ he frankly owned, ‘would induce me to repeat the experiment.’ He then recounted to me certain circumstances, which agreed so nearly with what I myself subsequently witnessed, that it will be better to narrate them from the direct evidence of my own astonished senses.

“My curiosity being greatly increased by the manifest belief accorded by those present to this gentleman’s story, I obtained an introduction to the family of B—— House, and received from them a ready permission to pass a night, or more, if necessary, in the haunted corridor. I was at full liberty,



moreover, to select any companion I chose, for the adventure, and I accordingly invited an old friend, Mr. W. K——, who happened to be shooting in the neighbourhood, to accompany me.

“K——, like myself, was disposed to incredulity in such matters; he had never seen anything of the sort before, and was positively assured either that nothing unusual would occur on the night when two such sentries were on duty, or that we should have no great difficulty in tracing the phenomenon to a fleshly source.

“The family at B—— happened at this period to be from home, but authority having been given us to make any arrangements we pleased, K—— and I proceeded to the mansion, intending, at all events, to devote two nights to the experiment. It will be seen that *this* part of the plan was not strictly carried out!

“We dined early, at five o’clock, and in order to make certain of the clearness of our heads, drank nothing but a little table-beer. We had then six hours before us; but, resolved to lose no chance, we took up our position at once in the haunted corridor. It was of considerable length, with a door at each extremity, and one or two at the side. My friend K—— is a good picquet player, and as our watch

was to be a prolonged one, and it was extremely desirable to keep ourselves well on the alert, it was agreed to take some cards with us.

“Combining business with pleasure, we placed our card-table so as completely to barricade the passage ; our two chairs exactly filling up the space that remained, so that it would be impossible for any mortal creature to press through without disturbing us. In addition to this, we placed two lighted candles on the ground near the wall, at two or three feet from the table, on the side from which the mysterious footsteps always came. Finally, we placed two revolvers and two life-preservers on the table.

“These precautions taken, we commenced our game, and played with varying success till about eleven o’clock. At that time, growing a little tired of picquet, we changed the game to *écarté*, and played until the house-clock sounded midnight. Mechanically we dropped our cards, and looked along the dim corridor. No sounds, however, followed, and after pausing a minute or two, we resumed the game, which chanced to be near its conclusion.

“‘I say, it’s nonsense sitting up,’ yawned K——, ‘this thing never comes, you know, after twelve. What do you say? After this game?’

“I looked at my watch, which I had taken the

precaution to set by the church clock, as we entered the village. By this it appeared that the house-clock was fast. It wanted yet three minutes of the hour. Pointing out the mistake to K——, I proposed that we should, by all means, wait another ten minutes.

“The words were not fairly out of my mouth, when the door at the end seemed to open and reclose. This time the cards literally dropped from our hands, for, though nothing could be seen, the conviction was growing, on both our minds, that *something* had entered. We were soon more fully convinced of it. The silence was broken by a tapping sound, such as would be caused by a light person, wearing high-heeled shoes, quietly coming towards us up the gallery, each step, as it approached, sounding more distinct than the last; exactly, in fact, as would be the case under ordinary circumstances. It was a firm and regular tread—light, yet determined—and it was accompanied by a sound between a sweep, a rustle, and a whistle, not comparable to anything but the brushing of a stiff silken dress against the walls!

“How K—— and I looked as the sounds advanced as it were to storm us, I will not pretend to say. I confess I was, for the moment, petrified with amazement, and neither of us, I believe, moved hand or

foot. On—on—*on*—came the tap and rustle; they reached the lighted candles on the floor, passed them, not even disturbing the flame, then the tapping ceased, but the invisible silken robe seemed to brush the wall on both sides, on a level with our heads, then the tapping re-commenced on the *other* side the table, and so, receding, made its exit at the other door!!

“As for making any use of our revolvers or life-preservers, the idea never once occurred to either of us. There was not even a shadow at which to strike; it was sound alone.

“I feel that any attempt to explain this strange phenomenon at once to my own satisfaction and that of others, would be perfectly futile. I must of necessity content myself with simply narrating the fact as it occurred, and as it had been, and probably may yet be, witnessed by many others, as little pre-disposed as my friend K—— and I to be made the dupe of any human artifice.

“I may mention that, on one occasion, it chanced that a nurse in the family had to pass through the corridor about the hour of twelve, carrying, or rather leading, a little girl *who was deaf and dumb*. As the sounds passed, the child appeared to shrink back in the utmost alarm, struggling and moaning to get away, nor could she ever be induced to enter the

corridor again, without evincing the same violent terror.”\*

It would not be difficult to present a considerable catalogue of these local phenomena, if the names of parties and places were not insisted on as an essential guarantee. Confining ourselves to those which possess that necessary feature, here is a singular experience furnished by a lady, the Countess of P——, who merely stipulates, and that for obvious reasons, that the name of the place at which the circumstance occurred, should not be recognizable.

Lady P——, in her youth, was visiting with her mother at an old moated mansion not many miles distant from Warwick. Not being as yet promoted to the honours of the late dinner-table, the Countess (then Miss B——) was one evening awaiting in a large room above the drawing-room, in company with three other young ladies, the accustomed summons to dessert. The fire having become low, she took up the shovel, and proceeded towards a closet near the other end of the room, where the coals were kept.

\* The mansion in which this extraordinary scene was, and perhaps still is, nightly enacted, remains in the occupation of the same family but will, in a few months, be wholly or partially demolished, in order to effect certain modern improvements.

She had made but a few paces in that direction, when, to her utter astonishment, the figure of a tall man suddenly stood before her. The young lady uttered a cry, which brought her companions to her side, when they likewise saw the figure. All remained for an instant fixed to the spot. There was something in the appearance of the intruder that convinced them he was not of flesh and blood; nevertheless, Miss B——, who was a child of remarkable spirit and courage, made a step forward, and actually offered to strike at him with the shovel she held in her hand. The apparition seemed to nod gravely in answer to the menace, but never moved from its place. Thus, for at least a minute, the parties stood gazing on each other, until, to the inexpressible relief of the juvenile allies, assistance arrived in the person of the footman, who knocked at the door, and announced dessert.

A general scream invited John to enter, since the phantom foe still stood his ground, and it was impossible to reach the door without passing him. John accordingly entered upon the field, and, thus taken in flank, the enemy disappeared.

The young ladies eagerly related what they had seen, when the man evinced no surprise, merely telling them they were in what had always been called the "haunted room."

Of course, the circumstance was quickly made known in the drawing-room, when the host and hostess expressed much regret that they had been introduced to the room in question, which had been rarely used, in consequence of its painful associations; the steward of a family, who formerly occupied the mansion, having shot a housemaid there, and concealed the body of his victim in the coal-closet. It is an odd circumstance that the pistol which had effected the murderous deed had ever since been kept hanging over the mantel-piece in the room.

As a proof of a certain distinct impression left on Miss B——'s mind, by the features of the shadowy visitor, it happened that, many years after, at a ball in Paris, she saw, in the brilliant crowd, a countenance so closely resembling that of the spectre, that the whole scene returned upon her in full force.

Hastily seeking her mother, she begged her to ascertain the name of the individual who had caused her such emotion. It was not difficult to do so. But the resemblance was fortuitous. It was the Count Pozzo di Borgo!

There is occasionally a curious intermingling of the mysterious and familiar, as in the case of another old house near B——, Wilts; visited, not

long since, by the gentleman who supplies the following details. These are, it must be owned, neither picturesque nor terrible, their sole interesting feature being that which is common to all such stories—inscrutability.

The dwelling in question is neither large nor gloomy, owns neither dungeon nor corridor, and against its ancient reputation tradition has not a syllable to allege. Nevertheless, as will be seen, no modern tenant is permitted to inhabit its cheerful chambers in tranquillity.

Mr. D——, who had recently returned from Australia, had been invited to pass a few days with the present occupant of the mansion ; and arriving for that purpose, early one afternoon, was informed that his host had not yet returned from riding. wishing to make some alteration in his dress, the visitor desired to be shown to his bed-room, and whilst there—the door being not quite closed—heard the step of his old friend hastily ascending the stairs. Calling to him as he passed, he received no answer—the steps continuing their way to the chamber above, where D—— distinctly heard his friend pull off his heavy riding-boots, one after the other, and toss them to a distance on the floor. So plainly audible was the whole process, that Mr. D—— could even distinguish the very creaking



of the bed-frame against which his friend had leaned.

Great then was his surprise to learn, on descending to the drawing-room, that Mr. W—— had not come back. It was nearly an hour before he did appear; and then D——, after the usual greetings, mentioned the mistake he had been led to make, by hearing some one, whose step resembled W——'s, marching upstairs to the room above.

“What, you have heard him already?” was his host's rejoinder. Then, seeing D——'s curiosity awakened, he told him that, for several years past, the sound as of some one, who certainly formed no part of the recognized establishment, walking about the house, had been the cause of frequent alarms.

“At first,” continued Mr. W——, “I took great pains to trace out the cause, confident, in my own mind, that one or more of the domestics were concerned in it, but when whole sets of servants had left me, owning themselves too terrified to remain, I became convinced I was wrong. For myself, I have grown indifferent to the sounds, puzzling as they are. They do me no harm. There is little beyond the sound of footsteps, although, now and then, our mysterious visitor varies his proceedings, as to-day, by imitating some familiar act of the household.”

Such was Mr. W——'s explanation, and his friend, during his visit, was not again destined to hear anything unusual.

Not many months after, the disturbances occurred on an evening when many witnesses happened to be assembled. It was on the first evening of the month, when a friendly little circle, dating from the days of the Pickwick Club, and calling themselves still by that honoured name, were accustomed to assemble, in order to read in company the best serial papers of the month. As the liberal constitution of this body tolerated the presence of ladies, the readings not unfrequently concluded with polkas—an amusement which was, one evening, at its height,—when the man-servant looking in, with a somewhat agitated face, beckoned his master to the door. The cause of his terror was soon made known. Whether partaking in the mirthful excitement of the time, or with the malicious purpose of spoiling it, the steps were to be heard hurrying about in all directions, above, below, along the passage, out at the door, &c., and all who possessed the requisite courage, were allowed abundant opportunity of listening to the gambols of Mr. W——'s "brownie."

A member of the English bar met with a mysterious adventure, at an old family mansion, W——,

in Kent, which formerly belonged to Alderman L——, a city magnate of fifty years ago.

Mr. A—— had gone down on a visit to his uncle, who at that time rented the mansion. In the middle of the night, he was aroused by a sound of weeping, varied with a sort of cry, plaintive and melancholy, such as he had never before heard. Sitting up in bed, he saw the figure of a beautiful female, dressed in white, crouching, as it were, among the curtains at the foot of the bed, and weeping violently. Receiving no answer to his question as to who and what she was, Mr. A—— concluded it to be a trick played upon him by one of the household, and, without further ceremony, launched his pillow at the intruder. To his utter amazement, that missile passed right through the object as though it had been a stream of moonlight, but the figure, directly after, became invisible, and the sound of weeping ceased. Mr. A—— changed his room on the following night, and, in consequence of his vision, that apartment was for a long period disused.

At a subsequent time, however, another visitor arrived, when almost every other apartment happened to be already occupied, and consequently took up his quarters in the deserted room, but without any knowledge of what had occurred there. About

midnight, all who slept were awakened by a loud scream which echoed through the entire mansion. For some reason never assigned, no one rose to ascertain the cause of the alarm, and the cry was not repeated. But on the following morning, the tenant of the haunted room appeared at breakfast with a pale and harassed face. He took little or no part in the conversation, and as he evinced a dislike to any questioning, it was impossible to trace the exact cause of his depression, nor did he ever reveal it, but, at length, starting up suddenly, he declared that it was impossible to remain, and quitted the house without another word.

Attached to this old mansion, is a large field, which has given its name to a once popular novel, the 'Field of Forty Footsteps.' No matter how luxuriant may be the herbage, or grain, for the field is in constant cultivation, the trace of forty steps is invariably marked out by that number of barren patches, of the shape and size of a man's foot.

We change the scene to Ireland. Not many years since, Mr. R——, a gentleman who had realized a very handsome fortune in India, returned home with a large family, chiefly of sons, and, purchasing an extensive farm in the sister-country, took up his residence in a house attached to the property. This edifice stood in a very lonely

situation, the nearest town being fully seven miles distant.

The family had been established in their new home but a few days, when Mr. R——, who had just retired to bed, happening to change his position, was startled by the appearance of the figure of a man standing in the room, in a rather peculiar attitude, having one hand resting on his hip, the other at the back of his head.

Springing from the bed, Mr. R—— approached the intruder, when the latter became suddenly invisible, nor could the search that was immediately instituted throw any light on the mysterious circumstance.

A day or two after, a medical gentleman who occasionally visited the neighbourhood, called upon the new comers, and, in the course of his visit, mention being made of the supposed apparition, the doctor displayed some agitation. Being pressed to account for it, he at length exclaimed :—

“ You have seen your predecessor, Captain B——. That is the attitude in which he was always accustomed to stand.”

He added some particulars, which shaped themselves into the following story :—

About seven years before Mr. R—— became possessed of the estate, it had been rented by Captain

B——, a man of (as was openly alleged) the most infamous character and antecedents. His first care had been to add to the natural seclusion of the dwelling by every means in his power, but, notwithstanding these precautions, rumour was quickly busy with insinuations of crimes committed there, too horrible to dwell upon. The accusations, however, which assumed the most distinct form, and were held by all the neighbouring peasantry as perfectly well-founded, had relation to the murder, by B——, of two of his own daughters.

It was alleged that these two young ladies, debarred from all intercourse with persons of their own station in life, had formed *mésalliances* with two young farmers of the neighbourhood. One of the girls effected her escape, and was residing with her husband, when she received a letter from her father, offering pardon and reconciliation, on condition that the young people would at once return, and take up their abode with him. They agreed to do so, and in pursuance of that arrangement, were in the act of entering the approaches to the house, when the miscreant father, who had placed himself in ambush, shot them both dead.

The second unfortunate girl he was believed to have drowned in a well, and, the murder having been committed under the eye of a young man who acted

as gamekeeper, the latter was poisoned by his master by means of some deadly agent mixed in his beer.

It was positively affirmed that this man, B——, had had born to him not less than seventeen children, the great majority of whom died very young, and all under circumstances of suspicion. It was even said that he had been heard to boast of the possession of a "good recipe for short life." His own end, which took place while resident in that house, was stated to have been a scene of surpassing horror.

Such was the substance of the doctor's narrative, and, as might be supposed, it did not make the new occupants more in love with their dwelling. They, however, disposed themselves to make the best of it, and did so, in defiance of frequent annoyances, which, under ordinary circumstances, would have been destructive of all domestic comfort. Not only was the former apparition frequently seen, but a second became so constant a visitor, as at length to create but little excitement in the house. This was the figure of a tall fine-looking youth, having large black whiskers. He was dressed as a gamekeeper and was accompanied by a black dog. His first appearance was in the kitchen. The two elder sons of Mr. R——, had gone into that apartment, late

one night, to see that all was safe, when they beheld the figure standing by the fire.

On approaching it, the man's figure disappeared, that of the dog remaining visible, and wearing an aspect so material, that the young men at first mistook it for a dog of their own, and were only convinced of their error, when, endeavouring to touch it, that likewise disappeared.

This figure repeatedly presented itself in the sleeping apartments. At first, the younger boys suspected the elder of playing tricks to frighten them, by personating the keeper, and calling in the aid of the spaniel, "Dash," until one memorable evening, when the whole assembled family at once witnessed the apparition.

We will close our peepings into the haunted homes of the empire, with a visit to an old priory, not far from E——, in the north of Scotland, a few years since in the occupation of a gentleman highly esteemed by an extensive circle of friends, and distinguished in literature as the author of one of the most attractive books that ever issued from the pen of sportsman and naturalist combined. Struck down by paralysis, in the very prime of manhood, while in the actual prosecution of his favourite sport, Mr. ——— was conveyed home, and there watched and tended with untiring assiduity, by a friend who



had shared with him many a glorious raid, in field and forest, and would not quit him in his hour of trial.

One day, the sufferer beckoned his friend to his side.

“I am going,” he said, “to tell you something that you will consider very strange, and which, seeing me as you do, in this enfeebled state, you might be easily pardoned for pronouncing a mere sick man’s fancy. But I assure you that my senses are perfectly clear, the illusion (if it be one) extending to nothing else; and my reason, so far as I can judge, entirely uninfluenced by my bodily suffering.

“After this preface, I have to tell you that there is, almost at all times in this room—(I see it *now*)—the figure of a woman in a long white flowing dress, and with very long black hair. Sometimes she sits at my bedside when you yourself occupy the other chair. Sometimes she bends over me as I lie, but most frequently stands or sits by the fire.”

Now when it is mentioned that a figure, in some degree resembling that which the invalid described, had been reputed for many years to haunt certain rooms in the priory, the readiest conclusion would be that some previous knowledge of this rumour suggested the phantom, Mr. ——’s brain, though seemingly preserving its functions unimpaired, being

unquestionably influenced by that terrible disease which had laid him prostrate. But, if the brain be in fault, whence the calm consistency with which, in this and similar cases, men have been enabled to describe and dilate upon the delusive image? In plain terms, can a brain sufficiently disorganized to produce spectra, still retain its perceptive analytic faculty in a condition to reason upon them? If it be so it is scarcely possible to call that a state of disease, which is more analogous to those peculiar physical conditions in which unknown and even unsuspected capacities are occasionally drawn forth.

The guise in which this phantasm presented itself to Mr. — was one of which, in health, he had no recollection. It is possible that the shock of disease revealed one of those latent powers whereby an idea once formed, a faculty once acquired, may exist either in or out of consciousness.

“Persons in fever or delirium have been known to speak languages which they had long forgotten; old people, whose memory of recent events is almost obliterated, experience a perfect revival of the scenes of their youth, &c. . . . Cases of such kind are almost of daily occurrence, and form a part of the obscure and well-established phenomena of the human mind.”—(Morell’s “*Outlines of Mental Philosophy*.”)

The instance of Mr. —, if excluded from the

catalogue of extra-natural occurrences, leaves us in possession of a phenomenon scarcely less extraordinary—that of the perceptive faculty being quickened, not dulled, by actual disease.

A gentleman holding an important diplomatic post related, a short time since, the following singular adventure of his youth:—

While residing on his father's estate, in Lancashire, he had been paying secret addresses to a young lady in the neighbourhood, with whom he had occasional "meetings by moonlight;" at all events, by twilight, the trysting-place being a grove approached by a small bridge.

One evening, the young lover having already waited more than an hour watching the bridge, happened to glance across some fields which stretched in the opposite direction, and there, to his astonishment, beheld, as he thought, the figure of his tardy mistress hastily approaching the rendezvous. As she neared the grove he stepped forth, and had actually cast his arms around her, when the form sunk away, melting as it were into the very earth—and he was alone!

For a few moments he stood as if transformed to stone; then, struck with horror, turned and fled homeward at his utmost speed. Still, however, as he ran, he could distinctly hear steps preceding him along the road, across the bridge, and through a gate,

which latter was flung back as though by an invisible hand, and checked his course.

On the following morning he called on the young lady—not without serious misgivings concerning her—but found her well and cheerful. She accounted for not having kept her appointment by the unexpected arrival of some relatives. The young man thereupon recounted his strange adventure, when Miss —— grew suddenly pale, and, with some emotion, said—

“Then, F——, *you* have seen the ghost the country people talk of; but in which I never could have else believed.”

The trysting-place was promptly changed.

“Now,” said Mr. C——, in conclusion, “I never invent or exaggerate. You may believe in the literal truth of what I have related. I repeat that I saw and encircled with my arms a form which, of whatsoever element it may have consisted, dissolved away as soon as touched. I was, in those days, neither weak in body nor in mind, nor am I a coward *now*, but such was my sense of horror at having embraced an actual *ghost*, that the chill I felt at that moment I can recall for ever.”

Although the theory of dreams, pure and simple, does not properly come within the scope of this work, that of impressions in the nature of second-sight, produced in sleep, may well be included in a treatise

which professes to touch generally upon the stranger things among us.

The wife of Mr. N——, a gentleman now living (who himself related the following circumstance to a literary friend of the writer's), had at intervals throughout her life displayed remarkable indications of a second-sighted intelligence, conveyed through the medium of dreams. Although, generally speaking, these previsions referred to matters of slight importance, such as the visits of friends, the arrival of letters, &c., they occasionally extended to greater things, and the confirmation which almost invariably followed, at length induced Mr. N——, as well as other members of the family, to regard these prophetic impressions with a degree of respect scarcely inferior to that entertained for them by the dreamer herself.

It followed that when, one night, the latter awoke her husband with the intelligence that she had had a dream of terrible omen as regarded their eldest son—then a midshipman on board a line-of-battle ship, at a distant station—he had the greatest difficulty in reassuring her. This was, however, in some degree effected, and she calmed herself to sleep. On the succeeding night, Mrs. M—— awoke, still more agitated than on the first occasion, and declared that “George” had seemed to stand at her bedside—pale,

disordered, dripping ; having, in fact, the appearance of one just drowned. And such, she was now assured, had been the poor boy's fate. Again, the stronger mind strove to impart the hope and comfort it scarcely dared to feel ; but the recurrence, on the third night, of the ominous dream, convinced the poor mother that she had indeed been deprived of her child.

In the morning, as Mr. N—— was standing, before breakfast, at his garden-gate, a neighbour accosted him, inquiring, with a somewhat anxious face, if he had heard the news that had just arrived. It appeared that a sudden and terrific hurricane had burst upon the coasts of —— . All the vessels lying in the roads of B—— made the most strenuous efforts to get to sea, and such as succeeded in doing so, weathered the storm in safety ; but, unhappily, three English vessels of war had been forced on shore, and totally lost.

Mr. N—— eagerly inquired their names.

His friend mentioned them.

“ God be thanked ! ” exclaimed the father, “ George is indeed on that station, as you know, but he is in the L—— . ”

“ And it is expressly mentioned that *she* got well to sea,” was the rejoinder.

Hurrying in with a mind much relieved, Mr. N——

related to his wife what had passed, trusting that her gloomy forebodings would now be dissipated. On the contrary, they seemed only to be the more confirmed. Not for an instant did she question the fatal meaning of the vision. The image of her drowned boy was ever present to her eyes; and, in truth, the presage was too sadly fulfilled.

When the complete details of that disaster reached England, it was known that the captain of George N——'s ship had gone to dine on board another vessel, taking the boy with him. The suddenness with which the storm burst upon them, precluded even an attempt to regain their own ship. They had to remain, perforce, and were unhappily lost, with those they came to visit.

This was a modern example of the dream-vision, the second of those five classes into which Macrobius divides dreams; and the not unnatural offspring of that condition which Sir Thomas Browne, in his 'Religio Medici,' attributes to the soul in sleep; that period, namely, "when, during the slumber of the senses, the reason is awake the most; not that faculty of comparison and conclusion which we generally designate as reason, but that instinct of the soul, whereby it concludes without comparing, and knows without syllogising, by an instantaneous operation of its own innate faculties."

The invariable characteristic of this rare phenomenon is the clear, indelible impression it at once stamps upon the mind ; the only one that survives, totally unchanged, the transition from sleep to waking. In this lies one of its distinctions from the common dream, that the resumed intelligence does not reject it as a figment of the pure reason, but adopts it as a fact already argued out. "*I know* that such and such a thing has happened," is the dreamer's expression ; but, though the belief never wavers, its actual ground defies analysis, and may almost be compared with that intuition which, before the fall of man, occupied the place of acquired knowledge. The repetition of these dream-visions adds not an atom to the conviction at first imparted. It is a familiar feature of the *insomnium*, or ordinary dream, to return again and again, following an identical chain of events, until the sleeping fancy, becoming in a manner educated to the history, moves forward with a prophetic certainty of the step that shall succeed.

Although a little beside the purpose, it is impossible not to notice for a moment the singular manner in which these reiterated dreams sometimes find accomplishment in fact. A man will dream a score of times between youth and middle age—say of riding into a village situated in a wild and savage



landscape, of meeting at a turn of the little street a bridal procession, the bride at its head, having a garland of red and white roses, a purple jacket edged with fur, a crimson petticoat, and one eye ! Years pass—he is journeying in Bohemia, and coming to a spot he is sure he has seen before, suddenly draws bridle. In a moment, the village to which he has made so many dreaming visits, reveals itself, feature for feature, to his astonished eyes. Not a living creature is to be seen, but he knows the reason, and tells his companions that the rustic community are assembled at a wedding, the procession of which they will meet at that approaching turn. He even foretells the bride's attire. A few hundred yards more, and here she is indeed, precisely as dream-foretold, alas, even to an eye !

True, some picture, seen and forgotten in youth, might have suggested both landscape and procession, but how account for those minute and unexpected touches which remove these things beyond the pale of accidental similarity ?

The recurring dream becomes stamped, at length, with a sort of prophetic character. "Such and such a thing *must* happen to me before I die, I have dreamed it through so often," was the language of one who subsequently experienced the fulfilment of a

dream, to all appearances as remote as chance could make it, from the path of his life. Few cannot bear testimony to some such instance within their cognizance. The writer himself had a dream of this nature which, occurring for the first time in boyhood, was repeated at irregular intervals, sometimes of a few days, sometimes of several years, fourteen or fifteen times, yet always, to the most minute particular, attended by the same circumstances, in the same order, and accompanied by the same strange feeling of familiarity with the situation. It was that of being in a beleaguered town, on the occasion of a sudden night-alarm. The distant solitary bugle, echoed and re-echoed by others at the nearer posts, then the single drum beating the "assembly," then a chorus of drums, the tramp of troops hurrying to the different rendezvous, the doubt and mystery as to the point of danger, the consultation of dark figures in a mounted circle at the city-gate, the moving forth of black masses surmounted with a faint glitter of steel, and the commencement of a battle, at which point, the dream, with much discretion, ended. Such was the programme, which had become as familiar as a "stock-piece" at the theatre, only without any diminution of interest, when it at length received an unexpected fulfilment. While in Italy, in 1860, the writer, during some weeks, shared the quarters of an

old friend then serving on the staff of Garibaldi, whose head-quarters were at Santa Maria, about a league from Capua. The latter city was at this time held in considerable strength by the Bourbon army, who harassed the Garibaldians with frequent sorties. On one especially dark night, an alarm of this nature happened to occur, and so strikingly recalled both the circumstances and impressions of the dream, that it was, for the moment, difficult to decide what was dream, and what reality.

“Oct. 17th.—To-night, an alarm. About 9.20 a distant bugle sounded the assembly, repeated; then a drum; a roar of drums. Hurried on our clothes, and grouped our way towards the Capua gate, through the darkest night I ever remember. The transition from the most profound quiet to universal bustle was striking enough to the uninitiated. The troops were already under arms, artillery-horses out and harnessed, standing by the guns. At the gate everybody was on the alert, listening and forming conjectures. Presently, a general, whose face we could not recognize in the gloom, galloped up, with aides and orderlies. A consultation. An officer reported that a patrol of ours had seen a large body of the enemy moving in the wood, and heard bugles of the (Bourbon) bersaglieri, which looked like earnest. A

M

little firing, but it presently ceased. Waited an hour. All remaining quiet, the troops were dismissed."

—DIARY.

Two or three years ago, a lady known to the writer, was on a visit in Hampshire, and was to attend the marriage of a young relation, whose family resided at a few miles distance from the house at which Mrs. M—— was staying. She had requested her maid to call her at an earlier hour than usual, in order to allow time for the toilette and journey, and this direction the girl obeyed, but, notwithstanding, performed her usual duties with such deliberation, amounting to reluctance, that her mistress, out of patience, asked her sharply what was the matter. The girl quietly replied that there was no need to hurry, she was indeed only anxious that her lady should save herself the trouble of dressing, as there would be no wedding that day! Being further questioned, she stated that she had dreamed of going to the house in question, and, at the turn of the carriage-sweep, encountered a funeral, *whose* she could not say, but that there would be no wedding was a fact as much implanted in her mind, as though the tidings, which she knew were on the way, had actually arrived. Of course, Mrs. M—— paid little attention to the augury, and set out on her

way; but, in half an hour, was met by a messenger from her friend, who announced the death of a near relation of the bridegroom, and the postponement, for three weeks, of the marriage ceremony.

A friend of the writer's, now holding an important government situation at Malta, dreamed, in boyhood, with singularly vivid and minute detail, that he was residing in that island while subject to so rigorous a blockade, that rats and mice attained the rank of delicacies, and an entire dog was a thing on which to ground a banquet of unusual magnificence. Having no interest in or connexion with Malta, more than any other point of British dominion, and being moreover intended for the Church, there seemed little or no prospect of Sir V—— H——'s dream becoming realized. Circumstances, however, induced him to embrace a diplomatic career, in place of that which had been originally proposed, and he now holds, as has been mentioned, an appointment in the above dependency, where, over and above the zealous discharge of his general public duties, he is observed to evince a peculiar, almost personal, interest, in the condition of the provision stores of that important garrison!

The waking-dream, impulse, or strong impression, is more to our present purpose; inasmuch as, however oppressed by this temporary influence, the understanding retains the free exercise of its faculties; while, in the condition of sleep, this is suspended, and what has been termed the "pure reason" supplies its place. The habits of thought, &c., of the present age are certainly not favourable to the development of this phenomenon,—nevertheless, occasional instances do occur.

It is but a few months since, that the commercial and seafaring community of Newport, Monmouthshire, witnessed, with indignant surprise, the return of one of their stout little ships, which after having, with much danger and difficulty, doubled Cape Horn, put about, and returned to port, cargo and all, precisely as she had started, three months before. It may be remembered, for the singularity of the circumstance obtained for it a wide publicity, that the captain alleged that he had been seized with an irresistible impulse to return. It was currently reported that he had "seen a vision"—but this he positively denied, declaring that the impulse had been in no sort communicated through the medium of his outward senses, but was a feeling that spoke within him, with all the distinctness and

authority of an actual voice, urging him to put about and return home, on pain of the complete destruction of both ship and crew.

According to his statement, he "remonstrated" most earnestly,—(he always, in the narration, used phrases implying the dealing with another individuality),—but the voice persisted, and promised, in the event of obedience, a certain sign, *i. e.* fair breezes from the moment of altering the vessel's course, which accordingly came to pass.

Of course, an act "so unprecedented in the annals of our mercantile marine," and so prejudicial to the interests of shipowners, should the example of this impulse be extensively followed, could not be passed over, and the captain, having submitted himself to a formal court of inquiry, and reiterated his story, was duly deprived of his certificate.

Justice being thus done, and the good ship, *Esk*, sent forth once more, under new command, the case admits of being looked at in a more dispassionate light, and presents a feature or two worth study.

There was a calmness and consistency about the man, that, even in the midst of the storm of reprobation he had raised, seems to have commanded

respect. It is, generally speaking, no very difficult task to discern when a man believes he is telling you the truth. This captain was no drunkard; he was a teetotaller. He had never exhibited the slightest taint of aberration. His crew, when appealed to by the mate, on such a plea, to deprive him of the command, unanimously refused, and, though dissatisfied with his proceedings, pronounced him the coolest and most skilful man among them. He was a man of strong religious feelings, and had led, it is believed, a life in accordance with his professions. There was no conceivable motive for the course he had adopted. Such worldly interests as he possessed, were entirely associated with the successful prosecution of his voyage, and he moreover owed a debt of gratitude to the principal owner, who had assisted him liberally in a time of need. The dangerous part of the voyage was accomplished. To return was a heavy loss to his employers; to himself, disgrace and ruin. He could not even expect to occupy, for a brief space, the position of a "hero," as the man that saw the vision, for he had witnessed nothing, wherewith to satisfy the curious inquirer. His address before the board of inquiry was a model of manly, straightforward eloquence, and he acquiesced in the withdrawal of



his certificate, as a duty to be expected from those to whom he could offer no evidence, beyond his own bare word, concerning the experience he had described.

It has been worth while to notice these things, because, in reality, a case like that of Captain Matthias, does not present itself twice in a century, and it is well to consider what would be the probable conduct of nineteen persons in twenty, subjected to such a test. We know that impulses of this nature have been the parent of deeds of heroic daring ; and, perhaps, had that of which we have been speaking suggested an act of boldness, leading to profit, instead of one of prudence, entailing an apparent loss, the theory of impressions might have been viewed with less disfavour at Newport, and the certificate spared. A person placed in the position of Captain Matthias, labours under this difficulty, that it is not within the power of ordinary language to describe the irresistible mind-pressure exercised by this rare mysterious prompting. Before it, duty, interest, inclination, alike give way. The dread of danger, the love of life, are words without significance, lost in the echo of the inner voice that persistently requires obedience. If it possess not the character, it has almost, if not altogether, the force,

of actual inspiration. Unable to trace it to any intelligible source, he who experiences it refers the mysterious secret to the source of all intelligence, the soul to Him who made the soul. It is *not* strange that the impulse should be obeyed, nor is it very creditable to, though perfectly consistent with, human judgment, to recognize in these rare examples no element of justification.

Captain Matthias, of Newport, is not the only individual who within these last years furnished an instance of the singular mental phenomenon to which we have been adverting. The salient features of the following narrative have formed, the writer believes, the basis of a "sensation" story in a popular serial, but nevertheless in the latter differ so materially from the actual facts, that nothing but the *sequence* of circumstances suggests the identity of the two histories. This, then, divested of embellishments, is believed to represent the matter:—

A young undergraduate of Cambridge, Mr. D——, had been reading, during the long vacation, at the quiet little town of Exmouth, at which place, as many readers are aware, the river Exe is crossed by a ferry, communicating with the Starcross station on the Great Western Railway. For this purpose

a boat remains in constant attendance from dawn till dusk.

One night, between twelve and one o'clock, the young man suddenly awoke, with the impression of having been addressed by an imperative voice, saying, with such distinctness that the last word still rung upon his ear—

*“ Go down to the ferry !”*

Thinking it an ordinary dream, he composed himself again to sleep, when a second time the command was repeated, with this addition—

*“ The boatman waits !”*

There was something in this second voice which it seemed to the young man's mind impossible to disregard. He did, however, combat the inclination, and sat up in bed for some minutes, wide-awake, reasoning with himself on what he tried to consider the absurdity of rising in the dead of night, at the bidding of an imaginary voice, to go to a ferry where no boat would be found (for the ferryman resided at Starcross), upon an errand of which he knew nothing. His efforts to dismiss the idea were, however, unsuccessful. He felt, at all events, that sleep was impossible. Then, at the worst, it was but a walk to the ferry and back, and none but himself need be aware of that little excursion. Finally, he sprang from the

bed, dressed rapidly, not to leave time for more useless self-argument, and set forth.

He had not reached the ferry when, to his astonishment, the boatman's hoarse voice was heard through the darkness hailing him impatiently—

“Well, you’ve kept me waiting long enough to-night, I think. I’ve stopped nigh an hour for you.”

The ferryman had, it appeared, received his summons also, but did not attribute it to any unusual source. Finding no passenger waiting on his own side of the river, he probably concluded that he had been hailed by a passing boat, and directed to go over.

By the time Mr. D—— had arrived on the Starcross side, a further idea or impulse, which seemed to have its origin in the former, had gained possession of his mind.

“Exeter!” “Exeter!” “Exeter!” was the word that kept continually reverberating, as it were, in his mental ear, like a summoning bell. His impression *now* was that at Exeter would be fulfilled the purpose, whatever it might prove to be, of this strange nocturnal expedition. To Exeter he accordingly proceeded by the first opportunity, and, it

being only eight or ten miles, reached that good city about dawn.

Now, for the first time, he felt at a loss. All impulse or impression had departed. Wandering aimlessly about the streets, he blamed himself severely for the readiness with which he had yielded to what he now regarded as an idle fancy, and only comforted himself with the idea that at that early hour none of his acquaintance were likely to be abroad to question him as to his untimely visit. Mr. D—— resolved to return home by the next train ; but, meanwhile, the shops and houses began to open, and passing an hotel the young gentleman thought he could scarcely do better than while away the hour that must necessarily intervene by ordering some breakfast.

The waiter was very slow in bringing the repast, but when at length he did so, apologized for the delay on the plea that the assizes, then proceeding, had filled the house to overflowing.

Mr. D—— had heard nothing of the assizes, and took but little interest in the subject. Seeing, however, that the waiter regarded it as an event of considerable importance, he good-humouredly encouraged him to continue the theme, and was rewarded with a very amusing history of such cases as had

been already disposed of, as well as with the waiter's own views concerning those yet remaining to be tried. Upon the whole, the man's entertaining volubility ended by inspiring young D—— with a portion of his own interest in the matter, and, accordingly, instead of returning to Exmouth by the next train, he strolled about until the court opened, and then took his place among the spectators.

The case just commencing seemed to create unusual excitement. The prisoner at the bar, who was in the dress of a carpenter, was arraigned on a capital charge. The chain of evidence against him, though circumstantial, was complete, and a conviction seemed inevitable. There was, in fact, no opening for a defence, unless the prisoner were in a position to prove the witnesses, one and all, mistaken in his identity, and establish an *alibi*.

When asked what he had to say, he quietly replied:—

“It is impossible that I could have committed this crime, because, on the day and at the hour it took place, I was sent for to mend the sash-line of a window at Mr. G——’s house, at M——. There is *one* gentleman,” he added, after a pause,

“who could prove that I was there, but I don’t know who he is, nor where to have him looked for. Yes, I *know* he could prove my innocence, for a particular reason, that would remind him of me; but, there, I can’t help it, the Lord’s will be done,” and the poor fellow, with a sigh, appeared to resign himself to his fate.

All this time Mr. D—— had been listening with profound attention to the progress of the trial, and when the prisoner concluded his sad and hopeless address, he started, and looked earnestly at him. As his eyes still dwelt upon the gloomy, toil-worn face—one by one, link by link—a chain of circumstances, trivial enough at the time, but now important as bearing upon the liberty, if not the very life, of a fellow-creature, came back to his remembrance.

He had gone, some months before, to pay an early visit to a friend at M——. The latter was from home, but, wishing particularly to see him, D—— had decided to await his return, and, for that purpose, had gone up to his friend’s library, meaning to beguile the interval with a book. Here, however, he found a carpenter, making some repairs about the window, and, in place of reading, he stood for some minutes watching the man, and conversing with him about

his work. While doing so, something was said that he was desirous of noting down, and he took out his memorandum-book for the purpose, but found that he had lost his pencil, when the carpenter, observing his difficulty, handed him his own (a short, brown, stumpy article, with square sides), saying that "if he might make so bold, Mr. D—— was welcome to it."

All this came back to the young man's mind, as clearly as if it had occurred but the day before. Hastily turning to his pocket-book, he there found the very entry he had made, date included, written in the thick but faint lines produced by the carpenter's pencil. He instantly made known to the court his wish to be examined on the man's behalf, and, being sworn, deposed to the above facts, clearly identifying the prisoner, as well as the pencil, which the man produced from his pocket. The jury were satisfied, and returned a verdict of acquittal.

It is difficult to meet a sufficiently authenticated case of this description, otherwise than with the simple confession that God's ways are not as our ways, and that it may be His pleasure, as unquestionably it is within His power, to suffer his ministering angels to speak in this mysterious tongue to the souls of



those whom He has selected as the earthly instruments of His divine will.

Having thus touched upon, and provided the best authenticated instances of almost every popular form of apparition narrative, we may be permitted a few words of recapitulation and inference.

At once we put aside all pretence of covering with one expansive theory any large proportion of these examples. Sift them as we will,—divest them of all the exaggerations they may have received through the distorting media of surprise, terror, superstition, &c.—there is still a residue of undeniable *fact*, teeming with features that cannot be brought under the operation of any one recognizable law; yet, as a whole, in connexion with the philosophy of the human mind, well deserving the attention of the thoughtful.

This thing is then, at the outset, sure,—that the matter contains within its many extraneous folds, that principle of truth which the sceptics, from Lucian downwards, irritated and baffled by the falsehoods and absurdities of credulous narrators and still *more* credulous hearers, flung away, without analysis, with the lumber in which it was enveloped.

It is not necessary that we should be restricted to

a single theory. Let us glance briefly at one or two that have found acceptance.

The doctrine of Meyer, that ideas were material, and, being locked up in the memory, might, by some unknown process, affect the nerves upon which sensations depend, and thus produce hallucinations, may be discarded as fantastic, abounding in assumption, and opposed to riper science.

That of Dr. Hibbert, demonstrating the power which the imagination possesses, under particular circumstances, of reacting upon the organs of sense with an intensity so great as to endue, with seeming reality, objects which are but impressions renovated—this suggestion is far more rational and acceptable, supported as it is by abundant proof that, when mental feelings of any kind attain a certain degree of vividness, muscular motions obey the impulse of the will,\* which is no less influenced by the renovating power of imagination, than by any of the ordinary passions,—in a word, that apparitions are but recollected objects, or images of the mind, recalled with a vivid positiveness equivalent to actual impression. This, implying a foregone conception, might be adaptable to a large class of cases, chiefly such

\* Line of retreat for detected table-turners.

as we have described as “common hallucinations”—(see *ante*, a Haunted Barrister; the Broadway Merchant; the “German Luther,” &c.) inasmuch as, in these instances, a certain idea had already existed, and whether “material” or otherwise, might be re-summoned, invested by the morbidly-awakened imagination with all the vivid tints of reality.

In further confirmation of this opinion, may be mentioned the fact remarked by Sir David Brewster, that when the eye is not exposed to the impression of external objects, or is insensible to those objects in consequence of being engrossed with its own operations—any object of mental contemplation which has either been called up by the memory, or created by the imagination, will be seen as distinctly as if it had been formed from the vision of a real object. The philosopher found that these mental impressions followed the motions of the eye-ball exactly like the spectral impressions of luminous objects, and hence he inferred that the objects of mental contemplation might be seen as distinctly as external objects, and would occupy the same local position in the axis of vision, as if they had been formed by the agency of light.

In a morbid condition of the mind, the inward contemplation becomes intense in proportion as the

attention is abstracted from external objects. As the real image fades, that which is but false creation or reproduction, brightens into an equal if not superior life, and, probably, in the chance yet manifold combinations of the fading and growing images, the false and the true, may be found the germ of that species of phantasm we have been noticing.

In this category may perhaps be included such cases as those of Mrs. D—— (p. 51), Lady C—— (p. 55), and others, which exhibit a simple reproduction of familiar objects with the fidelity of life, no *new* image being created. Granted, the suggestion cannot be followed into details without a certain difficulty. It is easier to account for the presence of the spectra, than for their seemingly independent action. To meet this difficulty, we have to suppose a mind unconscious of its own suggestions, the intelligence accepting, for example, the renovated image of a departed friend, involuntarily following out the portraiture, superadding familiar movements, habits, &c., all the while leading, though imagining itself the led. Thus, in the case of Mrs. D——, the seer's mind having, by an unconscious process, conjured up the presentment of one who had been for some time painfully familiar to her thoughts, first accepted the image as real, then proceeded to account for it in the

ordinary manner—viz., that the individual represented had died, and that here was his “angel,” lastly, suggested what was to follow. “W—— is dead. This is his immaterial part. Why is it revealed to me? Did he perhaps repent of his unkindness? Did he die at peace with me?” And, following the line of unconscious thought, the phantom sits, turns towards her, makes gestures of supplication, &c. ; and, finally, the prompting ceasing, vanishes, or is reconducted from the scene, according to the bent and strength of the imagination which evoked it.

It has been well remarked that, although illusions generated in this manner, are necessarily co-existent with the state of morbid excitement in which they have their origin (or, in other words, cease to be active when the spectral phenomena vanish), it does not follow that the mind, though restored to its ordinary condition, at once detects the delusion of which it has been the victim, or regains the power of distinguishing between the perceptions of sense, and the phantasms of imagination ; but, on the contrary, both theory and experience demonstrate that the conviction of reality usually outlasts the impressions which produced it.

Hence the tenacity with which, in defiance of

argument and reason, ghost-seers stand by their persuasions, and hence the impossibility of eradicating the popular belief that apparitions own an existence wholly independent of our mental and physical being.

Allowing these phenomena to be producible in the manner described, there would still remain one feature unaccounted for, that of coincidence of time. Reverting once more to the case of Mrs. D—— as a type of this class of incident, how is it that the crisis of imagination on the part of the seer coincides, so frequently and so precisely, with the moment of dissolution of the seen? To those who have satisfied themselves of the actual occurrence of these events among us, such coincidence has ceased to appear accidental. We believe them to be, like all the other works of the Creator's hand, subject to some harmonious law. Where shall we seek it? how demonstrate it when found? Rejecting, as of course, the absurd materialistic doctrine, that "intelligence" cannot exist, simply because it baffles material analysis, we find, in its existence, that of an "immaterial principle," which influences matter, and are thus compelled (says Dr. Leger) to acknowledge, as a *first* consequence, that there exists, at least, one elementary principle different from those

that material analysis points out ; and, as a *second* consequence, that there is in *immateriality* a positive power.

If it were possible to follow the earnest philosopher closely through his argument, in reference to the immaterial elementary principles, their magnetoid conditions and various combinations, a clue might be obtained to the very heart of much that is now mysterious. To do so, however, would be to re-write an essay which, all too brief as it is, still affords abundant food for study and reflection. It must suffice us to indicate the path, and to announce, in doing so, a belief that in this direction will ultimately be found the hitherto undetected links between "immateriality" and matter.

"The principles or infinite agents, misunderstood or unknown as yet, that the Deity employs in the formation of beings, have an extent of division, action, and reaction, in comparison of which our scientific means and appliances are but vanity," may be regarded as the text of the philosopher.

"In the harmonious whole of the entire world," he continues, "everything is composed of elementary principles. It is, then, with the study of those principles that our researches must begin. This

investigation embraces all the facts that compose human knowledge. . . .

“For chemical examination, we never can isolate the elementary principles from each other, on account of the common, reciprocal, and indestructible dependence that binds them together—a tie from which results universal harmony.

“It would, however, be an error to infer from this that there exists an insuperable barrier, which prevents us from ascertaining their nature and their laws.

“Material analysis is an excellent source of solid information. It is on account of the superiority of its means of analysis that chemistry has become the first science of our age, but the scanty resources of our laboratory compel us to stop at certain limits. Yet to take such limits for those of nature itself would be an egregious blunder.

“In every principle, without any exception whatever, we acknowledge a real, positive, and natural existence, actually to be found in space, in the same manner as light, heat, electricity, sound, odour, and savour. All our motives of action possess that existence. Their essence is the same; they proceed from the same source; all aim at the same end; they have the same characteristics; they resume all



the forces which cause motion and life ; and, although ‘immaterial,’ on account of their origin, they obey, nevertheless, in the most explicit manner, the eternal rule of Harmony, to which science has emphatically given the name of ‘*physical laws*.’ . . . . They may be considered as composing a formidable army, whose members are yet uncalculated. Under the rigorous and eternal laws of the admirable discipline imposed upon it by the Creator, this army attacks ‘matter’ in a thousand different ways ; takes hold of, models, modifies, moves, transforms, and animates it, giving birth to numberless natural productions, with their various characteristics and stupendous metamorphoses. Under their impulse, man himself becomes a creator. Thus it is that, a vassal of the heavens, he becomes a king of the earth. Thus it is that, rival of nature, he takes hold of the elements, combines them at his will, and directs over all the ‘intelligent power’ which animates himself.”—(*Leger*.)

The principles thus referred to are essentially magnetoid ; that is to say, they exhibit necessarily two contrary modes of manifestation, each of which possesses an attractive and a repulsive force, with a tendency to equilibrium. The professor considers that if the dualism of the forces characteristic of

the magnet had been sufficiently studied, this fact would have been acknowledged; and that philosophers, after having noticed that our globe is nothing but an immense magnet, would have concluded, also, that it must possess in like manner all the properties of natural or artificial magnets; and since the smallest particle of a magnet possesses all the magnetic characteristics, all elementary principles must necessarily possess them;—if not exactly in the same manner, on account of their different nature, at least in a degree of similitude sufficient to authorize us to call them properly “magnetoid.”

It is, as has been already hinted, almost impossible to follow up the argument so fully and closely as to make intelligible to the general reader the exact road by which we hope to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion. In a summary manner, the author describes the most important phenomena produced by the mode of contact between elementary principles and matter—a contact which sometimes takes place in consequence of the peaceable, moderate, and regular attraction of the magnetoid influences; sometimes by friction; sometimes as the consequence of the violent, irresistible, and instantaneous attraction and repulsion which characterize

electricity ;—the results showing the extreme force called into play in their production, and occasionally forming those sublime but terrible scenes, where horror and admiration are blended together.

The law of harmony does not allow of perturbation, except in extreme cases. Electric shocks, for example, become unavoidable only in case of excessive resistance from the part of the inferior poles of elements, in order to maintain the supremacy of the superior poles. Thus, tempests, floods, conflagrations, volcanic eruptions, deformities and diseases of the body, excesses of passion, revolutions, and moral monstrosities, imply no contradiction of the laws of universal harmony ; such extremes being the necessary opposites of superior poles, which owe their extreme excellence and attraction to that very repulsion.

“At a period more or less remote,” concludes the essayist, “Science will ascertain that every substance, however simple or composed, is corresponding to and significative of actual elementary immaterial principles, existing in nature in the manner of the so-called subtle fluids, let them be moral or otherwise.”

Let us endeavour to sum up the theory in as few words as will convey a distinct idea.

The magnetoid condition of the constitution of man is established. We have two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, a tongue, larynx, and pharynx, each symmetrically disposed halves, a duality in the bony system, and in the apparatus of voluntary muscles, in the brain, and its connexion with the spinal chord, the nerves of sensation and volition.

Wherever an harmonious whole or merely a symmetrical part appears, *there dwell magnetoid forces.*

Identity of elementary principles in organized and in inorganized matter, implies necessarily identity in the forces manifested.

Since then, magnetism, electricity, and analogous influences, are exhibited in inorganized matter, the like must be found in living bodies, with the increased energy that life imparts to all the elements that it seizes and unites. And, since there is no being whose composition offers so complete, so symmetrical, and so harmonious an assemblage of elementary principles as the human system, it is not surprising that there should be nowhere a more abundant focus of magnetoid forces.

To reveal and to illustrate these, Dr. Leger, as has been heretofore remarked, made extensive use of the magnetoscope,—“an instrument as true and

as inexorably correct in the portraiture of our immaterial being, as the photographic apparatus in regard to our material likeness;" and, although his premature death confined the discoveries effected by these means chiefly to the sciences of phrenology and mesmerism, there is little doubt that a diligent prosecution of an investigation so well begun, and already so richly rewarded, would have unfolded wonders respecting that union of intelligence and power which constitute our "consciousness" or "soul," to which the results already attained were as nothing.

For the soul, in itself a real principle, must possess its two different manifestations, its two poles—superior and inferior—with their tendency towards equilibrium—the neutral line—and, in a word, all the conditions of polarity; the *intelligence*, which reaches the remotest parts of the universe, and extends to the conception of God himself, being the superior—the *power*—trammelled by its material limits—the inferior, pole of the soul; the *will*, the neutral line, and necessary link between.

It is therefore no unwarrantable supposition that, in some of the innumerable vicissitudes to which the complicated constitution of man is

subject, the disturbed magnetic equilibrium may be productive of results hitherto unsuspected by the student, or rejected as either false or inexplicable, and, as the observer, even in the retirement of his study, is made aware of what occurs in the northern regions by the disordered motions of the magnetic needle, so the sympathetic action of these mysterious forces may, through the nervous organs, influence external sense to a degree sufficient to give birth to the phenomena on which we have been dilating.

Beyond this sketch of the yet untrodden way, this mere intimation of what is to be reasonably expected, rather than what is revealed, the limits of the present work forbid us to proceed. Perfectly conscious of the injustice done to so great a theme, by the attempt to crowd its *rationale* into a few pages, we must, for the present, abandon it, not without a hope that some able and earnest worker in the paths of experimental philosophy, such as was he whose unperfected labours have suggested these ideas, will quickly resume the suspended investigation.

Considering that the respective theories of renovated images, mental hallucinations, and (if accepted) magnetic influence, embrace among

them the greater portion of the phantom world, there remains still to be classified, one description of phantom to which neither can by any possibility apply, viz. that which has to all appearance a local habitation; and is absolutely, past all question, associated with that spot, by means of events which have never come to the knowledge of the seer. Such was the distinctive feature of the Canadian story, (page 82), the mysteries of W——, (page 119), the adventure of the Countess of P—— (page 139), and, perhaps the most remarkable of all, the haunted corridor at B—— (page 133).

To this class of incident, none of the former theories apply. The phenomena were not recollected images, for nothing in the remotest degree connected with them had come within the cognizance of the seer.

They were not chance creations of the brain, inasmuch as they held undeniable relation with events which proved to have actually occurred; nor were they objects to be reached by the most speculative magnetic theory, since the operation of such agents survives not an instant the dissolution of the union between soul and body.

What mean these stories, then? "False?" That is the easy solution of the sceptic and the ig-

norant for all that seems inexplicable. There is something harassing, both to sage and fool, in an unsatisfied doubt—an unguessed riddle. The difference is only in their mode of dealing with it. Denial is easier than analysis. "There came in a wise man, and a fool," says an old writer; "the wise man heard, considered, decided. The fool decided."

But let any one who has heard from the lips of an honest and veracious man, the simple, unspeculative narrative of such an experience, say if there was not something in the manner of relation which, coupled with the known character of the speaker, defied disbelief—something compared with which the truth-like fables of Defoe lose all their attractive verisimilitude. The characters of *our* especial seers can only be vouched for—their tongues can only speak—through these pages. All that can be done is to reiterate the assurance that they are persons of unblemished honour, of clear understanding, subject to all the restraining influences of the educated mind, and as reluctant to leave questions of this nature, so directly presented to them, unsolved, as intellects of a lower grade are often anxious to enshroud them within a still deeper veil of mystery.

To those, then, who believe and know that such incidents do occur among us, the remainder of these



observations are addressed, and narrow themselves down to a very close limit.

The imputation of "superstitious credulity" is one so easily incurred by earnest truth-seekers, that it is not wonderful that the latter are somewhat diffident in putting forward opinions in support of which direct and positive evidence cannot be adduced. He would be a bold man, who, in these days, proclaimed a "miracle,"—and although, without such, our faith might never have existed, he would probably be a right-judging man, also, since they have fulfilled their assigned purpose in, once for all, declaring the supreme attributes of the Creator—

God thus asserted, man is to believe  
Beyond what sense and reason can conceive ;  
And for mysterious things of faith rely  
On the proponent—Heaven's authority.

It is enough, there are no commissioned wonder-workers now, and even that daily miracle, the conversion of the fleshly heart to God, is wrought in silence and secrecy ; but, is it just to conclude that, because the Almighty ruler has seen fit to close that channel of connexion (that of direct miracles) between Himself and the material world, He has abolished also that intercourse which there seems reason to believe existed in the elder time, between

the world of spirits and of men? As revelations of this description had not the same object as the Christian miracles, that of bearing evidence to the illimitable power of the God of justice and of mercy,—(Abraham, in the parable of Dives, seems to hold their testimony less efficacious than that of living teachers)—their discontinuance was not essential to the unity of the new dispensation.

One thing is clear, that the subject engaged much attention among the early Fathers of the Christian Church, who agreed in nothing respecting it, except in not attributing the apparition to any purely natural cause. It is further abundantly evident that the great majority strenuously opposed the placing reliance upon visions or phantasms of any kind, that did not possess the unequivocal sanction of the Deity, our Saviour, or the angels. It was probably imagined that this might be used as another form of snare and temptation, by the powers of evil.

It was the opinion of Athanasius and others that souls, once delivered from the burden of the flesh, held no further communion with mortality ; and the remark of Saint Augustine is worthy the attention of “spirit-rappers”—that if souls ever revisited the haunts and the friends of their mortal being, he was assured that his mother, Monica, who had followed

him by land and sea, would have revealed herself to him, in order to inform him of what she had learned in another state, and advise him in his present conflict.

On the other hand, it was a widely-accepted tenet of ghostly faith that the immaterial part was frequently seen hovering near the spot where the "gross or crustaceous" body lies, waiting either until the latter should be accorded the rites of sepulture, or until some crimes should be revealed and expiated. Among the supporters of this opinion was Origen, who considered that the disembodied spirit might be permitted to wander within certain prescribed limits, until some especial purpose were fulfilled.

It must be confessed that, except by inclining toward this view, or by supposing that the spirits of evil were permitted to personate the departed, it would be difficult to suggest any rational explanation of a phenomenon which has been familiar to the thoughts of every successive generation since man's history was written. There is a certain consistency in the idea which commends it to the inquirer, and renders the incontrovertible evidence which establishes the occurrence of these phenomena, the more valuable.

In almost every instance the object, or purpose, is apparent. In the case at Holly Lodge (p. 75), the longing desire of the parting spirit was realized. In that Canadian Orchard (p. 82) a fearful and solemn warning was conveyed in the revelation of a tragedy that none could recount but she who was its victim. In other cases, such as that of Lady P——, the mysteries of W—— (p. 119), the case in Ireland (p. 146), &c., the restless spirit seems to have been fettered, as with a ghostly chain, to the scene of certain terrible crimes committed in the flesh, but without indicating other purpose than the intimation of that fearful retributory penalty.

This, however, is a subject on which we are compelled to stop short at conjecture, and, being without direct light from the Source of all light, it is perhaps well not even to press conjecture itself too far, while we are careful not too arrogantly to proclaim a thing incredible, acknowledging, in the language of one already quoted, that God's works are not to be brought to the tribunal of His natural laws, and that physical impossibilities have often been spiritual certainties.

The foregoing brief remarks conduct us not indirectly to the consideration of what may certainly be classed among the singular problems of the day—

the alleged, denied, condemned, vindicated, crushed to death and oblivion, and yet broadly-surviving "spirit" manifestations.

When, some ten or twelve years since, America transmitted to us the first instalment of this shadowy merchandize, with the necessary media, the whole was received with irony and ridicule. The press raised an almost unanimous shout of reprobation, seasoned with choice satire, in the face of which it was hardly to be expected that the small section of the public who attended the *séances* would have courage to bear independent witness to what was really curious in the things they did see, or would have got a fair hearing if they had. The circumstance that money was taken at these "entertainments" was of itself damnable of their reputation. The conclusion was at once arrived at that the whole affair was a matter of gain; its speculations purely monetary; it was, in fact, a mere swindling apparatus, aimed especially at the feeble and fanciful mind, and owning no characteristic more extraordinary than might be developed by the tricky fingers and ventriloquial gifts of the professors. Not much was said or written with respect to the injurious influence such a superstition, once established, might exercise upon the

minds and consciences of men. The system was abused simply because to produce a pecking noise somewhere about the legs of the table, and call it a voice from the unseen world, when it wasn't, was a cheat, and everybody who paid his five shillings, and sat to hear it so called, was a victim to the amount mentioned.

And never yet was anything so easily joked to shivers. The greatest booby might for once chuckle safely over a joke of his own begetting; and numbers of the species improved the opportunity. The experiments were perpetually breaking down; the machinery stopping; the phenomena collapsing at the most promising crisis, like a balloon bursting at its greatest altitude; the media confessing that, in such an unfaithful circle, nothing important could be effected; or worse, being detected in prestidigitation, endeavouring to supplement by natural means what was wanting in the spiritual. All this of course was very wrong, and the outcry proportionately loud and general.

How, then, was it that the pains taken to put an end at once to this popular delusion, met with such signal ill-success? The "spirit" manifestations thrived upon their repeated exposures, incurred a deeper and deeper debt of gratitude to their opponents

to this day live and flourish, and invade every circle of educated society. The truth is, that the sentiment to which they directly appealed lies at the very root of human sympathy. Mere ridicule is no match for that forceful feeling, and, consequently, when it became apparent that the satirists had not been searchers, the great majority ceased to attach much importance to their dicta, and preferred postponing their decision till they had themselves investigated the matter.

The premature judgment passed upon the American "humbug," thus tended to its preservation, for the monotonous conventional character of the phenomena, and the utter absence of any substantive results, would, in all probability, have wearied the public of the whole matter, had it not been for the crude attempts at explanation, which, failing one after another to reach the question, demonstrated the existence of an unsolved mystery, and piqued curiosity. The great error on the part of the shrewd and intelligent men who attended the *séances* for the purpose of denouncing them through the press, was in deciding that there was *no* element of truth in the whole concern. It was an easy task for these gentlemen, sitting at the table in smiling disbelief, to disencumber the phenomena of a large over-crust of

collusion or mechanical fraud ; but, unfortunately, in the too careless performance of this duty, there was permitted to escape that little grain of truth which was to give permanent vitality to the whole affair—

Richard of England, you have slain Jack Straw ;  
But you have left unquenched the vital spark  
That set Jack Straw on fire.

The inquiry was one that, if it were intended to be exhaustive, imperatively demanded patience, and even indulgence. The notorious fact that many eminent men in America had admitted the matter into earnest counsel, would have justified a closer examination before pronouncing the thing a hoax. The American public have not usually been found more gullible than the British, nor less tenacious on the important subject of money's worth. The key-note, however, was struck. Ridicule and barren denial, choice weapons from the fool's armoury, were the instruments selected for the demolition of the "spirit" theories, the consequence, easily foretold, being that they exist unravelled to this hour.

Any who have taken the trouble to peruse the works of Allan Kardec ("*Le Livre des Esprits*," and its sequel, "*Le Livre des Médiûms*"), on this singular subject, will acknowledge that there are ways of put-



ting a matter which, if they do not convince, at least command a certain degree of respect, and can scarcely be met except with a regular controversy. The views of the French spiritualist, moreover, often approximate very closely to those of orthodox professors, and his inferential conjectures are not wilder than many which, in science, now form the established bases of many a stately column of truth.

From all who believe in the existence of the soul deprived of its mortal garment, Kardec claims the belief in spirits also. He then complains that the idea formed of the latter is far too abstract, vague, and indefinite. Taking him as the best exponent of modern *spiritisme*, we will lay before the reader, in the most concise form, the theory of this school in regard to the manifestations.

In the union of body and spirit, the spirit is undoubtedly superior, inasmuch as it is the thinking and surviving essence. The body is a mere case or garment, to be cast aside when done with.

Besides this covering, the spirit possesses a second, semi-material, uniting it with the former, and to this (which is retained, when at death the body is dismissed) has been given the name of "*périsprit*." It is assimilated to the human form, a fluid

vaporous substance, and, though invisible in its normal state, possesses some of the properties of matter. Thus, it is argued, spirit is an actual limited existence, needing only to be visible and palpable, to resemble a human being. Is it objected that, by reason of its fluid form, it cannot act on matter? How, then, happens it that man selects from among the most subtle fluids, such as electricity, his most powerful motor agents? Does not light exercise a chemical action upon ponderable substances? The precise nature of the "*périsprit*" has yet to be learned; but, assuming it to be electric matter, or something as subtle, why should its properties be changed, when directed by a will?

Concluding that he who believes in God, believes in his own soul; and, further, that that soul exists after death; the next question to solve is, can the disembodied spirit communicate with flesh? Why not? says M. Kardec. What is man but an imprisoned soul? Shall not the free spirit talk with the captive, as a free man with a prisoner? Since it is admitted that the soul survives, is it rational to conclude that the affections die? Since the souls are everywhere, is it not natural that the soul that loved us should desire to be near? Since, in life, it directed its own corporal movements, can it not, in

harmony with another soul, still united with the body, borrow from this living frame the power to render its thoughts intelligible?

Finally, the philosopher considers his opponents as forced upon the horns, one or all, of this dilemma :

1. That the being (*être*) which thinks within us during life, cannot think after death.

2. That, if it does, it thinks no more of those it loved.

3. That, if it thinks of them, it does not desire communication.

4. That, though it be everywhere, it cannot be beside us.

5. That, if it be beside us, it cannot communicate its presence.

6. That, owing to its fluid form, it cannot act upon inert substances.

7. That, if it can act upon inert substances, it cannot act upon an intelligent being.

8. That, if it can act upon such, it cannot guide his hand to write.

9. That, doing this, it cannot answer questions, nor communicate ideas.

"The adversaries of spiritualism," concludes the professor, "will doubtless tell us that it is for us

to prove the reality of the manifestations. We prove it, both by fact and by argument. If, then, they admit neither the one nor the other, if they deny even what their eyes behold, it is for them to show that our reasoning is illogical, and our facts impossible."

There is at all events sense and truth in this last observation.\* Armed with it, we return to the shores of Britain.

In spite of that love of fair-play said to be peculiarly English, it is often impossible to demand a hearing for an unpopular person or thing, without being at once identified with the faults imputed to the latter. This is simply absurd. It is often in the best interests of jus-

\* A work, (*"Sights and Sounds,"*) published by the writer some years ago, provoked some criticism on the ground that it was the apologist and advocate of the "spirit-rappers." In no one passage of the book will there be found a defence, either open or implied, of the spirit-theories, far less of the scenes of folly and profanity to which they gave rise. The author's remarks were confined to pointing out the insufficiency of the modes of explanation already suggested. The real offence was probably his preferring to leave the disproof of spirit agency to those who are prepared to lay down limits to the power, or sufferance, of the Creator.

tice, as it unquestionably is in those of humanity and truth, to let the accused be heard.

Had the spirit-rappers generally received this measure of justice, it is more than possible, more than probable, it is, in short, quite within rational belief, that, in all those persons (setting apart the fraudulent imitators) styled *media*, there would have been found to reside an occult sympathetic power or influence, fully sufficient to account for the ordinary class of these phenomena; that it would be found in every degree of development, sometimes voluntary, sometimes the reverse, always, however, capricious and irregular in its action and results. Hence, perhaps, the impression upon the mind of the so-called "medium," that the origin of this singular power, of which he found himself in possession without being always able to control its operations, rested with an intelligence apart. This idea once conceived, he attributed that which was, in fact, the action of his own will-power over the mind of another, to an inspiration which, having no traceable source, could, to him, seem nothing less than supernatural. That the "media" should so readily have accepted this conclusion, will seem less extraordinary when we call to mind the admitted

fact that the peculiar gift, or condition, of which we are speaking, has seldom been found associated with high-class reasoning intellect.

Generally speaking, the media were persons belonging to the middle and lower ranks of life, more accessible to the desire of gain, and less governed by finer scruples, than their social superiors. These two characteristics had two consequences, that they (the media) felt no hesitation in turning their gift into money, nor, when its uncertain operation supplied no phenomena, in eking out the same by any natural means that might suggest themselves. Detection in these supplementary practices cast a well-deserved suspicion over the whole, and herein lay the difficulty of dealing fairly with the case.

Conceding that a perfect disinterestedness would be at all times the most satisfactory guarantee of a medium's sincerity, it must be borne in mind that many, who were believed to possess this power, did *not* use it for a mercenary end. Further, is it fair to condemn a whole system, because it includes some pretenders?

“De ce qu’il y a des charlatans qui débitent des drogues sur les places publiques, de ce qu’il y a même des médecins qui, sans aller sur la

place publique, trompent la confiance, s'ensuit-il, que tous les médecins sont des charlatans, et le corps médical en est-il atteint dans sa considération? De ce qu'il y a des gens qui vendent de la teinture pour du vin, s'ensuit-il que tous les marchands de vin sont des frelateurs, et qu'il n'y a point de vin pur? On abuse de tout—même des choses les plus respectables, et l'on peut dire que la fraude a aussi son génie. Mais la fraude a toujours un but, un intérêt matériel quelconque; là où il n'y a rien à gagner, il n'y a nul intérêt à tromper." ("Spiritisme Experimental"—par A. Kardec.)

Take for granted an "honest" medium, and note the impediments that lay before him. If he proposed to utilize his power, as men do other natural endowment, taking money in recompense for the sacrifice of time and health, a prejudice was at once established against him. If he persevered, it was necessary to forewarn his audience that striking results might not follow. The inference was, that he must have a credulous circle or nothing could be done.

The process or condition of mind essential to the experiments (as, granting that it exists at all, may surely be imagined) is as easily disturbed by opposing outer influences, as a feather floating in the summer

wind is by the changing currents that, with every second, divert its way. Jestings, laughter, inuendo, openly-declared scepticism, are the promising aids, in company with which, the experimentalist finds himself called upon to deal with the most subtle and delicate agents imagination can conceive. “ *C’est magnifique—mais ce n’est pas la guerre.*” It may be very entertaining, but it is not inquiry. As well lecture on political economy to a circle of baboons.

Messrs. Home, Hayden, Foster, and other “ professors,” have rendered the process too familiar to need any general description here. Let us take the last-named of these gentlemen, and simply set down as a fair type of the whole, what occurred, at a *séance* at his own house, some fifteen months since.

The writer had received a note from a literary friend in America, in which the latter, without making himself responsible for the manners, morals, or general character of Mr. F——, avowed his belief that he was possessed, in a remarkable degree, of the clairvoyant power, and recommended his experiments as worthy of scrutiny. The following is a transcript of the writer’s notes of the interview :—

“ I took an opportunity of calling upon Mr. Foster, and was shown into his parlour, a large apartment,



almost devoid of furniture, where that gentleman presently joined me. His manner was frank and unembarrassed, and rather prepossessing. After a little indifferent conversation, he asked me if I were inclined to witness some of his experiments, and on my replying 'yes,' requested me to place myself at the table, which stood at the wall between the windows; some sheets of letter paper and a pencil or two lay upon it. Mr. Foster then said he was about to leave the room, and desired me, when left alone, to tear off some ten or twelve slips of paper, write upon each of them the name of some deceased friend, roll each slip up so tightly as to be a mere shapeless lump of paper, then roll up as many more as I pleased, in the same manner, but *blank*, and mix the whole together in a heap on the table. Having given these instructions, he left the room, closing the door, and went upstairs.

"Determined to satisfy myself, if possible, once for all, what amount of humbug there might be in the matter, I neglected no precaution that occurred to me, and began by inspecting the room and its scanty furniture. There was no concealed object nor any perceptible means by which my proceedings might be overlooked.

"To guard, however, against the remotest possi-

bility of the latter circumstance, on reseating myself at the table to write the slips, I covered the latter with one hand in such a manner as would have effectually concealed them from every eye but my own, had any one been present. I then wrote down the names of six or seven deceased friends or acquaintances, purposely including one or two with whom the lapse of years had made my thoughts of late but little familiar; rolled up the strips with at least thirty others (blank) and flung the whole in a confused heap on the table, so as to be completely indistinguishable, even to myself.

“ Mr. F——, presently returning, handed me the pencil and alphabet, and, after a little ‘spirit’ jargon, the written slips were selected from the rest, and the names they bore spelled out, with unflinching precision.

“ Having heard that, from constant habit of observation, a ‘medium’ can sometimes detect the almost imperceptible pause made by an inquirer when his pencil reaches the required letter, I endeavoured to guard against this by affecting to dwell for half a second upon some especial letter. This, however, invariably failed to mislead the supposed clairvoyant. Any such hints were uniformly rejected. In reality I myself was not aware of the name contained in the slip under consideration until spelled out.

“Mr. F—— afterwards varied his experiments by exhibiting the several names written in large rosy characters, as though scratched with a bramble, on his arm, but these may be set aside, as easily producible by chemical means; and, indeed, I have heard of an accomplished young lady who has declared that they can, with a little practice, be produced at pleasure upon any arm, and who proved it by writing them on her own.

“Mr. F——’s remarks upon the spiritual agency were of the usual character, and not worth recording. But to revert, for a moment, to the only point really deserving attention, the clairvoyant reading, I confess I am at a loss to suggest any explanation of this complete and clever mystery, or mystification, excepting that it *is* clairvoyance. Was my writing overlooked? I have shown that it was impossible. Was the paper prepared, with chemicals, so as to let the characters show through? A gentleman well-known in London society (no spiritualist) took paper from his own study, and the same results followed. Is the inquirer’s manner, in pointing to the successive letters, relied upon as a guide? I have mentioned that I endeavoured, without effect, to mislead the experimentalist.”

Now it may be urged that professed conjurors,

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(at all events, Robert Houdin) will perform the same "trick." Possibly they will, but does that bring us nearer to a solution? It has never been pretended that this secret is, like most other magical mysteries, purchasable. There is nothing strained in the conjecture that these professors may themselves be endowed, in a greater or less degree, with the singular mental characteristic that is the parent of clairvoyant phenomena, and, further, that the sense of this unusual gift may have suggested to its possessors the idea of a conjuror's career, while its uncertain operation would render necessary a superstructure of pure mechanical skill and ingenuity, in order that an audience should never fail of the entertainment they expected. It is, at all events, certain that no one has hitherto volunteered a better explanation.

Within a short time of the above-mentioned interview, Mr. Foster had risen into high repute as a medium, and, at one period, had upon his list nearly three hundred appointments. What occasioned the sudden ebb in this tide of success, the writer, who was for many months absent from England, never understood, but, on his return, the medium and his familiars had vanished, leaving behind them, morally speaking, an effect very dissimilar to that bequeathed

by the disappearing spectre chronicled by old Aubrey, viz. "an aromatis savour, and a melodious twang."

Without any especial personal reference to Mr. Foster, it may be remarked that, in matters of this peculiar nature, in which a man openly lays claim to a power which the vast majority deny, an unblemished character is one of those essential qualifications for the obtaining a fair hearing, which cannot (as in the case of art-professors and other public-appellants generally) be dispensed with. It is almost in vain for any man who is not conscious of being "armed so strong in honesty" as to defy every form of ridicule and invective, to put forward such a claim, in the expectation that it will be weighed with that very honesty in which he himself is lacking. So ready is the irreproachable British public to gobble up every charlatan that does not tickle its palate sufficiently, that it not only occasionally extinguishes a legitimate performer, but, what is almost as bad, awes back into silence and obscurity those who have really something to show and to teach, but who shrink before a tribunal of such bias, much as a whig-prisoner, in the days of the Red Assize, before the drunken leer of the ferocious Jeffreys. As the loudest bawlers for "fair play" among the peoples of Europe, it would not be

amiss now and then to dispense a little of that article among ourselves. None so ready as Englishmen to condemn the brutal prejudices of their forefathers. Why, then—

———On past ages cry out ‘Shame!’—  
Then go their way, and do the very same?

The revenge usually taken upon all who advocate a more impartial inquiry into the American ‘manifestations,’ is to denounce them at once as “spirit” seekers themselves—a capital hit, entitling, as it does, those courageous persons to their full share in the cloud of missiles hurled from all directions, and sometimes by very skilful and distinguished hands indeed—against the party named. Let, therefore, one who has always promoted such an inquiry, declare his conviction that all who attend these *séances*, believing in the spiritual agency (whether of a good or evil nature), or even with a suspicion on their minds that such may be the case, are guilty of דאֶרֶשׁ אֵל הָרֵפִים “daresh el harephim”—in the Greek, summed up in its many aspects, as *φάρμακεια* or witchcraft—seeking to the spirits of the dead, or to devils assuming that character; the reiterated scriptural denunciations of which “*veneficium*”—soul-poisoning crime—need

scarcely be recalled to the recollection of any reader.

Guilty are such seekers of a crime not less gratuitous than hurtful, inasmuch as there ought not to be a moment's question whether these agencies, if found at all, are spirits of the dead, or "seducing spirits" of darkness. Good they cannot be, since, by their invariable assumption of the former character, falsehood at once invests them with the livery of their master. And falsehood it must be, because of the irresistible proofs that the Almighty jealously reserves within his own prerogative the right to send messengers across that "great gulf fixed" between the living and the departed.

Surely the lips of the grave are sealed. In the cases of those re-summoned to their mortal being by the Lord of life, and his commissioned servants, nothing was revealed concerning the intermediate state. The words that Paul was caught up to the third heaven to hear were "unspeakable;" and even to have listened to them, so tried his human nature as (it is conjectured) to have occasioned that "thorn in the flesh" it needed so much grace to endure. A sense of this wordless mystery seems to have inspired the old Greek poet, in bringing back his Alcestis from Hades veiled and dumb.

If, therefore, there be supernatural agency in the matter, all reason and probability press us towards the conclusion that it is of evil. Now there is good authority for believing that those who willingly court temptation will be abandoned to the snare. When all that warning and exhortation can effect has failed, Ephraim must be surrendered to his idols, and "let alone." Thenceforward, nothing shall be too false, too fearful, too devilish, for that debased, disabled soul. "Taken captive by him (the power of evil) *at his will*" is a lamentable picture of that slavish dotage which is the ultimate condition and reward of the persistent treaders in these forbidden ways.

On the other hand, supposing that these presumed intelligencers were indeed, as they profess, the souls of friends departed, what conceivable element of rational comfort could be deduced from such a renewal of intercourse? To believe that the "desire of our eyes," taken from our tender love and care, should be summonable from its hallowed rest to put half-a-crown into a showman's pocket; to receive and answer questions filtered through coarse and vulgar minds, perhaps (if the result be not satisfactory) to be dismissed with scorn and ridicule, is an insult to the Deity, and revolting



to humanity. Far better than the trite phrase and dubious answer familiar to spirit-seekers, is the comfort of believing that the departed, having, indeed, no longer a portion for ever in anything that is done under the sun, are forbidden to witness the struggle and the strife—the folly and the guilt—the temptation and the snare—the warring passions—the disappointment—the despair of this bitter, bitter world. Let us rather bless from our inmost hearts the God of peace, who, in breathing into the parting spirit the life divine, hath released it, for eternity, from the troubled dream of *this*.

The old aphorism, that familiarity breeds contempt, has never been more thoroughly exemplified than in the practice of our spirituals. When future generations shall have overcome their astonishment that the educated children of the present should, on the one hand, have cast aside the subject as not worth inquiry; on the other, have yielded themselves to the grossest imbecility; they will (in the latter case) have the further task of conceiving how any persons, persuaded that they were holding communion with disembodied souls, could be content to treat them with a disrespect they would not show to the lowest of human

mould. There are few things more repugnant to taste and feeling than an attempt to unite the grotesque with the terrible ; how much more, then, with that which professes to be sublime ! In witnessing the vagaries of a madman, pity will presently overgrow the sense of pain. In watching the agony of a Rigoletto, the fool's trappings drop out of sight. But with the "spirit"-cicerone, the element of absurdity is obtrusive and clamorous, and refuses to be extinguished.

Imagine (it is a positive fact) a *séance* at a house situated in a London thoroughfare, in which a considerable mortal traffic necessarily went on, commencing thus :—

"Sperrits will be good enough to speak up, 'cos of the 'busses."

Because, likewise of the five shillings per head, which the circle had disbursed, and which entirely justified this stipulation.

The meeting in question was rendered further memorable by an extremely interesting manifestation, which took the following form, and was doubly valuable, as proving that *equivoque* is either unknown or unpractised in spheres beyond our own :—

A spirit, whose replies had been at once so pointed

and so grammatical as to elicit murmurs of surprise and congratulation, was on the point of making his bow, when a member of the circle begged permission to ask one more question—viz., what he (the spirit) subsisted upon in his present state of being.

“Same as I did on *hearth*,” was the guarded reply.

“And what was *that*?” persisted some still unsatisfied person.

“*Hair*.”

Now it is no less true than remarkable that the supposed respondent had indeed been, while in the flesh, eminent as a forensic wig-maker, and the only further question that suggested itself was, in what possible manner, under the altered circumstances, his peculiar talent could be called into requisition.

This question was shaped and put with the utmost delicacy, but, nevertheless, elicited a most indignant volley of raps from the spirit, who demanded the alphabet, and, with some heat (no longer confiding in the medium’s pronunciation), himself spelled out the word :—

“*Air*.”

It would appear that a member of the company,

who had enjoyed opportunities of observing the deceased gentleman's mortal habits, expressed some incredulity as to his having restricted himself, on *all* occasions, to the above meagre diet, for a further appeal was judged necessary, and was met by the following exhaustive declaration :—

“ All folks lives upon air—leastways, can't *without* it.”

The lady who performed the part of medium on this interesting occasion attends at many houses at the West End, for the small charge of one-pound-one. Notwithstanding these eligible connections, we might be accused of striking too low a social key in the foregoing report, and therefore shift the scene to the unimpeachable neighbourhood of Hyde Park Square, where, in a certain magnificent drawing-room, a similar *séance* was recently held.

On this occasion, be it understood, there was no paid medium. The spiriting was done by the amateurs themselves, and there being two or three highly magnetic, and not a few remarkably silly persons present, the “happiest results” (as state papers express it) were of course to be expected. Probably, all our readers are not aware, that there is a conventional, technical tone among spiritualists, involving certain set phrases, hardly intelligible to

the uninitiated, just as the distinctive expressions current among a club of "Odd Fellows" or "Harmonious Owls," are confounding to the stranger guest.

Generally speaking, the ordinary courtesies of society are for the time superseded. There are no greetings or recognitions, unassociated with the mysterious influence of the hour.

Two young ladies enter, unannounced. The hostess merely glances in that direction. Words of welcome would be far too common-place. The new arrivals look curiously, even anxiously, round, as though they had been suddenly enveloped in a fog, and were in danger of losing their way. Perhaps they were. At length—

"How do you find the atmosphere, dear?" says Miss A—— to Miss B——, in a semi-confidential tone.

"Purple-ish," is the reply, in a solemn whisper.

"*I find it rose!*" rejoins Miss A——, uneasily.

"We have been very variable to-night," remarks the hostess, striking in, "but the prevailing tints have certainly been yellow and blue."

(Perhaps it did not occur to the speaker that a combination of these latter colours would have produced an "atmosphere" precisely adapted to the occasion.)

The conversation now becomes more general.

"Anything noteworthy of late?" inquires Miss B——, a strong-minded young lady, who looks as if she had written books, and printed them herself. "What on Friday?"

"Writings. Uncle M'Tavish's Scotch mull emptied under the table. Accordion (inside the fender) played 'Polly put the kettle on;' afterwards, with persuasion, 'Home, sweet home.' By-the-bye, Home's in Paris. The Emp——"

"I beg your pardon," interrupts Miss B——, somewhat sternly. "To our point. What beside?"

"Literally no more. But, on Wednesday week, we had hands."

"*Good* hands?"

"Excellent."

"Hah!" (thoughtfully.)

"The best hands these six weeks. Bessy Power was with us, however."

"*Cela suffit*. Gloved—the hands?"

"Both gloved and bare! One had a fine cinquecent ring. Sir Cusack Dozey, who was in the circle, thought it was his aunt's, Lady Longstretch, who died in 1793."

"These are telling facts," rejoins the strong-minded, taking out a grim brown note-book. "How do you spell 'Cusack?'"

“ Oh, Charlotte, Charlotte !” cries an animated young person, rushing from the inner drawing-room. “ Have you heard about Mildred’s cockatoo ?”

“ Mildred’s *what* ?”

“ Cockatoo. But here she is herself.”

Enter Mildred, a tall, noble girl, with the step and aspect of a queen. Mildred has bowed many and many a spirit to her will, but these had not yet shuffled off the mortal coil.

With a slight curl on her beautiful lip, she tells the story of the cockatoo.

At a *séance* held last week, in the boudoir of Mrs. Bow Peepe, Mildred was in such high favour with the invisible agencies, that they invited her to hang her laced handkerchief over the edge of the table. Having done so, and presently withdrawn it again, lo ! at one corner appeared the shaped and knotted similitude of a lovely cockatoo !

The unwonted form of this manifestation naturally caused considerable excitement in spiritualist circles, and, it is distressing to add, no small amount of envy, insomuch that it needed all Mildred’s popularity to make head against the feeling engendered by the spirits’ partiality, and the more so, as neither prayers, nor tears, nor even menaces, had availed to produce a repetition of the “ sign.”

On the present occasion, immense efforts are made, in the hope that Mildred's presence might soften the obdurate agencies. The excitable young lady works herself into a perfect agony of supplication.

"Oh, spirits, *dear* spirits, *kind* spirits! give me a cockatoo like Mildred's. You see my handkerchief, spirits? O do, *do*. A cockatoo-oo-oo!" &c., &c.

Another young lady, with more system and foresight, has come provided with no less than six pocket-handkerchiefs, and these she disposes at equal distances round the table, pulling them up at intervals, like night-lines, to see if anything has been caught. There is no cockatoo. On *that* point, the spirits are inflexible, but one of the handkerchiefs, at which the party had noticed, with a thrill of expectation, an unmistakable nibble, ultimately exhibits a very satisfactory double knot, and therewith the *séance* (which, like the former, is *fact*, and not caricature) comes to an end.

Scenes like these require no comment. To report them literally is the severest penalty to which, in the absence of any express legal enactment, they are at present amenable. Let us hope that the knowledge that they are really occurring, and likely



to occur among us, may suggest to the intelligent mind the necessity of so winnowing the subject, that its chaff and corn at length may fly asunder, and the homes of England be no longer desecrated by the scandal, folly, and ignorance, which are now its principal concomitants.\*

It remains only to close this little work, as it was begun, with a reiterated caution to marvel-hunters

\* Mr. W. Howitt, in his interesting work on the "Supernatural," has (Vol. II., p. 234) the following note :—

"Whilst this is going through the press, a phenomenon of a most extraordinary kind has shown itself in America. Mr. Mawler, a photographer of Boston, and a medium, was astonished, on taking a photograph of himself, to find also by his side the figure of a young girl, which he immediately recognized as that of a deceased relative. The circumstance made a great excitement. Numbers of persons rushed to his rooms, and many have found deceased friends photographed with themselves.

"The matter has been tested in all possible ways, but without detection of any imposture."

That Mr. W. Howitt honestly believes whatever he asserts, no one who is acquainted with that gentleman's private character will for an instant doubt. What remains to be stated merely shows how easily deceit may be practised.

After reading the above note, the writer and a friend, who is an amateur photographer, strolled up Regent Street, and, entering the first studio, mentioned their wish to have a "spirit" photograph.

"Two gentlemen—spirit-photograph," said the matter-of-fact artist to his assistant. And, in a few minutes, a very interesting

in general. That there are incidents of the most extraordinary nature perpetually interweaving themselves with our daily social life, is as true as that there are many whose mysterious or terrific features dissolve away at the first touch of reason. Why, then, should we be disinclined to press inquiry home? The more unsound narratives we are enabled to lop away from the general theme, the more will those that remain commend themselves to our study.

Finally, as examples of the ease with which the strangest story will gain a certain amount of credence, we will lighten the concluding pages with the following:—

Has any one ever yet heard of the ghost of a *doll*? Such an alleged phenomenon was the cause of much excitement and uneasiness in a fashionable German watering-place, only a few months

*carte de visite* was produced,—the writer, as spirit, extending a shadowy arm over his astonished friend, the portly representative of matter.

The process is simplicity itself. Upon one side of the plate, highly sensitized in the usual manner, the “spirit” (be it person or picture) is first taken in an indistinct manner, the object sitting only half the accustomed time. The developing agents not being applied until the “material” party has been added, the latter’s picture and the spirit’s appear together!

since ; and these were the singular circumstances.

A pretty little girl (daughter of one of the residents) well known in the neighbourhood from being constantly seen playing in the public gardens at W——, died last year, after a few weeks' illness, having been much soothed and solaced during that painful interval by the companionship of a favourite doll. The latter, who had received the name of 'Flore,' was scarcely less familiar to the juvenile community than her poor little mistress. It seemed painful to separate the two. At all events, it is a feeling perfectly intelligible that induced the friends of the deceased child to place the doll in the coffin, in the position it had been used to occupy on the bosom of the little sleeper, and thus they were interred in the neighbouring cemetery of B——.

Some weeks elapsed, and then a strange mysterious whisper went abroad that Eulalie (the little girl) and Flore had reappeared in the public walks and gardens. The rumour quickly narrowed down to the apparition of Flore alone ; but here it made so determined a stand, as to awaken the attention of the older and wiser members of the community. Not a day passed without one or other of the juvenile play-mates bringing home an eager story of Flore's having

been distinctly seen, sometimes sitting under a rose-bush, sometimes reclining at full length on a garden-seat, sometimes carried in the arms of a certain dark-looking child, whose demeanour had discouraged any close advances, who disdained skipping-rope, and had proved impervious to the seductive influence of hoop.

With some difficulty, the story was traced back to this circumstance, that, about three weeks after the funeral, an intimate playfellow of Eulalie was walking in the gardens, when her attention was attracted by two other children quarrelling. With the curiosity of her years, the little girl hurried up to ascertain the cause of the dispute. It was a doll. No sooner had her eyes lit upon it, than she uttered a scream, flew back to her nurse, and, pulling her towards the spot, bade her look at the ghost of 'Flore,' who had been buried with Eulalie.

The nurse complied, but, less familiar with Flore's specialities than her charge, declined to offer any decided opinion on the subject, excepting that it was certainly no ghost, and had a different cap and bonnet from that in which Flore made her last terrestrial appearance.

The little girl, however, positively maintained that

it *was* Flore, and no other ; or, if *not* Flore, then her ghost, and this opinion she repeated to every acquaintance they encountered during the remainder of the walk. It became, in fact, the child's fixed idea, and as the alleged frequent sight of the mysterious doll began seriously to affect her health and spirits, the parents, as the readiest means of tranquillizing her, resolved to make a complete inquiry into the matter.

As they knew something of the family (that of a gentleman from the Cape of Good Hope), with whom the doll was associated, there was not much difficulty in getting the toy in question handed over to their scrutiny. It appeared that the little girl was able to mention some certain peculiarities either in the dress or structure of the doll, which were not visible without close examination. These were found to correspond minutely with her description. There was no longer room for question. *It was Flore herself.*

The ghost was thus laid. But it became necessary to ascertain the cause of the singular resuscitation of Flore's body, and it presently appeared that the doll had been purchased at a toy shop frequently supplied by a travelling dealer whose habitat was unknown. The authorities at B—— were next applied to, and an order obtained to examine the coffin of the deceased child. It was found empty !

The investigation that followed resulted in the detection of a miscreant who had more than once used his means of access at all hours to the cemetery for the purpose of stripping the bodies of the recently dead, and even, it was darkly hinted, sometimes devoting them to the nutriment of the tenants of his sty. The wretch was condemned to the light penalty of a year's imprisonment.

From circumstances less remarkable than these have arisen ghost stories, which have obtained and kept their hold on public credulity long after the means of sifting them thoroughly have passed away.

The second example, somewhat less painful in its details, is grotesque enough, and, though it actually occurred in England but a short while since, would scarcely be out of place in a book of German dreams and fancies.

The narrator, a girl of the servant class, but of rather superior education and manners, had called on the writer's sister on the subject of a place to which she had been recommended, and in the course of conversation, related the following as a recent experience.

The advertisement in which she had set forth her willingness to take charge of an invalid, infirm, or lunatic person, or to assume any office demanding

unusual steadiness of nerve, was replied to by a lady whose letter was dated from a certain locality on the outskirts of a large commercial city, and who requested her attendance there at an appointed time.

The house proved to be a dingy, deserted-looking mansion, and was not rendered more cheerful by the fact that the adjoining tenements on either side were unoccupied. It wore altogether a haunted and sinister aspect, and the girl, as she rang the bell, was sensible of a kind of misgiving for which she could not account. A timid person might have hesitated. This girl possessed unusual firmness and courage, and, in spite of the presentiment we have mentioned, she determined, at all events, to see *what* she would be called on to encounter.

A lady-like person, the mistress herself, opened the door, and, conducting the applicant into an adjacent apartment, informed her in a few words that the service that would be required of her was of a very peculiar nature, imperatively demanding those precise qualities she conceived her to possess. It was right, she added, to mention that the family lived in great seclusion, partly from choice, partly from necessity, an impression having gone abroad that there existed something strange and evil in connexion with the residence, which was, in reality, known in

the vicinity by the title of the "haunted house.

With these preliminary warnings, the lady suggested that the applicant might wish to reconsider her purpose. The latter, however, having little fear of anything human, and none at all of apparitions, at once agreed to the terms proposed, stipulating only that the cause of the strange reports affecting the mansion should be a little more clearly explained, and her own particular duties defined.

The mistress readily assented to both conditions, and, leading the way to a ground floor apartment at the back, unlocked the door and turned the handle as about to enter, but, checking herself suddenly, warned her companion, without sinking her voice below its ordinary tone, that she was about to be brought face to face with a spectacle that might well try the strongest nerves; nevertheless, there was nothing to fear so long as she retained her self-command. With this not very reassuring preface, they entered the room.

It was rather dark, for the lower half of the windows were boarded up; but in one corner, on the floor, was plainly distinguishable what looked like a heap of clothes flung together in disorder. It appeared to be in motion, however, and the mistress of the house once more turning to her follower had just time to utter the mysterious words—



“Don’t be frightened. If she likes you, she’ll hoot; if she doesn’t, she’ll scream——”

When from the apex of the seeming heap of clothes there rose a head that made the stranger’s blood run chill. It was human indeed, in general structure, but exhibited, in place of nose, a huge beak curved and pointed like that of an owl. Two large staring yellow eyes increased the *bizarre* resemblance, while numerous tufts of some feathery substance, sprouting from a skin hard and black as a parrot’s tongue, completed this horrible intermingling of bird and woman.

As they approached, the unhappy being rose and sunk with the measured motion of a bird upon a perch, and presently, opening its mouth, gave utterance to a hideous and prolonged “*tu-whoo!*”

“All right,” said the lady, quietly, “she likes you!”

They were now standing as it were over the unfortunate freak of nature.

“Have you courage to lift her?” inquired the lady. “Try.”

The girl, though recoiling instinctively from the contact, nerved herself to the utmost, and, putting her arms beneath those of the still hooting creature, strove to raise her up. In doing so, the hands

became disengaged from the clothes. They were black, and armed with long curved talons, like those of a bird of prey.

Even this new discovery might not have made the girl's courage quail, had she not, in raising the creature, observed that she was not, as had seemed to be the case, crouched on the ground, but balanced on an actual perch, or rail, round which her feet closed and clung, by means of talons similar to those which adorned her hands.

So irrepressible was the feeling of horror that now overcame the visitor, that, after one desperate effort of self control, she was forced to let go of the thing she held. A wild, unearthly scream that rang through the house marked the creature's change of mood. The baleful eyes shot yellow fire, and scream after scream pursued her as she fairly fled from the apartment, followed at a steadier pace, by the lady.

The latter took her into another room, did all in her power to soothe her agitation, and expressed no surprise when the girl declared that ten times the liberal amount already offered, would not tempt her to undertake such a charge.

Such then are specimens of the "Strange things" unknown, mis-related, or disbelieved, yet constantly

occurring among us; and if, in grouping them together, in this slight and superficial manner, the attention of abler minds should be attracted to the analysis of one or more of the points alluded to in the earlier portion of this work, such as may seem most prophetic of useful result, the writer's purpose is attained.

Lastly, let it never be forgotten that, as science progresses, as the means of working the mine of knowledge augment in our hands, we must be prepared for new and greater discoveries than those which, in the arrogance of science pronounced impossible, are now the familiar playthings of a child. No fear that we shall arrive too soon at the summit of human knowledge. There *is* fear that we may mistake a lower elevation for that exalted rest.

Does the road wind up hill all the way?

*Yes, to the very end!*

Will the day's journey take the whole long day?

*From morn till eve, my friend!*

THE END.