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News from The Invisible World

THE WONDERFUL ACCOUNT
OF THE
EXTRAORDINARY EXPERIENCES
AT THE HOUSE OF

MR. SAMUEL WESLEY, SEN.,

DURING 1716 AND 1717.

BEING A REPRINT OF THE CELEBRATED

Letters of the Wesley Family

AND A FULL EXTRACT CONCERNING THESE
WONDERFUL MATTERS

FROM THE DIARY OF MR. SAMUEL WESLEY, SEN.,

BY

THE REV. JOHN WESLEY,

WITH

An Introductory Explanation by J. J. Morse.

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NEWS

FROM THE

INVISIBLE WORLD!

EXPERIENCES IN THE FAMILY OF
REV. JOHN WESLEY.

EXPLANATORY.

A WORD or two of explanation is due to the readers of this pamphlet, alike as to how and why the present publication is now issued. The letters that follow originally appeared in the *Arminian Magazine* in 1784, and at other dates selections from the general account, as compiled by the Rev. John Wesley, have appeared in various "Lives" of Wesley and other Wesleyan publications, while on another and later occasion, the materials here collected were included in a work bearing the same general title as that selected for this pamphlet, published in Yorkshire, and devoted to a remarkable series of supernatural narrations. It is from this work, now long since out of print, that these letters have been taken, virtually rescued, it might be truly said from oblivion, for the Wesleyan body have for a long time past rigorously excluded these narrations from their public prints.

This preservation of so remarkable a narration is really due to the generosity and interest of a good and earnest Spiritualist and Reformer, Mr. Joseph Armitage, The Mount, Hanging-Heaton, Dewsbury, Yorkshire, by whose friendly aid the writer was enabled to issue them as a series of Supplements to his journal, the LYCEUM BANNER, during the months of February, March, April and May of this year, while Mr. Armitage also subscribed for one thousand copies of this edition, thereby further helping to extend the circulation of the matters that he, in common with the publisher, thinks are eminently worthy of the widest and most extended dissemination. This, then, explains how it came about that these "letters" are now re-issued, while the generous response that has been made to the publisher's announcements, has caused him to arrange for a much larger edition than was originally contemplated.

As concerns the whyfore of this pamphlet, much more could be written than the limits of these prefatory pages permit. First, it may be noted, in this connection, that all things that pertain to the honoured name of Wesley are abundantly worthy of being preserved, for that name represents much that is associated with all that is noble and praiseworthy in the rise and progress of religious freedom in this country. With much, too, that has touched millions of human hearts with a new life, and kindled many a soul into a divine enthusiasm that was sleeping by the wayside, oblivious alike of life and duty. And, as the Wesleys were so largely associated with helping their fellows to prepare for that "invisible world," of which we all desire to know something positive about, these "letters," recording certain experiences in the household of this noted family, are alike instructive and suggestive in such connection. In this age preaching is often cast aside by those who demand proof. It is an age of doubt and scepticism, and many an anxious soul asks with pathetic despair: "Is there no proof that death does not end all?" To such, the fact that in a family of such known probity and veracity, there has occurred incidents that undeniably point to the manifestation of supernatural, or spiritual presences, comes as a beacon light, for it at least argues that, if true in these instances, may it not also be true in others. That such a

thing occurred is something to ponder over, that it was in such an household adds to its importance, and that the testimony has not been invalidated, is more than satisfactory, all of which give some reason why this publication is sent forth.

Still further, let it be noted, that undoubtedly the younger body of Wesleyans, not knowing much, if anything, of these curious experiences in the family of the founder of their body, are entitled to be informed thereon for their own advantage. For one of the missing elements, it might almost be said, in the religious professions of the times, is the absence, to a large extent—to a much greater degree than is usually confessed—of a consciousness of an actual, real, personal life, after death, for the individual, and of a real world in which the departed exist. Aught then that can help to establish, or re-establish, if lost, such a consciousness will surely be welcome to those who do not wish to see religion dwindle into dry formalism, or a belief in futurity become a nerveless and indefinite spiritual agnosticism. These words from Wesley may, then, be of help to all who are willing to heed their import. Indeed, the young Wesleyanism might greatly to its advantage not only peruse the present pages, but also pause to consider if, in these days, there may not be other evidences, possessed by people as credible, pure-minded and honourable as the Wesleys, that prove the presence of spiritual beings in our midst.

To Spiritualists, the record now published is mainly of corroborative value, since they are not only familiar with experiences similar to the special facts narrated, but they have had even more remarkable events occur in the course of their forty-five years' investigations of the modern revival of intercourse between the natural and spiritual worlds. But, to even them, a record such as is contained in the following pages, has a value none the less real, even though its facts are not the equals of those known to Spiritualists to-day.

Thus, then, the reader is now briefly possessed of the how and the why of the present issue. The why being summed up in a desire to rescue from oblivion a narration of experiences that shall not only appeal to Wesleyans as a body, but to the members of the great family of Christendom

at large, irrespective of sect or party, so that attention may be arrested and interest stimulated upon the question now raised on every side: "Is it possible for the departed to return?"

THE LETTERS.

THE letters themselves now claim our attention. The whole story was published by Rev. John Wesley over sixty years after the facts occurred, and as the narrative is confirmed by letters written during the time the events took place, and now published in this pamphlet, there is no room to cavil at the evidence presented.

THE FACTS

are comparatively in a new compass. On the First of December, 1715-16, strange noises, groans, knockings (?) "rappings," were heard at the Epworth Parsonage. These things continued more or less for four months. At times a sound as if of a great sum of coin falling, then as if a man was planing wood; again, as of bottles being smashed, or of a large piece of coal being broken upon the floor, and the splinters flying all about, when, actually, none of these things took place. Once a presence was felt pushing against the person of one of the family. On one occasion the unseen intruder was said to have assumed some sort of animal form, but it evidently was able to understand not only what it was about itself, but what was said to it by others. It apparently had Jacobite leanings, as will be noted, and seemingly a sort of affection, or interest, in Miss Hetty Wesley. All this, and more besides, will be found stated in the ensuing pages.

THE IMPORT OF IT ALL.

OF course, our old friend, the inevitable *Cui bono*, crops up again. What is the good of it all, even if true? At the first blush there may not appear much good in reviving an old and almost forgotten history of the kind embodied in these letters, but a careful consideration of the series leads almost irresistibly to the conclusion that these phenomena in the Wesley family, in 1716, were

A PROPHECY OF MODERN SPIRITUALISM,
as it afterwards manifested itself in the Fox family, in

Hydesville, in the State of New York, U.S. To any who have read Mrs. Leah Fox Underhill's remarkable work, "The Missing Link," which, as one of the three noted Fox sisters, she wrote, giving therein a full history of the beginnings of the modern spiritual movement, the parallels and similarities in the nature of the phenomena occurring in each case are so obvious and striking, that one is amazed at the virtually abortive result in the one case, and the marvellous consequences in the other. In each case the families questioned their ghostly visitor, but the Fox family pressed the questions home with that persistence, that ultimately led to the fact being established that the haunting in their house was done by a veritable being, who had once existed as a man here, on earth. It, too, shewed an intimate knowledge of the affairs and histories of many diseased persons, whose friends flocked to hear the strange sounds.

Had the Wesleys been fortunate enough to have cultivated their unseen visitor, he might have enabled them to establish in the quiet Lincolnshire parsonage the beginning of that marvellous upheaval of thought, known as Modern Spiritualism. But presumably it was not so destined.

A SERIOUS QUESTION.

Do the departed ever return to earth? It is a serious question, this. History—sacred and profane alike—tradition, among tribes, families, and nations, all assert they do! It is no exaggeration to add also, that millions of sound, sane-minded people throughout the civilised world are willing to assert that they *know* the departed do return. And you who may read these lines, may, if you do not already possess that knowledge, also obtain it for yourself, for the path that others have trodden you may tread as well. But the main purpose of the present writer is to direct your attention to the fact that one of the most noted, pious, and pure living families our land can boast of knew beyond a doubt, by practical experience, that the spirit world did intervene in our world, and having such a sanction before you, we, as Spiritualists—the writer as a worker in the cause for a quarter of a century past, blest by the knowledge and comfort obtained—invite you to enquire into the matter and find that proof that shall vindicate your faith in a life hereafter, bring back the departed to your aching and empty heart, sustain you in the hour of bereavement, and give you a deeper trust in God, life and immortality. Reader, John Wesley speaks, though dead he liveth still! Read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest what follows, and perchance you will in the end be willing to admit after all, that modern Spiritualism has a higher sanction and a greater use than you have hitherto believed. The sanction of truth, and the use of demonstrating faith, converting it into knowledge, and blessing humanity by, in very truth, proving there is no death, but only life, for ever and for ever, for us all.

J. J. MORSE.

JULY, 1893.

NEWS FROM THE INVISIBLE WORLD!

LETTERS CONCERNING SOME SUPERNATURAL DISTURBANCES
AT THE HOUSE OF MR. SAMUEL WESLEY, SENIOR,
AT EPWORTH, IN LINCOLNSHIRE.

LETTER I.

To Mr. Samuel Wesley, jun., from his Mother.

JAN. 12TH, 1716-7.

DEAR SAM,

THIS evening we were agreeably surprised with your packet, which brought the welcome news of your being alive, after we had been in the greatest panic imaginable, almost a month, thinking either you were dead, or one of your brothers by some misfortune had been killed.

The reason of our fears was as follows. On the first of December, our maid heard, at the door of the dining-room, several dismal groans, like a person in extremes, at the point of death. We gave little heed to her relation, and endeavoured to laugh her out of her fears. Some nights (two or three) after, several of the family heard a strange knocking in divers places, usually three or four knocks at a time, and then stayed a little. This continued every night for a fortnight; sometimes it was in the garrett, but most commonly in the nursery, or green chamber. We all heard it but your father, and I was not willing he should be informed of it, lest he should fancy it was against his own death, which, indeed, we all apprehended. But when it began to be so troublesome, both day and night, that few or none of the family durst be alone, I resolved to tell him of it, being minded he should speak to it. At first he would not believe but somebody did it to alarm us; but the night after as soon as he was in bed, it knocked loudly nine times,

just by his bedside. He rose, and went to see if he could find out what it was, but could see nothing. Afterwards he heard it as the rest.

One night it made such a noise in the room over our heads, as if several persons were walking, then run up and down stairs, and was so outrageous that we thought the children would be frightened, so your father and I rose and went down in the dark to light a candle. Just as we came to the bottom of the broad stairs, having hold of each other, on my side there seemed as if somebody had emptied a bag of money at my feet; and on his, as if all the bottles under the stairs (which were many,) had been dashed in a thousand pieces. We passed through the hall into the kitchen, and got a candle, and went to see the children, whom we found asleep.

The next night your father would get Mr. Hoole to lie at our house, and we all sat together till one or two o'clock in the morning, and heard the knocking as usual. Sometimes it made a noise like the winding up of a jack, at other times, as that night Mr. Hoole was with us, like a carpenter planing deals; but most commonly it knocked thrice and stopped, and then thrice again, and so many hours together. We persuaded your father to speak, and try if any voice would be heard. One night about six o'clock he went into the nursery in the dark, and at first heard several deep groans, then knocking. He adjured it to speak if it had the power, and tell him why it troubled his house, but no voice was heard, but it knocked thrice aloud. Then he questioned if it were Sammy, and bid it, if it were, and could not speak, knock again, but it knocked no more that night, which made us hope it was not against your death.

Thus it continued till the 28th of December, when it loudly knocked (as your father used to do at the gate) in the nursery, and departed. We have various conjectures what this may mean. For my own part I fear nothing now you are safe at London hitherto, and I hope God will still preserve you. Though sometimes I am inclined to think my brother is dead. Let me know your thoughts on it.

SUSANNAH WESLEY.

LETTER II.

To my Father.

SATURDAY, JAN. 30TH, 1716-7.

HON. SIR,

MY mother tells me a very strange story of disturbances in your house. I wish I could have some more particulars from you. I would thank Mr. Hoole if he would favour me with a letter concerning it. Not that I want to be confirmed myself in the belief of it, but for any other person's satisfaction. My mother sends to me to know my thoughts of it, and I cannot think at all of any interpretation. Wit, I fancy, may find many, but wisdom none.—Your dutiful and loving Son,

S. WESLEY, jun.

LETTER III.

From Mr. S. Wesley, jun., to his Mother.

JANUARY 19TH, 1716-7.

DEAR MOTHER,

THOSE who are so wise as not to believe any supernatural occurrences, though ever so well attested, could find a hundred questions to ask about those strange noises you wrote me an account of; but for my part I know not what question to put, which, if answered, would confirm me more in the belief of what you tell me. Two or three I have heard from others. Was there never a new maid, or man, in the house, that might play tricks? Was there nobody above in the garrets when the walking was there? Did all the family hear it together when they were in one room, or at one time? Did it seem to be all in the same place at the same time? Could not cats, or rats, or dogs, be the sprights? Was the whole family asleep when my father and mother went down stairs? Such doubts as these being replied to, though they could not, as God himself assures, convince them who believe not Moses and the prophets, yet would strengthen such as do believe. As to my particular opinion concerning the events foreboded by these noises, I cannot, I must confess, form any—I think, since it was not permitted to speak, all guesses must be vain. The end of spirits'

actions is yet more hidden than that of men, and even this latter puzzles the most subtle politicians. That we may be struck so as to prepare seriously for any ill, may, it is possible, be one design of providence. It is surely our duty and wisdom to do so.

Dear mother, I beg your blessing on your dutiful and affectionate Son,
S. WESLEY, jun.

I expect a particular account from every one.

LETTER IV.

From Mrs. Wesley to her son Samuel.

JAN. 25TH or 27TH, 1716-7.

DEAR SAM,

THOUGH I am not one of those that will believe nothing supernatural. but am rather inclined to think there would be frequent intercourse between good spirits and us, did not our deep lapse into sensuality prevent it; yet I was a great while ere I could credit anything of what the children and servants reported concerning the noises they heard in several parts of our house. Nay, after I had heard myself, I was willing to persuade myself and them that it was only rats and weasles that disturbed us, and having been formerly troubled with rats, which were frighted away by sounding a horn, I caused a horn to be procured, and made them blow it all over the house. But from that night they began to blow, the noises were more loud and distinct, both day and night, than before, and that night we rose and went down, I was entirely convinced that it was beyond the power of any human creature to make such strange and various noises.

As to your questions, I will answer them particularly, but withal, I desire my answers may satisfy none but yourself, for I would not have the matter imparted to any. We had both man and maid new this last Martinmas, yet I do not believe either of them occasioned the disturbance, both for the reason above mentioned, and because they were more affrighted than anybody else. Besides, we have often heard the noises when they were in the room by us; and the maid particularly was in such a panic, that she was almost

incapable of all business, nor durst ever go from one room to another, or stay by herself a minute after it began to be dark.

The man Robert Brown, whom you well know, was most visited by it lying in the garret, and has often been frightened down bare foot, and almost naked, not daring to stay alone to put on his clothes, nor do I think, if he had power, he would be guilty of such villainy. When the walking was heard in the garrett, Robert was in bed in the next room, in a sleep so sound that he never heard your father and me walk up and down, though we walked not softly, I am sure. All the family has heard it together, in the same room, at the same time, particularly at family prayers. It always seemed to all present in the same place at the same time, though often before any could say it is here, it would remove to another place.

All the family, as well as Robin, were asleep when your father and I went down stairs, nor did they awake in the nursery when we held the candle close by them, only we observed that Hetty trembled exceedingly in her sleep, as she always did, before the noise awaked her. It was commonly nearer her than the rest, which she took notice of, and was much frightened, because she thought it had a particular spite at her: I could multiply particular instances, but I forbear. I believe your father will write to you about it shortly. Whatever may be the design of Providence in permitting these things, I cannot say. *Secret things belong to God*; but I entirely agree with you that it is our wisdom and duty to prepare seriously for all events.

SUSANNAH WESLEY.

LETTER V.

Miss Susannah Wesley to her brother Samuel.

EPWORTH, JANUARY 24TH, 1716-7.

DEAR BROTHER,

ABOUT the first of December, a most terrible and astonishing noise was heard by a maid servant, as at the dining-room door, which caused the up-starting of her hair, and made her ears prick forth at an unusual rate. She said it was like the groans of one expiring. These so frightened her,

that for a great while she durst not go out of one room into another, after it began to be dark, without company. But, to lay aside jesting, which should not be done in serious matters, I assure you that, from the first to the last of a lunar month, the groans, squeaks, tinglings, and knockings, were frightful enough.

Though it is needless for me to send you an account of what we all heard, my father himself having a larger account of the matter than I am able to give, which he designs to send you ; yet, in compliance with your desire, I will tell you as briefly as I can what I heard of it. The first night I ever heard it my sister Nancy and I were sat in the dining-room. We heard something rush on the outside of the doors that opened into the garden, then three loud knocks, immediately after other three, and in half a minute the same number over our heads. We inquired whether anybody had been in the garden, or in the room above us, but there was nobody. Soon after my sister Molly and I were up after all the family were a-bed, except my sister Nancy, about some business. We heard three bouncing thumps under our feet, which soon made us throw away our work, and tumble into bed. Afterwards the tingling of the latch and warming-pan, and so it took its leave that night.

Soon after the above mentioned, we heard a noise as if a great piece of sounding metal was thrown down on the outside of our chamber. We, lying in the quietest part of the house, heard less than the rest for a pretty while ; but the latter end of the night Mr. Hoole sat up on, I lay in the nursery, where it was very violent. I then heard frequent knocks over and under the room where I lay, and at the children's bed-head, which was made of boards. It seemed to rap against it very hard and loud, so that the bed shook under them. I heard something walk by my bed-side, like a man in a long night-gown. The knocks were so loud, that Mr. Hoole came out of their chamber to us. It still continued. My father spoke, but nothing answered. It ended that night with my father's particular knock, very fierce.

It is now pretty quiet, only at our repeating the prayers for the king and prince, when it usually begins, especially

when my father says, "Our most gracious Sovereign Lord," &c. This my father is angry at, and designs to say *three* instead of *two* for the royal family. We all heard the same noise, and at the same time, and as coming from the same place. To conclude this, it now makes its personal appearance; but of this more hereafter. Do not say one word of this to our folks, nor give the least hint.

I am, your sincere friend and affectionate sister,
SUSANNAH WESLEY.

LETTER VI.

Mr. S. Wesley, jun., in Answer.

DEAN'S YARD, FEB. 9TH, 1716-7.

DEAR SISTER SUKEY,

YOUR telling me the spirit has made its personal appearance, without saying how, or to whom, or when, or how long, has excited my curiosity very much. I long mightily for a farther account of every circumstance by your next letter. Do not keep me any longer in the dark. Why need you write the less because my father is to send me the whole story. Has the disturbance continued since the 28th of December? I understand my father did not hear it at all, but a fortnight after the rest. What did he say remarkable to any of you when he did hear it? As to the devil's being an enemy to King George, were I the king myself, I should rather old Nick should be my enemy than my friend. I do not like the noise of the night-gown sweeping along the ground, nor its knocking like my father. Write when you receive this, though nobody else should, to your loving brother.

S.W.

LETTER VII.

Mr. S. Wesley, jun., to his Mother.

DEAR MOTHER,

YOU say you could multiply particular instances of the spirit's noises, but I want to know whether nothing was ever seen by any. For though it is hard to conceive, nay, morally impossible, that the hearing of so many people could be deceived, yet the truth will be still more manifest

and undeniable if it is grounded on the testimony of two senses. Has it never at all disturbed you since the 28th of December? Did no circumstance give any light into the designs of the whole?

Your obedient and loving Son,

S. WESLEY, jun.

Have you dug in the place where the money seemed poured at your feet?

LETTER VIII.

Mr. S. Wesley to his Father.

FEBRUARY 12TH.

HONOURED SIR,

I HAVE not yet received any answer to the letter I wrote some time ago, and my mother in her last seems to say, that as yet I know but a very small part of the whole story of strange noises in our house. I shall be exceeding glad to have the whole account from you. Whatever may be the main design of such wonders, I cannot think they were ever meant to be kept secret. If they bode anything remarkable to our family, I am sure I am a party concerned. Your dutiful Son,

S. WESLEY.

LETTER IX.

From Mr. S. Wesley to his Sister Emily.

FEBRUARY 12TH.

DEAR SISTER EMILY,

I WISH you would let me have a letter from you about the spirit, as indeed from every one of my sisters. I cannot think any of you superstitious, unless you are much changed since I saw you. My sister Hetty, I find, was more particularly troubled. Let me know all. Did anything appear to her?—I am, your affectionate Brother,

S. WESLEY.

LETTER X.

From Mr. Samuel Wesley, sen., to his Son Samuel.

FEBRUARY 11TH, 1716-7.

DEAR SAM,

As for the noises, etc., in our family, I thank God we are

now all quiet. There were some surprising circumstances in that affair. Your mother has not written you a third part of it. When I see you here, you shall see the whole account, which I wrote down. It would make a glorious penny book for Jack Dunton; but while I live I am not ambitious for anything of that nature. I think that's all, but blessings, from your loving Father,

SAM. WESLEY.

LETTER XI.

From Miss Emily Wesley to her brother Samuel.

DEAR BROTHER,

I THANK you for your last, and shall give you what satisfaction is in my power, concerning what has happened in our family. I am so far from being superstitious, that I was much inclined to infidelity, so that I heartily rejoice at having such an opportunity of convincing myself past doubt or scruple, of the existence of some beings besides those we see. A whole month was sufficient to convince anybody of the reality of the thing, and to try all ways of discovering any trick, had it been possible for any such to have been used. I shall only tell you what I myself heard and leave the rest to others.

My sisters in the *paper* chamber had heard noises, and told me of them, but I did not much believe, till one night, about a week after the first groans were heard, which was the beginning, just after the clock had struck ten, I went down stairs to lock the doors, which I always do. Scarce had I got up the best stairs when I heard a noise, like a person throwing down a vast coal in the middle of the fore kitchen, and all the splinters seemed to fly about from it. I was not much frightened, but went to my sister Sukey, and we together went over all the low rooms, but there was nothing out of order.

Our dog was fast asleep, and our only cat in the other end of the house. No sooner was I got up stairs, and undressed for bed, but I heard a noise among many bottles that stand under the best stairs, just like the throwing of a great stone among them, which had broken them all to pieces. This made me hasten to bed, but my sister Hetty,

who sits up always to wait on my father going to bed, was still sitting on the lowest step on the garrett stairs, the door being shut at her back, when soon after there came down the stairs behind her something like a man, in a loose night-gown trailing after him, which made her fly, rather than run, to me in the nursery.

All this time we never told our father of it, but soon after we did. He smiled, and gave no answer, but was more careful than usual, from that time, to see us in bed, imagining it to be some of us young women that sat up late and made a noise. His incredulity, and especially his imputing it to us, or our lovers, made me, I own, desirous of its continuance till he was convinced. As for my mother, she firmly believed it to be rats, and sent for a horn to blow them away. I laughed to think how wisely they were employed, who were striving half a day to fright away "Jeffrey," for that name I gave it, with a horn.

But whatever it was, I perceived it could be made angry, for from that time it was so outrageous, there was no quiet for us after ten at night. I heard frequently between ten and eleven, something like the quick winding up of a jack, at the corner of the room by my bed's head, just the running of the wheels and the creaking of the iron work. This was the common signal of its coming. Then it would knock on the floor three times, then at my sister's bed's head in the same room, almost always three together, and then stay. The sound was hollow, and loud, so as none of us could ever imitate.

It would answer to my mother, if she stamped on the floor, and bid it. It would knock when I was putting the children to bed, just under me where I sat. One time little Kesy, pretending to scare Patty, as I was undressing them, stamped with her foot on the floor, and immediately it answered with three knocks just in the same place. It was more loud and fierce if any one said it was rats, or anything natural.

I could tell you abundance more of it, but the rest will write, and therefore it would be needless. I was not much frightened at first, and very little at last; but it was never near me, except two or three times, and never followed me, as it did my sister Hetty. I have been with her when it

has knocked under her, and when she has removed has followed, and still kept just under her feet, which was enough to terrify a stouter person.

If you would know my opinion of the reason of this, I shall briefly tell you. I believe it to be witchcraft, for these reasons. About a year since there was a disturbance at a town near us, that was undoubtedly witches, and if so near, why may they not reach us? Then my father had, for several Sundays before its coming, preached warmly against consulting those that are called cunning men, which our people are given to; and it had a particular spite at my father.

Besides, something was thrice seen. The first time by my mother, under my sister's bed, like a badger, only without any head that was discernible. The same creature was sat by the dining-room fire one evening; when our man went into the room it run by him, through the hall under the stairs. He followed with a candle, and searched, but it was departed. The last time he saw it in the kitchen, like a white rabbit, which seems likely to be some witch; and I do so really believe it to be one, that I would venture to fire a pistol at it if I saw it long enough. It has been heard by me and others since December. I have filled up all my room, and have only time to tell you, I am, your loving sister,

EMILY WESLEY.

LETTER XII.

Miss Susannah Wesley to her Brother Samuel.

MARCH 27TH.

DEAR BROTHER,

I SHOULD farther satisfy you concerning the disturbances but it is needless, because my sisters, Emily and Hetty, write so particularly about it. One thing I believe you do not know, that is, last Sunday, to my father's no small amazement, his trencher danced upon the table a pretty while, without anybody stirring the table. When, lo! an adventurous wretch took it up, and spoiled the sport, for it remained still ever after. How glad should I be to talk with you about it. Send me some news, for we are secluded from the sight or hearing of any versal thing except "Jeffrey."

SUSANNAH WESLEY.

*A Passage in a Letter from my mother to me,
dated March 27th, 1717.*

I CANNOT imagine how you should be so curious about our unwelcome guest. For my part, I am quite tired with hearing or speaking of it; but if you come among us, you will find enough to satisfy all your scruples, and perhaps may hear or see it yourself.

S. WESLEY, jun.

*A Passage in a Letter from my sister Emily, to
Mr. N. Berry, dated April 1, 1717.*

TELL my brother the spright was with us last night, and heard by many of our family, especially by our maid and myself. She sat up with drink, and it came just at one o'clock, and opened the dining-room door. After some time it shut again. She saw as well as heard it both shut and open, then it began to knock as usual. But I dare write no longer, lest I should hear it.

EMILY WESLEY.

THE DIARY OF MR. S. WESLEY, SENR.

*Journal, or Diary, of Mr. Samuel Wesley, senr., transcribed by the
late Rev. John Wesley, August 27, 1726.*

*Account of Noises and Disturbances in my house at Epworth,
Lincolnshire, in December and January, 1716-17.*

FROM the first of December, my children and servants heard many strange noises, groans, knockings, etc., in every storey, and most of the rooms of my house, but I heard nothing of it myself. They would not tell me for some time, because, according to the vulgar opinion, if it boded any ill to me, I could not hear it. When it increased, and the family could not easily conceal it, they told me of it.

My daughters, Susannah and Ann, were below stairs in the dining-room, and heard first at the doors, then over their heads, and the night after a knocking under their feet, though nobody was in the chambers or below them. The like they and my servants heard in both the kitchens, at the door against the partition, and over them. The maid servant heard groans as of a dying man. My daughter Emily coming down the stairs to draw up the clock, and

lock the doors at ten at night, as usual, heard under the staircase a sound among some bottles there, as if they had been all dashed to pieces ; but when she looked, all was safe.

Something like the steps of a man was heard going up and down stairs, at all hours of the night, and vast rumblings below stairs, and in the garrets. My man, who lay in the garrett, heard some one come slaring through the garrett to the chamber, rattling by his side, as if against his shoes, though he had none there ; at other times walking up and down stairs when all the house was in bed, and gobbling like a turkey-cock. Noises were heard in the nursery and all the other chambers, knocking first at the feet of the bed and behind it, and a sound like that of dancing in a matted chamber next the nursery, when the door was locked, and nobody in it.

My wife would have persuaded them it was rats within doors, and some unlucky people knocking without, till at last we heard several loud knocks in our own chamber, on my side of the bed ; but till, I think, the 21st at night, I heard nothing of it. That night I was waked a little before one, by nine distinct very loud knocks, which seemed to be in the next room to ours, with a sort of pause at every third stroke. I thought it might be somebody without the house, and having got a stout mastiff, hoped he would soon rid me of it.

The next night I heard six knocks, but not so loud as the former. I know not whether it was in the morning after Sunday the 23rd, when about seven my daughter Emily called her mother into the nursery, and told her she might now hear the noises there. She went in, and heard it at the bedsteads, then under the bed, then at the head of it. She knocked, and it answered her. She looked under the bed, and thought something ran from thence, but could not well tell of what shape, but thought it most like a badger.

The next time but one, we were awaked about one by the noises, which were so violent, it was in vain to think of sleep while they continued. I rose, and my wife would rise with me. We went into every chamber, and down stairs ; and generally, as we went into one room, we heard it in

that behind us, though all the family had been in bed several hours.

When we were going down stairs, and at the bottom of them, we heard, as Emily had done before, a clashing among the bottles, as if they had been broken to pieces, and another sound distinct from it, as if a peck of money had been thrown down before us. The same three of my daughters heard at another time.

We went through the hall into the kitchen, when our mastiff came whining to us, as he did always after the first night of its coming; and then he barked violently at it, but was silent afterwards, and seemed more afraid than any of the children. We still heard it rattle and thunder in every room above or behind us, locked as well as open, except my study, where as yet it never came. After two we went to bed, and were pretty quiet the rest of the night.

Wednesday night, December 26, after or a little before ten, my daughter Emily heard the signal of its beginning to play, with which she was perfectly acquainted; it was like the strong winding up of a jack. She called us, and I went into the nursery, where it used to be most violent. The rest of the children were asleep. It began with knocking in the kitchen underneath, then seemed to be at the bed's feet, then under the bed, at last at the head of it. I went down stairs, and knocked with my stick against the joists of the kitchen. It answered me as often and as loud as I knocked; but then I knocked as I usually do at my door, 1—2 3 4 5 6—7, but this puzzled it, and it did not answer, or not in the same method; though the children heard it do the same exactly twice or thrice after.

I went up stairs and found it still knocking hard, though with some respite, sometimes under the bed, sometimes at the bed's head. I observed my children that they were frightened in their sleep, and trembled very much till it waked them. I stayed there alone, bid them go to sleep, and sat at the bed's feet by them, when the noise began again. Soon after it gave one knock on the outside of the house. (all the rest were within) and knocked off for that night.

I went out of doors, sometimes alone, at others with company, and walked round the house, but could see or hear nothing. Several nights the latch of our lodging

chamber would be lifted up very often, when all were in bed. One night, when the noise was great in the kitchen, and on a deal partition, and the door in the yard, the latch whereof was often lift up, my daughter Emily went and held it fast on the inside, but it was still lifted up, and the door pushed violently against her, though nothing was to be seen on the outside.

When we were at prayers, and came to the prayers for King George, and the Prince, it would make a great noise over our heads constantly, whence some of the family called it a Jacobite. I have been thrice pushed by an invisible power, once against the corner of my desk in the study, a second time against the door of the matted chamber, a third time against the right side of the frame of my study door, as I was going in.

I followed the noise into almost every room in the house, both by day and by night, with lights and without, and have sat alone for some time, and when I heard the noise, spoke to it, to tell me what it was, but never heard any articulate voice, and only once or twice two or three feeble squeaks, a little louder than the chirping of a bird, but not like the noise of rats, which I have often heard.

I had designed on Friday, December the 28th, to make a visit to a friend, Mr. Downs, at Normandy, and stay some days with him, but the noises were so boisterous on Thursday night, that I did not care to leave my family. So I went to Mr. Hoole, of Haxey, and desired his company on Friday night. He came, and it began after ten, a little later than ordinary. The younger children were gone to bed, the rest of the family and Mr. Hoole were together in the matted chamber. I sent the servants down to fetch in some fuel, went with them, and stayed in the kitchen till they came in. When they were gone, I heard loud noises against the doors and partition, and at length the usual signal, though somewhat after the time. I had never heard it before, but knew it by the description my daughter had given me. It was much like the turning about of a wind-mill when the wind changes. When the servants returned, I went up to the company, who had heard the other noises below, but not the signal. We heard all the knocking as usual, from one chamber to another, but at its going off,

like the rubbing of a beast against the wall ; but from that time till January the 24th, we were quiet.

Having received a letter from Samuel the day before, relating to it, I read what I had written of it to my family ; and this day at morning prayer, the family heard the usual knocks at the prayer for the King. At night they were more distinct, both in the prayer for the king and that for the prince ; and one very loud knock at the *amen* was heard by my wife, and most of my children at the inside of my bed. I heard nothing myself. After nine, Robert Brown, sitting alone by the fire in the back kitchen, something came out of the copper-hole like a rabbit, but less, and turned round five times very swiftly. Its ears lay flat upon its neck, and its little scut stood straight up. He ran after it with the tongs in his hands, but when he could find nothing he was frightened, and went to the maid in the parlour.

On Friday, the 25th, having prayers at church, I shortened, as usual, those in the family at morning, omitting the confession, absolution, and prayers for the king and prince. I observed when this is done there is no knocking. I therefore used them one morning for a trial ; at the name of king George it began to knock, and did the same when I prayed for the prince. Two knocks I heard, but took no notice after prayers, till after all who were in the room, ten persons besides me, spoke of it, and said they heard it. No noise at all the rest of the prayers.

Sunday, January 27. Two soft strokes at the morning prayers for king George, above stairs.



CONCLUSION.

THE publisher deemed it best to print the foregoing letters free from any comments. The reader can thus peruse them without the distraction of any other questions being raised

at the moment. Now that the reader has considered the letters, just a few words in conclusion, upon some of the salient points they raise, may be permissible.

Mr. Samuel Wesley, sen., has set out with evident care a fairly concise narration of the events, as extracts from his diary will show. As usual, there was at first an amount of scepticism concerning the nature of the cause of the disturbances. Mrs. Wesley suggesting rats and even weasles, while Samuel Wesley, jun., hints at rats, cats, or dogs, yet he naively accepts the action of spirits as the interpretation of the mystery. On three occasions old Mr. Wesley was pushed by the invisible power, while the sounds of knockings, and of walking to and fro, and the shutting and opening of doors, were quite common, and upon one occasion, Mr. Wesley's dinner plate—"trencher,"—was set to twirling upon the table. Miss Emily Wesley alleges "witchcraft" as the explanation, but, through all the windings of the story as laid out in the letters, or, in the more connected presentation in the narrative in the diary, the intelligence of the things named "Jeffrey" stand out clearly. It seems a thousand pities that "Jeffrey" was not more carefully investigated, more closely interrogated, for, as Mr. Stead would say, the "spook" was evidently desirous to enter into conference; while, had Mr. Myers or Mr. Sedgwick on behalf of the Society for Psychical Research been there, no doubt by this time that interesting and amiable body would have been able to report that "Jeffrey" was a clear case of trans-coporeal manifestation.

To Spiritualists, however, who have devoted over forty-five years to a painstaking verification, and re-verification of the facts upon which they assert the reality of communion with departed persons, the narrative of the Wesley phenomena has many familiar touches. Its simplicity, directness, and naturalness are obvious. But to them the sporadic "Jeffrey" and his intermittent phenomena have become the orderly manifestations of the Spirit "Circle," produced by beneficent and intelligent spirits in accordance with natural law, in harmony with divine wisdom. Thousands can give testimony to-day as direct and straightforward as to the reality of spiritual phenomena, even more remarkable and convincing than those set forth in these most

interesting letters, and which testimony, in either case, clearly tends to show that mankind really does receive

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