

with it for one night, and a few people straggling in, we withdrew to the little room for a time.

We could soon see that our audience was not likely to be a large one, which we attributed to the snow and cold, and we came out, and placed the members of the spiritual association in two rows of chairs, without a gangway, before the platform, in order that strangers should not have the chance to approach too near, and then we opened the meeting with a hymn.

In lieu of the lecture which I had so carefully constructed, I gave an impromptu address, after which we announced that the manifestations would begin, and we requested that the very best order might be observed, for the conditions under which the spirits worked were so extremely delicate, that the least disturbance would probably prevent a successful issue of our attempt to give the blessings of Spiritualism to the public.

We also informed them that we intended to give a test, to convince them of our honesty, which was the sack-test, and the medium would allow himself to be fastened in that, under the supervision of two referees from the audience.

Some little disturbance was caused at this point by a conceited little tailor, who refused to believe in the *bona fides* of the referees chosen by the majority of the audience.

I believe, if I remember aright, we had allowed him to come in at half-price, and he gave us to understand that he meant to have the full worth of his sixpence. I refused to have him on the platform, but Thomson told me to let him come up, as he couldn't hurt.

When the little fellow came up, he was asked to see that the knots and seals were in proper order, but being apparently a quarrelsome sort, he refused, and said—

“No, I don't never trust to nobody; I want to tie them knots myself.”

We allowed him to have his own way in everything, and then he professed himself satisfied, saying, as he looked cunningly around—

“There, he won’t get away from that.”

I believe the tailor stood in more danger now than he suspected, for I fancied the phenomenon seemed much inclined to try his muscular mesmerism on him, and I confess I experienced a sharp longing to bundle the little fellow out of the place ; but I checked my feelings, and drawing the curtain which enclosed Thomson in the cabinet, we requested every one to take his seat, and the tailor to take off his hat.

As the conditions appeared highly antagonistic, I did not anticipate a very successful meeting ; nor was I deceived, for although the physical manifestations were just as striking under the knots and seals of the tailor as at other times, yet the form itself was not vouchsafed. The guitar strummed, the bells rung, and a small harmonium was vigorously played ; and to finish, the coat of the medium came flying over the top of the curtains into our midst, and then I was pleased to hear Joey’s voice, telling us that the spirits could do no more.

We had allowed a light strong enough to see everything that was passing in the room, and I sat down in the front row of the audience, so that no charge of complicity on my part could be sustained ; and the tailor, when he was requested to come forward again, was much puzzled to find that all his cleverly contrived knots and seals had neither prevented manifestations, nor had they been touched. He scratched his head, perhaps to hoe out an idea, and he succeeded, for he asked if we would give him permission to take the bag home. Thomson willingly gave him his desire, and we both thought we should never see that bag again ; we expected that he might cut it to fragments to find out the secret, and if he had kept his hold of the bag, we should not have deplored its loss, seeing that we should also lose him for the following meetings.

But I owe the little fellow my sincere apologies, for he evinced no particular desire to pick or to steal, but faithfully returned his charge the next evening, at the same time admitting that he could find nothing to warrant his belief that it was a trick-sack.

We hoped now that our efforts to please him would produce better behaviour ; but his lordship of the needle and goose was just as captious and disagreeable as before.

We had for this night secured the services of our enthusiastic friend, Mr. Wilson, to act as chairman ; also two gentlemen from the town in which we lived had accompanied us. Neither of these two latter were spiritualists ; but they both acted in a perfectly straightforward manner, and fully bore out Thomson's axiom, that "a gentleman's word may always be taken."

The audience was even scantier than on the previous evening, and although our friends who came with us were intellectual enough to satisfy the most exacting speaker, I had no heart to deliver a lecture, and instead I determined to give another impromptu address.

A chattering chairman is always a nuisance. His duties should be a simple introduction of those on the platform to the audience ; but not so thought our able and eloquent president, for he rambled nearly all over Europe to find tropes and arguments to prove the truth of Spiritualism, and of our particular integrity ; although he knew less of Spiritualism, and not more of ourselves, than did his impatient listeners, who silently protested against the notion that they were there to hear a history of either, however grand.

He floundered about, and in short I do not think he knew how to stop ; but at last the wearisome oration began to falter, and after a few spasmodic gurgles, died away.

I have been frightened at an audience, but never before ashamed. Our friend, whose only fault was his over-kindness, had spoken of me as possessing such superlative powers, that I was meditating an abrupt retreat to the side-room, when he finished, and I courageously faced my hearers and completely gave the lie to the splendid *éloge* of my chairman.

And then the manifestations were about to commence, and our elumbated tailor came forward to distinguish himself again. He almost eyed the bag with an air of proprietorship, since he had once taken it home ; but after

some little squabbling he again professed himself satisfied, though not before he had told one of the two gentlemen with us (a banker) that he was in league with "them Sperritcherlists." But as little notice as possible was taken of this curiosity, who was quite bewildered and very angry.

Precisely the same occurred as on the previous evening. The physical manifestations were very lively, but we were not given any materialisations, and for this reason I believe the Association were very angry; they had bargained rather hardly with us for the little hall, and yet considered themselves in the light of free guests, though we did not by any means object to this, for they formed a little body-guard for our protection. They were bitterly disappointed because they did not see a materialisation; they did not want the physical, they had plenty of that.

After this meeting, Thomson said to me—

"Well, I have been a medium for over ten years, but I never before fell into such hands; that secretary ought to have told us of these people, and then I wouldn't have gone near the place for anything."

"Could you have escaped from the bag with that man's tying?"

"Don't talk nonsense; of course I could, but I was afraid they would attempt a seizure of the form."

"I did not think so once, but I think now that it is much too dangerous to offer this to the public. I don't think the secretary is to blame, for in a mixed audience we are sure to have such undesirable customers."

"Are we?" sneered Thomson, who was in a bad temper.

"That is my opinion, and now it is supported by facts."

"Oh. Well, I have given great numbers of public meetings in England and on the Continent, and never met such a lot. Do you know, that, in America, if a little snob like that were to attempt such antics, he would be quickly flung out; and then look at the meetings we gave in London, how pleasant and orderly everybody was."

"It certainly has been an unfortunate venture; and to tell you the truth, I'm not sorry."