

felt improbability of spiritual communications, and my own feelings of scepticism on that point, I will not say that spirits have been concerned in the case; but whatever be the agency, I am clear as to the *acta*, or things done. Under a light application of the hands of a few of my family and myself, a round table has moved both linearly and round—in the latter manner so rapidly at some moments, that I counted six revolutions in half a minute. With hands disposed in the same manner, we have received signals of various kinds in answers to questions, sometimes by tappings, but more frequently by lateral movements of the table on its feet, or by its tilting in a particular direction as requested. I can fully depend on the probity of the three or four members of the family circle who were associated with me in the experiments; but what places the matter beyond doubt is, that some of the responses involve matters known only to myself. I may add, that the same phenomena have been elicited, under my care, in another family, composed of persons to whom they were entirely a novelty. I am therefore left in no doubt as to the verity of the alleged facts, and, in justice to the professed Mediums, must withdraw my hypothesis, that they are first deceived by themselves, and then unintentionally deceive others."

Thus ye see that the mystery of table-moving is identified with spiritual manifestations, an', consequently, Doctor, if ye are at a loss for the motive power o' the tables, ye have only to gang to the speerits!

DOCTOR.—But, Laird, all that you have told us I do not admit as evidence. On the contrary, hear the following sensible remarks of the *Illustrated London News* on the "Mystery of the tables"—

"The matter-of-fact people of the nineteenth century have planged all at once into the bottomless depths of spiritualism. The love of the marvellous is not to be eradicated by the school-master. There are multitudes of hard-headed, business-like people, safely to be trusted in any matter of commerce or of money—people who can reason, and argue, and detect the flaws and the contradictions in statements and theories which they do not approve—who continually wear some pet absurdity of their own. They hug it like a garment, and refuse to shuffle it off till they can robe themselves in another absurdity not a whit better than the old one, except in the gloss of its novelty, and in the fashion of its cut. Something of the kind is always occurring to excite the laughter of those who smile, and the tears of those who weep, at the follies of humanity. Neither Democritus nor Heraclitus need lack disciples in our day. It is not only the ignorant and the vulgar, but the educated and refined who yield themselves up, the unsuspecting, if not the eager, victims of self-deception. In fact, it may be asserted that the lower classes—men and women who battle with the sternest realities of life—are less apt than the wealthier and more luxurious to seek excitement in the wonderful, and to feed their credulity with the incomprehensible. It has been so in all ages. The days of witchcraft had scarcely passed away when the idle

and the fashionable listened with keen curiosity to the wonderful stories related in the "*Sadducismus Triumphatus*," and swallowed with open mouths the reports of the spirit-rappings at the house of M. Mompesson. About the same time (two hundred years ago) appeared Valentine Greatraks, with his sympathetic salve, which cured the most desperate hurts—not by application to the wound, but to the sword or pistol which caused it. Valentine Greatraks had thousands of believers; and to have doubted of the marvellous cures which he effected would have been to run the risk of being scouted from good society. The famous metallic tractors of Dr. Haygarth, introduced sixty or seventy years ago, were a nine days' wonder, and were thought to have revolutionized the science of medicine, until it was found that wooden tractors, painted to imitate metallic ones, were as good as the genuine articles, and that neither had any effect, except upon the hypochondriacal and the weak-minded. Mr. St. John Long, at a comparatively recent period, rubbed the backs of the wealthy, and was growing rich by the process, until an unforeseen, and, to him, unwelcome casualty brought him within the grasp of the law, and caused his fashionable theory and his extensive practice to explode amid popular disgust. The Cocklane Ghost, the spirit-rappings of Stockwell, and the dancing porridge-pots of Baldrarroch, all had their day and their believers. We cite these cases at random, and might select hundreds of others that are familiar to those who have made the credulity of the multitude their study. There is nothing too absurd for the belief both of the ignorant and the educated. There is no system of mis-called philosophy, especially if it meddle with the business of the physician, that is too outrageous for encouragement, or too ridiculous for admiration.

"In an age which has been pre-eminently practical and material, dead superstitions start out of their graves, and squeak and jabber in our streets. The haunted house rears its head next door to the Mechanics' Institute; and in the same town in which a Faraday is lecturing upon the newly-discovered truths of science, a clever adventuress calls up ghosts for a fee, and pretends to reveal the ineffable secrets of another life. The old fables of witchcraft and demoniacal possession, are surpassed by the modern marvels, which we are called upon to believe, under the penalty of being denounced as materialists and atheists. The extraordinary results obtained by science in our day have ceased to excite the same lively interest as of yore. Those who feed upon the highly-seasoned fare of the preternatural, are like the daughters of the horse-leech, and their cry is 'Give, give!' Even clairvoyance, opening, as it does, so vast a field of inquiry to those who consider how fearfully and wonderfully man is made, fails to unfold mysteries enough to satisfy the daring neophytes of the nineteenth century. Magnetism and electricity are great, they admit; but the human will, they assert, is greater. Electricity in Dover can rend the rocks at Calais; but the all potent will of man—either travelling upon electricity or using it as a weapon—can leave this paltry world behind, and soar amid the planets and fixed stars, or, if it choose to stay upon the earth, can become as veritable a power as: