

POPULAR SUPERSTITIONS.

Continued.

Anyone who is acquainted with the wonderful powers of ventriloquism, knows that a person may abuse that power, to the very serious annoyance of those who are easily alarmed. A ventriloquist can, without difficulty, cause unearthly sounds, groanings, knockings, &c. to be heard in different parts of the house, and he can be all the time moving about with the family, an unsuspected spectator. Many a house has been thus haunted, to the extreme terror of its occupants, and to the great mirth of the mischievous joker.

These principles will account for a vast number of those appearances, which seem to be supernatural. The man who is acquainted with these laws, thinks at once, and very naturally, that there must be ghostly agency in the production of effects, which to him are so unaccountable, and he is, therefore, too much alarmed to give the subject a cool investigation.

We have, somewhere, met with another account illustrative of the same principle.—A ship was lying becalmed, one warm summer afternoon, in the middle of the Atlantic. The atmosphere was clear, and the sky, serene, with the exception of a few clouds floating in their fleecy whiteness. As the officers of the ship were carelessly reclining upon the quarter deck, and the sailors lolling in the listlessness of a calm at sea, whistling for the wind, all were surprised by seeing, far off in the horizon, where the sky and the water seemed to meet, a ship under full canvas sailing along in the sky. The ship was upside down, the masts pointing towards the water. The vision was so distinct, that all perceived it, and marked the peculiarities of her rigging. For some considerable time she continued in view, attracting the gaze of the whole ship's company, till finally she vanished. The sailors with their customary superstition, were exceedingly alarmed. This was to them a new kind of navigation. They deemed it the certain foreboding of their own destruction. The officers, better informed with regard to the laws of nature, saw in the occurrence, a very surprising and very interesting natural phenomenon. By the peculiar state of the air and the situation of the clouds, a mirror was formed, in which by the natural operation of reflected light, they saw the image of a ship, which had not as yet ascended the horizon. There are various kinds of mirrors. Sometimes they are made of glass, sometimes of burnished steel. The water is a mirror in which you see the trees which wave luxuriantly upon the river's banks, and from the vapors which float in the heavens, as from a looking glass, images are often reflected. In a few hours after the appearance of the vision, the identical ship herself made her appearance, rising

over the convex waters. This was the ghost of a ship, and the tale has probably been narrated, with exaggerations of terror, to thousands of seamen.

Another case, somewhat similar, we somewhere have met with, though we cannot now recollect in what work, which shows how incidents, at first apparently supernatural, may be explained by known principles. On a calm day, the sailors on board a ship, many hundred miles from land, and with no other sail in sight, had their attention arrested by the distinct ringing of a bell. They ascended the topmast, but far as the eye could extend along the unobstructed horizon, nothing could be seen. From whence could this sound proceed? No bell by the common conveyance of sound, could be heard the distance that they could see.—To the sailors, this apparently unearthly ringing, seemed to be the ship's funeral knell. The mournful monotony of those mysterious tones, sent paleness into the cheek of many a hardy tar. And surely it was strange to hear such a sound in the solitude of the ocean. They thought it must come from the world of spirits, a monition of their ruin. Scientific men on board accounted for it at once, upon the well understood principle of an acoustic tube. As the report of a gun discharged upon some Alpine summit, is thrown in thundering reverberations from cliff to cliff, so in the present case, the clouds reflected the sound of the bell, of a distant ship into the focus, in which they were placed. In the tongueless voices of every echo, there is just as much of a supernatural agency. The next day they met the ship, whose bell they had heard, and found by inquiry, that at the hour they heard the sound, the crew had been violently ringing for their amusement. How many of the apparently unnatural sounds which are heard, are capable of an equally simple explanation.

To be Continued

THE MONTHS.—No. 4.

April is so called from the Latin *Aprilis*, which is derived from *Aperine*, to open.—April is the first and only month in the year, whose name is expressive of the season. It is to be deplored that the first day of this month should be still in this enlightened age, disgraced by the ridiculous custom of April fooling. The wilful lying practised and encouraged on this day, is inexpressibly injurious to the morals of the young. Lying for sport is looked upon as harmless; and hence, the habit of lying on other occasions is acquired. They, in fact, are the fools, who are guilty of the deception and falsehood.

Easter Sunday, which is always the first Lord's day following the full-moon, after the 21st March, occurs this year on

the 19th of the present month. Hence "Good," or, as it used to be called "Long" Friday, occurs on the 17th. These two days are kept in commemoration of two of the most important events that ever took place in the history of the world,—the death and the resurrection of the Saviour.—This month is distinguished for the versatility of the weather—bright sunshine, interrupted by frequent showers—a wild mixture of clear and cloudy skies, flying hail and pelting rain. Hence, an April day, is often made proverbial of fickleness of temper and conduct.—Its rapid alternations of sunshine and shower, of heat and cold, of wintry gloominess, and summer brightness, both surprise and delight us, and furnish us with a striking emblem of the variable conditions of life. Across the darkened cloud, there is often thrown the beauteous 'bow of heaven;' bright harbinger of a subsiding storm, and a pledge of security against a returning deluge. The rainbow should ever be witnessed with delight, by the young and the old, the philosopher and the saint. April is a month of hope, inspiring alike the farmer and the gardener, the voyager and the traveller, we are irresistibly led to look forward, to anticipate, with a delightful enthusiasm, the progress of the season. It is one of the excellent laws of Providence, that our minds shall be insensibly moulded to a sympathy with that season which is passing, and become deprived in a certain degree of the power of recalling the images of those which have gone by; whence we reap the double advantage of not being disgusted with the deadness of the wintry landscape, from a comparison with the hilarity of spring; and when spring appears, it comes with a freshness of beauty which charms us at once with novelty and a recognition of old delights.

WEEKLY MIRROR.

FRIDAY, APRIL 3, 1835.

American papers received since our last, contain English and French dates to the 11th Feb.—Parliament was to be opened by the King, in person, on the 19th Feb.—Money is said to be abundant in England, and all branches of trade flourishing.

PARIS, Feb. 7.—*There cannot be the least doubt now that the American indemnity will be voted by the Chamber, since the members of the Commission elected on Thursday to report on the question are unanimously in its favor. The vote of the United States Senate, which subsequently arrived, must remove most of the objections raised by the hurt pride of the French against the payment of the claims. Many members of opposition supported Ministers, or at least insisted on the necessity of fully satisfying the United States.*