

epidemic of witchcraft. Of that remarkable period, Cotton Mather—who took an unfortunately prominent part in the executions that followed,—says, “Flashy people may burlesque these things, but when hundreds of the most sober people in the country, where they have as much mother wit as the rest of mankind, know them to be true, nothing but the absurd and froward spirit of Sadduceism can question them. I have not yet mentioned one thing that will not be justified, if required, by the oaths of more considerate persons than any that can ridicule these odd phenomena.”

In A.D. 1716, occurred the Epworth rappings, in the house of Rev. Samuel Wesley, rector of Epworth and father of the distinguished brothers, Charles and John Wesley. About ten o'clock at night two servants were sitting in the dining-room and heard a knocking at the door. When opened, no one was there. Soon after there was a second knocking accompanied with a groan, which was repeated several times. During the night the house was disturbed by strange noises. This continued night after night and day after day, in every part of the house; over head, under foot, on walls and bedsteads and tables. Doors were violently thrust open against those who were opening them, the family being disturbed especially during the hours of prayer.

• Rev. Mr. Hoole, Vicar of Haxey, an eminently pious and sensible man, spent a few evenings in the family. Knockings began in the nursery. When they entered, Wesley noticed that two of the children were affected, perspiring profusely and trembling violently. Mr. Wesley became excited and was about to fire a pistol in the direction from whence the sound came, when Mr. Hoole rebuked him, saying, “You are convinced that this is something preternatural, therefore you cannot hurt them; give them no cause to hurt you.” Wesley then said sternly, “Thou deaf and dumb devil, why frighten these children that cannot answer for themselves; come to the study to me that am a man.” Immediately a violent knocking began that seemed as if the wall would be broken down. Next night the rector's challenge was accepted—the knockings began in the study. He was violently thrust back when he opened the door; noises, as if large iron bells were thrown amongst dozens of bottles; a trencher danced on the table, without any visible cause. A large mastiff dog was