

to disbelieve me than it had to disbelieve Lady Brassey. Because the general public has not penetrated Central Africa, is no reason that Livingstone did not do so; because the general public has not seen (and does not care to see) what I have seen, is no argument against the truth of what I write. To those who *do* believe in the possibility of communion with disembodied spirits, my story will be interesting perhaps, on account of its dealing throughout in a remarkable degree with the vexed question of identity and recognition. To the materialistic portion of creation who may credit me with not being a bigger fool than the remainder of the thirty-eight millions of Great Britain, it may prove a new source of speculation and research. And for those of my fellow-creatures who possess no curiosity, nor imagination, nor desire to prove for themselves what they cannot accept on the testimony of others, I never had, and never shall have, anything in common. They are the sort of people who ask you with a pleasing smile if Irving wrote "The Charge of the Light Brigade," and say they like Byron's "Sardanapalus" very well, but it is not so funny as "Our Boys."

Now, before going to work in right earnest, I do not think it is generally known that my father, the late Captain Marryat, was not only a believer in ghosts, but himself a ghost-seer. I am delighted to be able to record this fact as an introduction to my own experiences. Perhaps the ease with which such manifestations have come to me is a gift which I inherit from him, anyway I am glad he shared the belief and the power of spiritual sight with me. If there were no other reason to make me bold to repeat what I have witnessed, the circumstance would give me courage. My father was not like his intimate friends, Charles Dickens, Lord Lytton, and many other men of genius, highly strung, nervous, and imaginative. I do not believe my father had any "nerves," and I think he had very little imagination. Almost all his works are founded on his personal experiences. His *forte* lay in a humorous description of what he had seen. He possessed a marvellous power of putting his recollections into graphic and forcible language, and the very reason that his books are almost as popular to-day as when they were written, is because they are true histories of their time. There is scarcely a line of fiction in them. His body was as powerful and muscular