



THE EDITOR'S SHANTY.

SEDERUNT XIV.

[Major, Doctor and Laird.]

MAJOR.—Well, doctor, have you thought over our experiments in table moving? Have you discovered any reasonable explanation for the phenomenon?

DOCTOR.—I have thought seriously over the matter, and cannot assign any cause that will bear criticism. It appears absurd that an inanimate body having no vital communication with the experimenter, should be influenced by immaterial will; indeed, I look upon the whole affair as a gigantic humbug.

LAIRD.—Humbug now? After your sitting hours wi' the Major an' me watching the revolutions of yon round table man! Did ye na' see it turn this way, and twist that, an' move about the room wherever ye wished it? Humbug! Nae humbug, unless ye were pushing it about yourself!

DOCTOR.—I give you my honor I rested my hands but lightly on the table, and exercised only my will; the muscles of my arms and hands were at rest, at least, I believe so; yet it is possible that an involuntary muscular power may have been exerted unconsciously.

MAJOR.—Is it really possible, that we could so far deceive ourselves, as to use the muscles unknowingly, and so communicate a motion that has excited wonder in all experimenters?

DOCTOR.—I believe it possible, and if it is once proven that such may be the case, the table moving mania falls to the ground.

MAJOR.—But the involuntary muscular action of the hands on the table as a cause of motion, has, I think, been satisfactorily disproved. Take a case related in the Times: tissue paper was placed upon the table, the hands resting on the paper; notwithstanding, that

the paper was moistened with the perspiration from the hands, it was not torn as it would have been had the slightest muscular effort been made. Again, at a "Table-moving" *Conversazione* held in the Athenæum, the following experiment was tried, at the instance of the chairman, the Rev. H. H. Jones, F. R. S. A. A table was ordered to be smeared with olive oil, upon which the experimenters were to rest their fingers. Six gentlemen occupied the seats around this table, and in twenty minutes it moved. The same experiment was tried upon a larger and heavier table, eight gentlemen operating, in forty-four minutes the table moved. I will mention another case given by the Paris Correspondent of the *London Globe*. "A hat was then placed on the table, and three experimentalists—one a gentleman of sixty, another a female of fifty-four, and the third a young man of thirty-four—formed the chain, placing their fingers very lightly indeed on the brim of the hat. In one minute the hat moved round, and the persons who had their hands on it were compelled to rise and follow the movement. The hat then moved towards the edge of the table, and was falling off, when the hands were taken off, and it was replaced on the table. The chain was formed again by the same persons, and their hands were again placed very lightly in the same position as before, but to their surprise, the hat did not move. Four minutes passed, during which the hat gave no sign of motion. At the end of that time one of the observers said, "The table is rising." This was the fact. The table rose again—the hat remaining quite motionless—on two legs, and in about two minutes the third leg was about eight inches from the floor, when the table with the hat upon it, lost its balance and tipped over. This ex-