

porary aphonia possessed me,* who would have heard me? and if any did, how come to my help through those dismal and labyrinthine passages, black with the thickest darkness, and blocked with numerous gates and doors, of which the keys lay there on the table, close under the eyes of that dreadful phantom. For during my attempts to rouse my companions, it had moved round to where I had been sitting, and now stooping down, over my dissection, appeared to be closely and minutely inspecting it.

"As I looked at it, I perceived, that the peculiar apparatus which I have before alluded to, as planned and understood solely by myself, and which I had placed upon the table, around and over the subject, had become disarranged, and that various portions of it had fallen together, apparently by accident, forming entirely new combinations and co-operations.

"I could not help starting forward to remedy this, as my whole heart was fixed upon the success of my experiments, but had just hurriedly touched it, when the spectre turned its head, and looked calmly and enquiringly at me.

"I leaped back in affright, my momentary interference having confounded the apparatus more than ever; in fact I could not help fearing that it was altogether ruined.

"My concern at this was, however, in an instant absorbed in a new excitement. All at once the air of the apartment seemed to have acquired form, colour, and motion. A confused intermixture of vapoury wreaths, of every shade and colour, here and there dim, and scarcely perceptible, but elsewhere more palpable and distinct, appeared to move hither and thither, all over the large hall. More and more clear and vivid did they become, till at length the whole place seemed alive with a multitude of spectral figures, as plain to the eye as the single apparition which erewhile so disconcerted me. They appeared to be of both sexes, and of all ages, from mere infants up to the most elderly, and they moved about, apparently each engrossed with some pursuit of its own.

"I remarked that they did not avoid, or make way for each other to pass, as they glided about, but seemed to penetrate or go through each other. Two would come together, coalesce, their colours and forms seeming confounded, like one picture on paper seen behind another against a window. Then emerging, they would become distinct and separate. Their features, too, were very clearly marked, and expressive, all different, and of a more or less intellectual cast. The same look, however, of deep interest, which I had remarked in the first instance, pervaded all their countenances. They gazed at me as they went, too, but again I perceived no appearance of anything like displeasure at me; in fact, they looked at me as they did at one another. They seemed to view with much attention the whole paraphernalia about the room, especially the morbid preparations and drawings that stood and hung every where around.

"It was, indeed a most striking spectacle. I stood crouching close to the fire, in wonder and fear, whilst my companion lay stretched in deep slumber, ever and anon murmuring in his dreams.

"They were continually changing their places, like a company in an exhibition-room, and moving along the passages to the lecturing theatre, and down toward the museum. By and by I could perceive they had some means of holding converse with each other, and communicating ideas—not by speech for I heard no sound. They even appeared now and then, as I watched them closely, to draw each other's attention to particular objects, and sometimes to myself, seeming to converse interestedly with regard to me, and then they would move on as if some other thing attracted their thoughts.

"At once the idea occurred to me that these were the spirits of the many hundreds of individuals that had, for three or four generations back, found their final earthly resting-place in these rooms, and whose remains were preserved in the glass bottles and cases. Of the truth of this surmise I became immediately convinced, and curiosity then began to rise in my mind from under the weight of dread that had oppressed it.

"I have said that they appeared to be of all ages—they also seemed to have been of all callings and professions, of which their external appearance gave evidence. They were, likewise, of all ranks, from the nobleman to the beggar; for the hand of the medical student of former times, like that of death, had no respect of persons, and it mattered not to him, whether his subject were snatched from the sculptured vault and leaden coffin, or from the shallow grassy heap of the open churchyard.

"In respect of dress, a more motley masquerade could hardly be conceived. Here I would remark the elderly physician of bygone times, with his peruke, full-frilled shirt, velvet suit, diamond buckles, and gold-headed cane; there the lady of quality, with her hooped petticoat, high-heeled shoes, monstrous head-dress, and the white of her complexion rendered more brilliant by fantastic patches of black; now my eye rested on a grotesque figure that seemed to have walked out of one of Hogarth's pictures; then it would be attracted by another in the old conical-capped, and white-breeched and gaitered uniform of a soldier; anon, it would shift to a beauty of the days of the latter Charles, with hat and feather, long train, luxuriant hair, deep stomacher, and necklace of pearl. All kinds of attire were there; old white-fronted naval uniforms, broad-skirted coats of silk and velvet, covered with lace, long-lapped waistcoats, periwigs, farthingales, sacques, hoods, plaids and philabegs, quaker broad brims, and collarless coats, jewelled rapiers, and glancing decorations, though the majority seemed to have been of the lower classes, and wore dresses to suit their particular employments.

"Many there were that had their limbs in fetters; these were they who had expiated their crimes upon the tree, and had been afterwards given to the schools for dissection. Some were stout, muscular bullies—these were burglars and highwaymen; several were pale, thin, darkly-dressed, and wearing the aspect of mercantile and professional men—these were forgers, and others guilty of similar offences.

"But the excitement—the terror—added to the fog of long study, want of food and rest, were at last more than my exhausted frame was equal to,

* Aphonia—loss of voice—a symptom that may arise from various causes of the larynx.