

makes his theme the occasion of some humorous and sensible reflections. Meeting Signor Antonio Blitz at a last New-year's reception, in his sixty-third year, I was reminded of that curious essay, and of the Signor's claims to favorable recollection. His face is fresh, though not unwrinkled; his hair and beard are white; his eyes bright; his step quick; his vivacity fairly contagious. *Here* is a character who has grown rich as a proficient in legerdemain, yet has outlived criticism, and by the practice of a genuine philanthropy, and the observance of his duties as a citizen, made himself an honorable name. For fifty years he has contributed to the innocent enjoyment of old and young. His peculiar talents, early shown, induced his father to send him out upon the world when he was a little over thirteen, making his first appearance at Hamburg, playing in succession at Lubeck, Potsdam, and the principal cities of Northern Europe, every where exciting wonder as "The Mysterious Boy." After two years of adventure, the youngster returned home, in time to be folded in his mother's arms and to see her die. He was fifteen when he appeared in England, and had rare success, but did not venture upon the London boards till he was eighteen. Good fortune welcomed him from the first, and would have waited on him to the last had he not been cheated by his managers. His Irish and Scotch tours were full of incident and anecdote. In 1834, in his twenty-fifth year, he landed in America, and performed at Niblo's Garden, where he met Norton, the great cornet-player, so well known in Philadelphia, and witnessed the long contest between him and his rival on the same instrument, Signor Gambati, and played some of his best tricks on Hamblin and Brice, the distinguished theatrical managers. After a tour of New England and the West, he appeared in Philadelphia under the patronage of Maelzel, the proprietor of the celebrated Automaton Chess Player, the Burning of Moscow, the Automaton Trumpeter, and the wonderful Rope Dancer, and made his bow at the northeast corner of Eighth and Chestnut Streets in that city. What scenes of our childhood come back to us at the mere mention of these names! He next journeyed through the South, the British Provinces, the West Indies, beginning at Barbadoes and ending at Havana. After his return to the United States he settled in Philadelphia, where he has ever since resided, to use his own words, "In my own house, with ample means for all the necessaries and comforts of life, surrounded by a host of near and dear friends, whose warm hearts and smiling faces always greet and cheer me." It was in Philadelphia that he spent most of his time, not relaxing his work, and giving pleasure to thousands of all conditions in

life, in public and in private. No social party in the winter is complete without his cheering presence and amusing deceptions.

I have read the autobiography of Signor Blitz, published in 1872, not so much because it is the story of a successful necromancer, as to show how invariably he turned his talent to good account, and how often a ventriloquist and a "magician" may accomplish what defies the physician, the lawyer, and the philosopher. Some of these experiences will show that the good Signor had not labored as a mere juggler, but has left a broad white mark in history showing that he had a higher aspiration than the tricks of his trade.

His landlady in London was so alarmed by his skill, which she regarded as superhuman, that she begged him to leave her house. "Do go away sir, do; and, there, let me give you this, and perhaps you will not be tempted again;" and she handed him a Bible. He accepted it; but, on opening it, found and handed her a five-pound note from between the leaves, placed there quietly by himself, and then she felt that he was not in league with Satan. This same landlady had a son, who was the pride of her heart, but secretly an inveterate gambler, who played away all his earnings and finally used his employers' money. The Signor resolved to save him if the young man would agree to his conditions. He gladly consented, and the Signor was duly introduced to the gambling-saloon, and began to play cards. At first he lost, but gradually won until he had secured one hundred and fifty pounds, when, with his friend, he left the place. But let Mr. Blitz tell the sequel:

"After I had gained the street, and was a considerable way from the house, where my visit had not been a very agreeable one to some, who wished me to remain longer, I turned and said: 'There, Harry, you see what I have done. This fortune, as you gamblers call it, is a cheat, and the money which I have taken from those scoundrels who robbed you, was done in accordance with their own principles. Here are the cards I played with,' and beneath the light of a street lamp I showed him a pack of cards, so arranged that I could always hold the game in my hands. Besides, I designated marks by which I could tell the character of every card in the hands of my opponents. 'There,' said I, 'in those and similar ways lies the art of gambling. You have been duped, but I know that you will not be so again.'

"'I see it all—but now it is too late!' exclaimed the poor fellow. 'Now I see my disgrace.'

"'Not yet; promise me but one thing and you shall be saved.'

"'What is it? I will do—aye, anything, only for my poor mother's sake.'