

THE GLOUCESTER GHOSTS.

Is Mr. Henry Hatch's House Really Haunted?

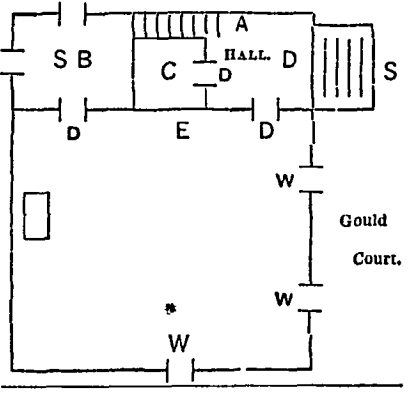
A Diagram Illustrating the Scene of the Strange Manifestations.

Similar Stories of "Old Jeffrey" and of Esther Cox.

In the comfortable kitchen of Henry Hatch at Gloucester on Sunday night sat Mr. and Mrs. Hatch and a stranger, who sought a solution of the mystery of Gould court. The room, like so many a sailor's home, was neat and clean, a snug harbor indeed for the mariner returning from the stormy sea. The conversation was in a most subdued tone, and in the intervals of silence all eyes were turned to the wall from which the mysterious noises had been heard in the past. The clock ticked out the minutes until the hour grew so late that it was known nothing would be heard, and the stranger took his leave.

The fact that the noises were not heard when listened for so intently proves nothing. Let no one doubt that they have been heard and will be heard again. The only question is, what causes them? and science alone can answer the question.

The Location of the Mysterious Noises may be outlined as below:



Alley-10 feet wide.

The large square is Hatch's kitchen. D D D represent the doors of the hall, of the room, and of the cellarway C. The windows are at W W W. S B is a small bed-room occupied by Hatch's children, S shows the steps leading up from Gould court, and A indicates where the stairs lead up over the cellarway C. The noises heard in Hatch's kitchen have come chiefly from that part of the wall marked E, and sometimes from the part marked F. A window close to the latter opens upon the alley, and any one playing a trick could be seen from it. It has already been stated that neither cellarway nor cellar affords a secure place for a person to hide in. Besides, the rapping has been heard at intervals during the last four years, and none of the tenants but Hatch have been in the house that length of time. Even if trickery were possible, there is no explainable motive for it. Hatch and his wife are both people of strong common sense, who reject the idea of there being any "ghost" in the affair, though they are fully satisfied that the noises are not the result of any ordinary agency.

If the phenomenon at Gould court were a solitary instance of knockings without visible hands, the story might be open to some doubt until further proof were given, but it has many parallels. One of the best known of such cases is found in the Wesley memoirs, where the good man and

His Family Were Sorely Persecuted by similar demonstrations. In time they became so accustomed to the noises—"Old Jeffrey" they called the unseen knocker—that it ceased to cause alarm. Another remarkable case was that of Esther Cox, at Amherst, N. S., a few years ago. In that instance the girl had been so much frightened that she was thrown into an epileptic fit; the knockings continued with great violence, and were heard by hundreds of people. Pails of water would seethe like whirlpools, cradles would rock, fragments of plaster would fly from the wall, and bricks would fall from the chimney, all without any visible cause. When Esther recovered her health the phenomena ceased. Those who investigated the case concluded that neither Spiritualism nor satanic agency had any connection with the affair, but that certain causes ascribable to the feebly understood laws of animal magnetism produced the peculiar results.

Such may be the solution of the Gloucester mystery. As no careful observations have been made of the conditions under which the knockings occur, it is difficult to find any data to reason from. This much is known; the noises are heard only before midnight, when certain electrical forces are most intense; they are heard only in the winter, and so far as can be learned at times when the air is moist. With these facts to work upon, there may be a chance for some one to solve the problem and relieve Gould court from any fear of ghostly visitants.