

## THE KATIE KING FRAUD.

A SPIRIT WITH A BAD BREATH—  
HOW AN AMATEUR DETECTIVE  
UNEARTHED THE SWINDLER—THE  
"SPIRIT'S" CONFESSION AND RES-  
TITUTION.

The full account of the discovery of the shallow trick of the Holmes was contributed to our columns by the gentleman who made it, and from whom our representative obtained it through the agency of Dr. Child. It emanates, therefore, from the highest and best authority. We can only regret that the gentleman has insisted that his name shall not be divulged, for in discovering and dragging to light the most generally believed-in swindle of the time he deserves the thanks of the community. Being possessed of the friendship and confidence of both Mr. Owen and Dr. Child, our informant had but little difficulty in convincing them of the deception practiced upon them when he got his evidence together.

This gentleman visited these seances on several occasions, and was disposed to look at the matter more from a scientific standpoint than otherwise. He discovered one evening what he supposed to be rather a singular characteristic of a "materialized" spirit. Quite a number of spirits had made their presence known by different manifestations. "Dick," "Rosa," "Ann," and the "Italian Lady," performed in the dark seances, each in their peculiar style, but the most attractive and the one producing the greatest sensation, was "Katie King," alias Annie Morgan, a maiden lady upwards of 200 years of age, as she stated, but still having all the attractions of youth and beauty, in appearance not over twenty years old. Katie had many admirers among both sexes; all the pretty names, such as "darling," "angel," "pet," etc., were lavished upon her, while the adjectives "beautiful," "splendid," "glorious," etc., were bestowed without limit. Many a well-meaning lady received her with the kind greeting, "God bless you, you lovely creature." The gentleman above referred to failed to see how spirits could cover themselves with flesh and blood; in fact such a thing "stands not within the prospect of belief," but he was still willing to be convinced, if facts sufficient existed. One evening, when in proximity to "Katie," he ascertained she had a bad breath, which produced rather an unfavorable impression; but still he reflected that a lady who had been dead two hundred years ought to have a bad breath, and he was unwilling

To bear the tidings of calamity,  
Like an unseasonable stormy day,

to others, and for the time remained quiet; in other words, "submitted to the conditions" imposed upon all frequenters of the spiritual sanctum. Believing that "flesh and blood cannot enter the kingdom of Heaven," and too gallant to believe that Miss King was spiritually in "another place," the aforesaid gentleman concluded that Katie must be "to the manner born." The admirers of Katie were neither few nor far between. In fact, the young lady had been loaded with presents, rings, lockets, pearl crosses, beads, love letters, &c., had been freely bestowed. No modern belle or acknowledged beauty could have received more attention than did Katie. A number of those who came under her influence got to writing poetry in her honor, some of this poetry was just as wretched as could possibly be put together by presuming same people. The following is a sample:

Oh, gather 'round and let us sing  
The praises of sweet Katie King,  
Who, from her bright and happy sphere,  
Comes smiling to us mortals here.

CHORUS.—Then with glad voices let all sing  
The praises of sweet Katie King.

Although the evidences of the "machine-make" verse are in the above, many of the other inspired lines are much worse as to time, sentiment, metre and rhythm. Many of the suddenly-made poets were formerly intelligent men and women, who will, probably, after reading what follows, return to their senses.

Things were going on smoothly; money was flowing into the coffers of the "mediums," and Katie's friends were jubilant at the number of converts daily being made to the cause of "spirit materialization;" but suddenly, without warn-

ing, Katie disappeared. Night after night her devotees assembled to welcome her return. The "medium" with plaintive voice sang, "I am coming; I am coming;" but she did not come. Various were the reasons assigned. Some said "she was offended at unkind remarks that had been made about her." The "medium" said that "some rude fellow had entered the cabinet and taken all the magnetism out; and, furthermore, that Katie had ascended to a 'higher sphere' and 'exhausted her strength;'" others were uncharitable enough to say that "Katie was on a strike." In the meantime the gentleman who was seeking knowledge under difficulties had been making extraordinary exertions to find her daily whereabouts—otherwise her boarding house. Little by little he quietly picked up information that enabled him to find a young lady whom he thought very much resembled Katie King. Using the most detective-like skill, he followed his clue successfully. By certain peculiarities which he observed in the Katie of the other world at the seances he found that a young woman who resembled Katie generally, and had her peculiarities, took meals with great regularity at a certain house which he had "piped off," in detective parlance. He then shadowed this woman, and found that she attended all the seances at the Holmes' House. He ultimately concluded to scrape an acquaintance with Katie in the flesh, choosing as an auspicious time an hour when the lady of materializing tendencies had been rendered happy by a good, square, worldly meal.

The first interview was a failure, the supposed Katie protested that she "did not believe in spiritualism;" declaring that she "had seen the manifestations at Holmes' but once, and so far as she knew they were all right." These assertions, however, did not satisfy the earnest seeker after truth, and various schemes, devices, plans and promises were resorted to in the hope of discovering some of the many "presents" that had been made to Katie. Through patience, perseverance, and certain considerations one present was produced. This satisfied the gentleman that he was in the right place. More patience, perseverance and promises, and out dropped another, and so on until a small table was covered with rings, lockets, crosses, beads and robes worn in the different "spheres" from which Katie had kindly descended to visit mortals at so much *per capita*. The object of the gentleman's efforts was to so narrow down the evidence of fraud that he might be able to "knock the bottom" out of the humbug at a blow, and here was his object attained. Here was not only the veritable Katie weepingly acknowledging her duplicity, but producing "material" evidence of it in the shape of all those little tokens of regard which she had been fondly believed to have borne off in her spirit shape to her abode in the other "sphere," as most of the "affected" term it. The presentation of these could not possibly fail to convince the persons who had given them to the spiritual Katie that the latter had a place of deposit on this planet for her valuables, so that course was determined upon.

All who are acquainted with the Hon. Robert Dale Owen and Dr. Henry T. Child, of this city, will not hesitate to say that they were honest, upright, truthful men, but like the rest of humanity, they are liable to be deceived. The party who had made the discovery consulted these gentlemen, showing them the "presents" which Katie had kindly loaned him. They having been identified with the manifestations from the first, were considered, when the fraud was discovered, the proper parties to denounce them. One word from them casting a doubt on the reality of the thing would have more effect upon the people than fifty exposures gotten up by outside parties. Moreover, the spiritualists who were the real victims, were supposed to have unlimited confidence in the integrity of these gentlemen. With commendable promptness they immediately sent to the *Banner of Light* the cards recently copied into our columns announcing the withdrawal of their confidence in the manifestations.

In order to make conviction absolute on the part of those who had hitherto endorsed the manifestations that the "materialisation" process was a most barefaced humbug,

the gentleman improvised a seance. Procuring a suitable apartment, to which he invited a number of "Katie's" friends, the gentleman pre-arranged with the lady, who now acquiesced in his suggestions for her appearance, dressed in the gauzy fabrics and other trappings she used to disport herself in at Holmes' shows. She did so in a sort of cabinet being hastily improvised, and the exposure was rendered complete, beyond a chance of cavil or dispute. As a result there are a few spiritualists who are better and wiser men and women, and, as a still better result, a check was administered to a most dangerous excitement, which was beginning to affect the minds of thousands of superficial thinkers, as it had already weakened those of many men and women who believed, all too willingly, in the trickery of designing, greedy, New Yorkers of the true "Yankee" stripe.

The woman who personated Katie King has already returned, as far as possible, all the presents she received to those who gave them to her. She deeply regrets her part of the swindle, and if all the facts in the case could be made public she would be freely forgiven by those who were duped by her aid. A letter was yesterday received by the lady above alluded to, containing brutal threats against her person, and warning her that if she does "not stop in her mad career" (meaning, of course, her willingness to aid in the exposure) she will be visited with the most terrible vengeance. Naturally, the sneaking coward who would write such a letter to a woman forgot to sign his name, but, although disguised, the "mediumistic" character of the penmanship has been recognized. It is said that the Holmes seances are still running, various excuses being made for the non-appearance of Katie King. Failing to be able to run the show with the "original cast," it is not altogether improbable that some one may be procured to "do" the part of Katie, while Holmes frowns the part of the old regretable pirate through a false face at another aperture in the cabinet. If, however, there is any one so silly as to be gulled by the claptrap after the exposure here made it may be taken as an indisputable evidence that they naturally belong within the limits of spiritualism.—*Philadelphia Inquirer*.

## Who Killed Coffin?

On Saturday, February 1st, 1873, Eli T. Coffin was murdered and in the evening his body was hung under a bridge on Turkey Creek, about five miles south of Atlantic. The whole case is familiar to our readers. Coffin's wife had previously died, and it is supposed that her death was caused from exposure and starvation. Coffin was worth several thousand dollars, but was miserly and selfish in his disposition. He had three children, two girls and one boy, the youngest being eleven years of age. At the time of his murder he was on bail to appear for trial on the charge of being accessory to his wife's death. The circumstances of his death led many to believe that his brother-in-law of Chicago, who came out to assist in prosecuting Coffin, and to look after the children and their interests, together with the incensed citizens of the locality, were the perpetrators of the murder. The business of the Coffin estate has not been entirely settled yet. The property was left in a complicated shape. Mr. Lyman Wright, a merchant residing at Lewis, and a brother-in-law to the murdered man, is the administrator. This much we offer that the uninformed reader may understand the following thrilling story:

Thursday evening, December 3, 1874, at 10 o'clock, Mr. Wright was alone in his store room at Lewis. L. O. Reinig, of the firm of Childs & Reinig, and James Gilmore, a well known farmer, had just gone out. Mr. Wright had fastened the back door securely, and had just blew out the lamp in the back part of the store room, passed to the cellar, and let the old savage dog (which Coffin owned during life) out of the cellar into the store room, and went to the front part of the store room to blow out the hanging lamp. Just as he turned around and set the small hand lamp which he had in his hand, on the counter, he observed a man coming from the back part of the store toward the stove. The man walked, but his footsteps made no noise. Mr. Wright silently

wondered where the man came from, as he thought all the men had gone out. The man came to the stove and noiselessly seated himself. Mr. Wright left the small lamp on the counter, and walked to the stove, where the man rose from the chair, and said—

"How are you, Mr. Wright?"

Mr. Wright took the man by the hand, and recognized him as being Eli T. Coffin, with the same clothes on that he wore on the day that he was hurried out of the world. Mr. Wright assured our special reporter that when he (Wright) took Coffin by the hand a thrill passed through his whole body such as he had never felt before. It was like taking hold of a galvanic battery.

The angel Coffin seated himself on the same chair that he just occupied, and Mr. Wright rested himself in another chair six feet distant. The old dog jumped up on Coffin's lap, and Coffin pushed him away. He had no time to fool with dogs. He had another mission to perform.

Mr. Wright asked:

"Who killed you?"

Coffin replied:

"I was shot in the stairway of Henry Roger's house, by a stranger. D. K. Carter, the DeBusk boys and Jesse Smith were there. They bucked and gagged me and left me in the lower part of Mr. Rogers' house until night. Carter put the newspapers over my head. At night they hauled me in my wagon and hung me under the bridge."

Mr. Wright asked the spirit the object of his visit now. He replied as follows:

"Whitney still has fifteen hundred dollars that he borrowed of me, and one hundred and twenty dollars that I left on deposit. I don't want Whitney to pay any of that to Carter, nor to Emma, but I want it to be divided between the boy and the other girl."

Mr. Wright says that at this juncture he felt so sure that it was Coffin that he longed for somebody else to come in and be convinced also, and hearing a noise in front like some one walking on the sidewalk, he turned his head and looked towards the front door, and when he turned his head back to its former position, the ghost, apparition, angel or whatever you may call it, was gone. After his visitor had gone, Mr. Wright lighted all the lamps in the store, and looked the establishment through from cellar to garret, but could find nobody. He then blew out the lights and started home. When about half way home, Mr. Wright informed our reporter that fear overcame him and his hair assumed a perpendicular attitude, as it were. On reaching home he told his wife his experience, and tried to go to sleep, but couldn't. He didn't sleep any that night.

Mr. Wright is well known in this country. He is not a believer in ghosts, spiritualism or anything of that kind, but he authorizes us to say that he did have just such an interview with Coffin as above narrated, and he would make oath to it if it were the last act of his life. He asks nobody to believe him, but says he knows that what he says is true. He is not a nervous or excitable man, but since he had the above angelic interview he does not feel like the same being. He talks of the matter a great deal.

We make no comments. The public have the story and can form their own conclusions, and frame their own explanations.—*Atlantic Telegram*.

## A Medium on the Bench.

A CHICAGO JUSTICE WHO DECIDES SUITS ACCORDING TO SPIRITUAL ADVICE.

Among the recent converts to Spiritualism in this city is a Justice of the Peace. Not willing to stop at the foot of the spiritual ladder and receive instructions from others, he has been busied in developing his powers as a medium, and at last has come to such a pitch of perfection as to be able to carry on long conversations with the inmates of the world beyond the grave. He no longer wastes his time in visiting saloons, but stays at home at night and holds intercourse with Kent, Blackstone, and other dead worthies of law. It is his great relaxation, when he gets home after a weary session, to light his pipe, mix a glass of punch and then have a protracted talk with Sir Ed-

ward Coke. This is really an improving way of spending the time, and may be recommended to all who desire to become experienced in the law.

These little peculiarities of the court have thus far had no influence upon the outside world, except to amuse the lawyers who found their way into his presence, whom he would inform how, on the previous evening, he had a long argument with Story on some obscure point, and had compelled him to own that he was mistaken. Yesterday, however, the matter assumed a serious form, and one lawyer at least is in a quandary as to what he shall do. During the forenoon session a case came up for trial. The attorney for the defence quoted a decision which will be found in one of the early Illinois reports. It was apparently decisive. The lawyer looked triumphantly at the judge. The latter said:

"Wait a minute; I feel the influence."

Then the Judge grabbed a lead pencil and a sheet of paper. His hand went convulsively, and at the end of five minutes he had scribbled over the entire page. When he was through he said to the lawyer: "I have just received a message from Judge Lockwood, who was one of the Judges of the Supreme Court at the time this decision was rendered. He authorizes me to say that the majority of the members of the then court, who are now in the spirit land, after mature consideration, decided to reverse their former judgment. Please inform the profession of that fact, that they may govern themselves accordingly."

Then the Judge continued: "Under the circumstances Mr. — you will see that I can pay no attention whatever to the decision you have quoted, and judgment must be rendered against you."

The lawyer remonstrated, and the Judge finally agreed to postpone the case for one week in order to give Judge Lockwood and his colleagues an opportunity to examine the matter again and see if they are determined to reverse their former opinion. The lawyers are meditating what the result will be if the doctrine of Spiritualism makes much further progress—whether it will not be necessary for them to burn all their reports, if judges in the spirit land are to be allowed to carry on the business of making decisions, and of reversing those which they have made while in this world.—*Chicago Times*.

## Diphtheria.

The general prevalence of diphtheria throughout the country this season and malignancy of the existing type makes it a matter of importance to have all available information in regard to its prevention or cure spread before the public. The practical conclusions arrived at by the Public Health Association of New York, (where the diphtheria has reached the rank of an epidemic,) are as follows:

"1. If diphtheria has gained a foothold in any city or populous neighborhood, it selects certain localities in which its persistence is specially marked, and its persistence, as shown by repeated outbreaks or continued prevalence, seems to hold an important relation to certain conditions of soil, drainage, and sanitary wants of dwellings, which admit of preventive measures.

"2. The extension of the disease from one individual to another, and to entire households or families, and from family to family, and from place to place, are facts so well proved in the history of the disease that the entire separation of the sick from the well, at least of children sick with this disease from all others, should be regarded as a first-rate sanitary duty.

"3. That the immediate sanitary as well as perfect medical care of every family exposed to it seems to be a duty required by every consideration of humanity and public health."

That diphtheria is not a new disease, and that its recent modes of prevalence are not new or in any manner unusual, is clearly proved by the medical writings of the best observers of disease. While in Europe the records of this malady extend back to the very dawning of scientific medicine, and through the last four centuries its fatal prevalence has been vividly described under various names, and its persistence and fatality have been entered in the historical records of numerous places over a vast range, from