

DARK DOINGS IN THE CUPBOARD.

BY

THE KNOTTING'EM BROTHERS.

A Farce,

IN ONE ACT.

BY

J. STIRLING COYNE,

(Member of the Dramatic Authors' Society).

AUTHOR OF

The Woman in Red, The Little Rebel, Black Sheep, The Love Knot, Presented at Court, What will they say at Brompton? Man of Many Friends, My Wife's Daughter, Box and Cox Married and Settled, Binks the Bagman, How to Settle Accounts with your Laundress, Did you ever send your Wife to Camberwell? A Duel in the Dark, Leo the Terrible, Mrs. Bunbury's Spoons, The Water Witches, An Unprotected Female, The Pas de Fascination, The Hope of the Family, Willikins and his Dinah, The Old Chateau, Fraud and its Victims, Catching a Mermaid, The Secret Agent, Duck Hunting, Samuel in Search of Himself, That Affair at Finchley, &c. &c.



THOMAS HAILES LACY,

89, STRAND, LONDON.

DARK DOINGS IN THE CUPBOARD.

*First Performed at the New Royal Adelphi Theatre,
(under the management of Mr. Benjamin Webster),
on Thursday, December 29th, 1864.*

Characters.

FRANK FAIRFAX	Mr. W. H. EBURNE.
EBENEZER SOFTSHELL.....	Mr. R. PHILLIPS.
JOE SMITH.....	Mr. J. L. TOOLE.
SAM SMIFFLE.....	Mr. P. BEDFORD.
DAN DOOLAN.....	Mr. C. H. STEPHENSON.
MR. JINKS.....	Mr. BILLINGTON.
„ MUDDIMAN.....	Mr. R. ROMER.
„ FLATMAN	Mr. BRANSCOMBE.
„ BOPPS	Mr. HITCHENSON.
„ WOPPS.....	Mr. TOMLIN.
LAURA WYDEAWAKE.....	Miss A. SEAMAN.
MRS. BUMBLEBEE	Mrs. H. LEWIS.
MARY GIGGLES.....	Mrs. A. MELLON.
MRS. FODDLES	Mrs. STOKER.
MISS CREEPMOUSE	Miss STOKER.

CONSTRUCTION OF THE CABINET.

The cabinet used in the piece resembles an ordinary wardrobe with three doors ; one on the right, opening to the right hand; another on the left, opening to the left hand; and the third, in the centre, opening to the right hand. These doors are fastened inside by means of buttons. Near the upper part of the centre door is a diamond-shaped aperture, about 8 inches in length, against which hangs, on the inside, a green silk or woollen curtain. The cabinet is fitted with three fixed seats ; one at each end, 10 inches wide, and one at the back, in the centre, 8 inches wide. These seats are 20 inches above the floor of the cabinet. The length of the structure is 6 feet 7 inches; height 6 feet 4 inches; and depth 2 feet 11 inches. At the back of the cabinet is a narrow door, close to which the musicians and assistants who make the discordant music, untie the cords, and exhibit the hands through the aperture in the front, are stationed on a platform, somewhat higher than the bottom of the cabinet, which may be constructed either of light boards, or frame work covered with canvas, painted to resemble walnutwood. The cabinet stands on three strong trestles, about 12 inches in height.

DARK DOINGS IN THE CUPBOARD.



SCENE.—*An Apartment on the first floor of Softshell's House in the Country—An open window, R. flat, at which a ladder rests outside. Door to Laura's apartment, R. U. E.—Door for general entrance, L.—Fireplace, C. In the middle of room a large Cabinet, exactly similar to that of the Davenport Brothers. Several chairs round the room—A table, L., on which are placed a banjo, violin, brass trumpet, tambourine and bell—Two coils of rope—Table, R., on which is a guitar and tambourine, and a gas lamp.*

Enter SOFTSHELL and LAURA, L.

SOFT. Ah, Laura! I was once as incredulous as you; but the united testimony of thousands of highly respectable persons, who have investigated the supernatural exhibitions of the Knotting'em Brothers, proves to me-----

LAURA. How easily thousands of highly respectable persons may be duped, uncle.

SOFT. Your incredulity on the subject of occult influences is painful; you cannot perceive the beauties of clairvoyance.

LAURA. I confess I'm totally blind to them.

SOFT. And you doubt the very existence of Od force ?

LAURA. I am odd enough to do so.

SOFT. Just like your poor dear aunt, whose mind never rose above the level of a leg of mutton with suet dumplings.

LAURA. My aunt was a positive Materialist, I believe.

SOFT. Positive! She was the most obstinate woman that ever I met; she even went so far as to thank heaven for her ignorance, and between ourselves, she had much to be thankful for. But I'm determined, Laura, that you shall be convinced of the truth of the spiritual agencies; and my friend, Doctor Jehonidah D. Quackenboss, has been fortunate enough to engage the Knotting'em Brothers to come down from London and give a *seance* to a select party here this evening. They have sent on their Cabinet, and their mysterious instruments of music, and these cords (*taking up coil of rope*) with which the wonderful brothers are to be bound. (*confidentially*) I once

learnt a hard knot from my grandmother, that nobody could ever undo.

LAURA. (*laughing*) I suppose that's the hard knot with which you mean to tie me up for life to the doctor. But take care, I may make a running knot of it, and slip out of the noose.

SOFT. Nothing will make you serious, till you are married to Quackenboss.

LAURA. That would make any girl serious.

SOFT. All prejudice; you have never seen him.

LAURA. Neither have you ; and yet you want me to marry a man, who for all you know may be an adventurer.

SOFT. Stop! stop! I've had the highest testimonials of the doctor's respectability.

LAURA. From whom?

SOFT. From the spirits; I turned the tables and got an excellent character of him.

LAURA. Ah! you have been turning the tables until they have nearly turned your poor dear head.

SOFT. That's precisely what that impudent young rascal who last summer proposed for your hand insinuated. In fact, he told me that I had been duped by a common juggler's trick;—duped was the word he used.

LAURA. Well?

SOFT. " I dispute no man's opinions," said I, " but mark what I say, young man ; you shall never marry my niece until you prove that I'm a fool, who can be duped by a juggler's trick."

LAURA. You never said that ?

SOFT. I did; and what do you think was his reply? " I accept the conditions, sir, and shall hold you to your word." Ha, ha, ha ! he'll prove me a fool. Ha, ha, ha ha! a fool.

LAURA. I have no doubt he will, if you only give him a little time, uncle.

SOFT. Six months;—I named the time, and it expires to day. By-the-bye, I wonder what delays the doctor, he was to have been here by the seven o'clock train. I'll send some one to the station to make enquiries about him. (*going, L.*) A stupendous man, Laura.

Exit, L.

LAURA. Ha, ha, ha, ha! I can't help laughing, though this ridiculous project of my uncle's may prove too serious for a joke. What am I to do should he insist upon my marrying this horrible doctor. Ah ! Frank, Frank !

Enter GIGGLES, L., with lights, crosses, and places them on table, R.

GIGGLES. I beg pardon, miss, but there's something a weighing on my mind.

LAURA. What is it, Giggles ?

GIGGLES. I'll tell the truth, Miss; there's dark doings in this house; master is visited by characters I wouldn't by no means call respectable.

LAURA. What do you mean? what characters?

GIGGLES. Spirits, miss, and such like:—Sarah, the cook says they come knocking at all hours of the night, and behave themselves scandalous,—which I dussn't put my feet under the kitchen table since I heard it,—not for any money, miss !

LAURA.—It's all nonsense, Giggles; I don't believe in spirits!

GIGGLES. Don't believe in 'em, Miss! When cook hears 'em every evening running like mice behind the dresser!

LAURA. Cook's a silly creature who spends her time turning tables, when she should be turning the joint which she sends up burnt to dinner.

GIGGLES. (*in suppressed voice*) Do you know what's in that piece of furniture, miss, that was brought here this morning ? Cook's been telling me that it's a spirit case. It's chock full of 'em, Miss ! Don't it make your flesh creep to look at it ?

LAURA. Not in the least; I have had my mind occupied with something that troubles me more. My uncle has been tormenting me about getting married.

GIGGLES. Well, miss, there's nothing so dreadful in that, is there ?

LAURA. Not absolutely. Marriage is like a game of croquet, capital fun provided you can choose your own partner:—now my uncle has selected a husband for me.

GIGGLES. And you naturally fancy somebody else.

LAURA. Giggles!

GIGGLES. La, miss ! the name of Mr. Frank Fairfax never passed my lips; but if it had where's the harm? I'm sure a handsomer, pleasanter, well spokener young gentleman I never see.

LAURA. Heigho ! Frank laughs at Spiritualism, and my uncle has refused his consent to our union.

GIGGLES. Ah, miss! all uncles are made on the same cruel pattern as the wicked one in the Babes in the Wood.

LAURA. He even forbade the poor fellow's visits,—so we have been compelled to interchange vows of eternal constancy by post.

GIGGLES. Once a week reg'lar, miss,—and double postage when the vows are overweight.

LAURA. For the last ten days though, I have not had a line from him. Can it be that he has grown cold or indifferent—that he has forgotten me ?

GIGGLES, I shouldn't wonder in the least, miss. There's no

trusting one of the male sect! I've felt myself what it is to have one's heart scrunched by a false villain, Joe Smith by name, which he sertainly was, through borrowing two p'und ten of me, likewise a silver salt spoon, to put up the banns, which he never did, though promised faithful to meet me the next Sunday in St. Pancras Church, where I gave sixpence to the beadle to call him three times through his nose, by reason of a cold in his head. But if he'd been calling him from that time till now it's my belief he'd never ha' come.

LAURA. (*musingly*) Oh, if he was here now !

GIGGLES. Shouldn't I box his ears well if he was.

(FRANK *comes from cabinet, C.*)

LAURA. Whose ears?

FRANK. (*coming between them, C.*) Mine ?

(LAURA and GIGGLES *scream and retreat*)

LAURA. Why—it's—Frank ! Where have you come from?

FRANK. (*solemnly*) From the abode of the spirits. (*points to cabinet*)

GIGGLES. Oh, don't let him near me, I'm not spirit proof.

LAURA. (*retreating*) Stop ! are you not an intangible being?

FRANK. (*kisses her*) There ! what is your opinion now on the point ?

LAURA. (*laughing*) The impression is certainly in favour of your corporeal consistency.

GIGGLES. It certainly was not an unsubstantial smack.

FRANK. (*going to GIGGLES*) You're quite right, Giggles. (*aside to her, giving her a half-crown*) There's another proof for you.

GIGGLES. (*aside*) Spirits don't slip half-crowns into young women's hands. I'm satisfied !

LAURA. Giggles will give us notice when my uncle is coming.

GIGGLES. Yes, Miss, of course I will. (*looking at half-crown —aside*) Well, he's an uncommon nice young man. *Exit, L.*

LAURA. How is it after ten days' silence—which I'll never forgive, never—you make your appearance here in such an extraordinary manner ?

FRANK. It's quite a romance, my dear Laura, a sensational drama, which I'll relate to you in two minutes. A clever roguish fellow, who had been formerly engaged as an assistant to Doctor Quackenboss, the Yankee speculator in Spiritualism, somehow discovered that your uncle intended marrying you to the Doctor, who was to give a *seance* with the Knotting'em Brothers this evening at your uncle's house. I had, however, a particular reason for wishing to mystify your respectable relative.

LAURA. I understand, dear Frank.

FRANK. My plan was soon formed; I dispatched my active

emissary by train in time to meet the doctor at the station on his arrival here, and to hand him a letter, apparently written by your uncle, informing him that the *seance* would take place at the house of Colonel Tomkins, ten miles across the country : and I had the pleasure of seeing the doctor and the marvellous brothers start an hour since for the colonel's, in a rickety trap specially provided for them by my intelligent agent, who pledges his reputation that the whole lot will be landed in a ditch before they do half the journey.

LAURA. Ha! ha! ha! ha! But how did you get into this house?

FRANK. By that ladder, which the painters had obligingly left standing outside the window. My chief confederate is to personate the Yankee spirit doctor, while two of his friends, one of them the conductor of the orchestra in Punch's theatre, the other a gentleman of Irish extraction who has mounted to the top of the ladder in architectural pursuits, have undertaken to appear as the Knotting'em Brothers in their mystical and musical performances. They are now waiting for me in the garden. *(knock outside, L.U.E.)*

LAURA. Hush! our visitors have begun to arrive; you must not remain longer here. *(opens door, R.U.E.)* This way you can descend into the garden.

FRANK. Thanks, thanks; now for a great strategic move!
Exit, R.U.E.

Enter GIGGLES, L., in great alarm.

GIGGLES. Oh! Miss Laura! oh! I've seed it, seed it, miss, with my own eyes, looking out of the second floor back, oh! *(drops into a chair, L.)* Excuse the liberty of a chair, miss, but weakness in the knees, and whizzin' in the ears, refuses to keep my tremblin' legs under me; oh my! I feel I'm a-going to faint, miss! leastways, if you couldn't oblige me with a sniff of your romantic vinegar.

LAURA. *(giving her scent bottle)* Here ;—compose yourself and tell me what you have seen.

GIGGLES. Oh! thankee, miss, *(sniffs)* I've seen the perjured spirit of Joe Smith,—*(sniffs)* ain't it strong though,—in the garding, miss, close by the cowcumber frame. *(sniffs)* It revives wonderful *(rises)* and draws tears from the eyes like a sensation drammer, *(returns the scent bottle)*—with the moon shining on it, standing there, as plain as I see you, miss.

LAURA. Hush, Giggles ! not a word;—that spirit is—I know I may depend on your fidelity and secrecy—*(SOFTSHELL calls " Laura," outside, L.)* There,—my uncle calls me, I can't tell you now,—but whatever happens, I charge you be silent.

Exit, L.

GIGGLES. It's all very well to say "be silent," but I'd like to know what young woman could be silent in a house where no followers are allowed, excepting them as comes from what master calls the invisible world. Never mind, I'll give Miss Laura warning to-morrow:—it's not to be expected I could stop in a situation where they keep spirits in a cupboard. *(seeing the ladder at window)* Well! if those good-for-nothing painters haven't left their ladder at the window. *(goes to window, R. flat, and looks out)* If I could see anybody to send to the policeman to come and take it away. *(still looking out of window)*

Enter SOFTSHELL and JOE SMITH, L., the latter is dressed in an outrageous Yankee costume.

SOFT. Allow me, Doctor Quackenboss, again to welcome you. *(shakes his hand warmly)* I esteem it an honour, a distinguished honour, sir, to see so great a man beneath my roof.

JOE. *(in Yankee style)* Wale, I can tell you I ain't a small punkin, that's a fact!

GIGGLES. *(at window)* There ain't a living soul about *(turns from window, sees JOE, screams, and covers her face with her apron, and drops in chair by table, R.)* Oh! oh! don't, please don't! oh! if you're the spirit of Joe Smith, don't come near me!

JOE. *(aside, L.)* Hollo! she knows my name.

SOFT. (C.) Whose spirit? who was Joe Smith?

JOE. Wale, I kinder guess the gal 'ludes to Colonel Jos Smith, a distinguished citizen of Brownsville, New Hampshire, who took to drink, and died of delirious trimmins last fall. *(aside to SOFTSHELL)* It's a case of spiritual perplexity, squire; you'd better leave the young woman awhile to me. I'll see what's the matter.

SOFT. *(crossing to L.)* Do so, doctor, do so. It's the most extraordinary instance of supernatural exaltation I ever witnessed.

Exit, L.

JOE. *(in his natural voice)* Come, my dear, since you know my name, it's only fair I should see your face. *(he removes the apron from her face)* Hey! ho! ho! may I die if it isn't Mary Giggles.

GIGGLES. *(recovering suddenly)* What! ain't you dead?

JOE. Not to my knowledge.

GIGGLES. And you're not your own spirit?

JOE. I'll take my oath I'm not.

GIGGLES. *(starting up)* Take that with it, then! *(slaps his face)* How dare you ever again look in my face?

JOE. It's so pretty, I can't help myself.

GIGGLES. Agh! Don't think to modify me with your fine speeches—I know you too well. Where's my two p'und ten? likewise my silver salt spoon, sir?

JOE. Don't let us bring up family matters in a strange place.

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The heart that once truly loves never forgets that it owes two pound ten, to say nothing of a silver salt spoon to the object of its affections.

GIGGLES. Rubbish ! why didn't you marry me as you promised ?

JOE. A pressing invitation from a—hem—from Her Majesty's Government deprived me of the pleasure of escorting you to the hymeneal altar as I proposed. I trust, however, you didn't take my temporary absence too much to heart, Miss Giggles?

GIGGLES. *(aside)* The wretch ! *(aloud)* Hoh dear, no ! I thought I should have fretted a little at first, but what with six sweethearts on my hands, three on 'em in the force with 'elmets, and one a horse corporal from the Halbany barracks, I hadn't time to think of you.

JOE. *(aside)* She's quietly bursting with rage is Miss Giggles.

GIGGLES. And ever since my grandmother died and left me fifty pounds in the savings bank-----

JOE. Hey! is your tender grandmother—stay, I don't think she could be tender at her age ; let me say your venerable grandmother—is she really dead, Mary—I must call you Mary, it's such a nice soft melting name in the mouth. Fifty pounds you said ? *(puts his arm round her waist)*

GIGGLES. In the Post Office Savings' Bank.

JOE. Considerate old lady. But you never doubted my affections, Mary; and though appearances were against me, you had confidence in your Joseph ? As for your two p'und ten, it's neither here nor there, *(touches his pockets)* but I've preserved the duplicate of that silver salt spoon. *(produces pawn ticket)* Each night I bedewed the precious mortgage with my fast flowing tears, and each morning I—*(aside)*—what did I do each morning?—oh! I remember. *(aloud)* Each morning I carefully dried the damp witness of my midnight sorrows!

(hands it to her)

GIGGLES. What's this ? a pair of Wellingtons!

JOE. Eh? Oh ! that's another, that's the wrong one.

(whistle outside)

GIGGLES. Bless me! did you hear that whistle ?

JOE. Distinctly. *(whistle again in garden)* It's the railway train.

GIGGLES. No, it's in the garden. I'll run and alarm the house. *(crosses to L.)*

JOE. *(detaining her)* Restrain your emotions, Miss Giggles, and remember, you're bound by a tremendous oath *(seizing her hand)* not to see,—hear,—breathe,—speak,—wink,—sneeze,—cough. *(solemnly)* You are to be blind, deaf, dumb, dead. *(kisses her)*

(SAM SMIFFLE appears on ladder at window, R. flat)

GIGGLES. *(indignantly)* Mr. Smith, I'm surprised !

JOE. Never let anything surprise you, Mary, it's a proof of a feeble mind to be surprised.

SAM. (*at window*) Mr. Joe Smith, sir, it's gone a quarter to nine.

JOE. (*aside to him*) All right, Sam! Where's Dan Doolan ?

SAM. Mr. Joe Smith, sir, my pardner's a sitting on a flower pot under a gooseberry bush, inwigorating himself for his spiritoous dooties.

JOE. Bring him up, Sam.

SAM. (*entering room*) Mr. Joe Smith, sir, he's a coming up.

DAN *sings as he ascends ladder.*

Air—" Billy O'Rourke."

Och! whiskey, sure I love you well,

With you I'm never dull, dear,

The coat from off my back I'd sell

To keep my bottle full, dear.

(*appears at window—enters room half drunk and walks unsteadily*)

GIGGLES. (*aside to JOE*) Who are those men ?

JOE. (L. C.) My cabinet ministers—you understand?

GIGGLES. (L.) No, I don't.

JOE. (*mysteriously*) Then never breathe a word of it to a living soul. (*goes up, making signs of silence*)

GIGGLES. (*aside*) There's something going to happen, and nobody will tell me what it is; but female curiosity wont be defrauded in that way.

DAN. Asy, Dan—asy does it, my boy—don't disthress yourself.

JOE. Get in there and be quiet will you? (*he pushes DAN into R. of cabinet with some difficulty—closes door, and then comes down*)

DAN. Asy does it, my boy, asy does it.

SAM. (R.) Mr. Joe Smith, sir, when's the performance to begin?

JOE. Sam, there's a lady present. (*touches his head significantly*)

SAM. Hey! all right, Mr. Joe Smith, sir. (*takes off his hat and bows in burlesque fashion to GIGGLES*) Beg pardon, mum—miss.

GIGGLES. (*curtseys*) May I ask you, sir, if that's a small church organ you carry there. (*indicates the pandean pipes which SAM carries in his breast*)

SAM. No, mum—miss,—organs is a nuisance : these are my panjean pipes. I carries my pipes, and my pipes support *me*. Would you like to hear my pop'lar hoverture which I plays with prodigious applause up the genteelest of courts. (*blows a few notes on the pipes*)

JOE. (C., *interrupting*) No, she wouldn't. You're breaking the law, and might be taken up under the Act of *Bass-oprofundo*.

SAM. Mr. Joe Smith, sir, if the young lady likes my overture nobody shall prevent it.

JOE. Blow your overture!

SAM. That's what I'm a-going to do, Mr. Joe Smith, sir.

JOE. Excuse me, you shan't.

GIGGLES. Oh, pray gentlemen, don't quarrel on my account!

JOE. Don't be alarmed, Miss Giggles, I merely wish to intimate to this low-minded hippopotamus that I look down upon him.

SAM. Hip-pop-hip—I despise thirteen syllables when one will do. (*emphatically*) Shrimp!

JOE. (*fiercely—partly takes off coat*) Shrimp!

SAM. (*partly taking off coat*) Shrimp was the word, Mr. Joe Smith, sir. If you didn't rightly hear it, I'll repeat it.

JOE. There's no necessity—an insulted Briton can remember his wrongs.

GIGGLES. (*coming between them*) Oh, gentlemen, gentlemen!

JOE. On consideration we can settle our little differences at a future time—a future time, observe.

SAM. The futurer the better, Mr. Joe Smith, sir. (*they put on their coats and shake hands, L.*)

DAN. (*getting out of cabinet—aside*) Asy does it, my boy! I've left my pipe in the garden, but I can fetch it while they're settlin' the reckoning,—asy does it. (*gets out of window and descends ladder*)

GIGGLES. (*seeing DAN go down ladder—aside*) There's one of the spirits stealing off. Ah! what an idea! If I was to take his place in the clothes' press I might discover what they're about! Why shouldn't I? I will too! Now, Mr. Joe Smith, I'll be even with you. (*gets into cabinet, and sits, R., closing R. door*)

JOE. (*to SAM*) Now, if you're ready, perhaps you'll get into the cabinet.

SAM. Of course, Mr. Joe Smith, sir. I'll get in all right. (*gets into cabinet and sits, L.*) Almost as tight a fit here as in a company's limited omnibus.

JOE. (*closing all the doors of cabinet*) There! I hear the company coming. (*lights a cigar, and stands looking out of the window*)

Enter SOFTSHELL, *accompanied by* MRS. BUMBLEBEE, MRS. FODDLES, MISS CREEPMOUSE, Messrs. MUDDIMAN, FLATMAN, JINKS, BOPPS *and* MOPPS, L.

SOFT. Now, my dear Mrs. Bumblebee, you and our friends shall have an opportunity of witnessing the stupendous phenomena which have astounded the world. (*sees JOE SMITH—restrains his friends from advancing, and speaks in a suppressed voice*) Hush! softly. There you have a back view of

the illustrious professor smoking the philosophical cigar in solitary grandeur. (*murmurs of admiration*) Let us approach him with proper respect, standing.

JINKS. On our hands ?

SOFT. Jinks! if you don't conduct yourself with the decorum proper to this solemn occasion, you had better retire. Hem! Doctor Quackenboss.

JOE. (*turning round*) Sirree! I'm here!

SOFT. (*introducing*) My friends,—Doctor Quackenboss, the world-renowned illustrator of supernatural philosophy. (*the company salute him deferentially*)

JOE. (*in Yankee style*) Wale, how d'ye get along? I'm considerable pleased to meet you all.

MRS. B. (*aside to others*) He's pleased to meet us.

MUDDIMAN. Allow me, sir, to shake your hand.

FLATMAN. Allow us all, sir, to shake your hand.

JOE. I'm not a morsel proud; shake away. (*they all crowd round him and shake his hands*) I ain't surprised at your enthusiasm—you don't often see such an amazing tall intellect growing among your corn in these parts.

SOFT. The name of Quackenboss, sir, will descend to posterity surrounded by—a—by—a brilliant—coruscation of-----

JINKS. Fireworks!

SOFT. Fire—no—Jinks! be silent—will descend to posterity surrounded by a halo of unfading glory.

JOE. Wale, you're about on the right track. I have a modest appreciation of my own gigantic genius, that like the proud bird of my native country, sits on the summit of the rock of liberty, and looking into the darkened future, sees the torch of the past illumining with its boundless radiance the all hail of awakening nations.

JINKS. Bravo ! pick that up.

ALL. Bravo!

SOFT. Jinks!

JINKS. (*in a loud voice*) Here !

SOFT. Silence, sir! Let every one be seated. (*they all sit*)

JINKS. The British Public are getting impatient.

SOFT. We are quite ready to begin, doctor; but where are the Knotting'em Brothers, they have not come with you.

JOE. No, sirree; spiritual agencies do not employ human means of locomotion. The Brothers *have* arrived; they are amongst us, sir, at this moment enclosed in that structure. (*points to cabinet*)

JINKS. Produce them ; open the spirit case.

(*the doors of cabinet fly open, SAM and GIGGLES are discovered seated in it.*)

JINKS. By Jove ! a woman! (*all express surprise*)

JOE. (*aside*) I'm pulverised !

SOFT. (*approaching cabinet*) Hey ! why it's Giggles. How did you come into that cabinet ?

GIGGLES. Don't know.

JOE. (*down L. aside*) Bravo!—Impudence assist me now. (*to SOFTSHELL, impressively*) She don't know. (*to the others*) She don't know!—but *I* do. This young person has been included in the structure by a supernatural influence. (*takes her by the hand and leads her down to centre, she appears in a state of passive immobility—murmurs of astonishment*) You perceive the medium is a passive instrument. (*lifts her arm, which remains extended*) She is also gifted with a peculiarly sensitive organization which recognizes the presence of a homogenous entity. (*kisses her—general astonishment—leads GIGGLES round the circle of spectators*) Observe ; she's a passive instrument—perfectly unconscious—a passive instrument.

JINKS. There can be no harm if I kiss the passive instrument. (*kisses her*)

GIGGLES. (*starts, screams*) It wasn't me. *Runs off, L.*

SOFT. (R. C.) Doctor, are you aware you have kissed the young woman ?

JOE. Wale, sir, kissing's an institution convenable to the female mind, all over the world. But did I act'lly kiss her?

MUDDI. (R.) Well, yes. I can testify to the fact, though I can't understand it.

JOE. (C.) Sir, it's not necessary that you should understand that which is above your comprehension. It is the proud privilege of Spiritualism that nobody understands it; and while combining the eccentricity of the playful conundrum with the awful mystery of the Egyptian sphinx, bursts open the windows of the soul, and reveals to the benighted lodger a splendid panorama of the Elysian fields, brilliantly illuminated by Hiram Jones's patent rushlight chandelier.

JINKS. Hurrah ! (DAN DOOLAN *appears on the ladder, outside window; he enters room with a short pipe in his mouth*) But where's the second Brother ?

JOE. Whar is he ?—hem!—a—a!-----

DAN. (*aside*) Aisy, Dan ; aisy does it, my boy.

JOE. (*seeing him*) Thar he is, sir. (DAN *puts pipe in his pocket*)

SOFT. That's really wonderful!

MUDDI. Astounding! (*general astonishment*)

JOE. Wale, I feel at this moment kinder, like Louis Napoleon, when he squirmed to the top of the Great Pyramid to shew his troops the Valley of Chamouni. I should like to do something.

JINKS. (L. C.) Don't do it, old fellow.

SOFT. (R. C.) Jinks! I insist you don't disturb the *seance*.

JOE. If any of the company wish to put questions to the Brothers, they are willing to respond.

(DAN and SAM come forward C.—DAN leaning on SAM'S arm, apparently intoxicated)

JINKS. Recognising the mysterious connexion between spirit and matter, allow me to ask the Corsican Brothers what they prefer for dinner?

SAM. According to the laws of natur, there's nothing beats rump-steak and ingins, with a pot of porter.

DAN. In the pewter.

SOFT. In the pewter! That's a very important fact—in pewter.

MRS. B. (R.) I expected a stronger resemblance between the brothers. You *are* brothers, I presume? (to SAM)

SAM. Yes, mum; both on us twins, by one father, and two stepmothers.

MUDDI. Hey! that seems impossible, don't it?

JOE. Wale, no; it's only supernatural, and what's supernatural can't be impossible.

JINKS. Hear, hear! Would it be proper to enquire why one of the twins is so much smaller than his brother.

SAM. Why, sir, you see my little brother, when he was a small boy was too lazy to grow.

JINKS. The small twin don't seem much of a public speaker.

JOE. Wale, no; but he's a powerful rapping agent. He'll rap out all Shakespeare's plays right off, from *Hamlet* to the *Lady of Lyons*—spellin', full stops, and i-talics included, without extra charge.

JINKS. Like the disembodied spirit of a general postman.

SOFT. Jinks! you ought to be ashamed of yourself.

JINKS. All right! I'll be as silent as a boiled owl.

JOE. We will now, if it be agreeable, proceed to the rope-tying manifestation. (SAM and DAN get into cabinet again, directed by JOE SMITH) Our enlightened host and fellow-citizen, Ebenezer Softshell, Esquire, has consented to secure the limbs and arms of the twins. (taking ropes from table, R.)

JINKS. Kindly undertaking the duty of putting the spirits in bond.

JOE. Examine the cords, gentlemen; they're manufactured of the strongest hemp.

JINKS. Hemp! rather suggestive, eh?

(JOE carries the two coils of rope round to the spectators, but manages to keep them behind his back when any one tries to examine them)

JOE. (to MUDDIMAN) If this intelligent stranger, who seems of an enquiring turn of mind, pleases, he may get into the structure, and remain there while the manifestations are going forward.

MUDDI. I--eh—remain in the structure; oh, no!—I think I'd rather not.

SOFT. My dear Muddiman, you mustn't refuse-----

JINKS. The privilege of being admitted behind the scenes by the spirits.

SOFT. You'll be sure to see something, and feel something extraordinary.

MRS. B. You'll so oblige us all, Mr. Muddiman.

MUDDIMAN. Well, if I was sure there was nothing to dread.

JINKS. Don't be afraid, it's all right, go in and win, old fellow. (*pushing him on one side, while SOFTSHELL does so on the other side into the cabinet C.*)

SOFT. Bopps and I will tie you up. (*SOFTSHELL and BOPPS tie SAM and DAN in the cabinet after the manner of the Davenport Brothers*)

JOE. While these gentlemen are engaged knotting and tying the twins, I should like to draw your attention to the astounding phenomena you are about to witness. I will place these musical notions in the structure; observe, a banjo, violin, tambourine, trumpet, and bell. (*he places the instruments as he names them in the cabinet*) Immediately the doors are closed, a melodious concert will be heard in the consarn, while disembodied hands will manifest themselves where you least expect them.

JINKS. (L.C.) In our pockets for instance.

JOE. In your pocket, sir, your head, sir, or any other vacant locality.

JINKS. Hear! hear!

JOE. The only conditions we require, are that you remain ondeniably quiet---don't interfere with the structure, but keep your eyes peeled, and look out sharp for what may eventuate — if nothing eventuates you'll be just whar you was.

SOFT. There, I've tied him firmly.

BOPPS. Let him open those knots if he can.

(*SAM and DAN are seen fastened with cords R. and L. of cabinet, MUDDIMAN is seated in centre between them*)

JOE. Now, we'll shut the doors.

(*he closes doors of cabinet, the bolts inside are shot with sharp clicks—immediately the door are closed, the instruments in the cabinet are played upon together so as to produce a discordant charivari*)

SOFT. Wonderful!

ALL. Wonderful!

SOFT. Hus-s-s-sh!

(*the nigger air—"It's no use knocking at the door" is played in the cabinet by all the instruments—out of tune—and amidst knocking and banging inside*)

MRS. B. What heavenly melody!

ALL. Divine, divine!

JINKS. Perhaps the spirits would favour us with a song?

(*three distinct knocks in cabinet*)

JOE. The spirits answer, " with great pleasure."

SAM and DAN *sing in cabinet, accompanied by instruments inside.*

Air,— " Catch 'em alive oh ! "

Rub, a dub—rub, a dub,
Rattle the washing tub,
Keep up the game in our hive, oh!
Hey diddle, diddle,
The cat and the fiddle,
They never can catch us alive, oh!

(the verse is repeated amidst an uproar caused by knocking and playing on all the instruments at once in the cabinet; the hand of a child appears through aperture of cabinet, then disappears; afterwards a man's hand and arm, flourishing a black wine bottle, appears and disappears)

SOFT. Look there! a perfect hand and arm, exhibiting an ordinary black bottle.

JINKS. Clearly proving the presence of spirits.

SOFT. Clearly ! Perfectly conclusive.

(the noises in the cabinet cease)

JOE. All the ladies and gentlemen present, will please to hold each other's hands. *(they do as directed)* Observe not to break the chain, and notify what happens. *(he puts out the gaslight on table, R.—when he does so he takes the guitar from R. table, and touches the strings while he walks round the circle)*

MRS. B. Do you hear that music in the air?

SOFT. Yes, hush! It was close above me—there.

MRS. C. It quite took away my breath.

(JOE taps FLATMAN on the head with banjo)

FLATMAN. Oh ! another stunning fact on my head.

(JOE strikes the banjo strings with more energy, occasionally striking the heads of the company—each person when struck, titters an exclamation — he takes SOFTSHELL'S watch from his pocket, and MOPPS'S spectacles from his nose, and places spectacles on BOPPS'S nose)

SOFT. *(when watch is taken)* The spirits have taken my watch.

MOPPS. *(when spectacles are taken)* My spectacles are gone!

BOPPS. *(when spectacles are put on)* I felt something about my face just now.

JINKS. *(when his nose is tickled)* Hollo ! there's a fly on my nose. *(JOE places guitar in MISS CREEPMOUSE'S lap)*

MISS CREEP. *(screams)* Ah! there's something or somebody come on my knees.

OMNES. Shame ! shame !

SOFT. Jinks!

JINKS. It isn't me! (JOE re-lights lamp with lucifer match)

MISS CREEP. Dear! dear! it's only the banjo.

SOFT. Well, that *is* extraordinary.

(*the music in cabinet begins again, gradually increasing—*

it is now at its height—blows—stamping—struggling)

MUDDI. (*in cabinet*) Help! oh! they'll murder me—let me out!

(*the COMPANY rise in alarm*)

JOE. Don't move! they're only piling up for a tremendous effect.

(*the cabinet doors are all opened suddenly with a crash—*

the musical instruments are thrown out on the floor—SAM

and DAN are seen with the ropes off and lying at their feet

—MUDDIMAN, with hat crushed over his eyes, and coat torn to ribbons on his back, totters out)

MUDDIMAN. Oh! oh! somebody give me a chair, and lift my hat from my eyes. (SOFTSHELL pulls off his hat, somebody places a chair, R., in which he drops) Oh! oh!

SOFT. Well, tell us, what did you see.

MUDDIMAN. See! nothing! but I felt unutterable things, I'm battered and bruised to a jelly; I don't know who did it, or how it was done, but the demonstration was most satisfactory ;—I don't mean satisfactory, but convincing.

JOE. These young gentlemen, whom you saw bound securely with ropes, are now free as the unfettered eagle that proudly spreads its golden wings over the grocery store of my friend Judge Slocum.

(*SAM and DAN come from cabinet, throw their legs and arms about to show that they have the use of them*)

SAM. There ain't no deception about us.

DAN. Not a morsel. Aisy does it, my boy.

SOFT. I trust that all here are now convinced that spiritual phenomena are-----

JINKS. Humbug!

SOFT. Your scepticism is disgusting, Jinks.

Enter LAURA, R. U. E.

Ah! here at last comes Laura; and now, doctor, it only remains for me to fulfil my promise, by bestowing on you my niece's hand, with a fortune of ten thousand pounds.

LAURA. (*aside*) Oh dear! what can keep Frank.

SOFT. (*takes her hand and gives it to JOE*) She is yours, doctor.

LAURA. (*alarmed*) Uncle! (*aside*) If Frank don't come, I shall expire.

JOE. Mr. Softshell, I accept with sentiments of pride and gratitude the very handsome present you have made me, and in celebration of the joyful event, I propose, sir, that we all liquor up.

JINKS. Hear, hear!

Enter FRANK and GIGGLES, L.

LAURA. (*rushing to him*) Oh, Frank ! you are here.

JOE. (*aside*) Dash it! Bowled out when I had the game in my hand.

SOFT. What does this intrusion mean, sir ? I told you you should not have my consent to marry Laura until you could prove I had been duped by a common juggler's trick.

FRANK. That is my business here, sir. The real Doctor Quackenboss and his companions have been sent to Colonel Tomkins's, and you have been hoaxed by my servant Joe Smith and his two confederates.

SOFT. How! is this a fact?

GIGGLES. It's the blessed truth, sir.

JOE. I can't deny it.

SAM. The two twins are convicted on the clearest evidence.

SOFT. And I have been duped by these impostors! Kick the scoundrels out of the house.

DAN. Aisy does it. (*puts himself in a pugilistic attitude*)

FRANK. Stay. I confess myself the concocter of the trick, and I now claim your niece's hand according to your own conditions.

SOFT. Well, it's hard to be obliged to acknowledge that I have been so egregiously bamboozled, but a man's word is his word; take my niece, Mr. Fairfax. I grant a general amnesty, and pardon to all offenders, including the mock doctor here.

JOE. (*taking GIGGLES by the hand*) *Multum in parvo*. For self and future partner, thanks. Hem! (*to audience*) Ladies and gentlemen, our manager is about to apply for a *spirit licence* for this house. His *case* is a plain one (*points to cabinet*) but there are knotty points in it that require investigation;—all he asks is your support. Let's have a show of hands upon it (*all hold up their hands, agitating them like the spirit hands*). The manifestation is perfectly satisfactory; so, if you please, we'll conclude the *seance* with a chorus of Spirits in Bond.

(All sing, holding up their hands)

Rub a dub, rub a dub,
Rattle the washing tub,
Keep up the game in our hive, oh !
Hey diddle, diddle,
The cat and the fiddle,
You never can catch us alive, oh!

Curtain.