



Strange Case of Witchcraft at Homington

Spirit-rapping in Wiltshire. Considerable commotion has been created in the neighbourhood of Salisbury by a case of supposed witchcraft in a village about four miles from the city. The person said to have been bewitched, is a little girl named Lydia Hewlett, aged nine and her father is a Primitive Methodist local preacher. Some time since, the girl saw a gipsy steal some onions belonging to a neighbour and subsequently, mysterious knockings were heard in the cottage where she dwelt. Some boards of the bedroom where they seemed to be heard were pulled up, but the rappings were not explained, and by and by, it was noticed that the noises follow, as it were, the little girl. These knockings were, it seems, generally heard near the girl, and when no-one else was in the room, but it has been alleged that when someone else has been with her the rapping has been heard. Someone conceived the idea that the child was bewitched, and a number of questions were put to the supposed spirit. According to the replies (given by means of knocks), the gipsy was the cause of all the trouble. She (the gipsy) had dark hair, was 4ft 8 in height, was married, had seven children and was 28 years of age (the number of years being indicated by raps). The questions were preceded by the words in the name of the Lord. Canon Kingsbury heard knocks and believed that the girl herself did not cause them, but another clergyman with him was more skeptical. The Rev J. Harper, a Primitive Methodist minister, also heard knocking, and did not believe that there was any shamming on the part of the girl. A doctor who visited her believed that she herself did it. Superintendent Stephens, of the County police, went to the cottage with the determination of finding out if there was any deception, and stood at the foot of the stairs and watched the

girl whilst listening to the knocking, but saw nothing suspicious her conduct, and believes that she herself did not do it. One night, when two men were in the same room as the girl, a mysterious knocking was heard. The girl (who looked ill and weary) has been admitted into the infirmary at Salisbury, and the strange sounds at Homington have now ceased, whilst herself is very much better than at the time of her admission.

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