

# The Syderstone Hauntings

By Elliot O'Donnell

Some years ago I published in a work entitled *Ghostly Phenomena* (Werner Laurie & Co.) an account, sent me by the late Rev. Henry Hacon, M.A., of Searly Vicarage, North Kelsey Moor, of hauntings that once occurred in the Old Syderstone Parsonage (the present Rectory has never, so I understand, been in any way disturbed). Thanks to the kindness and courtesy of Mr. E. A. Spurgin of Temple Balsall, Warwickshire (grandson of the Rev. John Spurgin), I am now able to reproduce further correspondence relative to the same case, written at the time of the occurrence—over eighty years ago.

The following paragraphs appeared in the *Norfolk Chronicle*, June 1, 1833:—

## “A REAL GHOST

“The following circumstance has been creating some agitation in the neighbourhood of Fakenham for the last few weeks.

“In Syderstone Parsonage lives the Rev. Mr. Stewart, curate, and rector of Thwaite. About six weeks since an unaccountable knocking was heard in it in the middle of the night. The family became alarmed, not being able to discover the cause. Since then it has gradually been becoming more violent, until it has now arrived at such a frightful pitch that one of the servants has left through absolute terror. The noises commence almost every morning about two, and continue until daylight. Sometimes it is a knocking, now in the ceiling overhead, now in the wall, and now directly under the feet; sometimes it is a low moaning, which the Rev. Gentleman says reminds him very much of the moans of a soldier on being whipped; and sometimes it is like the sounding of brass, the rattling of iron, or the clashing of earthenware or glass; but nothing in the house is disturbed. It never speaks, but will beat to a lively tune and moan at a solemn one, especially at the morning and evening hymns. Every part of the house has been carefully examined, to see that no one could be secreted, and the doors and windows are always fastened with the greatest caution. Both the inside and outside of the house have been carefully examined during the time of the noises, which always arouse the family from their slumbers, and oblige them to get up; but nothing has been discovered. It is heard by everyone present, and several ladies and gentlemen in the neighbourhood, who, to satisfy themselves, have remained all night with Mr. Stewart's family, have heard the same noise, and have been equally surprised and frightened. Mr. Stewart has also offered any of the tradespeople in the village an opportunity of remaining in the house and convincing themselves. The shrieking last Wednesday week was terrific. It was formerly reported in the village that the house was haunted by a Rev. Gentleman, whose name was Mantal, who died there about twenty-seven years since, and this is now generally believed to be the case. His vault, in the inside of the church, has lately been repaired, and a new stone put down. The house is adjoining the churchyard, which has added, in no inconsiderable degree, to the horror which pervades the villagers. The delusion must be very ingeniously conducted, but at this time of day scarcely anyone can be found to believe these noises proceed from any other than natural causes.

“On Wednesday se’nnight, Mr. Stewart requested several most respectable gentlemen to sit up all night—namely, the Rev. Mr. Spurgeon of Docking, the Rev. Mr. Goggs of Creake, the Rev. Mr. Lloyd of Massingham, the Rev. Mr. Titlow of Norwich, and Mr. Banks, surgeon, of Holt, and also Mrs. Spurgeon. Especial care was taken that no tricks should be played by the servants; but, as if to give the visitors a grand treat, the noises were even louder and of longer continuance than usual. The first commencement was in the bed-chamber of Miss Stewart, and seemed like the clawing of a voracious animal after its prey. Mrs. Spurgeon was at the moment leaning against the bed-post, and the effect on all present was like a shock of electricity. The bed was on all sides clear from the wall; but nothing was visible. Three powerful knocks were then given to the side-board, whilst the hand of Mr. Goggs was upon it. The disturber was conjured to speak, but answered only by a low hollow moaning; but on being requested to give three knocks, it gave three most tremendous blows apparently in the wall. The noises, some of which were as loud as those of a hammer on the anvil, lasted from between eleven and twelve o’clock until near two hours after sunrise. The following is the account given by one of the gentlemen: ‘We all heard distinct sounds of various kinds—from various parts of the room and the air—in the midst of us—nay, we felt the vibrations of parts of the bed as struck; but we were quite unable to assign any possible natural cause as producing all or any part of this. We had a variety of thoughts and explanations passing in our minds *before* we were on the spot, but we left it all equally bewildered.’ On another night the family collected in a room where the noise had never been heard; the maid-servants sat sewing round a table, under the especial notice of Mrs. Stewart, and the man-servant, with his legs crossed and his hands upon his knees, under the cognisance of his master. The noise was then for the first time heard there—‘above, around, beneath, confusion all’—but nothing seen, nothing disturbed, nothing felt except a vibratory agitation of the air, or a tremulous movement of the tables or what was upon them. It would be in vain to attempt to particularise all the various noises, knockings, and melancholy groanings of this mysterious something. Few nights pass away without its visitation, and each one brings its own variety. We have little doubt that we shall ultimately learn that this midnight disturber is but another ‘*Tommy Tadpole*,’ but from the respectability and superior intelligence of the parties who have attempted to investigate into the secret, we are quite willing to allow to the believers in the earthly visitations of ghosts all the support which this circumstance will afford to their creed—that of *unaccountable mystery*. We understand that inquiries on the subject have been very numerous, and we believe we may even say troublesome, if not expensive.”

(*Norfolk Chronicle*, June 1, 1833.)

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#### “SYDERSTONE PARSONAGE

“*To the Editor of the Norfolk Chronicle.*

“SIR,—My name having lately appeared in the *Bury Post*, as well as in your own journal, without my consent or knowledge, I doubt not you will allow me the opportunity of occupying some portion of your paper, in way of explanation.

“It is most true that, at the request of the Rev. Mr. Stewart, I was at the Parsonage at Syderstone, on the night of the 15th ult., for the purpose of investigating the cause of the several interruptions to which Mr. Stewart and his family have been subject for the last three or four months. I feel it right, therefore, to correct some of the erroneous impressions which the paragraph in question is calculated to make upon the public mind, and at the same time to state fairly the leading circumstances which transpired that night.

“At ten minutes before two in the morning, *‘knocks’* were distinctly heard; they continued at intervals, until after sunrise—sometimes proceeding from the bed’s-head, sometimes from the side-boards of the children’s bed, sometimes from a three-inch partition, separating the children’s sleeping-rooms; both sides of which partition were open to observation. On two or three occasions, also, when a definite number of blows was requested to be given, the precise number required was distinctly heard. *How* these blows were occasioned was the subject of diligent search: every object was before us, but nothing satisfactorily to account for them; no trace of any human hand, or of mechanical power, was to be discovered. Still, I would remark, though perfectly distinct, these knocks were by no means so powerful as your paragraph represents— indeed, instead of *‘being even louder, and of longer continuance that night, as if to give the visitors a grand treat,’* it would seem they were neither *so* loud nor *so* frequent as they commonly had been. In several instances they were particularly gentle, and the pauses between them afforded all who were present the opportunity of exercising the most calm judgment and deliberate investigation.

“I would next notice the *‘vibrations’* on the sideboard and post of the children’s beds. These were distinctly felt by myself as well as others, not only once, but frequently. They were obviously the effect of different blows, given in some way or other, upon the different parts of the beds, in several instances while those parts were actually under our hands. It is not true that *‘the effect on all present was like a shock of electricity,’* but that these *‘vibrations’* did take place, and that too in beds, perfectly disjointed from every wall, was obvious to our senses; though in what way they were occasioned could not be developed.

“Again—our attention was directed at different times during the night to certain sounds on the bed’s-head and walls, resembling the scratchings of two or three fingers; but in *no* instance were they *‘the clawing of a voracious animal after its prey.’* During the night I happened to leave the spot in which the party were assembled, and to wander in the dark to some more distant rooms in the house, occupied by no one member of the family (but where the disturbances originally arose), and there, to my astonishment, the same scratchings were to be heard.

“At another time, also, when one of Mr. Stewart’s children was requested to hum a lively air, *‘most scientific beatings’* to every note was distinctly heard from the bed-head; and at its close, *‘four blows’* were given, louder (I think) and more rapid than any which had before occurred.

“Neither ought I to omit that, at the commencement of the noises, several feeble *‘moans’* were heard. This happened more than once; after a time they increased to a series of *‘groanings’* of a peculiarly distressing character, and proceeding (as it seemed) from the bed of one of Mr. Stewart’s children, about ten years of age. From the tone of voice, as well as other circumstances, my own conviction is, that these *‘moans’* could not arise from any effort on the part of the child. Perhaps there were others present who

might have had different impressions; but be this as it may, towards daybreak four or six shrieks were heard— not from any bed or wall, but as hovering in the atmosphere in the room, where the other noises had been principally heard. These screams were distinctly heard by *all*, but their cause was discoverable by *none*.

“These, Sir, are the chief events which occurred at Syderst one Parsonage on the night alluded to in your paragraph. I understand the ‘*knockings*’ and ‘*sounds*’ have varied considerably in their character on different nights, and that there have been several nights occurring (at four distinct periods) in which *no noises* have been heard.

“I have simply related what took place under my own observation. You will perceive that the noises heard by us were by no means so loud and violent as would be gathered from the representations which have been made. Still, as you are aware, they are not on that account the less real; nor do they, on that account, require the less rational explanation. I trust, however, Mr. Editor, your readers will fully understand me. I have not related the occurrences of the night for the purpose of leading them to any particular views, or conclusions upon a subject which, for the present at least, is wrapt in obscurity: such is very remote from my object. But Mr. Stewart having requested me, as a neighbouring clergyman, to witness the inconveniences and interruptions to which the different members of his family have been subject for the last sixteen weeks, I have felt it my duty, as an honest man (particularly among the false statements now abroad) to bear my feeble testimony, however inconsiderable it may be, to their actual existence in his house; and also since, from the very nature of the case, it is not possible Mr. Stewart can admit the repeated introduction of strangers to his family, I have thought it likewise a duty I owed to the public to place before them the circumstances which really did take place on that occasion. In the words of your paragraph, I can truly say: ‘*I had a variety of thoughts and explanations passing in my mind before I was on the spot, but I left it perfectly bewildered,*’ and I must confess the perplexity has not been diminished by the result of an investigation, which was most carefully pursued for five days, during the past week, under the immediate direction of Mr. Reeve, of Houghton, agent to the Marquis of Cholmondeley, the proprietor of Syderstone and patron of the Rectory, and who, on learning the annoyances to which Mr. Stewart was subject, directed every practicable aid to be afforded for the purpose of discovery. Mr. Seppings and Mr. Savory, the two chief inhabitants of the parish, assisted also in the investigation. A ‘*trench*’ was dug round the back part of the house, and ‘*borings*’ were resorted to in all other parts of it to the depth of six or seven feet, completing a chain round the entire buildings, for the purpose of discovering any subterranean communication with the walls, which might possibly explain the noises in question. Many parts of the interior of the house, also, such as ‘*the walls,*’ ‘*floors,*’ ‘*false roofs,*’ etc., have been minutely examined, but nothing has been found to throw any light upon the source of the disturbances. Indeed, I understand the ‘*knockings*’ within the last four days, so far from having subsided, are become increasingly distressing to Mr. Stewart and his family—and so *remain!*— I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

“JOHN  
SPURGIN.

“Docking, *June 5, 1833.*”

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*“To the Editor of the Norfolk Chronicle.*

“Norwich, *June*  
5, 1833.

“Sir,—The detail of circumstances connected with the *Syderstone Ghost*, as reported in the public papers, is in my opinion very incorrect, and calculated to deceive the public. If the report of noises heard on other evenings be as much exaggerated as in the report of the noises which five other gentlemen and myself heard on Wednesday evening, the 15th of May, nothing could be better contrived to foster superstition and to aid deception. I was spending a few days with a friend in the neighbourhood of Syderstone, and was courteously invited by Mr. Stewart to sit up at the Parsonage; but I never imagined the noises I heard during the night would become a subject of general conversation in our city and county. As such is the case, and as I have been so frequently appealed to by personal friends, I hope you will afford the convenience of correcting, through the medium of your journal, some of the errors committed in the reports made of the disturbances which occurred when I was present. If the other visitors thought proper to make their statements known to the public, I have no doubt they would nearly accord with my own, as we are not, though so represented in the *Bury Post*, ‘those who deal in contradictions of this sort.’

“The noises were *not loud*; certainly they were not so loud as to be heard by those ladies and gentlemen who were sitting at the time of their commencement in a bedroom only a few yards distant. The noises commenced as nearly as possible at the hour we had been prepared to expect they would—or at about half-past one o’clock a.m. It is true that knocks seemed to be given, or actually were given, on the side-board of a bed whilst Mr. Goggs’ hands were upon it; but it is not true that they were ‘powerful knocks.’ It is also true that Mr. Goggs requested the ghost, if he could not speak, to give three knocks, and that three knocks—gentle knocks, not ‘three most tremendous blows’—were heard as proceeding from the thin wall against which were the beds of the children and the female servants. I heard a scream as of a female, but I was not alarmed; I cannot speak *positively* as to the origin of the scream, but I cannot deny that such a scream may be produced by a ventriloquist. The family are highly respectable, and I know not any good reason for a suspicion to be excited against any one of the members; but as it is *possible* for one or two members of a family to cause disturbances to the rest, I must confess that I should be more satisfied that there is not a connection between the ghost and a member of the family if the noises were distinctly heard in the rooms when *all* the members of the family were known to be at a distance from them. I understood from Mr. Stewart that on one occasion the whole family—himself, Mrs. Stewart, the children, and servants—sat up in his bedroom during the night; that himself and Mrs. Stewart kept an attentive watch upon the children and servants; and that the noises, though seldom or never heard before in that room, were then heard in all parts of the room. This fact, though not yet accounted for, is not a proof but that some one or more of the family is able to give full information of the cause of the noises. “Mr. Stewart and other gentlemen declared that they have heard such loud and violent knocking, and other strange noises, as certainly throw a great mystery over the circumstance. I speak only in reference to the knockings and the scream which I heard when in company with the gentlemen whose names have been already

made known to the public; and confining my remarks to those noises, I hesitate not to declare that I think similar noises might be caused by visible and internal agency.

“I do not deny the existence of supernatural agency, or of its occasional manifestation; but I firmly believe such a manifestation does not take place without Divine permission, and when permitted it is not for trifling purposes, nor accompanied with *trifling effects*. Now there are effects which appear to me *trifling*, connected with the noises at Syderstone, and which therefore tend to satisfy my mind that they are *not caused by supernatural agency*. On one occasion the ghost was desired to give ten knocks; he gave nine, and, as if recollecting himself that the number was not completed, he began again, and gave ten. I heard him beat time to the air of the verse of a song sung by Miss Stewart—if I mistake not, ‘Home, Sweet Home’; and I heard him give three knocks in compliance with Mr. Goggs’ request.

“Mr. Editor, noises are heard in Syderstone Parsonage the cause or agency of which is at present unknown to the public, but a full, a diligent investigation ought *immediately* to be made—Mr. Stewart, I believe, is willing to afford facility. If, therefore, I may express an opinion, that if two or three active and experienced police officers from Norwich were permitted to be the sole occupants in the house for a few nights, the ghost would not interrupt their slumbers, or, if he attempted to do it, they would quickly find him out, and teach him better manners for the future. The disturbances at the Parsonage House, Epworth, in 1716, in some particulars resemble those which have occurred at Syderstone, but in these days we give little credit to tales of witchcraft, or that evil spirits are permitted to indicate their displeasure at prayers being offered for the King, etc.; and therefore I hope that deceptions practised at Syderstone, if there be deceptions, will be promptly discovered, lest that parsonage become equal in repute to the one at Epworth.—I am, Sir, your humble servant,

“Samuel  
Titlow.”

(*Norfolk Chronicle*, June 8, 1833.)

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#### SYDERSTONE PARSONAGE

*“To the Editor of the Norfolk Chronicle.*

“Sir,—Having already borne my testimony to the occurrences of the night of the 15th ult. in the Parsonage at Syderstone, and finding that *ventriloquism and other devices* are now resorted to as the probable causes of them (and that, too, under the sanction of certain statements put forth in your last week’s paper), I feel myself called on to state publicly that, although a diligent observer of the different events which then took place, I witnessed no one circumstance which could induce *me* to indulge a conjecture that the *knocks, vibrations, scratchings, groanings*, etc., which I heard, proceeded from any member of Mr. Stewart’s family, through the medium of mechanical or other trickery

indeed, it would seem to me utterly impossible that the scratchings which fell under my observation during the night, in a remote room of the house, could be so produced, as, at that time, every member of Mr. Stewart's family was removed a considerable distance from the spot.

"While making this declaration, I beg to state that my only object in bearing any part in this mysterious affair has been to investigate and to elicit the *truth*. I have ever desired to approach it without *prejudging* it—that is, with a mind willing to be influenced by *facts* alone,—without any inclination to establish either the intervention of *human* agency on the one hand, or of *super-human* agency on the other hand:—at the same time, it is but common honesty to state that Mr. Stewart expresses himself so fully conscious of his own integrity towards the public that he has resolved on suffering all the imputations and reflections which *have* been or which may be cast either upon himself or upon his family to pass without remark; and as he has, at different times and upon different occasions, so fully satisfied his own mind on the *impossibility* of the disturbances in question arising from the agency of any member of his own household (and from the incessant research he has made on this point, he himself must be the best judge),

Mr. Stewart intends declining all future interruptions of his family, by the interference of strangers. "Perhaps, Mr. Editor, your distant readers may not be aware that Mr. Stewart has not been resident at Syderstone more than fourteen months, while mysterious noises are *now* proved to have been heard in this house, at different intervals and in different degrees of violence, for the last thirty years and upwards. Most conclusive and satisfactory affidavits on this point are now in progress, of the completion of which you shall have notice in due time.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

"John  
Spurgin.

"Docking, *June 7, 1833.*"

(*Norfolk Chronicle*, June 15, 1833.)

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These Declarations were inserted in the *Norfolk Chronicle*, June 22, 1833:—

#### "SYDERSTONE PARSONAGE

"For the information of the public, as well as for the protection of the family now occupying the above residence from the most ungenerous aspersions, the subjoined documents have been prepared. These documents, it was proposed, should appear before the public as Affidavits, but a question of law having arisen as to the authority of the Magistrates to receive Affidavits on subjects of this nature, the Declarations hereunder furnished have been adopted in their stead. The witnesses whose testimony is afforded have been all separately examined—their statements, in every instance, have been most cheerfully afforded—and the solemn impression under which the evidence of some of them particularly has been recorded, has served to show how deeply the events in question have been fixed in their recollection. Without entering upon the question of Causes, one Fact, it is presumed, must be obvious to all (namely) That various inexplicable noises have been heard in the above residence, at different intervals, and in

different degrees of violence, for many years before the present occupiers ever entered upon it indeed, the Testimony of other respectable persons to this Fact might have been easily adduced, but it is not likely that any who are disposed to reject or question the subjoined evidence would be influenced by any additional Testimony which could be presented:—

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*“Elizabeth Goff, of Docking, in the county of Norfolk, widow, now voluntarily declareth, and is prepared at any time to confirm the same on oath, and say: That she entered into the service of the Rev. William Mantle about the month of April 1785, at which time her said master removed from Docking to the Parsonage at Syderstone, and the said Elizabeth Goff further states, that at the time of entering upon the said parsonage, two of the sleeping rooms therein were nailed up: and upon one occasion, during the six months of her continuance in the service of her said master, she well remembers the whole family were much alarmed in consequence of Mrs. Mantle’s sister having either seen or heard something very unusual, in one of the sleeping rooms over the kitchen, which had greatly terrified her.—This Declaration was made and signed this 18th day of June 1833, before me, Derick Hoste, one of His Majesty’s Justices of the Peace for the County of Norfolk.*

*“The mark (X) of Elizabeth Goff.”*

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*“Elizabeth, the wife of George Parsons, of Syderstone, in the county of Norfolk, blacksmith, now voluntarily declareth, and is prepared at any time to confirm the same on oath, and say: That she married about nineteen years ago, and then entered upon the occupation of the south end of the Parsonage at Syderstone, in which house she continued to reside for the space of nine years and a half. That she, the said Elizabeth Parsons, having lived at Fakenham previously to her marriage, was ignorant of the reputed circumstances of noises being heard in the said house, and continued so for about nine or ten months after entering upon it; but that, at the end of that time, upon one occasion during the night, she remembers to have been awoke by some ‘very violent and very rapid knocks’ in the lower room occupied by them, immediately under the chamber in which she was sleeping; that the noise appeared to her to be as against the stove which she supposed must have been broken to pieces; That she, the said Elizabeth Parsons, awoke her husband, who instantly heard the same noise; that he immediately arose, struck a light, and went downstairs; but that, upon entering the room, he found everything perfectly safe, as they had been left upon their going to bed; that her husband hereupon returned to the sleeping room, put out the light, and went to bed; but scarcely had he settled himself in bed, before the same heavy blows returned; and were heard by both of them for a considerable time.—This being the first of the noises she, the said Elizabeth Parsons, ever heard, she was greatly alarmed, and requested her husband not to go to sleep while they lasted, lest she should die from fear; but as to the causes of these noises, she, the said Elizabeth Parsons, cannot, in anywise, account. And the said Elizabeth Parsons further states, that about a year afterwards at midnight, during one of her*

confinements, her attention was particularly called to some strange noises heard from the lower room. These noises were very violent, and, as much as she remembers, were like the opening and tossing up and down of the sashes, the bursting of the shutters, and the crashing of the chairs placed at the windows: that her nurse hereupon went downstairs to examine the state of the room, but, to the surprise of all, found everything perfectly in order, as she had left it.—And likewise the said Elizabeth Parsons further states, that besides the occurrences hereinbefore particularly stated and which remain quite fresh in her recollection, she was, from time to time, during her residence in Syderstone Parsonage, constantly interrupted by very frightful and unusual knockings, various and irregular;—sometimes they were heard in one part of the house, and sometimes in another;—sometimes they were frequent, and sometimes two or three weeks or months or even twelve months would pass, without any knock being heard. That these knocks were usually never given till the family were all at rest at night, and she has frequently remarked, just at the time she hoped she had got rid of them, they returned to the house, with increased violence.— And finally the said Elizabeth Parsons declares, that during a residence in the Syderstone Parsonage of upwards of nine years, knocks and noises were heard by her therein, for which she was utterly unable to assign any cause.—This Declaration was made and signed this 18th day of June 1833, before me, Derick Hoste, one of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the County of Norfolk.

“ELIZABETH  
PARSONS.”

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*Thomas Mase*, of Syderstone, in the county of Norfolk, carpenter, now voluntarily declareth, and is prepared at any time to confirm the same on oath, and say: That one night, about eleven years ago, while Mr. George Parsons occupied part of the Parsonage at Syderstone, he happened to be sleeping in the attic there; and about midnight he heard (he thinks he was awoke out of sleep) a dreadful noise, like the sudden and heavy fall of part of the chimney upon the stove in the lower sitting-room.—That the crash was so great that, although at a considerable distance from the spot, he distinctly heard the noise, not doubting the chimney had fallen and dashed the stove to pieces:—that he arose and went downstairs (it being a light summer's night): but upon examining the state of the room and stove, he found, to his astonishment, everything as it ought to have been. And the said Thomas Mase further states, that, upon another occasion, about eight or nine years ago, while sleeping a night in Syderstone Parsonage in a room at the south end thereof, the door of which room moved particularly hard upon the floor, requiring to be lifted up in order to close or open it, and producing a particular sound in its movement, he distinctly heard all the sounds which accompanied its opening.—That he felt certain the door was opened, and arose from his bed to shut it, but, to his great surprise, he found the door closed, just as he had left it.—And finally the said Thomas Mase states, that the circumstances above related, arose from causes which he is totally at a loss to explain.—This Declaration was made and signed this 18th day of June 1833, before me, Derick Hoste, one of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the County of Norfolk.

“Thomas  
Mase.”

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“*William Ofield*, of Syderstone, in the county of Norfolk, gardener and groom, now voluntarily declareth, and is prepared at any time to confirm the same on oath, and say: That he lived in the service of the Rev. Thomas Skrimshire, about nine years ago, at which time his said master entered upon the occupation of the Parsonage at Syderstone, and that he continued with him during his residence in that place. The said William Ofield also states, that, as he did not sleep in the house, he knows but little of what took place therein during the night, but that he perfectly remembers, on one occasion, while sitting in the kitchen, he heard in the bedroom immediately over his head, a noise resembling the dragging of furniture about the room, accompanied with the fall as of some very heavy substance upon the floor.—That he is certain this noise did take place, and verily believes no one member of the family was in the room at the time.—The said William Ofield likewise states, that the noise was loud enough to alarm part of the family then sitting in the lower room, in the opposite extremity of the house; that he is quite sure they were alarmed, inasmuch as one of the ladies immediately hastened to the kitchen to make inquiry about the noise, though his said master’s family never seemed desirous of making much of these occurrences:—that he, the said Win. Ofield, was ordered to go upstairs to see what had happened, and upon entering the room he found everything right:—he has no hesitation in declaring that this noise was not occasioned by any person in the house. The said Win. Ofield likewise states, that, at different times during the evenings, while he was in his said master’s service, he has heard other strange noises about the house, which he could never account for, particularly the rattling of glass and china in the chiffoier standing in the drawing-room, as if a cat were running in the midst of them, while he well believes no cat could be there, as the door was locked. And the said Win. Ofield likewise states, that he has been requested by some of the female servants of the family, who had been frightened, to search the false roof of the house, and to quiet their alarms, he has done so, but could never discover anything out of order.—This Declaration was made and signed this 18th day of June 1833, before me, Derick Hoste, one of His Majesty’s Justices of the Peace for the County of Norfolk.

“William Ofield.”

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“*Elizabeth*, the wife of John *Hooks*, of Syderstone, in the county of Norfolk, labourer, now voluntarily declareth, and is prepared at any time to confirm the same on oath, and say: That she entered the service of the Rev. Thomas Skrimshire, at Syderstone Parsonage, about seven years ago, and continued with him about four years; that in the last year of her service with Mr. Skrimshire, about Christmas-time, while sitting by the kitchen fireside, she heard a noise resembling the moving and rattling of the chairs about the sleeping rooms immediately over her;—that the noise was so great that one of Mr. Skrimshire’s daughters came out of the drawing-room (which was removed a considerable distance from the spot in which the noise was heard) to make inquiry about it: that the manservant and part of the family immediately went upstairs, but found nothing displaced;—and moreover that she verily believes no member of the family was upstairs

at the time.—The said Elizabeth Hooks also states, that, upon another occasion, after the above event, as she was going up the attic stairs to bed, with her fellow-servant, about eleven o'clock at night, she heard three very loud and distinct knocks, as coming from the door of the false roof. These knocks were also heard by the ladies of the family, then separating for the night, who tried to persuade her it was someone knocking at the hall door. The said Elizabeth Hooks says, that although convinced it was from no person out doors, yet she opened the casement to look and, as she expected, found no one;—indeed (being closest to the spot on which the blows were struck) she is sure they were on the door, but how and by whom given she is quite at a loss to conjecture.—And finally the said Elizabeth Hooks states, that at another time, after she had got into her sleeping-room (the whole family besides being in bed, and she herself sitting up working at her needle) she heard noises in the passage leading to the room, like a person walking with a peculiar hop: that she was alarmed, and verily believes it was not occasioned by any member of the family.—This Declaration was made and signed this 18th day of June 1833, before me, Derick I-Ioste, one of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the County of Norfolk.

“The mark (X) of Eliz. Hooks.”

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“*Phoebe Steward*, of Syderstone, in the county of Norfolk, widow, now voluntarily declareth, and is prepared at any time to confirm the same on oath, and say: That about twenty years ago, a few days after Michaelmas, she was left in charge of Syderstone Parsonage, then occupied by Mr. Henry Crafer; and about eight o'clock in the evening, while sitting in the kitchen, after securing all the doors, and no other person being in the house, she heard great noises in the sleeping rooms over her head, as of persons 'running out of one room into another'—'stumping about very loud'—and that these noises continued about ten minutes or a quarter of an hour:—that she felt the more alarmed, being satisfied there was, at that time, no one but herself in the house.—And the said Phoebe Steward further states, that on Whitsun-Tuesday, eighteen years ago, she was called to attend, as nurse, on Mrs. Elizabeth Parsons, in one of her confinements, then living in Syderstone Parsonage:—That about a fortnight after that time, one night, about twelve o'clock, having just got her patient to bed, she remembers to have plainly heard the footsteps, as of someone walking from their sleeping-room door, down the stairs, step by step, to the door of the sitting-room below:—that she distinctly heard the sitting-room door open, and the chair placed near one of the windows moved; and the shutters opened. All this the said Phoebe Steward is quite sure she distinctly heard, and thereupon immediately, on being desired, she came downstairs, in company with another female, whom she had awakened to go with her, being too much alarmed to go by herself: but on entering the room she found everything just as she had left it.—And the said Phoebe Steward further states, that about a fortnight after the last-named event, while sleeping on a bureau bedstead in one of the lower rooms in Syderstone Parsonage,—that is, in the room referred to in the last statement,—she heard 'a very surprising and frightful knock, as if it had struck the head of the bed and dashed it in pieces': that this knock was so violent as to be heard by Mrs. Crafer in the centre of the house:—that she, the said Phoebe Steward, and another person who was at that time sleeping with her, were very much alarmed with this heavy blow, and never knew how to account for it. And finally,

the said Phoebe Steward states, that, during the forty-five years she has been in the habit of frequenting the Syderstone Parsonage (without referring to any extraordinary statements she has heard from her sister, now dead, and others who have resided in it), that she, from her own positive experience, has no hesitation in declaring, that in that residence noises do exist which have never been attempted to be explained—This Declaration was made and signed this 18th day of June 1833, before me, Derick Hoste, one of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the County of Norfolk.

“The mark (X) of Phoebe Steward.”

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“*Robert Hunter*, of Syderstone, in the county of Norfolk, shepherd, now voluntarily declareth, and is prepared at any time to confirm the same on oath, and say: That for twenty-five years he has lived in the capacity of shepherd with Mr. Thomas Seppings, and that one night in the early part of March 1832, between the hours of ten and eleven o'clock, as he was passing behind the Parsonage at Syderstone in a pathway across the glebe land near the house, when within about twelve yards of the back part of the buildings, his attention was arrested all on a sudden by some very loud 'groanings,' like those 'of a dying man—solemn and lamentable,' coming as it seemed to him from the centre of the house above:—that the said Robert Hunter is satisfied these groans had but then just begun, otherwise he must have heard them long before he approached so near the house.—He also further states, that he was much alarmed at these groans, knowing particularly that the Parsonage at that time was wholly unoccupied, it being about a month before Mr. Stewart's family came into residence there:—that these groans made such an impression upon his mind, as he shall never lose, to his dying hour. And the said Robert Hunter likewise states, that, after stopping for a season near the house, and satisfying himself of the reality of these groans, he passed on his way, and continued to hear them as he walked, for the distance of not less than 100 yards. The said Robert Hunter knows 100 yards is a great way, yet if he had stopped and listened, he, the said Robert Hunter, doubts not he could have heard them to a still greater distance than 100 yards: 'so loud and so fearful were they, that never did he hear the like before.'—This Declaration was made and signed this 19th day of June 1833, before me, Derick Hoste, one of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the County of Norfolk.

“The mark (X) of Robt. Hunter.”

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“We, the undersigned chief inhabitants of the parish of Syderstone, in the county of Norfolk, do hereby certify that Elizabeth Parsons, Thomas Mase, William Ofield, Elizabeth Hooks, Phoebe Steward, and Robert Hunter, who are now residing in this parish, and whose Declarations are hereto annexed, have been known to us for some years, and are persons of veracity and good repute. “Witness our hands, this 18th day of June 1833.

“Thomas Seppings.

“John Savory.”

