

DOUBLE VUE.

BY FREDERICK MARSHALL.

ALL London has been to the top of the Haymarket to see Robin's conjurings, and his wife's "second sight;" and the ingenuity of papas and mammas has been most painfully strained in their efforts to explain to their puzzled offspring the astounding doings of the necromancer and his spouse.

It would much edify the curious public to learn the crafty processes by which half-crowns are made to jump into an empty box, or live pigeons out of a thin portfolio; but the secret of such delusions is the stock-in-trade of Bosco, Houdin, Robin, and their fellow wizards; and though it would amuse the readers of the *New Monthly* to learn the simple means by which such apparent impossibilities are effected, they must remember that their wonder is the consequence of their ignorance, and that all the conjurors would starve if the rest of the world were as wise as they.

The secrets of "*magie blanche, magie noire, et autre,*" shall therefore, for the present, retain their mystery; and the British nation, unenlightened, shall go on staring and gaping at delusions which most children could produce if only they once knew how.

There is, however, one branch of the science of recent professors of the black art which may, without injustice to their interests or rights, be examined and explained; for some of the less worthy among them have claimed for it the attention and respect which is due only to great discoveries.

"Double Vue," or "second sight," was first put forward in Paris some six or seven years ago, and was announced as a new evidence of the prodigious effects of mesmerism and magnetic influence. Performances of it were given, before astonished audiences, in the principal towns of France; and it was introduced into England (though only as an acknowledged trick) by Robert Houdin and his son. It has since become familiar to everybody from the admirable representations of M. and Madame Robin.

As "double vue" is simply a perfectly contrived mechanism of words, and has no more to do with "electric sympathy" than with the botany of the fixed stars, and as it is still largely employed to impose upon the credulity of those weak people who believe whatever they see or hear, it will be useful, as well as amusing, to set forth its principles and process.

It is, perhaps, prudent to observe that there may, very possibly, be a great deal of reality and valuable truth in what is generally known as "Mesmerism;" it is by no means intended to assert the contrary; but it is, at the same time, certain that most of the results of the so-called magnetism, somnambulism, and "lucidity," which have lately been exhibited in England, have been obtained by means almost exactly analogous to those about to be described: and though of course it is not pretended that the key now published is the identical one employed by all professors of supernatural knowledge (it being obviously capable of great variation), yet the principle is the same throughout, and they who have

once acquired a knowledge of it can easily detect the form in which it is applied.

In "experiments" of second sight the "subject" is generally blindfolded, and placed at a distance from the operator, sometimes even in an adjoining room, but always within easy earshot; the operator receives from the audience the questions to which they desire answers, or the objects which they wish to be described; and he asks the subject, in apparently the most natural and meaningless words, for the required reply.

Those natural and meaningless words convey, with infallible exactness, the answer which it is necessary to give.

The first letters of the consecutive words in the operator's question stand for the required letters or figures; and the whole science of "double vue" consists in nothing more than a clever pre-arranged use of initial letters, which signify either numbers or other letters than themselves, according to the nature of the question.

Let us suppose, for instance, that the number 12 is asked for. The operator calls to the subject "Dites le nombre,"* or, to utterly destroy suspicion, he may even say to the questioner, "Demandez-le vous-même." In either case the subject would unhesitatingly and instantly answer "Twelve."

The following table will show how simply this is effected:

1	is conveyed by the letter D.
2	..... L.
3	..... C.
4	..... P.
5	..... Q, or "Quel est."
6	..... A, or "A present."
7	..... F.
8	..... V.
9	..... N.
0	..... M.

In the example given above the first letters of the consecutive words, "Dites le nombre," and "Demandez-le vous-même," are D L, which, as the table shows, stand for 1 and 2, or 12.

It will, however, be at once observed that the question must be so arranged as not only to announce the figures themselves to the subject, but also to tell him how many of them there are; as, otherwise, he might suppose that every consecutive initial letter in a long question stood for a required figure. This difficulty is got over by a very neat expedient.

When a single figure is asked for, the operator employs in his question the word "chiffre." If, for instance, a 9 be wanted, he would say, "Nommez le chiffre;" and the subject perceiving, from the use of "chiffre," that one figure was all he had to give, would at once name 9, which is the figure represented by N. If this guide were not before him he would give the equivalents of all the initial letters in the sentence, N, L, and C, and would say, 923.

The following table of questions shows how all the single figures may be conveyed:

1. Dites le chiffre.

* The key is given in French, as nearly all performances of second sight are carried on in that language; but it may of course be easily arranged in English.

2. Le chiffre posé.
3. Connaissez-vous le chiffre ?
4. Pouvez-vous dire le chiffre ?
5. Quel chiffre a-t-on posé ?
6. Annoncez le chiffre posé.
7. Faites connaître le chiffre.
8. Voulez-vous dire le chiffre ?
9. Nommez le chiffre.
0. Monsieur vient de poser un chiffre.

In like manner, if two figures are required, the operator uses, instead of "chiffre," the expression "nombre;" and the subject being thereby warned that he has a double number to declare, announces the value of the initial letters of the first two words.

The following examples will make this clear :

22 Lisez le nombre posé.

2 2

99 Nomme nous le nombre.

9 9

34 Citez promptement le nombre.

3 4

62 Annoncez le nombre.

6 2

00 Maintenant, mon ami, dites le nombre.

0 0

To indicate to the subject that three figures are required, the operator commences his question with the seemingly valueless word "Bien" (the initial of which represents no figure).

Thus :

139 Bien—Dites ce nombre.

1 3 9

732 Bien—Faites connaître le nombre.

7 3 2

009 Bien—Maintenant, monsieur, nommez le nombre.

0 0 9

When four figures are wanted, the question opens with "Très bien :"

5906 Très bien—Quel nombre monsieur a-t-il posé ?

5 9 0 6

7280 Très bien—Faites-lui vous-même la demande.

7 2 8 0

1725 Très bien—Demandez, faites la question.

1 7 2 5

For five figures the operator begins with "Eh bien."

52950 Eh bien—Quel est le nombre que monsieur vient d'écrire ?

5 2 9 5 0

"Bien, très bien," announces six figures :

629506 Bien, très bien—Annoncez le nombre que monsieur a posé.

6 2 9 5 0 6

For seven figures the operator begins by using the word "Faites" in some apparently innocent question, such as, "Faites savoir le nombre de chiffres posés;" and when the answer, 7, is given, he would add, supposing such a number as 1912953 to be required, "Dites-nous donc le

1 9 1 2

nombre que cela produit."

9 5 3

Such high numbers are scarcely ever asked, but eight, nine, and ten figures are expressed by the previous use, in the same manner as for seven, of the words, "Voyez," or "Voyons," "Nommez," and "Dites moi."

Whenever the number consists of a repetition of the same figure, the guiding expression at the beginning of the sentence is followed only by one word announcing what the figure is; thus, if 333 be asked, the question would simply be, "Bien—Calculez." "Bien" shows that there are three figures, and the C must be multiplied to that extent. If 888,888 were required, the operator would say, "Bien, très bien—voyons."

The ordinary fractions, $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{1}{3}$, and $\frac{2}{3}$, are expressed by "Dites," "Dites donc," and "Dites le donc;" $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ by "Eh, dites," and "Eh, dites donc." Large fractions are announced by the word "Maintenant," and are expressed by the already given process, with a marked hesitation between the two terms.

Thus:

183	Maintenant—Dites vite ce—nombre que monsieur a écrit.				
950					
1	8	3	9	5	0

Such is the key to second sight in numbers. It is certainly vastly ingenious, and is very creditable to M. Gandon, who is supposed to have been its inventor. It is extremely easy to practise, and the young lady readers of these pages will do well to get it up as a drawing-room amusement.

The key to the announcement of objects, flowers, cards, and names, is not quite so simple, and requires in its working a considerably greater effort of memory and calculation.

It consists in changing the meaning of all the letters of the alphabet, and in composing the questions which are addressed to the subject of words commencing with the letters which, in regular alphabetical order, immediately follow those which form the name of the object to be described. If the name of the object begin with C, the operator must employ the letter D to commence his phrase; and if the second letter of the name be O, the second word in the phrase must begin with P. With the exceptions named in the following table, this rule is acted upon throughout the alphabet.

A signifies V, because the letters X, Y, and Z, which follow V, cannot be used to commence a word of interrogation.

B A

C B

D C

E D

F E

G there are very few words beginning with G which would be serviceable in questions; the word "Regardez" is therefore employed, as a conventional sign, for the letter F.

H G

I H

J I

K has no value.

L	.....	K
M	.....	L
N	.....	M
O	.....	N
P	.....	O
Q	.....	P
R	.....	Q
S	.....	R
T	.....	S
U	.....	T
V	.....	U

X, Y, Z, W, are all expressed by the following conventional phrases; X, "C'est facile;" Y, "C'est bien facile;" Z, "C'est très facile;" W, "Annoncez à présent."

If, for example, the letter X were asked for, the operator would remark, "C'est facile de dire cette lettre."

It will be seen from this table that, with a fluent command of words, any idea whatever may be unmistakeably conveyed by the operator to the subject without the slightest apparent trace of collusion. As, however, many different words commence with the same letters, and have nearly the same sound, it is necessary to indicate by the form of the question whether it refer to an animal, a card, a flower, or other object.

The possibility of any mistakes from such a cause is prevented by an arrangement that if the question refer to any part of the body of a man or an animal, the verb "indiquer" is used;

If it refer to dress, "toucher" is employed;

For all immoveable objects, furniture, &c., "regarder" is made use of;

All large objects are referred to by "en quoi;"

All small portable objects, rings, fans, &c., are distinctly spoken of as "objets."

For example: one of the audience points to his own body, the French word for which (*corps*) has its three first letters, and its sound, in common with another word (*cor*) which means a horn.

The operator asks, "Dites promptement si—vous voyez ce que j'ⁱn-_c^o_r^r
digue."

The use of the word "indique," tells the subject at once that the question refers to the body; but if it had been expressed "Dites promptement si—vous connaissez cet instrument," he would have perceived that his reply must be "a horn."

The hesitation in the question shows the limit of the words which convey the point.

In cards, diamonds are expressed by "C'est bien" (before the question); spades by "Très bien;" clubs by "Parfaitement;" and hearts by "Bien."

The nine of hearts would thus be conveyed by "Bien nommez la carte;" the king of spades by "Très bien—savez-vous la carte;" the six of diamonds by "C'est bien—⁹
r (roi)
annoncez la carte."

The facility of such means of giving secret information about cards should be remembered by young gentlemen who (of course to their own great astonishment) invariably have bad luck at *écarté* when they play with doubtful strangers.

Examples might be given in every possible form, so as to show the extent and capacity of this well-arranged system; but a very few will be sufficient to fully explain its nature, and to enable those who are blessed with good memories and ready tongues to astonish their less learned friends with an exhibition of "double vue."

The following words are selected as being in ordinary every-day use :

Couteau—Dites, pour vous un pareil—objet n'est pas difficile.

Montre—Nommez promptement—l'objet.

Épingle—Facilement—quel objet (conventional phrase for a pin).

Livre—Maintenant jugez—ah! sachez faire—connaître l'objet.

Savon—Très bien, annoncez promptement—l'objet.

Parapluie—Quel objet ai-je pris à monsieur (convention)?

Verre—Ah! faites savoir—l'objet.

Tabac—Voyez bien, citez bien—l'objet.

Lys—Madame, je tiens—à ce que vous demandiez vous-même le nom de cette fleur.

Camélia—Dites bien; nommez facilement; madame, je balance—quelquefois pour des noms de fleurs difficiles; mais, &c., &c.

Iris—Jugez, sachez juste trouver—la fleur.

Angleterre—Bien—oh! hâtez vous maintenant, faites savoir le nom de ce pays.

Italie—Je voudrais savoir le nom de ce pays.

Asie—Bien, trouvez juste le nom de cette partie du monde.

Hollande—Il peut, monsieur, bien dire le nom de ce pays.

Argent—Bien, savez-vous en quoi, &c.

Plomb—Quel métal? parlez, nommez-le.

Or—Parlez—savez-vous en quoi, &c.

Ecaïlle—Facilement; dites bien juste maintenant en quoi, &c.

Noir—Oh! précisez juste si vous voyez cette couleur.

Blond—Citez-moi promptement le couleur.

Champagne—Dites immédiatement ; bien, nommez quel vin.

Hermitage—Il faut savoir nommer juste le nom de ce vin.

Coq—Dites promptement, regardez—quel est l'oiseau.

The names of the months and days are conveyed by their order in the year or week.

Mai—Quel mois ?

Septembre—Nommez le mois.

Vendredi—A présent le jour.

The operator may vary his performance by asking aloud, "Will any gentleman present, who has been in the army, be good enough to write down the number and name of his regiment:" the subject hearing this prepares accordingly.

The 10th regiment of Cuirassiers may be named:

The operator says, "Demandez ; vous jugerez s'il peut répondre sans que je parle—demandez, monsieur."

The separation here between the two parts of the sentence serves to indicate the nature and number of the regiment in question.

It only remains to show how correct answers can be obtained from the subject when the operator does not speak, but simply touches a bell.

This is done by holding up preconceived objects, in alphabetical order; and though, at first sight, it may appear improbable that the objects wanted can always be obtained, yet it will be found that in a crowded audience no difficulty will arise on that ground.

Objects beginning with alternate letters, for instance, may be taken :

A NNEAU.

C HAPEAU.

E PINGLE.

G ANT.

K very few common words begin with K; it may therefore be arranged to answer "nothing" at this point, which will produce a marvellous effect.

M ONTRE,

and so on.

It is unnecessary to add more to this explanation of "second sight;" the simplicity of the trick will astonish everybody, but most people will be generous enough to admire the dexterous perfection of the mechanism by which they have been deluded.

If it were never directed to any other purpose than the amusement and astonishment of the public, this exposition of its nature would not have been given; but it has been often employed with very different ends, and the believers in magnetism will possibly be henceforth disposed to a little more scepticism about the all-seeing power which they fancy its subjects to possess.