

G. 232.           Collective. Auditory.

Sent by Mr. J. P. Quincy, a Member of the American Branch, well know to Mr. Hodgson.

From Miss Sarah Jenkins.  
Hotel Mt. Vernon, 18, West Cedar-street, Boston  
March 31st, 1891.

In the year 1845 Mr. Herwig, a German, and a much esteemed musician, who had for several years resided in Boston, Massachusetts, died suddenly in that city. I was then a young girl, and knew him only through his high reputation, and my own great enjoyment of his delightful performances on the violin in public concerts.

The only personal association I ever had with him was, that in the winter before his death, in returning to my home from that of a friend who was studying with me, I chanced for many weeks to meet Mr. Herwig almost daily on a certain part of Beacon-street. It seemed to be only an accident, but finally it became such a constant occurrence that he smiled on me kindly, and gave me a respectful little bow, which I ventured as respectfully to return.

The following autumn he died, as I have said, very suddenly, and his funeral took place on November 4th, 1845, in Trinity Church - then on Summer-street, Boston. It was a solemn and touching service, attended by a crowd of musicians and other eminent citizens, for all mourned the loss of such an accomplished and valuable man. I was present with my sister, and, in the midst of the services, there came to me a most unaccountable and inexpressible feeling that he might then and there at once rise from the coffin and appear in life again among us. Hardly knowing that I did, I caught my sister's hand, exclaiming almost aloud, "Oh, he *must*, he *must* come to life again!" so very earnestly that she looked at me in wonder and whispered "Hush ! hush !" That evening my mother, my two sisters, a friend (Mr. S., from Cuba), and myself - five of us in all - were sitting in our dining-room, No. 4, H. Street, Boston while my sister and I were describing the funeral. My sister had just told of my singular exclamation while there, and I was repeating the words, when suddenly the room was filled with a burst of glorious music, such as none of us had ever heard. I saw a look of astonishment and even fear on every face, and, in a sort of fright myself, I continued speaking incoherently when, once more, after a slight pause, came a similar full swell of harmony which then died softly away. My sister and I at once rushed to the hall door, which was but a few steps from us, to discover if outside there were any music, but we heard not a sound save the hard drizzle of a dark rainy night. I then ran upstairs to the parlour over the dining-room, where was only a Quaker lady reading. A piano was in that room, and, though it was closed, I asked, "Has anyone been playing?" "No," she replied "But I heard a strange burst of music. What was it?"

Now let it be understood that, as a family, we had never been superstitious, but, on the contrary, had been educated to scoff at the idea of ghosts, omens, &c., so that none of us announced this occurrence as supernatural, but could only look at each other saying, "What was it?" The Quakers, however, we found more excited than ourselves. She related the experience to her daughters, who were absent at the time, and they spent much time perambulating the neighbourhood to discover if there had been any music in the houses near ours; but it was distinctly proved that there had been none, nor had any been heard from the street. In fact, what we heard seemed to be close around ourselves, as we each described it, and unlike any we had ever heard.

It may seem strange that, after so many years, I should be able to describe so particularly this event. But I own it made a deep impression upon the minds of all the hearers. I have often narrated it, and heard others narrate it in exactly the same way, and my sister, the only one now living of that little company, will verify my description word for word.

I add my replies to some questions which have been asked.

When we went to the hall door we looked up and down the street, which was well lighted. Street performers upon musical instruments were absolutely unknown in Boston at this period.

Mrs. S., the Quaker lady of whom I have spoken, was staying in the house as a guest. I asked whether anyone had played upon the piano, not because the music bore any resemblance to that of a piano, but to connect it, if possible, with some natural cause.

The music appeared to all of us to be in the room where we were sitting. It seemed to begin in one corner, and to pass round the room. I said that it was like a burst of sunshine in sound, and can give no better description of it.

My mother and Mr. S. agreed that the music was utterly inexplicable.

My sister and I, as well as the daughters of Mrs. S., made thorough inquiries at all the houses about us, but could hear nothing that could account for the phenomenon.

SARAH JENKINS

Miss E. JENKINS corroborates as follows:-

I have carefully read the above account written by my sister, and testify to its accuracy.

ELIZABETH JENKINS

Boston, 1890.