

**THE GHOST! AS PRODUCED IN THE
SPECTRE DRAMA, POPULARLY
ILLUSTRATING THE MARVELLOUS
OPTICAL ILLUSIONS OBTAINED BY
THE DIRCKSIAN PHANTASMAGORIA**

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The Ghost! As Produced in the Spectre Drama, Popularly Illustrating the Marvellous Optical Illusions Obtained by the Dircksian Phantasmagoria by Henry Dircks

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HENRY DIRCKS

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OBTAINED BY THE APPARATUS CALLED
THE DIRCKSIAN PHANTASMAGORIA:
BEING A FULL ACCOUNT OF ITS
HISTORY, CONSTRUCTION, AND VARIOUS ADAPTATIONS.

BY HENRY DIRCKS,
CIVIL ENGINEER,
LIFE MEMBER OF THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION (1857), &c. &c.
THE INVENTOR.

— COME, LET ME CLUTCH THEE :—
I HAVE THEE NOT, AND YET I SEE THEE STILL.
ART THOU NOT, FATAL VISION, SENSIBLE
TO FEELING AS TO SIGHT!

Macbeth.



LONDON:
E. AND F. N. SPON, 18, BUCKLESBURY.

1863.

[The right of translation is reserved].

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PREFACE.

Few inventions on their first presentation to the public meet with popular acceptance. The popularity of inventions in arts and sciences is usually slow and uncertain. Among scientific inventions, it was the fate of the kaleidoscope, patented by Sir David Brewster, 10th July, 1817, that hundreds of thousands of that beautiful philosophical toy were manufactured in a very short time throughout England and the continent. Forty-six years have elapsed without any similarly popular optical instrument making its appearance, except, perhaps, the stereoscope. But the modern reader may either have forgotten or not be aware of the reverse of this picture of brilliant success. Ignorant persons, as well as designing philosophical instrument manufacturers defrauded the successful inventor of all emolument from his invention; and, driven to screen themselves from legal proceedings for either unknowingly or designedly having infringed a patent right, strenuous efforts were made to deprive Sir David Brewster of all right or title to originality.

The public cannot be too generally informed, that it is a prevalent feeling among inventors that the pro-

ducts of their intellectual looms are for the public good, through the medium of anybody but the rightful inventors. In fact, inventors, as a class, are much like a hive of bees on the old construction, in which it was thought perfectly consistent to smother the producers for the benefit of those who had afforded a convenient lodging until the spoil of the laborious workers within was worth their seizure. But modern practice in regard to inventors has not kept pace with the improved practice in regard to bees; and it would be well if, instead of stifling the poverty-stricken inventor, he were put into some asylum specially appointed for his reception. One of this class, the late Samuel Hall, Esq., Civil Engineer, of Basford Hall, near Nottingham, after spending a fortune on scheming and patenting, at the end of his days lived some weeks in a workhouse, and was only saved from dying there, at the age of about 83 years, by a small pittance from rich relations.*

What Homer and Shakespeare and Milton were, such likewise were the Marquis of Worcester, Savery, and Watt; all great inventors in different directions of powerful intellect.

* *The Times*, of December 5, 1863, concludes an article on this deceased inventor, observing:—"He had in large measure the true genius of the mechanician, and belonged by nature to that illustrious line which has in all ages bequeathed the heritage of power, and to which the world looks for her most splendid triumphs." His gassing of lace, bleaching of starch, and surface condensation, form but a small portion of his inventions.

An original idea, originating a novel invention, is not the lot of one man in a million of the population of the globe; hence probably the proverbial irritability of great poets, painters, and philosophers. But, independent of all other considerations, it is universally admitted, that authorship is inviolable. Every author of any work in art, literature, or science, has a clear claim to the labours of his own intellect. In no department is this right better understood, or more jealously maintained, or zealously guarded than in literature. The purloining of a few sentences or pages by one author from the works of another would raise the trumpet voice of a hundred papers, a dozen magazines, and three or four reviews in happy concert to denounce such flagrant literary larceny. But who cares for scientific larceny? Whoever heard of such a foolish charge, as pretending that there is anything in science which may not be appropriated with impunity at pleasure either for aggrandizement or honour? A true history of the toils, troubles, and follies of inventors has yet to be written; their wrongs would prove how cold, indifferent, and heartless has been their reception among their relatives and their countrymen. While literature has its century of channels of information, science is almost unrepresented in a popular sense; it is broken up into sections, each section is small, and each seems to be the one repellant of the other. There is no union in scientific literature or pursuits. Science is not a common interest among scientific men as a body;