

## A TRUE STORY ABOUT SPIRIT RAPPINGS.

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By DR. JOHN H. LEMON

Soon after locating as a physician in New Albany, Ind., in 1867, I became acquainted with Mrs. Lydia Towner. She was related to the families of Bogart, Folger and Scribner, who were from the Hudson regions, New York. The Scribners in 1813 secured 800 acres and platted the first street and lots in this city.

Lydia Towner (nee Bogart) lost her husband, Joseph Towner, about 1855. She was of a very quiet, kindly disposition, a member of the Christian Church.

When a child I lived on a farm one mile southwest of Harrodsburg, Monroe County, Indiana, and thirteen miles southwest of the Bloomington College where my three older brothers and I were educated.

When I was seven years old, an old, wrinkled, dark-faced woman came to our home for several succeeding years to pick our geese. These details are tedious and seem irrelevant, but they serve in identification. I sat on a little box by her feet and held the goose's head to keep it from biting her as she plucked its feathers. It was a tiresome task to sit all day on the barn floor, the doors closed to keep the wind from blowing the feathers away. I was alone with her mostly, and became much attached to the silent, wrinkled feather picker. She was very deaf, but could understand me by watching the motion of my lips. She was very kind, giving me her sort of cakes and telling me stories of the dark German Forest.

So when I saw Lydia Towner in 1867, I liked her; she appeared to be my old goose-picking friend of boyhood. A few times I gave her medicine, but I was never in her house until her last day of life. Some years after, people who knew her, and liked her much said there were rappings in her house, especially on the old bureau which had belonged to her deceased husband. Lydia never spoke of them, except to say, "It is Joseph," and that they "comforted" her.

Fifty years ago there was more interest in spiritualism than now; people had social spirit rapping parties or séances and would tell of singular happenings. Lydia never had any meetings at her house nor joined in talk about the spirits. She was satisfied in her church, and felt that the "Better Land" and Joseph were not far away.

I never attended a "spirit meeting," as I thought it something separate from the serious life of a physician; besides, I thought, and was told, if one became too much mixed up with the spirits they became a nuisance. Often being much fatigued at night, it was necessary to sleep, so with this, perhaps selfish policy, my rest has been sound.

In 1875, while living in a house on Pearl Street, since replaced by the Mutual Trust and Deposit bank building, I had Lydia to come to do some quilting. She was at our dinner table at which there were six present. "Aunt Lydia" sat at one end or the head of the table; I was at her right. The chairs, table and floor were firm and solid. It was noon, and the room was full of

sunlight. When all were seated and food was being passed, there were many loud raps, fifty or more, single and several at once, a tattoo or brisk air of them, across the top panel of her chair, then on the lower and on both, from the right to left and back again.

I said, "Lydia, your friends have come with you. They are very welcome."

She said, and her face was full of pleasure, "That is Joseph. He is glad I have so much to eat."

When the biscuit plate passed around and was set empty in front of me, three loud raps, sounding like the dropping of water on a tin pan, were made on the empty plate. The "raps" seemed to assist in dispensing the plenty. Lydia appeared throughout the meal a quiet bride – her ghost husband was near.

During the succeeding years I passed her occasionally on the street, when we had a friendly chat of our personal gettings on.

On a sunny day many years after the dinner table raps, a messenger came to say Lydia Towner was very ill and wished me to come to her. I went to where she lived, in an old house on the east corner of West Fourth or Fifth street. She was in a lower front room, propped in a rocking chair, dying, exhausted from sporadic cholera. As I bent over her the "raps" again played the same lively air on the panels of her chair as at the dinner table in my home many years before. Her withered sad face became light with joy, as she whispered, "It is Joseph. He is glad you have come."

The house was vacant except for two women who lived in the rear. I had one to help put the patient on the bed and make her position more comfortable, giving her a half teacup of hot water, whisky, paregoric and extract of ginger, the usual routine practice.

The attendant said to me, "Stay with her a moment. I must carry dinner to some rolling mill men."

I opened the front door. Lydia could look over the Ohio River to the fields, some four or five miles west of Louisville, green with grass and corn. The view was one of quiet beauty, full of peace. Lydia seemed to be looking at the green and the blue beyond the river.

I said, "It is pretty over the river, Lydia; but you will soon be in a land fairer than day."

She faintly said, "I am glad," and, after a moment, "My life has been lonely and often hard to get along, especially in the winter, but I have not been unhappy. I am glad now." Perhaps these were her last words.

I closed the front door and cleared off the top of her work table, and sat down to dispense a few Dover Powders. The table, about two feet square, of cherry, was heavy and solid, the floor of the room was firm, the chair I sat on was heavy and strong, and there was no rattling of windows. After dispensing the powders, I turned a glass over them and sat two or three feet away to await the return of the attendant to receive my directions. As I waited, there were three very heavy, slow knocks on the top of the table, as firm and decisive as the raps of a chairman's gavel. The solemn, emphatic knocks seemed to say, "This is all," or "It is finished."

The house was perfectly silent, and no one in it except the dying woman and myself. When the attendant came I returned home, and Lydia died that night.

I have related everything connected with these manifestations of the supernatural, the most definite in a very long medical experience.

JOHN HERSCHEL LEMON,  
425 Pearl Street, New Albany, Ind.,  
August 23, 1928

Personally appears John H. Lemon and makes oath that the matters set forth in the appended statement or manuscript, entitled "Lydia Towner," are true statements.

(Signed) JOHN H. LEMON

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 27<sup>th</sup> day of August, 1928. EDWARD H. MEYER, Clerk,  
Floyd Circuit Court