

THE CAPTAIN'S STORY

Rebecca Harding Davis

Table of Contents

<u>THE CAPTAIN'S STORY</u>	1
<u>Rebecca Harding Davis</u>	1

THE CAPTAIN'S STORY

Rebecca Harding Davis

This page copyright © 2001 Blackmask Online.

<http://www.blackmask.com>

I have been asked to tell what I know of the case of Joseph C. Wylie, whose mysterious disappearance caused so much excitement in Cincinnati when it occurred. That was in '58, however, before the war; and I had supposed all trace of the affair had been swept from the public mind by the events which followed. Indeed, I see no reason for reviving it now, except that it bears more fully than any evidence I have ever heard upon the curious matter called spiritualism, and I have thought (though I am only a plain man, not used to dealing in such whimsies), it offers a key to unlock the riddle.

Wylie was a river hand; ran the Ohio and Lower Mississippi as clerk and captain on several stern-wheelers, so came to be known pretty generally along shore. He was with me as a second clerk when the thing happened. I was running the Jacob Strader, one of the largest steamboats on the Mississippi. I took little account of the fellow; he was a small, red-headed, weak-eyed man, shambling lazily about, whose legs and arms seemed scarcely to have gristle enough in them to hold them firmly together.

The only noteworthy trait about him was that he never touched liquor or a card, but found his amusement, instead, in sitting with some of the deck hands below, telling long pointless yarns. I had to stop it at last. That runs contrary to my notions of discipline.

It was in April that he disappeared; like a flea, under my very eyes. The Strader lay at the wharf, at Cincinnati; it was Sunday, about noon; she was to get up steam at seven o'clock next morning. I walked up the levee, and just off the cobble-stones, met Wylie. He had a drum of figs in his hand which he had just bought from some peddler on the David Swan, and was going to take home to his little Joe, in Cairo, he said, as he walked alongside of me.

I met John Fordyce, and stopped to get a light of him; Wylie went into a shanty fitted up as a shop for the sale of cigars, newspapers, and the like; he wanted a "Despatch," he said. The shop was but a single room, opening, front and back, on the wide (and at that hour on Sunday morning), empty wharf; a square plank-built affair, made to hold the two counters and a stove in the middle. Wylie went into it, as I said, but out of it he was never seen to come alive. I stood talking with Fordyce for some minutes, then called the clerk, and when he did not answer, went in search of him, but found only the boy who tended the shop, asleep under the counter. Wylie was not there, nor on the boat, nor on the wharf. He was nowhere, so far as the sharpest eyes of the Cincinnati police could discover.

The thing staggered me when I had time to take it home and realize that the man was actually gone; spirited away in broad daylight, before my face. It was absurd, impossible; yet it struck me with a sort of horror that did not belong to midnight murder. They called it murder in the papers; there was a great outcry; but where was the foul play? The boy (a child of ten) had heard or seen nothing; it was impossible that Wylie could have been foully dealt with, and no sound or cry reach Fordyce or me, half a dozen feet off. It was just as impossible that he could have left the shop, unseen by us on the wide, open levee. That he could have gone voluntarily, nobody hinted. The poor fellow had but few ideas beyond his wife and boy, Joe. His trunk on board was found filled with cheap Summer clothes for them both, some tin-ware, a japanned tea-tray, a china mug; trifles which he had gathered up at auctions, and was taking to Cairo to make their little home comfortable. He had made an engagement to go out with the first clerk that afternoon; his clean shirt, collar, and shaving apparatus were all laid out in his stateroom.

THE CAPTAIN'S STORY

But that was the last of him. It only remained to gather up these things and carry them with the news to his wife.

I shirked that. I cannot face a woman in trouble. I ordered Stein, who had been a sort of crony of his, to do it. Stein was the steward, and was leaving the boat. He had a good berth offered to him in St. Louis, he said; so that I knew he had time to see Wylie's widow, and break it gently to her.

If widow she was. If Wylie had died naturally I would have dismissed him from my mind; but the matter rankled there, as I might say, from its very doubt and mystery.

About two years afterward, therefore, when Warrick brought a little boy on board, as the boat lay at Cairo, and told me it was Wylie's son, I found myself going, again and again, to the part of the deck where the child was playing, feeling pained to notice how coarsely dressed it was, and how pinched even hunger-bitten, the little, honest face.

"Is it going so badly with her?" I asked.

Warrick nodded, saying aloud, "Joe's shaken with the whooping-cough, Captain. He's the deuce of a boy for sniffing up all the ailments that are going up and down the river."

Joe looked up and laughed.

"He had better shake them down into the river again, then," I said. "Let him and his mother come aboard for a trip or two. Nothing like air off of water for that whoop, the old women say."

I sent Warrick to urge the plan on Mrs. Wylie. I knew it was not the air that was needed so much as good, wholesome food. Warrick set apart the best stateroom for her, and I dropped in myself to see that it was all in order.

In the evening, before we started, Warrick brought her aboard and into the cabin where I was. I found that she had some exaggerated notions about one or two good turns I had done her husband, and a trifle which I had sent to her when he was lost; so, after that, I held aloof from her. I hate philandering. I kept an eye, though, to see how she fared on the little body in her rusty black gown, shying round with Joe in the corners, out of the way of the ladies who went sweeping their long dresses up and down.

I soon found, however, that all the men on board who had known Wylie, from Warrick down, vied with each other in treating her with a sort of patronizing respect; even Jake, the black cook, was continually sending up little messes for her and Joe. She was but a poor mouse of a woman, who had made a god of that stupid little weak-eyed fellow, and of his boy after he was gone; take her on politics, or even gossip, anything outside of Wylie and her child, and there nothing in her. Warrick told me that she had never been outside of Cairo before, and the near village of Blandville, where she had been a sempstress before her marriage; this journey was like a glimpse of a new world to her. I used to see her sitting in a dark corner on deck until late in the night, her eyes strained over the long stretch of shore as we floated by; and I could understand how the heavy, wooded hills, crouching like sullen beasts along the water's edge, or the miles and miles of yellow can-brake laying flat and barren in the desolate, homesick twilight of a Winter's day, might have a different meaning to the lonely woman, and to us, who counted them only as "a run" of so many hours.

She was sitting this way one evening on our back trip when the boat stopped at a place called by the boatmen Dead Man's Riffle. Warrick was near me, watching her.

"She wears black," he said, at last. "Now for me," cutting off a quid of tobacco, "I never believed Joe Wylie was dead. No, it was a bad bit of work, dead or alive bad."

THE CAPTAIN'S STORY

"It is work I would give much to see cleared up, before I die," I said. Warrick and I were walking up and down the hurricane deck.

"Would you?" he said, slowly, chewing and glancing up at me. "Would you? There's a way. But no matter " stopping short and looking ashamed.

I said nothing. I never urge a man to speak, if he has ever so little mind to hold his tongue quiet. But Warrick had some notion that troubled him. He walked nearer at each turn to the place where a stout, short young woman was sitting dressed in brown linsey. There was nothing remarkable about her face, which was heavy and dull, if we except a pair of thick, dead, fishy gray eyes.

"Do you see that girl?" he jerked out, "Many of the men aboard would say that she could tell you anything you want to know; the dead are about her all the time, they say. I don't say it, Captain, mind; I'm not such a fool."

"I should hope not, Warrick," I said, gravely, and began to talk of something else. But somehow the matter stuck in my mind. The next day we stopped for freight at Natchez. I went up into the city with one of the passengers. Old Jimmy A. it was anybody on the Western waters will know who I mean; for strangers I will only say that A. was one of the most thorough misers I ever knew. He was an extensive stock-broker and speculator in Western lands. When his wife lived he had always consulted her, and abode by her advice in his business. I believe he mourned for the old woman sincerely, though when she died he had taken the ribbon away with which the women had bound her chin and put twine instead, to save a penny.

A. was my companion, as I said. Coming down into the old town a sudden idea struck me.

"These lots are cheap, Mr. A.," I said. "Buy them and put up good dwellings on them, and your fortune is made. Real estate is going up here daily."

The old man seized on the plan eagerly, and held me by the coat while he went about the lots, calculating, muttering, chuckling to himself.

"It's a good notion, very good. This swamp could be drained it would bring in eleven per cent., eleven and a half and a half; I wish I knew what Ann would think of it, poor Ann! I've a great mind to go into it; I have indeed;

It was with difficulty I got the old fellow away and on board in time before the boat put off. It was growing dusk as we stepped off the plank on deck. A. still clung to me, following me up and down, charging me to say nothing of the plan until he had well considered it. As we went up to the outer cabin we met the woman to whom Warrick had directed my notice the day before. She was pacing up and down with heavy, masculine steps; she stood still as we came up; her dead, gray eyes fell on A. and rested there with a curious absorbing look; which, perhaps, I should not have seen but for Warrick's warning.

She remained quite quiet until we had passed, and returned; then stooping suddenly to a table before her, wrote on a scrap of paper, and handed it to the old man, walking away after she had done so; every motion lifeless, mechanical, like a clumsy machine of wood set in action.

A. had not seen her, I think, until she thrust the paper into his hand; he stared, pulled at his ragged, gray beard, and then peered at it through his spectacles. There was a queer, scared little noise in his throat, like the crow of a chicken.

"Why, Captain, look here! this is is " holding out the dirty scrap of paper.

THE CAPTAIN'S STORY

It was a message from his wife. "Do not touch real estate, except to mortgage," she said. "The drainage of the swamp would eat up four years' profits."

("I thought of that,") he interrupted, quickly. "Do not withdraw your money from P.C."

"That is all," I said. "Who is this woman, Mr. A.?"

"God knows. But no human being alive knew of that P.C. money. Ann did." His face was colorless and his teeth chattered. We went to the woman. She was apparently stolid, but half educated; I saw no sign of cunning, even shrewdness, about her.

"The message had been given to her," she said. "How, she did not know."

"From a spirit?"

"She could not say that. She supposed so. They called her a writing medium."

Afterward she said, "This thing would ruin her," crying in a feeble stupid way. She had been an operative in some mill in Cincinnati, we were told, and was discharged in consequence of it. The "manifestations" were followed by attacks of something resembling paralysis, which would soon leave her helpless. I left the old man talking to her.

Warrick came to me that evening. He had heard of the affair. "Captain," he said, "I'm going to try if no tidings can be had from Joe Wylie. Have I your permission?" I nodded shortly. Warrick's broad face was pale and anxious. I sat for a while looking at the closed door of the little office into which they had gone. Then I got up and followed them. The woman (Lusk was her name), was there, Warrick and the wife of the carpenter—a shrewd, sensible woman—who had been a friend of Wylie's, as most women were.

She and the girl sat facing each other at a table on which flared a dirty oil lamp. Warrick leaned on the back of a chair with both hands, watching the girl's face.

"She knows what she's got to do, Captain," vigorously chewing and spitting, but not lifting his eyes. "I told her to consult, her familiar spirit, or whatever it is. Let's have him up! Let's know what's become of Joe, good or bad."

I had seen Warrick cool and grave when a burning boat was drifting with all aboard right into the rapids; but now he was a coward in every bone of his body; his very voice grew piping and boisterous as the woman turned her square, heavy face toward him, and the gray eyes, which they said saw the dead, fell on his.

For the girl, I observed that she had the appearance of extreme nervous dejection: her breath was uncertain and feeble; her lips blue. I touched her and found that the blood had almost ceased to circulate. Her temples were hot; hands icy cold; the pupils of the eyes contracted. The look was fastened into Warrick. I can describe it in no other way. I shook her, but could not loosen the hold of it. It was as if she drew the life out of his burly big body with her dull eyes.

"Bring up the spirit of Wylie, my woman," he said, with a loud, uneasy laugh that suddenly died into profound silence.

She shook her head; raised her forefinger slowly, pointing into the shadow behind him.

"What do you see?"

THE CAPTAIN'S STORY

"I see a ship three-masted a bark." (Warrick started, nodding his head with a muttered oath.) "The sea is frozen; the ship is wedged between masses of ice; the sky is like a bronze plane above; there is neither sun nor wind."

"On a whaler!" burst in Warrick. "I always knew it! I was in just such a scrape, off go on, go on."

"There are two men on the deck. One is heavily built, gray-headed; the other is spare, short with red hair. There is a blood-mark on his chin."

"Wylie! Alive!"

"Alive. His clothes are gray "

"He wore gray the day he left," said Warrick. "But, come to think of it now, he wouldn't "

"I was wrong. He wears a sailor's dress."

She got up hastily, putting her hand to her forehead. Her face was covered with a cold sweat. "Nothing nothing! I am sick. Stop no more," she gasped.

Mrs. Pallet, the carpenter's wife, put her arm around her. "I'll take her to her room, Captain?" looking at me. "There's no cheating in her, at any rate," as she led her out. "It's my belief it's the devil's work."

Warrick straightened himself and drew a long breath. "Do you think it is the devil's work, sir?"

"God knows."

"It is the truth, whether or no. Wylie always had a hankering for a sea life. He used to listen to my old whaling yarns twenty times over. And I've heard lately, Captain, that poor Joe was deep in debt when he disappeared. Some old matters, before he came aboard the Strader. He had a reason for going. But Ellen thinks him dead thinks him dead," stroking his whiskers. "Would you tell her of this now, eh, Captain?" looking up.

"Yes, I would," after a pause. "It can do no harm. But gently, Warrick, gently."

"It did no harm, however gently it was told. The next day Wylie's wife came to me where I stood alone, near the texas. Her nose was red from crying, and her eyes angry, which made the rest of her face more hunger-nipped and pale. She touched my sleeve, and then drew off, holding her little boy by the hand.

"Captain Roberts," she said, in a low, steady voice, "there is a woman on the boat who pretends to have seen my husband alive. If he is alive, he has deserted me. He is dead."

"Be calm, madam."

"He is dead. You shall not think ill of Joe." She was silent a moment, holding her throat with one hand. "If he is alive, he has deserted me, and I'll tell you, Captain Roberts, but I never meant to tell any living man: When you brought me and Joe on the boat, I hadn't touched meat for four months. It took all I could make to keep life in the boy, and barely that. I went out scrubbing when sewing failed me. I scrubbed and whitewashed. I didn't beg. Do you think Joe would have left me to that? and him alive? He's dead. There's some days I've went through if Joe had been on the face of the earth he'd have come to me them days. He's dead; he's waiting somewheres "

THE CAPTAIN'S STORY

She held little Joe tighter by the hand, looking beyond me—God knows where—into the place where old Joe waited for her, I suppose; the somewheres where the poor starved soul hoped to find the comfort and love of her married life again. I hesitated. "Would you like to see this woman? I will not say that I credit her assertions, but there is a curious—"

She drew herself up, growing pale. "I, sir? No; I only wished that you should do my husband justice. For the woman—no matter. I will not detain you, Captain Roberts." And so, scarcely waiting for me to speak to the boy, she drew him away with her.

"That cut Ellen hard," Warrick said—"hard. These women would rather a man should die any day than cease to care for them. But it's true. Joe Wylie went on a whaler, sir."

The girl Lusk went ashore at New Albany, and I saw her no more. She became afterward a noted medium, I believe, and old A., by the way, used to consult her in all of his undertakings, or rather his wife, through her.

The matter puzzled me. I did not believe the spirits of the dead had anything to do with it; though the woman, before she went off the boat, brought me a message from one who has been gone from me this many a year. I will say no more of this. Since she did not name her name. I did not believe the words came from her. I did not believe the girl Lusk was an impostor. I thought, as every impartial cool observer must, that there was a something—not charlatanism—in this matter, and I think, in the end, I got the key to it; but of that you must judge.

It was early dawn when I took Ellen to her. She occupied a corner of the market as a fruit and vegetable stall, and as we came near was hanging nets of apples and oranges in front of it, I remember. A skinny, sour-visaged, middle-aged woman dressed in a sluttish gown and calico sun-bonnet. I noticed the same peculiarity in the eye of the girl Lusk: they were opaque, gray, dead. The market-house was nearly empty; a few butchers were arranging their meat at some distance inside, or swallowing their coffee at the eating stalls by the light of a few candles. This woman's stall was out on the solitary street, however, and the pleasant morning light shone about it.

I made a pretence of buying some fruit. "This is the business for which I brought you ashore," I said to Ellen.

It was impossible that the woman could have heard me, yet she turned sharply, eyeing Ellen as she came forward.

"It was for no oranges you come. Why didn't ye say what you come for? If there's any dead belonging to ye, I'll bring ye word from them. There's spirits all about me; there's spirits at yer back, there's spirits fillin' the street. What'll you have, my young man?" to a boy who stopped. "Eight and ten cents them is."

Ellen drew back. "Let us go, let us go," she said.

At that moment a series of soft double knocks, as if made by two knuckles of a gloved hand, sounded all about us—under the pavement, on the roof, on the stall.

"There's yer change—I've a message for you," suddenly facing Ellen. "There's a spirit here to speak to you."

"He is dead, then?" catching both hands together as if to support herself.

The woman took down a greasy card on which the alphabet was printed from a nail where it hung, and ran her pencil lightly along it, as the raps continued in swift soft succession. She spelled out this message.

"I think of you here. Of you and Joe. You will come to me."

THE CAPTAIN'S STORY

"Where how is it to be done?" I cried.

The woman glanced at Ellen, who leaned against the edge of the block.

"I was murdered; drugged and murdered," was the answer.

"He is dead. There is no chance any more." That was all she said, with a strange inconsistency, forgetting her anger of the other day. "There is no chance, no chance," I heard her mutter, as we went back to the boat, "he's gone now."

The blow was as hard as if it had struck her for the first time. I told Warrick the story without comment.

"It goes dead against the other," he exclaimed. "And yet where did either woman get their knowledge of the business we wanted cleared. The blood mark on the chin, the possibility that the dead man had been drugged and murdered? There's truth in it, in all the muddle."

I said nothing. But the matter had taken a hold of me which I could not shake off. I determined to look through the absurdity and mystery of this so-called spiritualism until I had discovered the truth which Warrick believed lay in it. I could not divest myself, either, of an unaccountable impression that at last we were upon the track of the missing man.

I induced Mrs. Wylie to remain on the boat during its next run, for the boy's sake, who grew stronger and more rugged every day. There was the making of a man in the little fellow; he had a hearty, straightforward look in his puny face, that made a friend of everybody. For the woman, from the day when the message came to her from her husband, dead, she gave way in mind or body as if some sinew had been snapped which had held her up. I fancied that unconsciously she had been keeping some vague hope alive which was gone now, forever. She crept out now to the hurricane deck, and sat all day; where her look settled, or her hands fell on her lap, there they rested, immovable. As I knew her better, I discovered why the men held her in such a pitying aspect. She was a simple-hearted, credulous creature, such as everybody feels bound and anxious to take care of when they are left drifting about the world.

So we made our way up to the headwaters of the Ohio. It was late in October, I remember, warm, yellow sunshine, by day, and cold nights. The fields nipped brown and red in the early frosts. I used to think if anything could take the poor woman's thoughts off the dead, the cheerful sights and sounds along shore ought to do it. The water was unusually clear, and curdled and bubbled back from the edge of the boat, all day, filled with a frothed, green light; the hills on both sides kept rising back and back to the sky beyond, mottled with purple and crimson and blackish greens; we passed thousands of little islands shying out of the current, which were mere beds of feathery moss and golden-rod. Then there were pretty, new little villages, and the busy larger towns, and farms, at long intervals; and when these were passed we floated into the deep solitude again. I noticed it the more because we were out of our usual run; the Strader plied then between Louisville and New Orleans. But the woman saw nothing of it, I think.

When we reached Pittsburg, and had discharged cargo, I determined with Warrick, to make a final test of the matter. F. was then in the city, just back from England; the most successful medium, next to Home, who ever left the States. He was willing, "for a consideration," to hold a private seance and bring us in contact with any of the dead.

He was hardly the person to whom one could think St. Peter would have lent his keys for ever so short a time; an oily, bloated sensualist, with thick lips, and thicker eyelids half closed over a dull, sleepy eye. He was dressed like an Orleans black-leg, gaudy with purple velvet waistcoat and flash jewelry. But if there was any truth in spiritualism, here was its interpreter. I engaged him to come onboard on Saturday evening; no one was to be

THE CAPTAIN'S STORY

present but Warrick, Ellen and myself; the boat was empty at the time with the exception of its regular crew, below. There was but little persuasion needed to induce Ellen to consent.

"He may bring me another message," with a light flickering into her eyes. "Joe will be glad to find the way." It is people like Ellen who are always sure converts of spiritualism; it seems so natural to them that their dead should come back that they are blind to any absurd discrepancies in the** manner. On Saturday morning, on the wharf, I met Stein, who had left the boat some two years before, and remembering his old liking for Joe, told him what we were about to do. Stein was a hard-headed, shrewd little Yankee; I was surprised, therefore, to see how discomposed and startled he appeared at the first mention of the affair; he denounced F. as a humbug with a great deal of heat, and tried to persuade and chaff me out of it; but finding he could not, asked leave to come himself to the seance.

"You're bitten, Captain," he said. "It will be easy to persuade you that you see ghosts yourself. You had better let me bring a little daylight with me."

I told Warrick of my meeting with Stein, and he, having nothing else to do, sauntered off in the afternoon to bring him down. I told Ellen also, who, to my surprise, reddened and grew pale, when I named him.

"He is a man whom I have no reason to like," she said. "But it does not matter."

In the evening F. came on board, stopping in the outer cabin, where we were soon joined by Stein. We waited an hour for Warrick, who did not return, and then entered the saloon where Ellen was seated. I noticed that Stein drew back muttering, "You did not tell me that woman was here," and that no greeting passed between them.

The seance proceeded according to the usual formula. We sat around a bared table, on which were placed by Stein and myself the names of those whom we wished to appear written on scraps of paper rolled up in pellets and laid in a small heap. Ellen wrote none. "He will come," she said, simply.

But few raps were heard. F. delivered the messages by writing, his fat, lumpy hand moving spasmodically over the sheets of paper. From several of the names written on the pellets came communications, vague and meaningless, any one of which might have been exchanged for the other without loss of force.

F. glanced shrewdly around from time to time, fixing his strange, introverted gaze oftenest on Ellen and little Joe, who had crept in and stood looking him boldly in the face. He turned to me.

"One whom you desire to appear has not yet come? so far the seance has failed for you?" he said.

I nodded. His face heightened in color as if the blood slowly rose to his head; the veins swelled; drops of sweat oozed out on his neck and forehead; he peered sharply about the room, as if out of the dark shadows he expected visible spirits to rise.

"He is coming!" said Ellen, with a gasp. Stein became ghastly pale at the words, and looked terrified, over his shoulder, recovering himself with a feeble laugh.

The table where we sat was under the chandelier; two of the lamps of which barely sufficed to light that end of the cabin. The remainder stretched, long and narrow and black, to the far upper deck. The medium, looking at Stein as if he saw through him into this outer darkness, sat motionless. There was a long silence. Then he raised his hand, made a slow beckoning movement into the shadow. Ellen and Stein turned their pale faced, breathlessly.

"They are coming! They are here!" he said. "They tell me all you would know. The man you seek is not dead. He was cheated, deceived, carried off to Caraccas that another man might marry his wife."

THE CAPTAIN'S STORY

As his voice rose, Stein rose with it, stood facing him with a look of terror and ferocity, like a wild animal whose lair has suddenly been uncovered. Sudden light flashed on me. I sprang up; Ellen cowered with a cry, but above all sounded F.'s sharp, monotonous sentences.

"He is not dead; he has returned! He is here!" as Stein, with an oath, pointed into the shadow where Warrick appeared, and leaped back as though the ghost of his victim confronted him.

It was no ghost. A little red-headed, weak-eyed fellow had his arms about Ellen's neck, holding her to his breast as if he had the strength of a lion. Warrick, the medium and I exclaimed and swore, choking for words; but he was silent. He only held her close as if he had indeed come back from the grave to find her, putting back her head, now and then, and looking at her with a wonderful love in his puny, insignificant face.

"Ellen! Ellen!" he said at last. "They told me you were dead you and the boy. This is my Joe! little Joe?" picking up the boy, handing his legs and arms and looking into his face, his own contorted wand wet with tears. We men moved off down into the lower cabin, leaving them along; but I saw Joe a long time after, still sitting there with his wife clinging to him, and the boy on his knees, and I could not help it, I went in and held out my hand. "I congratulate you, old fellow! God has been good to you!"

But he only looked up with a bewildered smile. "Yes, God has been good. This is my Ellen, Captain. And my little son. My little son."

Wylie's story is soon told. Stein had persuaded him to give his creditors the slip and make for California, promising to join him shortly, and that they would speedily make their fortunes. Wylie was a man easily led, and consented. He was concealed under a trap-door in the cigar shop, and escaped while Fordyce and I sought the police.

Stein had intercepted his letters to his wife until such time as he could send him word of her death. In his own plans upon her he was disappointed.

I am glad to say that Joe brought back enough yellow dust to keep the wolf from the door for many a day. He and his wife are living somewhere in Indiana. Joe, their son, was a drummer boy in the Thirty-sixth Ohio under Captain Saunders, and I'll venture to say no braver heart kept time to his "Rat-tat-too" than that which beat under his own little jacket.

I consented to write down these facts, as I said, because of their bearing upon the matter of spiritualism. In this case, as in every other of which I have become cognizant, the mediums have only put into shape the thoughts of those who question them. To admit that certain persons can at will become possessed of the secret movements in the mind of another, will solve the whole mystery. In this case of Wylie the mediums, Lusk, the woman at Cincinnati and, finally F., simply reproduced surmises or knowledge of Warrick, Ellen and Stein. It is not agreeable to think that an animal so gross as F. should have power to decypher our inmost thoughts. Better that, however, than to believe that those we have lost should hold out their hands to us through such a messenger.