

From a Politician's Notebook

By Jessie Adelaide Middleton

Sir Henry Lucy, the distinguished writer and politician ("Toby, M.P.," of *Punch*), has most kindly given me permission to reproduce here the following extract from his diary of October 6, 1890, which deals with a remarkable ghost story.

"A lady bearing a name well known and highly honoured in the United States tells me," he writes, "a thrilling ghost story, the incident happening within her personal knowledge.

"Some years ago she was at Washington, at a time when Congress was sitting, and all the hotels were full. On applying for a room at one she had been accustomed to frequent with her husband, she was told the house was full. After some hesitation the clerk, observing her distress, undertook, if she would wait half-an-hour, that a room, not the best in the house, but all that was possible, should be got ready for her. It was a small, plainly furnished room on the sixth storey. It had to serve, and she was disposed to make the best of it.

"She went to bed early and slept soundly, till she was awakened by the sensation of a hand touching her face, and a voice cried with piteous accent, 'Oh, mother! mother!' She was profoundly startled, but, arguing with herself that it was only a dream, she determined to go to sleep again, and succeeded.

"Again she was awakened with the hand nervously stroking her face and the blood-curdling cry, 'Oh, mother! mother!' It was no use trying to sleep. She got up, half dressed, lit a candle, got a book, and sat in the arm-chair till daybreak, nothing further happening. As soon as she heard the servants moving she rang the bell, and the chambermaid came in with startled look. To her the visitor related her experiences.

" 'Yes, marm,' said the chambermaid, 'I told them they ought not to have put you in the room. He was only carried out an hour before you came.'

" 'Who was carried out?' said the lady.

" 'Why, the young man who has been lying here for a fortnight in delirium tremens, and died a couple of days ago. He was always stretching out his hands, feeling for something, and crying in a heart-breaking voice, "Oh, mother! mother!" ' "