complaining, as in the former case, of his dreadful ſituation in purgatory, and calling upon him to deliver him inſtantly from thence, by putting into the hands of Louis Brabant, then with him, a large ſum for the redemption of Chriſtians then in ſlavery with the Turks ; threatening him at the ſame time with eternal damnation if he did not take this method to expiate likewise his own sins. The reader will naturally ſuppoſe that Louis Brabant affected a due degree of aſtoniſhment on the occaſion ; and further promoted the deception, by acknowledging his having devoted himſelf to the proſecution of the charitable deſign imputed to him by the ghoſt. An old uſurer is naturally ſuſpicious. Ac­cordingly the wary banker made a ſecond appointment with the ghoſt’s delegate for the next day ; and, to render any deſign of impoſing upon him utterly abortive, took him into the open fields, where not a houſe, or a tree, or even a buſh, or a pit, were in sight, capable of screening any ſuppoſed confederate. This extraordinary caution excited the ventriloquiſt to exert all the powers of his art. Wherever the banker conducted him, at every ſtep his ears were ſaluted on all sides with the complaints and groans not only of his father, but of all his deceaſed relations, imploring him for the love of God, and in the name of every ſaint in the kalendar, to have mercy on his own soul and theirs, by effectually ſeconding with his purſe the intentions of his wor­thy companion. Cornu could no longer reſiſt the voice of heaven, and accordingly carried his gueſt home with him, and paid him down 10,000 crowns ; with which the honeſt ventriloquiſt returned to Paris, and married his miſtreſs.—The cataſtrophe was fatal. The ſecret was afterwards blown, and reached the uſurer’s ears, who was ſo much affected by the loſs of his money, and the mortifying railleries of his neighbours, that he took to his bed and died.

This trick of Louis Brabant is even exceeded by an in­nocent piece of waggery played off not 40 years ago by another French ventriloquiſt on a whole community. We have the ſtory from M. de la Chapelle, who informs us, that Μ. St Gill the ventriloquiſt and his intimate friend, return­ing home from a place whither his busineſs had carried him, fought for ſhelter from an approaching thunder ſtorm in a neighbouring convent. Finding the whole community in mourning, he inquired the cauſe, and was told that one of their body had died lately, who was the ornament and de­light of the whole ſociety. To paſs away the time, he walked into the church, attended by ſome of the religious, who ſhowed him the tomb of their deceaſed brother, and spoke feelingly of the ſcanty honours they had beſtowed on his memory. Suddenly a voice was heard, apparently pro­ceeding from the roof of the quire, lamenting the situation of the defunct in purgatory, and reproaching the brother­hood with their lukewarmneſs and want of zeal on his ac­count. The friars, as ſoon as their aſtoniſhment gave them power to ſpeak, consulted together, and agreed to acquaint the rest of the community with this singular event, ſo intereſting to the whole ſociety. M. St Gill, who wiſhed to carry on the joke ſtill farther, dissuaded them from taking this ſtep ; telling them that they would be treated by their abſent brethren as a ſet of fools and viſionaries. He recom­mended to them, however, the immediately calling of the whole community into the church, where the ghoſt of their departed brother might probably reiterate his complaints. Accordingly all the friars, novices, lay-brothers, and even the domeſtics of the convent, were immediately ſummoned and collected together. In a ſhort time the voice from the roof renewed its lamentation and reproaches, and the whole convent fell on their faces, and vowed a ſolemn reparation. As a firſt ſtep, they chanted a *De profundis* in a full choir ; during the intervals of which the ghoſt occasionally expreſſed the comfort he received from their pious excreiſes and ejaculations on his behalf. When all was over, the prior entered into a ſerious conversation with Μ. St Gill ; and on the ſtrength of what had juſt passed, ſagaciouſly in­veighed againſt the absurd incredulity of our modern sceptics and pretended philoſophers on the article of ghoſts or apparitions. M. St Gill thought it now high time to diſabuſe the good fathers. This purpoſe, however, he found it extremely difficult to effect, till he had prevailed upon them to return with him into the church, and there be witnesses of the manner in which he had conducted this ludi­crous deception.

A ventriloquiſt, who performed feats ſomewhat ſimilar to theſe, made his appearance in Edinburgh, and many of the other towns of Scotland, a few months before the writing of this article. He imitated ſucceſsfully the voice of a ſqueaking child, and made it appear to proceed, from what­ever place he choſe ; from the pockets of the company, from a wooden doll, with which he held many ſpirited conversations ; from beneath a hat or a wine-glaſs, and out of any perſon’s foot or hand. When the voice ſeemed to come from beneath a glaſs or hat, it was dull and on a low key, as ſounds confined always are ; and what evinced his dexterity was, that when the glaſs was raised from the table during the time of his ſpeaking, the words or ſyllables ut­tered afterwards were on a higher key, in conſequence, one would have thought, of the air being readmitted to the ſpeaker. This part of the experimeat failed, however, when the management of the glaſs was at a diſtance committed to any of the company ; but as the room was not well illumi­nated, we are inclined to attribute this failure to the ventriloquiſt’s not being able to perceive at what preciſe inſtant of time the glaſs was removed from the table. The ſame artiſt imitated the tones of a ſcolding old woman, diſturbed at unſeaſonable hours by a perſon demanding admiſſion into her houſe ; but this exhibition did not to us appear maſterly. The tones of the old woman and the child were not accurately diſcriminated : the child was a young ſcold, and the ſcold ſpoke like an angry child. We have heard that, when in Edinburgh, the ſame practitioner aſtoniſhed a number of perſons in the Fiſhmarket, by making a fiſh appear to ſpeak, and give the lie to its vender, who affirmed that it was freſh, and caught in the morning ; and whether this fact was really performed or not, we cannot doubt, from what we ſaw and heard him do, but that he was fully equal to its performance.

Our ventriloquiſt was an illiterate man ; and though ſufficiently communicative, could not make intelligible to us the manner in which he produced theſe acouſtic decep­tions. Indeed if he had, we ſhould hardly have deſcribed the practical rules of the art to the public ; for though it is proper to make the exiſtence of ſuch an art univerſally known, it will readily occur to every reflecting mind, that the attainment of it ſhould not be rendered eaſy to thoſe who, like Louis Brabant, might make it ſubſervient to the purpoſes of knavery and deception. The ſpeculative prin­ciples on which it is founded muſt be obvious to every man who has ſtudied the philoſophy of the human mind, and has ever witnessed the feats of mimickry.

It has been ſhown elſewhere (ſee Metaphysics, n⁰ 47, 48.), that, previous to experience, we could not refer sound to any external cauſe ; that it does not therefore give im­mediate indication of the place or diſtance of the ſonorous body ; and that it is only by the aſſociation of place with sound that the latter becomes an indication of the former. This being admitted, nothing ſeems requisite to fit a man for becoming an expert ventriloquiſt but a delicate ear, fle­xibility of the organs of ſpeech, and long practice of thoſe