ORIGIN, HISTORY, and EXPLANATION, of what has been called the INVISIBLE GIRLS, and which have caused so much surprise, under this new name and appearance.

All the speaking automata, or figures, having lost their attraction by the great age of the invention, and the universality of exhibitions in almost every country, the hapless proprietors of such speaking machines (manufactured very cheap, and in great numbers, at that noted toy manufactory, the city of Nurenberg, in Germany) who had no other objects for livelihood, began to refine on various modes to produce a *fresh wonder out of very old materials*. Some brought it forward by the name and appearance of an *Artificial Echo*; others exhibited it in the shape of a *Whispering Gallery*; but of all the *new names* and *forms* given to a very old invention, none succeeded so well with a good-natured Public, as the appellation of the INVISIBLE GIRL, which conveys something truly *supernatural* in the very sound of the name, and by which the great multitude of all countries and cities are generally carried away. Like the Phantasmagoria deluding the *eyes*, the Invisible Girl

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deludes the *ears* of mankind; but persons acquainted with the first principles of Optics and Acoustics, smile at the mystic simplicity of the transformation of the common Magic Lanterns and Speaking Figures.

If such things were ushered into public notice as simple amusements in natural philosophy, for general explanation and instruction, the inventors or proprietors would deserve some degree of praise; but when they gravely fly in the face of the public, assuring them "they will raise departed parents and friends into life, through the *Phantasmagoria*;" or that the *Invisible Girls* and *Amazing Busts* exhibited, are made on the principle of the famous oracles of Pythia and Delphos; they deserve to be unmasked for their impudent assurance; because it is a base prostitution of the beautiful and sublime sciences of Optics and Acoustics.

A few years ago, a well known character in France, who during the phrensy of the revolution played several conspicuous parts in Paris, under the names of Ch-rl-s R, and R Ch-rl-s, brought forward the famed *Invisible Girl*, in a misserable garret in the Rue St. Honoré.

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Those of our readers who wish for a more particular account of the life and character of the first inventor of INVISIBLE GIRLS, we refer to the Journal of London and Paris, in 1800, published at Tubingen—and which work is in universal renown and circulation on the continent, on account of its extensive information respecting all the curiosities of the capitals of France and England; because the proprietors keep well informed writers in those cities, at a great expence.

The whole engraving of the miserable garret is to be found in the same Journal, with a minute description. Here we are also informed "that the *supernatural sound* of *Femme Invisible*, brought numbers of gay and curious Parisians up the wretched staircase, leading to a fifth-story garret *salon*. This soon brought some Louisdors into the great inventor's pocket, and he as soon changed his place of exhibition and his wardrobe for a genteeler one." The writer above alluded to having visited him sundry times in his garret, was much surprised to find him again some few weeks after in the neighbourhood of the Palais Royal, clad in a much gayer apparel than before.

Dame Fortune has done the rest, and at last

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wafted this great genius to the British shore, to gather plentiful harvests of half crowns, for what in point of scientifical merit is not worth a sixpence. We repeat it, that the whole scientific merit of the Invisible Girls hitherto shewn abroad and in England, is not worth a sixpence, because we do not value the *gaudy delusions* of the apparatus, nor the glass globe, for any thing in point of art or science. We have seen most of these exhibitions, and could give a minute description of each of the different apparatus, all tending to hide or cover the same deception. A square, round, or angular wooden railing, with a glass or metal case or globe suspended in the centre, provided with one or more speaking trumpets, fitted-up in a more or less elegant stile, constitute the *visible* apparatus of the Invisible Girl, who is generally concealed in an adjoining room or closet, hid from the visitors prying looks. From this secret hiding place, the Invisible fair is enabled to observe every thing that passes in the large room, even through the aperture of a *nail-hole*, and which cannot possibly be discovered by strangers. The smallest *crack*, *crevice*, or *cleft*, in the doors, walls, or partitions of the adjoining room or closet, being darkened, is quite sufficient to observe the

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company, their dresses, and complections, and transmit the description through the conducting tubes under the boards of the room into the hollowed railing pieces. One plank or board on the floor being taken up, the tin-plate-tubes, of one inch diameter, are put beneath, and the board is replaced with the greatest nicety.

Whoever is acquainted with the first principles of Acoustics, knows, that nothing is more easy than *the transmission of sound through the smallest tubes*, which travels with the velocity of about 13 miles in a minute. The apparatus of the Invisible Girl has not even the merit of distinction between good and bad conductors of sound, for, *any* tube will answer to transmit the human voice. Hence the principle is exactly the same as that long known and hackneyed experiment with speaking figures; but, instead of seeing an Automaton before us, we behold a wooden railing, inclosing a glass globe with speaking trumpets. We have seen several different arrangements of apparatus, with various modes of hiding the deception; but, we shall only notice a few exhibited in London.

That, at the Pantheon, shewn last year, the sound was conveyed in the usual method,

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from under the boards, through one of the feet of the railing, from thence it was led into the middle through a little black Cupid, which apparently was only placed to support the globe in the middle of the railing.

To make this still less discernible, the apparatus at *certain Pr-m-n-de R--ms* is supplied with glass feet, one of which is nevertheless hollow for the conveyance of sound.

That in *a well-known Square*, and which has made the greatest and longest noise, differs from the others, as its glass globe, silvered in the inside, has nothing to do with the transmission and reverberation of sound. The voice passes only from under the board into one of the feet of the railing. When you enter the room, the hiding place, or closet of the Invisible Female, is on your left hand, where the *Amazing Bust* is placed. The same board of the floor, which is nearest to the window, passes under the feet of the railings of both the bust and the silvered globe, and covers the tubes which convey the voice and sound.

When the hour of the watch is asked, or a large print is shewn, they are generally held high enough and in such directions that the concealed Invisible Women can easily perceive

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them. We have seen it done abroad by combination, where, by the explicator making certain signs, every piece of money from different countries, was told by the Invisible Girl, with the greatest accuracy. The greatest charm of this experiment, is the appearance of the apparatus, and a witty sensible female to encourage conversation through the tubes. The blowing, singing, and playing through the same tube, helps to increase the wonder; and when the sound is subdivided into 2 or 4 speaking trumpets, as if proceeding from the glass globe, the charm is completed.

The common assertion, as if the *seeing* and *hearing every thing* proceeded from the refraction of light, and the reverberation of sounds, is a most impudent prostitution of the principle of Optics and Acoustics. Men acquainted with these sciences must smile at and pity such ignorant assurances, because they well know, that a quite different apparatus of convex and concave glasses and mirrors, arranged with the most scientific precision, in different angles of intersections, are absolutely necessary for such experiments.

Should this scientific truth be contradicted by any Exhibitors and Inventors of Invisible

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Girls, Messrs. SCHIRMER and SCHOLL do hereby publickly stake any sum, that they will discover and take up the *very boards* of the room under which the sound is conveyed in tubes, &c.

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