The Ghost World



T. F. Thiselton-Dyer

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Title: The Ghost World

Author: T. F. Thiselton-Dyer

Release date: April 11, 2014 [eBook #45362]
Most recently updated: October 24, 2024

Language: English

Other information and formats: www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/45362

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THE GHOST WORLD

BY

T. F. THISELTON DYER

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London
WARD & DOWNEY
12 YORK STREET COVENT GARDEN
1893

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THE GHOST WORLD

CHAPTER I

THE SOUL'S EXIT

IN the Iliad,[1] after the spirit of Patroclus has visited Achilles in his dream, it is described as taking its departure, and entering the ground like smoke. In long after years, and among widely scattered communities, we meet with the same imagery; and it is recorded how the soul of Beowulf the Goth 'curled to the clouds,' imaging the smoke which was curling up from his pyre. A similar description of the soul's exit is mentioned in one of the works of the celebrated mystic, Jacob Boehme,[2] who observes: 'Seeing that man is so very earthly, therefore he hath none but earthly knowledge; except he be regenerated in the gate of the deep. He always supposeth that the soul—at the deceasing of the body—goeth only out at the mouth, and he understandeth nothing concerning its deep essences above the elements. When he seeth a blue vapour go forth out of the mouth of a dying man, then he supposeth that is the soul.' The same conception is still extensively believed throughout Europe, and the Russian peasant often sees ghostly smoke hovering above graves. The Kaffirs hold that at death man leaves after him a sort of smoke, 'very like the shadow which his living body will always cast before it,'[3] reminding us of the hero in the Arabian romance of Yokdnan, who

seeks the source of life and thought, and discovers in one of the cavities of the heart a bluish vapour—the living soul. Among rude races the original idea of the human soul seems to have been that of vaporous materiality, which, as Dr. Tylor observes,[4] has held so large a place in modern philosophy, and in one shape or another crops up in ghost stories. The Basutos, speaking of a dead man, say that his heart has gone out, and the Malays affirm that the soul of a dying man escapes through the nostrils.

Hogarth has represented the figure of Time breathing forth his last—a puff of breath proceeding from his mouth; and a correspondent of 'Notes and Queries'[5] relates that, according to a popular belief, a considerable interval invariably elapses between the first semblance of death and what is considered to be the departure of the soul, about five minutes after the time when death, to all outward appearances, has taken place, 'the last breath' may be seen to issue with a vapour 'or steam' out of the mouth of the departed. According to some foreign tribes, the soul was said to dwell mainly in the left eye; and in New Zealand men always ate the left eye of a conquered enemy. At Tahiti, in the human sacrifices, the left eye of the victim was always offered to the chief presiding over the ceremony. It was further believed in New Zealand that 'in eating the left eye they doubled their own soul by incorporating with it that of the conquered man. It was also thought by some people in the same archipelago that a spirit used to dwell in both eyes.'[6]

The supposed escape of the soul from the mouth at death gave rise to the idea that the vital principle might be transferred from one person to another; and, among the Seminoles of Florida, when a woman

died in childbirth, the infant was held over her face to receive her parting spirit. Algonquin women, desirous of becoming mothers, flocked to the bed of those about to die, in the hope that they might receive the last breath as it passed from the body; and to this day the Tyrolese peasant still fancies a good man's soul to issue from his mouth at death like a little white cloud.[7] We may trace the same fancy in our own country, and it is related[8] that while a well-known Lancashire witch lay dying, 'she must needs, before she could "shuffle off this mortal coil," transfer her familiar spirit to some trusty successor. An intimate acquaintance from a neighbouring township was sent for in all haste, and on her arrival was immediately closeted with her dying friend. What passed between them has never fully transpired; but it is asserted that at the close of the interview the associate received the witch's last breath into her mouth, and with it her familiar spirit. The powers for good or evil were thus transferred to her companion.'

In order that the soul, as it quits the body, may not be checked in its onward course, it has long been customary to unfasten locks or bolts, and to open doors, so that the struggle between life and death may not be prolonged—a superstition common in France, Germany, Spain, and England. A correspondent of 'Notes and Queries' tells how for a long time he had visited a poor man who was dying, and was daily expecting death. Upon calling one morning to see his poor friend, his wife informed him that she thought he would have died during the night, and hence she and her friends unfastened every lock in the house; for, as she added, any bolt or lock fastened was supposed to cause uneasiness to, and hinder, the departure of the soul.[9] We find the

same belief among the Chinese, who make a hole in the roof to let out the departing soul; and the North American Indian, fancying the soul of a dying man to go out at the wigwam roof, would beat the sides with a stick to drive it forth. Sir Walter Scott, in 'Guy Mannering,' describes this belief as deep rooted among 'the superstitious eld of Scotland;' and at the smuggler's death in the Kaim of Derncleugh, Meg Merrilies unbars the door and lifts the latch, saying—

Open lock, end strife,
Come death, and pass life.

A similar practice exists among the Esquimos, and one may often hear a German peasant express his dislike to slam a door, lest he should pinch a soul in it. It has been suggested that the unfastening of doors and locks at death may be explained by analogy and association. Thus, according to a primitive belief, the soul, or the life, was thought to be tied up,[10] so that the unloosing of any knot might help to get rid of it at death. The same superstition 'prevailed in Scotland as to marriage. Witches cast knots on a cord; and in a Perthshire parish both parties, just before marriage, had every knot or tie about them loosened, though they immediately proceeded in private to tie them each up again.'[11] Another explanation suggests that the custom is founded on the idea that, when a person died, the ministers of purgatorial pains took the soul as it escaped from the body, and flattening it against some closed door—which alone would serve the purpose—crammed it into the hinges and hinge openings; thus the soul in torment was likely to be miserably squeezed. By opening the doors, the friends of the departed were at least assured that they were not made the unconscious instruments of torturing the departed.

[12]

There is a widespread notion among the poor that the spirit will linger in the body of a child a long time when the parent refuses to part with it, an old belief which, under a variety of forms, has existed from a primitive period. In Denmark one must not weep over the dying, still less allow tears to fall on them, for it will hinder their resting in the grave. In some parts of Holland, when a child is at the point of death, it is customary to shade it by the curtains from the parents' gaze, the soul, it is said, being detained in the body so long as a compassionate eye is fixed upon it. A German piece of folk-lore informs us that he who sheds tears when leaning over an expiring friend increases the difficulty of death's last struggle. A correspondent of 'Notes and Queries' alluding to this superstition in the North of England writes: 'I said to Mrs. B——, "Poor little H—— lingered a long time; I thought when I saw him that he must have died the same day, but he lingered on!" "Yes," said Mrs. B——, "it was a great shame of his mother. He wanted to die, and she would not let him die; she couldn't part with him. There she stood fretting over him, and couldn't give him up; and so we said to her, 'He'll never die till you give him up,' and then she gave him up, and he died quite peacefully."'[13]

Similarly, it is not good to weep for the dead, as it disturbs the peace and rest of the soul. In an old Danish ballad of Aage and Else, a lover's ghost says to his mistress:

Every time thou weepest, for each tear in that flood,
The coffin I am laid in is filled with much blood.

Or, as another version has it:

Every time thou'rt joyful,
And in thy mind art glad,
Then is my grave within
Hung round with roses' leaves.

Every time thou grievest,
And in thy mind are sad,
Then is within my coffin
As if full of clotted blood.

A German song tells us how a sister wept incessantly over her brother's grave, but at last her tears became intolerable to the deceased, because he was detained on earth by her excessive weeping, and suffered thereby great torment. In a fit of desperation he cursed her, and in consequence of his malediction, she was changed into a cuckoo, so that she might always lament for herself.[14] Mannhardt relates a pretty tale of a young mother who wept incessantly over the loss of her only child, and would not be comforted. Every night she went to the little grave and sobbed over it, till, on the evening preceding the Epiphany, she saw Bertha pass not far from her, followed by her troop of children. The last of these was one whose little shroud was all wet, and who seemed exhausted by the weight of a pitcher of water she carried. It tried in vain to cross a fence over which Bertha and the rest had passed; but the fond mother, at once recognising her child, ran and lifted it over. 'Oh, how warm are mother's arms!' said the little one; 'but don't cry so much, mother, for I must gather up every tear in my pitcher. You have made it too full and heavy already. See how it has run over and wet all my shift.' The mother cried again, but soon dried her tears.

We may compare a similar superstition among the natives of Alaska, when, if too many tears were shed

by the relatives during the burial ceremonies, it was thought that the road of the dead would be muddy, but a few tears were supposed just to lay the dust.[15] The same idea is found in a Hindu dirge: ‘The souls of the dead do not like to taste the tears let fall by their kindred; weep not, therefore;’ and, according to the Edda, every tear falls as blood upon the ice-cold bosom of the dead. We may trace the belief in Ireland, and Sir Walter Scott says[16] it was generally supposed throughout Scotland that ‘the excessive lamentation over the loss of friends disturbed the repose of the dead, and broke even the rest of the grave.’

The presence of pigeon or game feathers is said to be another hindrance to the exit of the soul; and, occasionally, in order to facilitate its departure, the peasantry in many parts of England will lay a dying man on the floor. A Sussex nurse once told the wife of a clergyman that ‘never did she see anyone die so hard as Master Short; and at last she thought—though his daughter said there were none—that there must be game feathers in the bed. So she tried to pull it from under him, but he was a heavy man, and she could not manage it alone, and there was none with him but herself, and so she got a rope and tied it round him, and pulled him right off the bed, and he went off in a minute quite comfortable, just like a lamb.’[17] In Lancashire, this belief is so deep-rooted that some persons will not allow sick persons to lie on a feather-bed; while in Yorkshire the same is said of cocks’ feathers. Shakespeare alludes to the practice where Timon says[18]—

Pluck stout men’s pillows from below their heads.

And Grose remarks: ‘It is impossible for a person to die whilst resting on a pillow stuffed with the

feathers of a dove, for he will struggle with death in the most exquisite torture.' This is also a Hindu and Mohammedan belief, and in India 'the dying are always taken from their beds and laid on the ground, it being held that no one can die peaceably except when laid on mother earth.'[19] In Russia, too, there is a strong feeling against the use of pigeon feathers in beds.

The summons for the soul to quit its earthly tenement has been thought to be announced, from early times, by certain strange sounds, a belief which Flatman has embodied in some pretty lines:

My soul, just now about to take her flight
Into the regions of eternal night,
Methinks I hear some gentle spirit say,
'Be not fearful, come away!'

Pope speaks in the same strain:

Hark! they whisper, angels say,
'Sister spirit, come away!'

And in 'Troilus and Cressida' (iv. 4), the former says:

Hark! you are called; some say, the Genius so
Cries 'Come!' to him that instantly must die.

As in days gone by so also at the present time, there is, perhaps, no superstition more generally received than the belief in what are popularly known as 'death-warnings,'[20] reference to which we shall have occasion to make in a later chapter.

It has been urged again, that at the hour of death the soul is, as it were, on the confines of two worlds, and hence may possess a power which is both prospective and retrospective. In 'Richard II.' (ii. 1), the dying Gaunt exclaims, alluding to his nephew,

the young and self-willed king:

Methinks I am a prophet, new inspired,
And thus expiring do foretell of him.

Nerissa says of Portia's father in 'Merchant of Venice' (i. 2): 'Your father was ever virtuous; and holy men at their death have good inspirations.' This idea may be traced up to the time of Homer,[21] and Aristotle tells us that the soul, when on the point of death, foretells things about to happen; the belief still lingering on in Lancashire and other parts of England. According to another notion, it was generally supposed that when a man was on his death-bed, the devil or his agents tried to seize his soul, if it should happen that he died without receiving the 'Eucharist,' or without confessing his sins. In the old office books of the Church, these 'busy meddling fiends' are often represented with great anxiety besieging the dying man; but on the approach of the priest and his attendants they are represented as being dismayed. Douce[22] quotes from a manuscript book of devotion, of the time of Henry VI., the following prayer to St. George: 'Judge for me when the most hedyous and damnable dragons of helle shall be redy to take my poore soule and engloute it into theyr infernall belyes.' One object, it has been urged, of the 'passing bell' was to drive away the evil spirit that might be hovering about to seize the soul of the deceased, such as the king speaks of in 2 Henry VI. (iii. 3):

O, beat away the busy meddling fiend,
That lays strong siege unto this wretch's soul,
And from his bosom purge this black despair.

We may find the same idea among the Northern

Californians, who affirmed that when the soul first escaped from the body an evil spirit hovered near, ready to pounce upon it and carry it off.[23]

It is still a common belief with our seafaring community on the east coast of England, that the soul takes its departure during the falling of the tide. Everyone remembers the famous scene in 'David Copperfield,' where Barkis's life 'goes out with the tide.' As Mr. Peggotty explained to David Copperfield by poor Barkis's bedside, 'People can't die along the coast except when the tide's pretty nigh out. He's a-going out with the tide—he's a-going out with the tide. It's ebb at half arter three, slack water half an hour. If he lives till it turns he'll hold his own till past the flood, and go out with the next tide.' In the parish register of Heslidon, near Hartlepool, the subjoined extract of old date alludes to the state of the tide at the time of death: 'The xith daye of Maye, A.D. 1595, at vi of ye clocke in the morninge, being full water, Mr. Henrye Mitford, of Hoolam, died at Newcastel, and was buried the xvi daie, being Sondaie. At evening prayer, the hired preacher made ye sermon.' Mrs. Quickly in 'Henry V.' (ii. 3) speaking of Falstaff's death says: ''A made a finer end and went away an it had been any christom child; 'a parted even just between twelve and one, even at the turning o' the tide.' In Brittany, death claims its victim at ebb of the tide, and along the New England coast it is said a sick man cannot die until the ebb-tide begins to run. It has been suggested that there may be some slight foundation for this belief in the change of temperature which takes place on the change of tide, and which may act on the flickering spark of life, extinguishing it as the ebbing sea recedes.

CHAPTER II

TEMPORARY EXIT OF SOUL

MANY of the conceptions of the human soul formed by savage races arose from the phenomena of everyday life. According to one of the most popular dream theories prevalent among the lower races, the sleeper's soul takes its exit during the hours of slumber, entering into a thousand pursuits. Now, as it is well known by experience 'that men's bodies do not go on these excursions, the explanation is that every man's living self, a soul, is his phantom or image, which can go out of his body and see, and be seen itself, in dreams.'[24] In the opinion of the savage, therefore, dreams have always afforded a convincing proof of the soul's separate existence, and Dr. Tylor considers that 'nothing but dreams and visions could ever have put into men's minds such an idea as that of souls being ethereal images of bodies.'

Thus the Dayaks of Borneo believe that in the hours of sleep the soul travels far away, and the Fijians think that the spirit of a living man during sleep can leave the body and trouble some one else. But Mr. E. im Thurn, in his 'Indians of Guiana' (344-346), gives some very striking instances of this strange phase of superstitious belief: 'One morning, when it was important to me to get away from a camp on the Essequibo River, at which I had been detained for some days by the illness of some of my Indian companions, I found that one of the invalids, a young Macusi Indian, though better in health, was so enraged against me that he refused to stir, for he declared that, with great want of consideration for his weak health, I had taken him out during the night, and had made him haul the canoe up a series of difficult cataracts. Nothing could persuade him

that this was but a dream, and it was some time before he was so far pacified as to throw himself sulkily into the bottom of the canoe. At that time we were all suffering from a great scarcity of food, and, hunger having its usual effect in producing vivid dreams, similar events frequently occurred. More than once the men declared in the morning that some absent men whom they named had come during the night, and had beaten, or otherwise maltreated them; and they insisted on much rubbing of the bruised parts of their bodies.'[25]

Another evidence in savage culture of the soul's having its own individuality, independently of the body, is the fact that a person through some accident may suddenly fall into a swoon, remaining to all outward appearance dead. When such a one, however, revives and is restored to consciousness, the savage is wont to exclaim that he died for a time until his soul was induced to return.

Hence Mr. Williams informs us[26] how the Fijians believe, when anyone dies or faints, that the soul may sometimes be brought back by calling after it; and in China, when a child is at the point of death, the mother will go into the garden and call its name, thinking thereby to bring back the wandering spirit. On this account divination and sorcery are extensively employed, and certain 'wise men' profess to have a knowledge of the mystic art of invoking souls that for some reason or other may have deserted their earthly tenement.[27]

The Rev. W. W. Gill, in his 'Myths and Songs from the South Pacific' (171-172), gives a curious instance of the wandering of the soul during life. 'At Uea, one of the Loyalty Islands, it was the custom formerly, when a person was very ill, to send for a man whose employment it was to restore souls to forsaken

bodies. The soul doctor would at once collect his friends and assistants, to the number of twenty men, and as many women, and start off to the place where the family of the sick man was accustomed to bury their dead. Upon arriving there, the soul doctor and his male companions commenced playing the nasal flutes with which they had come provided, in order to entice back the spirit to its old tenement. The women assisted by a low whistling, supposed to be irresistibly attractive to exile spirits. After a time the entire procession proceeded towards the dwelling of a sick person, flutes playing and the women whistling all the time, leading back the truant spirit. To prevent its possible escape, with their palms open, they seemingly drove it along with gentle violence and coaxing. On entering the dwelling of the patient, the vagrant spirit was ordered in loud tones at once to enter the body of the sick man.'

In the same way, too, according to a popular superstition among rude tribes, some favoured persons are supposed to have the faculty of sending forth their own souls on distant journeys, and of acquiring, by this means, information for their fellow creatures. Thus the Australian doctor undergoes his initiation by such a journey, and those who are not equally gifted by nature subject themselves to various ordeals, so as to possess the supposed faculty of releasing their souls for a time from the body. From this curious phase of superstition have arisen a host of legendary stories, survivals of which are not confined to uncivilised communities, but are found among the folk-tales of most countries. Mr. Baring Gould,[28] for instance, quotes a Scandinavian story in which the Norse Chief Ingimund shut up three Finns in a hut for three nights so that their souls might make an expedition to Iceland, and bring back

information of the nature of the country where he was eventually to settle. Accordingly their bodies soon became rigid, they dismissed their souls on the errand, and on awakening after three days, they gave Ingimund an elaborate description of the country in question. We may compare this phase of belief with that which is commonly known in this country as second sight.[29]

Among the Hervey Islanders, Mr. Gill says: 'The philosophy of sneezing is that the spirit having gone travelling about—perchance on a visit to the homes or burying-places of its ancestors—its return to the body is naturally attended with some difficulty and excitement, occasionally a tingling and enlivening sensation all over the body. Hence the various customary remarks addressed to the returned spirit in different islands. At Rarotonga, when a person sneezes, the bystanders exclaim, as though addressing a spirit, "Ha! you have come back."'

Then there is the widespread Animistic belief, in accordance with which each man has several souls;—some lower races treating the breath, the dream ghost, and other appearances as being separate souls. This notion seems to have originated in the pulsation of the heart and arteries, which rude tribes regard as indications of independent life. Thus this fancy is met with in various parts of America and exists also in Madagascar. It prevails in Greenland, and the Fijians affirm that each man has two souls. This belief, too, is very old, evidences of its existence being clearly traceable among the ancient Greeks and Romans.[30] Indeed, classic literature affords ample proof of how the beliefs of modern savages are in many cases survivals of similar notions held in olden times by nations that had made considerable progress in civilisation.

CHAPTER III

THE NATURE OF THE SOUL

IT has from time immemorial been a widely recognised belief among mankind that the soul after death bears the likeness of its fleshly body, although opinions have differed largely as to its precise nature. But it would seem to be generally admitted that the soul set free from its earthly tenement is at once recognised by anyone to whom it may appear, reminding us of Lord Tennyson's dictum in 'In Memoriam':

Eternal form shall still divide
The eternal soul from all beside;
And I shall know him when we meet.

Despite the fact that the disembodied spirit has been supposed to retain its familiar likeness, we find all kinds of strange ideas existing in most parts of the world as to what sort of a thing it really is when its condition of existence is so completely changed. Thus, according to a conception which has received in most ages very extensive credence, the soul has substantiality. This was the Greek idea of ghosts, and 'it is only,' writes Bishop Thirwall, 'after their strength has been repaired by the blood of a slaughtered victim, that they recover reason and memory for a time, can recognise their living friends, and feel anxiety for those they have left on earth.' A similar notion of substantiality prevailed among the Hebrews, and, as Herbert Spencer points out, 'the stories about ghosts accepted among ourselves in past times involved the same thought. The ability to open doors, to clank chains, and make other noises implies considerable coherence of the ghost's

substance.'[31] That this conception of the soul was not only received but taught, may be gathered from Tertullian, who says: 'The soul is material, composed of a substance different to the body, and particular. It has all the qualities of matter, but it is immortal. It has a figure like the body. It is born at the same time as the flesh, and receives an individuality of character which it never loses.' He further describes[32] a vision or revelation of a certain Montanist prophetess, of the soul seen by her corporeally, thin and lucid, aerial in colour, and human in form. It is recorded, too, as an opinion of Epicurus, that 'they who say the soul is incorporeal talk folly, for it could neither do nor suffer anything were it such.' It was the idea of materiality that caused the superstitious folk in years gone by to attribute to ghosts all kinds of weird and eccentric acts which could not otherwise be explained. And yet it has always been a puzzle in Animistic philosophy, how a ghost could be possessed at one moment of a corporeal body, and immediately afterwards vanish into immateriality, escaping sight and touch. But this strange ghost phenomenon is clearly depicted in sacred history, where we find substantiality, now insubstantiality, and now something between the two, described. Thus, as Herbert Spencer remarks,[33] 'the resuscitated Christ was described as having wounds that admitted of tactual examination, and yet as passing unimpeded through a closed door or through walls.' And, as he adds, the supernatural beings of the Hebrews generally, 'whether revived dead or not, were similarly conceived: here, angels dining with Abraham, or pulling Lot into the house, apparently possess complete corporeity; there, both angels and demons are spoken of as swarming invisibly in the surrounding air, thus being

incorporeal; while elsewhere they are said to have wings, implying motion by mechanical action, and are represented as rubbing against, and wearing out, the dresses of Rabbis in the Synagogue.' All kinds of strange theories have been suggested by perplexed metaphysicians to account for this duplex nature of the disembodied soul; Calmet having maintained that 'immaterial souls have their own vaporous bodies, or occasionally have such vaporous bodies provided for them by supernatural means to enable them to appear as spectres, or that they possess the power of condensing the circumambient air into phantom-like bodies to invest themselves in.'[34]

In Fiji the soul is regarded quite as a material object, subject to the same laws as the living body, and having to struggle hard to gain the paradisaical Bolotu. Some idea, too, of the hardships it has to undergo in its material state may be gathered from the following passage in Dr. Letourneau's 'Sociology' (p. 251): 'After death the soul of the Fijian goes first of all to the eastern extremity of *Vanna Levou*, and during this voyage it is most important that it should hold in its hand the soul of the tooth of a spermaceti whale, for this tooth ought to grow into a tree, and the soul of the poor human creature climbs up to the top of this tree. When it is perched up there it is obliged to await the arrival of the souls of his wives, who have been religiously strangled to serve as escort to their master. Unless all these and many other precautions are taken, the soul of the deceased Fijian remains mournfully seated upon the fatal bough until the arrival of the good Ravuyalo, who kills him once and for all, and leaves him without means of escape.'

According to another popular and widely accepted doctrine, the soul was supposed to be composed of a

peculiar subtle substance, a kind of vaporous materiality. The Choctaws have their ghosts or wandering spirits which can speak and are visible, but not tangible.[35] The Tongans conceived it as the aeriform part of the body, related to it as the perfume and essence of a flower; and the Greenlanders speak of it as pale and soft, without flesh and bone, so that he who tries to grasp it feels nothing he can take hold of. The Siamese describe the soul as consisting of some strange matter, invisible and untouchable. While Dr. Tylor quotes a curious passage from Hampole,[36] in which the soul, owing to the thinness of its substance, suffers all the more intense suffering in purgatory:

The soul is more tendre and nesche (soft)
Than the bodi that hath bones and fleysche;
Thanne the soul that is so tendere of kinde,
Mote nedis hure penaunce hardere y-finde,
Than eni bodi that evere on live was.

Then there is the idea of the soul as a shadow, a form of superstition which has given rise to many quaint beliefs among uncultured tribes. The Basutos, when walking by a river, take care not to let their shadow fall on the water, lest a crocodile seize it, and draw the owner in. The Zulu affirms that at death the shadow of a man in some mysterious way leaves the body, and hence, it is said, a corpse cannot cast a shadow. Certain African tribes consider that ‘as he dies, man leaves a shadow behind him, but only for a short time. The shade, or the mind, of the deceased remains, they think, close to the grave where the corpse has been buried. This shadow is generally evil-minded, and they often fly away from it in changing their place of abode.’[37] The Ojibways tell how one of their chiefs died,[38] but while they

were watching the body on the third night, his shadow came back into it. He sat up, and told them how he had travelled to the River of Death, but was stopped there, and sent back to his people.

Speaking of the human shadow in relation to foundation sacrifices, we are reminded[39] how, according to many ancient Roumenian legends, 'every new church or otherwise important building became a human grave, as it was thought indispensable to its stability to wall in a living man or woman, whose spirit henceforward haunts the place. In later times this custom underwent some modifications, and it became usual, in place of a living man, to wall in his shadow. This is done by measuring the shadow of a person with a long piece of cord, or a ribbon made of strips of reed, and interring this measure instead of the person himself, who, unconscious victim of the spell thrown upon him, will pine away and die within forty days. It is an indispensable condition to the success of this proceeding that the chosen victim be ignorant of the part he is playing, therefore careless passers by near a building may often hear the cry, warning, "Beware, lest they take thy shadow!" So deeply engrained is this superstition, that not long ago there were professional shadow-traders, who made it their business to provide architects with the necessary victims for securing their walls.' 'Of course, the man whose shadow is thus interred must die,' argues the Roumenian, 'but as he is unaware of his doom, he does not feel any pain or anxiety, and so it is less cruel than walling in a living man.'

At the present day in Russia, as elsewhere, a shadow is a common metaphor for the soul,[40] whence it arises that there are persons there who object to having their silhouettes taken, fearing that

if they do, they will die before the year is out. In the same way, a man's reflected image is supposed to be in communion with his inner self, and, therefore, children are often forbidden to look at themselves in a glass, lest their sleep should be disturbed at night. It may be added, too, as Mr. Clodd points out, that in the barbaric belief of the loss of the shadow being baleful, 'we have the germ of the mediæval legends of shadowless men, and of tales of which Chamisso's "Story of Peter Schlemihl" is a type.'[41] Hence the dead in purgatory recognised that Dante was alive when they saw that, unlike theirs, his figure cast a shadow on the ground. But, as Mr. Fiske observes,[42] 'the theory which identifies the soul with the shadow, and supposes the shadow to depart with the sickness and death of the body, would seem liable to be attended with some difficulties in the way of verification, even to the dim intelligence of the savage.'

Again, another doctrine promulgated under various forms in Animistic philosophy is, that the existence and condition of the soul depend upon the manner of death. The Australian, for instance, not content with slaying his enemy, cuts off the right thumb of the corpse, so that the departed soul may be incapacitated from throwing a spear; and even the half-civilised Chinese prefer the punishment of crucifixion to that of decapitation, that their souls may not wander headless about the spirit world. Similarly the Indians of Brazil 'believe that the dead arrive in the other world wounded or hacked to pieces, in fact, just as they left this.' European folk-lore has preserved, more or less, the same idea, and the ghost of the murdered person often appears displaying the wounds which were the cause of the death of the body. Many a weird and ghastly ghost

tale still current in different parts of the country gives the most blood-curdling details of such apparitions; and although, in certain cases, a century or so is said to have elapsed since they first made their appearance, they still bear the marks of violence and cruelty which were done to them by a murderous hand when in the flesh. An old story tells how, when the Earl of Cornwall met the fetch of William Rufus carried on a very large black goat, all black and naked, across the Bodmin moors, he saw that it was wounded through the breast. Robert adjured the goat, in the name of the Holy Trinity, to tell what it was he carried so strangely. He answered, 'I am carrying your king to judgment; yea, that tyrant, William Rufus, for I am an evil spirit, and the revenger of his malice which he bore to the Church of God. It was I that did cause this slaughter.' Having spoken, the spectre vanished. Soon afterwards Robert heard that at that very hour the king had been slain in the New Forest by the arrow of William Tirell.[43] This idea corresponds with what was believed in early times, for Ovid[44] tells us how

Umbra cruenta Remi visa est assistere lecto.

Again, some modes of death are supposed to kill not only the body but also the soul. 'Among all primitive peoples,' writes Mr. Dorman,[45] 'where a belief in the renewal of life, or the resurrection, exists, the peace and happiness of the spirit, which remains in or about the body, depend upon success in preventing the body, or any part of it, from being devoured or destroyed in any manner.' The New Zealanders believed that the man who was eaten was annihilated, both body and soul; and one day a bushman, who was a magician, having put to death a woman, dashed the head of the corpse to pieces with

large stones, buried her, and made a large fire over the grave, for fear, as he explained, lest she should rise again and trouble him. The same idea, remarks Sir John Lubbock,[46] evidently influenced the Californian, who did not dispute the immortality of the whites, who buried their dead, but could not believe the same of his own people, because they were in the habit of burning them, maintaining that when they were burnt they became annihilated.

It may be added, too, that the belief underlying the burial customs of most American tribes was to preserve the bones of the dead, the opinion being that the soul, or a part of it, dwelt in the bones. These, indeed, were the seeds which, planted in the earth, or preserved unbroken in safe places, would in time put on once again a garb of flesh, and germinate into living human beings.[47] This Animistic belief has been amply illustrated by mythology and superstition. In an Aztec legend, after one of the destructions of the world, Zoloti descended to the realm of the dead, and brought thence a bone of the perished race. This, sprinkled with blood, grew on the fourth day into a youth, the father of the present race. The practice of pulverising the bones of the dead, practised by some tribes, and of mixing them with the food, was defended by asserting that the souls of the dead remained in the bones, and lived again in the living.[48] The Peruvians were so careful lest any of the body should be lost, that they preserved even the parings of the nails and clippings of the hair—expecting the mummified body to be inhabited by its soul; while the Choctaws maintain that the spirits of the dead will return to the bones in the bone mounds, and flesh will knit together their loose joints. Even the lower animals were supposed to follow the same law.

‘Hardly any of the American hunting-tribes,’ writes Mr. Brinton, ‘before their original manners were vitiated by foreign influence, permitted the bones of game slain in the chase to be broken, or left carelessly about the encampment; they were collected in heaps, or thrown into the water.’ The Yuricares of Bolivia carried this belief to such an inconvenient extent that they carefully put by even small fish bones, saying that unless this was done the fish and game would disappear from the country. The traveller on the western prairies often notices the buffalo skulls, countless numbers of which bleach on those vast plains, arranged in circles and symmetrical piles by the careful hands of the native hunters. The explanation for this practice is that these osseous relics of the dead ‘contain the spirits of the slain animals, and that some time in the future they will rise from the earth, re-clothe themselves with flesh, and stock the prairies anew.’

As a curious illustration of how every spiritual conception was materialised in olden times, may be quoted the fanciful conception of the weight of the soul. Thus in mediæval literature the angel in the Last Judgment ‘was constantly represented weighing the souls in a literal balance, while devils clinging to the scales endeavoured to disturb the equilibrium.’[49] But how seriously such tests of the weight of the soul have been received, may be gathered from the cases now and then forthcoming of this materialistic notion of its nature. These, writes Dr. Tylor,[50] range from the ‘conception of a Basuto diviner that the late queen had been bestriding his shoulders, and he never felt such a weight in his wife, to Glanvil’s story of David Hunter, the neatherd, who lifted up the old woman’s ghost, and she felt just like a bag of feathers in his arms; or

the pathetic superstition that the dead mother's coming back in the night to suckle the baby she has left on earth, may be known by the hollow pressed down in the bed where she lay, and at last down to the alleged modern spiritualistic reckoning of the weight of a human soul at from three to four ounces.' But the heavy tread which occasionally makes the stairs creak and boards resound has been instanced as showing that, whatever may be the real nature of the soul, it is capable of materialising itself at certain times, and of displaying an amount of force and energy in no way dissimilar to that which is possessed when living in the flesh.

Just, too, as souls are possessed of visible forms, so they are generally supposed to have voices. According to Dr. Tylor,[51] 'men who perceive evidently that souls do talk when they present themselves in dream or vision, naturally take for granted at once the objective reality of the ghostly voice, and of the ghostly form from which it proceeds;' and this principle, he adds, 'is involved in the series of narratives of spiritual communications with living men, from savagery onward to civilisation.' European folk-lore represents ghostly voices as resembling their material form during life, although less audible. With savage races the spirit voice is described 'as a low murmur, chirp, or whistle.' Thus, when the ghosts of the New Zealanders address the living, they speak in whistling tones. The sorcerer among the Zulus 'hears the spirits who speak by whistlings speaking to him.' Whistling is the language of the Caledonians, and the Algonquin Indians of North America 'could hear the shadow souls of the dead chirp like crickets.' As far back as the time of Homer, the ghosts make a similar sound, 'and even as bats flit gibbering in the secret

place of a wonderful cavern, even so the souls gibbered as they fared together.'[52]

Ghosts, when they make their appearance, are generally supposed, as already noticed, to have a perfect resemblance, in every respect, to the deceased person. Their faces appear the same—except that they are usually paler than when alive—and the ordinary expression is described by writers on the subject as 'more in sorrow than in anger.' Thus, when the ghost of Banquo rises and takes a seat at the table, Macbeth says to the apparition—

> Never shake
> Thy gory locks at me.

And Horatio tells Marcellus how the ghost of Hamlet's father was not only fully armed, but—

> So frown'd he once, when in angry parle,
> He smote the sledded Polacks on the ice.

The folk-lore stories from most parts of the world coincide in this idea. It was recorded of the Indians of Brazil by one of the early European visitors that 'they believe that the dead arrive in the other world, wounded or hacked to pieces, in fact, just as they left this;'[53] a statement which reminds us of a ghost described by Mrs. Crowe,[54] who, on appearing after death, was seen to have the very small-pox marks which had disfigured its countenance when in the flesh.

As in life, so in death, it would seem that there are different classes of ghosts—the princely, the aristocratic, the genteel, and the common. The vulgar class, it is said, delight to haunt 'in graveyards, dreary lanes, ruins, and all sorts of dirty dark holes and corners.' An amusing anecdote

illustrative of this belief was related by the daughter of ‘the celebrated Mrs. S.’ [Siddons?] who told Mrs. Crowe that when her parents were travelling in Wales they stayed some days at Oswestry, and lodged in a house which was in a very dirty and neglected state, yet all night long the noise of scrubbing and moving furniture made it impossible to sleep. The servants did little or no work, for they had to sit up with their mistress to allay her fears. The neighbours said that this person had killed an old servant, hence the disturbance and her terror. Mr. and Mrs. S—— coming in suddenly one day, heard her cry out, ‘Are you there again? Fiend! go away!’ But numerous tales similar to the above are still current in different parts of the country; and from time to time are duly chronicled in the local press.

CHAPTER IV

THE UNBURIED DEAD

THE Greeks believed that such as had not received funeral rites would be excluded from Elysium. The younger Pliny tells the tale of a haunted house at Athens, in which a ghost played all kinds of pranks owing to the funeral rites having been neglected. It is still a deep-rooted belief that when the mortal remains of the soul have not been honoured with proper burial, it will walk. The ghosts of unburied persons not possessing the *obolus* or fee due to Charon, the ferryman of Styx, and Acheron, were unable to obtain a lodging or place of rest. Hence

they were compelled to wander about the banks of the river for a hundred years, when the portitor, or 'ferryman of hell,' passed them over *in formâ pauperis*. The famous tragedy of 'Antigone' by Sophocles owes much of its interest to this popular belief on the subject. In most countries all kinds of strange tales are told of ghosts ceaselessly wandering about the earth, owing to their bodies, for some reason or another, having been left unburied.

There is a well known German ghost, the Bleeding Nun. This was a nun who, after committing many crimes and debaucheries, was assassinated by one of her paramours and denied the rites of burial. After this, she used to haunt the castle where she was murdered, with her bleeding wounds. On one occasion, a young lady of the castle, willing to elope with her lover, in order to make her flight easier, personated the bleeding nun. Unfortunately the lover, whilst expecting his lady under this disguise, eloped with the spectre herself, who presented herself to him and haunted him afterwards.[55]

Comparative folk-lore, too, shows how very widely diffused is this notion. It is believed by the Iroquois of North America, that unless the rites of burial are performed, the spirits of the dead hover for a time upon the earth in great unhappiness. On this account every care is taken to procure the bodies of those slain in battle. Certain Brazilian tribes suppose that the spirits of the dead have no rest till burial, and among the Ottawas, a great famine was thought to have been produced on account of the failure of some of their tribesmen to perform the proper burial rites. After having repaired their fault they were blessed with abundance of provisions. The Australians went so far as to say that the spirits of the unburied dead became dangerous and malignant

demons. Similarly, the Siamese dread, as likely to do them some harm, the ghosts of those who have not been buried with proper rites, and the Karens have much the same notion. According to the Polynesians, the spirit of a dead man could not reach the sojourn of his ancestors, and of the gods, unless the sacred funereal rites were performed over his body. If he was buried with no ceremony, or simply thrown into the sea, the spirit always remained in the body.[56]

Under one form or another, the same belief may be traced in most parts of the world, and, as Dr. Tylor points out,[57] 'in mediæval Europe the classic stories of ghosts that haunt the living till laid by rites of burial pass here and there into new legends where, under a changed dispensation, the doleful wanderer now asks Christian burial in consecrated earth.' Shakespeare alludes to this old idea, and in 'Titus Andronicus' (i. 2) Lucius, speaking of the unburied sons of Titus, says:

Give us the proudest prisoner of the Goths,
That we may hew his limbs, and on a pile
Ad manes fratrum sacrifice his flesh,
Before this earthly prison of their bones;
That so the shadows be not unappeas'd,
Nor we disturb'd with prodigies on earth.

Hence the appearance of a spirit, in times past, was often regarded as an indication that some foul deed had been done, on which account Horatio in 'Hamlet' (i. 1) says to the ghost:

If there be any good thing to be done
That may to thee do ease, and grace to me,
Speak to me.

In the narrative of the sufferings of Byron and the crew of H.M. ship 'Wager,' on the coast of South

America, we find a good illustration of the superstitious dread attaching to an unburied corpse. ‘The reader will remember the shameful rioting, mutiny, and recklessness which disgraced the crew of the “Wager,” nor will he forget the approach to cannibalism and murder on one occasion. These men had just returned from a tempestuous navigation, in which their hopes of escape had been crushed, and now what thoughts disturbed their rest—what serious consultations were they which engaged the attention of these sea-beaten men? Long before Cheap’s Bay had been left, the body of a man had been found on a hill named “Mount Misery.” He was supposed to have been murdered by some of the first gang who left the island. The body had never been buried, and to such neglect did the men now ascribe the storms which had lately afflicted them; nor would they rest until the remains of their comrade were placed beneath the earth, when each evidently felt as if some dreadful spell had been removed from his spirit.’ Stories of this kind are common everywhere, and are interesting as showing how widely scattered is this piece of superstition.

In Sweden the ravens, which scream by midnight in forest swamps and wild moors, are held to be the ghosts of murdered men, whose bodies have been hidden in those spots by their undetected murderers, and not had Christian burial.[58] In many a Danish legend the spirit of a strand varsler, or coast-guard, appears, walking his beat as when alive. Such ghosts were not always friendly, and it was formerly considered dangerous to pass along ‘such unconsecrated beaches, believed to be haunted by the spectres of unburied corpses of drowned people.’[59]

The reason, it is asserted, why many of our old

castles and country seats have their traditional ghost, is owing to some unfortunate person having been secretly murdered in days past, and to his or her body having been allowed to remain without the rites of burial. So long as such a crime is unavenged, and the bones continue unburied, it is impossible, we are told, for the outraged spirit to keep quiet. Numerous ghost stories are still circulated throughout the country of spirits wandering on this account, some of which, however, are based purely on legendary romance.

But when the unburied body could not be found, and the ghost wandered, the missing man was buried in effigy, for, as it has been observed, ‘according to all the laws of primitive logic, an effigy is every bit as good as its original. Therefore, when a dead man is buried in effigy, with all due formality, that man is dead and buried beyond a doubt, and his ghost is as harmless as it is in the nature of ghosts to be.’ But sometimes such burial by proxy was premature, for the man was not really dead; and if he declined to consider himself as such, the question arose, was he alive, or was he dead? The solution adopted was that he might be born again and take a new lease of life. ‘And so it was, he was put out to nurse, he was dressed in long clothes—in short, he went through all the stages of a second childhood. But before this pleasing experience could take place, he had to overcome the initial difficulty of entering his own house, for the door was ghost-proof. There was no other way but by the chimney, and down the chimney he came.’ We may laugh at such credulity, but many of the ghost-beliefs of the present day are not less absurd.

CHAPTER V

WHY GHOSTS WANDER

A VARIETY of causes have been supposed to prevent the dead resting in the grave, for persons 'dying with something on their mind,' to use the popular phrase, cannot enjoy the peace of the grave; oftentimes some trivial anxiety, or some frustrated communication, preventing the uneasy spirit flinging off the bonds that bind it to earth. Wickedness in their lifetime has been commonly thought to cause the souls of the impenitent to revisit the scenes where their evil deeds were done. It has long been a widespread idea that as such ghosts are too bad for a place in either world, they are, therefore, compelled to wander on the face of the earth homeless and forlorn. We have shown in another chapter how, according to a well-known superstition, the *ignes fatui*, which appear by night in swampy places, are the souls of the dead—men who during life were guilty of fraudulent and other wicked acts. Thus a popular belief reminds us[60] how, when an unjust relative has secreted the title-deeds in order to get possession of the estate himself, he finds no rest in the other world till the title-deeds are given back, and the estate is restored to the rightful heir. Come must the spirit of such an unrighteous man to the room where he concealed the title-deeds surreptitiously removed from the custody of the person to whose charge they were entrusted. 'A dishonest milkwoman at Shrewsbury is condemned,' writes Miss Jackson in her 'Shropshire Folk-lore'[61] (p. 120), 'to wander up and down "Lady Studley's Diche" in the Raven Meadow—now the Smithfield—constantly repeating:

"Weight and measure sold I never,

Milk and water sold I ever.”’

The same rhyme is current at Burslem, in the Staffordshire Potteries. The story goes that ‘Old Molly Lee,’ who used to sell milk there, and had the reputation of being a witch, was supposed to be seen after her death going about the streets with her milk-pail on her head repeating it. Miss Jackson further relates how a mid-Shropshire squire of long ago was compelled to wander about in a homeless state on account of his wickedness. Murderers cannot rest, and even although they may escape justice in this life, it is supposed that their souls find no peace in the grave, but under a curse are compelled to walk to and fro until they have, in some degree, done expiation for their crimes. Occasionally, it is said, their plaintive moans may be heard as they bewail the harm done by them to the innocent, weary of being allowed no cessation from their ceaseless wandering—a belief which reminds us of the legend of the Wandering Jew, and the many similar stories that have clustered round it.

In ‘Blackwood’s Magazine’ for August 1818 this passage occurs: ‘If any author were so mad as to think of framing a tragedy upon the subject of that worthy vicar of Warblington, Hants, who was reported about a century ago to have strangled his own children, and to have walked after his death, he would assuredly be laughed to scorn by a London audience.’ But a late rector of Warblington informed a correspondent of ‘Notes and Queries’ (4th S. xi. 188), ‘it was quite true that his house was said to be haunted by the ghost of a former rector, supposed to be the Rev. Sebastian Pitfield, who held the living in 1677.’ A strong prejudice against hanging prevails in Wales, owing to troublesome spirits being let loose,

and wandering about, to the annoyance of the living.

The spirits of suicides wander, and hence cross-roads in various parts of the country are oftentimes avoided after dark, on account of being haunted by headless and other uncanny apparitions. The same belief exists abroad. The Sioux are of opinion that suicide is punished in the land of spirits by the ghosts being doomed for ever to drag the tree on which they hang themselves; and for this reason they always suspend themselves to as small a tree as can possibly sustain their weight.

With the Chinese the souls of suicides are specially obnoxious, and they consider that the very worst penalty that can befall a soul is the sight of its former surroundings. Thus, it is supposed that, in the case of the wicked man, 'they only see their homes as if they were near them; they see their last wishes disregarded, everything upside down, their substance squandered, strangers possess the old estate; in their misery the dead man's family curse him, his children become corrupt, land is gone, the wife sees her husband tortured, the husband sees his wife stricken down with mortal disease; even friends forget, but some, perhaps, for the sake of bygone times, may stroke the coffin and let fall a tear, departing with a cold smile.'[62] But, as already noticed, the same idea, in a measure, extends to the West, for in this country it has long been a popular belief that the ghosts of the wicked are forced to periodically rehearse their sinful acts. Thus, the murderer's ghost is seen in vain trying to wash out the indelible blood-stains, and the thief is supposed to be continually counting and recounting the money which came into his possession through dishonest means. The ghost is dogged and confronted with the hideousness of his iniquities, and the young woman who slew her lover

in a fit of jealous passion is seen, in an agonised expression, holding the fatal weapon. But such unhappy spirits have, in most cases, been put to silence by being laid, instances of which are given elsewhere; and in other cases they have finally disappeared with the demolition of certain houses which for years they may have tenanted.

On the other hand, the spirits of the good are said sometimes to return to earth for the purpose of either succouring the innocent, or avenging the guilty.

'Those who come again to punish their friends' wrongs,' writes Miss Jackson, in her 'Shropshire Folk-lore' (p. 119), 'generally appear exactly as in life, unchanged in form or character. A certain well-to-do man who lived in the west of Shropshire within living memory, left his landed property to his nephew, and a considerable fortune to his two illegitimate daughters, the children of his housekeeper. Their mother, well provided for, was at his death turned adrift by the nephew. Her daughters, however, continued to live in their old home with their cousin. A maid-servant who entered the family shortly after (and who is our informant) noticed an elderly man often walking in the garden in broad daylight, dressed in old-fashioned clothes, with breeches and white stockings. He never spoke, and never entered the house, though he always went towards it. Asking who he was, she was coolly told, "Oh, that is only our old father!" No annoyance seems to have been caused by the poor old ghost, with one exception, that the clothes were every night stripped off the bed of the two unnatural daughters.'

German folk-lore tells how slain warriors rise again to help their comrades to victory, and how a mother will visit her old home to look after her injured and forsaken children, and elsewhere the

same idea is extensively believed. In China, the ghosts which are animated by a sense of duty are frequently seen: at one time they seek to serve virtue in distress, and at another they aim to restore wrongfully-held treasure. Indeed, as it has been observed, ‘one of the most powerful as well as the most widely diffused of the people’s ghost stories is that which treats of the persecuted child whose mother comes out of the grave to succour him.’[63] And there perhaps can be no more gracious privilege allotted to immortal spirits than that of beholding those beloved of them in mortal life:

I am still near,
Watching the smiles I prized on earth,
Your converse mild, your blameless mirth.[64]

As it has been observed, no oblivious draught has been given the departed soul, but the remembrance of its earthly doings cleaves to it, and this is why ghosts are always glad to see the places frequented by them while on earth. In Galicia, directly after a man’s burial, his spirit takes to wandering by nights about the old home, and watching that no evil befalls his heirs.[65]

Occasionally the spirit returns to fulfil a promise as in compacts, to which reference is made in another chapter. The reappearance of a lover, ‘in whose absence his beloved has died, is a subject that has been made use of by the folk-poets of every country, and nothing,’ it is added, ‘can be more characteristic of the nationalities to which they belong than the divergences which mark their treatment of it.’[66] Another cause of ghosts wandering is founded upon a superstition as to the interchange of love-tokens, an illustration of which we find in the old ballad of ‘William’s Ghost’:

There came a ghost to Marjorie's door,
  Wi' many a grievous maen,
And aye he tirl'd at the pin,
  But answer made she nane.

'Oh, sweet Marjorie! oh, dear Marjorie!
  For faith and charitie,
Give me my faith and troth again,
  That I gied once to thee.'

'Thy faith and troth I'll ne'er gie thee,
  Nor yet shall our true love twin,
Till you tak' me to your ain ha' house,
  And wed me wi' a ring.'

'My house is but yon lonesome grave,
  Afar out o'er yon lee,
And it is but my spirit, Marjorie,
  That's speaking unto thee.'[67]

She followed the spirit to the grave, where it lay down and confessed that William had betrayed three maidens whom he had promised to marry, and in consequence of this misdemeanour he could not rest in his grave until she released him of his vows to marry her. On learning this, Marjorie at once released him.

Then she'd taen up her white, white hand,
  And struck him on the breist,
Saying, 'Have ye again your faith and troth,
  And I wish your soul good rest.'

In another ballad, 'Clerk Sanders,' there is a further illustration of the same belief. The instances, says Mr. Napier, differ, but 'the probability is that the ballad quoted above and "Clerk Sanders" are both founded on the same story. Clerk Sanders was the son of an earl, who courted the king's daughter, Lady Margaret. They loved each other even in the

modern sense of loving too well. Margaret had seven brothers, who suspected an intrigue, and they came upon them together in bed and killed Clerk Sanders, whose ghost soon after came to Margaret's window. The ballad, which contains much curious folk-lore, runs thus:[68]

'Oh! are ye sleeping, Margaret?' he says,
'Or are ye waking presentlie?
Give me my faith and troth again,
I wot, true love, I gied to thee.

'I canna rest, Margaret,' he says,
'Down in the grave where I must be,
Till ye give me my faith and troth again,
I wot, true love, I gied to thee.'

'Thy faith and troth thou shalt na get,
And our true love shall never twin,
Until ye tell what comes o' women,
I wot, who die in strong travailing.

'Their beds are made in the heavens high,
Down at the foot of our Lord's knee,
Weel set about wi' gilliflowers,
I trow sweet company for to see.

'Oh, cocks are crowing a merry midnight,
I wot the wild fowls are boding day;
The psalms of heaven will soon be sung,
And I, ere now, will be missed away.'

Then she has ta'en a crystall wand,
And she has stroken her throth thereon;
She has given it him out of the shot-window,
Wi' many a sigh and heavy goan.

'I thank ye, Margaret; I thank ye, Margaret;
And aye, I thank ye heartilie;
Gin ever the dead come for the quick,
Be sure, Margaret, I'll come for thee.'

Then up and crew the milk-white cock,
And up and crew the gray;
Her lover vanished in the air,
And she gaed weeping away.

Madness, again, during life, is said occasionally to produce restlessness after death. ‘Parson Digger, at Condover,’ remarked an old woman to Miss Jackson, [69] ‘he came again. He wasn’t right in his head, and if you met him he couldn’t speak to you sensibly. But when he was up in the pulpit he’d preach, oh! beautiful!’ In Hungary, there are the spirits of brides who die on their wedding-day before consummation of marriage. They are to be seen at moonlight, where cross-roads meet. And it is a Danish tradition that a corpse cannot have peace in the grave when it is otherwise than on its back. According to a Scotch belief, excessive grief for a departed friend, ‘combined with a want of resignation to the will of Providence, had the effect of keeping the spirit from rest in the other world. Rest could be obtained only by the spirit coming back, and comforting the mourner by the assurance that it was in a state of blessedness.’[70] The ghosts of those, again, who had some grievance or other in life are supposed to wander. The Droitwich Canal, in passing through Salwarpe, Worcestershire, is said to have cut off a slice of a large old half-timbered house, in revenge for which act of mutilation, the ghost of a former occupier revisited his old haunts, and affrighted the domestics.

Once more, according to another Animistic conception which holds a prominent place in the religion of uncultured tribes, the soul at death passes through some transitionary stages, finally developing into a demon. In China and India this theory is deeply rooted among the people, and hence it is

customary to offer sacrifices to the souls of the departed by way of propitiation, as otherwise they are supposed to wander to and fro on the earth, and to exert a malignant influence on even their dearest friends and relatives. Diseases, too, are regarded as often being caused by the wandering souls of discontented relatives, who in some cases are said to re-appear as venomous snakes.[71] Owing to this belief, a system of terror prevails amongst many tribes, which is only allayed by constantly appeasing departed souls. Believing in superstitions of this kind, it is easy to understand how the uncivilised mind readily lays hold of the doctrine that the souls of the departed, angry and enraged at having had death thrust on them, take every opportunity of wandering about, and annoying the living, and of wreaking their vengeance on even those most nearly related to them. In this phase of savage belief may be traced the notion of Manes worship found under so many forms in foreign countries. Indeed, once granted that the departed soul has power to affect the living, then this power attributed to it is only one of degree. With this belief, too, may be compared the modern one of worship of the dead; and as Dr. Tylor remarks: ‘A crowd of saints, who were once men and women, now form an inferior order of deities active in the affairs of men, and receiving from them reverence and prayer, thus coming strictly under the definition of Manes.’[72] A further illustration may be adduced in the patron deities of particular trades and crafts, and in the imposing array of saints supposed to be specially interested in the particular requirements of mankind.

CHAPTER VI

GHOSTS OF THE MURDERED

IT is commonly supposed that the spirits of those who have suffered a violent or untimely death are baneful and malicious beings; for, as Meiners conjectures in his 'History of Religions,' they were driven unwillingly from their bodies, and have carried into their new existence an angry longing for revenge. Hence, in most countries, there is a dread of such harmful spirits; and, among the Sioux Indians the fear of the ghost's vengeance has been known to act as a check to murder. The avenging ghost often comes back to convict the guilty, and appears in all kinds of strange and uncanny ways. Thus the ghost of Hamlet's father (i. 5) says:

I am thy father's spirit,
Doomed for a certain time to walk the night,
And for the day confined to fast in fires,
Till the foul crimes, done in my days of nature,
Are burnt and purged away.

Till the crime has been duly expiated, not only is the spirit supposed to be kept from its desired rest, but it flits about the haunts of the living, that, by its unearthly molestation, it may compel them to make every possible reparation for the cruel wrong done. Any attempt to lay such a ghost is ineffectual, and no exorcist's art can induce it to discontinue its unwelcome visits. Comparative folk-lore proves how universal is this belief, for one of the most popular ghost stories in folk-tales is that which treats of the murdered person whose ghost hovers about the earth with no gratification but to terrify the living.

The Chinese have a dread of the wandering spirits of persons who have come to an unfortunate end. At Canton, in 1817, the wife of an officer of Government had occasioned the death of two female domestic slaves, from some jealous suspicion it was supposed of her husband's conduct towards the girls; and, in order to screen herself from the consequences, she suspended the bodies by the neck, with a view to its being construed into an act of suicide. But the conscience of the woman tormented her to such a degree that she became insane, and at times personated the victims of her cruelty; or, as the Chinese supposed, the spirits of the murdered girls possessed her, and utilised her mouth to declare her own guilt. In her ravings she tore her clothes, and beat her own person with all the fury of madness; after which she would recover her senses for a time, when it was supposed the demons quitted her, but only to return with greater frenzy, which took place a short time previous to her death.[73] According to Mr. Dennys,[74] the most common form of Chinese ghost story is that wherein the ghost seeks to bring to justice the murderer who shuffled off its mortal coil.

The following tale is told of a haunted hill in the country of the Assiniboins. Many summers ago a party of Assiniboins pounced on a small band of Crees in the neighbourhood of Wolverine Knoll. Among the victors was the former wife of one of the vanquished, who had been previously captured by her present husband. This woman directed every effort in the fight to take the life of her first husband, but he escaped, and concealed himself on this knoll. Wolverine—for this was his name—fell asleep, and was discovered by this virago, who killed him, and presented his scalp to her Assiniboin husband. The knoll was afterwards called after him. The Indians

assert that the ghosts of the murderess and her victim are often to be seen from a considerable distance struggling together on the very summit of the height.[75]

The Siamese 'fear as unkindly spirits the souls of such as died a violent death, or were not buried with the proper rites, and who, desiring expiation, invisibly terrify their descendants.'[76] In the same way, the Karens say that the ghosts of those who wander on the earth are the spirits of such as died by violence; and in Australia we hear of the souls of departed natives walking about because their death has not been expiated by the avenger of blood.

The Hurons of America, lest the spirits of the victims of their torture should remain around the huts of their murderers from a thirst of vengeance, strike every place with a staff in order to oblige them to depart. An old traveller mentions the same custom among the Iroquois: 'At night we heard a great noise, as if the houses had all fallen; but it was only the inhabitants driving away the ghosts of the murdered;' with which we may compare the belief of the Ottawas: On one occasion, when noises of the loudest and most inharmonious kind were heard in a certain village, it was ascertained that a battle had been lately fought between the Ottawas and Kickapoos, and that the object of all this noise was to prevent the ghosts of the dead combatants from entering the village.[77]

European folk-lore still clings to this old belief, and, according to the current opinion in Norway,[78] the soul of a murdered person willingly hovers around the spot where his body is buried, and makes its appearance for the purpose of calling forth vengeance on the murderer.

The idea that, in cases of hidden murder, the

buried dead cannot rest in their graves is often spoken in our old ballad folk-lore. Thus, in the ballad of the 'Jew's Daughter,' in Motherwell's collection, a youth was murdered, and his body thrown into a draw-well, and he speaks to his mother from the well:

She ran away to the deep draw-well,
  And she fell down on her knee,
Saying, 'Bonnie Sir Hugh, oh, pretty Sir Hugh,
  I pray ye, speak to me!'
'Oh! the lead it is wondrous heavy, mother,
  The well, it is wondrous deep,
The little penknife sticks in my throat,
  And I downa to ye speak.
But lift me out of this deep draw-well,
  And bury me in yon churchyard;
Put a Bible at my head,' he says,
  'And a Testament at my feet,
And pen and ink at every side,
  And I will lay still and sleep.
And go to the back of Maitland town,
  Bring me my winding sheet;
For it's at the back of Maitland town
  That you and I shall meet.'

The eye of superstition, we are told, sees such ghosts sometimes as white spectres in the churchyard, where they stop horses, terrify people, and make a disturbance; and occasionally as executed criminals, who, in the moonlight, wander round the place of execution, with their heads under their arms. At times they are said to pinch persons while asleep both black and blue, such spots being designated ghost-spots, or ghost-pinches. It is also supposed in some parts of Norway that certain spirits cry like children, and entice people to them, such being thought to derive their origin from murdered

infants. A similar belief exists in Sweden, where the spirits of little children that have been murdered are said to wander about wailing, within an assigned time, so long as their lives would have lasted on earth, had they been allowed to live. As a terror for unnatural mothers who destroy their offspring, their sad cry is said to be ‘Mama! Mama!’ If travellers at night pass by them, they will hang on the vehicle, when the most spirited horses will sweat as if they were dragging too heavy a load, and at length come to a dead stop. The peasant then knows that a ghost or pysling has attached itself to his vehicle.[79]

The nautical ghost is often a malevolent spirit, as in Shelley’s ‘Revolt of Islam’; and Captain Marryat tells a sailor story of a murdered man’s ghost appearing every night, and calling hands to witness a piratical scene of murder, formerly committed on board the ship in which he appeared. A celebrated ghost is that of the ‘Shrieking Woman,’ long supposed to haunt the shores of Oakum Bay, near Marblehead. She was a Spanish lady murdered by pirates in the eighteenth century, and the apparition is thus described by Whittier in his ‘Legends of New England’:

’Tis said that often when the moon,
  Is struggling with the gloomy even,
And over moon and star is drawn
  The curtain of a clouded heaven,
Strange sounds swell up the narrow glen,
  As if that robber crew was there;
The hellish laugh, the shouts of men
  And woman’s dying prayer.

Many West Indian quays were thought to be the haunts of ghosts of murdered men; and Sir Walter Scott tells how the Buccaneers occasionally killed a

Spaniard or a slave, and buried him with their spirits, under the impression that his ghost would haunt the spot, and keep away treasure hunters. He quotes another incident of a captain who killed a man in a fit of anger, and, on his threatening to haunt him, he cooked his body in the stove kettle. The crew believed that the murdered man took his place at the wheel, and on the yards. The captain, troubled by his conscience and the man's ghost, finally jumped overboard, when, as he sank, he threw up his arms and exclaimed, 'Bill is with me now!'

In most parts of the world similar tales are recorded, and are as readily believed as when they were first told centuries ago. A certain island on the Japanese coast is traditionally haunted by the ghosts of Japanese slain in a naval battle. Even 'to-day the Chousen peasant fancies he sees the ghostly armies baling out the sea with bottomless dippers, condemned thus to cleanse the ocean of the slain of centuries ago.'[80] According to an old Chinese legend the ghost of a captain of a man-of-war junk, who had been murdered, reappeared and directed how the ship was to be steered to avoid a nest of pirates.[81]

In this country, many an old mansion has its haunted room, in which the unhappy spirit of the murdered person is supposed, on certain occasions, to appear. Generation after generation do such troubled spirits return to the scene of their life, and persistently wait till some one is bold enough to stay in the haunted room, and to question them as to the cause of their making such periodical visits. Accordingly, when a murder has been committed and not discovered, often, it is said, has the spirit of the murdered one continued to come back and

torment the neighbourhood till a confession of the crime has been made, and justice satisfied. Mr. Walter Gregor,[82] detailing instances in Scotland of haunted houses, tells how ‘in one room a lady had been murdered, and her body buried in a vault below it. Her spirit could find no rest till she had told who the murderer was, and pointed out where the body lay. In another, a baby heir had its little life stifled by the hand of an assassin hired by the next heir. The estate was obtained, but the deed followed the villain beyond the grave, and his spirit could find no peace. Night by night the ghost had to return at the hour of midnight to the room in which the murder was committed, and in agony spend in it the hours till cock-crowing, when everything of the supernatural had to disappear.’

The ghost of Lady Hamilton of Bothwellhaugh, who always appears in white, carrying her child in her arms, has long been, as Mr. Ingram says,[83] ‘an enduring monument of the bloodthirsty spirit of the age in which she lived.’ Whilst her husband was away from home, a favourite of the Regent, Murray seized his house, turned his wife, on a cold night, naked, into the open fields, where, before morning, she was found raving mad; her infant perishing either by cold or murder. The ruins of the mansion of Woodhouslee, ‘whence Lady Bothwell was expelled in the brutal manner which occasioned her insanity and death,’ have long been tenanted with the unfortunate lady’s ghost; ‘and so tenacious is this spectre of its rights, that a part of the stones belonging to the ancient edifice having been employed in building or repairing the new Woodhouslee, the apparition has deemed it one of her privileges to haunt that house also.’

Samlesbury Hall, Lancashire, has its ghosts; and it

is said that ‘on certain clear still evenings a lady in white can be seen passing along the gallery and the corridors, and then from the hall into the grounds; then she meets a handsome knight who receives her on bended knees, and he then accompanies her along the walks. On arriving at a certain spot, most probably the lover’s grave, both the phantoms stand still, and, as they seem to utter lost wailings of despair, they embrace each other, and then melt away into the clear blue of the surrounding sky.’ The story goes that one of the daughters of Sir John Southworth, a former owner, formed an attachment with the heir of a neighbouring house; but when Sir John said ‘no daughter of his should ever be united to the son of a family which had deserted its ancestral faith,’ an elopement was arranged. The day and place were overheard by the lady’s brother, and, on the evening agreed upon, he rushed from his hiding-place and slew her lover. But soon afterwards her mind gave way, and she died a raving maniac.[84]

Mrs. Murray, a lady born and brought up in the borders, writes Mr. Henderson,[85] tells me of ‘a cauld lad,’ of whom she heard in her childhood during a visit to Gilsland, in Cumberland. He perished from cold, at the behest of some cruel uncle or stepdame, and ever after his ghost haunted the family, coming shivering to their bedsides before anyone was stricken by illness, his teeth audibly chattering; and if it were to be fatal, he laid his icy hand upon the part which would be the seat of the disease, saying:

Cauld, cauld, aye cauld!
An’ ye see he cauld for evermair.

St. Donart’s Castle, on the southern coast of Glamorganshire, has its favourite ghost, that of Lady

Stradling, who is said to have been murdered by one of her family. ‘It appears,’ writes the late Mr. Wirt Sikes,[86] ‘when any mishap is about to befall a member of the house of Stradling, the direct line, however, of which is extinct. She wears high-heeled shoes, and a long trailing gown of the finest silk.’ While she wanders, the castle hounds refuse to rest, but with their howling raise all the dogs in the neighbourhood. The Little Shelsey people long preserved a tradition that the court-house in that parish was haunted by the spirit of a Lady Lightfoot, who was said to have been imprisoned and murdered;[87] and Cumnor Hall has acquired a romantic interest from the poetic glamour flung over it by Mickle in his ballad of Cumnor Hall, and by Sir Walter Scott in his ‘Kenilworth.’ Both refer to it as the scene of Amy Robsart’s murder, and although the jury agreed to accept her death as accidental, the country folk would not forego their idea that it was the result of foul play. Ever since the fatal event it was asserted that ‘Madam Dudley’s ghost did use to walk in Cumnor Park, and that it walked so obstinately, that it took no less than nine parsons from Oxford to lay her.’ According to Mickle—

The village maids, with fearful glance,
  Avoid the ancient moss-grown wall;
Nor ever lead the merry dance
  Among the groves of Cumnor Hall.

About half a mile to the east of Maxton, a small rivulet runs across the old turnpike road, at a spot called Bow-brig-syke. Near this bridge is a triangular field, in which for nearly a century it was averred that the forms of two ladies, dressed in white, might be seen pacing up and down, walking over precisely the same spot of ground till morning light. But one

day, while some workmen were repairing the road, they took up the large flagstones upon which foot-passengers crossed the burn, and found beneath them the skeletons of two women lying side by side. After this discovery the Bow-brig ladies, as they were called, were never again seen to walk in the three-corner field. The story goes that these two ladies were sisters to a former laird of Littledean, who is said to have killed them in a fit of passion, because they interfered to protect from ill-usage a young lady whom he had met at Bow-brig-syke. Some years later he met with his own death near the same fatal spot. [88]

Mr. Sullivan, in his 'Cumberland and Westmoreland,' relates how, some years ago, a spectre appeared to a man who lived at Henhow Cottage, Martindale. Starting for his work at an early hour one morning, he had not gone two hundred yards from his house when his dog gave signs of alarm, and, on looking round, he saw a woman carrying a child in her arms. On being questioned as to what was troubling her, the ghost replied that she had been seduced, and that her seducer, to conceal his guilt and her frailty, had given her medicine, the effect of which was to kill both mother and child. Her doom was to wander for a hundred years, forty of which had expired. The occurrence is believed to have made a lasting impression on the old man, who, says Sullivan, 'was until lately a shepherd on the fells. There can be no moral doubt that he both saw and spoke with the apparition; but what share his imagination had therein, or how it had been excited, are mysteries, and so they are likely to remain.' But as Grose remarks, ghosts do not go about their business like living beings. In cases of murder, 'a ghost, instead of going to the next justice of the

peace and laying its information, or to the nearest relation of the person murdered, it appears to some poor labourer who knows none of the parties, draws the curtains of some decrepit nurse or alms-woman, or hovers about the place where his body is deposited.' The same circuitous mode, he adds, 'is pursued with respect to redressing injured orphans or widows, when it seems as if the shorter and more certain would be to go to the person guilty of the injustice, and haunt him continually till he be terrified into a restitution.'

From early days the phantoms of the murdered have occasionally appeared to the living, and made known the guilty person or persons who committed the deed. Thus Cicero relates how 'two Arcadians came to Megara together; one lodged at a friend's house, the other at an inn. During the night, the latter appeared to his fellow-traveller, imploring his help, as the innkeeper was plotting his death; the sleeper sprang up in alarm, but thinking the vision of no importance, he went to sleep again. A second time his companion appeared to him, to entreat that, though he had failed to help, he would at least avenge, for the innkeeper had killed him, and hidden his body in a dung-cart, wherefore he charged his fellow-traveller to be early next morning at the city gate before the cart passed out. The traveller went as bidden, and there found the cart; the body of the murdered man was in it, and the innkeeper was brought to justice.'[89]

Of the many curious cases recorded of a murder being discovered through the ghost of the murdered person, may be quoted one told in Aubrey's 'Miscellanies.' It appears that on Monday, April 14, 1690, William Barwick was walking with his wife close to Cawood Castle, when, from motives not

divulged at the trial, he determined to murder her, and finding a pond conveniently at hand, threw her in. But on the following Tuesday, as his brother-in-law, Thomas Lofthouse, 'about half an hour after twelve of the clock in the daytime, was watering quickwood, as he was going for the second pail, there appeared walking before him an apparition in the shape of a woman, "her visage being like his wife's sister's." Soon after, she sat down over against the pond, on a green hill. He walked by her as he went to the pond, and, on his return, he observed that she was dangling "something like a white bag" on her lap, evidently suggestive of her unborn baby that was slain with her. The circumstance made such an impression on him, that he immediately suspected Barwick, especially as he had made false statements as to the whereabouts of his wife, and obtained a warrant for his arrest. The culprit when arrested confessed his crime, and the body of the murdered woman being recovered, was found dressed in clothing similar, apparently, to that worn by the apparition. Ultimately Barwick was hanged for his crime.'[90]

A similar case, which occurred in the county of Durham in 1631, and is the subject of a critical historical inquiry in Surtees's 'History of Durham,' may be briefly summed up.[91] 'One Walker, a yeoman of good estate, a widower, living at Chester-le-Street, had in his service a young female relative named Anne Walker. The results of an amour which took place between them caused Walker to send away the girl under the care of one Mark Sharp, a collier, professedly that she might be taken care of as befitted her condition, but in reality that she might no more be troublesome to her lover. Nothing was heard of her till, one night in the ensuing winter, one

James Graham, coming down from the upper to the lower floor of his mill, found a woman standing there with her hair hanging about her head, in which were five bloody wounds. According to the man's evidence, she gave an account of her fate; having been killed by Sharp on the moor in their journey, and thrown into a coal pit close by, while the instrument of her death, a pick, had been hid under a bank along with his clothes, which were stained with her blood. She demanded of Graham that he should expose her murder, which he hesitated to do, until she had twice reappeared to him, the last time with a threatening aspect.

'The body, the pick, and the clothes having been found as Graham had described, Walter and Sharp were tried at Durham, before Judge Davenport, in August 1631. The men were found guilty, condemned, and executed.'

In 'Ackerman's Repository' for November 1820, there is an account of a person being tried on the pretended evidence of a ghost. A farmer, on his return from the market at Southam, co. Warwick, was murdered. The next morning a man called upon the farmer's wife, and related how on the previous night her husband's ghost had appeared to him, and, after showing him several stabs on his body, had told him that he was murdered by a certain person, and his corpse thrown into a marl-pit. A search was instituted, the body found in the pit, and the wounds on the body of the deceased were exactly in the parts described by the pretended dreamer; the person who was mentioned was committed for trial on the charge of murder, and the trial came on at Warwick before Lord Chief Justice Raymond. The jury would have convicted the prisoner as rashly as the magistrate had committed him, but for the interposition of the

judge, who told them he did not put any credence in the pretended ghost story, since the prisoner was a man of unblemished reputation, and no ill-feeling had ever existed between himself and the deceased. He added that he knew of no law which admitted of the evidence of a ghost, and, if any did, the ghost had not appeared. The crier was then ordered to summon the ghost, which he did three times, and the judge then acquitted the prisoner, and caused the accuser to be detained and his house searched, when such strong proofs of guilt were discovered, that the man confessed the crime, and was executed for murder at the following assizes.

CHAPTER VII

PHANTOM BIRDS

ONE of the forms which the soul is said occasionally to assume at death is that of a bird—a pretty belief which, under one form or another, exists all over the world. An early legend tells how, when St. Polycarp was burnt alive, there arose from his ashes a white dove which flew towards heaven; and a similar story is told of Joan of Arc. The Russian peasantry affirm that the souls of the departed haunt their old homes in the shape of birds for six weeks, and watch the grief of the bereft, after which time they fly away to the other world. In certain districts bread-crumbs are placed on a piece of white linen at a window during those six weeks, when the soul is believed to come and feed upon them in the form of a bird. It is generally into pigeons or crows that the dead are

transformed. Thus, when the Deacon Theodore and his three schismatic brethren were burnt in the year 1682, writes Mr. Ralston,[92] 'the souls of the martyrs appeared in the air as pigeons.' In Volhynia dead children are believed to come back in the spring to their native village under the semblance of swallows and other small birds, endeavouring, by soft twittering or song, to console their sorrowing parents. The Bulgarians say that after death the soul assumes the form of a bird; and according to an old Bohemian fancy the soul flies out of the dying in a similar shape. In the 'Chronicles of the Beatified Anthony'[93] we find described fetid and black pools 'in regione Puteolorum in Apulia,' whence the souls arise in the form of monstrous birds in the evening hours of the Sabbath, which neither eat nor let themselves be caught, but wander till in the morning an enormous lion compels them to submerge themselves in the water.

It is a German belief that the soul of one who has died on shipboard passes into a bird, and when seen at any time it is supposed to announce the death of another person. The ghost of the murdered mother comes swimming in the form of a duck, or the soul sits in the likeness of a bird on the grave. This piece of folk-lore has been introduced into many of the popular folk-tales, as in the well-known story of the juniper tree. A little boy is killed by his step-mother, who serves him up as a dish of meat to his father. The father eats in ignorance, and throws away the bones, which are gathered up by the half-sister, who puts them into a silk handkerchief and buries them under a juniper tree. But presently a bird of gay plumage perches on the tree, and whistles as it flits from branch to branch:

Min moder de mi slach't,
Min fader de mi att,
Min swester de Marleenken,
Söcht alle mine Beeniken,
Und bindt sie in een syden Dodk,
Legst unner den Machandelboom;
Ky witt! ky witt! Ach watt en schön vogel bin ich!

—a rhyme which Goethe puts into the mouth of Gretchen in prison.[94] In Grimm's story of 'The White and the Black Bride,' the mother and sister push the true bride into the stream. At the same moment a snow-white swan is discovered swimming down the stream.

Swedish folk-lore tells us that the ravens which scream by night in forest swamps and wild moors are the ghosts of murdered men whose bodies have been hidden by their undetected murderers, and not had Christian burial. In Denmark the night-raven is considered an exorcised spirit, and there is said to be a hole in its left wing caused by the stake driven into the earth. Where a spirit has been exorcised, it is only through the most frightful swamps and morasses that it ascends, first beginning under the earth with the cry of 'Rok! rok!' then 'Rok op! rok op!' and when it has thus come forth, it flies away screaming 'Hei! hei! he!—i!' When it has flown up it describes a cross, but one must take care, it is said, not to look up when the bird is flying overhead, for he who sees through the hole in its wing will become a night-raven himself, and the night-raven will be released. This ominous bird is ever flying towards the east, in the hope of reaching the Holy Sepulchre, for when it arrives there it will find rest.[95] Then there is the romantic Breton ballad of 'Lord Nann and the Korrigan,' wherein it is related how—

It was a marvel to see, men say,
The night that followed the day,
The lady in earth by her lord lay,

To see two oak trees themselves rear,
From the new made grave into the air;

And on their branches two doves white,
Who there were hopping, gay and light,

Which sang when rose the morning ray,
And then towards heaven sped away.

In Mexico it is a popular belief that after death the souls of nobles animate beautiful singing birds, and certain North American Indian tribes maintain that the souls of their chiefs take the form of small woodbirds.[96] Among the Abipones of Paraguay we are told of a peculiar kind of little ducks which fly in flocks at night-time, uttering a mournful tone, and which the popular imagination associates with the souls of those who have died. Darwin mentions a South American Indian who would not eat land-birds because they were dead men; and the Californian tribes abstain from large game, believing that the souls of past generations have passed into their bodies. The Içannas of Brazil thought the souls of brave warriors passed into lovely birds that fed on pleasant fruits; and the Tapuyas think the souls of the good and the brave enter birds, while the cowardly become reptiles. Indeed, the primitive psychology of such rude tribes reminds us how the spirit freed at death—

Fills with fresh energy another form,
And towers an elephant, or glides a worm;
Swims as an eagle in the eye of noon,
Or wails a screech-owl to the deaf cold moon.

It was also a belief of the Aztecs that all good people, as a reward of merit, were metamorphosed at the close of life into feathered songsters of the grove, and in this form passed a certain term in the umbrageous bowers of Paradise; while certain African tribes think that the souls of wicked men become jackals. The Brazilians imagined that the souls of the bad animated those birds that inhabited the cavern of Guacharo and made a mournful cry, which birds were religiously feared.

Tracing similar beliefs in our own country, may be compared the Lancashire dread of the so-called 'Seven Whistlers,' which are occasionally heard at night, and are supposed to contain the souls of those Jews who assisted at the Crucifixion, and in consequence of their wickedness were doomed to float for ever in the air. Numerous stories have been told, from time to time, of the appearance of these 'Seven Whistlers,' and of their being heard before some terrible catastrophe, such as a colliery explosion. A correspondent of 'Notes and Queries' relates how during a thunderstorm which passed over Kettering, in Yorkshire, on the evening of September 6, 1871, 'on which occasion the lightning was very vivid, an unusual spectacle was witnessed. Immense flocks of birds were flying about, uttering doleful affrighted cries as they passed over the locality, and for hours they kept up a continual whistling like that made by sea-birds. There must have been great numbers of them, as they were also observed at the same time in the counties of Northampton, Leicester, and Lincoln. The next day, as my servant was driving me to a neighbouring village, this phenomenon of the flight of birds became the subject of conversation, and on asking him what birds he thought they were, he told me

they were what were called the “Seven Whistlers,” and that whenever they were heard it was considered a sign of some great calamity, and that the last time he heard them was the night before the great Hartley Colliery explosion. He had also been told by soldiers, that if they heard them they always expected a great slaughter would take place soon. Curiously enough, on taking up the newspaper the following morning, I saw headed in large letters, “Terrible Colliery Explosion at Wigan,” &c.’ Wordsworth speaks of the ‘Seven Whistlers’ in connection with the spectral hounds of the wild huntsman:

He the seven birds hath seen that never part—
  Seen the seven whistlers on their nightly rounds,
And counted them. And oftentimes will start,
  For overhead are sweeping Gabriel's hounds,
Doomed, with their impious lord, the flying hart
  To chase for ever on ærial grounds.

A similar tradition prevails on the Bosphorus with reference to certain flocks of birds, about the size of a thrush, which fly up and down the Channel, and are never seen to rest on the land or water. These are supposed to be the souls of the damned, and condemned to perpetual motion. Among further instances of the same belief may be mentioned one current among the Manx herring fishermen, who, from time immemorial, have been afraid of going to sea without a dead wren, for fear of disasters and storms. The story goes that once upon a time 'a sea spirit hunted the herring track, always attended by storms, but at last assumed the form of a wren, and flew away.' Accordingly they believe that so long as they have a dead wren with them all is snug and safe. Similarly, in the English Channel a rustling, rushing sound is occasionally heard on the dark still nights of winter, and is called the herring spear, or herring piece, by the fishermen of Dover and Folkestone. But this strange sound is really caused by the flight of the little redwings as they cross the Channel on their way to warmer regions.

Stories of disembodied souls appearing as birds are very numerous. An old well-known Cornish legend tells how, in days of old, King Arthur was transformed into a chough, 'its talons and beak all red with blood,' denoting the violent end to which the celebrated chieftain came. In the same way a

curious legend in Poland affirms that every member of the Herburt family assumes the form of an eagle after death, and that the eldest daughters of the Pileck line take the shape of doves if they die unmarried, of owls if they die married, and that they give previous notice of their death to every member of their race by pecking a finger of each. A wild song sung by the boatmen of the Molo, Venice, declares that the spirit of Daniel Manin, the patriot, is flying about the lagunes to this day in the shape of a beautiful white dove.[97] There is the ancient Irish tradition that the first father and mother of mankind exist as eagles in the island of Innis Bofin, at the mouth of Killery Bay, in Galway; indeed, survivals of this old belief occur under all manner of forms. There is the popular legend of the owl and the baker's daughter which Shakespeare has immortalised in 'Hamlet' (iv. 5), where Ophelia exclaims, 'They say the owl was a baker's daughter; Lord, we know what we are, but know not what we may be.'[98] Gervase of Tilbury tells how the stork was formerly regarded as both bird and man, on account of which superstition it is carefully protected in Prussia from any kind of injury. The stork, too, is still held in superstitious dread by the Chinese, who, on the twenty-first day of the period of mourning for the dead, place three large paper birds resembling storks on high poles in front of the house of mourning. The birds are supposed to carry the soul of the deceased person to Elysium, and during the next three days the Buddhist prays to the ten kings of the Buddhist Hades, calling on them to hasten the flight of the departed soul to the Western Paradise.[99] The Virginian Indians had great reverence for a small bird called Pawcorance, that flies in the woods, and in its note continually sounds that name. This

bird flies alone, and is heard only in twilight. It is said to be the son of one of their priests, and on this account they would not hurt it; but there was once a profane Indian who was hired to shoot one of them, but report says he paid dearly for his act of presumption, for a few days afterwards he disappeared, and was never heard of again.[100] The Indians dwelling about the Falls of St. Anthony supposed that the spirits of their dead warriors animated the eagles which frequented the place, and these eagles were objects of their worship. In the 'Sæmund Edda' it is said that in the nether world souls as singed birds fly about like swarms of flies—

Of that is to be told
What I just observed,
When I had come into the land of torment:
Singed birds,
That had been souls,
Flew as many as gnats.

The Finns and the Lithuanians speak of the 'Milky Way' as the Bird's Way—the way of souls. According to Kuhn, the notion of the soul assuming the form of a bird is closely allied with the primitive tradition of birds as soul-bringers. Thus, as it has been suggested, 'the soul and the bird that brought it down to earth may have been supposed to become one, and to enter and quit the body together.' In the Egyptian hieroglyphics a bird signified the soul of man; and the German name for stork, writes Grimm, is literally child, or soul-bringer. Hence the belief that the advent of infants is presided over by this bird, which obtains so wide a credence in Denmark and Germany.[101]

The idea of the bird as a 'soul bringer' probably gave rise to the popular belief that it is unlucky

when a bird hovers near the window of a sick-room, a superstition to which Mrs. Hemans has prettily alluded:

Say not 'tis vain! I tell thee some
  Are warned by a meteor's light,
Or a pale bird flitting calls them home,
  Or a voice on the winds by night.

There are various stories told of mysterious birds appearing at such a time in different localities. In Devonshire the appearance of a white breasted bird has long been considered a presage of death, a notion which is said to have originated in a tragic occurrence that happened to one of the Oxenham family. A local ballad tells how on the bridal eve of Margaret, heiress of Sir James Oxenham, a silver-breasted bird flew over the wedding guests just as Sir James stood up to thank them for good wishes. The next day she was slain by a discarded lover, and the ballad records how—

Round her hovering flies,
The phantom-bird, for her last breath,
To bear it to the skies.

In Yorkshire, Berry Well was supposed to be haunted by a bogie in the form of a white goose, and the Rev. S. Baring-Gould informs us how Lew Trenchard House is haunted by a white lady who goes by the name of Madame Gould, and is supposed to be the spirit of a lady who died there, April 10, 1795. 'A stone is shown on the "ramps" of Lew Slate Quarry, where seven parsons met to lay the old madame, and some say that the white owl, which nightly flits to and fro in front of Lew House, is the spirit of the lady conjured by the parsons into a bird.'[102]

Similarly, whenever the white owls are seen perched on the family mansion of the noble family of Arundel of Wardour, it is regarded as a certain indication that one of its members will shortly be summoned out of the world. In Count Montalembert's 'Vie de Ste. Elizabeth' it is related how 'Duke Louis of Thuringia, the husband of Ste. Elizabeth of Hungary, being on the point of expiring, said to those around him, "Do you see those doves more white than snow?" His attendants supposed him to be a prey to visions; but a little while afterwards he said to them, "I must fly away with those brilliant doves." Having said this he fell asleep in peace. Then his almoner, Berthold, perceived doves flying away to the east, and followed them along with his eyes.' We may compare a similar story told of the most beautiful woman of the Knistenaux, named 'Foot of the Fawn,' who died in her childbirth, and her babe with her. Soon afterwards two doves appeared, one full grown, and the other a little one. They were the spirits of the mother and child, and the Indians would gather about the tree on which they were perched with reverential love, and worship them as the spirit of the woman and child. [103] There is Lord Lyttelton's well-known ghost story, and the belief of the Duchess of Kendal that George I. flew into her window in the shape of a raven. Another well-known case was that of the Duchess of St. Albans, who, on her death-bed, remarked to her step-daughter, Lady Guilford, 'I am so happy to day because your father's spirit is breathing upon me; he has taken the shape of a little bird singing at my window.' Kelly relates an anecdote of a credulous individual who believed that the departing soul of his brother-in-law, in the form of a bird, tapped at his window at the time of his death;[104] and in

FitzPatrick's 'Life of Bishop Doyle' it is related, in allusion to his death, that, 'considering the season was midsummer, and not winter, the visit of two robin redbreasts to the sick-room may be noticed as interesting. They remained fluttering round, and sometimes perching on the uncurtained bed. The priests, struck by the novelty of the circumstance, made no effort to expel the little visitors, and the robins hung lovingly over the bishop's head until death released him.' A singular instance of this belief was the extraordinary whim of a Worcester lady, who, imagining her daughter to exist in the shape of a singing-bird, literally furnished her pew in the Cathedral with cages full of the kind; and we are told in Lord Oxford's letters that, as she was rich, and a benefactress in beautifying the church, no objection was made to her harmless folly.

CHAPTER VIII

ANIMAL GHOSTS

IT is the rule rather than the exception for ghosts to take the form of animals. A striking feature of this form of animism is its universality, an argument, it is said, in favour of its having originally sprung from the old theory of metempsychosis which has pertinaciously existed in successive stages of the world's culture. 'Possibly,' it has been suggested, 'the animal form of ghosts is a mark of the once-supposed divinity of the dead. Ancestor worship is one of the oldest of the creeds, and in all mythologies we find that the gods could transform themselves into any

shape at will, and frequently took those of beasts and birds.'[105] At the same time, one would scarcely expect to come across nowadays this fanciful belief in our own and other civilised countries, and yet instances are of constant occurrence, being deeply rooted in many a local tradition. Acts of injustice done to a person cause the soul to return in animal form by way of retribution. Thus, in Cornwall, it is a very popular fancy that when a young woman who has loved not wisely but too well dies forsaken and broken-hearted, she comes back to haunt her deceiver in the form of a white hare.[106] This phantom pursues the false one everywhere, being generally invisible to everyone but himself. It occasionally rescues him from danger, but invariably causes his death in the end. A Shropshire story tells[107] how 'two or three generations back there was a lady buried in her jewels at Fitz, and afterwards the clerk robbed her; and she used to walk Cuthery Hollow in the form of a colt. They called it Obrick's Colt, and one night the clerk met it, and fell on his knees, saying, "Abide, Satan! abide! I am a righteous man, and a psalm singer."'[108] The ghost was known as Obrick's Colt from the name of the thief, who, as the peasantry were wont to say, 'had niver no pace atter; a was sadly troubled in his yed, and mithered.'[109]

Sometimes the spirit in animal form is that of a wicked person doomed to wear that shape for some offence. A man who hanged himself at Broomfield, near Shrewsbury, 'came again in the form of a large black dog;' and an amusing Shropshire story is told of the laying of an animal ghost at Bagbury, which took the form of a roaring bull, and caused no small alarm. This bull, it appears, had been a very bad man, but when his unexpected presence as a bull-

ghost terrified the neighbourhood, it was deemed desirable by the twelve parsons whose help had been invoked to run him to earth in Hyssington Church, with candles and all the paraphernalia employed on such occasions. But the bull, becoming infuriated, ‘made such a bust that he cracked the wall of the church from the top to the bottom.’ Their efforts were ultimately successful, for they captured him, and as he was compressible, they shut him up in a snuff-box, and laid him in the Red Sea for a thousand years.

Lady Howard, a Devonshire notable of the time of James I., in spite of her beauty and accomplishments, had many bad qualities, and amongst others was not only guilty of unnatural cruelty to her only daughter, but had a mysterious knack of getting rid of her husbands, having been married no less than four times. Her misdemeanours, however, did not escape with impunity, for, on her death, her spirit was transformed into a hound, and compelled to run every night, between midnight and cockcrow, from the gateway of Fitzford, her former residence, to Oakhampton Park, and bring back to the place from whence she started a blade of grass in her mouth, and this penance she is doomed to continue till every blade of grass is removed from the park, which she will not be able to effect till the end of the world.

Many spectral dogs, believed to be the souls of wicked persons, are said to haunt the sides of rivers and pools, and the story goes that there once lived in the hamlet of Dean Combe, Devon, a weaver of great fame and skill. After a prosperous life he died, but the next day he appeared sitting at the loom and working diligently as when he was alive. His sons applied to the parson, who, hearing the noise of the weaver’s shuttle above, cried, ‘Knowles! come down;

this is no place for thee.' 'I will,' said the weaver, 'as soon as I have worked out my quill' (the quill is the shuttle-full of wool). 'Nay,' said the vicar, 'thou hast been long enough at thy work, come down at once!' So when the spirit came down, the vicar took a handful of earth from the churchyard, and threw it on its face, and instantly it became a black hound. Then the vicar took a nutshell with a hole in it, and led the hound to the pool below the waterfall. 'Take this shell,' he said, 'and when thou shalt have dipped out the pool with it, thou mayest rest, not before.'[110] On the west coast of Ireland, fishermen have a strong prejudice against killing seals, owing to a popular tradition that they enshrined 'the souls of them that were drowned at the flood.' It was also said that such seals possessed the power of casting aside their external skins, and disporting themselves in human form on the sea-shore.

Within the parish of Tring, Hertford, a poor old woman was drowned in 1751 for suspected witchcraft. A chimney-sweeper, who was the principal perpetrator of this deed, was hanged and gibbeted near the place where the murder was committed; and while the gibbet stood, and long after it had disappeared, the spot was haunted by a black dog. A correspondent of the 'Book of Days' (ii. 433) says that he was told by the village schoolmaster, who had been 'abroad,' that he himself had seen this diabolical dog. 'I was returning home,' said he, 'late at night in a gig with the person who was driving. When we came near the spot, where a portion of the gibbet had lately stood, he saw on the bank of the roadside a flame of fire as large as a man's hat. "What's that?" I exclaimed. "Hush!" said my companion, and suddenly pulling in his horse, made a dead stop. I then saw an immense black dog

just in front of our horse, the strangest looking creature I ever beheld. He was as big as a Newfoundland, but very gaunt, shaggy, with long ears and tail, eyes like balls of fire, and large, long teeth, for he opened his mouth and seemed to grin at us. In a few minutes the dog disappeared, seeming to vanish like a shadow, or to sink into the earth, and we drove on over the spot where he had lain.'

Occasionally, when loss of life has happened through an accident, a spectre animal of some kind has been afterwards seen. Some years ago an accident happened in a Cornish mine, whereby several men lost their lives. As soon as help could be procured, a party descended, but the remains of the poor fellows were discovered to be mutilated beyond recognition. On being brought up to the surface, the clothes and a mass of mangled flesh dropped from the bodies. A bystander, anxious to spare the feelings of the relatives present, quickly cast the unsightly mass into the blazing furnace of an engine close at hand. But ever since that day the engineman positively asserted that troops of little black dogs continually haunted the locality. Then there is the pretty legend mentioned by Wordsworth in his poem entitled, 'The White Doe of Rylstone,' in which is embodied a Yorkshire tradition to the effect that the lady founder of Bolton Abbey revisited the ruins of the venerable structure in the form of a spotless white doe:

Which, though seemingly doomed in its breast to sustain
A softened remembrance of sorrow and pain,
Is spotless, and holy, and gentle, and bright,
And glides o'er the earth like an angel of light.

So common in France are human ghosts in bestial form, 'that M. D'Assier has invented a Darwinian

way of accounting for the phenomena. M. D'Assier, a positivist, is a believer in ghosts, but not in the immortality of the soul. He suggests that the human *revenants* in the guise of sheep, cows, and shadowy creatures may be accounted for by a kind of Atavism, or "throwing back," on the side of the spirit to the lower animal forms out of which humanity was developed!'[111]

According to a German piece of folk-lore, the soul takes the form of a snake, a notion we find shared by the Zulus, who revere a certain kind of serpents as the ghosts of the dead; and the Northern Indians speak of a serpent coming out of the mouth of a woman at death. It is further related that out of the mouth of a sleeping person a snake creeps and goes a long distance, and that whatever it sees, or suffers, on its way, the sleeper dreams of. If it is prevented from returning, the person dies.[112] Another belief tells us that the soul occasionally escapes from the mouth in the shape of a weasel or a mouse, a superstition to which Goethe alludes in 'Faust':

Ah! in the midst of her song,
A red mouseskin sprang out of her mouth.

Turning to similar beliefs current among distant nations, we are told that the Andaman Islanders had a notion that at death the soul vanished from the earth in the form of various animals and fishes; and in Guinea, monkeys found in the locality of a graveyard are supposed to be animated by the spirits of the dead. As Mr. Andrew Lang remarks:[113] 'Among savages who believe themselves to be descended from beasts, nothing can be more natural than the hypothesis that the souls revert to bestial shapes.' Certain of the North American Indian tribes believe that the spirits of their dead enter into bears;

and some of the Papuans in New Guinea 'imagine they will reappear as certain of the animals in their own island. The cassowary and the emu are the most remarkable animals that they know of; they have lodged in them the shades of their ancestors, and hence the people abstain from eating them.'[114] Spiritualism, we are told, is very widely spread among the Esquimos, who maintain that all animals have their spirits, and that the spirits of men can enter into the bodies of animals.[115] In the Ladrone Islands it was supposed that the spirits of the dead animated the bodies of the fish, and 'therefore to make better use of these precious spirits, they burnt the soft portions of the dead body, and swallowed the cinders which they let float on the top of their cocoa-nut wine.'[116]

In most parts of England there is a popular belief in a spectral dog, which is generally described as 'large, shaggy, and black, with long ears and tail. It does not belong to any species of living dogs, but is severally said to represent a hound, a setter, a terrier, or a shepherd dog, though often larger than a Newfoundland.'[117] It is commonly supposed to be a bad spirit, haunting places where evil deeds have been done, or where some calamity may be expected. In Lancashire, this spectre-dog is known as 'Trash' and 'Striker,'[118] its former name having been applied to it from the peculiar noise made by its feet, which is supposed to resemble that of a person walking along a miry, sloppy road, with heavy shoes; and its latter appellation from its uttering a curious screech, which is thought to warn certain persons of the approaching death of some relative or friend. If followed, it retreats with its eyes fronting its pursuer, and either sinks into the ground with a frightful shriek, or in some mysterious manner disappears.

When struck, the weapon passes through it as if it were a mere shadow. In Norfolk and Cambridgeshire this apparition is known to the peasantry by the name of ‘shuck’—the provincial word for ‘shag’—and is reported to haunt churchyards and other lonely places. A dreary lane in the parish of Overstrand is called from this spectral animal ‘Shuck’s Lane,’ and it is said that if the spot where it has been seen be examined after its disappearance, it will be found to be scorched, and strongly impregnated with the smell of brimstone. Mrs. Latham tells[119] how a man of notoriously bad character, who lived in a lonely spot at the foot of the South Downs, without any companion of either sex, was believed to be nightly haunted by evil spirits in the form of rats. Persons passing by his cottage late at night heard him cursing them, and desiring them to let him rest in peace. It was supposed they were sent to do judgment on him, and would carry him away some night. But he received his death-blow in a drunken brawl.

In the neighbourhood of Leeds there is the Padfoot, a weird apparition about the size of a small donkey, ‘with shaggy hair and large eyes like saucers.’ Mr. Baring-Gould relates[120] how a man in Horbury once saw ‘the Padfooit,’ which ‘in this neighbourhood is a white dog like a “flay-craw.”’ It goes sometimes on two legs, sometimes it runs on three, and to see it is a prognostication of death. He was going home by Jenkin, and he saw a white dog in the hedge. He struck at it, and the stick passed through it. Then the white dog looked at him, and it had ‘great saucer e’en’; and he was so ‘flayed,’ that he ran home trembling and went to bed, when he fell ill and died. With this strange apparition may be compared the Barguest, Bahrgeist, or Boguest of Northumberland, Durham, and Yorkshire, and the

Boggart of Lancashire; an uncanine creature, which generally assumes the form of a large black dog with flaming eyes, and is supposed to be a presage of death. The word ‘barguest,’ according to Sir Walter Scott, is from the German ‘bahrgeist’—spirit of the bier; and, as it has been pointed out, the proverbial expression to ‘war like a Barguest,’ shows how deep a hold this apparition once had on the popular mind. There is a Barguest in a glen between Darlington and Houghton, near Throstlenest, and another haunted a piece of waste land above a spring called the Oxwells, between Wreghorn and Headingly Hill, near Leeds. On the death of any person of local importance in the neighbourhood the creature would come forth, followed by all the dogs barking and howling.[121] Another form of this animal spectre is the Capelthwaite, which, according to common report, had the power of appearing in the form of any quadruped, but usually chose that of a large black dog. It does not seem to have appeared of late years, for tradition tells how a vicar of Beetham went out in his ecclesiastical vestments to lay this troublesome spirit in the River Bela.[122]

In Wales, there is the Gwyllgi, or ‘dog of darkness,’ a terrible spectre of a mastiff which, with a baleful breath and blazing red eyes, has often inspired terror even amongst the strong-minded Welsh peasantry. Many stories are told of its encountering unwary travellers, who have been so overcome by its unearthly howl, or by the glare of its fiery eyes, that they have fallen senseless on the ground. A certain lane, leading from Mowsiad to Lisworney-Crossways, is said to have been haunted by a Gwyllgi of the most terrible aspect. A farmer, living near there, was one night returning home from market on a young mare, when suddenly the animal shied, reared,

tumbled the farmer off, and bolted for home. The farm-servants, finding the mare trembling by the barn door, suspected she had seen the Gwyllgi, and going in search of their master, they found him on his back in the mud, who, being questioned, protested 'it was the Gwyllgi, and nothing less, that had made all this trouble.'[123]

It is a popular belief in Wales that horses have the peculiar 'gift' of seeing spectres, and carriage horses have been known to display every sign of the utmost terror when the occupants of the carriage could see no cause for alarm. Such an apparition is an omen of death, and an indication that a funeral will pass before long, bearing to the grave some person not dead at the time of the horses' fright. Another famous dog-fiend, in the shape of a shaggy spaniel, was the 'Mauthe Doog,' which was said to haunt Peel Castle, Isle of Man. Its favourite place was the guard-chamber, where it would lie down by the fireside. According to Waldron, 'the soldiers lost much of their terror by the frequency of the sight; yet, as they believed it to be an evil spirit waiting for an opportunity to hinder them, the belief kept them so far in order that they refrained from swearing in its presence. But, as the Mauthe Doog used to come out and return by the passage through the church, by which also somebody must go to deliver the keys every night to the captain, they continued to go together; he whose turn it was to do that duty being accompanied by the next in rotation. On a certain night, however, one of the soldiers, being the worse for liquor, would go with the key alone, though it really was not his turn. His comrades tried to dissuade him, but he said he wanted the Mauthe Doog's company, and would try whether he was dog or devil. Soon afterwards a great noise alarmed the

soldiers; and when the adventurer returned, he was struck with horror and speechless, nor could he even make such signs as might give them to understand what had happened to him; but he died with distorted features in violent agony. After this the apparition was never seen again.'

Then there are the packs of spectral hounds, which some folk-lorists tell us are evil spirits that have assumed this form in order to mimic the sports of men, or to hunt their souls. They are variously named in different parts of the country—being designated in the North, 'Gabriel's Hounds'; in Devon, the 'Wisk,' 'Yesk,' 'Yeth,' or 'Heath Hounds'; in Wales, 'Cwn Annwn' or 'Cwn y Wybr'; and in Cornwall, the 'Devil and his Dandy-Dogs.' Such spectral hounds are generally described as 'monstrous human-headed dogs,' and 'black, with fiery eyes and teeth, and sprinkled all over with blood.' They are often heard though seldom seen, 'and seem to be passing along simply in the air, as if in hot pursuit of their prey'; and when they appear to hang over a house, then death or misfortune may shortly be expected. In the gorge of Cliviger the spectre huntsman, under the name of 'Gabriel Ratchets,' with his hounds yelping through the air, is believed to hunt a milk-white doe round the Eagle's Crag, in the Vale of Todmorden, on All Hallows Eve. [124] Mr. Holland, of Sheffield, has embodied the local belief in the subjoined sonnet, and says: 'I never can forget the impression made upon my mind when once arrested by the cry of these Gabriel hounds as I passed the parish church of Sheffield one densely dark and very still night. The sound was exactly like the questing of a dozen beagles on the foot of a race, but not so loud, and highly suggestive of ideas of the supernatural.'

Oft have I heard my honoured mother say,
  How she has listened to the Gabriel hounds—
  Those strange, unearthly, and mysterious sounds
Which on the ear through murkiest darkness fell;
And how, entranced by superstitious spell,
  The trembling villager nor seldom heard,
  In the quaint notes of the nocturnal bird,
Of death premonished, some sick neighbour's knell.
I, too, remember, once at midnight dark,
  How these sky-yelpers startled me, and stirred
  My fancy so, I could have then averred
A mimic pack of beagles low did bark.
Nor wondered I that rustic fear should trace
A spectral huntsman doomed to that long moonless chase.

In the neighbourhood of Leeds these hounds are known as 'Gabble Retchets,' and are supposed, as in other places, to be the souls of unbaptized children who flit restlessly about their parents' abode. The Yeth hounds were heard some few years ago in the parish of St. Mary Tavy by an old man named Roger Burn. He was walking in the fields, when he suddenly heard the baying of the hounds, the shouts and horn of the huntsman, and the smacking of his whip. The last point the old man quoted as at once settling the question, 'How could I be mistaken? Why, I heard the very smacking of his whip.'

But, as Mr. Yarrell has long ago explained, this mysterious noise is caused by bean-geese, which, coming southwards in large flocks on the approach of winter—partly from Scotland and its islands, but chiefly from Scandinavia—choose dark nights for their migration, and utter a loud and very peculiar cry. The sound of these birds has been observed in every part of England, and as far west as Cornwall. One day a man was riding alone near Land's End on a still dark night, when the yelping cry broke out above his head so suddenly, and to appearance so

near, that he instinctively pulled up the horse as if to allow the pack to pass, the animal trembling violently at the unexpected sounds.

An amusing account of the devil and his dandy-dogs is given by Mr. J. Q. Couch, in his 'Folk-lore of a Cornish Village,' from which it appears that 'a poor herdsman was journeying homeward across the moors one windy night, when he heard at a distance among the Tors the baying of hounds, which he soon recognised as the dismal chorus of the dandy-dogs. It was three or four miles to his house, and, very much alarmed, he hurried onward as fast as the treacherous nature of the soil and the uncertainty of the path would allow; but, alas! the melancholy yelping of the hounds, and the dismal holloa of the hunter, came nearer and nearer. After a considerable run they had so gained upon him that on looking back—oh, horror! he could distinctly see hunter and dogs. The former was terrible to look at, and had the usual complement of *saucer-eyes*, horns, and tail accorded by common consent to the legendary devil. He was black, of course, and carried in his hand a long hunting pole. The dogs, a numerous pack, blackened the small patch of moor that was visible, each snorting fire, and uttering a yelp of indescribably frightful tone. No cottage, rock, or tree was near to give the herdsman shelter, and nothing apparently remained to him but to abandon himself to their fury, when a happy thought suddenly flashed upon him and suggested a resource. Just as they were about to rush upon him, he fell on his knees in prayer. There was a strange power in the holy words he uttered, for immediately, as if resistance had been offered, the hell hounds stood at bay, howling more dismally than ever, and the hunter shouted, "Bo Shrove," which means "The boy prays," at which

they all drew off on some other pursuit and disappeared.'

Gervase of Tilbury informs us that in the thirteenth century the wild hunt was often seen by full moon in England traversing forest and down. In the twelfth century it was known as the Herlething, the banks of the Wye having been the scene of the most frequent chases.

In Wales, the Cwn Annwn, or Dogs of Hell, or, as they are sometimes called, 'Dogs of the Sky,' howl through the air 'with a voice frightfully disproportionate to their size, full of a wild sort of lamentation,' but, although terrible to hear, they are harmless, and have never been known to commit any mischief. One curious peculiarity is that the nearer these spectral hounds are to a man, the less loud their voices sound; and the farther off they are, the louder is their cry. According to one popular tradition, they are supposed to be hunting through the air the soul of the wicked man the instant it quits the body.

This superstition occupies, too, a conspicuous place in the folk-lore of Germany and Norway. Mr. Baring-Gould, in his 'Iceland, its Scenes and Sages,' describes it as he heard it from his guide Jon, who related it to him under the title of the 'Yule Host.' He tells us how 'Odin, or Wodin, is the wild huntsman who nightly tears on his white horse over the German and Norwegian forests and moor-sweeps, with his legion of hell hounds. Some luckless woodcutter, on a still night, is returning through the pine-woods when suddenly his ear catches a distant wail; a moan rolls through the interlacing branches; nearer and nearer comes the sound. There is the winding of a long horn waxing louder and louder, the baying of hounds, the rattle of hoofs and paws on

the pine-tree tops.' This spectral chase goes by different names. In Thuringia and elsewhere it is 'Hakelnberg' or 'Hackelnbärend,' and the story goes that Hakelnberg was a knight passionately fond of the chase, who, on his death-bed, would not listen to the priest, but said, 'I care not for heaven, I care only for the chase.' Then 'hunt until the last day,' exclaimed the priest. And now, through storm and sunshine, he fleets, a faint barking or yelping in the air announcing his approach. Thorpe quotes a similar story as current in the Netherlands,[125] and in Denmark it occurs under various forms.[126] In Schleswig it is Duke Abel, who slew his brother in 1252. Tradition says that in an expedition against the Frieslanders, he sank into a deep morass as he was fording the Eyder, where, being encumbered with the weight of his armour, he was slain. His body was buried in the Cathedral, but his spirit found no rest. The canons dug up the corpse, and buried it in a morass near Gottorp, but in the neighbourhood of the place where he is buried all kinds of shrieks and strange sounds have been heard, and 'many persons worthy of credit affirm that they have heard sounds so resembling a huntsman's horn, that anyone would say that a hunter was hunting there. It is, indeed, the general rumour that Abel has appeared to many, black of aspect, riding on a small horse, and accompanied by three hounds, which appear to be burning like fire.'[127] In Sweden, when a noise like that of carriage and horses is heard at night, the people say, 'Odin is passing by,' and in Norway this spectral hunt is known as the 'Chase of the inhabitants of Asgarth.' In Danzig, the leader of the hounds is Dyterbjernat, *i.e.* Diedrick of Bern. Near Fontainebleau, Hugh Capet is supposed to ride, having, it is said, rushed over the palace with his

hounds before the assassination of Henry IV.; and at Blois, the hunt is called the ‘Chasse Macabee.’ In some parts of France the wild huntsman is known as Harlequin, or Henequin, and in the Franche Comté he is ‘Herod in pursuit of the Holy Innocents.’ This piece of folk-lore is widespread, and it may be added that in Normandy, the Pyrenees, and in Scotland, King Arthur has the reputation of making nightly rides.

Another form of spectre animal is the kirk-grim, which is believed to haunt many churches. Sometimes it is a dog, sometimes a pig, sometimes a horse, the haunting spectre being the spirit of an animal buried alive in the churchyard for the purpose of scaring away the sacrilegious. Swedish tradition tells how it was customary for the early founders of Christian churches to bury a lamb under the altar. It is said that when anyone enters a church out of service time he may chance to see a little lamb spring across the choir and vanish. This is the church lamb, and its appearance in the churchyard, especially to the grave-digger, is said to betoken the death of a child.[128] According to a Danish form of this superstition, the kirk-grim dwells either in the tower or wherever it can find a place of concealment, and is thought to protect the sacred building; and it is said that in the streets of Kroskjoberg, a grave-sow, or as it is also called, a ‘gray-sow,’ has frequently been seen. It is thought to be the apparition of a sow formerly buried alive, and to forebode death and calamity.

CHAPTER IX

PHANTOM LIGHTS

STORIES of mysterious lights suddenly illuminating the nocturnal darkness of unfrequented spots have long been current throughout the world. In the 'Odyssey,' when Athene was mystically present as Odysseus and Telemachus were moving the weapons out of the hall (xix. 21-50), Telemachus exclaims, 'Father, surely a great marvel is this I behold! Meseemeth that the walls of the hall, and the fair spaces between the pillars, and the beams of pine, and the columns that run aloft, are bright as it were with flaming fire. Verily some god is within of them that hold the wide heaven.' Odysseus answers, 'Lo, this is the wont of the gods that possess Olympus.' In Theocritus, when Hera sends the snakes to attack the infant Heracles, a mysterious flame shines forth. The same phenomenon occurs in the Sagas of Burut Njas, when Gunnar sings within his tomb. The brilliance of the light which attends the presence of the supernatural is indeed widely diffused, and, as Mr. Andrew Lang writes,[129] 'Philosophers may dispute whether any objective fact lies at the bottom of this belief, or whether a savage superstition has survived into Greek epic and idyll and into modern ghost stories.'

Although science has years ago explained many such phosphoric appearances as governed by certain atmospheric laws, superstitious fancy has not only attributed to them supernatural causes, but associated them with all kinds of weird and romantic tales. According to one popular notion, strange lights of this kind are the spirits of persons who, for some reason, cannot remain quiet. Thus a spectre known as the 'Lady and the Lantern,' has long been said to

haunt the beach at St. Ives, Cornwall, in stormy weather. The story goes that a lady and her child had been saved from a wreck, but the child was swept away and drowned, and she is supposed to be hunting for its body. Similar tales are told elsewhere, but the object of search is not always the same. A light, for instance, hovers about a stone on the Cornish coast, locally designated 'Madge Figg's Chair,' which is supposed to be the ghost of a wrecked lady whom Madge stripped of her jewels. In Scotland the appearance of a spectral 'lady of the golden casket' was attended by a phantom light, and it is also related how the ghost of a murdered woman is seen by her lover at sea, approaching in the shape of a bright light, which assumes the human form as it draws nearer. She finally calls him, and he springs into her arms, and disappears in a flash of fire.[130]

There is the popular legend of the 'Radiant Boy'—a strange boy with a shining face, who has been seen in certain Lincolnshire houses and elsewhere. This ghost was described to Mr. Baring-Gould[131] by a Yorkshire farmer, who, as he was riding one night to Thirsk, suddenly saw pass by him a 'radiant boy' on a white horse. To quote his own words, 'there was no sound of footfall as the boy drew nigh. He was first aware of the approach of the mysterious rider by seeing the shadow of himself and his horse flung before him on the high road. Thinking there might be a carriage with lamps, he was not alarmed till, by the shortening of the shadow, he knew that the light must be near him, and then he was surprised to hear no sound. He thereupon turned in his saddle, and at the same moment the "radiant boy" passed him. He was a child of about eleven, with a fresh bright face. "Had he any clothes on? and if so, what were they like?" I asked. But the old man could not tell. His

astonishment was so great that he took no notice of particulars. The boy rode on till he came to a gate which led into a field; he stooped as if to open the gate, rode through, and all was instantly dark.'

At the commencement of the present century the little village of Black Heddon, near Stamfordham, in Northumberland, was greatly disturbed by an apparition known as 'Silky,' from the nature of her dress. She suddenly appeared to benighted travellers, breaking forth upon them in dazzling splendour, in the darkest and most lonely parts of the road. This spirit exercised a marvellous power over the brute creation, and once, it is said, waylaid a waggon bringing coals to a farm near Black Heddon, and fixed the team upon a bridge, since called, after her, 'Silky's Brig.' Do what he could, the driver could not make the horses move a step, and there they would have stayed all night had not another farm servant come up with some mountain ash about him. It was generally supposed that Silky, who suddenly disappeared, was the troubled phantom of some person who had died miserable because she owned treasure, and was overtaken by death before she had disclosed its hiding-place.

An old barn situated near Birchen Tower, Hollinwood, which was noted for the apparition of Madame Beswick on dark and wintry nights, at times, it is said, appears to be on fire, a red glare of glowing heat being observable through the loopholes and crevices of the building. Sometimes the sight is so threatening that the neighbours will raise an alarm that the barn is in flames. But when the premises are searched, everything is in order, and nothing found wrong.[132] And a Welsh romance tells how, after Howel Sele slew his cousin Glendower, and buried him in 'a broad and blasted oak, scorched

by the lightning's vivid glare,'

Pale lights on Cader's rocks were seen,
And midnight voices heard to moan.

Such phantom lights are not confined to land, and most of the tales of spectre ships speak of their being seen by the affrighted crews. In the 'Salem Spectre Ship' we are told how

The night grew thick, but a phantom light
Around her path was shed.

They are generally dreaded as foreboding a catastrophe, and have given rise to a host of curious stories. A light is said to hover about in Sennen Cove, which is thought to be an ill-omened apparition; and a Welsh story speaks of a ghost, the 'Cyhyraeth,' that appears on the beach, in a light, with groanings and cries.[133] Flames are reported to issue from the Eider River, and from several lakes in Germany. Where ships have been wrecked, blue lights are supposed to faintly glimmer, occasionally accompanied by the spirits of wrecked or injured persons. A notable instance is told of Sable Island,[134] where, with the leaping flames, is seen the 'Lady of Copeland' wrecked and murdered by pirates from the Amelie transport. She has one finger missing on her hand.

Sometimes weird lights flickering in solitary places are thought to be the unhappy spirits of wicked persons who have no rest in the grave. Milton refers to this fancy in his 'Paradise Lost' (ix. 634):

A wandering fire,
Compact of unctuous vapour, which the night
Condenses, and the cold environs round,
Kindled through agitation to a flame,
Which oft, they say, some evil spirit attends,

Hovering and blazing with delusive light,
Misleads the amazed night wanderer from his way
To bogs and mires; and oft through pond or pool
There swallowed up and lost from succour far.

Hence they were doomed to wander backwards and forwards carrying a light. A tradition current in Normandy says that a pale light occasionally seen by travellers is the unquiet spirit of some unfortunate woman who, as a punishment for her intrigues with a minister of the Church, is doomed to this existence. There are various versions of this story, and one formerly current in this country tells how the hovering flame—the cause of terror to many—is the soul of a priest who has been condemned to expiate his vows of perpetual chastity by thus haunting the scenes of his disobedience. Brand, quoting from an old work on 'Lights that Lead People out of their Ways in the Night,' informs us that the lights which are seen in churchyards and Moorish places were represented by the Popish clergy to be 'souls come out of purgatory all in flame, to move the people to pray for their entire deliverance, by which they gulled them of much money to say mass for them, everyone thinking it might be the soul of his or her deceased relations.'

According to another explanation, it is believed on the Continent that the ghosts of those who in their lifetime were guilty of removing their neighbours' landmarks are fated to roam hither and thither, lantern in hand, 'sometimes impelled to replace the old boundary mark, then to move it again, constantly changing their course with their changing purpose.' A Swedish tradition adds that such a spirit may be heard saying in a harsh, hoarse voice, 'It is right! it is right! it is right!' But the next moment qualms of conscience and anguish seize him, and he then

exclaims, ‘It is wrong! it is wrong! it is wrong!’[135] It is also said that these lights are the souls of land-measurers, who, having acted dishonestly in their business, are trying to remedy the wrong measurements they made. A German legend tells how, at the partition of the land, there arose between the villages of Alversdorf and Röst, in South Ditmarschen, great disputes. One man gave fraudulent measurements, but after his death he wandered about as a fire sprite. A flame, the height of a man, was seen dancing about till the moor dried up. Whenever it flared up higher than usual, the people would cry out, ‘Dat is de Scheelvalgt’—that is the land-divider. There is a tale told of a certain land-measurer near Farsum, in the Netherlands, who had in his lifetime acted dishonestly when he had a piece of land to measure. He suffered himself ‘to be bribed by one or other, and then allotted to the party more than was just, for which offence he was condemned after death to wander as a burning man with a burning measuring-staff.’

Popular fancy, too, has long identified phantom lights as being the souls of unbaptized children. Because such souls cannot enter heaven, they make their abodes in forests, and in dark and lonely places, where they mourn over their hard lot. If at night they chance to meet anyone, they run up to him, and walk on before to show him the way to some water where they may be baptized. The mysterious lady, Frau Bertha, is ever attended by troops of unbaptized children, whom she takes with her when she joins the wild huntsman. One tradition relates how a Dutch parson, happening to return home later than usual, was confronted with no less than three of these fiery phenomena. Remembering them to be the souls of unbaptized children, he thoughtfully

stretched out his hand, and pronounced the words of baptism over them. But, much to his unexpected surprise, in the same instant hundreds of these moving lights made their appearance, which so frightened him that, forgetting his good intentions, he ran home as fast as he could. In Ireland unbaptized children have been represented as sitting blindfolded within fairy moats, the peasantry supposing such souls 'go into nought.' A somewhat similar idea may be found in Longfellow's 'Evangeline,' where we have introduced among the *contes* of an Arcadian village notary allusion to

> The white Létiche, the ghost of a child unchristened,
> Died, and was doomed to haunt unseen the chambers of children.

Closely allied with the notion of phantom lights are the strange phosphoric appearances said occasionally to be seen about the dying. In Russia, the soul under certain circumstances is believed to assume the form of a flame, and such a ghostly apparition cannot be banished till the necessary prayers have been offered up.[136] According to a Sussex death-omen, lights of a circular form seen in the air are significant, and it is supposed that the death of sick persons is shown by the prognostic of 'shell-fire.' This is a sort of lambent flame, which seems to rise from the bodies of those who are ill, and to envelope the bed. On one occasion, considerable alarm was created in a Sussex village by a pale light being observed to move over the bed of a sick person, and after flickering for some time in different parts of the room, to vanish through the window. But the difficulty was eventually explained, for the light was found to proceed from a luminous insect—the small glow-worm.[137] Marsh[138] relates

how a pale moonlight-coloured glimmer was once seen playing round the head of a dying girl about an hour and a half before her last breath. The light proceeded from her head, and was faint and tremulous like the reflection of summer lightning, which at first those watching her mistook it to be. Another case, reported by a medical man in Ireland, was that of a consumptive patient, in whose cabin strange lights had been seen, filling the neighbourhood with alarm. To quote a further instance, from the mouth of a patient in a London hospital, some time since, the nurses observed issuing a pale bluish flame, and soon after the man died. The frightened nurses were at a loss to account for this unusual sight, but a scientific explanation of the phenomenon ascribed it to phosphoretted hydrogen, a result of incipient decomposition.[139]

Dante Rossetti, in his 'Blessed Damozel,' when he describes her as looking down from heaven towards the earth that 'spins like a fretful image,' whence she awaits the coming of her lover, depicts the souls mounting up to God as passing by her 'like thin flames.'

Another form of this superstitious fancy is the corpse-candle, or 'tomb-fire,' which is invariably a death-warning. It sometimes appears 'as a stately flambeau, stalking along unsupported, burning with a ghastly blue flame. Sometimes it is a plain tallow "dip" in the hand of a ghost; and when the ghost is seen distinctly, it is recognised as that of some person still living, who will now soon die[140]—in fact, a wraith.' Occasionally the light issues from the person's mouth, or nostrils. The size of the candle indicates the age of the person who is about to die, being large when it is a full-grown person whose death is foretold, small when it is a child, still

smaller when an infant. When two candles together are seen, one of which is large and the other small, it is a mother and child who are to die. When the flame is white the doomed person is a woman, when red a man. A Carmarthenshire tradition relates how one evening, when the coach which runs between Llandilo and Carmarthen was passing by Golden Grove, the property of the Earl of Cawdor, three corpse-candles were observed on the surface of the water gliding down the stream which runs near the road. A few days afterwards, just as many men were drowned there. Such a light, too, has long been thought to hover near the grave of the drowned, reminding us of Moore's lines—

Where lights, like charnel meteors, burned the distant
wave,
Bluely as o'er some seaman's grave,

and stories of such uncanny appearances have been told of nearly every village churchyard.

It should be added that, according to a popular idea, the presence of ghosts was announced, in bygone years, by an alteration in the tint of the lights which happened to be burning—an item of folk-lore alluded to in 'Richard III.' (Act v. sc. 3), where the tyrant exclaims as he awakens—

The lights burn blue. It is now dead midnight,
Cold fearful drops stand on my trembling flesh.
.....
Methought the souls of all that I had murder'd
Came to my tent.

So in 'Julius Cæsar,' (Act iv. sc. 3), Brutus, on seeing the ghost of Cæsar, exclaims:

How ill this taper burns! Ha! Who comes here?

Phantom lights have also been associated with buildings, as in the case of the ancient chapel of Roslin, founded in the year 1446 by William St. Clair, Prince of Orkney. It is believed that whenever any of the founder's descendants are about to depart this life, the chapel appears to be on fire, a weird and terrible occurrence graphically portrayed by Harold's song in 'The Lay of the Last Minstrel':

O'er Roslin all that dreary night,
A wondrous blaze was seen to gleam;
'Twas broader than the watch-fire light,
And redder than the bright moonbeam.

It glared on Roslin's castled rock,
It ruddied all the copse-wood glen;
'Twas seen from Dryden's groves of oak,
And seen from cavern'd Hawthornden.

Seem'd all on fire that chapel proud,
Where Roslin's chiefs uncoffin'd lie;
Each Baron, for a sable shroud,
Sheathed in his iron panoply.

Seem'd all on fire, within, around,
Deep sacristy and altar's pale;
Shone every pillar foliage-bound,
And glimmer'd all the dead men's mail.

Blazed battlement and pinnet high,
Blazed every rose-carved buttress fair;
So still they blaze when fate is nigh,
The lordly line of Hugh St. Clair.

But notwithstanding the fact that the last 'Roslin,' as he was called, died in 1778, and the estates passed into the possession of the Erskines, Earls of Rosslyn, the old tradition has not yet been extinguished.[141] Sir Walter Scott also tells us that the death of the head of a Highland family is sometimes announced

by a chain of lights, of different colours, called Dr'eug, or death of the Druid. The direction which it takes is supposed to mark the place of the funeral. [142] A correspondent of 'Notes and Queries' gives a curious account of a house at Taunton which possessed 'a luminous chamber,' for, as common report said, 'the room had a light of its own.' As an eye-witness observed, 'A central window was generally illuminated.' All the other windows were dark, but from this was a wan, dreary light visible; and as the owners had deserted the place, and it had no occupant, the lighted window became a puzzle.

With the North American tribes one form of spiritual manifestation is fire; and among the Hurons, a female spirit, who was supposed to cause much of their sickness, appeared like a flame of fire. Of the New England Indians it is related that 'they have a remarkable observation of a flame that appears before the death of an Indian, upon their wigwams, in the dead of night. Whenever this appears, there will be a death.'[143] The Eskimos believe that the Inue, or powerful spirits, 'generally have the appearance of a fire or bright light, and to see them is very dangerous, particularly as foreshadowing the death of a relation.'[144]

CHAPTER X

THE HEADLESS GHOST

LOCALITIES where any fatal accident has happened, or murder been committed, are frequently supposed to be haunted by that uncanny apparition known as

‘the headless ghost.’ Many curious tales are still told by the peasantry of this mysterious spectre, whose weird movements have long been the subject of comment. Sir Walter Scott, it may be remembered, speaking of the Irish dullahan, writes: ‘It puts me in mind of a spectre at Drumlanrick Castle, of no less a person than the Duchess of Queensberry—“Fair Kitty, blooming, young, and gay”—who, instead of setting fire to the world in mama’s chariot, amuses herself with wheeling her own head in a wheelbarrow through the great gallery.’

But it has often puzzled the folk-lorist why ghosts should assume this form, although the idea is by no means a modern one, for, as Dr. Tylor has pointed out,[145] a people of wide celebrity are Pliny’s Blemmyæ, said ‘to be headless, and accordingly to have their mouths and eyes in their breasts—creatures over whom Prester John reigned in Asia, and who dwelt far and wide in South America.’ Stories, too, like that of St. Denis, who is said to have walked from Paris, *sans tête*, to the place which bears his name, show that the living, as well as the dead, occasionally managed to do without their heads—a strange peculiarity which Kornmann, in his ‘De Miraculis Vivorum,’ would attempt to account for philosophically. Princess Marie Lichtenstein, in her ‘History of Holland House,’ tells us that one room of this splendid old mansion is believed to be haunted by Lord Holland, the first of his name, and the chief builder of Holland House. To quote her words, ‘The gilt room is said to be tenanted by the solitary ghost of its just lord, who, according to tradition, issues forth at midnight from behind a secret door, and walks slowly through the scenes of former triumphs with his head in his hand. To add to this mystery, there is a tale of three spots of blood on one side of

the recess whence he issues—three spots which can never be effaced.' Such a strange act, on the part of the dead, is generally regarded as a very bad omen. The time of the headless ghost's appearance is always midnight, and in Crofton Croker's 'Fairy Legends of Ireland' it is thus described:

'Tis midnight; how gloomy and dark!
By Jupiter, there's not a star!
'Tis fearful! 'tis awful! and hark!
What sound is that comes from afar?

A coach! but the coach has no head;
And the horses are headless as it,
Of the driver the same may be said,
And the passengers inside who sit.

According to the popular opinion, there is no authority to prove that headless people are unable to speak; on the contrary, a variation of the story of 'The Golden Mountain,' given in a note to the 'Kindermärchen,' relates how a servant without a head informed the fisherman (who was to achieve the adventure) of the enchantment of the king's daughter, and of the mode of liberating her. There is the Belludo, a Spanish ghost mentioned by Washington Irving in his 'Tales of the Alhambra.' It issues forth in the dead of night, and scours the avenues of the Alhambra, and the streets of Granada, in the shape of a headless horse, pursued by six hounds, with terrible yellings and howlings. It is said to be the spirit of a Moorish king, who killed his six sons, who, in revenge, hunt him in the shape of hounds at night-time.

In some cases, as it has been humorously observed, the headless ghosts of well-known persons have continued to set up their carriage after death. Thus, for years past, it has been firmly believed that Lady

Anne Boleyn rides down the avenue of Blickling Park once a year, with her bloody head in her lap, sitting in a hearse-like coach drawn by four headless horses, and attended by coachmen and attendants, who have, out of compliment to their mistress, also left their heads behind them. Nor, if tradition is to be believed, is her father more at rest than she, for Sir Thomas Boleyn is said to be obliged to cross forty bridges to avoid the torments of the furies. Like his daughter, he is reported to drive about in a coach and four with headless horses, carrying his head under his arm.[146] Young Lord Dacre, who is said to have been murdered at Thetford, through the contrivance of his guardian, Sir Richard Fulmerston, in 1569, by the falling of a wooden horse, purposely rendered insecure, used to prance up and down on the ghost of a headless rocking-horse.

Another romantic story is told[147] of a large field at Great Melton, divided from the Yare by a plantation, along which the old Norwich road ran. ‘Close to the edge of where the road is said to have run is a deep pit or hole of water, locally reputed to be fathomless. Every night at midnight, and every day at noon, a carriage drawn by four horses, driven by headless coachmen and footmen, and containing four headless ladies in white, rises silently and dripping wet from the pool, flits stately and silently round the field, and sinks as silently into the pool again.’ The story goes that long, long ago, a bridal party driving along the old Norwich Road were accidentally upset into the deep hole, and were never seen again. Strangely enough the same story is told of fields near Bury St. Edmunds, and at Leigh, Dorsetshire.[148] Another Norfolk story, amusingly told by the late Cuthbert Bede,[149] informs us how, ‘on the anniversary of the death of the gentleman

whose spectre he is supposed to be, his ghostship drives up to his old family mansion. He drives through the wall, carriage and horses and all, and is not seen again for a twelvemonth. He leaves, however, the traces of his visit behind him; for, in the morning, the stones of the wall through which he had ridden over-night are found to be loosened and fallen; and though the wall is constantly repaired, yet the stones are as constantly loosened.' In the little village of Acton, Suffolk, it was currently reported not many years ago that on certain occasions the park gates were wont to fly open at midnight 'withouten hands,' and that a carriage drawn by four spectral horses, and accompanied by headless grooms and outriders, proceeded with great rapidity from the park to a spot called 'the nursery corner,' a spot where tradition affirms a very bloody engagement took place in olden times, when the Romans were governors of England.[150] A similar tale is related of Caistor Castle, the seat of the Falstofs, where the headless apparition drives round the courtyard, and carries away some unearthly visitors.

At Beverley, in Yorkshire, the headless ghost of Sir Joceline Percy drives four headless horses at night, above its streets, passing over a certain house which was said to contain a chest with one hundred nails in it, one of which dropped out every year. The reason assigned for this nocturnal disturbance is attributed to the fact that Sir Joceline once rode on horseback into Beverley Minster. It has long been considered dangerous to meet such spectral teams, for fear of being carried off by them, so violent and threatening are their movements. In 'Rambles in Northumberland' we are told how, 'when the death-hearse, drawn by headless horses, and driven by a

headless driver, is seen about midnight proceeding rapidly, but without noise, towards the churchyard, the death of some considerable personage in the parish is sure to happen at no distant period.'

Night after night, too, when it is sufficiently dark, the headless coach whirls along the rough approach to Langley Hall, near Durham, drawn by black and fiery steeds; and many years ago a headless boggart was supposed to haunt Preston streets and neighbouring lanes. Its presence was often accompanied by the rattling of chains. It presently changed its form, and whether it appeared as a woman or a black dog, it was always headless. The story went that this uncanny apparition was at length 'laid' by some magical or religious ceremony in Walton churchyard.[151]

Many spots where suicides have been buried are supposed to be haunted by headless ghosts attired in white grave-clothes. Some few years ago, as a peasant was passing in a waggon with three horses a 'four-lane-end' in Lyneal Lane, Ellesmere, Shropshire, where a man was buried with a forked stake run through the body to keep it down, a woman was seen without a head. The horses took fright, and started off, overturning the waggon, and pitching the man into the Drumby Hole, where the waggon and shaft-horse fell upon him. The other horses broke loose and galloped home, where they arrived covered with foam, and on a search being made, the dead body of the waggoner was found in the hole.[152] Exactly twelve months afterwards, his son, it is said, was killed by the same horses on the same spot. As Miss Jackson points out, the headless ghost in this story is of a different sex from the person whose death is supposed to cause its restlessness. The same, she adds, is the case 'with the ghost of the Mary Way, a

now almost forgotten spectre of more than a hundred years ago. The figure of a woman in white was supposed to haunt the spot where a murderer was buried—more probably a suicide—at the cross roads about two miles from Wenlock, on the Bridgnorth road, which is known as the "Mary Way," no doubt from some chapel, or processional route, in honour of the Virgin.' Another story is told of the Baschurch neighbourhood, where the ghost of a man who hanged himself at Nesscliff is to be seen 'riding about in his trap at night without a head.'

A tragic case is recorded by Crofton Croker, who tells how, many years ago, a clergyman belonging to St. Catharine's Church, Dublin, resided at the old Castle of Donore, in the vicinity of that city. From melancholy, or some other cause, he put an end to his existence by hanging himself out of a window near the top of the castle. After his death, a coach, sometimes driven by a coachman without a head, and occasionally drawn by headless horses, was observed at night driving furiously by Roper's Rest.

Referring to spots where murders have taken place, a Shropshire tradition informs us how, at a certain house at Hampton's Wood, near Ellesmere, six illegitimate children were murdered by their parents, and buried in a garden. But, soon after this unnatural event, a ghost in the form of a man, sometimes headless, at other times not so, haunted the stables, rode the horses to water, and talked to the waggoner. Once it appeared to a young lady who was passing on horseback, and rode before her on her horse. Eventually, after much difficulty, this troublesome ghost was laid, but 'the poor minister was so exhausted by the task that he died.'[153]

There is a haunted room at Walton Abbey frequented by a spectre known as 'The Headless Nun

of Walton.' The popular belief is that this is the unquiet spirit of a transgressing nun of the twelfth century, but some affirm it to be that of a lady brutally beheaded in the seventeenth century.[154] Another instance is that of Calverley Hall, in the same county. In 'The Yorkshireman' for January 5, 1884, the particulars of this strange apparition are given, from which it appears that Walter Calverley, on April 23, 1604, went into a fit of insane frenzy of jealousy, or pretended to do so. Money-lenders were pressing him hard, and he had become desperate. Rushing madly into the house, he plunged a dagger into one and then into another of his children, and then tried to take the life of their mother, a crime for which he was pressed to death at York Castle. But his spirit could not rest, and he was often seen galloping about the district at night on a headless horse, being generally accompanied by a number of followers similarly mounted, who attempted to run down any poor benighted folks whom they chanced to meet. These spectral horsemen nearly always disappeared in a cave in the wood, but this cave has now been quarried away.[155]

It would seem that in years gone by one of the punishments assigned to evil doers guilty of a lesser crime than that of murder, was their ceaselessly frequenting those very spots where in their lifetime they had committed their wicked acts, carrying their heads under their arms. Numerous tales of this kind have been long current on the Continent, and at the present day are told by the simple-minded peasantry of many a German village with the most implicit faith. It is much the same in this country, and Mr. Henderson[156] has given several amusing anecdotes. At Dalton, near Thirsk, there was an old barn, said to be haunted by a headless woman. One night a tramp

went into it to sleep; at midnight he was awakened by a light, and, sitting up, he saw a woman coming towards him from the end of the barn, holding her head in her hands like a lantern, with light streaming out of the eyes, nostrils, and mouth. Hunt, too, in his 'Popular Romances,' notices this superstition as existing in the West of England; and Mrs. Latham, in her 'Sussex Superstitions,' tells us how spirits are reported to walk about without their heads; others carry them under their arms; and one haunting a dark lane is said to have 'a ball of fire upon its shoulders in lieu of the natural finial.' At Haddington, Worcestershire, there is an avenue of trees locally known as 'Lady Winter's Walk,' where, it is said, the lady of Thomas Winter, who was obliged to conceal himself on account of his share in the Gunpowder Plot, was in the habit of awaiting her husband's further visits, and here the headless spectre of her ladyship used to be seen occasionally pacing up and down beneath the sombre shade of the aged trees.

Lady Wilde[157] has given a laughable specimen of the headless ghost as believed in by the Irish peasantry. One Denis Molony, a cow-jobber, was on his way to the great fair at Navan when he was overtaken by night. He laid down under a hedge, but 'at that moment a loud moaning and screaming came to his ear, and a woman rushed past him all in white, as if a winding sheet were round her, and her cries of despair were terrible to hear. Then, after her, a great black coach came thundering along the road, drawn by two black horses. But when Denis looked close at them he saw that the horses had no heads, and the coachman had no head; and out sprang two men from the coach, and they had no heads either; and they seized the woman and carried her by force into

the carriage and drove off.'

It appears that the woman Denis saw was 'an evil liver and a wicked sinner, and no doubt the devils were carrying her off from the churchyard, for she had been buried that morning. To make sure, they went next morning to the churchyard to examine the grave, and there, sure enough, was the coffin, but it was open, and not a trace of the dead woman was to be seen. So they knew that an evil fate had come on her, and that her soul was gone to eternal tortures.'[158]

Connected also with the legend of the headless ghost is the old belief that persons prior to their death occasionally appear to their friends without their heads. Dr. Ferrier, in his 'Theory of Apparitions,' tells of an old Northern chieftain who informed a relative of his 'that the door of the room in which they and some ladies were sitting had appeared to open, and that a little woman without a head had entered the room; and that the apparition indicated the sudden death of some person of his acquaintance.' The 'Glasgow Chronicle' (January, 1826) records how, on the occasion of some silk-weavers being out of work, mourning-coaches drawn by headless horses were seen about the town; and some years ago a very unpleasant kind of headless ghost used to drive every Saturday night through the town of Doneraile, Ireland, and to stop at the doors of different houses, when, if anyone were so foolhardy as to open the door, a basin of blood was instantly flung in his face.

CHAPTER XI

PHANTOM BUTTERFLIES

DEPARTED souls, according to a Cornish piece of folk-lore, are occasionally said to take the form of moths, and in Yorkshire, writes a correspondent of 'Notes and Queries,' 'the country people used, and perhaps do still, call night-flying white moths, especially the *Hepialus humuli*, which feeds while in the grub state on the roots of docks and other coarse plants, "souls."' By the Slavonians the butterfly seems to have been universally accepted as an emblem of the soul. Mr. Ralston, in his 'Songs of the Russian People' (p. 117), says that in the Government of Yaroslaw one of its names is *dushichka*, a caressing diminutive of *dusha*, the soul. In that of Kherson it is believed that if the usual alms are not distributed at a funeral, the dead man's soul will reveal itself to its relatives in the form of a moth flying about the flame of a candle. The day after receiving such a warning visit they call together the poor and distribute food among them. In Bohemia there is a popular tradition that if the first butterfly a man sees in the spring-time is a white one, he is destined to die within the year. According to a Servian belief, the soul of a witch often leaves her body while she is asleep, and flies abroad in the shape of a butterfly. If, during its absence, her body be turned round, so that her feet are placed where her head was before, the soul will not be able to find her mouth, and so will be shut out from her body. Thereupon the witch will die. The Bulgarians believe that at death the soul assumes the form of a butterfly, and flits about on the nearest tree till the funeral is over. The Karens of Burma 'will run about pretending to catch a sick man's wandering soul, or,

as they say with the ancient Greeks, his “butterfly,” and at last drop it down upon his head.’[159] The idea is an old one, and, as Gubernatis remarks in his ‘Zoological Mythology’ (ii. 213), ‘the butterfly was both a phallic symbol and a funereal one, with promises of resurrection and transformation; the souls of the departed were represented in the forms of butterflies carried towards Elysium by the dolphin.’ According to another belief, the soul was supposed to take the form of a bee, an old tradition telling us that ‘the bees alone of all animals descended from Paradise.’ In the Engadine, in Switzerland, it is believed that the souls of men emigrate from the world and return to it in the forms of bees. In this district bees are considered messengers of death. When someone dies, the bee is invoked as follows, ‘almost as if requesting the soul of the departed,’ says De Gubernatis, ‘to watch for ever over the living’:[160]

Bienchen, unser Herr ist todt,
Verlass mich nicht in meiner Noth.

In Russia gnats and flies are often looked upon as equally spiritual creatures. ‘In Little Russia,’ says Mr. Ralston,[161] ‘the old women of a family will often, after returning from a funeral, sit up all night watching a dish in which water and honey in it have been placed, in the belief that the spirit of their dead relative will come in the form of a fly, and sip the proffered liquid.’

Among North American tribes we are told how the Ojibways believe that innumerable spirits appear in the varied forms of insect life,[162] while some tribes supposed that ‘most souls went to a common resort near their living habitat, but returned in the daytime in the shape of flies in order to get something to

eat.’[163]

CHAPTER XII

RAISING GHOSTS

THE trade of raising spirits has probably existed at all times in which superstition has been sufficiently prevalent to make such a practice a source of power or of profit, and nations—the most polished as well as the most barbarous—have admitted the claims of persons who professed to be able to control spirits. One of the most graphic illustrations of an incantation for evoking spirits is in connection with the appearance of the shade of Darius in the ‘Persæ’ of Æschylus, which is very nobly given. After receiving news of the great defeat of her son Xerxes at Salamis, Atossa has prepared the requisite offerings to the dead—milk from a white cow, honey, water from a pure fountain, unadulterated wine, olives, and flowers—and she instructs the ancient counsellors of the deceased king to evoke his shade. They who form the tragic chorus commence an incantation from which we quote the following:

Royal lady, Persia’s pride,
Thine offerings in earth’s chamber hide;
We, meanwhile, with hymns will sue
The powers who guard hell’s shadowy crew,
Till they to our wish incline.
Gods below, ye choir divine,
Earth, Hermes, and thou King of night,
Send his spirit forth to light!
If he knows worse ills impending,

He alone can teach their ending.
&c., &c., &c.

The incantation is successful, but Darius assures his friends that exit from below is far from easy, and that the subterranean gods are far more willing to take than to let go. Indeed, the raising of spirits was a trick of magic much in use in ancient times, and the scene that took place at Endor when Saul had recourse to a professor of the art is familiar to all. The Egyptian magicians, Simon Magus, and Elymas the sorcerer, all, it is said, exhibited such corporeal deceptions. Tertullian, in his tract 'De Anima,' inquires whether a departed soul, either at his own will, or in obedience to the command of another, can return from the 'Inferi'? After discussing the subject, he sums up thus: 'If certain souls have been recalled into their bodies by the power of God, as manifest proof of His prerogative, that is no argument that a similar power should be conferred on audacious magicians, fallacious dreamers, and licentious poets.'

Among certain Australian tribes the necromants are called Birraark. It is said that a Birraark was supposed to be initiated by the 'mrarts' (ghosts) when they met him wandering in the bush. It was from the ghosts that he obtained replies to questions concerning events passing at a distance, or yet to happen, which might be of interest or moment to his tribe. An account of a spiritual séance in the bush is given in 'Kamilaroi and Kurnai' (p. 254): 'The fires were let down; the Birraark uttered the cry "Coo-ee" at intervals. At length a distant reply was heard, and shortly afterwards the sound as of persons jumping on the ground in succession. A voice was then heard in the gloom asking in a strange intonation, "What is wanted?" At the termination of the séance, the spirit voice said, "We are going." Finally, the Birraark was

found in the top of an almost inaccessible tree, apparently asleep.'

In Japan, ghosts can be raised in various ways. One mode is to 'put into an andon' (a paper lantern in a frame) 'a hundred rushlights, and repeat an incantation of a hundred lines. One of these rushlights is taken out at the end of each line, and the would-be ghost-seer then goes out in the dark with one light still burning, and blows it out, when the ghost ought to appear. Girls who have lost their lovers by death often try that sorcery.'[164]

Shakespeare has several allusions to the popular belief of certain persons being able to exorcise, or raise, spirits, and he represents Ligarius, in 'Julius Cæsar' (iv. 2) as saying:

> Soul of Rome!
> Brave son, derived from honourable loins!
> Thou, like an exorcist, has conjured up
> My mortified spirit. Now bid me run,
> And I will strive with things impossible;
> Yea, get the better of them.

In days gone by, it would seem, numerous formalities were observed by the person whose object was to 'constrain' some spirit to appear before him. It was necessary to fix upon a spot proper for such a purpose, 'which had to be either in a subterranean vault hung round with black, and lighted by a magical torch, or else in the centre of some thick wood or desert, or upon some extensive unfrequented plain, where several roads met, or amidst the ruins of ancient castles, abbeys, monasteries, &c., or amongst the rocks on the sea-shore, in some private detached churchyard, or any other solemn melancholy place, between the hours of twelve and one in the morning, either when the

moon shone very bright, or else when the elements were disturbed with storms of thunder, lightning, wind, and rain, for in these places, times, and seasons it was contended that spirits could with less difficulty manifest themselves to mortal eyes, and continue visible with the least pain in this elemental external world.'[165] Great importance was attached to the magic circle in the invocation of spirits, the mode of procedure being thus: 'A piece of ground was usually chosen, nine feet square, at the full extent of which parallel lines were drawn, one within the other, having sundry crosses and triangles described between them, close to which was formed the first or outer circle; then, about half a foot within the same, a second circle was described, and within that another square correspondent to the first, the centre of which was the spot where the master and associate were to be placed. The vacancies formed by the various lines and angles of the figure were filled up by the holy names of God, having crosses and triangles described between them.... The reason assigned for the use of circles was, that so much ground being blessed and consecrated by such holy words and ceremonies as they made use of in forming it, had a secret force to expel all evil spirits from the bounds thereof, and being sprinkled with pure sanctified water, the ground was purified from all uncleanness; besides, the holy names of God being written over every part of it, its force became so powerful that no evil spirits had ability to break through it, or to get at the magician and his companion, by reason of the antipathy in nature they bore to these sacred names. And the reason given for the triangles was, that if the spirit was not easily brought to speak the truth, they might by the exorcist be conjured to enter the same, where, by

virtue of the names of the essence and divinity of God, they could speak nothing but what was true and right.'[166] We are further informed, that if the ghost of a deceased person was to be raised, the grave had to be resorted to at midnight, when a special form of conjuration was deemed necessary; and there was another for 'any corpse that hath hanged, drowned, or otherwise made away with itself.' And in this case, it is added, 'the conjurations are performed over the body, which will at last arise, and, standing upright, answer with a faint and hollow voice the questions that are put to it.'

The mode of procedure as practised in Scotland was thus. The haunted room was made ready. He 'who was to do the daring deed, about nightfall entered the room, bearing with him a table, a chair, a candle, a compass, a crucifix if one could be got, and a Bible. With the compass he cast a circle on the middle of the floor, large enough to hold the chair and the table. He placed within the circle the chair and the table, and on the table he laid the Bible and the crucifix beside the lighted candle. If he had not a crucifix, then he drew the figure of a cross on the floor within the circle. When all this was done, he seated himself on the chair, opened the Bible, and waited for the coming of the spirit. Exactly at midnight the spirit came. Sometimes the door opened slowly, and there glided in noiselessly a lady sheeted in white, with a face of woe, and told her story to the man on his asking her in the name of God what she wanted. What she wanted was done in the morning, and the spirit rested ever after. Sometimes the spirit rose from the floor, and sometimes came forth from the wall. One there was who burst into the room with a strong bound, danced wildly round the circle, and flourished a long

whip round the man's head, but never dared to step within the circle. During a pause in his frantic dance he was asked, in God's name, what he wanted. He ceased his dance and told his wishes. His wishes were carried out, and the spirit was in peace.'[167]

In Wraxall's 'Memoirs of the Courts of Berlin, Dresden, Warsaw, and Vienna'[168] there is an amusing account of the raising of the ghost of the Chevalier de Saxe. Reports had been circulated that at his palace at Dresden there was secreted a large sum of money, and it was urged that if his spirit could be compelled to appear, that interesting secret might be extorted from him. Curiosity, combined with avarice, accordingly prompted his principal heir, Prince Charles, to try the experiment, and on the appointed night, Schrepfer was the operator in raising the apparition. He commenced his proceedings by retiring into a corner of the gallery, where, kneeling down with many mysterious ceremonies, he invoked the spirit to appear. At length a loud clatter was heard at all the windows on the outside, resembling more the effect produced by a number of wet fingers drawn over the edge of glasses than anything else to which it could well be compared. This sound announced the arrival of the good spirits, and was shortly followed by a yell of a frightful and unusual nature, which indicated the presence of malignant spirits. Schrepfer continued his invocations, when 'the door suddenly opened with violence, and something that resembled a black ball or globe rolled into the room. It was enveloped in smoke or cloud, in the midst of which appeared a human face, like the countenance of the Chevalier de Saxe, from which issued a loud and angry voice, exclaiming in German, "Carl, was wollte du mit mich?"—Charles, what would thou do with me?' By

reiterated exorcisms Schrepfer finally dismissed the apparition, and the terrified spectators dispersed, fully convinced of his magical powers.[169] Roscoe has given an interesting account[170] of Benvenuto Cellini's experiences of raising spirits by incantation, but the Sicilian priest who acquainted him with the mysteries of his art of necromancy, as it has been remarked, had far greater knowledge of 'chemistry and pharmacy than he required for his thurible or incense pot.' His accomplices, of course, could see and report sights of any wonderful kind. Those who penetrate into 'magic circles may expect startling sights, overpowering smells, strange sounds, and even demoniacal dreams.' Instances, it is stated, are recorded of many who perished by raising up spirits, particularly 'Chiancungi,' the famous Egyptian fortune-teller, who was so famous in England in the seventeenth century. He undertook for a wager to raise up the spirit 'Bokim,' and having described the circle, he seated his sister Napula by him as his associate. 'After frequently repeating the form of exorcism, and calling upon the spirit to appear, and nothing as yet answering his demand, they grew impatient of the business, and quitted the circle; but it cost them their lives, for they were instantaneously seized and crushed to death by that infernal spirit, who happened not to be sufficiently constrained till that moment to manifest himself to human eyes.'

Among the many curious stories told of ghost-raising may be mentioned a somewhat whimsical one related by a correspondent of a Bradford paper, who tells how, in his youthful days, he assisted in an attempt to raise the ghost of the wicked old squire of Calverley Hall. 'About a dozen scholars,' to quote his words, 'used to assemble close to the venerable church of Calverley, and then put their hats and caps

on the ground, in a pyramidal form. Then taking hold of each other's hands, they formed a "magic circle," holding firmly together, and making use of an old refrain:

Old Calverley, old Calverley, I have thee by the ears,
I'll cut thee into collops, unless thee appears.

Whilst this incantation was going on, crumbs of bread mixed with pins were strewn on the ground, the lads meanwhile tramping round in the circle with a heavy tread. Some of the more venturesome boys had to go round to each of the church doors, and whistle aloud through the keyholes, repeating the magic couplet which their comrades in the circle were chanting. But, at this critical point, a pale and ghostly figure was expected to appear, and, on one occasion, some kind of apparition is said to have issued forth from the church, the lads in their terrified haste making their escape as quickly as they could.'

In the search after the philosopher's stone, and elixir of life, the most revolting ingredients were turned to use, such as blood and dead men's bones, but occasionally with unexpected results. On one occasion, for instance, three alchemists obtained some earth mould from St. Innocent's Church, Paris, thinking that from it might be extracted the philosopher's stone. But, after subjecting it to distillation, they perceived in their receivers forms of men produced which caused them to desist from their labours. The Paris Institute took up the matter, and the result of their inquiries appears in the 'Miscellanea Curiosa.' An abstract of one of these French documents was published by Dr. Ferrier in the 'Manchester Philosophical Transactions,' which we quote below:

‘A malefactor was executed, of whose body a grave physician got possession for the purpose of dissection. After disposing of the other parts of the body, he ordered his assistant to pulverise a part of the cranium, which was a remedy at that time administered in dispensaries. The powder was left in a paper on the table in the museum, where the assistant slept. About midnight he was awakened by a noise in the room, which obliged him to rise immediately. The noise continued about the table without any visible agent, and at length he traced it to the powder, in the midst of which he now beheld, to his unspeakable dismay, a small head, with large eyes, staring at him. Presently two branches appeared, which formed into arms and hands. Next the ribs became visible, which were soon clothed with muscles and integuments. Next the lower extremities sprouted out, and, when they appeared perfect, the puppet (for his size was small) reared himself on his feet; instantly his clothes came upon him, and he appeared in the very cloak he wore at his execution. The affrighted spectator, who stood hitherto mumbling his prayers with great application, was simply awe-struck; but still greater was his bewilderment when the apparition planted himself in his way, and after divers fierce looks and threatening gestures, opened the door and went out. No doubt the powder was missing next day.’

A similar strange experience is recorded by Dr. Webster in his book on witchcraft, on the authority of Dr. Flud, the facts of which were thus:

‘A certain chemical operator, named La Pierre, received blood from the hands of a certain bishop to operate upon, which he, setting to work upon the Saturday, did continue it for a week, with divers degrees of fire. But about midnight the Friday

following, this artificer, lying in a chamber next to his laboratory, betwixt sleeping and waking, heard a horrible noise like unto the lowing of kine or the roaring of a lion; and continuing quiet, after the ceasing of the sound in the laboratory, the moon being at the full, and by shining enlightening the chamber, suddenly, betwixt himself and the window he saw a thick little cloud condensed into an oval form, which after, by little and little, did seem completely to put on the shape of a man, and making another and sharp clamour did suddenly vanish. And not only some noble persons in the next chambers, but also the host and his wife, lying in a lower room of the house, and also the neighbours dwelling on the opposite side of the street, did distinctly hear the bellowing as well as the voice, and some of them were awakened with the vehemence thereof. But the artificer said that in this he found solace, because the bishop from whom he had it did admonish him that if any of them from whom the blood was extracted should die in the time of its putrefaction, his spirit was wont often to appear to the sight of the artificer with perturbation. Also forthwith, upon the Saturday following, he took the retort from the furnace and broke it with the slight stroke of a little key, and there, in the remaining blood, found the perfect representation of a human head, agreeable in face, eyes, nostrils, mouth, and hairs, that were somewhat thin and of a golden colour.' Webster adds: 'There were many ocular witnesses, as the noble person Lord of Bourdalone, the chief secretary to the Duke of Guise, and he (Flud) had this relation from the Lord of Menanton, living in that house at the same time, from a certain doctor of physic, from the owner of the house, and many others.'

In recent years the so-called spiritualism has

attracted much attention, and ‘as of old, men live now in habitual intercourse with the spirits of the dead.... The spirits of the living as well as of the dead, the souls of Strauss and Carl Vogt as well as of Augustine and Jerome, are summoned by mediums to distant spirit-circles.’[171] But for further information on this subject reports of the Psychical Research Society should be consulted.[172]

CHAPTER XIII

GHOST LAYING

IN his amusing account of the art of ‘laying’ ghosts, published in the last century, Grose tells us ‘a ghost may be laid for any term less than a hundred years, and in any place or body, full or empty; as a solid oak, the pommel of a sword, a barrel of beer, if a yeoman or simple gentleman; or a pipe of wine, if an esquire or a justice.’ But this, as Dr. Tylor writes,[173] ‘is one of the many good instances of articles of serious savage belief surviving as jests among civilised men.’ However whimsical the idea of laying a ghost may seem to the prosaic mind, an inquiry into the history of human belief shows how widely this expedient has been resorted to in times past, although St. Chrysostom is said to have insulted some African conjurors of old with this quaint and humiliating observation: ‘Miserable and woful creatures that we are, we cannot so much as expel fleas, much less devils.’

It was not so very long ago that, at the trial of Laurie for the murder of Mr. Rose,[174] Sergeant

Munro, on being asked by the Dean of Faculty a question as to the disappearance of the murdered man's boots, replied that he believed they had been buried on the beach at Corne, below high-water mark. This curious ceremony seems to have been adopted by the Highland police, with the intention of laying Mr. Rose's ghost—an object which, according to tradition, might be attained by burying his boots under water. The expedient resorted to by the Highland police was founded not upon any inadequate estimate of the powers of ghosts, but upon an intimate knowledge of their likes and dislikes. They are known to entertain a strong objection to water, an antipathy which is sufficiently strong to make them shun a spot on which water is to be found; in fact, as Mr. Hunt writes,[175] spirits are supposed to be unable to cross water.

A story is told of 'Dary Pit,' Shropshire, a dismal pool, which was a much dreaded spot, because it was said spirits were laid under the water, and might, it seems, in spite of being so laid, walk abroad.

This belief may be traced in various parts of the world, and 'one of the most striking ways,' writes Mr. James G. Frazer,[176] 'of keeping down the dead man is to divert the course of a river, bury him in its bed, and then allow the river to resume its course. It was thus that Alaric was buried, and Commander Cameron found the same mode of burial in vogue amongst a tribe in Central Africa.'

Among the Tipperahs of Chittagong, if a man dies away from home, his friends stretch a thread over all the intermediate streams, so that the spirit of the dead man may return to his own village; 'it being supposed that,[177] without assistance, spirits are unable to cross running water,' and hence streams are occasionally bridged over in the manner afore-

said.[178] A somewhat similar idea prevails among the Fijians, and we are told how those who have reason to suspect others of plotting against them occasionally ‘build themselves a small house, and surround it with a moat, believing that a little water will neutralise the charms which are directed’ to hurt them.[179]

The idea of water as a barrier against ghosts has given rise to many strange customs, some of which Mr. Frazer quotes in his paper on ‘The Primitive Ghost.’[180] Among the Metamba negroes, a woman is bound hand and foot by the priest, who flings her into the water several times over with the intention of drowning her husband’s ghost, who may be supposed to be clinging to his unfeeling spouse. A similar practice exists in Angola, and in New Zealand those who have attended a funeral plunge several times into the nearest stream. In Tahiti, all who assisted at a burial plunged into the sea; and in some parts of West Africa, after the corpse has been deposited in the grave, ‘all the bearers rush to the waterside and undergo a thorough ablution before they are permitted to return to the town.’

According to Mr. Ralston, the Lusatian Wends place water between themselves and the dead as they return from a burial, even, if necessary, breaking ice for the purpose. And ‘in many parts of Germany, in modern Greece, and in Cyprus, water is poured out behind the corpse when it is carried from the house, in the belief that if the ghost returns he will not be able to cross it.’[181] A Danish tradition says, ‘If a person dies who, it is feared, will reappear, as a preventive let a basinful of water be thrown after the corpse when it is carried out’[182] and there will be no further cause of alarm. In Bohemia, after a death, the water-butt is turned upside down, for if the ghost

bathe in it, and anyone should happen to drink of it afterwards, he would be a dead man within the year. In Pomerania, after a funeral, no washing is done for some time, lest the dead man should be wet in his grave.

Drake, in his legends of New England, alludes to a story of a wreck at Ipswich, and says that, when the storms come, the howling of the wind is 'Harry Main'—a legend which has thus been versified by A. Morgan:

He blasphemed God, so they put him down,
With his iron shovel at Ipswich Bar,
They chained him there for a thousand years,
And the sea rolls up, to shovel it back.
So when the sea cries, the good wives say,
'Harry Main growls at his work to-day.'

Similarly the Chibchas in their mythology had a great river that souls had to pass over on floats made of cobwebs. On this account they never killed spiders. The Araucanian soul is borne across the Stygian flood by a whale, and the Potawatomis think 'the souls of the dead cross a large stream over a log, which rolls so that many slip off into the water. One of their ancestors went to the edge of the stream, but, not liking to venture on the log, he came back two days after his death. He reported that he heard the sounds of the drum on the other side of the river, to the beat of which the souls of the dead were dancing.'[183] The Ojibways speak of a similar stream, across which lies a serpent, over whose body the soul must cross.

A favourite mode of capturing a ghost in days gone by was to entice it into something small, such as a bottle, and as a decoy, to doubt its power to do so—a mode of exorcism which would seem to have

suggested our ‘bottle-imps.’ An amusing story of laying a ghost by this means, and which illustrates the popular belief, is recorded in the ‘Folk-lore Record’ (ii. 176), on the authority of the late Thomas Wright. ‘There lived in the town of ——, in that part of England which lies towards the borders of Wales, a very curious simple kind of a man, though all said he knew a good deal more than other people did not know. There was in the same town a very old house, one of the rooms of which was haunted by a ghost, which prevented people making use of it. The man above mentioned was reported to be very clever at dealing with ghosts, and so the owner of the haunted house sent for him, and asked him if he could undertake to make the ghost quit the house. Tommy, for that was the name he generally went by, agreed to do this, on condition that three things were provided him—an empty bottle, a bottle of brandy with a tumbler, and a pitcher of water. So Tommy locked the door safely inside, and sat down to pass the night drinking brandy and water.

‘Just as the clock struck twelve, he was roused by a slight noise, and lo! there was the ghost standing before him. Says the ghost, “Well, Tommy, how are ye?” “Pretty well, thank ye,” says he, “but pray, how do you know my name?” “Oh, very well indeed,” said the ghost. “And how did you get in?” “Oh, very easily.” “Not through the door, I’m sure.” “No, not at all, but through the keyhole.” “D’ye say so? None of your tricks upon me; I won’t believe you came through the keyhole.” “Won’t ye? but I did.” “Well, then,” says Tommy, pointing to the empty bottle, which he pretended to have emptied, “if you can come through the keyhole you can get into this bottle, but I won’t believe you can do either.” Now the ghost began to be very angry that Tommy should

doubt his power of getting into the bottle, so he asserted most confidently that the thing was easy to be done. “No,” said Tommy, “I won’t believe it till I have seen you get in.” “Here goes then,” said the ghost, and sure enough into the bottle he went, and Tommy corked him up quite tight, so that he could not get out, and he took the bottle to the bridge where the river was wide and deep, and he threw the bottle exactly over the keystone of the middle arch into the river, and the ghost was never heard after.’

This cunning mode of laying a ghost is very old, and reminds us of the amusing story of the fisherman and the genie in the Arabian Nights. The tale tells how, one day, a fisherman drew a brazen bottle out of the sea, sealed with the magic seal of Suleyman Ben Daood, out of which there issued an enormous genie, who threatened the fisherman with death. The latter, feeling his life was at stake, bethought him of doubting the genie’s ability to enter so small a vessel, whereupon the affronted genie returned thither to vindicate his character, and so placed himself in the fisherman’s power. In the same way a Bulgarian sorcerer armed with a saint’s picture will hunt a vampire into a bottle containing some of the food that the demon loves; as soon as he is fairly inside, he is corked down, the bottle is thrown into the fire, and the vampire disappears for ever.

Miss Jackson[184] quotes a story from Montgomeryshire, of how the spirit of Lady Jeffreys, who for some reason could not rest in peace, and ‘troubled people dreadfully,’ was ‘persuaded to contract her dimensions and enter a bottle. She did so, after appearing in a good many hideous forms; but when once in the bottle it was corked down securely, and the bottle was thrown into the pool underneath the Short Bridge, over the Severn, in

Llanidloes; and in the bottle she was to remain until the ivy that crept along the buttresses overgrew the sides of the bridge and reached the top of the parapet; then when this took place she should be released from her bottle prison.' In the 'Collectanea Archæologica' (vol. i. part 1) we are told on the authority of one Sarah Mason, of Baschurch, that 'there was a woman hanged on a tree at Cutberry, and she came again so badly that nine clergymen had to be fetched to lay her. So they read and read until they got her into a bottle, and they buried it under a flat sandstone in the road. We used to go past the stone every time we went to church, and I've often wondered if she was still there, and what would happen if anyone was to pull the stone up.' And as a further safeguard a correspondent of 'Notes and Queries,' writing from Ecclesfield, says it is best in laying ghosts to cheat them to consent to being laid while hollies are green, for hollies being evergreen, the ghost can reappear no more.

In Wales, the objectionable spectre must be conjured in the name of Heaven to depart, and return no more, the strength of the exorcism being doubled by employing the Latin language to deliver it, which, to be perfectly effectual, must be done by three clergymen. The exorcism is usually for a stated time, seven years is the favourite period, and one hundred years the limit. Instances are recorded where a ghost which had been laid a hundred years returned at the end of the time to its old haunts. According to Mr. Wirt Sikes,[185] 'in all cases it is necessary the ghost should agree to be exorcised; no power can lay it if it be possessed of an evil demon. In such cases the terrors of Heaven must be rigorously invoked, but the result is only temporary. Properly constituted family ghosts, however, will

lend a reasonable ear to entreaty backed by prayer.'

Candles have generally played an important part in the ceremony of ghost laying, one popular idea being that ghosts have no power by candlelight. Thus, in many tales, the ghost is cheated into a promise not to return till the candle is burnt out, whereupon the crafty parson immediately blows it out, throwing it into a pond, or burying it in the earth. The belief is an old one, for, in one of the Sagas quoted by Mr. Baring-Gould,[186] the tomb-breaking hero finds an old Viking sitting in his dragon-ship, with his five hundred comrades motionless about him. He is about to depart, after possessing himself of the dead man's treasures, when the taper goes out, whereupon they all rise and attack the intruder, who barely escapes by invoking St. Olaf's aid. In all Shropshire stories, we are told that the great point is to keep the candles lighted in spite of the ghost's utmost efforts to blow them out; an amusing instance being that of the Bagbury ghost, which appeared in the shape of a bull, and was so troublesome that twelve parsons were required to lay it. The story goes that they got him into Hyssington Church; 'they all had candles, and one blind old parson, who knowed him, and knowed what a rush he would make, he carried his candle in his top-boot. And he made a great rush, and all the candles went out, all but the blind parson's, and he said, "You light your candles by mine."'

Miss Jackson also tells[187] how 'Squire Blount's ghost' long haunted Kinlet Hall, because his daughter had married a page-boy. At last it was found necessary to pull down Kinlet Old Hall, and to build it again on a fresh site, 'for he would even come into the room where they were at dinner, and drive his coach and four white horses across the dinner table.'

But ‘at last they got a number of parsons together and lighted candles, and read and read till all the candles were burnt out but one, and so they quieted him, and laid him in the sea. There was, it is reported, a little bottle under his monument in Kinlet Church, and if that were broken he would come again. It is a little flat bottle seven or eight inches long, with a glass stopper in it, which nobody could get out; and if anyone got hold of it, the remark was made, “Take care as you dunna let that fall, for if it breaks, old Blount will come again.”’

According to Mr. Henderson[188] there was a house in a village of Arkingarthdale which had long been haunted by a bogle. At last the owner adopted the following plan for expelling it. Opening the Bible, he placed it on a table with a lighted candle, and said aloud to the bogle, ‘Noo thoo can read or dance, or dea as ta likes.’ He then turned round and walked upstairs, when the bogle, in the form of a grey cat, flew past and vanished in the air. Years passed without its being seen again, but one day he met it on the stairs, and he was that day killed in the mines.

At Leigh, Worcestershire, a spectre known as ‘Old Coles’ formerly appeared, and would drive a coach and four over the great barn at Leigh Court, and then cool the fiery nostrils of his steeds in the waters of the Teme. This perturbed spirit was at length laid in a neighbouring pool by twelve parsons at midnight, by the light of an inch of candle; and as he was not to rise again until the candle was quite burnt out, it was thrown into the pool, and to make all sure, the pool was filled up,

And peaceful ever after slept
Old Coles’s shade.[189]

But sometimes, when the candles burn out their

time, it is an indication that none of the party can lay the ghost, as happened in the case of a certain Dartmoor vicar's unquiet spirit described by Mr. Henderson.[190] 'A jury of seven parsons was convoked to lay it, and each sat for half an hour with a candle in his hand, but it burned out its time with each. The spirit could afford to defy them; it was not worth his while to blow their candles out. But the seventh parson was a stranger and a scholar fresh from Oxford. In his hand the light went out at once. He was clearly the man to lay the ghost; he laid it at once, and in a beer-barrel.'

According to another way of ejecting or laying ghosts, there must be two or three clergymen, and the ceremony must be performed in the Latin language, which, it is said, will strike the most audacious ghost with terror. Allan Ramsay mentions, as common in Scotland, the vulgar notion that a ghost cannot be laid till some priest speaks to it, and ascertains what prevents it from resting.

For well we wat it is his ghaist
Wow, wad some folk that can do't best,
Speak tol't, and hear what it confest.
To send a wand'ring saul to rest
'Tis a good deed
Amang the dead.

And in the 'Statistical Account of Scotland' (xiii. 557) the writer, speaking of the parish of Locharron, county of Ross, alludes to the same idea: 'There is one opinion which many of them entertain, and which, indeed, is not peculiar to this parish alone, that a Popish priest can cast out devils and cure madness, and that the Presbyterian clergy have no such power. A person might as well advise a mob to pay no attention to a merry Andrew, as to desire

many ignorant people to stay from the priest.'

On a small island off Scotland, called Ledge's Holm, writes Mr. Bassett, there is a quarry called 'The Crier of Claife.' According to a local tradition, a ferryman was hailed on a dark night from the island, and went over. After a long absence he returned, having witnessed many horrible sights which he refused to relate. Soon afterwards he became a monk. After a time the same cry was heard, and he went over and succeeded in laying the ghost where it now rests. But Bourne, who has preserved a form for exorcising a haunted house, ridicules the fancy that 'none can lay spirits but Popish priests,' and says that 'our own clergy know just as much of the black art as the others do'—a statement which is amply confirmed. Thus, a ghost known as 'Benjie Gear' long troubled the good people of Okehampton to such an extent that, 'at last,' writes Mr. James Spry, in 'The Western Antiquary,' 'the aid of the archdeacon was called in, and the clergy were assembled in order that the troubled spirit might be laid and cease to trouble them. There were twenty-three of the clergy who invoked him in various classic languages, but the insubordinate spirit refused to listen to their request. At length, one more learned than the rest addressed him in Arabic, to which he was forced to succumb, saying, "Now thou art come, I must be gone!" He was then compelled to take the form of a colt; a new bridle and bit, which had never been used, were produced, with a rider, to whom the Sacrament was administered. The man was directed to ride the colt to Cranmere Pool, on Dartmoor, the following instructions being given him. He was to prevent the colt from turning its head towards the town until they were out of the park, and then make straight for the pool, and when he got to the slope, to

slip from the colt's back, pull the bridle off, and let him go. All this was dexterously performed, and the impetus thus gained by the animal with the intention of throwing the rider over its head into the Pool, accomplished its own fate.'

Another curious account of laying a ghost is connected with Spedlin's Tower, which stands on the south-west bank of the Annan. The story goes, that one of its owners, Sir Alexander Jardine, confined, in the dungeon of his tower, a miller named Porteous, on suspicion of having wilfully set fire to his own premises. Being suddenly called away to Edinburgh, he forgot the existence of his captive until he had died of hunger. But no sooner was the man dead, than his ghost began so persistently to disturb Spedlin's Tower, that Sir Alexander Jardine summoned 'a whole legion of ministers to his aid, and by their efforts Porteous was at length confined to the scene of his mortal agonies, where, at times, he was heard screaming, "Let me out, let me out, for I'm deein' o' hunger!"' The spell which compelled his spirit to remain in bondage was attached to a large black-lettered Bible used by the exorcists, and afterwards deposited in a stone niche, which still remains in the wall of the staircase. On one occasion the Bible, requiring to be re-bound, was sent to Edinburgh, whereupon the ghost of Porteous recommenced its annoyances, so that the Bible was recalled before reaching Edinburgh, and was replaced in its former situation. But, it would seem, the ghost is at last at rest, for the Bible is now kept at Jardine Hall.

Then there is the ghost of 'Madam Pigott,' once the terror of Chetwynd and Edgmond. Twelve of the neighbouring clergy were summoned to lay her by incessantly reading psalms till they had succeeded in

making her obedient to their power. ‘Mr. Foy, curate of Edgmond,’ says Miss Jackson,[191] ‘has the credit of having accomplished this, for he continued reading after all the others were exhausted.’ But, ‘ten or twelve years after his death, some fresh alarm of Madam Pigott arose, and a party went in haste to beg a neighbouring rector to come and lay the ghost; and to this day Chetwynd Hall has the reputation of being haunted.’ It is evident that ‘laying a ghost’ was far from an easy task. A humorous anecdote is told[192] of a haunted house at Homersfield, in Suffolk, where an unquiet spirit so worried and harassed the inmates that they sent for a parson. On his arrival he commenced reading a prayer, but instantly the ghost got a line ahead of him. Happily one of the family hit on this device: the next time, as soon as the parson began his exorcism, two pigeons were let loose; the spirit stopped to look at them, the priest got before him in his prayer, and the ghost was laid.

Clegg Hall, Lancashire, was the scene of a terrible tragedy, for tradition tells how a wicked uncle destroyed the lawful heirs—two orphans that were left to his care—by throwing them over a balcony into the moat, in order that he might seize on their inheritance. Ever afterwards the house was the reputed haunt of a troubled and angry spirit, until means were taken for its expulsion. Mr. William Nuttall, in a ballad entitled ‘Sir Roland and Clegg Hall Boggart,’ makes Sir Roland murder the children in bed with a dagger. Remorse eventually drove him mad, and he died raving during a violent storm. The hall was ever after haunted by the children’s ghosts, and also by demons, till St. Anthony, with a relic from the Virgin’s shrine, exorcised and laid the evil spirits. According to Mr. Nuttall there were two

boggarts of Clegg Hall, and it is related how the country people ‘importuned a pious monk to exorcise or lay the ghost.’ Having provided himself with a variety of charms and spells, he quickly brought the ghosts to a parley. They demanded as a condition of future quiet the sacrifice of a body and a soul. Thereupon the cunning monk said, ‘Bring me the body of a cock and the sole of a shoe.’ This being done, the spirits were forbidden to appear till the whole of the sacrifice was consumed, and so ended the laying of the Clegg Hall boggarts. But, for some reason or other, the plan of this wily priest did not prove successful, and these two ghosts have continued to walk.[193]

With this idea of sacrifice as necessary for laying ghosts may be mentioned the apparition of a servant at Waddow Hall, known as ‘Peg o’ Nell.’ On one occasion, the story goes, she had a quarrel with the lord or lady of Waddow Hall, who, in a fit of anger, wished that she ‘might fall and break her neck.’ In some way or other Peggy did fall and break her neck, and to be revenged on her evil wisher she haunted the Hall, and made things very uncomfortable. In addition to these perpetual annoyances, ‘every seven years Peg required a life, and it is said that “Peg’s night,” as the time of sacrifice at each anniversary was called, was duly observed; and if no living animal were ready as a septennial offering to her manes, a human being became inexorably the victim. Consequently, it grew to be the custom on “Peg’s night” to drown a bird, or a cat, or a dog in the river; and a life being thus given, Peg was appeased for another seven years.’[194]

At Beoley, Worcestershire, at the commencement of the present century, the ghost of a reputed murderer managed to keep undisputed possession of

a certain house, until a conclave of clergymen chained him to the Red Sea for fifty years. At the expiration of this term of imprisonment, the released ghost reappeared, and more than ever frightened the inmates of the said house, slamming the doors, and racing through the ceilings. At last, however, they took heart and chased the restless spirit, by stamping on the floor from one room to another, under the impression that could they once drive him to a trap door opening in the cheese-room, he would disappear for a season.[195]

A curious case of laying a ghost occurs in 'An account of an apparition attested by the Rev. W. Ruddell, minister at Launceston, in Cornwall,' 1665, quoted in Gilbert's 'Historical Survey of Cornwall.' A schoolboy was haunted by Dorothy Dingley, and he pined. He was thought to be in love, and when, at the wishes of his friends, the parson questioned him, he told him of his ghostly visitor, and showed him the spectral Dorothy. Then comes the story of the ghost-laying.

'The next morning being Thursday, I went out very early by myself, and walked for about an hour's space in meditation and prayer in the field adjoining to the Quartills. Soon after five I stepped over the stile into the disturbed field, and had not gone above thirty or forty paces when the ghost appeared at the further stile. I spoke to it with a loud voice in some such sentences as the way of these dealings directed me; thereupon it approached, but slowly, and when I came near it, it moved not. I spoke again, and it answered again in a voice which was neither very audible nor intelligible. I was not the least terrified, therefore I persisted till it spoke again, and gave me satisfaction. But the work could not be finished this time, wherefore the same evening, an hour after

sunset, it met me again near the same place, and after a few words on each side it quietly vanished, and neither doth appear since, nor ever will more to any man's disturbance.'

Local tradition still tells us that 'Madam Dudley's ghost did use to walk in Cumnor Park, and that it walked so obstinately, that it took no less than nine parsons from Oxford "to lay her." That they at last laid her in a pond, called "Madam Dudley's Pond," and, moreover, wonderful to relate, the water in that pond was never known to freeze afterwards.' Heath Old Hall, near Wakefield, is haunted by the ghost of Lady Bolles, who is commonly reported to have been conjured down into a hole of the river, locally known as 'Bolles Pit.' But, as in many other cases of ghost-laying, 'the spell was not so powerful, but that she still rises, and makes a fuss now and then.' Various reasons have been assigned for her 'walking,' such as the non-observance by her executors of certain clauses in her will, whilst a story current in the neighbourhood tells us that a certain room in the Hall which had been walled up for a certain period, owing to large sums of money having been gambled away in it, was opened before the stipulated time had expired. Others assert that her unhappy condition is on account of her father's mysterious death, which was ascribed to demoniacal agency.[196]

But of all places the most common, in years gone by, for laying ghosts was the Red Sea, and hence, in one of Addison's plays, we read, 'There must be a power of spirits in that sea.' 'This is a locality,' says Grose, 'which ghosts least like, it being related in many instances that ghosts have most earnestly besought the exorcists not to confine them in that place. It is, nevertheless, considered as an indisputable fact that there are an infinite number

laid there, perhaps from its being a safer prison than any other nearer at hand.' But when such exiled ghosts did happen to re-appear, they were thought more audacious, being seen by day instead of at night.

In an amusing poem entitled 'The Ghost of a Boiled Scrag of Mutton,' which appeared in the 'Flowers of Literature' many years ago, the following verse occurs embodying the idea:

The scholar was versed in all magical lore,
  Most famous was he throughout college;
To the Red Sea full many an unquiet ghost,
To repose with King Pharaoh and his mighty host,
  He had sent through his proverbial knowledge.

Addison tells us in the 'Spectator,' alluding to his London lodgings at a good-natured widow's house one winter, how on one occasion he entered the room unexpectedly, where several young ladies, visitors, were telling stories of spirits and apparitions, when, on being told that it was only *the gentleman*, the broken conversation was resumed, and 'I seated myself by the candle that stood at one end of the table, and, pretending to read a book that I took out of my pocket, heard several stories of ghosts that, pale as ashes, had stood at the bed's foot, or walked over a churchyard by moonlight; and others that had been conjured into the Red Sea for disturbing people's rest.' As it has been humorously remarked, it is not surprising that many a strange ghost story has been told by the sea-faring community, when we remember how many spirits have been banished to the Red Sea.

CHAPTER XIV

GHOSTS OF THE DROWNED

On the coast of Brittany there is the 'Bay of the Departed,' where, it is said, in the dead hour of night the boatmen are summoned by some unseen power

to launch their boats and to ferry to a sacred island the souls of men who have been drowned. On such occasions the boat is so crowded with invisible passengers as to sink quite low in the water, while the wails and cries of the shipwrecked are clearly heard as the melancholy voyage progresses. On reaching the island of Sein, the invisible passengers are numbered by unseen hands, after which the wondering, awestruck sailors return to await in readiness the next supernatural summons. At Guildo, on the same coast, small phantom skiffs are reported to dart out from under the castle cliffs, manned by spectral figures, ferrying over the treacherous sands the souls of those unfortunate persons whose bodies lie engulfed in the neighbourhood. So strong is the antipathy to this weird spot that, after nightfall, none of the seafaring community will approach near it. [197] Similar superstitions are found elsewhere, and in Cornwall, sailors dislike walking at night near those parts of the shore where there have been wrecks, as they are supposed to be haunted by the ghosts of drowned sailors, and the ‘calling of the dead has frequently been heard.’ ‘I have been told,’ writes Mr. Hunt,[198] ‘that, under certain circumstances, especially before the coming of storms, but always at night, these callings are common. Many a fisherman has declared he has heard the voices of dead sailors “hailing their own names.”’ He further tells how a fisherman, or a pilot, was walking one night on the sands at Porth-Towan, when all was still save the monotonous fall of the light waves upon the sand. Suddenly, he distinctly heard a voice from the sea exclaiming: ‘The hour is come, but not the man.’

This was repeated three times, when a black figure, like that of a man, appeared on the top of the hill. It paused for a moment, then rushed

impetuously down the steep incline, over the sands, and was lost in the sea. In different forms the story is current all round the Cornish shores, and on the Norfolk coast, when any person is drowned, a voice is said to be heard from the water, ominous of a squall.

On the Continent the same belief, with certain variations, is found. Lord Teignmouth, in his 'Reminiscences of Many Years,' speaking of Ullesvang, in Norway, writes: 'A very natural belief that the voice of a person drowned is heard wailing amidst the storm is, apparently, the only acknowledged remnant of ancient superstition still lingering along the shores of the fiords.' In Germany, it is said that whenever a man is drowned at sea, he announces his death to his relations, and haunts the sea-shore. Such ghosts are supposed to make their appearance at evening twilight, in the clothes in which they were drowned.[199] According to a Schleswig version of this belief, the spirits of the drowned do not enter the house, but linger about the threshold to announce their sad errand. A story is told of a young lad who was forced by his father to go to sea against his will. Before starting, he bid farewell to his mother, and said, 'As you sit on the shore by the lake think of me.' Shortly his ghost appeared to her there, and she only knew too well afterwards that he had perished.

Among Maine fishermen there are similar stories of the ghost of the drowned being seen. Mr. W. H. Bishop, in 'Harper's Magazine' (Sept. 1880) tells us 'there was particularly the story of the Hascall. She broke loose from her moorings during a gale on George's banks, and ran into and sank the Andrew Johnson, and all on board. For years afterwards the spectres of the drowned men were reported to come

on board the Hascall at midnight, and go through the dumb show of fishing over the side, so that no one in Gloucester could be got to sail her, and she would not have brought sixpence in the market.' A Block Island tradition affirms that the ghosts of certain refugees, drowned in the surf during the revolution, are often seen struggling to reach the shore, and occasionally their cries are distinctly heard.[200]

There is the well-known anecdote which Lord Byron, says Moore,[201] used sometimes to mention, and which Captain Kidd related to him on the passage. 'This officer stated that, being asleep one night in his berth, he was awakened by the pressure of something heavy on his limbs, and there being a faint light in the room, could see, as he thought, distinctly the figure of his brother, who was at that time in the same service in the East Indies, dressed in his uniform, and stretched across the bed. Concluding it to be an illusion, he shut his eyes, and made an effort to sleep. But still the same pressure continued; and as often as he ventured to take another look, he saw the figure lying across him in the same position. To add to the wonder, on putting his hand forth to touch this form, he found the uniform in which he appeared dripping wet. On the entrance of one of his brother officers, to whom he called out in alarm, the apparition vanished, but, in a few months afterwards, he received the startling intelligence that on that night his brother had been drowned in the Indian Seas. Of the supernatural character of this appearance, Captain Kidd himself did not appear to have the slightest doubt.'

A strange antipathy has long existed against rescuing a drowning man, one reason being that the person saved would at some time or other do injury to the man who rescued him. In China, however, this

reluctance to give help to a drowning man arises from another form of the same superstitious dread, the idea being that the spirit of a person who has been drowned continues to flit along the surface of the water, until it has caused by drowning the death of a fellow creature. A person, therefore, who is bold enough to attempt to rescue another from drowning is believed to incur the hatred of the unquiet spirit, which is supposed to be desirous, even at the expense of a man's life, of escaping from its unceasing wandering. The Bohemian fisherman shrinks from snatching a drowning man from the water, fearing that the water-demons would take away his luck in fishing, and drown him at the first opportunity. This, as Dr. Tylor points out,[202] is a lingering survival of the ancient significance of this superstition, the explanation being that the water spirit is naturally angry at being despoiled of his victim, and henceforth bears a special grudge against the unlucky person who has dared to frustrate him. Thus, when a person is drowned in Germany the remark is often made, 'The river spirit claims his yearly sacrifice,' or 'The Nix has taken him.'

Similarly the Siamese dreads the Pnük, or water spirit, that seizes unwary bathers, and drags them underneath the water; and the Sioux Indians tell how men have been drowned by Unktahe, the water demon. Speaking of the ghosts of the drowned among savage tribes, Herbert Spenser says:[203] 'An eddy in the river, where floating sticks are whirled round and engulfed, is not far from the place where one of the tribe was drowned and never seen again. What more manifest, then, than that the double of this drowned man, malicious as the unburied dead ever are, dwells thereabouts, and pulls these things under the surface—nay, in revenge, seizes and drags

down persons who venture near? When those who knew the drowned man are all dead, when, after generations, the details of the story, thrust aside by more recent stories, have been lost, there survives only the belief in a water demon haunting the place.' We may compare the practice of the Kamchadals, who, instead of helping a man out of the water, would drown him by force. If rescued by any chance, no one would receive such a man into his house, or give him food, but he was reckoned as dead.

CHAPTER XV

GHOST SEERS

ACCORDING to the popular creed, some persons have the peculiar faculty of seeing ghosts, a privilege which, it would seem, is denied to others. It has been urged, however, that under certain conditions of health there are those who are endowed with special powers of perception, whereby they are enabled to see objects not visible at other times. Thus, as Sir William Hamilton has observed, 'however astonishing, it is now proved, beyond all rational doubt, that in certain abnormal states of the nervous organism, perceptions are possible through other than the ordinary channels of the senses.' But, without entering into this metaphysical question, folk-lore holds that persons born at a particular time of the day have the power of seeing ghosts. Thus it is said in Lancashire, that children born during twilight are supposed to have this peculiarity, and to know who of their acquaintance will next die. Some say

that this property belongs also to those who happen to be born exactly at twelve o'clock at night, or, as the peasantry say in Somersetshire, 'a child born in chime-hours will have the power to see spirits.' The same belief prevails in Yorkshire, where it is commonly supposed that children born during the hour after midnight have the privilege through life of seeing the spirits of the departed. Mr. Henderson says[204] that 'a Yorkshire lady informed him she was very near being thus distinguished, but the clock had not struck twelve when she was born. When a child she mentioned this circumstance to an old servant, adding that mamma was sure her birthday was the 23rd, not the 24th, for she had inquired at the time. "Ay, ay," said the old woman, turning to the child's nurse, "mistress would be very anxious about *that*, for bairns born after midnight see more things than other folk."'

This superstition prevails on the Continent, and, in Denmark, Sunday children have prerogatives far from enviable. Thorpe[205] tells how 'in Fyer there was a woman who was born on a Sunday, and, like other Sunday children, had the faculty of seeing much that was hidden from others. But, because of this property, she could not pass by the church at night without seeing a hearse or a spectre. The gift became a perfect burden to her; she therefore sought the advice of a man skilled in such matters, who directed her, whenever she saw a spectre, to say, "Go to Heaven!" but when she met a hearse, "Hang on!" Happening some time after to meet a hearse, she, through lapse of memory, cried out, "Go to Heaven!" and straightway the hearse rose in the air and vanished. Afterwards meeting a spectre, she said to it, "Hang on!" when the spectre clung round her neck, hung on her back, and drove her down into the

earth before it. For three days her shrieks were heard before the spectre would put an end to her wretched life.'

It is a popular article of faith in Scotland that those who are born on Christmas Day or Good Friday have the power of seeing spirits, and even of commanding them, a superstition to which Sir Walter Scott alludes in his 'Marmion' (stanza xxii.). The Spaniards imputed the haggard and downcast looks of their Philip II. to the disagreeable visions to which this privilege subjected him.

Among uncultured tribes it is supposed that spirits are visible to some persons and not to others. The 'natives of the Antilles believed that the dead appeared on the roads when one went alone, but not when many went together; and among the Finns the ghosts of the dead were to be seen by the Shamans, but not by men generally unless in dreams.'[206] It is, too, as already noticed,[207] a popular theory with savage races that the soul appears in dreams to visit the sleeper, and hence it has been customary for rude tribes to drink various intoxicating substances, under the impression that when thrown into a state of ecstasy they would have pleasing visions. On this account certain tribes on the Amazon use certain narcotic plants, producing an intoxication lasting twenty-four hours. During this period they are said to be subject to extraordinary visions, in the course of which they acquire information on any subject they may specially require. For a similar reason the inhabitants of North Brazil, when anxious to discover some guilty person, were in the habit of administering narcotic drinks to seers, in whose dreams the criminal made his appearance. The Californian Indians would give children certain intoxicants, in order to gain from the ensuing vision

information about their enemies. And the Darien Indians used the seeds of the *Datura sanguinea* to produce in children prophetic delirium, during which they revealed the whereabouts of hidden treasure.

In our own country various charms have been practised from time immemorial for invoking spirits, and, as we shall show in a succeeding chapter, it is still a widespread belief that, by having recourse to certain spells at special seasons in the year, one, if so desirous, may be favoured with a view of the spirits of departed friends.

CHAPTER XVI

GHOSTLY DEATH-WARNINGS

THE belief in death-omens peculiar to certain families has long been a fruitful source of superstition, and has been embodied in many a strange legendary romance. Such family forewarnings of death are of a most varied description, and are still said to be of frequent occurrence. An ancient Roman Catholic family in Yorkshire, of the name of Middleton, is supposed to be apprised of the death of any one of its members by the apparition of a Benedictine nun; and Sir Walter Scott, in his 'Peveril of the Peak,' tells us how a certain spirit is commonly believed to attend on the Stanley family, warning them by uttering a loud shriek of some approaching calamity, and especially 'weeping and bemoaning herself before the death of any person of distinction belonging to the family.' In his 'Waverley,' too, towards the end of Fergus

MacIvor's history, he alludes to the Bodach Glas, or dark grey man. Mr. Henderson says,[208] 'Its appearance foretold death in the Clan of ——, and I have been informed on the most credible testimony of its appearance in our own day. The Earl of E——, a nobleman alike beloved and respected in Scotland, was playing on the day of his decease on the links of St. Andrews at golf. Suddenly he stopped in the middle of the game, saying, "I can play no longer, there is the Bodach Glas. I have seen it for the third time; something fearful is going to befall me." He died that night as he was handing a candlestick to a lady who was retiring to her room.' According to Pennant, most of the great families in Scotland had their death-omens. Thus it is reported 'the family of Grant Rothiemurcus had the "Bodach au Dun," or the Ghost of the Hill; and the Kinchardines the "Lham-dearg," or the Spectre of the Bloody Hand, of whom Sir Walter Scott has given the subjoined account from Macfarlane's MSS.: "There is much talk of a spirit called 'Ly-erg,' who frequents the Glenmore. He appears with a red hand, in the habit of a soldier, and challenges men to fight with him. As lately as the year 1669 he fought with three brothers, one after another, who immediately died therefrom."'

The family of Gurlinbeg was haunted by Garlin Bodacher, and Tulloch Gorms by May Moulach, or the Girl with the Hairy Left Hand.[209] The Synod gave frequent orders that inquiry should be made into the truth of this apparition, and one or two declared that they had seen one that answered the description. An ancestor of the family of McClean, of Lochburg, was commonly reported, before the death of any of his race, to gallop along the sea-beach announcing the death by dismal lamentations; and the Banshee of Loch Nigdal used to be arrayed in a

silk dress of greenish hue.

Reference is made elsewhere to the apparition of the Black Friar, the evil genius of the Byrons, supposed to forebode misfortune to the member of the family to whom it appeared, and Mr. Hunt has described the death-token of the Vingoes. It seems that above the deep caverns in a certain part of their estate rises a cairn. On this, it is asserted, chains of fire were formerly seen ascending and descending, which were frequently accompanied by loud and frightful noises. But it is affirmed that these warnings have not been heard since the last male of the family came to a violent end.[210] Whenever two owls are seen perched on the family mansion of the family of Arundel of Wardour, it is said that one of its members will shortly die. The strange appearance of a white-breasted bird[211] was long thought to be a warning of death to a family of the name of Oxenham, in Devonshire.

Equally strange is the omen with which the old baronet's family of Clifton, of Clifton Hall, in Nottinghamshire, is forewarned when death is about to visit one of its members. It seems that, in this case, the omen takes the form of a sturgeon, which is seen forcing itself up the River Trent, on whose bank the mansion of the Clifton family is situated. With this curious tradition may be compared one connected with the Edgewell Oak, which is commonly reported to indicate the coming death of an inmate of Castle Dalhousie by the fall of one of its branches. Burke, in his 'Anecdotes of the Aristocracy' (1849, i. 122), says that 'opposite the dining-room at Gordon Castle is a large and massive willow-tree, the history of which is somewhat singular. Duke Alexander, when four years of age, planted this willow in a tub filled with earth; the tub floated about in a marshy piece of land, till

the shrub, expanding, burst its cerements, and struck root in the earth below; here it grew and prospered, till it attained the present goodly size. The Duke regarded the tree with a sort of fatherly and even superstitious regard, half believing there was some mysterious affinity between its fortunes and his own. If an accident happened to the one by storm or lightning, some misfortune was not long in befalling the other.'

It may be remembered, too, how in the Park of Chartley, near Lichfield, has long been preserved the breed of the indigenous Staffordshire cow, of sand white colour. In the battle of Burton Bridge a black calf was born, and the year of the downfall of the House of Ferrers happening about the same time, gave rise to the tradition that the birth of a parti-coloured calf from the wild herd in Chartley Park is a sure omen of death within the same year to a member of the family. Thus, 'by a noticeable coincidence,' says the 'Staffordshire Chronicle' (July 1835), 'a calf of this description has been born whenever a death has happened to the family of late years.' It appears that the death of the seventh Earl Ferrers, and of his Countess, and of his son, Viscount Tamworth, and of his daughter, Mrs. William Joliffe, as well as the deaths of the son and heir of the eighth Earl and of his daughter, Lady Francis Shirley, were each preceded by the ominous birth of the fatal-hued calf. This tradition has been made the subject of a romantic story entitled 'Chartley, or the Fatalist.'

Walsingham, in his 'Ypodigma Neustriæ' (1574, p. 153), informs us how, on January 1, 1399, just before the civil wars broke out between the houses of York and Lancaster, the River Ouse suddenly stood still at a place called Harewood, about five miles from Bedford, so that below this place the bed of the

river was left dry for three miles together, and above it the waters swelled to a great height. The same thing is said to have happened at the same place in January 1648, which was just before the death of Charles I., and many superstitious persons 'have supposed both these stagnations of the Ouse to be supernatural and portentous; others suppose them to be the effect of natural causes, though a probable natural cause has not yet been assigned.'[212]

The following curious anecdote, styled 'An Irish Water-fiend,' said to be perfectly well authenticated, is related in Burke's 'Anecdotes of the Aristocracy' (i. 329). The hero of the tale was the Rev. James Crawford, rector of the parish of Killina, co. Leitrim. In the autumn of 1777, Mr. Crawford had occasion to cross the estuary called 'The Rosses,' on the coast of Donegal, and on a pillion behind him sat his sister-in-law, Miss Hannah Wilson. They had advanced some distance, until the water reached the saddle-laps, when Miss Wilson became so alarmed that she implored Mr. Crawford to get back as fast as possible to land. 'I do not think there can be danger,' replied Crawford, 'for I see a horseman crossing the ford not twenty yards before us.' Miss Wilson also saw the horseman. 'You had better hail him,' said she, 'and inquire the depth of the intervening water.' Crawford checked his horse, and hallooed to the other horseman to stop. He did stop, and turning round, displayed a ghastly face grinning fiendishly at Crawford, who waited for no further parley, but returned as fast as he could. On reaching home he told his wife of the spectral rencontre. The popular belief was that whenever any luckless person was foredoomed to be drowned in that estuary, the fatal event was foreshown to the doomed person by some such apparition as Crawford had seen. Despite this

monitory warning, Mr. Crawford again attempted to cross the ford of the Rosses upon September 27, 1777, and was drowned in the attempt.

A correspondent of the 'Gentleman's Magazine' speaks of a superstition prevalent among the peasantry in Worcestershire, that when storms, heavy rains, or other elemental strifes take place at the death of a great man, the spirit of the storm will not be appeased till the moment of burial. 'This superstition,' he adds, 'gained great strength on the occasion of the Duke of Wellington's funeral, when, after some weeks of heavy rain, and one of the highest floods ever known in this country, the skies began to clear, and both rain and flood abated. It was a common observation in this part of the country, in the week before the interment of his Grace, "Oh, the rain won't give over till the Duke is buried."'

In Germany several princes have their warnings of death. In some instances it is the roaring of a lion, and in others the howling of a dog. Occasionally a similar announcement was made by the tolling of a bell, or the striking of a clock at an unusual time. Then there is the time-honoured White Lady, whose mysterious appearance has from time immemorial been supposed to indicate some event of importance. According to a popular legend, the White Lady is seen in many of the castles of German princes and nobles, by night as well as by day, especially when the death of any member of the family is imminent. She is regarded as the ancestress of the race, 'shows herself always in snow white garments, carries a bunch of keys at her side, and sometimes rocks and watches over the children at night when their nurses sleep.' The earliest instance of this apparition was in the sixteenth century, and is famous under the name

of ‘Bertha of Rosenberg,’ in Bohemia. The white lady of other princely castles was identified with Bertha, and the identity was accounted for by the intermarriages of other princely houses with members of the house of Rosenberg,[213] in whose train the White Lady passed into their castles. According to Mrs. Crowe[214] the White Lady was long supposed to be a Countess Agnes of Orlamunde; but a picture of a princess called Bertha, or Perchta von Rosenberg, discovered some time since, was thought so to resemble the apparition, that it is a disputed point which of the two ladies it is, or whether it is or is not the same apparition that is seen at different places. The opinion of its being the Princess Bertha, who lived in the fifteenth century, was somewhat countenanced by the circumstance that, at a period when, in consequence of the war, an annual benefit which she had bequeathed to the poor was neglected, the apparition appeared more frequently, and seemed to be unusually disturbed. The ‘Archæologia’ (xxxiii.) gives an extract from Brereton’s ‘Travels’ (i. 33), which sets forth how the Queen of Bohemia told William Brereton ‘that at Berlin—the Elector of Brandenburg’s house—before the death of any related in blood to that house, there appears and walks up and down that house like unto a ghost in a white sheet, which walks during the time of their sickness and until their death.’[215]

Cardan and Henningius Grosius relate a similar marvel of some of the ancient families of Italy, the following being recorded by the latter authority: ‘Jacopo Donati, one of the most important families in Venice, had a child, the heir to the family, very ill. At night, when in bed, Donati saw the door of his chamber opened and the head of a man thrust in. Knowing that it was not one of his servants, he

roused the house, drew his sword, went over the whole palace, all the servants declaring that they had seen such a head thrust in at the doors of their several chambers at the same hour; the fastenings were found all secure, so that no one could have come in from without. The next day the child died.'

Burton, in his 'Anatomy of Melancholy,' says that near Rufus Nova, in Finland, Sweden, 'there is a lake in which, when the governor of the castle dies, a spectrum is seen, in the habit of Arion, with a harp, and makes excellent music, like those clocks in Cheshire which (they say) presage death to the master of the family; or that oak in Lanthadran Park, in Cornwall, which foreshows as much.'

One of the most celebrated ghosts of this kind in Britain is the White Lady of Avenel, the creation of Sir Walter Scott. In the Highlands it was long a common belief that many of the chiefs had some kind spirit to watch over the fortunes of their house. Popular tradition has many well-known legends about white ladies, who generally dwell in forts and mountains as enchanted maidens waiting for deliverance. They delight to appear in warm sunshine to poor shepherds, or herd boys. They are either combing their long hair or washing themselves, drying wheat or spinning, they also point out treasures, &c. They wear snow-white or half-white black garments, yellow or green shoes, and a bunch of keys at their side. All these and many other traits that appear in individual legends may be traced back to a goddess of German mythology who influences birth and death, and presides over the ordering of the household.[216]

An interesting instance of a death-warning among uncultured tribes is told by Mr. Lang,[217] on the authority of Mr. J. J. Atkinson, late of Noumea, New

Caledonia, which is curious because it offers among the Kanekas an example of a belief current in Breton folk-lore. Mr. Atkinson relates how one day a Kaneka of his acquaintance paid a visit and seemed loth to go away. After some hesitation he explained that he was about to die, and would never see his English friend again, as his fate was sealed. He had lately met in the wood one whom he took for the Kaneka girl of his heart, but he became aware too late that she was no mortal woman, but a wood-spirit in the guise of his beloved. As he said, so it happened, for the unlucky man shortly afterwards died. 'This is the ground-work,' adds Mr. Lang, 'of the old Breton ballad of "Le Sieur Nann," who died after his intrigue with the forest spectre!' A version of the ballad is printed by De la Villemarque, Barzaz-Breiz (i. 41), and variants exist in Swedish, French, and even in a Lowland Scotch version, sung by children in a kind of dancing game.[218] Another story quoted by Mr. Lang tells how, in 1860, a Maneroo black fellow died in the service of Mr. Du Ve. 'The day before he died, having been ill some time, he said that in the night his father, his father's friend, and a female spirit he could not recognise, had come to him, and said that he would die next day, and that they would wait for him.' Mr. Du Ve adds that, 'though previously the Christian belief had been explained to this man, it had entirely failed, and that he had gone back to the belief of his childhood.' But cases of this kind, it would appear, are not uncommon among rude races, and have a special value to the student of comparative folk-lore.

CHAPTER XVII

'SECOND SIGHT'

THE power of seeing things invisible to others is commonly known as 'second sight,' a peculiarity which the ancient Gaels called 'shadow sight.' The subject has, for many years past, excited popular interest, and demanded the attention even of our learned men. Dr. Johnson was so favourably impressed with the notion of 'second sight,' that after, in the course of his travels, giving the subject full inquiry, he confessed that he never could 'advance his curiosity to conviction, but came away at last only willing to believe.' Sir Walter Scott, too, went so far as to say that 'if force of evidence could authorise us to believe facts inconsistent with the general laws of nature, enough might be produced in favour of the existence of "second sight."' When we recollect how all history and tradition abound in instances of this belief, oftentimes apparently resting on evidence beyond impeachment, it is not surprising that it has numbered among its adherents advocates of most schools of thought. Although, too, of late years the theory of 'second sight' has not been so widely preached as formerly, yet it must not be supposed that the stories urged in support of it are less numerous, or that it has ceased to be regarded as great a mystery as in days gone by.

In defining 'second sight' as a singular faculty 'of seeing an otherwise invisible object without any previous means used by the person that beholds it for that end,' we are at once confronted with the well-known axiom that 'a man cannot be in two places at once,' a rule with which it is difficult to reconcile such statements as those recorded by Pennant of a gentleman of the Hebrides said to have

had the gift of foreseeing visitors in time to get ready for them, or the anecdote which tells how St. Ambrose fell into a comatose state while celebrating the mass at Milan, and on his recovery asserted that he had been present at St. Martin's funeral at Tours, where it was afterwards declared he had been seen. But it must be remembered that believers in 'second sight' base their faith not so much on metaphysical definitions as on the evidence of daily experience, it being of immaterial importance to them how impossible a certain doctrine may seem, provided it only has the testimony of actual witnesses in its favour. Hence, in spite of all arguments against the so-called 'second sight,' it is urged, on the other hand, that visions coinciding with real facts and events occurring at a distance—oftentimes thousands of miles away—are beheld by persons possessing this remarkable faculty. Thus Collins, in his ode on the 'Popular Superstitions of the Highlands,' alludes to this belief:

To monarchs dear, some hundred miles astray
  Oft have they seen Fate give the fatal blow.
  The seer, in Sky, shrieked as the blood did flow
When headless Charles warm on the scaffold lay.

Accounts differ largely respecting the faculty of 'second sight.' Some make it hereditary, and according to an account communicated to Aubrey from a gentleman at Strathspey, some of the seers acknowledged the possibility of teaching it. A correspondent of the 'Gentleman's Magazine'[219] says 'the visions attendant on "second sight" are not confined to solemn or important events. The future visit of a mountebank or piper, the arrival of common travellers, or, if possible, still more trifling matters than these, are foreseen by the seers. Not

only aged men and women have the “second sight,” but also children, horses, and cows. Children endowed with that faculty manifest it by crying aloud at the very time a corpse appears to a seer. That horses possess it is likewise plain, from their violent and sudden starting when their rider, or a seer in company with him, sees a vision of any kind, by night or by day. It is observable of a horse, that he will not go forwards towards the apparition but must be led round, at some distance from the common road; his terror is evident, from his becoming all over in a profuse sweat, although quite cool a moment before. Balaam’s ass seems to have possessed this power or faculty; and, perhaps, what we improperly style a startlish horse may be one who has the gift of the “second sight.” That cows have the “second sight” is proved by the following circumstance. If a woman, whilst milking a cow, happen to have a vision of that kind, the cow runs away in a great fright at the same instant, and cannot, for some time, be brought to stand quietly.’ It is further added, that persons who have not long been gifted with ‘second sight,’ after seeing a vision without doors, on coming into a house, and approaching the fire, will immediately fall into a swoon. All those, too, who have the ‘second sight’ do not see these appearances at the same time, but if one having this faculty designedly touches his fellow seer at the instant that a vision appears to him, in that case it will be seen by both.

Goethe relates that as he was once riding along a footpath towards Drusenheim, he saw, ‘not with the eyes of his body, but with those of his spirit, himself on horseback coming towards him, in a dress that he then did not possess. It was grey, and trimmed with gold. Eight years afterwards he found himself, quite

accidentally, on that spot, on horseback, and in precisely that attire.'[220]

In 1652 a Scottish lawyer, Sir George Mackenzie, afterwards Lord Tarbat, when driven to the Highlands by fear of the Government of Cromwell, made very extensive inquiries concerning this supposed supernatural faculty, and wrote an elaborate account of its manifestations to the celebrated Robert Boyle, published in the correspondence of Samuel Pepys. Aubrey, too, devoted considerable attention to the subject, and in the year 1683 appeared the treatise of 'Theophilus Insularum,' with about one hundred cases gathered from various sources.

It was, however, in Scotland that this belief gained a specially strong footing. In the year 1799, a traveller writing of the peasants of Kirkcudbrightshire relates: 'It is common among them to fancy that they see the wraiths of persons dying which will be visible to one and not to others present with him. Within these last twenty years it was hardly possible to meet with any person who had not seen many wraiths and ghosts in the course of his experience.' Indeed, we are told that many of the Highlanders gained a lucrative livelihood by enlightening their neighbours on matters revealed to them through 'second sight;' and Mr. Jamieson writes: 'Whether this belief was communicated to the Scotch by the northern nations who so long had possession of it, I shall not pretend to determine, but traces of the same wonderful faculty may be found among the Scandinavians.' One of the best illustrations of this superstition as it prevailed in the Highlands is that given by Dr. Johnson in his 'Journey to the Hebrides': 'A man on a journey far from home falls from a horse; another, who is

perhaps at work about the house, sees him bleeding on the ground, commonly with a landscape of the place where the accident befalls him. Another seer, driving home his cattle, or wandering in idleness, or musing in the sunshine, is suddenly surprised by the appearance of a bridal ceremony, or funeral procession, and counts the mourners or attendants, of whom, if he knows them, he relates the names; if he knows them not, he can describe the dresses. Things distant are seen at the instant when they happen.' 'At the Literary Club,' says Boswell, 'before Johnson came in, we talked of his "Journey to the Western Islands," and of his coming away "willing to believe the 'second sight,'" which seemed to excite some ridicule. I was then so impressed with many of the stories which I had been told, that I avowed my conviction, saying, "He is only willing to believe—I do believe; the evidence is enough for me, though not for his great mind. What will not fill a quart bottle will fill a pint bottle; I am filled with belief." "Are you?" said George Colman; "then cork it up."' It is not many years ago since a man lived at Blackpool who was possessed, as he pretended, by this faculty, and was visited by persons from all parts anxious to gain information about absent friends. This belief, it may be added, is not confined to our own country, curious traces of it being found among savage tribes. Thus Captain Jonathan Carver obtained from a Cree medicine man a correct prophesy of the arrival of a canoe with news the following day at noon; and we are told how, when Mr. Mason Brown was travelling with the *voyageurs* on the Coppermine river, he was met by Indians of the very band he was seeking, these having been despatched by their medicine-man, who, on being interrogated, affirmed that 'he saw them coming, and heard them talk on their

journey.'

Again, persons gifted with 'second sight' are said not only to know particular events at a distance precisely at the same moment as they happen, but also to have a foreknowledge of them before they take place, for—

> As the sun,
> Ere it is risen, sometimes paints its image
> In the atmosphere, so often do the spirits
> Of great events stride on before the events,
> And in to-day already walks to-morrow.

Dr. Tylor, in his 'Primitive Culture,' relates the case of a Shetland lady who affirmed how, some years ago, she and a girl leading her pony recognised the familiar figure of one Peter Sutherland, whom they knew to be at the time in Edinburgh. He turned a corner, and they saw him no more, but next week came the news of his sudden death.

A curious old story illustrative of 'second sight,' of which there are several versions, is that of 'Booty's Ghost,' an account of which occurs in Kirby's 'Wonderful and Eccentric Museum' (ii. 247). It was an action for slander of a deceased husband brought by the widow, and the following extract, which contains an outline of the strange tale, is from the journal of Mr. Spinks:

'*Friday, May 15, 1687.*—We had the observation of Mr. Booty this day. Captain Barrisby, Captain Bristowe, Captain Brown, I, and Mr. Ball, merchant, went on shore in Captain Barnaby's boat to shoot rabbits upon Stromboli; and when we had done, we called our men together by us, and about half an hour and fourteen minutes after three in the afternoon, to our great surprise, we all of us saw two men come running towards us with such swiftness

that no living man could run half so fast as they did run, when all of us heard Captain Barnaby say, "Lord, bless me! the foremost is old Booty, my next door neighbour," but he said he did not know the other that run behind; he was in black clothes, and the foremost was in grey. Then Captain Barnaby desired all of us to take an account of the time, and put it down in our pocket-books, and when we got on board we wrote it in our journals; for we saw them into the flames of fire, and there was a great noise which greatly affrighted us all, for we none of us ever saw or heard the like before. Captain Barnaby said he was certain it was old Booty, which he saw running over Stromboli and into the flames of hell. It is stated that Captain Barnaby told his wife, and she told somebody else, and that it was afterwards told to Mrs. Booty, who arrested Captain Barnaby in a thousand pound action for what he had said of her husband. Captain Barnaby gave bail to it, and it came on to a trial in the Court of King's Bench, and they had Mr. Booty's wearing apparel brought into Court, and the sexton of the parish, and the people that were with him when he died; and we swore to our journals, and it came to the same time within two minutes. Ten of our men swore to the buttons on his coat, and that they were covered with the same sort of cloth his coat was made of, and so it proved. The jury asked Mr. Spinks if he knew Mr. Booty. He answered, "I never saw him till he ran by me on the burning mountain."'

The Chief Justice from April 1687 to February 1689 was Sir Robert Wright. His name is not given in the report, but the judge said: 'Lord, have mercy on me, and grant that I may never see what you have seen. One, two, or three may be mistaken, but thirty can never be mistaken.' So the widow lost her suit.

[221]

It appears, also, that coming events are mostly forecasted by various symbolic omens which generally take the form of spectral exhibitions. Thus, a phantom shroud seen in the morning on a living person is said to betoken his death in the course of the day; but if seen late in the evening, no particular time is indicated, further than that it will take place within the year. If, too, the shroud does not cover the whole body, the fulfilment of the vision may be expected at some distant period.

But these kind of omens vary largely in different countries; and, on the Continent, where much misplaced faith is attached to them, they are frequently the source of much needless dread.

CHAPTER XVIII

COMPACTS BETWEEN THE LIVING AND DEAD

SOMETIMES ghosts appear in consequence of an agreement made before death with some particular friend, that he or she who first died should appear to the survivor. Numerous tales are told illustrative of this belief, one of the best authenticated being that recorded by Lord Brougham,[222] who, speaking of his intimate friend at the University, writes: ‘There was no divinity class, but we frequently in our walks discussed and speculated upon many grave subjects, among others, on the immortality of the soul and on a future state. This question and the possibility, I will not say of ghosts walking, but of the dead appearing to the living, were subjects of much speculation; and

we actually committed the folly of drawing up an agreement written with our blood, to the effect that whichever of us died first should appear to the other, and thus solve any doubts we had entertained of the "life after death."' Years afterwards—on December 19, 1799—when Lord Brougham had almost forgotten the existence of his friend, as he was taking a warm bath, he appeared to him; but, as he adds, 'No doubt I had fallen asleep, and the appearance presented to my eyes was a dream. I recollected quickly enough our old discussion, and the bargain we had made. I could not discharge from my mind the impression that my friend must have died, and that his appearance to me was to be received by me as a proof of his future state.' In October 1862 Lord Brougham made this postscript: 'I have just been copying out from my journal the account of this strange dream—*certissima mortis imago*. And now to finish the story begun about sixty years since. Soon after my return to Edinburgh, there arrived a letter from India, announcing G——'s death, and stating that he had died on the 19th of December.'

A curious story is told by John Darley, Carthusian monk, who relates that, as he was attending upon the death bed of Father Raby, in 1534, he said to the expiring man, 'Good Father Raby, if the dead can visit the living, I beseech you to pay a visit to me by-and-by;' and Raby answered, 'Yes;' immediately after which he drew his last breath. But on the same afternoon, about five o'clock, as Darley was meditating in his cell, the departed man suddenly appeared to him in a monk's habit, and said to him, 'Why do you not follow our father?' And I replied, 'Why?' He said, 'Because he is a martyr in heaven next to the angels.' Then I said, 'Where are all our fathers who did like to him?' He answered and said,

‘They are all pretty well, but not so well as he is.’ And then I asked him how he was, and he said ‘Pretty well.’ And I said, ‘Father, shall I pray for you?’ To which he replied, ‘I am as well as need be, but prayer is at all times good,’ and with these words he vanished.[223]

There is the well-known Beresford ghost tale, about which so many accounts have been given. It appears that Lord Tyrone and Miss Blank were orphans, educated in the same house ‘in the principles of Deism.’ When they were about fourteen years old their preceptor died, and their new guardian tried to persuade them to embrace revealed religion. The boy and girl stuck to Deism. But they made a compact, that he or she who died first should appear to the survivor, ‘to declare what religion was most approved by the Supreme Being.’ Miss Blank married St. Martin Beresford, and one day she appeared at breakfast with a pale face, and a black band round her wrist. On her death-bed she explained how the ghost of Lord Tyrone had appeared to her at the hour of his death, and had correctly prophesied her future: ‘He struck my wrist; his hand was as cold as marble; in a moment the sinews shrank up, every nerve withered.... I bound a piece of black ribbon round my wrist.’ The black ribbon was formerly in the possession of Lady Betty Cobb, who, during her long life, was ever ready to attest the truth of this narration, as are, to the present hour, the whole of the Tyrone and Beresford families.[224]

As Mr. Andrew Lang points out in the ‘Nineteenth Century,’[225] Lord Tyrone merely did what many ghosts had done before in the matter of touching Lady Beresford’s wrist. Thus, as he says, according to Henry More, ‘one’ (bogie) ‘took a relation of

Melanchthon's by the hand, and so scorched her that she bore the mark of it to her dying day.' Before Melanchthon the anecdote was improved by Eudes de Shirton, in a sermon, who tells how a certain clerk, Serlon, made with a friend the covenant which Miss Blank made with Lord Tyrone. The friend died, and appeared to Serlon 'in a parchment cloak, covered with the finest writing in the world.' Being asked how he fared, he said that this cloak, a punishment for his love of logic, weighed heavier than lead, and scorched like the shirt of Nessus. Then he held out his hand, and let fall a drop which burned Serlon to the bone—

And evermore that master wore
A covering on his wrist.

Before Eudes de Shirton, William of Malmesbury knew this anecdote. His characters are two clerks, an Epicurean and a Platonist, who made the usual compact that the first to die should appear to the survivor, and state whether Plato's ideas, or Epicurus in his atoms, were the correct reply to the conundrum of the universe. The visit was to be paid within thirty days of the death. One of the philosophical pair was killed, and appeared to the other, but after the time arranged, explaining that he had been unable to keep his appointment earlier, and, stretching out his hand, let fall three burning drops of blood, which branded the brow of the psychical inquirer.

Mrs. Grant, in her 'Superstitions of the Highlands,' tells how a widow, returning home through a wood at dusk, was met by her husband's ghost, 'who led her carefully along a difficult bridge, but left a blue mark on her wrist which the neighbours had opportunities of seeing during the week; she survived

the adventure.' A similar circumstance is related by Richard Baxter,[226] in connection with a lady, soon after the Restoration, when Parliament was passing Acts which pressed sore on the dissenters. While praying for the deliverance of the faithful from the evils which threatened them, 'it was suddenly given her, that there should be a speedy deliverance, even in a very short time. She desired to know which way, and it being set strongly on her as a revelation, she prayed earnestly that if this were a true divine impulse and revelation, God would certify her by some sign, and she ventured to choose the sign herself, and laid her hand on the outside of the upper part of her leg, begging of God, that if it were a true answer, He would make on that place some visible mark. There was presently the mark of black spots, like as if a hand had burnt it, which her sister witnessed, there being no such sign before.'

In Scott's well-known ballad, the phantom knight impresses an indelible mark on the lady who has been his paramour, and in the Tartan stories, written by a Frenchman, a ghost appears to Prince Faruk in a dream, and touches him on the arm. The Prince finds the mark of the burn when he awakes.[227] There are numerous stories of this kind scattered here and there in the traditionary lore of this and other countries, and such indelible marks, left by ghosts of their visits, have been held as a mysterious proof of their materialistic power.

A correspondent of 'Notes and Queries' (2nd S. v. 343) vouches for the authenticity of the following 'incontrovertible facts,' which, he says, 'occurred to a friend of my own, and to the companion of his early youth, who, having obtained a cadetship, went to India.' The story runs thus. 'The former was towards evening driving across a long barren heath.

Suddenly, by his side in the vehicle, was seen the figure of his playmate. Happening to turn his head from him to the horse, and on looking again, the apparition had vanished. Remembering the conversation that they had held together at parting, he doubted not but that his friend was at that moment dead, and that in his appearing to him, he was come in the fulfilment of their mutual promise, in order to remove all pre-existing doubts as to the possibility of a denizen of a higher sphere appearing to its friend on earth. By the next Indian Mail was received intelligence of his death, showing the exact coincidence as to the time of the two events.'

In the biography of William Smellie is the history of a compact he made with his friend William Greenlaw, whereby it was mutually agreed that whoever died first should return and give the other an account of his condition after death. Shortly after the anniversary of his death, the ghost of Greenlaw is reported to have appeared to Smellie, and in a solemn tone informed him 'that he had experienced great difficulties in procuring permission to return to this earth, according to their agreement; that he was now in a much better world than the one he had left,' but added 'that the hopes and wishes of its inhabitants were by no means satisfied, as, like those of the lower world, they still looked forward in the hope of eventually reaching a still happier state of existence.' Another case of a similar kind is that of the appearance of the Rev. Theodore Alois Buckley, formerly one of the chaplains of Christ Church, Oxford, to his friend Mr. Kenneth Mackenzie. The story, as narrated in Newton Crosland's 'Theory of Apparitions,' is, that about the year 1850 the two friends, when at Oxford, entered into a compact of the kind already described, the signal of appearance

arranged between them being the laying of a ghostly hand on the forehead of the surviving friend. On January 30, 1856, Mr. Buckley died, and on February 2, it is said, kept the agreement, for as Mr. Mackenzie 'was lying in bed, watching the candle expiring, he felt placed over one eye and his forehead a cool, damp hand, and on looking up saw Buckley in his ordinary apparel, with his portfolio under his arm standing by his bedside.'

The Duchess of Mazarin is said to have appeared to Madame de Beauclair, in accordance with a solemn compact made in life, that whoever died first should return, if it were possible, and inform the other of the existence of the future state. But it was some years after her death that the Duchess kept her promise, and when she did, it was to make this announcement: 'Beauclair, between the hours of twelve and one this night you will be with me.' The non-appearance of her friend's spirit for so long had caused Madame de Beauclair to doubt the non-existence of a future life.[228]

But in some cases such compacts have not been kept. Dr. Chance tells us in 'Notes and Queries' (6th S. ii. 501) that in 1846-1847, as a young man, he made such a compact, but when his friend died in 1878 he did not appear, neither has he ever done so. To quote Dr. Chance's words: 'It is true my friend died about noon, and that I knew of his death the same evening, so that if he had appeared to me I should have learnt nothing new, whilst in most, if not all, of the recorded cases the apparition has been the first to convey the intelligence of the death. But this did not exonerate my friend from his promise; and if he did not keep it, I must take it that he could not come, for nothing but inability would have kept me from fulfilling my share of the compact if I had

been called upon to do so.'

In Mather's 'Remarkable Providences' the failure of a spirit to keep a promise of appearing after its separation from the body is referred to, the author being of opinion that there is great hazard attending such covenants. To quote his words: 'It may be after men have made such agreements, devils may appear to them pretending to be their deceased friends, and thereby their souls may be drawn in woful snares. Who knoweth whether God will permit the persons, who have thus confederated, to appear in the world again after their death? And if not, then the survivor will be under great temptation unto Atheism, as it fell out with the late Earl of Rochester, who (as is reported in his life by Dr. Burnet) did in the year 1665 enter into a formal engagement with another gentleman, not without ceremonies of religion, that if either of them died, he should appear, and give the other notice of the future state if there were any. After this the other gentleman was killed, but did never appear after his death to the Earl of Rochester, which was a great snare to him during the rest of his life. Though, when God awakened the Earl's conscience upon his death-bed, he could not but acknowledge that one who had so corrupted the natural principles of truth as he had done, had no reason to expect that such an extraordinary thing should be done for his conviction. Or if such agreement should necessitate an apparition, how would the world be confounded with spectres; how many would probably be scared out of their wits; or what curious questions would vain men be proposing about things which are (and it is meet they should be) hid from mortals?'

CHAPTER XIX

MINERS' GHOSTS

MINES have long been supposed to be haunted, a fact which is no cause of wonderment, considering the many unearthly sounds—such as 'the dripping of water down the shafts, the tunnelling of distant passages, the rumbling of trains from some freshly-exploded lode'—constantly to be heard there. In early times it was thought that all mines of gold, &c. were guarded by evil spirits, a belief to which Falstaff alludes in 2 Henry IV. (Act iv. sc. 3), where he speaks of 'learning a mere hoard of gold kept by a devil.' The Peruvian Indians affirm that the treasures in emerald mines are guarded by evil spirits, and Stevenson, speaking of the emerald mine in the neighbourhood of Los Esmeraldos, writes: 'I never visited it, owing to the superstitious dread of the natives, who assured me it was enchanted, and guarded by a dragon, which poured forth thunder and lightning on those who dared to ascend the river.' The spirits that haunt mines are considered to be unfriendly, because, as an old writer quoted by Reginald Scot remarks, 'they do exceedingly envy every man's benefit in the discovery of hidden treasure, ever haunting such places where money is concealed, and diffusing malevolent and poisonous influences to blast the lives and limbs of those that dare attempt the discovery thereof.' And 'modern authors,' adds Fuller, 'avouch that malignant spirits haunt the places where precious metals are found, as if the devil did there sit abrood to hatch them, cunningly pretending an unwillingness to part with them; whereas, indeed, he gains more by one mine minted out into money than by a thousand concealed

in the earth.'

It is supposed by the people who live in the neighbourhood of Largo Law, in Fife, that there is a very rich mine of gold under and near the mountain, which has never yet been properly searched for. So convinced are they that this is so, that, whenever they see the wool of a sheep's side tinged with yellow, they think it has acquired that colour from having lain above the gold of the mine. Many years ago a ghost made its appearance upon the spot, supposed to be acquainted with the secret of the mine, but, as it required to be spoken to before it would condescend to speak, the question arose as to who should accost it. At length a shepherd volunteered to ask the ghost the cause of its haunting this locality, and to his surprise it proved very affable, promising to appear on a particular night at eight o'clock, when, said the spirit,

If Auchindownie cock disna craw,
And Balmain horn disna blaw,
I'll tell ye where the gowd mine is in Largo Law.

True to its promise, the ghost came ready to divulge the secret, when Tammie Norrie, the cowherd of Balmain, either through obstinacy or forgetfulness, 'blew a blast both loud and dread,' at which the ghost vanished, after exclaiming—

Woe to the man that blew the horn
For out of the spot he shall ne'er be borne.

The unfortunate horn-blower was struck dead on the spot, and as it was found impossible to remove his body, which seemed, as it were, pinned to the earth, a cairn of stones was raised over it, known still as Norrie's Law, and which is regarded as uncanny

by the peasantry.[229]

Again, frequent accidents in mines were thought to be a proof of the potency ‘of the metallic spirits, which so tormented the workmen in German mines, and in those of other countries, by blindness, giddiness, and sudden sickness, that they were obliged frequently to abandon mines well known to be rich in metals.’[230]

Strange noises are oftentimes a puzzle to the miner, and suggest a supernatural agency. In the mine at Wheal Vor, where there appears to have been a general belief in ‘tokens’ and supernatural appearances, a man one morning, on being relieved from his turn as watcher, reported that during the night he had heard a sound like the emptying of a cartload of rubbish in front of the account house where he was staying. On going out nothing was to be seen. The man, considering the strange sound as a warning, pined away and died within a few weeks.

The Cornish miner too has long been a firm believer in the existence of a mysterious being known as the ‘Knocker.’ The late Charles Kingsley, in his ‘Yeast,’ asks, ‘Who are the knockers?’ To which question Tregarra answers: ‘They are the ghosts, the miners hold, of the old Jews that crucified Our Lord, and were sent for slaves by the Roman Emperors to work the mines.... We used to break into the old shafts and adits which they had made, and find fine old stag’s horn pickaxes, that crumbled to pieces when we brought them to grass. And they say that if a man will listen on a still night about these shafts, he may hear the ghosts of them at work, knocking and picking, as clear as if there was a man at work in the next level.’ In some districts the knockers are designated ‘the buccas,’ and, generally speaking, they work upon productive lodes only. An interesting

illustration of these strange beings is given in Carne's 'Tales of the West,' wherein we read how 'the rolling of the barrows, the sound of the pickaxes, and the fall of the earth and stones, are distinctly heard through the night, often, no doubt, the echo of their own labours; but sometimes continued long after the labour has ceased, and occasionally voices seem to mingle with them.'

In Wales, when a mysterious thumping, not produced by any human being, is heard, and when, in examining the spot from whence the sound proceeded, indications of ore oftentimes are detected, the sturdiest incredulity is shaken.[231] In such cases, 'science points out that the noise may be produced by the action of water upon the loose stones in fissures and pot-holes of the mountain limestone, and does actually suggest the presence of metals.' Furthermore, as the late Mr. Wirt Sikes rightly suggests, 'in the days before a Priestley had caught and bottled that demon which exists in the shape of carbonic acid gas, when the miner was smitten dead by an invisible foe in the deep bowels of the earth, it was natural that his awe-struck companions should ascribe the mysterious blow to a supernatural enemy. When the workman was assailed suddenly by what we now call fire-damp, which killed him and his companions upon the dark rocks, scorching, burning, and killing, those who survived were not likely to question the existence of the mine-fiend.' Hence, too, originated the superstition of basilisks in mines, which destroyed with their terrible gaze.[232]

In the 'Colliery Guardian' for May 13, 1863, many strange superstitions are described, in which it is stated that the pitmen in the Midland Counties have or had a belief unknown to the north, in aerial

whistlings warning them against the pit. Who or what the invisible musicians were, nobody pretended to know, but they generally consisted of seven, as the 'Seven Whistlers' is the name they bear to this day. [233] An instance of this superstition is given in the 'Times' of September 21, 1874. Owing to certain nocturnal sounds, a large number of the men employed at some of the Bedworth collieries in North Warwickshire refused to descend the coal-pits in which they were employed. During Sunday it was stated that these sounds had been distinctly heard in the neighbourhood of Bedworth, and the result was that on the following morning, when labour should have been resumed, the men pointedly refused to work.

The Northern mines were supposed to be haunted by two goblins. One was a spiteful elf, who indicated his presence only by the mischief he perpetrated. He rejoiced in the name of 'Cutty Soams,' and appears 'to have amused himself by severing the rope-traces or soams, by which an assistant putter, honoured by the title of "the fool," is yoked to the tub. The strands of hemp, which were left all sound in the board at "kenner-time," were found next morning severed in twain. "'Cutty Soams' has been at work," would the fool and his driver say, dolefully knotting the cord.' The other goblin was no other than a ghostly putter, and his name was 'Bluecap.' Sometimes the miners would perceive a light blue flame flicker through the air, and settle on a full coal-tub, which immediately moved towards the rolley way, as though impelled by the sturdiest sinews in the working. Industrious Bluecap was at his vocation, but he required to be paid for his services; therefore, once a fortnight, his wages were left for him in a solitary corner of the mine. If they were a

farthing below his due, the indignant Bluecap would not pocket a stiver; if they were a farthing above his due, Bluecap left the surplus where he found it. A hewer was asked if Bluecap's wages were nowadays to be left for him, whether they would be appropriated. The man shrewdly answered he thought they would be taken by Bluecap, or somebody else.

But as most mines are productive, more or less, of the same weird echoes, we find similar stories current in different localities of strange hammerings and knockings. A story is told in North Ayrshire of a miner who, day by day, heard the sounds of a pick on the other side of the coal into which he was digging, which so terrified him, that at last he sought the help of a minister to protect him 'from the machinations of the devil.' The good man having asked him how many 'holings'—the depth of coal displaced by one blasting—there were before the wall between him and the evil spirit could be broken through, sent him back to work until there was only one 'holing' between them. Then he was to take a piece of bread, and crumble it all down in a train to the mouth of the pit, and again resuming his pick, to strike through the dividing coal. The moment this was done, he was to cry 'The hole's mine!' and make for the mouth of the pit as fast as he could. These directions the miner carefully followed, but he had a narrow escape, for he had no sooner reached his place of safety than the walls of the pit came close together with a thundering crash.

Another story, recorded in 'Communications with the Unseen World,' tells how, for many years, the overseer of a mine at Whitehaven was a Cumberland man, but being found guilty of some unfair proceedings, he was dismissed by the proprietors

from his post, though employed in an inferior one. The new overseer was a Northumberland man, to whom the degraded overseer bore the strongest hatred, and was heard to say that some day he would be his ruin. One day they were both destroyed by fire-damp, and it was believed in the mine that, preferring revenge to life, the ex-overseer had taken his successor, less acquainted than himself with the localities of the mine, into a place where he knew the fire-damp to exist, without a safety lamp, and had thus contrived his destruction. But, ever after, in the place where the two men perished, their voices might be heard high in dispute, the Northumbrian burr being distinctly audible, and also the well-known pronunciation of the treacherous murderer.

The mysterious apparition of a woman who committed suicide was supposed to haunt Polbreen Mine, Cornwall, locally known as 'Dorcas.' She appeared to take a malicious delight in tormenting the miner when at work, calling him by his name, and enticing him from his duties. This was carried on by her to such an extent that when 'a tributer' had made a poor month, he was commonly asked if he had 'been chasing Dorcas.' On one occasion only, Dorcas is said to have acted kindly. It is stated[234] that two miners, who may be styled Martin and Jacky, were at work in their end, and at the time busily engaged 'beating the borer.' The name of Jack was distinctly uttered between the blows. He stopped and listened—all was still. They proceeded with their task, a blow on the iron rod—'Jacky!' Another blow —'Jacky!' They pause—all is silent. 'Well, thee wert called, Jacky,' said Martin, 'go and see.' Jacky, however, disregarded the sound, work was resumed, and 'Jacky! Jacky! Jacky!' was called more vehemently and distinctly than before. Jacky threw

down his hammer, resolved to satisfy himself as to the person who was calling him. But he had not proceeded many yards from the spot on which he had been standing at work, when a mass of rock fell from the roof of the level weighing many tons, which would have crushed him to death. Martin had been stooping, holding the borer, and a projecting corner of rock just above him turned off the falling mass. He was securely enclosed, but he was extricated without injury. Jack declared to his dying day that he owed his life to Dorcas.

A similar experience is recorded by Mr. John Lean in the 'West Briton,' who relates how, when he was underground hundreds of fathoms distant from any other human being at Wheal Jewell, a mine in the parish of Gwennap, 'as he was walking slowly and silently through the level, his thoughts, as it were, absorbed, examining the rich course of copper ore in the roof or back, he was aroused as though by an audible voice, "You are in the winze!" He at once threw himself flat on his back in the bottom of the level, and on shifting from this posture to that of a sitting one, he discovered that his heels were on the verge of the end of a winze, left exposed and open, embracing all the width of the gunnis, communicating with the next level, ten fathoms below. At the moment he received this singular warning, his foot was lifted for the next step over the mouth of this abyss, a step to eternity, had it not thus been prevented.'

On the Continent, similar tales of phantoms haunting mines are current. In the mines about Clausthal and Andreasberg a spectre was formerly seen who went by the name of the 'Bergmönch.' He was clad as a monk, but was of gigantic stature, and always carried in his hand a large tallow candle,

which never went out. When the miners entered in the morning, he would stand at the aperture with his light, letting them pass under it. It appears that the Bergmönch was formerly a burgomaster or director, who took such delight in mining that, when at the point of death, he prayed that instead of resting in heaven, he might wander about till the last day, over hill and dale, in pits and shafts, and superintend the mining. To those towards whom he is well disposed he renders many a kind service, and appears to them in a human form and of ordinary stature; while to others he appears in his true form. His eyes sprout forth flames, and are like coach-wheels; his legs are like spiders' webs.[235] Associated, too, with the German miners' superstitious fancies is the belief in the 'Cobal,' or 'Kobold,' a supernatural being who is generally malicious, and rarely heard but when mischief is near. But still more to be feared were the 'Knauff-kriegen,' of whom Professor Ramazzini of Padua thus writes:

'I took the story of devils haunting mines to be fabulous, until I was undeceived by a skilful Hanoverian operator in metals, who is now employed by our duke in tracing the metallic veins in the mountainous parts of Modena. For this man told me seriously, that in the Hanoverian mines the diggers have frequent falls, which they say are occasioned by their being knocked down by devils, which they call "Knauff-kriegen," and that after such falls they often die in the space of three or four days; but if they outlive that time they recover.'

French mines are haunted, and many tales are told of a spectral hare which at times is seen. One story tells how 'a miner was frightened one day by seeing a white object run and conceal itself in an iron pipe. He went forward, and stopped up the two ends of the

tube, and called one of his fellow men to examine the pipe with him. They did so, but found nothing within, the hare spirit had vanished.'[236] 'Similarly at Wheal Vor,' says Mr. Hunt,[237] 'it has always been and is now believed that a fatal accident in the mine is presaged by the appearance of a hare, or white rabbit, in one of the engine houses. The men solemnly declare that they have chased these appearances till they were hemmed in apparently, without being able to catch them; and they tell how the white rabbit on one occasion was run into a "windbore" lying on the ground, and though stopped in, escaped.' With this belief may be compared one which was common in Sussex a few years ago, closely resembling the French superstition of the Fétiches, animals of a dazzling whiteness which appear only in the night-time, and vanish as soon as anyone attempts to touch them. A blacksmith's wife at Ashington, the daughter of a small farmer, was found one morning much depressed in mind, and on being questioned as to the cause of it said, 'I shall hear bad news before the day is over; for late last night as I was waiting for my husband what should I see on looking out of the window, lying close under it, but a thing like a duck, yet a great deal whiter than it ought to have been, whiter than any snow.' It was suggested that it might have been a neighbour's cat, and that it looked whiter than usual on account of the moonlight. 'Oh, dear no!' she replied, 'it was no cat, nor anything alive; those white things were sent as warnings,' but no sad news came as she expected.[238] She nevertheless remained firmly convinced that a warning of some kind had been supernaturally sent to her.

CHAPTER XX

THE BANSHEE

ONE of the grandest and wildest legends of Ireland is that relating to the Banshee—a mysterious personage, generally supposed to be the harbinger of some approaching misfortune. The name of the Banshee 'is variously pronounced Banshi and Benshee, being translated by different scholars, the "Female Fairy," the "Woman of Peace," the "Lady of Death," the "Angel of Death," the "White Lady of Sorrow," the "Nymph of the Air," and the "Spirit of the Air."' The many romantic incidents in which this weird figure has, at different times, made its appearance are treasured up among the household stories of our Irish peasantry. It must not be forgotten that in a country abounding in natural beauties such a superstition would harmonise with the surroundings of the picturesque scenery, and so gain a firm hold on the mind of the inhabitants.

Unlike, also, many of the legendary beliefs of this kind, the popular accounts illustrative of it are related on the evidence of all sections of the community, many an enlightened and well-informed advocate being enthusiastic in his vindication of its reality. It would seem, however, that no family which is not of an ancient and noble stock is honoured with this visit of the Banshee, and hence its non-appearance has been regarded as an indication of disqualification in this respect on the part of the person about to die. 'If I am rightly informed,' writes Sir Walter Scott, 'the distinction of a Banshee is only allowed to families of the pure Milesian stock, and is never ascribed to any descendant of the proudest Norman or boldest Saxon

who followed the banner of Strongbow, much less to adventurers of later date who have obtained settlements in the Green Isle.' Thus, an amusing story is contained in an Irish elegy to the effect that on the death of one of the Knights of Kerry, when the Banshee was heard to lament his decease at Dingle—a seaport town, the property of those knights—all the merchants of this place were thrown into a state of alarm lest the mournful and ominous wailing should be a forewarning of the death of one of them, but, as the poet humorously points out, there was no necessity for them to be anxious on this point. Although, through misfortune, a family may be brought down from high estate to the rank of peasant tenants, the Banshee never leaves nor forgets it till the last member has been gathered to his fathers in the churchyard. The MacCarthys, O'Flahertys, Magraths, O'Neils, O'Rileys, O'Sullivans, O'Reardons, have their Banshees, though many representatives of these names are in abject poverty.[239]

'The Banshee,' says Mr. McAnally, 'is really a disembodied soul, that of one who in life was strongly attached to the family, or who had good reason to hate all its members. Thus, in different instances, the Banshee's song may be inspired by different motives. When the Banshee loves those whom she calls, the song is a low, soft chant, giving notice, indeed, of the close proximity of the angel of death, but with a tenderness of tone that reassures the one destined to die, and comforts the survivors; rather a welcome than a warning, and having in its tones a thrill of exultation, as though the messenger spirit were bringing glad tidings to him summoned to join the waiting throng of his ancestors.' To a doomed member of the family of the O'Reardons the Banshee generally appears in the form of a beautiful

woman, ‘and sings a song so sweetly solemn as to reconcile him to his approaching fate.’ But if, during his lifetime, the Banshee was an enemy of the family, the cry is the scream of a fiend, howling with demoniac delight over the coming death agony of another of his foes.

Hence, in Ireland, a source of dread to many a family against which she has an enmity is the ‘hateful Banshee.’ ‘It appears,’ adds McAnally,[240] ‘that a noble family, whose name is still familiar in Mayo, is attended by a Banshee of this description—the spirit of a young girl, deceived, and afterwards murdered by a former head of the family. With her dying breath she cursed her murderer, and promised she would attend him and his for ever. After many years the chieftain reformed his ways, and his youthful crime was almost forgotten even by himself, when one night, as he and his family were seated by the fire, the most terrible shrieks were suddenly heard outside the castle walls. All ran out, but saw nothing. During the night the screams continued as though the castle were besieged by demons, and the unhappy man recognised in the cry of the Banshee the voice of the young girl he had murdered. The next night he was assassinated by one of his followers, when again the wild unearthly screams were heard exulting over his fate. Since that night the “hateful Banshee” has, it is said, never failed to notify to the family, with shrill cries of revengeful gladness, when the time of one of their number has arrived.’

Among some of the recorded instances of the Banshee’s appearance may be mentioned one related by Miss Lefrau, the niece of Sheridan, in the Memoirs of her grandmother, Mrs. Frances Sheridan. From this account we gather that Miss Elizabeth Sheridan

was a firm believer in the Banshee, and firmly maintained that the one attached to the Sheridan family was distinctly heard lamenting beneath the windows of the family residence before the news arrived from France of Mrs. Frances Sheridan's death at Blois. She added that a niece of Miss Sheridan's made her very angry by observing that as Mrs. Frances Sheridan was by birth a Chamberlaine, a family of English extraction, she had no right to the guardianship of an Irish fairy, and that therefore the Banshee must have made a mistake. Then there is the well-known case related by Lady Fanshawe, who tells us how, when on a visit in Ireland, she was awakened at midnight by a supernatural scream outside her window. On looking out she saw a young and rather handsome woman, with dishevelled hair, who eventually vanished with two shrieks similar to that which had at first attracted her attention. On communicating the circumstance in the morning, her host replied, 'A near relation of mine died last night in the castle, and before such an event happens, the female spectre whom you have seen is always visible.'

This weird apparition is generally supposed to assume the form of a woman, sometimes young, but more often old. She is usually attired in a loose white drapery, and her long ragged locks hang over her thin shoulders. As night time approaches she occasionally becomes visible, and pours forth her mournful wail—a sound said to resemble the melancholy moaning of the wind:

Who sits upon the heath forlorn,
With robe so free and tresses worn?
Anon she pours a harrowing strain,
And then she sits all mute again!
Now peals the wild funereal cry,

And now—it sinks into a sigh.

Oftentimes she is not seen but only heard, yet she is supposed to be always clearly discernible to the person upon whom she specially waits. Respecting the history of the Banshee, popular tradition in many instances accounts for its presence as the spirit of some mortal woman whose destinies have become linked by some accident with those of the family she follows. It is related how the Banshee of the family of the O'Briens of Thomond is related to have been originally a woman who had been seduced by one of the chiefs of that race—an act of indiscretion which ultimately brought upon her misfortune and death.

'Sometimes the song of the Banshee is heard,' writes Mr. McAnally,[241] 'at the beginning of a course of conduct, a line of action, that has ended fatally.' A story is told in Kerry of a young girl who engaged herself to a youth, but at the moment the promise of marriage was given, the low sad wail was heard by both above their heads. The young man deserted her, she died of a broken heart, and, on the night before her death, the Banshee's ominous song was heard outside her mother's cottage window. On another occasion, we are told by the same authority, one of the Flahertys of Galway marched out of his castle with his men on a foray, and, as his troops filed through the gateway, the Banshee was heard high above the towers of the fortress. The next night she sang again, and was heard no more for a month, when he heard the wail under his window, and on the following day his followers brought back his corpse. One of the O'Neils of Shane Castle, Antrim, heard the Banshee as he started on a journey, but while on the same journey he was accidentally killed. According to Lady Wilde, 'at Lord O'Neil's

residence, Shane's Castle, there is a room appropriated to the use of the Banshee, and she often appears there, sometimes shrouded and in a dark, mist-like cloak. At other times she is seen as a beautiful young girl, with long red-gold hair, and wearing a green kirtle and scarlet mantle, covered with gold, after the Irish fashion.' She adds that there is no harm or fear of evil in her mere presence, unless she is seen in the act of crying. But this is a fatal sign, and the mournful wail is a sure and certain prophecy that the angel of death is waiting for one of the family.[242]

Mr. Crofton Croker, in his 'Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland,' has given several entertaining stories of the Banshee; but adds, that since these spirits have become amenable to vulgar laws they have lost much of their romantic character. The introduction of the Banshee in the following stanza of a 'keening'—an Irish term for a wild song of lamentation poured forth over a dead body by certain mourners employed for the purpose—indicates the popular feeling on the subject. It was composed on a young man named Ryan, whose mother speaks—

'Twas the Banshee's lonely wailing,
  Well I knew the voice of death,
On the night wind slowly sailing
  O'er the bleak and gloomy heath.

If a member of an Irish family dies abroad, the Banshee notifies his misfortune at home. When the Duke of Wellington died, the Banshee was heard wailing round the house of his ancestors, and during the Napoleonic campaigns she often announced at home the death of Irish officers and soldiers—an occurrence which happened on the night preceding

the Battle of the Boyne. ‘Indeed,’ says Mr. McAnally, ‘the Banshee has given notice at the family seat in Ireland of deaths in battle fought in every part of the world; from every point to which Irish regiments have followed the roll of the British drums, news of the prospective shedding of Irish blood has been brought home.’

‘The Welsh have also their Banshee, which generally makes its appearance,’ writes Mr. Wirt Sikes,[243] ‘in the most curdling form,’ and is regarded as an omen of death. It is supposed to come after dusk, and to flap its leathern wings against the window where the sick person happens to be. Nor is this all, for in a broken, howling tone, it calls on the one who is to quit mortality by his or her name several times. There is an old legend of the ‘Ellyllon,’ a prototype of the Scotch and Irish Banshee, which usually appears as an old crone with streaming hair and a coat of blue, making its presence manifest by its ominous scream of death. The Welsh have a further form of the Banshee in the ‘Cyhyraeth,’ which is never seen, although the noise it makes is such as to inspire terror in those who chance to hear it. Thus, in some of the Welsh villages it is heard passing through the empty streets and lanes by night groaning dismally, and rattling the window-shutters as it goes along. According to the local belief it is only heard ‘before the death of such as are of strayed mind, or who have been long ill; but it always comes when an epidemic is about to visit the neighbourhood.’ As an instance of how superstitions are remitted from one country to another, it is told that in America there are tales of the Banshee imported from Ireland along with the sons of that soil.

CHAPTER XXI

SEA PHANTOMS

THE romance of the sea has always attracted interest, and, as Buckle once remarked, 'the credulity of sailors is notorious, and every literature contains evidence of the multiplicity of their superstitions, and of the tenacity with which they cling to them.' This is not surprising, for many of the weird old fancies with which the legendary lore of the sea abounds originated in certain atmospherical phenomena which were once a mystery to our seafaring community. In a 'New Catalogue of Vulgar Errors' (1761) the writer says: 'I look upon sailors to care as little of what becomes of themselves as any people under the sun; yet no people are so much terrified at the thoughts of an apparition. Their sea-songs are full of them; they firmly believe in their existence, and honest Jack Tar shall be more frightened at the glimmering of the moon upon the tackling of a ship, than he would be if a Frenchman were to place a blunderbus at his head.' The occasional reflections of mountains, cities, and ships in mirage gave rise to many strange stories of spectral lands. Early instances of this popular fancy occur, and Mrs. Jameson, in her 'Sacred and Legendary Art,' quotes an old Venetian legend of 1339, relating to the ring with which the Adriatic was first wedded. During a storm a fisherman was required to row three men, whom he afterwards learns were St. Mark, St. George, and St. Nicholas, first to certain churches, and then over to the entrance of the port. But there a huge Saracen galley was seen with frightful demons on board, which spectral craft the three men caused to sink, thus saving the city. On leaving the boat, the boatman is

presented with a ring. In the Venetian academy is a painting by Giorgione of this phantom ship, with a demon crew, who, terrified at the presence of the three holy men, jump overboard, or cling to the rigging, while the masts flame with fire, and cast a lurid glare on the water. Collin de Plancy, in his 'Sacred Legends of the Middle Ages,' tells us how at Boulogne, in 663, while the people were at prayers, a strange ship—without guide or pilot—was observed approaching the shore, with the Virgin on board, who indicated to the people a site for her chapel—delusions which may be classed in the same category as the 'phantom ship.' Novelists and poets have made graphic use of such well-known apparitions, variations of which occur in every maritime country. But the author accounts for this philosophically, adding that 'a great deal may be said in favour of men troubled with the scurvy, the concomitants of which disorder are, generally, faintings and the hip, and horrors without any ground for them.'

There were few ships in days gone by that 'doubled the Cape' but owned among the crew some who had seen the 'Flying Dutchman,' a phantom to which Sir Walter Scott alludes as the harbinger of woe. This ship was distinguished from earthly vessels by bearing a press of sail when all others were unable to show an inch of canvas.

The story goes that 'Falkenburg was a noble-man who murdered his brother and his bride in a fit of passion, and was condemned to wander towards the north. On arriving at the sea-shore, he found awaiting him a boat, with a man in it, who said, "Expectamus te." He entered the boat, attended by his good and his evil spirit, and went on board a spectral bark in the harbour. There he still lingers, while these spirits play dice for his soul. For six

hundred years the ship has wandered the seas, and mariners still see her in the German Ocean, sailing northwards, without helm or helmsman. She is painted grey, has coloured sails, a pale flag, and no crew. Flames issue from the masthead at night.'[244] There are numerous versions of this popular legend, and O'Reilly, in his 'Songs of Southern Seas,' says—

Heaven help the ship near which the demon sailor steers!
The doom of those is sealed to whom the phantom ship
appears,
They'll never reach their destin'd port, they'll see their
homes no more,
They who see the Flying Dutchman never, never reach the
shore.

Captain Marryat made this legend the basis of his 'Phantom Ship,' and Longfellow, in his 'Tales of a Wayside Inn,' powerfully tells of—

A ship of the dead that sails the sea,
And is called the Carmilhan,
A ghostly ship, with a ghostly crew.
In tempests she appears,
And before the gale, or against the gale,
She sails, without a rag of sail,
Without a helmsman steers.

And ill-betide the luckless ship
That meets the Carmilhan!
Over her decks the seas will leap,
She must go down into the deep,
And perish, mouse and man.

There are, also, a host of stories of spectral ships, some of which are still credited by sailors. The Germans have their phantom ships, to meet which is regarded as an omen of disaster. In one instance, the crew is said to consist of ghosts of condemned

sinners, who serve one hundred years in each grade, until each has a short tour as captain. This mysterious vessel is described by Oscar L. B. Wolff in ‘The Phantom Ship’:

For the ship was black, her masts were black,
  And her sails coal-black as death;
And the Evil-One steered at the helm, and laughed,
  And mocked at their failing breath.

Swedish sailors have a vessel of this kind. She is so large that it takes three weeks to go from poop to prow, and hence orders are transmitted on horseback. Danish folk-lore has its spectral ship, and a Schleswick-Holstein tradition relates how a maiden was carried off by her lover in a spectral ship, as one day she sat on the shore bewailing his absence. In ‘Mélusine’ for September 1884,[245] it is stated that, ‘in many localities in Lower Brittany, stories are current of a huge ship manned by giant human forms and dogs. The men are reprobates guilty of horrible crimes; the dogs, demons set to guard them and inflict on them a thousand tortures. Such a vessel wanders ceaselessly from sea to sea, without entering port or casting anchor, and will do so to the end of the world. No vessel should allow it to fall aboard, for its crew would suddenly disappear. The orders, in this strange craft, are given through huge conch-shells, and, the noise being heard several miles off, it is easy to avoid her. Besides, there is nothing to fear, if the “Ave Maria” is repeated, and the Saints appealed to, especially St. Anne d’Auray.’

Stories of phantom ships are found, more or less, all over the world, and are associated with many a romantic and tragic tale. Bret Harte[246] relates how some children go on board a hulk to play, but it breaks away from its moorings, drifts out to sea, and

is lost. Yet at times there are heard:

The voices of children, still at play,
In a phantom hulk that drifts away
Through channels whose waters never fail.

And Whittier[247] tells how the young captain of a schooner visits the Labrador coast where, in a certain secluded bay, two beautiful sisters live with their mother. Both fall in love with him, and, just as the younger is about to meet her lover and fly with him, she is imprisoned in her room by her mother, whereupon her elder sister goes in her stead, and is carried to sea in the vessel. The disappointed lover, on learning the deception, returns only to find his loved one dead. But the schooner, adds Whittier, never returned home and:

Even yet, at Seven Isle Bay,
Is told the ghastly tale
Of a weird unspoken sail.
She flits before no earthly blast,
With the red sign fluttering from her mast,
The ghost of the Schooner Breeze.

In Dana's 'Buccaneer,' the pirate carries a lady to sea, who jumps overboard, and on the anniversary of her death:

A ship! and all on fire! hull, yards, and mast,
Her sails are sheets of flame; she's nearing fast!

Occasionally a spectre ship is seen at Cap d'Espoir, in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, which is commonly reported to be the ghost of the flagship of a fleet sent to reduce the French forts by Queen Anne, and which was wrecked here, and all hands. On this phantom ship, which is crowded with soldiers, lights are seen, and on the bowsprit stands an officer, pointing to the

shore with one hand, while a woman is on the other side. The lights suddenly go out, a scream is heard, and the ill-fated vessel sinks. Under one form or another, the phantom ship has long been a world-wide piece of folk-lore, and even in an Ojibway tale, when a maiden is on the eve of being sacrificed to the spirit of the falls, a spectral canoe, with a fairy in it, takes her place as a sacrifice.

Dennys, in his 'Folk-lore of China,' gives a novel variety of the phantom ship. The story goes that a horned serpent was found in a tiger's cage near Foochow by a party of tiger-hunters. They tried to ship it to Canton, but during the voyage the serpent escaped, through a flash of lightning striking the cage and splitting it. Thereupon the captain offered a thousand dollars to anyone who would destroy the monster, but its noxious breath killed two sailors who attempted the task. Eventually the junk was abandoned, and is still believed to cruise about the coast, and cautious natives will not board a derelict junk.

One of the chief features of many of these phantom-ship stories is the idea of retribution for evil deeds, as in the following, told by Irving in the 'Chronicles of Wolfert's Roost.' A certain Ramnout van Dam had 'danced and drank until midnight—Saturday—when he entered his boat to return home. He was warned that he was on the verge of Sunday morning, but he pulled off, swearing that he would not land until he reached Spiting Devil, if it took him a month of Sundays. He was never seen afterwards, but may be heard plying his oars, being the Flying Dutchman of the Tappan Sea, doomed to ply between Kakiot and Spiting Devil until the day of judgment.' Moore in his account of the phantom ship seen in the description of Deadman's Island, where

wrecks were once common, writes:

To Deadman's Isle, on the eve of the blast,
To Deadman's Isle, she speeds her fast,
By skeleton shapes, her sails are furled,
And the hand that steers is not of this world.

Turning to our own country, similar phantom vessels have long been supposed to haunt the coast, and Mr. Hunt[248] describes one that visited the Cornish shores on the occasion of a storm, and to rescue which delusive bark help was despatched: 'Away they pulled, and the boat which had been first launched still kept ahead by dint of mechanical power and skill. At length the helmsman cried, "Stand by to board her." The vessel came so close to the boat that they could see the men, and the bow oarsman made a grasp at the bulwarks. His hand found nothing solid and he fell. Ship and light then disappeared. The next day the "Neptune" of London was wrecked, and all perished. The captain's body was picked up after a few days, and that of his son also.' Among other Cornish stories may also be mentioned those known as the 'Pirate-wrecker and the Death Ship;' and the 'Spectre Ship of Porthcurno.' Occasionally off the Lizard a phantom lugger is seen, and Bottrell[249] tells how, at times, not only spectral ships, but the noise of falling spars, &c., are heard during an incoming fog.

Scotch sailors have their stories of phantom ships. Thus a spectral vessel—the ghostly bark of a bridal party maliciously wrecked—is said to appear in the Solway, always hovering near a ship that is doomed to be wrecked; and Cunningham[250] has given a graphic account of two phantom pirate ships. The story goes that, for a time, two Danish pirates were permitted to perform wicked deeds on the deep, but

were at last condemned to perish by wreck for the evil they had caused. On a certain night they were seen approaching the shore—the one crowded with people, and the other carrying on its deck a spectral shape. Then four young men put off in a boat that had been sent from one ship, to join her, but, on reaching the ship, both vessels sank where they were. On the anniversary of their wreck, and before a gale, these two vessels are supposed to approach the shore, and to be distinctly visible. A Highland legend records how a large ship—the 'Rotterdam'—which went down with all on board, is seen at times with her ghostly crew, a sure indication of disaster. But perhaps this superstition has been most firmly riveted in the popular mind by Coleridge's 'Ancient Mariner,' wherein an ominous sign is seen afar off prefiguring the death of himself and his comrades. It is a spectre ship in which Death and Life-in-Death play at dice for the possession of the crew—the latter winning the mariner.

Her lips were red, her looks were free,
Her locks were yellow as gold;
Her skin was white as leprosy,
The night-mare Life-in-Death was she,
Who thicks man's blood with cold.

Stories of ghosts having appeared at sea have been told from early days, and have everywhere been a fruitful source of terror to sailors. But this is not surprising for, as Scot says,[251] 'innumerable are the reports of accidents unto such as frequent the seas, as fishermen and sailors, who discourse of noises, flashes, shadows, echoes, and other things, nightly seen or heard upon the waters.' Brand,[252] for instance, narrates an amusing tale of a sea ghost. The ship's cook, who had one of his legs shorter than the

other, died on a homeward passage and was buried at sea. A few nights afterwards his ghost was seen walking before the ship, and the crew were in a panic. It was found however that the cause of this alarm was part of a maintop, the remains of some wreck floating before them that simulated the dead man's walk. On another occasion a ship's crew fancied they had not only seen but 'smelled' a ghost —a piece of folly which so enraged the captain that he ordered the boatswain's mate to give some of the sailors a dozen lashes, which entirely cleared the ship of the ghost during the remainder of the voyage. It was afterwards ascertained that the smell proceeded from a dead rat behind some beer-barrels. In the same way, many a ghost story might be explained which, proceeding from natural causes, has been the source of superstitious dread among the seafaring community. Cheever, in his 'Sea and Sailor,' referring to the credulity of sailors, says: 'The sailor is a profound believer in ghosts. One of these nocturnal visitants was supposed to visit our ship. It was with the utmost difficulty that the crew could be made to turn in at night. You might have seen the most athletic, stout-hearted sailor on board, when called to take his night-watch aloft, glancing at the yards and tackling of the ship for the phantom. It was a long time, in the opinion of the crew, before the phantom left the ship.' It may be remembered that Sir Walter Scott[253] relates how the captain of an English ship was assured by the crew that the ghost of a murdered sailor, every night, visited the ship. So convinced were the sailors of the appearance of this phantom that they refused to sail, but the mystery was cleared up by the discovery of a somnambulist.

Occasionally, the ghost of a former captain is

supposed to visit a vessel and to warn the crew of an approaching storm. Symondson in his 'Two Years abaft the Mast' records the appearance of such an apparition, at one time 'to prescribe a change of course, at another, in wet and calm weather, quietly seated in his usual place on the poop deck.'[254] Sometimes similar warnings have come from other sources. Thus a curious occurrence is told by Mary Howitt, which happened in 1664 to Captain Rogers, R.N., who was in command of the 'Society,' a vessel bound from England to Virginia. The story goes that 'he was heading in for the capes, and was, as he reckoned, after heaving the lead, three hundred miles from them. A vision appeared to him in the night, telling him to turn out, and look about. He did so, found all alert, and retired again. The vision appeared again, and told him to heave the lead. He arose, caused the lead to be cast, and found but seven fathoms. Greatly frightened, he tacked ship, and the daylight showed him to be under the capes, instead of two hundred miles at sea.'[255] With this story may be compared a mysterious story told in the 'Chicago Times' of March, 1885.

It appears that, as two men had fallen from the topmast head of a lake-vessel, the rumour spread that the ship was an unlucky one. Accordingly, writes one of the crew, 'on its arrival at Buffalo, the men went on shore as soon as they were paid off. They said the ship had lost her luck. While we were discharging at the elevator, the story got round, and some of the grain-trimmers refused to work on her. Even the mate was affected by it. At last we got ready to sail for Cleveland, where we were to load coal. The captain managed to get a crew by going to a crimp, who ran them in, fresh from salt water. They came on board two-thirds drunk, and the mate

was steering them into the forecastle, when one of them stopped and said, pointing aloft, “What have you got a figurehead on the mast for?” The mate looked up and then turned pale. “It’s Bill,” he said, and with that the whole lot jumped on to the dock. I didn’t see anything, but the mate told the captain to look for another officer. The captain was so much affected that he put me on another schooner, and then shipped a new crew, and sailed for Cleveland. He never got there. He was sunk by a steamer off Dunkirk.’

Another curious phantom warning to sailors seen in years gone by was the ‘Hooper,’ or the ‘Hooter,’ of Sennen Cove, Cornwall. This was supposed to be a spirit which took the form of a band of misty vapour, stretching across the bay, so opaque that nothing could be seen through it. According to Mr. Hunt,[256] ‘it was regarded as a kindly interposition of some ministering spirit, to warn the fisherman against venturing to sea. This appearance was always followed, and often suddenly, by a severe storm. It is seldom or never now seen. One profane old fisherman would not be warned by the bank of fog, and, as the weather was fine on the shore, he persuaded some young men to join him. They manned a boat, and the aged leader, having with him a threshing-flail, declared that he would drive the spirit away, and he vigorously beat the fog with the “threshel,” as the flail is called. The boat passed through the fog, and went to sea, but a severe storm arose, and no one ever saw the boat or the men again, since which time the “Hooper” has been rarely seen.’ Similarly a mist over the river Cymal, in Wales, is thought to be the spirit of a traitoress, who lost her life in the lake close by. Tradition says she had conspired with pirates to rob her lord of his

domain, and was defeated by an enchanter.[257]

But sailors' yarns are so proverbially remarkable that the reader must estimate their value for himself, not forgetting how large a factor in their production is the imagination, worked upon by nervous credulity and superstitious fear, a striking instance of which is recorded by a correspondent of the 'Gentleman's Magazine:' 'My friend, Captain Mott, R.N., used frequently to repeat an anecdote of a seaman under his command. This individual, who was a good sailor and a brave man, suffered much trouble and anxiety from his superstitious fears. When on the night watch, he would see sights and hear noises in the rigging and the deep, which kept him in a perpetual fever of alarm. One day the poor fellow reported upon deck that the devil, whom he knew by his horns and cloven foot, stood by the side of his hammock the preceding night, and told him that he had only three days to live. His messmates endeavoured to remove his despondency by ridicule, but without effect; and the next morning he told the tale to Captain Mott, with this addition, that the fiend had paid him a second nocturnal visit, announcing a repetition of the melancholy tidings. The captain in vain expostulated with him on the folly of indulging such groundless apprehensions; and the morning of the fatal day being exceedingly stormy, the man, with many others, was ordered to the topmast to perform some duty among the rigging. Before he ascended he bade his messmates farewell, telling them that he had received a third warning from the devil, and that he was confident he should be dead before night. He went aloft with the foreboding of evil on his mind, and in less than five minutes he lost his hold, fell upon the deck, and was killed on the spot.'

CHAPTER XXII

PHANTOM DRESS

ACCORDING to a popular ghost doctrine, the spirits of the departed 'generally come in their habits as they lived,' and as George Cruikshank once remarked,[258] 'there is no difference in this respect between the beggar and the king.' For they come—

Some in rags, and some in jags, and some in silken gowns.

And he adds that all narrators agree that 'the spirits appear in similar or the same dresses which they were accustomed to wear during their lifetime, so exactly alike that the ghost-seer could not possibly be mistaken as to the identity of the individual.' Horatio, describing the ghost to Hamlet, says—

A figure like your father,
Armed at all points, exactly cap-à-pé.

And it is further stated that the ghost was armed 'from top to toe,' 'from head to foot,' that 'he wore his beaver up;' and when Hamlet sees his father's spirit he exclaims—

What may this mean,
That thou, dead corse, again, in complete steel,
Revisit'st thus the glimpses of the moon?

It is the familiar dress worn in lifetime that is, in most cases, one of the distinguishing features of the ghost, and when Sir George Villiers wanted to give a warning to his son, the Duke of Buckingham, his spirit appeared to one of the duke's servants 'in the very clothes he used to wear.' Mrs. Crowe,[259] some years ago, gave an account of an apparition which

appeared at a house in Sarratt, Hertfordshire. It was that of a well-dressed gentleman, in a blue coat and bright gilt buttons, but without a head. It seems that this was reported to be the ghost of a poor man of that neighbourhood who had been murdered, and whose head had been cut off. He could, therefore, only be recognised by his 'blue coat and bright gilt buttons.' Indeed, many ghosts have been nicknamed from the kinds of dress in which they have been in the habit of appearing. Thus the ghost at Allanbank was known as 'Pearlin Jean,' from a species of lace made of thread which she wore; and the 'White Lady' at Ashley Hall—like other ghosts who have borne the same name—from the white drapery in which she presented herself. Some lady ghosts have been styled 'Silky,' from the rustling of their silken costume, in the wearing of which they have maintained the phantom grandeur of their earthly life. There was the 'Silky' at Black Heddon who used to appear in silken attire, oftentimes 'rattling in her silks'; and the spirit of Denton Hall—also termed 'Silky'—walks about in a white silk dress of antique fashion. This last 'Silky' 'was thought to be the ghost of a lady who was mistress to the profligate Duke of Argyll in the reign of William III., and died suddenly, not without suspicion of murder, at Chirton, near Shields—one of his residences. The "Banshee of Loch Nigdal," too, was arrayed in a silk dress, green in colour. These traditions date from a period when silk was not in common use, and therefore attracted notice in country places.'[260] Some years ago a ghost appeared at Hampton Court,[261] habited in a black satin dress with white kid gloves. The 'White Lady of Skipsea' makes her midnight serenades clothed in long white drapery. Lady Bothwell, who haunted the mansion of Woodhouselee, always appeared in white; and the

apparition of the mansion of Houndwood, in Berwickshire—bearing the name of 'Chappie'—is clad in silk attire.

One of the ghosts seen at the celebrated Willington Mill was that of a female in greyish garments. Sometimes she was said to be wrapped in a sort of mantle, with her head depressed and her hands crossed on her lap. Walton Abbey had its headless lady who used to haunt a certain wainscotted chamber, dressed in blood-stained garments, with her infant in her arms; and, in short, most of the ghosts that have tenanted our country-houses have been noted for their distinctive dress.

Daniel de Foe, in his 'Essay on the History and Reality of Apparitions,' has given many minute details as to the dress of a ghost. He tells a laughable and highly amusing story of some robbers who broke into a mansion in the country, and, whilst ransacking one of the rooms, they saw, in a chair, 'a grave, ancient man, with a long full-bottomed wig, and a rich brocaded gown,' &c. One of the robbers threatened to tear off his 'rich brocaded gown'; another hit at him with a firelock, and was alarmed at seeing it pass through the air; and then the old man 'changed into the most horrible monster that ever was seen, with eyes like two fiery daggers red hot.' The same apparition encountered them in different rooms, and at last the servants, who were at the top of the house, throwing some 'hand grenades' down the chimneys of these rooms, the thieves were dispersed. Without adding further stories of this kind, which may be taken for what they are worth, it is a generally received belief in ghost lore that spirits are accustomed to appear in the dresses which they wore in their lifetime—a notion credited from the days of Pliny the Younger to the present day.

But the fact of ghosts appearing in earthly raiment has excited the ridicule of many philosophers, who, even admitting the possibility of a spiritual manifestation, deny that there can be the ghost of a suit of clothes. George Cruikshank, too, who was no believer in ghosts, sums up the matter thus: 'As it is clearly impossible for spirits to wear dresses made of the materials of the earth, we should like to know if there are spiritual outfitting shops for the clothing of ghosts who pay visits on earth.' Whatever the objections may be to the appearance of ghosts in human attire, they have not hitherto overthrown the belief in their being seen thus clothed, and Byron, describing the 'Black Friar' who haunted the cloisters and other parts of Newstead Abbey, tells us that he was always

arrayed
In cowl, and beads, and dusky garb.

Indeed, as Dr. Tylor remarks,[262] 'it is an habitual feature of the ghost stories of the civilised, as of the savage, world, that the ghost comes dressed, and even dressed in well-known clothing worn in life.' And he adds that the doctrine of object-souls is held by the Algonquin tribes, the islanders of the Fijian group, and the Karens of Burmah—it being supposed that not only men and beasts have souls, but inorganic things. Thus, Mariner describing the Fijian belief, writes: 'If a stone or any other substance is broken, immortality is equally its reward; nay, artificial bodies have equal good luck with men, and hogs, and yams. If an axe or a chisel is worn out or broken up, away flies its soul for the service of the gods. The Fijians can further show you a sort of natural well, or deep hole in the ground, at one of their islands, across the bottom of which runs a

stream of water, in which you may clearly see the souls of men and women, beasts and plants, stocks and stones, canoes and horses, and of all the broken utensils of this frail world, swimming, or rather tumbling along, one over the other, pell-mell, into the regions of immortality.'[263] As it has been observed, animistic conceptions of this kind are no more irrational than the popular idea prevalent in civilised communities as to spirits appearing in all kinds of garments.

CHAPTER XXIII

HAUNTED HOUSES

A jolly place, said he, in days of old,
But something ails it now: the spot is curst.
WORDSWORTH.

A VARIETY of strange causes, such as secret murder, acts of treachery, unatoned crime, buried treasures, and such-like incidents belonging to the seamy side of family history, have originated, at one time or another, the ghostly stories connected with so many a house throughout the country. Robert Browning has graphically described the mysteries of a haunted house:

At night, when doors are shut,
  And the wood-worm picks,
  And the death-watch ticks,
And the bar has a flag of smut,
And a cat's in the water-butt—

And the socket floats and flares,
  And the house-beams groan,
  And a foot unknown
Is surmised on the garret stairs,
  And the locks slip unawares.

Although in some cases centuries have elapsed since a certain house became haunted, and several generations have come and passed away, still, with ceaseless persistency, the restless spirit hovers about in all kinds of uncanny ways, reminding us of Hood's romance of 'The Haunted House.'

For over all there hung a cloud of fear,
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is haunted!

Corby Castle, Cumberland, was famous for its 'Radiant Boy;' Peel Castle had its 'Mauthe Doog;' and Dobb Park Lodge was noted for 'the Talking Dog.' Cortachy Castle, the seat of the Earl of Airlie, is noted for its 'Drummer;' and a noted Westmoreland ghost was that of the 'bad Lord Lonsdale,' locally known as Jemmy Lowther, which created much alarm at Lowther Hall; but of recent years this miscreant spirit has been silent, having, it is said, been laid for ever under a large rock called Wallow Crag. Strange experiences were associated with Hinton Ampner Manor House, Hampshire,[264] and when, in 1797, it was pulled down, 'under the floor

of the lobby was found a box containing bones, and what was said to be the skull of a monkey. No regular inquiry was made into the matter, and no professional opinion was ever sought as to the real character of the relic.' Wyecoller Hall, near Colne, is visited once a year by a spectre horseman; and some years ago Hackwood House, an old mansion near Basingstoke, purchased from Lord Bolton by Lord Westbury, was said to have its haunted room, the phantom assuming the appearance of a woman clothed in grey. Ramhurst Manor House, Kent, was disturbed by weird and mysterious noises, and at Barton Hall, Bath, in 1868, a phantom is said to have appeared, displaying a human countenance, but devoid of eyes.

Allanbank, a seat of the Stuarts—a family of Scotch baronets, has long been haunted by 'Pearlin Jean,' one of the most remarkable ghosts in Scotland. On one occasion, seven ministers were called in to lay this restless spirit, but to no purpose. Creslow Manor House, Buckinghamshire, has its ghost, and Glamis Castle has its famous 'Haunted Room,' which, it is said, was walled up. At Hilton Castle there was the time-honoured 'Cold Lad,' which Surtees would lead us to suppose was one of the household spirits known as 'Brownies.' But, according to one local legend, in years gone by a servant-boy was ill-treated and kept shut up in a cupboard, and is supposed to have received the name of 'Cold Lad' from his condition when discovered. Sundry apparitions seem to have been connected with Newstead Abbey, one being that of 'Sir John Byron the Little, with the Great Beard,' who was wont to promenade the state apartments at night. But the most dreaded spectre was the 'Goblin Friar,' previously alluded to, who—

appeared,
Now in the moonlight, and now lapsed in shade,
With steps that trod as heavy, yet unheard.

This strange, weird spectre has been thought to forebode evil to the member of the family to whom it appears, and its uncanny movements have been thus pictured by the poet:

By the marriage-bed of their lords, 'tis said,
He flits on the bridal eve;
And 'tis held as faith, to their bed of death
He comes—but not to grieve.

When an heir is born, he is heard to mourn,
And when aught is to befall
That ancient line, in the pale moonshine
He walks from hall to hall.

His form you may trace, but not his face,
'Tis shadowed by his cowl;
But his eyes may be seen from the folds between,
And they seem of a parted soul.

Holland House has had the reputation of being haunted by the spirit of the first Lord Holland; and, in 1860, there was published in 'Notes and Queries,' by the late Edmund Lenthal Swifte, Keeper of the Crown Jewels, the account of a spectral illusion witnessed by himself in the Tower. He says that in October, 1817, he was at supper with his wife, her sister, and his little boy, in the sitting-room of the jewel-house. To quote his own words: 'I had offered a glass of wine and water to my wife, when, on putting it to her lips, she exclaimed, "Good God! what is that?" I looked up, and saw a cylindrical figure like a glass tube, seemingly about the thickness of my arm, and hovering between the ceiling and the table; its contents appeared to be a

dense fluid, white and pale azure. This lasted about two minutes, when it began to move before my sister-in-law; then, following the oblong side of the table, before my son and myself, passing behind my wife, it paused for a moment over her right shoulder. Instantly crouching down, and with both hands covering her shoulder, she shrieked out, "O Christ! it has seized me!" It was ascertained,' adds Mr. Swifte, 'that no optical action from the outside could have produced any manifestation within, and hence the mystery has remained unsolved.' Speaking of the Tower, we learn from the same source how 'one of the night sentries at the jewel-office was alarmed by a figure like a huge bear issuing from underneath the jewel-room door. He thrust at it with his bayonet which stuck in the door. He dropped in a fit and was carried senseless to the guardroom.... In another day or two the brave and steady soldier died at the presence of a shadow.' Windsor Castle, as report goes, was haunted by the ghost of Sir George Villiers, who appeared to an officer in the king's wardrobe and warned him of the approaching fate of the Duke of Buckingham.[265]

According to Johnson, the 'Old Hummums' was the scene of the 'best accredited ghost story' that he had ever heard, the spirit of a Mr. Ford, said to have been the riotous parson of Hogarth's 'Midnight Conversation,' having appeared to a waiter; and Boswell, alluding to a conversation which took place at Mr. Thrale's house, Streatham, between himself and Dr. Johnson, thus writes: 'A waiter at the Hummums, in which house Ford died, had been absent for some time, and returned, not knowing that Ford was dead. Going down to the cellar, according to the story, he met him; going down again, he met him a second time. When he came up he asked some

of the people of the house what Ford could be doing there. They told him Ford was dead. The waiter took a fever, and when he recovered he said he had a message from Ford to deliver to some women, but he was not to tell what, or to whom. He walked out, he was followed, but somewhere about St. Paul's they lost him. He came back, and said he had delivered the message, and the women exclaimed, "Then we are all undone."' There is the so-called 'Mystery of Berkeley Square,' No. 50 having been reputed to be haunted. But a long correspondence on the subject in the pages of 'Notes and Queries' proved this to be a fallacy, the rumour, it would seem, having arisen from 'its neglected condition when empty, and the habits of the melancholy and solitary hypochondriac when occupied by him.' Lord Lyttelton, however, wrote in 'Notes and Queries' of November 16, 1872, thus: 'It is quite true that there is a house in Berkeley Square (No. 50) said to be haunted, and long unoccupied on that account. There are strange stories about it, into which this deponent cannot enter.' What these strange stories were may be gathered from 'Mayfair' of May 10, 1879—an interesting illustration of how rapidly legendary stories spring up on little or no basis. 'The house in Berkeley Square contains at least one room of which the atmosphere is supernaturally fatal to body and mind. A girl saw, heard, and felt such horror in it that she went mad, and never recovered sanity enough to tell how or why. A gentleman, a disbeliever in ghosts, dared to sleep in it, and was found a corpse in the middle of the floor, after practically ringing for help in vain. Rumour suggests other cases of the same kind, all ending in death, madness, or both, as the result of sleeping, or trying to sleep, in that room. The very party walls of the house, when touched, are

found saturated with electric horror. It is uninhabited, save by an elderly man and woman who act as caretakers; but even these have no access to the room. That is kept locked, the key being in the hands of a mysterious and seemingly nameless person, who comes to the house once every six months, locks up the elderly couple in the basement, and then unlocks the room and occupies himself in it for hours.'

Berry Pomeroy Castle, Devonshire, was long said to be haunted by the daughter of a former baron, who bore a child to her own father, afterwards strangling the fruit of their incestuous intercourse; and all kinds of weird noises are heard at Ewshott House, Hampshire. Bagley House, near Bridport, is haunted by the ghost of a Squire Lighte, who committed suicide; and at Astwood Court, once the seat of the Culpepers, was an old oak table, removed from the side of the wainscot in 1816, respecting which tradition declares that it bore the impress of the fingers of a lady ghost who, it has been suggested, probably tired of appearing to no purpose, at last struck the table in a rage and vanished for ever. Holt Castle was supposed, in bygone years, to be haunted by a mysterious lady in black who, in the still hours of the night, occasionally walked in a certain passage near the attics. It was likewise said that the cellar had been occupied by an ill-favoured bird like a raven, which would sometimes pounce upon any person who ventured to approach a cask for drink, and, having extinguished the candle with a horrid flapping of wings, would leave its victims prostrate with fright. A solution, however, has been given to this legend that 'would imply a little cunning selfishness on the part of the domestics who had the care of the ale and cider *depôt*.'[266]

At Althorp, the seat of Earl Spencer, is said to have appeared the ghost of a favourite groom, and Cumnor Hall, the supposed scene of the murder of Lady Amy Bobsart, was haunted by her apparition. According to Mickle—

In that Manor now no more
Is cheerful feast and sprightly ball;
For, ever since that dreary hour,
Have spirits haunted Cumnor Hall.

The village maids, with fearful glance,
Avoid the ancient moss-grown wall;
Nor ever lead the merry dance
Among the groves of Cumnor Hall.

Full many a traveller oft hath sighed
And pensive wept the Countess's fall,
As, wandering onward, they espied
The haunted towers of Cumnor Hall.

Powis Castle had once its ghost, and Cullaby Castle, Northumberland, the seat of Major A. H. Browne, is haunted. According to a correspondent,[267] in the older part of the castle, which was the pele-tower of the Claverings, there was known to be a room walled up, 'which Mrs. Browne, during her husband's absence, had broken into;' but the room was found to be quite empty. She says, however, that 'she let a ghost out who is known as "The Wicked Priest." Ever since they have been annoyed with the most unaccountable noises, which are sometimes so loud that one would think the house was being blown down. I believe the ghost has been seen—it is a priest with a shovel hat.' The seat of the Trevelyans is haunted with the incessant wailing of a spectral child, and the ruins of Seaton Delaval Castle are said to be haunted. Churton Hall, at one time the seat of

the Duke of Argyll, ‘has marked Tyneside with the ghost of the Duke’s mistress, who is locally known as “Silky.”’ ‘Tyneside,’ writes Mr. W. T. Stead, ‘abounded with stories of haunted castles; but, with the doubtful exception of Dilston, where Lady Derwentwater was said to revisit the pale glimpses of the moon to expiate the restless ambition which impelled her to drive Lord Derwentwater to the scaffold, none of them were leading actors in the tragedies of old time.’

Bisham Abbey, report says, is haunted by the ghost of Lady Hoby, who treated her son by her first husband so unmercifully, on account of his antipathy to study, that he died. As a punishment for her unnatural cruelty she glides through a certain chamber, in the act of washing blood-stains from her hands. One of the rooms at Combermere Abbey, Cheshire, formerly known as the ‘Coved Saloon,’ is tenanted by the ghost of a little girl, the sister of Lord Cotton, who had died when fourteen years old. [268] Then there was the famous ‘Sampford Peverell’ ghost, which created much interest at the commencement of the present century,[269] and Rainham, the seat of the Marquis Townshend, in Norfolk, has long been haunted by the ‘Brown Lady.’ At Oulton House, Suffolk, at midnight, a wild huntsman with his hounds, accompanied by a lady carrying a poisoned cup, is said to take his ghostly walk; and Clegg Hall, Lancashire, long had its restless spirits, and the laying of these ‘Clegg Hall boggarts,’ as they were called, is described elsewhere. At Samlesbury Hall, near Blackburn, a lady in white attended by a handsome knight is seen at night;[270] and a headless lady walked about Walton Abbey. Hermitage Castle, one of the most famous of the Border keeps in the days of its

splendour, has for years past been haunted, and has been described as—

Haunted Hermitage,
Where long by spells mysterious bound,
They pace their round with lifeless smile,
And shake with restless foot the guilty pile.
Till sink the mouldering towers beneath the burdened ground.

The story goes that Lord Soulis, 'the evil hero of Hermitage,' made a compact with the devil, who appeared to him in the shape of a spirit wearing a red cap, which gained its hue from the blood of human victims in which it was steeped. Lord Soulis sold himself to the demon, and in return he could summon his familiar whenever he chose to rap thrice on an iron chest, on condition that he never looked in the direction of the spirit. Once, however, he forgot or ignored this condition, and his doom was sealed. But even then Lord Soulis kept the letter of the compact. Lord Soulis was protected by an unholy charm against any injury from rope or steel; hence cords could not bind him, and steel could not slay him. When, at last, he was delivered over to his enemies it was found necessary to adopt the ingenious and effective expedient of rolling him up in a sheet of lead and boiling him to death:

On a circle of stones they placed the pot,
On a circle of stones but barely nine;
They heated it red and fiery hot,
And the burnished brass did glimmer and shine.

They rolled him up in a sheet of lead—
A sheet of lead for a funeral pall;
They plunged him into the cauldron red,
And melted him, body, lead, bones and all.

This was the end of Lord Soulis's body, but his spirit still lingers on the scene. Once every seven years he keeps tryst with Red Cap on the scene of his former devilries:

And still when seven years are o'er
  Is heard the jarring sound,
When hollow opes the charmèd door
  Of chamber underground.[271]

Hugh Miller, in his 'Schools and Schoolmasters,' says that, while working as a stonemason in a remote part of Scotland, he visited the ruins of Craighouse, a grey fantastic rag of a castle, which the people of the neighbourhood firmly believed to be haunted by its goblin—a miserable-looking, grey-headed, grey-bearded old man, who might be seen, late in evening and early in the morning, peering out through a narrow slit or shot-hole at the chance passenger. He further adds that he met with a sunburnt herd-boy who was tending his cattle under the shadow of the old castle wall. He asked the lad whose apparition he thought it was that could continue to haunt a building whose last inhabitant had long been forgotten. 'Oh, they're saying,' was the reply, 'it's the spirit of the man who was killed on the foundation-stone, soon after it was laid, and then built intil the wa' by the masons that he might keep the Castle by coming back again; and they're saying that a' varra auld hooses i' the country had murderit men builded intil them i' that way, and that all o' them hev their bogie!'

Among Irish haunted houses may be noticed the castle of Dunseverick, in Antrim, which is believed to be still inhabited by the spirit of a chief, who there atones for a horrid crime; while the castles of Dunluce, of Magrath, and many others are similarly

peopled by the wicked dead. In the abbey of Clare the ghost of a sinful abbot walks, and will continue to do so until his sin has been atoned for by the prayers he unceasingly mutters in his tireless march up and down the aisles of the ruined nave.

The 'Cedar Room' at Ashley Hall, Cheshire, was said to be tenanted by the figure of a white lady, reminding us of similar so-called apparitions at Skipsea and Blenkinsopp Castles. At Burton Agnes Hall, the family seat of Sir Henry Somerville Boynton, there is a spirit of a lady which haunts the ancient mansion, known in the neighbourhood as 'Awd Nance.' The skull of this lady is preserved at the Hall, and so long as it is left quietly in its resting-place all goes well, but should any attempt be made to remove it, all kinds of unearthly noises are raised in the house, and last until it is restored.[272] Denton Hall has for many years past attracted interest from being inhabited by a spirit known by the names of 'Old Barbery' and 'Silky,' and Waddow Hall, Yorkshire, is haunted by a phantom called 'Peg O'Nell.' Bridge End House, Burnley, was said to have its ghost; Crook Hall, near Durham, has its 'White Ladie;' South Biddick Hall, its shadowy tenant, 'Madam Lambton;' and Netherby Hall, a 'Rustling Lady' who walks along a retired passage in that mansion, her dress rustling as she moves along.[273] There was the famous Willington Mill, alluded to in the previous chapter, which some years ago became notorious in the North of England, having been haunted, it is said, by a priest and a grey lady who amused themselves at their victims' expense by all kinds of strange acts.[274] A correspondent of 'Notes and Queries' (4th S. x. 490) referring to the Willington ghost says: 'The steam flour mill, with the house, was in the occupation then of Messrs. Proctor

and Unthank; the house was separated from the mill by a space of a few feet, so that no tricks could be played from the mill. The partners alternately lived in the house. A relation of mine asked one of those gentlemen if there was any truth as to the current rumours. He remarked, “Well, we don’t like to speak of it; my partner certainly cannot live comfortably in the house, from some unexplained cause, but as to myself and family we are never disturbed.”’

Several parsonages have had their ghosts. Southey, in his ‘Life of Wesley,’ speaking of Epworth parsonage, which appears to have been haunted in the most strange manner, and alluding to the mysterious disturbances that happened in it, says: ‘An author who, in this age, relates such a story, and treats it as not utterly incredible and absurd, must expect to be ridiculed, but the testimony upon which it rests is far too strong to be set aside because of the strangeness of the relation.’ In the ‘Gentleman’s Magazine’ is recorded an account of an apparition that appeared at Souldern Rectory, Oxfordshire, to the Rev. Mr. Shaw, who had always ridiculed the idea of ghosts, announcing to him that his death would be very soon, and very sudden. Suffice it to say that shortly afterwards he was seized with an apoplectic fit while reading the service in church, and died almost immediately. This strange affair is noticed in the register of Brisly Church, Norfolk, under December 12, 1706: ‘I, Robert Withers, M.A., Vicar of Gately, do insert here a story which I had from undoubted hands, for I have all the moral certainty of the truth of it possible.’

The old parsonage at Market, or East, Lavington, near Devizes—now pulled down—was reputed to be haunted by a lady supposed to have been murdered, and, it has been said, a child came also to an

untimely end in the house. Previous to 1818, a correspondent of 'Notes and Queries' (5 S. i. 273) says: 'A witness states his father occupied the house, and writes "that in that year on Feast Day, being left alone in the house, I went up to my room. It was the one with marks of blood on the floor. I distinctly saw a white figure glide into the room. It went round by the washstand by the bed, and there disappeared."' It may be added that part of the road leading from Market Lavington to Easterton, which skirts the grounds of Fiddington House, used to be looked upon as haunted by a lady, who was known as the 'Easterton Ghost.' In 1869, a wall was built round the road-side of the pond; and, close to the spot where the lady was seen, two skeletons were disturbed—one of a woman, the other of a child. The bones were buried in the churchyard, and no ghost, it is said, has been seen since.

Occasionally, churches have been haunted. The famous phantom nun of Holy Trinity Church, Micklegate, York, has excited a good deal of interest—an account of which is given by Mr. Baring-Gould in his 'Yorkshire Oddities.' The story goes that during the suppression of religious houses before the Reformation, a party of soldiers came to sack the convent attached to the church. But having forced an entry they were confronted by the abbess, a lady of great courage and devotion, who declared that they should only pass it over her body, and that should they slay her and succeed in their errand of destruction, her spirit would haunt the place until the time came that their sacrilegious work was expiated by the rebuilding of the holy house. Many accounts have been published of this apparition, the following being from the 'Ripon and Richmond Chronicle' (May 6, 1876): 'In the middle of the

service,' writes a correspondent, 'my eyes, which had hardly once moved from the left or north side of the [east] window, were attracted by a bright light, formed like a female, robed and hooded, passing from north to south with a rapid gliding motion outside the church, apparently at some distance. There are four divisions in the window, all of stained glass, but at the edge of each runs a rim of plain transparent glass, about two inches wide, and adjoining the stone-work. Through this rim especially could be seen what looked like a form transparent, but yet thick (if such a term can be used) with light. The robe was long and trailed. About half an hour later it again passed from north to south, and, having remained about ten seconds only, returned with what I believe to have been the figure of a young child, and stopped at the last pane but one, and then vanished. I did not see the child again, but a few seconds afterwards the woman reappeared, and completed the passage behind the last pane very rapidly.' It is said to appear very frequently on Trinity Sunday, and to bring two other figures on to the scene, another female, called the nurse, and the child. Likewise, on one of the windows of the Abbey Church, Whitby, was occasionally seen—

The very form of Hilda fair,
Hovering upon the sunny air.

According to a correspondent of the 'Gentleman's Magazine,' a ghost appeared for several years, but very seldom, only in the church porch at Kilncote, Leicestershire. Folk-lore tells us that ghosts are occasionally seen in the church porch, and, in years gone, it was customary for young people to sit and watch here on St. Mark's Eve, from 11 at night till 1

o'clock in the morning. In the third year, for the ceremony had to be gone through three times, it was supposed the ghosts of all those about to die in the course of the ensuing year would pass into the church. It is to this piece of superstition that James Montgomery refers in his 'Vigil of St. Mark':

'"Tis now,' replied the village belle,
'St. Mark's mysterious Eve;
And all that old traditions tell
I tremblingly believe.

'How, when the midnight signal tolls,
Along the churchyard green
A mournful train of sentenced souls
In winding sheets are seen.

'The ghosts of all whom death shall doom
Within the coming year,
In pale procession walk the gloom,
Amid the silence drear.'

A strange illustration of this superstition is found among the Hollis manuscripts in the Lansdowne collection. The writer, Gervase Hollis, of Great Grimsby, Lincolnshire, was a colonel in the service of Charles I., and he professes to have received the tale from Mr. Liveman Rampaine, minister of God's word at Great Grimsby, Lincolnshire, who was household chaplain to Sir Thomas Munson of Burton, in Lincoln, at the time of the incident.[275]

A curious and somewhat unique advertisement of a haunted house appeared some years ago, and ran thus: 'To be sold, an ancient Gothic mansion, known as Beckington Castle, ten miles from Bath, and two from Frome. The mansion has been closed for some years, having been the subject of proceedings in Chancery. There are legends of haunted rooms, miles

of subterranean passages, &c., affording a fine field of research and speculation to lovers of the romantic.' It was no doubt true of the ghost of this, as of most other haunted houses—

We meet them on the door-way, on the stair,
  Along the passages they come and go,
Impalpable impressions on the air,
  A sense of something moving to and fro.

CHAPTER XXIV

HAUNTED LOCALITIES

SPIRITS in most countries are supposed to haunt all kinds of places, and not to confine themselves to any one locality. Local traditions show how the most unlikely spots, which can boast of little or no romance, are supposed to be frequented by ghosts; the wayfarer along some country road having oftentimes been confronted by an uncanny apparition.

Indeed, the superstitious fear of places being haunted by ghosts not only led to the abandonment but even destruction of many a dwelling-place, a practice which, amongst uncultured tribes, not only 'served as a check to material prosperity, but became an obstacle to progress.'[276] But even in civilised countries the same antipathy to a haunted house is often found, and the ghostly tenant is allowed uninterrupted possession owing to the dread his presence inspires. The Hottentots deserted the house after a decease,[277] and the Seminoles at once

removed from the dwelling where death had occurred, and from the neighbourhood where the body was buried. Among the South Slavonians and Bohemians, the bereaved family, returning from the grave, pelted the ghost of their deceased relative with sticks, stones, and hot coals. And the Tschuwasche, a tribe in Finland, opened fire on it as soon as the coffin was outside the house. In Old Calabar, it was usual for a son to leave his father's house for two years, after which time it was considered safe to return. If a Kaffir or Maori died before he could be carried out, the house was tabooed and deserted.[278] The Ojibways pulled down the house in which anyone had died, and chose another one to live in as far off as possible. Even with the death of an infant the same fear was manifested. One day, when a friend visited a neighbour whose child was sick, he was not a little surprised to find, on his return in the evening, that the house had disappeared and all its inhabitants gone. Among the Abipones of Paraguay, when anyone's life is despaired of, the house is immediately forsaken by his fellow inmates, and the New England tribes would never live in a wigwam in which any person had died, but would immediately pull it down.

If a deceased Creek Indian 'has been a man of eminent character, the family immediately remove from the house in which he is buried, and erect a new one, with a belief that where the bones of their dead are deposited, the place is always attended by goblins.'[279] The Kamtchadales frequently remove from their dwelling when anyone has died, and among the Lepchas the house where there has been a death 'is almost always forsaken by the surviving inmates.'[280] Occasionally, it would seem, the

desertion is more complete. After a death, for instance, the Boobies of Fernando Po forsake the village in which it occurred, and of the Bechuanas we read that ‘on the death of Mallahawan ... the town [Lattakoo] was removed, according to the custom of the country.’[281]

Ghosts are supposed to find pleasure in revisiting the places where they have experienced joy, or sorrow and pain, and to wander round the spot where they died, and hence all kinds of precautions have been adopted to prevent their returning. In Europe, sometimes, ‘steps were taken to barricade the house against him. Thus, in some parts of Russia and East Prussia, an axe or a lock is laid on the threshold, or a knife is hung over the door, and in Germany as soon as the coffin is carried out of the house all the doors and windows are shut.’[282] And conversely, it is a common custom in many parts of England to unfasten every bolt and lock in the house that the spirit of the dying man may freely escape.

But, as Mr. Frazer shows in his interesting paper on the ‘Primitive Ghost,’ our ancestors knew how to outwit the ghost in its endeavour to find its way back to the house it left at death. Thus the practice of closing the eyes of the dead, he suggests, originated in ‘blindfolding the dead that he might not see the way by which he was carried to his last home. At the grave, where he was to rest for ever, there was no motive for concealment; hence the Romans, and apparently the Siamese, opened the eyes of the dead man at the funeral pyre. And the idea that if the eyes of the dead be not closed, his ghost will return to fetch away another of the household, still exists in Germany, Bohemia, and England.’ With the same object the coffin was carried out of the house by a hole purposely made in the wall, which was stopped

up as soon as the body had passed through, so that, when the ghost strolled back from the grave, he found there was no thoroughfare—a device shared equally by Greenlanders, Hottentots, Bechuanas, Samoieds, Ojibways, Algonquins, Laosians, Hindoos, Tibetans, Siamese, Chinese, and Fijians. These 'doors of the dead' are still to be seen in a village near Amsterdam, and they were common in some towns of Central Italy. A trace of the same custom survives in Thüringen, where there is a belief that the ghost of a man who has been hanged will return to the house if not taken out by a window instead of a door. Similarly, for the purpose of misleading the dead, the Bohemians put on masks, that the dead might not know and therefore might not follow them, and it is a matter of conjecture whether mourning customs may not have sprung from 'the desire to disguise and therefore to protect the living from the dead.'

Among further methods in use for frustrating the return of the dead, may be noticed the objection to utter the names of deceased persons—a superstition which Mr. Frazer shows has modified whole languages. Thus, 'among the Australians, Tasmanians, and Abipones, if the name of a deceased person happened to be a common name, e.g. the name of an animal or plant, this name was abolished, and a new one substituted for it. During the residence of the Jesuit Missionary Dobritzhoffer amongst the Abipones, the name for tiger was thus changed three times. Amongst the Indians of Columbia, near relatives of a deceased person often change their names, under the impression that the ghost will return if he hears the familiar names.'[283]

The Sandwich Islanders say the spirit of the departed hovers about the place of its former resort, and in the country north of the Zambesi 'all believe

that the souls of the departed still mingle among the living, and partake in some way of the food they consume.' In the Aleutian Islands, it is said that 'the invisible souls or shades of the departed wander about among their children.'

But one of the most favourite haunts of departed spirits is said to be burial-grounds, and especially their own graves, reminding us of Puck's words in 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' (Act v. sc. 2):

Now it is the time of night,
That the graves all gaping wide,
Everyone lets forth his sprite,
In the church-way paths to glide.

'The belief in ghosts,' writes Thorpe,[284] 'was deeply impressed on the minds of the heathen Northmen, a belief closely connected with their ideas of the state after death. The soul, they believed, returned to the place whence it sprang, while the body, and the grosser life bound to it, passed to the abode of Hel or Death. Herewith was naturally combined the belief that the soul of the departed might, from its heavenly home, revisit the earth, there at night-time to unite itself in the grave-mound with the corporeal shadow released from Hel. Thus the dead could show themselves in the open grave-mounds in the same form which they had in life.'

Indeed, it has been the current opinion for centuries that places of burial are haunted with spectres and apparitions. Ovid speaks of ghosts coming out of their sepulchres and wandering about, and Virgil,[285] too, quoting the popular opinion of his day, tells us how 'Mœris could call the ghosts out of their tombs.' In short, the idea of the ghost remaining near the corpse is of world-wide prevalence, and, as Dr. Tylor remarks,[286] 'through

all the changes of religious thought from first to last in the course of human history, the hovering ghosts of the dead make the midnight burial-ground a place where man's flesh creeps with terror.' We may further compare Hamlet's words (Act iii. sc. 2):

'Tis now the very witching time of night,
When church-yards yawn.

And Puck also tells how, at the approach of Aurora, 'ghosts, wandering here and there, troop home to churchyards.' Tracing this superstition amongst uncultured tribes, we find the soul of the North American hovering about its burial-place, and among the Costa Ricans the spirits of the dead are believed to remain near their bodies for a year. The Dayak's burial-place is frequented by ghosts, and the explorer Swan tells us that when he was with the North-Western Indians, he was not allowed to attend a funeral for fear of his offending the spirits hovering about. From the same authority we learn how at Stony Point, on the north-west coast of America, a burial-place of the Indians was considered to be haunted by spirits, and on this account no Indian ever ventured there.[287] This dread of burial-grounds still retains a persistent hold, and is one of those survivals of primitive belief which has given rise to a host of strange superstitious practices.

Keppel, in his 'Visit to the Indian Archipelago,' says that in Northern Australia the natives will not willingly approach graves at night, alone, 'but when they are obliged to pass them, they carry a firestick to keep off the spirit of darkness.'

There is still a belief that the ghost of the last person watches round the churchyard till another is buried, to whom he delivers his charge. Crofton Croker says that in Ireland it is the general opinion

among the lower orders that ‘the last buried corpse has to perform an office like that of “fag” in our public schools by the junior boy, and that the attendance on his churchyard companions is duly relieved by the interment of some other person.’ Serious disturbances have resulted from this superstition, and terrific fights have at times taken place to decide which corpse should be buried first. The ancient churchyard of Truagh, county Monaghan, is said to be haunted by an evil spirit, whose appearance generally forebodes death. The legend runs, writes Lady Wilde,[288] ‘that at funerals the spirit watches for the person who remains last in the graveyard. If it be a young man who is there alone, the spirit takes the form of a beautiful young girl, inspires him with an ardent passion, and exacts from him a promise that he will meet her that day month in the churchyard. The promise is then sealed by a kiss, which sends a fatal fire through his veins, so that he is unable to resist her caresses, and makes the promise required. Then she disappears, and the young man proceeds homewards; but no sooner has he passed the boundary wall of the churchyard than the whole story of the evil rushes on his mind, and he knows that he has sold himself, soul and body, for a demon’s kiss. Then terror and dismay take hold of him, till despair becomes insanity, and on the very day month fixed for the meeting with the demon bride, the victim dies the death of a raving lunatic, and is laid in the fatal graveyard of Truagh.’

The dead, too, particularly object to persons treading carelessly on their graves, an allusion to which occurs in one of the songs of Greek outlawry: [289]

All Saturday we held carouse, and far through Sunday night,

And on the Monday morn we found our wine expended
quite.
To seek for more, without delay, the captain made me go;
I ne'er had seen nor known the way, nor had a guide to
show.
And so through solitary roads and secret paths I sped,
Which to a little ivied church long time deserted led.
This church was full of tombs, and all by gallant men
possest;
One sepulchre stood all alone, apart from all the rest.
I did not see it, and I trod above the dead man's bones,
And as from out the nether world came up a sound of
groans.
'What ails thee, sepulchre? Why thus so deeply groan and
sigh?
Doth the earth press, or the black stone weigh on thee
heavily?'
'Neither the earth doth press me down, nor black stone do
me scath,
But I with bitter grief am wrung, and full of shame and
wrath,
That thou dost trample on my head, and I am scorned in
death.
Perhaps I was not also young, nor brave and stout in fight,
Nor wont, as thou, beneath the moon, to wander through
the night.'

According to the Guiana Indians, 'every place is haunted where any have died;' and in Madagascar the ghosts of ancestors are said to hover about their tombs. The East Africans 'appear to imagine the souls to be always near the place of sepulture,' and on the Gold Coast 'the spirit is supposed to remain near the spot where the body has been buried.' The souls of warriors slain on the field of battle are considered by the Mangaians to wander for a while amongst the rocks and trees of the neighbourhood in which their bodies were thrown. At length 'the first slain on each battlefield would collect his brothers' ghosts, and

lead them to the summit of a mountain, whence they leap into the blue expanse, thus becoming the peculiar clouds of the winter.'[290] And the Mayas of Yucatan think the souls of the dead return to the earth if they choose, and, in order that they may not lose the way to the domestic hearth, they mark the path from the hut to the tomb with chalk.[291]

The primitive doctrine of souls obliges the savage, says Mr. Dorman,[292] 'to think of the spirit of the dead as close at hand. Most uncultured tribes, on this account, regard the spot where death has taken place as haunted. A superstitious fear soon instigates worship, and this worship, beginning at the tombs and burial-places, develops into the temple ritual of higher culture.'

The Iroquois believe the space between the earth and sky is full of spirits, usually invisible, but occasionally seen, and the Ojibways affirm that innumerable spirits are ever near, and dwell in all kinds of places. European folk-lore has similar beliefs, it having been a Scandinavian idea that the souls of the departed dwell in the interior of mountains, a phase of superstition which frequently presents itself in the Icelandic sagas, and exists in Germany at the present day. 'Of some German mountains,' writes Thorpe, 'it is believed that they are the abodes of the damned. One of these is the Horselberg, near Eisenach, which is the habitation of Frau Holle; another is the fabulous Venusberg, in which the Tannhäuser sojourns, and before which the trusty Eckhart sits as a warning guardian.'[293]

Departed souls were also supposed to dwell in the bottom of wells and ponds, with which may be compared the many tales current throughout Germany and elsewhere of towns and castles that have been sunk in the water, and are at times visible.

But, as few subjects have afforded greater scope for the imagination than the hereafter of the human soul, numerous myths and legendary stories have been invented to account for its mysterious departure in the hour of death. Shakespeare has alluded to the numerous destinations of the disembodied spirit, enumerating the many ideas prevalent, in his day, on the subject. In 'Measure for Measure' (Act iii. sc. 1) Claudio pathetically says:

Ay, but to die, and go we know not where;
To lie in cold obstruction, and to rot;
This sensible warm motion to become
A kneaded clod, and the delighted spirit
To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside
In thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice;
To be imprison'd in the viewless winds,
And blown with restless violence round about
The pendent world.[294]

Indeed, it would be a long task to enter into the mass of mystic details respecting 'the soul's dread journey by caverns and rocky paths and weary plains, over steep and slippery mountains, by frail bank or giddy bridge, across gulfs or rushing rivers,' to its destined home.

According to the Mazovians the soul remains with the coffin, sitting upon the upper part of it until the burial is over, when it flies away. Such traditions, writes Mr. Ralston,[295] 'vary in different localities, but everywhere, among all the Slavonic people, there seems always to have prevailed an idea that death does not finally sever the ties between the living and the dead. This idea has taken various forms, and settled into several widely differing superstitions, lurking in the secrecy of the cottage, and there keeping alive the cultus of the domestic spirit, and

showing itself openly in the village church, where on a certain day it calls for a service in remembrance of the dead. The spirits of those who are thus remembered, say the peasants, attend the service, taking their place behind the altar. But those who are left unremembered weep bitterly all through the day.'

In some parts of Ireland, writes Mr. McAnally, 'there exists a belief that the spirits of the dead are not taken from earth, nor do they lose all their former interest in earthly affairs, but enjoy the happiness of the saved, or suffer the punishment imposed for their sins in the neighbourhood of the scenes among which they lived while clothed in flesh and blood. At particular crises in the affairs of mortals these disenthralled spirits sometimes display joy and grief in such a manner as to attract the attention of living men and women. At weddings they are frequently unseen guests; at funerals they are always present; and sometimes, at both weddings and funerals, their presence is recognised by aerial voices, or mysterious music, known to be of unearthly origin. The spirits of the good wander with the living as guardian angels; but the spirits of the bad are restrained in their action, and compelled to do penance at, or near, the place where their crimes were committed. Some are chained at the bottom of lakes, others buried underground, others confined in mountain gorges, some hang on the sides of precipices, others are transfixed on the tree-tops, while others haunt the homes of their ancestors, all waiting till the penance has been endured and the hour of deliverance arrives.'

Harriet Martineau, speaking of the English lakes, says that Souter or Soutra Fell is the mountain on which ghosts appeared in myriads at intervals during

ten years of the last century. ‘On the Midsummer Eve of the fearful 1745, twenty-six persons, expressly summoned by the family, saw all that had been seen before, and more. Carriages were now interspersed with the troops; and everybody knew that no carriages had been, or could be, on the summit of Souter Fell. The multitude was beyond imagination; for the troops filled a space of half a mile, and marched quickly till night hid them, still marching. There was nothing vaporous or indistinct about the appearance of these spectres. So real did they seem, that some of the people went up the next morning to look for the hoof-marks of the horses; and awful it was to them to find not one footprint on heather or grass.’ This spectral march was similar to that seen at Edge Hill, in Leicestershire, in 1707, and corresponds with the tradition of the tramp of armies over Helvellyn, on the eve of the battle of Marston Moor.

With such phantoms may be compared the mock suns, the various appearances of halos and wandering lights, and such a phenomenon as the ‘Spectre of the Brocken.’ Calmet relates a singular instance at Milan, where some two thousand persons saw, as they supposed, an angel hovering in the air: he cites Cardan as an eye-witness, who says that the populace were only undeceived when it was shown, by a sharp-sighted lawyer, to be a reflection from one of the statues of a neighbouring church, the image of which was caught on the surface of a cloud. The mirage, or water of the desert, owes its appearance to similar laws of refraction. Mountain districts, we know, abound in these illusions, and ‘the splendid enchantment presented in the Straits of Reggio by the Fata Morgana’ has attracted much notice. At such times, ‘minarets, temples, and palaces, have seemed to rise out of the distant

waves;' and spectral huntsmen, soldiers in battle array, and gay but mute cavalcades, have appeared under similar circumstances, pictured on the table of the clouds. It was thus, we are told, that the Duke of Brunswick and Mrs. Graham saw the image of their balloon distinctly exhibited on the face of a cumulous cloud, in 1836; and travellers on Mont Blanc have been startled by their own magnified shadows, floating among the giant peaks.[296] It is difficult to say how many of the apparitions which have been supposed to haunt certain spots might be attributed to similar causes.

CHAPTER XXV

CHECKS AND SPELLS AGAINST GHOSTS

AMONGST the qualities ascribed to the cock was the time-honoured belief that by its crow it dispelled all kinds of ghostly beings—a notion alluded to by the poet Prudentius, who flourished at the commencement of the fourth century. There is, also, a hymn said to have been composed by St. Ambrose, and formerly used in the Salisbury Missal, in which allusion is made to this superstition. In Blair's 'Grave' the apparition vanishes at the crowing of the cock, and in 'Hamlet,' on the departure of the ghost, Bernardo says:

It was about to speak when the cock crew;

to which Horatio answers:

And then it started like a guilty thing

Upon a fearful summons. I have heard
The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn,
Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat
Awake the god of day; and, at his warning,
Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air,
The extravagant and erring spirit hies
To his confine: and of the truth herein
This present object made probation.

Whereupon Marcellus adds the well-known lines:

It faded on the crowing of the cock.
Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes,
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
The bird of dawning singeth all night long;
And then, they say, no spirit dares stir abroad;
The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike,
No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm,
So hallow'd and so gracious is the time.

Even the devil is powerless at the sound of cock-crow. An amusing story is told on the Continent of how a farmer's wife tricked the devil by means of this spell. It appears that her husband was mourning the loss of his barn—either by wind or fire—when a stranger addressed him, and said: 'That I can easily remedy. If you will just write your name in your blood on this parchment, your barn shall be fixed and ready to-morrow before the cock crows; if not, our contract is void.' But afterwards the farmer repented of the bargain he had made, and, on consulting his wife, she ran out in the middle of the night, and found a number of workmen employed on the barn. Thereupon she cried with all her might, 'Cock-a-doodle-doo! cock-a-doodle-doo!' and was followed by all the cocks in the neighbourhood, each of which sent forth a hearty 'Cock-a-doodle-doo!' At the same moment all the phantom workmen

disappeared, and the barn remained unfinished. In a pretty Swedish ballad of 'Little Christina,' a lover rises from the grave to console his beloved. One night Christina hears light fingers tapping at the door; she opens it and sees her betrothed. She washes his feet with pure wine, and for a long while they converse. Then the cocks begin to crow, and the dead get them underground. The young girl follows her sweetheart through the white forest, and when they reach the graveyard, the fair hair of the young man begins to disappear. 'See, maiden,' he says, 'how the moon has reddened all at once; even so, in a moment, thy beloved will vanish.' She sits down on the tomb, and says, 'I shall remain here till the Lord calls me.' Then she hears the voice of her betrothed, 'Little Christina, go back to thy dwelling-place. Every time a tear falls from thine eyes my shroud is full of blood. Every time thy heart is gay, my shroud is full of rose-leaves.' These folk-tales are interesting, as embodying the superstitions of the people among whom they are current.

A similar idea prevails in India, where the cock is with the Hindoos, as with the English peasant, a most potent instrument in the subjugation of troublesome spirits. A paragraph in the 'Carnatic Times' tells us how a Hindoo exorcist tied his patient's hair in a knot, and then with a nail attached it to a tree. Muttering some 'incantatory' lines, he seized a live cock, and holding it over the girl's head with one hand, he, with the other, cut its throat. The blood-stained knot of hair was left attached to the tree, which was supposed to detain the demon. It is further supposed that 'one or a legion thus exorcised will haunt that tree till he or they shall choose to take possession of some other unfortunate.'

It was said that chastity was of itself a safeguard

against the malignant power of bad ghosts; a notion to which Milton has referred:

Some say no evil thing that walks by night,
In fog or fire, by lake or moorish fen,
Blue meagre hag, or stubborn unlaid ghost,
That breaks the magic chains at curfew-time,
No goblin, or swart faery of the mine,
Hath hurtful power o'er true virginity.

The cross and holy water have, too, generally been considered sacred preservatives against devils and spirits, illustrations of which will be found in many of our old romances.[297]

Fire, like water,[298] has been employed for the purpose of excluding or barring the ghost, and Mr. Frazer writes how 'the Siberians seek to get rid of the ghost of the departed by leaping over a fire. At Rome, mourners returning from a funeral stepped over fire,' a practice which still exists in China. A survival of this custom prevails among the south Slavonians, who, on their return from a funeral, are met by an old woman carrying a vessel of live coals. On these they pour water, or else they take a live coal from the hearth and fling it over their heads. The Brahmans simply touched fire, while in Ruthenia 'the mourners merely look steadfastly at the stove or place their hands on it.'[299] It is noteworthy that in the Highlands of Scotland and in Burma, the house-fires were always extinguished when a death happened; for fear, no doubt, of the ghost being accidentally burnt.

The Eskimos drive away spirits by blowing their breath at them,[300] and the Mayas of Yucatan had evil spirits which could be driven away by the sorcerers; but they never came near when their fetiches were exposed. They had a ceremony for

expelling evil spirits from houses about to be occupied by newly married persons.[301] The natives of Brazil so much dread the ghosts of the dead that it is recorded how some of them have been struck with sudden death because of an imaginary apparition of them. They try to appease them by fastening offerings on stakes fixed in the ground for that purpose.[302]

Mutilations of the dead were supposed to keep his ghost harmless, and on this account Greek murderers hacked off the extremities of their victims. Australians cut off the right thumb of a slain enemy that his ghost might not be able to draw the bow. And in Arabia, Germany, and Spain, as the ghosts of murderers and their victims are especially restless, everyone who passes their graves is bound to add a stone to the pile.[303]

In Pekin, six or seven feet away from the front of the doors, small brick walls are built up. These are to keep the spirits out, which fly only in straight lines, and therefore find a baulk in their way. Another mode of keeping spirits away in the case of children is to attire them as priests, and also to dress the boys as girls, who are supposed to be the less susceptible to the evil influence. In fact, most countries have their contrivances for counteracting, in one way or another, the influence of departed spirits—a piece of superstition of which European folk-lore affords abundant illustrations.

Thus, in Norway, bullets, gunpowder, and weapons have no influence on ghosts, but at the sight of a cross, and from exorcisms, they must retire. The same belief prevails in Denmark, where all kinds of checks to ghostly influence are resorted to. It is said, for instance, to be dangerous to shoot at a spectre, as the bullet will return on him who shot

it. But if the piece be loaded with a silver button, that will infallibly take effect. A Danish tradition tells how once there was a horrible spectre which caused great fear and disquietude, as everyone who saw it died immediately afterwards. In this predicament, a young fellow offered to encounter the apparition, and to endeavour to drive it away. For this purpose he went at midnight to the church path, through which the spectre was in the habit of passing, having previously provided himself with steel in various shapes. When the apparition approached, he fearlessly threw steel before its feet, so that it was obliged instantly to turn back, and it appeared no more.[304] A common superstition, equally popular in England as on the Continent, is that when a horseshoe is nailed over the doorway no spirit can enter. It is also said that 'if anyone is afraid of spectres, let him strew flax seed before the door; then no spirit can cross the threshold. A preventive equally efficacious is to place one's slippers by the bedside with the heels towards the bed. Spectres may be driven away by smoking the room with the snuff of a tallow candle; while wax-lights attract them.' And at the present day various devices are adopted by our English peasantry for warding off from their dwellings ghosts, and other uncanny intruders.[305]

CHAPTER XXVI

WRAITH-SEEING

CLOSELY allied to 'second sight' is the doctrine of 'wraiths' or 'fetches,' sometimes designated

'doubles'—an apparition exactly like a living person, its appearance, whether to that person or to another, being considered an omen of death. The 'Fetch' is a well-known superstition in Ireland, and is supposed to be a mere shadow, 'resembling in stature, features, and dress, a living person, and often mysteriously or suddenly seen by a very particular friend.' Spiritlike, it flits before the sight, seeming to walk leisurely through the fields, often disappearing through a gap or lane. The person it resembles is usually known at the time to be labouring under some mortal illness, and unable to leave his or her bed. When the 'fetch' appears agitated, or eccentric in its motions, a violent or painful death is indicated for the doomed prototype. Such a phantom, too, is said to make its appearance at the same time, and in the same place, to more than one person.[306] Should it be seen in the morning, a happy longevity for the original is confidently expected; but if it be seen in the evening, immediate dissolution of the living prototype is anticipated. It is thought, too, that individuals may behold their own 'fetches.' Queen Elizabeth is said to have been warned of her death by the apparition of her own double, and Miss Strickland thus describes her last illness: 'As her mortal illness drew towards a close, the superstitious fears of her simple ladies were excited almost to mania, even to conjuring up a spectral apparition of the Queen while she was yet alive. Lady Guilford, who was then in waiting on the Queen, leaving her in an almost breathless sleep in her privy chamber, went out to take a little air, and met her Majesty, as she thought, three or four chambers off. Alarmed at the thought of being discovered in the act of leaving the royal patient alone, she hurried forward in some trepidation in order to excuse herself, when the apparition

vanished away. She returned terrified to the chamber, but there lay the Queen in the same lethargic slumber in which she left her.'

Shelley, shortly before his death, believed he had seen his wraith. 'On June 23,' says one of his biographers, 'he was heard screaming at midnight in the saloon. The Williamses ran in and found him staring on vacancy. He had had a vision of a cloaked figure which came to his bedside and beckoned him to follow. He did so, and when they had reached the sitting-room, the figure lifted the hood of his cloak and disclosed Shelley's own features, and saying "Siete soddisfatto?" vanished. This vision is accounted for on the ground that Shelley had been reading a drama attributed to Calderon, named 'El Embozado, ó el Encapotado,' in which a mysterious personage who had been haunting and thwarting the hero all his life, and is at last about to give him satisfaction in a duel, unmasks and proves to be the hero's own wraith. He also asks, "Art thou satisfied?" and the haunted man dies of horror.' Sir Robert Napier is supposed to have seen his double, and Aubrey quaintly relates how 'the beautiful Lady Diana Rich, daughter to the Earl of Holland, as she was walking in her father's garden at Kensington to take the air before dinner, about 11 o'clock, being then very well, met her own apparition, habit and everything, as in a looking-glass. About a month after, she died of small-pox. And it is said that her sister, the Lady Isabella Thynne, saw the like of herself also before she died. This account I had from a person of honour. A third sister, Mary, was married to the Earl of Breadalbane, and it has been recorded that she also, not long after her marriage, had some such warning of her approaching dissolution.'

The Irish novelist, John Banim, has written both a

novel and a ballad on this subject, one which has also largely entered into many a tradition and folk-tale.[307] In Cumberland this apparition is known by the peasantry as a 'swarth,' and in Yorkshire by the name of a 'waff.' The gift of wraith-seeing still flourishes on the Continent, and examples abound in Silesia and the Tyrol.

'With regard to bilocation, or double personality,' writes a Catholic priest,[308] 'there is a great deal of very interesting matter in St. Thomas of Aquin, and also in Cardinal Cajetan's "Commentaries of St. Thomas." The substance of the principles is this: Bilocation, properly so called, is defined by the scholastics as the perfect and simultaneous existence of one and the same individual in two distinct places at the same time. This *never* does and never can happen. But bilocation, improperly so called, and which St. Thomas terms *raptus*, does occur, and is identical with the double, as you call it, in the cases of St. Gennadius, St. Ignatius, &c.

'St. Thomas quotes as illustrations or instances, St. Paul being taken up to the Third Heaven. Ezekiel, the prophet, was taken by God and shown Jerusalem, whilst at the same time he was sitting in the room with the ancients of the tribe of Judah before him (Ezekiel viii.), &c. In which the soul of man is not wholly detached from the body, being necessary for the purpose of giving life, but is detached from the *senses* of the body. St. Thomas gives three causes for this phenomenon: (1) Divine power; (2) the power of the Devil; and (3), disease of the body when very violent sometimes.' Bardinus tells how Marsilius Ficinus appeared at the hour of his death on a white horse to Michael Mercatus, and rode away crying, 'O Michael, Michael, vera, vera sunt illa,' that is, the doctrine of a future life is true. Instances of this kind

of phenomenon have been common in all ages of the world, and Lucretius suggested the strange fancy that the superficial surfaces of all bodies were continually flying off like the coats of an onion, which accounted for the appearance of apparitions; whilst Jacques Gaffarel suggested that corrupting bodies send forth vapours which, being compressed by the cold night air, appear visible to the eye in the forms of men.[309]

In one of the notes to 'Les Imaginations Extravagantes de Monsieur Oufle,' by the Abbé Bordélon, it is said that the monks and nuns, a short time before their death, have seen the images of themselves seated in their chairs or stalls. Catharine of Russia, after retiring to her bedroom, was told that she had been seen just before to enter the State Chamber. On hearing this she went thither, and saw the exact similitude of herself seated upon the throne. She ordered her guards to fire upon it.

In Scotland and the northern counties of England it was formerly said that the apparition of the person that was doomed to die within a short time was seen wrapped in a winding-sheet, and the higher the winding-sheet reached up towards the head the nearer was death. This apparition was seen during day, and it might show itself to anyone, but only to one, who generally fell into a faint a short time afterwards. If the person who saw the apparition was alone at the time, the fainting fit did not come on till after meeting with others.

In the 'Statistical Account of Scotland' (xxi. 148), the writer, speaking of the parish of Monquhitter, says, the 'fye gave due warning by certain signs of approaching mortality'; and, again (149), 'the fye has withdrawn his warning.' Some friends observing to an old woman, when in the ninety-ninth year of her age, that, in the course of nature, she could not long

survive, she remarked, with pointed indignation, ‘What fye-token do you see about me?’

In the same work (iii. 380) the minister of Applecross, county of Ross, speaking of the superstitions of that parish, says: ‘The ghosts of the dying, called “tasks,” are said to be heard, their cry being a repetition of the moans of the sick. Some assume the sagacity of distinguishing the voice of their departed friends. The corpse follows the track led by the “tasks” to the place of interment, and the early or late completion of the prediction is made to depend on the period of the night at which the “task” is heard.’

The Scotch wraith and Irish fetch have their parallel in Wales in the Lledrith, or spectre of a person seen before his death. It never speaks, and vanishes if spoken to. It has been seen by miners previous to a fatal accident in the mine. The story is told of a miner who saw himself lying dead and horribly maimed in a phantom tram-car, led by a phantom horse, and surrounded by phantom miners. As he watched this dreadful group of spectres they passed on, looking neither to the right nor the left, and faded away. The miner’s dog was as frightened as its master, and ran away howling. The miner continued to work in the pit, and as the days passed on and no harm came to him he grew more cheerful, and was so bold as to laugh at the superstition. But the day he did this a stone fell from the roof and broke his arm. As soon as he recovered he resumed work in the pit; but a stone crushed him, and he was borne maimed and dead in the tram along the road where his ‘lledrith’ had appeared.[310]

‘Examining,’ says Dr. Tylor,[311] ‘the position of the doctrine of wraiths among the higher races, we find it specially prominent in three intellectual districts:

Christian hagiology, popular folk-lore, and modern spiritualism. St. Anthony saw the soul of St. Ammonius carried to heaven in the midst of choirs of angels, the same day that the holy hermit died five days' journey off in the desert of Nitria. When St. Ambrose died on Easter Eve, several newly-baptized children saw the holy bishop and pointed him out to their parents; but these, with their less pure eyes, could not behold him.' Numerous instances of wraith-seeing have been chronicled from time to time, some of which are noteworthy. It is related how Ben Jonson, when staying at Sir Robert Cotton's house, was visited by the apparition of his eldest son, with a mark of a bloody cross upon his forehead, at the moment of his death by the plague. Lord Balcarres, it is said, when in confinement in Edinburgh Castle under suspicion of Jacobitism, was one morning lying in bed when the curtains were drawn aside by his friend Viscount Dundee, who looked upon him steadfastly, and then left the room. Shortly afterwards the news came that he had fallen about the same hour at Killiecrankie. Lord Mohun, who was killed in a duel in Chelsea Fields, is reported to have appeared at the moment of his death, in the year 1642, to a lady in James Street, Covent Garden, and also to the sister of Glanvill, famous as the author of 'Sadducismus Triumphatus.' It is related how the second Earl of Chesterfield, in 1652, saw, when walking, a spectre with long white robes and black face. Regarding it as an intimation of some illness of his wife, then visiting her father at Networth, he set off early to inquire, and met a servant from Lady Chesterfield, describing the same apparition. Anna Maria Porter, when living at Esher, was visited by an old gentleman, a neighbour, who frequently came in to tea. On this occasion, the story

goes, he left the room without speaking; and, fearing that something had happened, she sent to inquire, and found that he had died at the moment of his appearance. Similarly Maria Edgeworth, when waiting with her family for an expected guest, saw in a vacant chair the apparition of a sailor cousin, who suddenly stated that his ship had been wrecked and he himself the only one saved. The event proved the contrary—he alone was drowned.[312]

One of the most striking and best authenticated cases on record is known as the Birkbeck Ghost, and is thus related in the 'Proceedings of the Psychical Research Society': 'In 1789, Mrs. Birkbeck, wife of William Birkbeck, banker, of Settle, and a member of the Society of Friends, was taken ill and died at Cockermouth while returning from a journey to Scotland, which she had undertaken alone—her husband and three children, aged seven, five, and four years respectively, remaining at Settle. The friends at whose house the death occurred made notes of every circumstance attending Mrs. Birkbeck's last hours, so that the accuracy of the several statements as to time as well as place was beyond the doubtfulness of man's memory, or of any even unconscious attempt to bring them into agreement with each other. One morning, between seven and eight o'clock, the relation to whom the care of the children had been entrusted, and who kept a minute journal of all that concerned them, went into their bedroom, as usual, and found them all sitting up in bed in great excitement and delight. "Mamma has been here," they cried; and the little one said, "She called, 'Come, Esther!'" Nothing could make them doubt the fact, and it was carefully noted down to entertain the mother when she came home. That same morning, as their mother lay on her dying

bed at Cockermouth, she said, “I should be ready to go if I could but see my children.” She then closed her eyes, to reopen them, as they thought, no more. But after ten minutes of perfect stillness she looked up brightly, and said, “I am ready now; I have been with my children;” and at once passed peacefully away. When the notes taken at the two places were compared, the day, hour, and minutes were the same.’

Baxter, in his ‘World of Spirits,’ records a very similar case of a dying woman visiting her children in Rochester, and in a paper on ‘Ghosts and Goblins,’ which appeared in the ‘Cornhill’ (1873, xxvii. 457), the writer relates how, in a house in Ireland, a girl lay dying. Her mother and father were with her, and her five sisters were praying for her in a neighbouring room. This room was well lit, but overhead was a skylight, and the dark sky beyond. One of the sisters, looking towards this skylight, saw there the face of her dying sister looking sorrowfully down upon them. She seized another sister and pointed to the skylight; one after another the sisters looked where she pointed. They spoke no word; and in a few moments their father and mother called them to the room where their sister had just died. But when afterwards they talked together about what had happened that night, it was found that they had all seen the vision and the sorrowful face. But, as the writer observes, ‘in stories where a ghost appears for some useful purpose, the mind does not reject the event as altogether unreasonable, though the circumstances may be sufficiently preposterous;’ but one can conceive no reason why the vision of a dying sister should look down through a skylight.

According to a Lancashire belief, the spirits of persons about to die, especially if the persons be in

distant lands, are supposed to return to their friends, and thus predict the event. While the spirit is thus away, the person is supposed to be in a swoon, and unaware of what is passing. But his desire to see his friends is necessary; and he must have been thinking of them.[313]

It is related from Devonshire, of the well-known Dr. Hawker, that, when walking one night, he observed an old woman pass by him, to whom he was in the habit of giving a weekly charity. As soon as she had passed, he felt somebody pull his coat, and on looking round he recognised her, and put his hand in his pocket to seek for a sixpence, but on turning to give it to her she was gone. On his return home he heard she was dead, but his family had forgotten to mention the circumstance.[314]

A correspondent of 'Notes and Queries' (3rd S. vi. 182) tells how a judge of the Staffordshire County Courts, being on one occasion in the North, went with his sisters into the church of the place to inspect its monuments. While there they were surprised to see a lady, whom they knew to be in Bath, walk in at one door and out through another. They immediately followed, but could neither see nor hear anything further of her. On writing to her friends, it was found that she was dead, and a second letter elicited the fact that she had died at the very same time at which she had been seen by them in the North.

Patrick Kennedy, in his 'Legendary Fiction of the Irish Celt,' speaking of the Irish fetch, gives the following tale of 'The Doctor's Fetch,' based, it is stated, on the most authentic sources: 'In one of our Irish cities, and in a room where the mild moonbeams were resting on the carpet and on a table near the window, Mrs. B., wife of a doctor in good practice and general esteem, looking towards

the window from her pillow, was startled by the appearance of her husband standing near the table just mentioned, and seeming to look with attention on the book which was lying open on it. Now, the living and breathing man was by her side apparently asleep, and, greatly as she was surprised and affected, she had sufficient command of herself to remain without moving, lest she should expose him to the terror which she herself at the moment experienced. After gazing on the apparition for a few seconds, she bent her eyes upon her husband to ascertain if his looks were turned in the direction of the window, but his eyes were closed. She turned round again, although now dreading the sight of what she believed to be her husband's fetch, but it was no longer there. She remained sleepless throughout the remainder of the night, but still bravely refrained from disturbing her partner.

'Next morning, Mr. B., seeing signs of disquiet on his wife's countenance while at breakfast, made some affectionate inquiries, but she concealed her trouble, and at his ordinary hour he sallied forth to make his calls. Meeting Dr. C. in the street, and falling into conversation with him, he asked his opinion on the subject of fetches. "I think," was the answer, "and so I am sure do you, that they are mere illusions produced by a disturbed stomach acting upon the excited brain of a highly imaginative or superstitious person." "Then," said Dr. B., "I am highly imaginative or superstitious, for I distinctly saw my own outward man last night standing at the table in the bedroom, and clearly distinguishable in the moonlight. I am afraid my wife saw it too, but I have been afraid to speak to her on the subject."

'About the same hour on the ensuing night the poor lady was again roused, but by a more painful

circumstance. She felt her husband moving convulsively, and immediately afterwards he cried to her in low, interrupted accents, “Ellen, my dear, I am suffocating; send for Dr. C.” She sprang up, huddled on some clothes, and ran to his house. He came with all speed, but his efforts for his friend were useless. He had burst a large blood-vessel in the lungs, and was soon beyond human aid. In her lamentations the bereaved wife frequently cried out, “Oh! the fetch, the fetch!” and at a later period told the doctor of the appearance the night before her husband’s death.’ But, whilst many stories of this kind are open to explanation, it is a singular circumstance how even several persons may be deceived by an illusion such as the following. A gentleman who had lately lost his wife, looking out of window in the dusk of evening, saw her sitting in a garden-chair. He called one of his daughters and asked her to look out into the garden. ‘Why,’ she said, ‘mother is sitting there.’ Another daughter was called, and she experienced the same illusion. Then the gentleman went out into the garden, and found that a garden-dress of his wife’s had been placed over the seat in such a position as to produce the illusion which had deceived himself and his daughters.

In ‘Phantasms of the Living’[315] very many strange and startling cases are recorded, in which the mysterious ‘double’ has appeared, sometimes speaking, and sometimes without speech, although such manifestations have not always been omens of death. Thus the late Lord Dorchester[316] is said to have seen the phantom of his daughter standing at the window, having his attention aroused by its shadow, which fell across the book he was reading at the time. She had accompanied a fishing expedition, was caught in a storm, and was distressed at the

thought that her father would be anxious on her account.

In Fitzroy's 'Cruise of the Beagle' an anecdote is told of a young Fuegian, Jemmy Button, and his father's ghost. 'While at sea, on board the "Beagle," about the middle of the year 1842, he said one morning to Mr. Byno, that in the night some man came to the side of his hammock, and whispered in his ear that his father was dead. Mr. Byno tried to laugh him out of the idea, but ineffectually. He fully believed that such was the case, and maintained his opinion up to the time of finding his relations in Beagle Channel, when, I regret to say, he found that his father had died some months previously.' This story is interesting, especially as Mr. Lang says it is the only one he has encountered among savages, of a warning conveyed to a man by a ghost as to the death of a friend.[317]

CHAPTER XXVII

GHOSTLY TIMES AND SEASONS

SHAKESPEARE, quoting from an early legend, has reminded us that at Christmastide 'no spirit dares stir abroad.' And yet, in spite of this time-honoured belief, Christmas would seem to be one of the favourite seasons of the year for ghosts to make their presence felt in all kinds of odd ways. Many an old baronial hall, with its romantic associations and historic legends, is occasionally, as Christmastime comes round, disturbed by certain uncanny sounds, which timidity is only too ready to invest with the

most mysterious and unaccountable associations. One reason for this nervous credulity may be ascribed to the fact that, as numerous old country seats are supposed to be haunted, Christmas is a fitting opportunity for the ghost to catch a glimpse of the family revelry and mirth. But, judging from the many legendary tales which have been handed down in connection with Christmas, it would seem that these spirit-members of the family intrude their presence on their relatives in the flesh in various ways. In Ireland, the ill-fated Banshee has selected this season on more than one occasion, to warn the family of coming trouble. According to one tale told from Ireland, one Christmas Eve, when the family party were gathered round the festive board in an old castle in the South of Ireland, the prancing of horses was suddenly heard, and the sharp cracking of the driver's whip. Imagining that one of the absent members of the family had arrived, some of the young people moved to the door, but found that it was the weird apparition of the 'headless coach and horseman.'

Many such stories might be enumerated, which, under one form or another, have imparted a dramatic element to the season. With some of our country peasantry, there is a deep-rooted dread of encountering anything either bordering on, or resembling, the supernatural, as sometimes spirits are supposed at Christmastide to be unfriendly towards mankind. In Northamptonshire, for instance, there is a strange notion that the ghosts of unfortunate individuals buried at cross-roads have a particular license to wander about on Christmas Eve, at which time they wreak their evil designs upon defenceless and unsuspecting persons. But conduct of this kind seems to be the exception, and ghosts are

oftentimes invoked at Christmastide by those anxious to have a foretaste of events in store for them. Thus, the anxious maiden, in her eager desire to know something of her matrimonial prospects, has often subjected herself to the most trying ordeal of 'courting a ghost.' In many countries, at the 'witching hour of midnight, on Christmas Eve,' the candidate for marriage goes into the garden and plucks twelve sage leaves, 'under a firm conviction that she will be favoured with a glimpse of the shadowy form of her future husband as he approaches her from the opposite end of the garden.' But a ceremony observed in Sweden, in years past, must have required a still more strong-minded person to take advantage of its prophetic powers. It was customary in the morning twilight of Christmas Day, to go into a wood, without making the slightest noise, or uttering a word; total abstinence from eating and drinking being another necessary requirement. If these rules were observed, it was supposed that the individual as he went along the path leading to the church, would be favoured with a sight of as many funerals as would pass that way during the ensuing year. With this practice may be compared one current in Denmark, where, it is said, when a family are sitting together on Christmas Eve, if anyone is desirous of knowing whether a death will occur amongst them during the ensuing year, he must go outside, and peep silently through the window, and the person who appears at table sitting without a head, will die before Christmas comes round again. The feast of St. Agnes was formerly held in high veneration by women who wished to know when and whom they should marry. It was required that on this day they should not eat—which was called 'fasting St. Agnes' fast'—if they wished to have

visions of delight, a piece of superstition on which Keats has founded his poem, 'The Eve of St. Agnes:'

They told me how, upon St. Agnes' Eve,
Young virgins might have visions of delight,
And soft adorings from their love receive,
Upon the honey'd middle of the night,
If ceremonies due they did aright;
As supperless to bed they must retire,
And couch supine their beauties, lily white,
Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require
Of heaven, with upward eyes, for all that they desire.

Laying down on her back that night, with her hands under her head, the anxious maiden was led to expect that her future spouse would appear in a dream, and salute her with a kiss. Various charms have long been observed on St. Valentine's Eve, and Poor Robin's Almanack tells us how:

On St. Mark's Eve, at twelve o'clock,
The fair maid will watch her smock,
To find her husband in the dark,
By praying unto good St. Mark.

But St. Mark's Eve was a great day for apparitions. Allusion has been made in a previous chapter to watching in the church porch for the ghosts of those who are to be buried in the churchyard during the following months; and Jamieson tells us of a practice kept up in the northern counties, known as 'ash-ridlin.' The ashes being sifted, or riddled, on the hearth, if any one of the family 'be to die within the year, the mark of the shoe, it is supposed, will be impressed on the ashes; and many a mischievous wight has made some of the credulous family miserable, by slyly coming downstairs after the rest have retired to bed, and marking the ashes with the

shoe of one of the members.'

In Peru it is interesting to trace a similar superstitious usage. As soon as a dying man draws his last breath, ashes are strewed on the floor of the room, and the door is securely fastened. Next morning the ashes are carefully examined to ascertain whether they show any impression of footsteps, and imagination readily traces marks, which are alleged to have been produced by the feet of birds, dogs, cats, oxen, or llamas. The destiny of the dead person is construed by the footmarks which are supposed to be discernible. The soul has assumed the form of that animal whose tracks are found.[318]

There is St. John's, or Midsummer Eve, around which many weird and ghostly superstitions have clustered. Grose informs us that if anyone sit in the church porch, he will see the spirits of those destined to die that year come and knock at the church door in the order of their decease. In Ireland there is a popular belief that on St. John's Eve the souls of all persons leave their bodies, and wander to the place, by land or sea, where death shall finally separate them from the tenement of the clay. The same notion of a temporary liberation of the soul gave rise to a host of superstitious observances at this time, resembling those connected with Hallow Eve. Indeed, this latter night is supposed to be the time of all others when supernatural influences prevail. 'It is the night,' we are told, 'set apart for a universal walking abroad of spirits, both of the visible and invisible world; for one of the special characteristics attributed to this mystic evening is the faculty conferred on the immaterial principle in humanity to detach itself from its corporeal tenement and wander abroad through the realms of space. Divination is then believed to attain its highest power, and the gift

asserted by Glendower of calling spirits “from the vast deep” becomes available to all who choose to avail themselves of the privileges of the occasion.’[319] Similarly, in Germany on St. Andrew’s Eve, young women try various charms in the hope of seeing the shadow of their sweethearts; one of the rhymes used on the occasion being this:

St. Andrew’s Eve is to-day;
Sleep all people,
Sleep all children of men
Who are between heaven and earth,
Except this only man,
Who may be mine in marriage.

The story goes that a girl once summoned the shadow of her future husband. Precisely as the clock struck twelve he appeared, drank some wine, laid a three-edged dagger on the table and vanished. The girl put the dagger into her trunk. Some years afterwards there came a man from a distant part to the town where the girl dwelt, bought property there, and married her. He was, in fact, the identical person whose form had appeared to her. Some time after their marriage the husband by chance opened the trunk, and there found the dagger, at the sight of which he became furious. ‘Thou art the girl,’ said he, ‘who years ago forced me to come hither from afar in the night, and it was no dream. Die, therefore!’ and with these words he thrust the dagger into her heart. [320]

It may be added, that by general consent night-time is the season when spirits wander abroad. The appearance of morning is the signal for their dispersion.

The flocking shadows pale,
Troop to the infernal jail;

Each fettered ghost slips to his several grave,
And the yellow skirted fays,
Fly after the night-steeds, leaving their noon-loved maze.

The ghost of Hamlet's father says, 'Methinks I scent the morning air,' and adds:

'Fare thee well at once!
The glow-worm shows the matins to be near.'

According to a popular notion formerly current, the presence of unearthly beings was announced by an alteration in the tints of the lights which happened to be burning—a superstition alluded to in 'Richard III.' (Act v. sc. 3)—where the tyrant exclaims as he awakens:

'The lights burn blue. It is now dead midnight,
Cold fearful drops stand on my trembling flesh.
.....
Methought the souls of all that I had murder'd
Came to my tent.'

So in 'Julius Cæsar' (Act iv. sc. 3), Brutus, on seeing the ghost of Cæsar, exclaims:

'How ill this taper burns. Ha! who comes here?'

CHAPTER XXVIII

SPIRIT-HAUNTED TREES

ACCORDING to Empedocles 'there are two destinies for the souls of highest virtue—to pass into trees or into the bodies of lions,' this conception of plants as

the habitation of the departing soul being founded on the old idea of transmigration. Illustrations of the primitive belief meet us in all ages, reminding us how Dante passed through that leafless wood, in the bark of every tree of which was confined a suicide; and of Ariel's imprisonment:

Into a cloven pine, within which rift
Imprison'd, thou didst painfully remain
A dozen years....
... Where thou didst vent thy groans,
As fast as mill-wheels strike.

In German folk-lore the soul is supposed occasionally to take the form of a flower, as a lily or white rose; and, according to a popular belief, one of these flowers appears on the chairs of those about to die. Grimm[321] tells a pretty tale of a child who 'carries home a bud which the angel had given him in the wood; when the rose blooms the child is dead.' Similarly, from the grave of one unjustly executed white lilies are said to spring as a token of the person's innocence, and from that of a maiden three lilies, which no one save her lover must gather, a superstition which, under one form or another, has largely prevailed both amongst civilised and savage communities. In Iceland it is said that when innocent persons are put to death, the sorb or mountain ash will spring over their grave, and the Lay of Runzifal makes a blackthorn shoot out of the bodies of slain heathens, and a white flower by the heads of fallen Christians. The well-known story of 'Tristram and Ysonde' tells how 'from his grave there grew an eglantine which twined about the statue, a marvel for all men to see; and though three times they cut it down, it grew again, and ever wound its arms about the image of the fair Ysonde.' With which legend

may be compared the old Scottish ballad of ‘Fair Margaret and Sweet William’:

Out of her breast there sprang a rose,
And out of his a briar;
They grew till they grew to the church top,
And there they tied in a true lover’s knot.

It is to this time-honoured fancy that Laertes refers when he wishes that violets may spring from the grave of Ophelia,[322] and Lord Tennyson has borrowed the same idea:

And from his ashes may be made,
The violet of his native land.[323]

Some of the North-Western Indians believed that those who died a natural death would be compelled to dwell among the branches of tall trees, and the Brazilians have a mythological character called Mani[324]—a child who died and was buried in the house of her mother. Soon a plant—the Mandioca—sprang out of the grave, which grew, flourished, and bore fruit. According to the Iroquois, the spirits of certain trees are supposed to have the forms of beautiful females; recalling, writes Mr. Herbert Spencer,[325] ‘the dryads of classic mythology, who, similarly conceived as human-shaped female spirits, were sacrificed to in the same ways that human spirits in general were sacrificed to.’ ‘By the Santals,’ he adds, ‘these spirits or ghosts are individualised. At their festivals the separate families dance round the particular trees which they fancy their domestic lares chiefly haunt.’

In modern Greece certain trees are supposed to have their ‘stichios,’ a being variously described as a spectre, a wandering soul, a vague phantom,

occasionally invisible, and sometimes assuming the most widely different forms. When a tree is 'stichimonious,' it is generally considered dangerous for anyone 'to sleep beneath its shade, and the woodcutters employed to cut it down will lie upon the ground and hide themselves, motionless, and holding their breath, at the moment when it is about to fall, dreading lest the stichio at whose life the blow is aimed with each blow of the axe, should avenge itself at the precise moment when it is dislodged.'[326] This idea is abundantly illustrated in European folk-lore, and a Swedish legend tells how, when a man was on the point of cutting down a juniper tree, a voice was heard saying, 'Friend, hew me not.' But he gave another blow, when, to his horror and amazement, blood gushed from the root.

Such spirit-haunted trees have been supposed to give proof of their peculiar character by certain weird and mysterious signs. Thus the Australian bush-demons whistle in the branches, and Mr. Schoolcraft mentions an Indian tradition of a hollow tree, from the recesses of which there issued on a calm day a sound like the voice of a spirit. Hence it was considered to be inhabited by some powerful spirit, and was deemed sacred. The holes in trees have been supposed to be the doors through which the spirits pass, a belief which reappears in the German idea that the holes in the oak are the pathways for elves, and that various diseases may be cured by contact with these holes. It is not surprising, too, that the idea of spirit-haunted trees caused them to be regarded by the superstitious with feelings of awe. Mr. Dorman tells us[327] of certain West Indian tribes, that if any person going through a wood perceived a motion in the trees which he regarded as supernatural, frightened at the strange

prodigy, he would address himself to that tree which shook the most. Similarly, when the wind blows the long grass or waving corn, the German peasant is wont to say that the 'Grass-wolf,' or the 'Corn-wolf' is abroad. Under a variety of forms this animistic conception is found in different parts of the world, and has been embodied in many a folk-tale—an Austrian Märchen relating, for instance, how there sits in a stately fir-tree a fairy maiden waited on by a dwarf, rewarding the innocent and plaguing the guilty; and there is the German song of the maiden in the pine, whose bark the boy split with a gold and silver horn.

CHAPTER XXIX

GHOSTS AND HIDDEN TREASURES

THE presence of troubled phantoms in certain localities has long been attributed to their being interested in the whereabouts of certain secreted treasures, the disposal of which to the rightful owner having been frustrated through death having prematurely summoned them from their mortal existence. Traditions of the existence of large sums of hidden money are associated with many of our own country mansions. Such a legend was long connected with Hulme Castle, formerly a seat of a branch of the Prestwich family. The hoard was generally supposed to have been hidden either in the hall itself or in the grounds adjoining, and was said to be protected by spells and incantations. Many years ago the hall was pulled down, but, although considerable care was

taken to search every spot, no money was discovered. Secreted treasure is associated with the apparition of Madame Beswick, who used to haunt Birchen Tower, Hollinwood;[328] and an eccentric spectre known as ‘Silky,’ which used to play all kinds of strange pranks in the village of Black Heddon, Northumberland, was commonly supposed to be the troubled phantom of a certain lady who had died before having an opportunity of disclosing the whereabouts of some hoarded money. With the discovery of the gold, this unhappy spirit is said to have disappeared. The story goes that one day, in a house at Black Heddon, a terrific noise was heard, which caused the servant to exclaim, ‘The deevil’s in the house! the deevil’s in the house! He’s come through the ceiling!’ But on the room being examined where the noise occurred, a great dog’s skin was found on the floor, filled with gold, after which time ‘Silky’ was neither seen nor heard.

Equally strange is the legend related of Swinsty Hall, which tells how its original founder was a poor weaver, who travelled to London at a time when the plague was raging, and finding many houses desolate and uninhabited, took possession of the money left without an owner, to such an extent that he loaded a waggon with the wealth thus acquired, and, returning to his home, he built Swinsty Hall. But he cannot cleanse himself from the contamination of the ill-acquired gold, and at times, it is said, his unquiet spirit has been seen bending over the Greenwell Spring rubbing away at his ghastly spoil. Mr. Henderson[329] gives the history of an apparition which, with retributive justice, once haunted a certain Yorkshire farmer. An old woman of Sexhow, near Stokesley, appeared after her death to a farmer of the place, and informed him that beneath a certain

tree in his apple orchard he would find a hoard of gold and silver which she had buried there; the silver he was to keep for his trouble, but the gold he was to give to a niece of hers living in great poverty. The farmer went to the spot indicated, found the money, and kept it all to himself. But from that day his conscience gave him no rest, and every night, at home or abroad, old Nanny's ghost dogged his steps. At last one evening the neighbours heard him returning from Stokesley market very late; his horse was galloping furiously, and as he passed a neighbour's house, its inmates heard him screaming out, 'I will, I will, I will!' and looking out they saw a little old woman in black, with a large straw hat on her head, clinging to him. The farmer's hat was off, his hair stood on end, as he fled past them uttering his fearful cry, 'I will, I will, I will!' But when the horse reached the farm all was still, for the rider was a corpse.

Tradition asserts that the 'white lady' who long haunted Blenkinsopp Castle, is the ghost of the wife of Bryan de Blenkinsopp, who quarrelled with her husband, and in a fit of spite she concealed a chest of gold that took twelve of the strongest men to carry into the castle. Filled with remorse for her undutiful conduct, the unhappy woman cannot rest in her grave, but her spirit is doomed to wander back to the old castle, and to mourn over the accursed wealth of which its rightful owner was defrauded.

An old farm, popularly known in the neighbourhood as 'Sykes' Lumb Farm,' from having been inhabited for many generations by a family of the name of Sykes, was long haunted by an old wrinkled woman who, one night, being interrogated by an occupier of the farm as to the cause of her wandering about, made no reply, but proceeding

towards the stump of an old apple tree in the orchard, pointed significantly to the ground beneath. On search being made, there was found buried deep in the earth a jar of money, on the discovery of which the phantom vanished.

Anecdotes of treasures concealed at the bottom of wells are of frequent occurrence, and the 'white ladies' who dwell in the lakes, wells, and seas of so many countries, are owners of vast treasures, which they occasionally offer to mortals. Tradition says that in a pool known as Wimbell Pond at Acton, Suffolk, is concealed an iron chest of money, and if any person approach the pond and throw a stone into the water, it will ring against the chest—a small white figure having been heard to cry in accents of distress, 'That's mine.'[330]

Scotland has many such stories. It is popularly believed that for many ages past a pot of gold has lain at the bottom of a pool beneath a fall of the rivulet underneath Craufurdland Bridge, about three miles from Kilmarnock. Many attempts have been made to recover this treasure, but something unforeseen has always happened to prevent a successful issue. 'The last effort made, by the Laird of Craufurdland himself,' writes Mr. Chambers,[331] 'was early in the last century, at the head of a party of his domestics, who first dammed up the water, then emptied the pool of its contents, and had heard their instruments clink on the kettle, when a voice was heard saying:

Pow, pow!
Craufurdland tower's a' in a low!

Whereupon the laird left the scene, followed by his servants, and ran home to save what he could. Of course, there was no fire in the house, and when they

came back to renew their operations, they found the water falling over the lin in full force. Being now convinced that a power above that of mortals was opposed to their researches, the laird and his people gave up the attempt. Such is the traditionary story, whether,' adds Mr. Chambers, 'founded on any actual occurrence, or a mere fiction of the peasants' brain, cannot be ascertained; but it is curious that a later and well authenticated effort to recover the treasure was interrupted by a natural occurrence in some respects similar.'

Vast treasures are said to be concealed beneath the ruins of Hermitage Castle, but, as they are in the keeping of the Evil One, they are considered beyond redemption. Venturesome persons have occasionally made the attempt to dig for them, but a storm of thunder and lightning has generally deterred the adventurers from proceeding, otherwise, of course, the money would have long ago been found. It is ever, we are told, that such supernatural obstacles come in the way of these interesting discoveries. Mr. Chambers relates how 'an honest man in Perthshire, named Finlay Robertson, about a hundred years ago, went with some stout-hearted companions to seek for the treasures which were supposed to be concealed in the darksome cave of a deceased Highland robber, but just as they had commenced operations with their mattocks, the whole party were instantaneously struck, as by an electric shock, which sent them home with fear and trembling, and they were ever after remarked as silent, mysterious men, very apt to take offence when allusion was made to their unsuccessful enterprise.'[332]

In Scotland and the North of England, the Brownie was regarded as a guardian of hidden treasure, and 'to him did the Borderers commit their money or

goods, when, according to the custom prevalent in wild insecure countries, they concealed them in the earth.' Some form of incantation was practised on the occasion, such as the dropping upon the treasure the blood of a slaughtered animal, or burying the slain animal with it.[333]

According to the Welsh belief, if a person die while any hoarded money—or, indeed, metal of any kind, were it nothing more than old iron—is still secretly hidden, the spirit of that person cannot rest. Others affirm that it is only ill-gotten treasure which creates this disturbance of the grave's repose; but it is generally agreed that the soul's unquiet condition can only be relieved by finding a human hand to take the hidden metal, and throw it down the stream of a river. To throw it up a stream is useless. The spirit 'selects a particular person as the subject of its attentions, and haunts that person till asked what it wants.' A story is told of a tailor's wife at Llantwit Major, a stout and jolly dame, who was thus haunted until she was worn to the semblance of a skeleton, 'for not choosing to take a hoard honestly to the Ogmore'—the favourite river in Glamorganshire for this purpose. To quote her own words, 'I at last consented, for the sake of quiet, to take the treasure to the river, and the spirit wafted me through the air so high that I saw below me the church loft and all the houses, as if I had leaned out of a balloon. When I took the treasure to throw it into the river, in my flurry I flung it up stream instead of down, and on this the spirit, with a savage look, tossed me into a whirlwind, and how ever I got back to my home I know not.' The bell-ringers found her lying insensible in the Church lane, on their return from church, late in the evening.[334]

No piece of folk-lore is more general in Ireland

than that gold or silver may be found under nearly all the raths, cairns, or old castles throughout the island. It is always a difficult task to exhume such buried treasure, for some preternatural guardian or other will be found on the alert. These buried treasures are usually deposited in ‘a crock,’ but whenever an attempt is made to lift it, some awful gorgon, or monster, appears. Sometimes a rushing wind sweeps over the plain, or from the opening made, with destructive force, carrying away the gold-seeker’s hat or spade, or even, in various instances, the adventurer himself, who is deposited with broken bones, or a paralysed frame, at a respectful distance from the object of his quest. ‘On the banks of a northern river, and near a small eminence,’ writes a correspondent of the ‘Gentleman’s Magazine,’[335] ‘is a beautiful green plot, on which two large, moss-covered stones over six hundred feet apart are shown. It is said two immense “crocks” of gold lie buried under these conspicuous landmarks, and that various attempts have been made to dig round and beneath them. In all those instances when a persistent effort has been made, a monk appeared in full habit, with a cross in his hand to warn off sacrilegious offenders.’

Similar legends are found in different parts of the world. ‘The Isle of Yellow Sands,’ says Mr. Dorman, [336] ‘derives its chief interest from the traditions and fanciful tales which the Indians relate concerning its mineral treasures and their supernatural guardians. They pretend that its shores are covered with a heavy, shining, yellow sand, which they are persuaded is gold, but that the guardian spirit of the island will not permit any to be carried away. To enforce his commands, he has drawn together upon it myriads of eagles, hawks, and other birds of prey,

who, by their cries warn him of any intrusions upon the domain, and assist with their claws and beaks to expel the enemy. He has also called from the depths of the lake, large serpents of the most hideous forms, who lie thickly coiled upon the golden sands, and hiss defiance to the steps of the intruder. A great many years ago, they say, some people driven by stress of weather upon the island, put a large quantity of the glittering treasure in their canoes and attempted to carry it off; but a gigantic spirit strode into the water and in a tone of thunder commanded them to bring it back'—

Listen, white man, go not there!
Unseen spirits stalk the air;
Ravenous birds their influence lend,
Snakes defy, and kites defend....
Touch not, then, the guarded lands,
Of the Isle of Yellow Sands.

The 'Ceylon Times' records a remarkable instance of superstition among the Tamul population employed as labourers on a coffee estate. 'It is the belief of all Orientals,' says the writer, 'that hidden treasures are under the guardianship of supernatural beings. The Singhalese, however, divide the charge between demons and cobra da capellos. Various charms are resorted to by those who wish to gain the treasures, the demons requiring a sacrifice. Blood of a human being is the most important, but, as far as it is known, the Cappowas have hitherto confined themselves to the sacrifice of a white cock, combining its blood with their own, drawn by a slight puncture in the hand or foot.'

Many curious stories are on record of persons having been informed by ghosts of the whereabouts of hidden money, and of their having been directed

to the spot where the hoarded treasure has lain for years secreted in its undetected recess.

In the ‘Antiquarian Repertory’ is a singular narrative of a man named Richard Clarke, a farm-labourer at Hamington, Northamptonshire, who was haunted by the ghost of a man who declared that he had been murdered near his own house 267 years, 9 months, and 2 days ago, and buried in an orchard. He added that his wife and children, who had lived in Southwark, never knew what became of him; that he had some treasures and papers buried in the cellar of a house near London, and that he (Clarke) must seek for it, and that he (the ghost) would meet him in the cellar, to assist him in the search. The ghost added that as soon as the money and the writings were found, and duly delivered to certain relatives of his in Southwark, at such an address, removed from him in the fourth generation, he would cease to visit him, and would leave him in peace. Clarke went to town, and on London Bridge the ghost passed him, and conducted him to the house, where his wife had lived four generations before. Clarke found everything answering the description which the ghost had given him; the money and the documents were discovered, the writings on vellum found, but those on paper decayed. Clarke divided the money, and acted as the ghost of the murdered man directed him to do; and the latter ‘lookt chearfully upon him, and gave him thankes, and said now he should be at rest, and spoke to those other persons which were of his generation, relations, but they had not courage to answer, but Clarke talkt for them.’

CHAPTER XXX

PHANTOM MUSIC

MANY of those weird melodious sounds which romance and legendary lore have connected with the enchanted strains of invisible music have originated in the moaning of the winds, and the rhythmical flow of the waves. In several of their operatic works, our dramatic composers have skilfully introduced the music of the fairies and of other aerial conceptions of the fancy, reminding us of those harmonious sounds which Caliban depicts in the 'Tempest' (Act iii. sc. 2):

> The isle is full of noises,
> Sounds and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not;
> Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments,
> Will hum about mine ears, and sometimes voices
> That, if I then had waked after long sleep,
> Will make me sleep again.

Most countries have their stories and traditions of mysterious music which, in many cases, has been associated with certain supernatural properties. Under one form or another, the belief in phantom music has extensively prevailed throughout Europe, and in many parts of England it is still supposed to be heard, occasionally as a presage of death. It has been generally supposed that music is the favourite recreation of the spirits that haunt mountains, rivers, and all kinds of lonely places. The Indians would not venture near Manitobah Island, their superstitious fears being due to the weird sounds produced by the waves as they beat upon the beach at the foot of the cliffs, near its northern extremity. During the night, when a gentle breeze was blowing from the north, the various sounds heard on the island were quite sufficient to strike awe into their minds. These

sounds frequently resembled the ringing of distant bells; so close, indeed, was the resemblance that travellers would awake during the night with the impression that they were listening to chimes. When the breeze subsided, and the waves played gently on the beach, a low wailing sound would be heard three hundred yards from the cliffs.[337]

Sometimes music is heard at sea, and it is believed in Ireland that when a friend or relative dies, a warning voice is discernible. The following is a rough translation of an Irish song founded on this superstition, which is generally sung to a singularly wild and melancholy air:

A low sound of song from the distance I hear,
In the silence of night, breathing sad on my ear.
Whence comes it? I know not—unearthly the note,
And unearthly the tones through the air as they float;
Yet it sounds like the lay that my mother once sung,
And o'er her firstborn in his cradle she hung.

When ships go down at sea, it is said the death-bell is at times distinctly heard, a superstition to which Sir Walter Scott alludes:

And the kelpie rang,
And the sea-maid sang,
The dirge of lovely Rosabelle.

At the present day, indeed, all kinds of phantom musical sounds are believed to float through the air —sounds which the peasantry, in days past, attributed to the fairies.

The American Indians have a similar piece of legendary lore. Gayarre, in his 'Louisiana,' says that mysterious music floats on the waters of the river Pascagoula, 'particularly on a calm moonlight night. It seems to issue from caverns or grottoes in the bed of the river, and sometimes oozes up through the water under the very keel of the boat which contains the traveller, whose ear it strikes as the distant concert of a thousand Æolian harps. On the banks of the river, close by the spot where the music is heard, tradition says that there existed a tribe different from the rest of the Indians. Every night when the moon was visible, they gathered round the beautifully carved figure of a mermaid, and, with instruments of strange shape, worshipped the idol with such soul-stirring music as had never before blessed human ears. One day a priest came among them and tried to

convert them from the worship of the mermaid. But on a certain night, at midnight, there came a rushing on the surface of the river, and the water seemed to be seized with a convulsive fury. The Indians and the priest rushed to the bank of the river to contemplate the supernatural spectacle. When she saw them, the mermaid turned her tones into still more bewitching melody, and kept chanting a sort of mystic song. The Indians listened with growing ecstasy, and one of them plunged into the river to rise no more. The rest —men, women, and children—followed in quick succession, moved, as it were, with the same irresistible impulse. When the last of the race disappeared, the river returned to its bed. Ever since that time is heard occasionally the distant music, which the Indians say is caused by their musical brethren, who still keep up their revels at the bottom of the river, in the palace of the mermaid.'

It was a popular belief in years gone by, that it was dangerous to listen long to the weirdly fascinating influence of phantom music, or, as it was sometimes called, 'diabolic music,' as it was employed by evil-disposed spirits for the purpose of accomplishing some wicked design. Tradition tells how certain weird music was long since heard in an old mansion in Schleswig Holstein. The story goes that at a wedding there was a certain young lady present, who was the most enthusiastic dancer far and near, and who, in spite of having danced all the evening, petulantly exclaimed, 'If the devil himself were to call me out, I would not refuse him.' Suddenly the door of the ball-room flew open, and a stranger entered and invited her to dance. Round and round they whirled unceasingly, faster and faster, until, to the horror of all present, she fell down dead. Every year afterwards, on the same day as this tragic event

happened, exactly at midnight, the mansion long resounded with diabolic music, the lady haunting the scene of her fearful death. There are numerous versions of this story, and one current in Denmark is known as ‘The Indefatigable Fiddler.’ It appears that on a certain Sunday evening, some young people were merrymaking, when it was decided to have a little dancing. In the midst of an animated discussion as to how they could procure a musician, one of the party boastingly said, ‘Now, that leave to me. I will bring you a musician, even if it should be the devil himself.’ Thereupon he left the house, and had not gone far when he met a poverty-looking man with a fiddle under his arm, who, for a certain sum, agreed to play. Soon the young people, spellbound by the fiddler’s music, were frantically dancing up and down the room unable to stop, and in spite of their entreaties he continued playing. They must have soon died of exhaustion, had not the parish priest arrived at the farmhouse, and expelled the fiddler by certain mystic words. Sometimes, it is said, the sound of music, such as harp-playing, is heard in the most sequestered spots, and is attributed to supernatural agency. The Welsh peasantry thought it proceeded from the fairies, who were supposed to be specially fond of this instrument; but such music had this peculiarity—no one could ever learn the tune.

Cortachy Castle, the seat of the Earl of Airlie, has long had its mysterious drummer; and whenever the sound of his drum is heard, it betokens the speedy death of a member of the Ogilvie family. The story goes that ‘either the drummer, or some officer whose emissary he was, had excited the jealousy of a former Lord Airlie, and that in consequence he was put to death by being thrust into his own drum and flung from the window of the tower, in which is situated

the chamber where his music is apparently chiefly heard. It is said that he threatened to haunt the family if his life were taken,' a promise which he has fulfilled.[338] With this strange warning may be compared the amusing story popularly known as 'The Drummer of Tedworth,' in which the ghost or evil spirit of a drummer, or the ghost of a drum, performed the principal part in this mysterious drama for 'two entire years.' The story, as succinctly given by George Cruikshank,[339] goes that in March 1661, Mr. Monpesson, a magistrate, caused a vagrant drummer to be arrested, who had been annoying the country by noisy demands for charity, and had ordered his drum to be taken from him, and left in the bailiff's house. About the middle of the following April, when Mr. Monpesson was preparing for a journey to London, the bailiff sent the drum to his house. But on his return home, he was informed that noises had been heard, and then he heard the noises himself, which were a 'thumping and drumming,' accompanied by 'a strange noise and hollow sound.' The sign of it when it came was like a hurling in the air over the house, and at its going off, the beating of a drum, like that of the 'breaking up of a guard.' After a month's disturbance outside the house, it came into the room where the drum lay. For an hour together it would beat 'Roundheads and Cockolds,' the 'tattoo,' and several other points of war as well as any drummer. Upon one occasion, when many were present, a gentleman said, 'Satan, if the drummer set thee to work, give three knocks,' which it did at once. And for further trial, he bid it for confirmation, if it were the drummer, to give five knocks and no more that night, which it did, and left the house quiet all the night after. 'But,' as George Cruikshank observes, 'strange as it certainly was, is it not still

more strange that educated gentlemen, and even clergymen, as in this case, also should believe that the Almighty would suffer an evil spirit to disturb and affright a whole innocent family, because the head of that family had, in his capacity as magistrate, thought it his duty to take away a drum from no doubt a drunken drummer, who, by his noisy conduct, had become a nuisance to the neighbourhood?'

In many parts of the country, phantom bells are supposed to be heard ringing their ghostly peals. Near Blackpool, about two miles out at sea, there once stood, tradition says, the church and cemetery of Kilmigrol, long ago submerged. Even now, in rough weather, the melancholy chimes of the bells may be heard sounding over the restless waters. A similar story is told of Jersey. According to a local legend, many years ago, 'the twelve parish churches in that island possessed each a valuable peal of bells, but during a long civil war the bells were sold to defray the expenses of the troops. The bells were sent to France, but on the passage the ship foundered, and everything was lost. Since then, during a storm, these bells always ring at sea, and to this day the fishermen of St. Ouen's Bay, before embarking, go to the edge of the water to listen if they can hear the bells; if so, nothing will induce them to leave the shore.' With this story may be compared one told of Whitby Abbey, which was suppressed in 1539. The bells were sold, and placed on board to be conveyed to London. But, as soon as the vessel had moved out into the bay it sank, and beneath the waters the bells may occasionally be heard, a legend which has been thus poetically described:

Up from the heart of the ocean

The mellow music peals,
Where the sunlight makes its golden path,
And the seamew flits and wheels.

For many a chequered century,
Untired by flying time,
The bells no human fingers touch
Have rung their hidden chime.

To this day the tower of Forrabury Church, Cornwall, or, as it has been called by Mr. Hawker, 'the silent tower of Bottreaux,' remains without bells. It appears the bells were cast and shipped for Forrabury, but as the ship neared the shore, the captain swore and used profane language, whereupon the vessel sank beneath a sudden swell of the ocean. As it went down, the bells were heard tolling with a muffled peal; and ever since, when storms are at hand, their phantom sound is still audible from beneath the waves:

Still when the storm of Bottreaux's waves
Is waking in his weedy caves,
Those bells that sullen surges hide,
Peal their deep tones beneath the tide—
'Come to thy God in time,'
Thus saith the ocean chime;
'Storm, whirlpool, billow past,
Come to thy God at last.'

Legends of this kind remind us of Southey's ballad of the 'Inchcape Bell,' founded on a tragic legend. The abbots of Aberbrothock (Arbroath) fixed a bell on a rock, as a kindly warning to sailors, that obstruction having long been considered the chief difficulty in the navigation of the Firth of Forth. The bell was so fastened as to be rung by the agitation of the waves, but one day, Sir Ralph the Rover 'cut the bell from the Inchcape float,' and down sank the bell

with a gurgling sound. Afterwards,

Sir Ralph the Rover sailed away,
He scoured the sea for many a day,
And now grown rich with plundered store,
He steers his course for Scotland's shore.

But the night is dark and hazy, and—

They hear no sound, the swell is strong,
Though the wind hath fallen they drift along,
Till the vessel strikes with a shivering shock.
'O Christ! It is the Inchcape rock!'

But it is too late—the ship is doomed:

Sir Ralph the Rover tore his hair;
He cursed himself in his despair.
The waves rush in on every side;
The ship is sinking beneath the tide.

But even in his dying fear
One dreadful sound could the rover hear,
A sound as if with the Inchcape bell,
The devil below was ringing his knell.

Indeed, there are all kinds of whimsical stories current of phantom bells, and according to a tradition at Tunstall, in Norfolk, the parson and churchwardens disputed for the possession of some bells which had become useless because the tower was burnt. But, during their altercation, the arch-fiend quickly travelled off with the bells, and being pursued by the parson, who began to exorcise in Latin, he dived into the earth with his ponderous burden, and the place where he disappeared is a boggy pool of water, called 'Hell Hole.' Notwithstanding the aversion of the powers of darkness to such sounds, even these bells are

occasionally permitted to favour their native place with a ghostly peal. Similarly, at Fisherty Brow, near Lonsdale, there is a sort of hollow where, as the legend runs, a church, parson, and congregation were swallowed up. On a Sunday morning the bells may be heard ringing a phantom peal by anyone who puts his ear to the ground.

Occasionally, it is said, phantom music, by way of warning, is heard just before a death, instances of which are numerous.

Samuel Foote, in the year 1740, while visiting at his father's house in Truro, was kept awake by sounds of sweet music. His uncle was at about the same time murdered by assassins. This strange occurrence is thus told by Mr. Ingram.[340] Foote's maternal uncles were Sir John Goodere and Captain Goodere, a naval officer. In 1740 the two brothers dined at a friend's house near Bristol. For a long time they had been on bad terms, owing to certain money transactions, but at the dinner-table a reconciliation was, to all appearance, arrived at between them. But, on his return home, Sir John was waylaid by some men from his brother's vessel, acting by his brother's authority, carried on board, and deliberately strangled, Captain Goodere not only unconcernedly looking on, but furnishing the rope with which the crime was committed. The strangest part of this terrible tale, however, remains to be told. On the night the murder was perpetrated, Foote arrived at his father's house in Truro, and he used to relate how he was kept awake for some time by the softest and sweetest strains of music he had ever heard. At first he tried to fancy it was a serenade got up by some of the family to welcome him home, but not being able to discover any trace of the musicians, he came to the conclusion that he was deceived by his own

imagination. He shortly afterwards learnt that the murder had been consummated at the same hour of the same night as he had been haunted by the mysterious sounds.

CHAPTER XXXI

PHANTOM SOUNDS

THE deceptiveness of sound in olden times was very little understood, and hence originated, in most countries, a host of traditionary tales descriptive of sundry mysterious noises which were generally attributed to supernatural agencies. Hence, it is impossible to say how many a ghost story would long ago have found a satisfactory solution if only attention had been paid to the properties of sound. But by disregarding the laws which regulate the conditions upon which sound is oftentimes more or less audible, the imagination has frequently conjured up the most fantastic reasons for some mysterious rumbling which has suddenly trespassed on the silence of the night. Thus, Dr. Tyndall has proved how the atmosphere is occasionally in an unusual degree more transparent or opaque to sound as well as to light, and supported this theory by referring to the audibility of fog-signals, which vary according to the state of the weather. Facts of this kind are of the utmost importance in accounting, it may be, for some apparently inexplicable sound. It is sometimes forgotten, too, that sounds are far more audible at night time than during the day, and what would fail to attract notice, even if heard during the hours of

sunlight, would probably be treated in a different aspect when once the darkness of evening had set in. There is perhaps no superstition so deeply rooted in the popular mind as the belief in what are generally termed ‘death-warnings’; the common opinion being that death announces its approach by certain mysterious noises, a powerful illustration of which occurs in ‘Macbeth’ (Act ii. sc. 3), where Lennox graphically describes how, on the awful night in which Duncan is murdered—

Our chimneys were blown down: and, as they say
Lamentings heard i’ the air; strange screams of death:
And prophesying, with accents terrible,
Of dire combustion, and confused events,
New hatch’d to the woeful time.

Modern folk-lore holds either that a knocking or rumbling in the floor is an omen of death about to happen, or that dying persons themselves announce their dissolution to their friends in such strange sounds.[341]

In recent years one of the most interesting instances of a phantom voice occurred in connection with the death of Mr. George Smith, the well-known Assyriologist. This eminent scholar died at Aleppo, on August 19, 1876, at about six o’clock in the afternoon. On the same day, and at about the same time, as Dr. Delitzsch—a friend and fellow-worker of Mr. Smith—was passing within a stone’s throw of the house in which he had lived when in London, he suddenly heard his own name uttered aloud ‘in a most piercing cry,’ which a contemporary record of the time said ‘thrilled him to the marrow.’ The fact impressed Dr. Delitzsch so much that he looked at his watch, made a note of the hour, and recorded the fact in his note-book, this being one of those

straightforward and unimpeachable coincidences which, even to an opponent, is difficult to explain.

There can be no doubt that many of the unearthly noises heard near and in lonely houses on the coast were produced by an illicit class of spirits, that is, through the agency of smugglers, ‘in order to alarm and drive all others but their accomplices from their haunts.’ Thus, in a house at Rottingdean, Sussex, all kinds of strange noises were heard night after night, when suddenly they ceased. Soon afterwards one of a gang of smugglers confessed to their having made a secret passage from the beach close by the house, and that, wishing to induce the occupiers to abandon it, they had rolled at the dead of night tub after tub of spirits up the passage, and so had caused it to be reported that the place was haunted.[342] George Cruikshank tells how, in the wine cellar of a house somewhere near Blackheath, there were sometimes heard strange noises in the evening and at night-time, such as knocking, groaning, footsteps, &c. The master of the house at last determined ‘to lay the ghost’ if possible, and one evening, when these noises had been heard, went with his servants to the cellar, where they discovered an under-gardener in a drunken state. It seems that he had tunnelled a hole from the tool-house through the wall into the cellar.

In numerous cases, too, there can be no doubt that strange noises heard in the silent hours of the night have been due to some cleverly-devised trick for the purpose, in many cases, of keeping the house uninhabited, and thereby benefiting, it may be, some impecunious care-taker. A story is told of a ghost—which turned out to be the trick of a Franciscan friar—that answered questions by knocking in the Catholic church of Orleans, and demanded the removal of the provost’s Lutheran wife, who had

been buried there.[343] But one of the most eccentric instances of spiritual antics was the noises said to have been heard at Epworth Parsonage in the time of the Rev. Samuel Wesley, these sounds having consisted of 'knockings' and 'groanings,' of 'footsteps,' and 'rustling of silk trailing along,' 'clattering of the iron casement,' and 'clattering of the warming pan,' and all sorts of frightful noises, which frightened even a big dog, a large mastiff, who used, at first, when he heard the noises, 'to bark, and leap, and snap on one side and the other, and that frequently before anyone in the room heard the noises at all; but after two or three days he used to creep away before the noise began, and by this the family knew it was at hand.' Mr. Wesley at one time thought it was rats, and sent for a horn to blow them away. But this made matters worse, for after the horn was blown the noise came in the daytime as well. Some of the Wesley family believed it to be supernatural hauntings, and explained the cause of it thus: at morning and evening prayers, 'when the Rev. Samuel Wesley commenced prayer for the king, a knocking began all round the room, and a thundering knock attended the *Amen*.' Mr. Wesley observed that his wife did not say '*Amen*' to the prayer for the king, but Mrs. Wesley added she could not, for she did not believe that the Prince of Orange was king.[344] Ewshott House, Hampshire, was disturbed by equally strange sounds, and Glamis Castle, with its secret room, has long been famous for the mysterious noises, knocking, and hammering heard at night-time, which a lady once remarked reminded her of the erection of a scaffold.

The miscreant ghosts of wicked people are supposed to make all kinds of unearthly noises, for as they cannot enjoy peace in their graves, they delight

in annoying the occupants of their mortal haunts. Lowther Hall, the residence of the 'bad Lord Lonsdale,' was disturbed by such uncanny sounds that neither men nor animals were permitted to rest, and many of the ghost stories told of our old country houses describe the peculiar noises made by their ghostly tenants. The mother of the premier, George Canning, used to tell her experiences of a haunted house in Plymouth, where she stayed during a theatrical engagement. Having learnt from a Mr. Bernard, who was connected with the theatre, that he could obtain comfortable apartments for her at a moderate price, she accepted his offer. 'There is,' said he, 'a house belonging to our carpenter that is reported to be haunted, and nobody will live in it. If you like to have it you may, and for nothing, I believe, for he is so anxious to get a tenant; only you must not let it be known that you do not pay any rent for it.' It turned out as Mr. Bernard had informed her, for night after night she heard all such noises as are wont to proceed from a workshop, although, on examining every part of the house herself, she found nothing to account for this extraordinary series of noises.

Occasionally, it is said, before the perpetration of any dreadful crime, as murder, a supernatural sound is heard. A murder was committed, for instance, at Cottertown, of Auchanasie, near Keith, on January 11, 1797, in connection with which the following facts have been recorded: 'On the day on which the deed was done, two men, strangers to the district, called at a farmhouse about three miles from the house in which lived the old folk that were murdered. Shortly before the tragic act was committed, a sound was heard passing along the road the two men were seen to take, in the direction

of the place at which the murder was perpetrated. So loud and extraordinary was the noise that the people left their houses to see what it was that was passing. To the amazement of every one, nothing was to be seen, though it was moonlight, and moonlight so bright that it aroused attention. All believed something dreadful was to happen, and some proposed to follow the sound. About the time this discussion was going on, a blaze of fire arose on the hill of Auchanasie. The foul deed had been accomplished, and the cottage set on fire. By next day all knew of what the mysterious sound had been the forerunner.'[345] At Wheal Vor Mine an unaccountable noise has been generally supposed to be a warning. On Barry Island, near Cardiff, it is said that certain ghostly noises were formerly heard in it —sounds resembling the clanking of chains, hammering of iron, and blowing of bellows, and which were supposed to be made by the fiends whom Merlin had set to work to frame the wall of crags to surround Carmarthen.

The following extract from Lockhart's 'Life of Sir Walter Scott' records a strange noise which was heard while the new house at Abbotsford was being built, the novelist living in an older part, close adjoining: 'Walter Scott to Daniel Terry, April 30, 1818.... The exposed state of my house has led to a mysterious disturbance. The night before last we were awakened by a violent noise, like drawing heavy boards along the new part of the house. I fancied something had fallen, and thought no more about it; this was about *two* in the morning. Last night, at the same witching hour, the very same noise occurred. Mrs. S., as you know, is rather timbersome, so up I got, with Beardie's broad sword under my arm—

Bolt upright,
And ready to fight.

But nothing was out of order, neither can I discover what occasioned the disturbance.' Mr. Lockhart adds: 'On the morning that Mr. Terry received the foregoing letter in London, Mr. William Erskine was breakfasting with him, and the chief subject of their conversation was the sudden death of George Bullock, which had occurred on the same night, and nearly as they could ascertain at the very hour when Scott was aroused from his sleep by the "mysterious disturbance" here described. This coincidence, when Scott received Erskine's minute detail of what had happened in Tenterdon Street (that is, the death of Bullock, who had the charge of furnishing the new rooms at Abbotsford), made a much stronger impression on his mind than might be gathered from the tone of an ensuing communication.' It seems that Bullock had been at Abbotsford, and made himself a great favourite with old and young. Sir Walter Scott, a week or two afterwards, wrote thus to Terry: 'Were you not struck with the fantastical coincidence of our nocturnal disturbances at Abbotsford, with the melancholy event that followed? I protest to you the noise resembled half a dozen men at work, putting up boards and furniture, and nothing can be more certain than that there was nobody on the premises at the time. With a few additional touches, the story would figure in Glanville or Aubrey's collection. In the meantime you may set it down, with poor Dubisson's warnings, as a remarkable coincidence coming under your own observation.'

In a paper by Mrs. Edwards, in 'Macmillan's Magazine,' entitled 'The Mystery of Pezazi,' an account is given of constant disturbing sounds of nocturnal tree-felling heard near a bungalow in

Ceylon, where examination proved that no trees had been felled. Mrs. Edwards, her husband, and their servants were on several occasions disturbed by these sounds, which were unmistakable and distinct. The Singhalese attribute these noises to a Pezazi, or spirit. A description of precisely the same disturbances occurs, writes Mr. Andrew Lang,[346] in Sahagun's account of the superstitions of the Aztecs, and it seems that the Galapagos Islands, 'suthard of the line,' were haunted by the midnight axe. 'De Quincey,' adds Mr. Lang, 'who certainly had not heard the Ceylon story, and who probably would have mentioned Sahagun's had he known it, describes the effect produced by the midnight axe on the nerves of his brother, Pink: "So it was, and attested by generations of sea-vagabonds, that every night, duly as the sun went down and the twilight began to prevail, a sound arose—audible to other islands, and to every ship lying quietly at anchor in that neighbourhood—of a woodcutter's axe.... The close of the story was that after, I suppose, ten or twelve minutes of hacking and hewing, a horrid crash was heard, announcing that the tree, if tree it were, that never yet was made visible to daylight search, had yielded to the old woodman's persecution.... The woodcutter's axe began to intermit about the earliest approach of dawn, and as light strengthened it ceased entirely, after poor Pink's ghostly panic grew insupportable."'

Among the American Indians all the sounds that issued from caverns were thought to be produced by their spiritual inhabitants. The Sonora Indians say that departed souls dwell among the caves and nooks of their cliffs, and that echoes often heard there are their voices. Similarly, when explosions were heard, caused by the sulphurous gas from the rocks around

the head-waters of Lake Ontario, the superstitious Indians attributed them to the breathing of the Manitous.[347] The modern Dayaks, Siamese, and Singhalese agree with the Esths as to noises being caused by spirits. European folk-lore has long ascribed most of the unexplained noises to the agency of spirits, and to this day Franconian damsels go to a tree on St. Thomas's Day, knock three times, and listen for the indwelling spirit to inform them from raps within what kind of husbands they are to have. Hence the night is known as 'Little Knocker's Night.' There is the Poltergeist of the German, a mischievous spirit, who wanders about the house at night making all kinds of strange noises.

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SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE
LONDON

FOOTNOTES

[1] xxiii. 100; Keary's *Outlines of Primitive Belief*, p. 284.

[2] *The Three Principles*, chap. xix. 'Of the Going Forth of the Soul.'

[3] Letourneau's *Sociology*, p. 252.

[4] *Primitive Culture*, 1873, i. p. 457.

[5] 1st S. ii. p. 51.

[6] Letourneau's *Sociology*, p. 257.

[7] Tylor's *Primitive Culture*, i. p. 433; Brinton's *Myths of the New World*, p. 253.

[8] Harland and Wilkinson's *Lancashire Folk-lore*, 1867, p. 210.

[9] 1st S. i. p. 315.

[10] Cf. 'Nexosque resolveret artus,' Virgil on the death of Dido. Æneid iv. 695.

[11] See Dalyell's *Darker Superstitions of Scotland*, p. 302, and *Notes and Queries*, 1st S. iv. p. 350.

[12] *Ibid.* i. p. 467.

[13] 1st S. iii. p. 84.

[14] Kelly's *Indo-European Folk-lore*, pp. 127-128.

[15] Dorman's *Primitive Superstitions*, p. 43.

[16] In a note to *Redgauntlet*, Letter xi.

[17] *Folk-lore Record*, i. pp. 59-60.

[18] *Timon of Athens*, iv. 3.

[19] Henderson's *Folk-lore of Northern Counties*, pp. 60-61.

[20] See Tylor's *Primitive Culture*, i. p. 145.

[21] *Iliad*, ii. 852.

[22] *Illustrations of Shakspeare*, 1839, pp. 324-326.

[23] Dorman's *Primitive Superstitions*, p. 40.

[24] Tylor's *Anthropology*, 1881, p. 343.

[25] See further instances in Tylor's *Primitive Culture*, i. pp. 440, 441.

[26] *Fiji and the Fijians*, i. p. 242.

[27] See Sir John Lubbock's *Origin of Civilisation and the Primitive Condition of Man*, 1870, p. 141.

[28] *Werewolves*, p. 29.

[29] See Chapter on Second Sight.

[30] See Tylor's *Anthropology*, p. 345; and Sir John Lubbock's *Origin of Civilisation and the Primitive Condition of Man*, p. 141; and H. Spencer's *Principles of Sociology*, 1885, i. p. 777.

[31] *Principles of Sociology*, 1885, i. p. 174.

[32] *De Anima*, p. 9; see Tylor's *Primitive Culture*, i. p. 456.

[33] *Principles of Sociology*, 1885, i. p. 174.

[34] See Tylor's *Primitive Culture*, i. p. 457.

[35] Dorman's *Primitive Superstitions*, p. 20.

[36] Tylor's *Primitive Culture*, i. p. 456.

[37] Letourneau's *Sociology*, p. 253.

[38] See Tylor's *Anthropology*, 1881, p. 344.

[39] *Nineteenth Century*, July 1885, pp. 143-144, 'Transylvanian Superstitions,' by Madame Emily de Laszowska Gerard.

[40] Ralston's *Songs of the Russian People*, p. 117.

[41] *Myths and Dreams*, 1885, p. 184.

[42] *Myths and Myth-makers*, 1873, p. 225.

[43] See Hunt's *Popular Romances of the West of England*, p. 373.

[44] *Fasti*, v. 457.

[45] *Primitive Superstitions*, p. 195.

[46] *The Origin of Civilisation, and the Primitive Condition of Man*, 1870, p. 140; see Letourneau's *Sociology*, p. 263.

[47] Brinton's *Myths of the New World*, 1868,

p. 257.

[48] Dorman's *Primitive Superstitions*, 1881, p. 193.

[49] See Lecky's *Rationalism in Europe*, 1870, i. p. 340; cf. Maury's *Légendes Pieuses*, p. 124.

[50] *Primitive Culture*, i. p. 455.

[51] See Andrew Lang's *Myth, Ritual, Religion*, i. p. 108.

[52] *Odyssey*, xxiv.

[53] Tylor's *Primitive Culture*, i. p. 451.

[54] *Night Side of Nature.*

[55] Yardley's *Supernatural in Fiction*, p. 93.

[56] Letourneau's *Sociology*, p. 257.

[57] *Primitive Culture*, ii. p. 29; Douce's *Illustrations of Shakespeare*, pp. 450, 451.

[58] Henderson's *Folk-lore of Northern Counties*, p. 126, note.

[59] Thorpe's *Northern Mythology*, ii. p. 166.

[60] See Gregor's *Folk-lore of North-East of Scotland*, p. 68.

[61] Edited by C. S. Burne.

[62] Countess Evelyn Martinengo-Cesaresco, 1886, *Essays in the Study of Folk-songs*, p. 8.

[63] *Study of Folk-songs*, p. 2.

[64] *Study of Folk-songs*, p. 8.

[65] Ralston's *Songs of the Russian People*, p. 121.

[66] *Study of Folk-songs*, p. 21.

[67] *Folk-lore Record*, 1879, iii. pp. 111, 112.

[68] *Folk-lore Record*, 1879, iii. pp. 111, 112.

[69] *Shropshire Folk-lore*, p. 119.

[70] Gregor's *Folk-lore of North-East of Scotland*, p. 69.

[71] Sir John Lubbock's *Origin of Civilisation*, p. 134.

[72] *Primitive Culture*, ii. p. 120.

[73] *The Chinese*: J. F. Davis, 1836, ii. pp. 139, 140.

[74] *Folk-lore of China*, p. 73.

[75] See Dorman's *Primitive Superstitions*, p. 304.

[76] *Primitive Culture*, ii. p. 28.

[77] See Dorman's *Primitive Superstitions*, 1880, pp. 19, 20.

[78] Thorpe's *Northern Mythology*, ii, p. 19.

[79] Thorpe's *Northern Mythology*, ii. pp. 94, 95.

[80] Griffis, *The Mikado's Kingdom*.

[81] Denny's *Folk-lore of China*; see Bassett's *Legends and Superstitions of the Sea*, p. 296.

[82] *Folk-lore of North-East of Scotland*, 1881, p. 68.

[83] *Haunted Homes of England*, 1881, p. 286.

[84] *Haunted Homes of England*, 2nd S., pp. 222-225.

[85] *Folk-lore of Northern Counties*, p. 267.

[86] *British Goblins*, pp. 143, 144.

[87] *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1855, part ii. p. 58.

[88] See Henderson's *Folk-lore of Northern Counties*, pp. 324-325.

[89] Quoted in Tylor's *Primitive Culture*, i. p. 444.

[90] See Ingram's *Haunted Homes*, 1884, pp. 33-36.

[91] See *Book of Days*, ii. p. 287.

[92] *Songs of the Russian People*, p. 118.

[93] Quoted by Gubernatis, *Zoological Mythology*, 1872, ii. pp. 254, 255.

[94] Countess Evelyn Martinengo-Cesaresco, *Study of Folk-songs* p. 10; Thorpe's *Northern Mythology*, i. p. 289.

[95] Henderson's *Folk-lore of Northern Counties*, p. 126; Thorpe's Northern Mythology, ii. p. 211.

[96] See Dorman's *Primitive Superstitions*, pp.

48, 49.

[97] Jones' *Credulities, Past and Present*, p. 376.

[98] See Dasent's *Tales of the Norse*, 1859, p. 230.

[99] Jones' *Credulities, Past and Present*, p. 373.

[100] Dorman's *Primitive Superstitions*, pp. 255, 256.

[101] Hardwick's *Traditions, Superstitions, and Folk-lore*, 1872 p. 243; Thorpe's *Northern Mythology*, i. p. 289. See Kelly's *Indo-European Folk-lore*, p. 103.

[102] See Henderson's *Folk-lore of Northern Counties*, pp. 331-335.

[103] Dorman's *Primitive Superstitions*, p. 255.

[104] *Indo-European Folk-lore*, pp. 104, 105.

[105] *Shropshire Folk-lore*, p. 131.

[106] Hunt's *Popular Romances of the West of England*, p. 377.

[107] *Shropshire Folk-lore*, pp. 105, 106.

[108] See *Ibid.* pp. 108-111.

[109] See Hartshorne's *Salopia Antiqua*, p. 522

[110] *Notes and Queries*, 1st S. ii. p. 515.

[111] *Nineteenth Century*, April 1885, p. 625.

[112] See Thorpe's *Northern Mythology*, ii. pp. 289, 290.

[113] *Nineteenth Century*, April 1885, p. 625.

[114] Letourneau's *Sociology*, p. 250.

[115] *Ibid.* p. 264.

[116] *Ibid.* p. 266.

[117] *Book of Days*, ii. p. 433.

[118] See Harland and Wilkinson's *Lancashire Folk-lore*, p. 91.

[119] 'West Sussex Superstitions,' *Folk-lore Record*, i. p. 23.

[120] Henderson's *Folk-lore of Northern*

Counties, pp. 274, 275.

[121] Henderson's *Folk-lore of Northern Counties*, p. 275.

[122] See Henderson's *Folk-lore of Northern Counties*, pp. 274-278.

[123] See Wirt Sikes' *British Goblins*, pp. 167-169.

[124] See Roby's *Traditions of Lancashire*; Homerton's *Isles of Loch Awe*; Hardwick's *Traditions, Superstitions, and Folk-lore*, pp. 153-176.

[125] *Northern Mythology*, iii. p. 219.

[126] *Ibid.* ii. pp. 195-202.

[127] *Northern Mythology*, ii. pp. 198, 199.

[128] See Thorpe's *Northern Mythology*, ii. pp. 102, 166, 167.

[129] The *Nineteenth Century*, 'Comparative Study of Ghost Stories,' 1885, xvii. pp. 629, 630.

[130] Rev. W. Gregor, *Folk-lore of North-East of Scotland*, 1881, p. 69.

[131] *Yorkshire Oddities*, ii. p. 105.

[132] See Ingram's *Haunted Homes*, 2nd S. pp. 29, 30.

[133] See Wirt Sikes' *British Goblins*, pp. 219-221.

[134] 'Secrets of Sable Island,' *Harper's Magazine*.

[135] See Thorpe's *Northern Mythology*, ii. pp. 97, 202, 211; iii. pp. 11, 158, 268.

[136] *Songs of the Russian People*, 1872, p. 116.

[137] *Folk-lore Record*, 1878, i. p. 54.

[138] *Evolution of Light from the Living Subject.*

[139] *Transactions Cardiff Natural Society*, iv. p. 5.

[140] Wirt Sikes, *British Goblins*, p. 239.

[141] See Ingram's *Haunted Homes*, 2nd S. pp. 219-221.

[142] See 'Essay on Fairy Superstitions' in the *Border Minstrelsy*.

[143] Rink's *Tales and Traditions of the Eskimos*, p. 43.

[144] Josselyn's *Two Voyages*, p. 133.

[145] *Primitive Culture*, i. p. 390.

[146] See *The Norfolk Antiquarian Miscellany*, 1877, i. pp. 288, 289.

[147] *Eastern Counties Collectanea*, p. 3.

[148] See *Notes and Queries*, 1st S. xii. p. 486, for another hole or pit story.

[149] *The Curate of Cranston, and other Stories*, 1862, 'Carriage and Four Ghosts.'

[150] *Notes and Queries*, 1st S. v. p. 295.

[151] Hardwick's *Traditions, Superstitions, and Folk-lore*, p. 130.

[152] *Shropshire Folk-lore*, p. 112.

[153] *Shropshire Folk-lore*, pp. 113, 114.

[154] A full account will be found in a paper by Mr. F. Ross, in the *Leeds Mercury*, 1884, entitled 'Yorkshire Legends and Traditions.'

[155] See Ingram's *Haunted Homes*, 2nd S. pp. 72-78.

[156] *Folk-lore of the Northern Counties*, pp. 326-328.

[157] *Ancient Cures, Charms, and Usages of Ireland*, pp. 163, 164.

[158] See notes to Crofton Croker's *Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland*, where much curious information will be found on this subject.

[159] Tylor's *Primitive Culture*, i. p. 437.

[160] *Zoological Mythology*, ii. p. 218.

[161] *Folk-songs of the Russian People*, p. 118.

[162] Dorman's *Primitive Superstitions*, p. 23.

[163] *Ibid.* p. 42.

[164] Miss Bird's *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan*, i. p. 380.

[165] *Occult Sciences*, 1855, Elihu Rich, p. 188.

[166] For works on this subject may be consulted, Colin de Plancy's *Dictionnaire Infernal*; the *Malleus Maleficarum* of the Germans; Del Rio's *Disquisitiones Magicæ*; and *Occult Sciences*, paper by Elihu Rich, pp. 189-191.

[167] Gregor, *Folk-lore of North-East of Scotland*, pp. 68, 69.

[168] 1799, i. p. 281.

[169] See 'Ghosts and Ghost-lore,' *Leisure Hour*, 1871, pp. 334-766.

[170] *Life of Benvenuto Cellini.*

[171] Tylor's *Primitive Culture*, i. p. 143.

[172] See also *Real Ghost Stories*. Edited by W. T. Stead.

[173] *Primitive Culture*, ii. p. 153.

[174] *See Daily Telegraph*, Nov. 17, 1890. Article on 'Ghost Laying.' Burns's 'Tam o' Shanter' turns on this point, and it is noticed by Sir Walter Scott in 'The Lay of the Last Minstrel' (Canto III. Stanza 13): 'The running stream dissolv'd the spell.'

[175] *Romances of West of England*, p. 470.

[176] *Contemporary Review*, xlviii. p. 107.

[177] Lewin, *Hill Tracts of Chittagong*, p. 84.

[178] See Sir John Lubbock, *Origin of Civilisation and Primitive Condition of Man*, 1870, p. 145.

[179] *Fiji and the Fijians*, i. p. 248.

[180] *Contemporary Review*, xlviii. p. 113.

[181] *Folk-songs of Russia*, p. 320.

[182] Thorpe's *Northern Mythology*, ii. p. 275.

[183] Dorman's *Primitive Superstitions*, p. 37.

[184] *Shropshire Folk-lore*, pp. 140, 141.

[185] *British Goblins*, p. 165.

[186] *Shropshire Folk-lore*, pp. 138, 139.

[187] *Shropshire Folk-lore*, pp. 122, 123.

[188] *Folk-lore of Northern Counties*, p. 247.

[189] Jabez Allies, Worcestershire.

[190] *Folk-lore of Northern Counties*, p. 337.

[191] *Shropshire Folk-lore*, p. 125.

[192] Henderson's *Folk-lore of Northern Counties*, p. 338.

[193] See Harland and Wilkinson's *Lancashire Legends*, pp. 10-12.

[194] Ingram's *Haunted Homes*, 2nd S. p. 265.

[195] See *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1855, part ii. pp. 58, 59.

[196] See Ingram's *Haunted Homes*, 2nd S. pp. 155-159.

[197] Jones: *Credulities Past and Present*, p. 92.

[198] *Romances of West of England*, p. 366.

[199] Thorpe's *Northern Mythology*, pp. 10, 11.

[200] Quoted in Bassett's 'Legends of the Sea,' from Livermore's *History of Block Island*.

[201] *Life of Byron.*

[202] See Tylor's *Primitive Culture*, i. p. 109.

[203] *Principles of Sociology*, p. 219.

[204] *Folk-lore of Northern Counties*, p. 11.

[205] *Northern Mythology*, ii. p. 203.

[206] Tylor's *Primitive Culture*, i. p. 446.

[207] Chap. II.

[208] *Folk-lore of Northern Counties*, p. 344.

[209] See *Sir Walter Scott's Poetical Works*, 1853, viii. p. 126.

[210] *Popular Romances of West of England*, p. 372.

[211] See Chapter on 'Phantom Birds.'

[212] *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1764, p. 59.

[213] See Moncure Conway's *Demonology and Devil Lore*.

[214] *Night Side of Nature*, 1854, p. 315.

[215] See *Notes and Queries*, 5th S. xi. p. 334.

[216] Chambers's *Encyclopædia*, 1886, x. p. 179.

[217] The *Nineteenth Century*, April 1865, p. 628; *Myth, Ritual, and Religion*, 1887, i. p. 104.

[218] Fison's *Kamilaroi and Kurnai*, p. 253.

[219] 1822, Part ii. pp. 598, 599.

[220] Quoted in Mrs. Crowe's *Night Side of Nature*, 1854, p. 181.

[221] See *Notes and Queries*, 1st S. iii. 170.

[222] *Life and Times of Lord Brougham*, written by himself, 1871.

[223] See Brand's *Popular Antiquities*, 1870, iii. p. 117.

[224] Dr. F. G. Lee: *Glimpses of the Supernatural*; the subject has been discussed in *Notes and Queries*.

[225] *Comparative Study of Ghost Stories*, April 1885, pp. 630, 631.

[226] *Certainty of a World of Spirits*, p. 181.

[227] Yardley's *Supernatural in Fiction*, p. 94.

[228] T. M. Jarvis: *Accredited Ghost Stories*, 1823

[229] Chambers's *Popular Rhymes of Scotland*, pp. 238, 239.

[230] Jones's *Credulities Past and Present*, p. 123.

[231] See Hunt's *Popular Romances of West of England*.

[232] Wirt Sikes: *British Goblins*, p. 26.

[233] See Chapter 'Phantom Animals.'

[234] Hunt's *Popular Romances of West of England*, p. 354.

[235] Thorpe's *Northern Mythology*, iii. p. 96.

[236] Jones's *Credulities Past and Present*, p. 138.

[237] *Popular Romances of West of England*, p. 350.

[238] *Folk-lore Record*, i. p. 54.

[239] McAnally: *Irish Wonders*, p. 112.

[240] *Irish Wonders*, 1888, p. 114.

[241] *Irish Wonders*, p. 112.

[242] *Ancient Cures, Charms, and Usages of Ireland*, p. 84.

[243] *British Goblins*, pp. 212-216.

[244] See Bassett's *Legends and Superstitions of the Sea*, pp. 346, 347.

[245] Quoted in Bassett's *Legends of the Sea*, p. 351.

[246] Poems: *A Greypoint Legend, 1797*.

[247] *The Wreck of the Schooner Breeze.*

[248] *Romances of West of England*, pp. 362-364.

[249] *Traditions and Fireside Stories of West Cornwall.*

[250] *Traditional Tales of the English and Scottish Peasantry*, p. 338.

[251] *Discoverie of Witchcraft.*

[252] *Pop. Antiq.* iii. p. 85.

[253] *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft.*

[254] Quoted by Bassett in his *Legends and Superstitions of the Sea*, p. 288.

[255] *Ibid.* p. 286.

[256] *Romances of West of England*, p. 367.

[257] Wirt Sikes: *British Goblins*.

[258] *A Discovery Concerning Ghosts*, p. 3.

[259] *Night Side of Nature.*

[260] Henderson's *Folk-lore of Northern Counties*, p. 270.

[261] See *All the Year Round*, June 22, 1867.

[262] *Primitive Culture*, i. p. 480.

[263] See Letourneau's *Sociology*, p. 250; Sir John Lubbock's *Origin of Civilisation, and Primitive Condition of Man*, 1870, p. 246.

[264] See Ingram's *Haunted Homes*, 2nd S. pp. 159-180.

[265] See Lord Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion*, and *Notes and Queries*, July 1860.

[266] *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1855, pt. ii. pp. 58, 59.

[267] *More Ghost Stories*, p. 64.

[268] *All the Year Round*, December 24, 1870.

[269] See Ingram's *Haunted Homes*, 2nd S. pp. 226-233.

[270] *Ibid.* see p. 222.

[271] *More Ghost Stories*, W. T. Stead, 1892, p. 63.

[272] Henderson's *Folk-lore of Northern Counties*, pp. 314, 315.

[273] *Henderson's Folk-lore of Northern Counties*, pp. 314, 315.

[274] See *Ibid.* p. 315; Ingram's *Haunted Homes*, pp. 266-277; *More Ghost Stories*, W. T. Stead.

[275] Quoted in *Book of Days*, i. p. 649.

[276] Dorman's *Primitive Superstitions*, p. 22.

[277] See Tylor's *Primitive Culture*, ii. p. 26.

[278] *Contemporary Review*, xlviii. p. 108.

[279] Schoolcraft's *Indian Tribes*, v. p. 270.

[280] See Herbert Spencer's *Principles of Sociology*, 1885, i. p. 199.

[281] *Ibid.* p. 199.

[282] The *Contemporary Review*, xlviii. p. 109.

[283] The *Contemporary Review*, xlviii. p. 111.

[284] *Northern Mythology*, ii. p. 20.

[285] *Bucolics*, viii. p. 98.

[286] *Primitive Culture*, ii. p. 30.

[287] See Dorman's *Primitive Superstitions*, p. 21.

[288] *Ancient Cures, Charms, and Usages of Ireland*, p. 84.

[289] *Essay in the Study of Folk-Songs*, pp. 14, 15.

[290] Gill: *Myths and Songs from the South*

Pacific, pp. 162, 163.

[291] See Dorman's *Primitive Superstitions*, p. 33.

[292] *Ibid.* p. 30.

[293] *Northern Mythology*, i. p. 286.

[294] Cf. *Othello*, Act v. sc. 2.

[295] *Songs of the Russian People*, pp. 115, 116.

[296] *Occult Sciences*, 1855; *Apparitions*, pp. 80, 81.

[297] See E. Yardley's *Supernatural in Fiction*, pp. 29-31.

[298] See Chapter on 'Ghost Laying.'

[299] *Contemporary Review*, xlviii. p. 112; Ralston's *Songs of the Russian People*, p. 319.

[300] Dorman's *Primitive Superstitions*, p. 20.

[301] *Ibid.* p. 29.

[302] *Ibid.* p. 21.

[303] 'The Primitive Ghost,' *Contemporary Review*, xlviii. p. 107.

[304] Thorpe's *Northern Mythology*, ii. p. 205.

[305] See Harland and Wilkinson's *Lancashire Folk-lore*, 1867, p. 63.

[306] *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1865, pt. ii. p. 564.

[307] See *Popular Irish Superstitions*, by W. R. Wilde, p. 109.

[308] *More Ghost Stories*, collected and edited by W. T. Stead, 1892, p. 22.

[309] See Mrs. Crowe's *Night Side of Nature*, 1854, p. 111.

[310] Wirt Sikes, *British Goblins*, p. 215.

[311] *Primitive Culture*, 1891, i. p. 448.

[312] *Real Ghost Stories*, W. T. Stead, p. 103.

[313] Harland and Wilkinson, *Lancashire Folk-lore*, p. 105.

[314] Quoted by Mrs. Crowe, *Night Side of Nature*, p. 202.

[315] Messrs. Gurney, Myers, and Podmore.

[316] *Phantasms of the Living*, ii. p. 531.

[317] *Nineteenth Century*, April 1865, p. 629.

[318] Dorman's *Primitive Superstitions*, p. 48.

[319] See *Book of Days*, ii. pp. 519-521.

[320] See Thorpe's *Northern Mythology*, iii. p. 144.

[321] *Teutonic Mythology*, ii. p. 827.

[322] *Hamlet*, Act v. sc. 1.

[323] See *Folk-lore of Plants*, pp. 12, 13.

[324] Dorman's *Primitive Superstitions*, p. 293.

[325] *Principles of Sociology*, 1885, pp. 357-359.

[326] *Nineteenth Century*, April, 1882, p. 394; *Superstitions of Modern Greece*, by M. Le Baron d'Estournelles.

[327] *Primitive Superstitions*, p. 288.

[328] See Ingram's *Haunted Homes*, 2nd S. pp. 24, 25.

[329] *Folk-lore of Northern Counties*, p. 322.

[330] *Notes and Queries*, 1st S. v. p. 195.

[331] *Popular Rhymes of Scotland*, pp. 241-242.

[332] *Popular Rhymes of Scotland*, p. 240.

[333] Henderson's *Folk-lore of Northern Counties*, pp. 247-248.

[334] Wirt Sikes: *British Goblins*, pp. 151-152.

[335] 1865, pt. ii. pp. 706-707.

[336] *Primitive Superstitions*, p. 310.

[337] Dorman's *Primitive Superstitions*, p. 309.

[338] See Ingram's *Haunted Homes*, p. 53.

[339] *A Discovery Concerning Ghosts*, 1864, pp. 18, 19.

[340] *Haunted Homes*, p. 253.

[341] Tylor's *Primitive Culture*, i. p. 145.

[342] Mrs. Latham's 'West Sussex Superstitions,' *Folk-lore Record*, i. p. 21.

[343] See Tylor's *Primitive Culture*, i. p. 146.

[344] See Southey's *Life of Wesley*.

[345] Walter Gregor: *Folk-lore of North-East of Scotland*, pp. 205, 206.

[346] *Nineteenth Century*, vol. xvii. p. 627.

[347] Dorman's *Primitive Superstitions*, p. 302.

Transcriber's note

A table of contents was missing from the original and has been added. Also an alphabetic jump table for navigating the Index was added.

Footnotes were renumbered and gathered at the end of the chapter to which they belong.

Errors in punctuation, capitalisation, and missing letters and footnote numbers have been corrected without note. If necessary for the placement of quotation marks or the footnote number, the source of some quotations was verified on Internet Archive.

The following corrections were made, on page
89 "ledy" changed to "lady" (The lady in earth by her lord lay)
91 "Brazials" changed to "Brazilians" (The Brazilians imagined that the souls of the bad)
257 2nd "to" removed (a belief to which Falstaff alludes in)
320 "Ann" changed to "Amy" (the supposed scene of the murder of Lady Amy Bobsart)
369 "ninty-ninth" changed to "ninety-ninth" (when in the ninety-ninth year of her age)
439 "Becklington" changed to "Beckington" (Beckington Castle, 333)
439 "Bergmouch" changed to "Bergmönch" (Bergmönch, spectre so called, 269)
440 "Bodach Gartin" changed to "Bodacher, Garlin" (Bodacher Garlin, 221) and the word order changed
440 "Cassioway" changed to "Cassowary" (Cassowary, 111)
440 "Chibehas" changed to "Chibchas" (Chibchas, 184)

442 “Gurlinheg” changed to “Gurlinbeg” (Gurlinbeg, family of, 221)
444 “Lledwith” changed to “Lledrith” (Lledrith, 370)
444 “Wray” changed to “Way” (Mary Way, spectre so called, 152)
444 “Mazarine” changed to “Mazarin” (Mazarin, Duchess of, 254)
444 “Mohin” changed to “Mohun” (Mohun, Lord, 372)
445 “460-469” changed to “400-409” (Money hidden by ghosts, 400-409)
445 “Padfoit” changed to “Padfooit” (Padfooit, 113)
445 “Padfoot” added (Padfoot, 113)
445 “Josceline” changed to “Joceline” (Percy, Sir Joceline, 150)
445 “Potawatomies” changed to “Potawatomis” (Potawatomis, 184)
445 “Peverel” changed to “Peverell” (Sampford Peverell ghost, 322)
447 “Waddon” changed to “Waddow” (Waddow Hall, 327)
and in footnote 101: 2 words exchanged between lines, “Indo-” and “1872” (*Folk-lore*, 1872 p. 243; ... See Kelly’s *Indo-European Folk-lore*).

Otherwise the original was preserved, including unusual, archaic and inconsistent spelling and hyphenation.

Additional: “Vanna Levou” in the quote on page 26 should probably be “Vanua Levu” also known as “Sandelwood Island”, Fuji.

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