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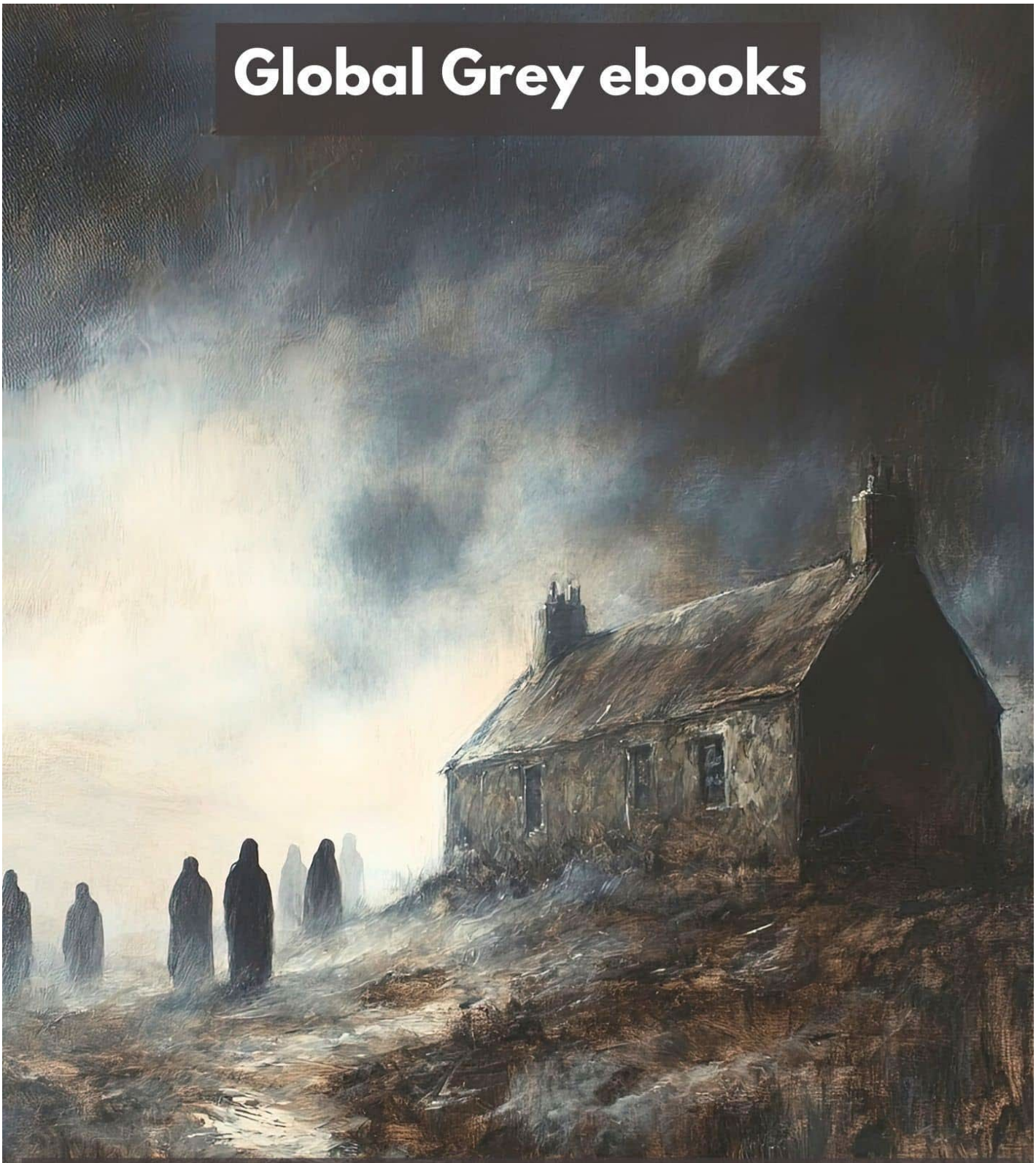

WITCHCRAFT AND SUPERSTITIOUS RECORD IN THE SOUTH-WESTERN DISTRICT OF SCOTLAND

J. Maxwell Wood

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by J. Maxwell Wood.
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Preface

THROUGHOUT Dumfriesshire and Galloway remnants of old-world customs still linger, suggesting a remoter time, when superstitious practice and belief held all-important sway in the daily round and task of the people.

In gathering together the available material bearing upon such matters, more particularly in the direction of witchcraft, fairy-lore, death warnings, funeral ceremony and ghost story, the author trusts that by recording the results of his gleanings much as they have been received, and without at all attempting to subject them to higher analysis or criticism, a truer aspect and reflection of the influence of superstition upon the social life of those older days, may be all the more adequately presented.

112 George Street, Edinburgh,
August 9th, 1911.

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"For she's gathered witch dew in the Kells kirkyard,
In the mirk how of the moon,
And fed hersel' wi' th' wild witch milk
With a red-hot burning spoon."
—*M'Lehan.*

I. Traditional Witchcraft Described

"When out the hellish legion sallied."
—Tam o' Shanter.

IN the far-off days, when Superstition, in close association with the "evil sister" of Ignorance, walked abroad in the land, the south-western district of Scotland shared very largely in the beliefs and terrors embraced under the general descriptive term of witchcraft. Active interference in the routine of daily life on the part of the Prince of Darkness and his agencies was fully believed in. The midnight ride, the power of conversion into animal semblance and form, mystic rite and incantation, spells and cantrips, as well as the presence on earth of the Devil himself, who generally appeared in some alluring form—all had a firmly-established place in the superstitious and impressionable minds of the people who dwelt in the land of those darker days.

In approaching the whole matter for descriptive purposes, the traditional, or as it may perhaps be fittingly termed, the "ideal" form of witchcraft, falls naturally first to be considered, and here the existence of a secret society or unholy order of witches and warlocks meeting together at certain appointed times, figures as an outstanding feature, qualification to belong to which, confessed rare powers of affinity with the powers of evil and darkness. The more these witches and warlocks were feared in their ordinary guise as human mortals by the country-side or district to which they belonged, the higher the rank accorded to them in secret conclave, and the special notoriety of having been branded or "scored," at the hands of an angry populace, with the sign of the cross on the forehead, carried with it special recognition of itself. Reputed gatherings or witch-festivals were celebrated periodically, the most important and outstanding taking place at Hallowmass, and such eerie places of meeting as the lonely ruins of Sweetheart Abbey and Caerlaverock Castle, were the appropriate scenes of their midnight rites and revels; but most of all in this south-western district was it to the rising slope of Locharbriggs Hill, not many miles from Dumfries, that the "hellish legion" repaired.

There is a remnant extant of an old song called the "Witches' Gathering," that with quaint and mystic indication tells of the preliminary signals and signs, announcing that a midnight re-union or "Hallowmass rade" as it was aptly termed, had been arranged and appointed:—

"When the gray howlet has three times hoo'd,
When the grimy cat has three times mewed,
When the tod has yowled three times i' the wode,
At the red moon cowering ahin the cl'ud;
When the stars ha'e cruppen' deep i' the drift,
Lest cantrips had pyked them out o' the lift,
Up horsies a' but mair adowe,
Ryde, ryde for Locher-briggs-knowe!"

On such a night the very elements themselves seemed in sympathy. The wind rose, gust following gust, in angry and ever-increasing intensity, till it hurled itself in angry blasts that levelled hay-rick and grain-stack, and tore the thatched roof from homestead and cot, where the frightened dwellers huddled and crept together in terror. Over and with higher note than the blast itself, high-pitched eldritch laughter, fleeting and mocking, skirled and shrieked through the air. Then a lull, with a stillness more terrifying than even the wild force of the angry blast, only to be almost immediately broken with a crash of ear-splitting thunder, and

the flash and the glare of forked and jagged flame, lighting up the unhallowed pathway of the "witches' ride."

The journey itself, or rather the mode of progression in passing to the "witch gathering," was itself steeped in "diabolerie" of varying degree. The simple broomstick served the more ordinary witch for a steed. Another vehicle was the chariot of "rag-wort" or ragweed, "harnessed to the wind;" for sisters of higher rank, broomsticks specially shod with the bones of murdered men, became high mettled and most spirited steeds; but the possession of a bridle, the leather of which was made from the skin of an unbaptised infant, and the iron bits forged at the "smithy" of the Evil One himself, gave to its possessor the power of most potent spell. Only let a witch shake this instrument of Satan over any living thing, man or beast, and at once it was transformed into an active witch steed in the form generally of a gray horse, with the full knowledge and resentment that a spell had been wrought, to compass this ignoble use. This was familiarly known and described as being "ridden post by a witch."

No better picture was ever drawn of the wild witch diabolerie and abandon than in "Tam o' Shanter," but it may be claimed for Galloway that in the possession of the powerful poem of "Maggie o' the Moss," Ayrshire is followed very closely, as the following quotation bearing upon this particular point brings out:—

"But Maggie had that nicht to gang
Through regions dreary, dark, and lang,
To hold her orgies.
……
Then cross his haunches striding o'er,
She gave him the command to soar:
At first poor Simon, sweir to yield,
Held hard and fast the frosty field;
His body now earth's surface spurn'd,
He seem'd like gravitation turned;
His heels went bickering in the air,
He held till he could haud nae mair,
Till first wi' ae han', syne the tither,
He lost his haud o't a' thegither;
And mounted up in gallant style,
Right perpendicular for a mile.
……
For brawly ken'd she how to ride,
And stick richt close to Simon's hide;
For aft had Maggie on a cat
Across the German Ocean sat;
And wi' aul' Nick and a' his kennel,
Had often crossed the British Channel,
And mony a nicht wi' them had gone
To Brussels, Paris, or Toulon;
And mony a stormy Hallowe'en
Had Maggie danced on Calais Green!"

Like a swarm of bees in full flight they passed, all astride of something, be it rag-wort, broomstick, kail-runt, hare, cat, or domestic fowl, or even as indicated riding post on a human steed.

Assembled at the Dumfriesshire or Galloway "Brocken," tribute to Satan, who presided in person, had to be paid for the privilege of exercising their unholy licence over their several districts and neighbourhoods. This took the form of unchristened "Kain Bairns," the witches' own by preference, but failing this, the stolen offspring of women of their own particular neighbourhood.

The rite of baptismal entry, which all novitiates had to undergo, was also a regular part of the weird proceedings of this witches' Sabbath.

A magic circle was drawn round the top of the meeting mound, across which none but the initiated and those about to be initiated, dare pass. In the centre of this circle a fire emitting a thick, dense, sulphurous smoke sprang up, round which the assembled company of witches and warlocks danced with joined hands and wild abandon. Into the charmed circle the converts, naked and terror-stricken, were brought and dragged to the fire, which now sent forth even thicker clouds as if in a measure to screen the secrecy of the rites even from those participating, and scream after scream arose as their naked bodies were stamped with the hellish sign-manual of the order. A powerful soothing ointment was, however, immediately poured on the raw wounds, giving instant relief and almost effacement to the ordinary eye, the well-concealed cicatrix becoming the "witch-mark." The grim nature of the ordeal now gave place to proceedings more in keeping with a festival, and dancing of the "better the worse" order and general hilarity and high revelry followed, the Prince of Darkness joining in the dance, giving expert exhibitions with favoured partners.

Next in importance to Satan himself at these "Walpurgis" night festivals at Locharbriggs tryst, was the celebrated witch "Gyre Carline," who possessed a wand of great creative and destructive power. It is told how in the days when Lochar Moss was an open arm of the Solway Firth, an extra large tide swept up and washed away several of the witch steeds from the Locharbrigg hill. This so enraged the "Gyre Carline" that over the unruly waters she waved her magic wand, and what was "once a moss and then a sea" became "again a moss and aye will be." At other meetings of less consequence the more important carlines of different districts met together, when schemes of persecution and revenge were evolved, and where philtres and charms were brewed and concocted for distribution amongst their inferior sisters whose office it was to give them effect. A concoction of virulent power was in the form of a bannock or cake, better known as the "witch cake," whose uncannie preparation and potency has been so quaintly described in verse by Allan Cunningham:—

The Witch Cake.

"I saw yestreen, I saw yestreen,
Little wis ye what I saw yestreen,
The black cat pyked out the gray ane's een
At the hip o' the hemlock knowe yestreen.

Wi' her tail i' her teeth, she whomel'd roun',
Wi' her tail i' her teeth, she whomel'd roun',
Till a braw star drapt frae the lift aboon,
An' she keppit it e'er it wan to the grun.

She hynt them a' in her mou' an' chowed,
She hynt them a' in her mou' an' chowed,
She drabbled them owre wi' a black tade's blude,
An' baked a bannock an' ca'd it gude!

She haurned it weel wi' ae blink o' the moon,
She haurned it weel wi' ae blink o' the moon,

An withre-shines thrice she whorled it roun',
There's some sall skirl ere ye be done.

Some lass maun gae wi' a kilted sark,
Some priest maun preach in a thackless kirk,
Thread maun be spun for a dead man's sark,
A' maun be done e'er the sang o' the lark.

Tell me what ye saw yestreen,
Tell me what ye saw yestreen,
There's yin may gaur thee sich an' green,
For telling what ye saw yestreen."

At such minor meetings also, effigies were moulded in clay of those who had offended, which pierced with pins conveyed serious bodily injuries and disorder in their victims corresponding to the pin punctures. Two of these carlines dispensing the "black art" in the respective parishes of Caerlaverock and Newabbey were in the habit of meeting with each other for such purpose, but the holy men of Sweetheart Abbey overcame their wicked designs by earnest prayers, so much so that their meetings on the solid earth were rendered futile, and thus thwarted, their intercourse had to take place on the water.

Of this the following tale from "Cromek," as reputed to be told by an eye-witness, is descriptive:—

"I gaed out ae fine summer night to haud my halve at the Pow fit. It was twal' o'clock an' a' was lowne; the moon had just gotten up—ye mought a gathered preens. I heard something firsle like silk—I glowered roun' an' lake! what saw I but a bonnie boat, wi' a nob o' gowd, and sails like new-coined siller. It was only but a wee bittie frae me. I mought amaist touch't it. 'Gude speed ye gif ye gang for guid,' quoth I, 'for I dreed our auld carline was casting some o' her pranks.' Another cunning boat cam' off frae Caerla'rick to meet it. Thae twa bade a stricken hour thegither sidie for sidie. 'Haith,' quoth I, 'the deil's grit wi' some!' sae I crap down amang some lang cowes till Luckie cam' back. The boat played bowte again the bank, an out lowpes Kimmer, wi' a pyked naig's head i' her han'. 'Lord be about us!' quo' I, for she cam' straught for me. She howked up a green turf, covered her bane, an' gaed her wa's. When I thought her hame, up I got and pou'd up the bane and haed it. I was fleyed to gae back for twa or three nights, lest the deil's minnie should wyte me for her uncannie boat and lair me 'mang the sludge, or maybe do waur. I gaed back howsever, and on that night o' the moon wha comes to me but Kimmer. 'Rabbin,' quo' she, 'fand ye are auld bane amang the cowes?' ''Deed no, it may be gowd for me,' quo' I. 'Weel, weel,' quo' she, 'I'll byde and help ye hame wi' your fish.' God's be me help, nought grippit I but tades and paddocks! 'Satan, thy nieve's here,' quo' I. 'Ken ye' (quo' I) 'o' yon new cheese our wyfe took but frae the chessel yestreen? I'm gaun to send't t' ye i' the morning, ye're a gude neebor to me: an' hear'st thou me? There's a bit auld bane whomeled aneath thae cowes; I kent nae it was thine.' Kimmer drew't out. 'Ay, ay, it's my auld bane; weel speed ye.' I' the very first pow I got sic a louthe o' fish that I carried 'till me back cracked again."

A celebrated witch connected with Wigtownshire was Maggie Osborne.

"On the wild moorland between the marches of Carrick and the valley of the Luce tracks are pointed out, on which the heather will not grow, as 'Maggie's gate to Gallowa''; the sod having been so deeply burned by her tread, or that of her weird companion. Among the misdemeanours imputed to her, in aggravation of the charge for which she was cruelly condemned, was that of having impiously partaken of the communion at the Moor Kirk of Luce. She accepted the bread at the minister's hands, but a sharp-eyed office-bearer (long

after) swore that he had detected her spitting out the wafer at the church-door, which he clearly saw swallowed by the devil, who had waited for her outside in the shape of a toad. Again it was asserted that when passing from Barr to Glenluce by the 'Nick o' the Balloch' she encountered a funeral procession, and to pass unseen she changed herself into a beetle; but before she could creep out of the way, a shepherd in the party unwittingly set his foot upon her, and would have crushed her outright had not a rut partly protected her. Much frightened and hurt she vowed vengeance; but the moor-man being a pious man, for long her arts were of no avail against him. One night however, detained late by a storm, he sat down hurriedly to supper, having forgotten to say grace. Her incantations then had power. A wreath of snow was collected and hurled from the hill above on the devoted cabin, and the shepherd, his wife, and family of ten were smothered in the avalanche."

In Glenluce a story is handed down which brings out that it was not necessarily the dweller in the humble cot on whom the mantle of witchcraft fell, but that the high-bred dames of the "Hall" did also at times dabble in the practice.

"A labouring man's wife, a sensible, decent woman, having been detained late from home, was returning about the witching hour; and at a spot known as the 'Clay Slap' she met face to face a troop of females, as to whose leader, being cloven-footed, she could not be mistaken. Her consternation was the greater, as one by one she recognised them all, and among them the ladies of the manor. They stopped her, and in her terror she appealed to one of them by name. Enraged at being known, the party declared that she must die. She pleaded for mercy, and they agreed to spare her life on her taking an awful oath that she would never reveal the names of any as long as they lived.

"Fear prevented her from breaking her pledge, but as one by one the dames paid the debt of nature, she would mysteriously exclaim 'There's anither of the gang gone!' She outlived them all, and then divulged the secret, adding that on that dreadful night, after getting to her bed, she lay entranced in an agony as if she had been roasting between two fires."

The name of Michael Scott of Balwearie (Fife), scholar and alchemist, who lived in the thirteenth century, is traditionally associated with the Abbey of Glenluce. Regarded by the peasantry as a warlock, he was supposed to be here buried with his magic books, and there is a story extant to the effect that a man in the district who daringly disinterred his skeleton, found it in a sitting position confronting him, and that the sight drove him stark mad.

Whilst in the neighbourhood of Glenluce, "Michael the Warlock" is credited with having exercised strong discipline over the witches of the district. One task he assigned them to keep them from more doubtful work, was to spin ropes from sea-sand, and it is yet said that some of the rope fragments may be seen to this day near Ringdoo Point, near the mouth of the Luce, when laid bare by wind and tide. Another equally profitless and endless task set for the same purpose of keeping them from unsanctioned, mischievous deeds, was the threshing of barley chaff.

There is a quaint reference in MacTaggart's *Gallovidian Encyclopædia* to the "Library of Michael Scott." He says, "One of these (vaults) at the Auld Abbey of Glenluce contains the famous library of Michael Scott, the Warlock. Here are thousands of old witch songs and incantations, books of the 'Black Art,' and 'Necromancy,' 'Philosophy of the Devil,' 'Satan's Almanacks,' 'The Fire Spangs of Faustus,' 'The Soothsayers' Creed,' 'The Witch Chronicle,' and the 'Black Clud's Wyme laid open,' with many more valuable volumes."

It may be noted in passing that the Abbey of Holm-Cultram, in Cumberland, has also been associated as the burial-place of the Wizard Michael; but it is with Melrose Abbey, as

depicted by Sir Walter Scott in the "Lay of the Last Minstrel," that the most cherished associations linger, even if only in the romance of poetry:—

"With beating heart to the task he went;
His sinewy frame o'er the grave-stone bent;
With bar of iron heaved amain,
Till the toil-drops fell from his brows like rain;
It was by dint of passing strength,
That he moved the massy stone at length."
…….
"Before their eyes the Wizard lay,
As if he had not been dead a day."

The religious house of Tongland may be said to have some slight connection here, for in Dunbar's poem of "The Dream of the Abbot of Tungland" (the "frenziet" Friar) there is reference to a witch—"Janet the widow, on ane besome rydand."

"Bess o' Borgue" and "Glencairn Kate" were two notorious south-country witches. They are included in the descriptive witch-poem of "Maggie o' the Moss," already referred to.

About the middle of the eighteenth century there was a famous witch that lived at Hannayston, in the Kells, who was credited with wonderful powers, and many stories of her exploits are still current. Some say her name was Nicholas Grier, others that it was Girzie M'Clegg, but it matters little which now. Some of Lucky's favourite pastimes were, drowning anyone she had a spite at by sinking a caup in the yill-boat in her kitchen; sucking cows in the shape of a hare; frightening people at night by appearing to them like a little naked boy; walking in the resemblance of a cat on its hind legs; conversing with travellers on the road; and sending young people into declines.

The old Church of Dalry has a legend of witch-festival surrounding it, which gives it a distinction something akin to the better-known tradition of Alloway Kirk. The following version is taken from *Harper's Rambles*:—

"Adam Forester, proprietor of Knocksheen, had been detained one evening until near midnight in the public-house at Dalry. On the way home he had to pass the church, and being perhaps like the famous Tam o' Shanter, through indulging in inspiring bold John Barleycorn, ready to defy all dangers in the shape of goblin and spirit, he very soon had his mettle tested. On reaching the church the windows 'seemed in a bleeze,' and from within loud bursts of mirth and revelry reached the ears of the astonished laird. Nothing daunted however, he dismounted, and securing his horse to a tree near the church-yard wall, he peered in at the window, and to his astonishment, amongst those engaged in the 'dance o' witches' were several old women of his acquaintance, amongst whom was the landlady of the public-house where he had spent the greater part of the evening, and which he had just left. Horrified with such desecration of the sacred edifice, and unable longer to restrain his displeasure, Forester shouted, 'Ho! ho! Lucky, ye'll no deny this the morn!' knocking at the same instant against the window frame with his whip. In a moment the lights were extinguished, and the witches with loud yells rushed out of the church after him; but the laird, having gained his horse, went off at a furious gallop for the ford on the Ken, his pursuers following hard upon him, their frantic and hideous shouts striking terror to his heart. As they could not cross the running stream, they flew to the Brig o' Ken, six miles distant, where they crossed and overtook Adam on Waterside Hill, tearing all the hair out of the horse's tail, and Lucky getting her black hand on the horse's hip. She left its impression there for life. The laird, finding he could proceed no further, dismounted and was only saved from being torn to

pieces by describing a circle in God's name round himself and horse. This charm proved effectual. The fury of the mysterious band was arrested, and at daybreak he rode home to his residence."

The story is still current in the Glenkens, and what is supposed to be the circle drawn by the laird is pointed out on Waterside Hill.

In concluding the account of "traditional witchcraft," there yet falls to be mentioned one outstanding form in which beautiful and seductive female shapes were assumed to tempt through the flesh, the destruction of soul and body. There is no better reference to this than in the local traditional tale of the "Laird of Logan" of Allan Cunningham, where the struggle between the powers of darkness and those of good contend, not without a certain dignity of purpose, for the mastery. The following is the dramatic denouement:—

"He took a sword from the wall, and described a circle, in the centre of which he stood himself. Over the line drawn with an instrument on which the name of God is written, nought unholy can pass. 'Master, stand beside me, and bear ye the sword.' He next filled a cup with water, and said, 'Emblem of purity, and resembling God, for He is pure, as nought unholy can pass over thee whilst thou runnest in thy native fountain, neither can ought unholy abide thy touch, thus consecrated—as thou art the emblem of God, go and do His good work. Amen.' So saying he turned suddenly round and dashed the cupful of water in the face and bosom of the young lady—fell on his knees and bowed his head in prayer. She uttered scream upon scream; her complexion changed; her long locks twined and writhed like serpents; the flesh seemed to shrivel on her body; and the light shone in her eyes which the Master trembled to look upon. She tried to pass the circle towards him but could not. A burning flame seemed to encompass and consume her; and as she dissolved away he heard a voice saying, 'But for that subtle priest, thou hadst supped with me in hell.'"

II. Witch Narrative

"The best kye in the byre gaed yell;
Some died, some couldna raise themsel';
In short, ilk' beast the farmer had
Died—sicken'd—rotted—or gaed mad!"
—*Maggie o' the Moss.*

THE witchcraft however, which had a special abiding-place in rural districts, was most usually associated with the presence in their midst of someone to whom it was supposed the devil had bequeathed the doubtful possession of the "evil eye," a possession which at all times was deemed a certain means of bringing about supernatural ill. Other suspected workers of subtle cantrips whom the finger of suspicion was ready to point to were old creatures, not uncommonly poor and eccentric, perhaps even deformed or with some peculiarity, but generally genuinely blameless, or in some instances foolishly seeking notoriety in the pretended possession of witch-power.

The spells and cantrips alleged to be cast by these agencies were usually such as brought harmful effect upon human being or farm stock, such supposed incidence of supernatural interference being accepted without question. A natural consequence followed in misdirected measures of protection and retaliation. The whole atmosphere of domestic life became charged with suspicious attitude towards one another, and when illness overtook either human being or four-footed beast, or some such minor happening as a heated stack, or a cow failing to yield milk, took place, the presence of the "Black Art" was proclaimed in their midst, and too often was accidental circumstance followed by unjust cruelty and persecution, sanctioned and practised, as we shall see later, by the powers of the State and Church.

Many stories of such form of witchcraft have been handed down and still form a not inconsiderable part of the floating tradition pertaining to the south-western district of Dumfries and Galloway.

The following traditions, not hitherto recorded, are from western Galloway, and may be regarded as consequent to the influence of the "evil eye":—

"There was an old woman who went about Kirkmaiden begging, or what old people call 'thigging,' and one day in the course of her wanderings she came to a place called 'The Clash' and asked for butter, which she seemed to particularly want. As luck would have it, the farm folks had only newly put the milk into the churn, and had no butter in the house until it was churned. In passing, it may be noticed that the churn was always put out of sight when this old woman appeared, in case she might 'witch' it. As they had no butter they offered her both meal and a piece of meat, but butter she would have, so she went away, muttering 'that maybe she would fen' without it,' and more talk to the same purpose. The farmer met her on the way from the house and heard her mutterings. On arriving at his house he asked what they had done to the old woman to put her in such a temper, and was told the circumstances. He had two young horses in a field beside the house, and going out of the house into the field he found one of them rolling on the ground seemingly in great pain. Of course he jumped to the conclusion that this was some of the witch's cantrips, and after trying to get it to rise, bethought himself of going after her and bringing her back to get her to lift the spell. Following the old woman, who was very lame, he soon overtook her and tried to coax her to return to see if she could tell him what was wrong. She demurred at first, but he pressed her, and at last she said, that seeing he was so anxious she would go back. When they arrived the

animal was still suffering great pain, and she proceeded to walk round it some few times always muttering to herself, and at last cried, 'Whish! get up,' striking the horse; 'there's naething wrang wi' ye.' The horse at once got up and commenced feeding, apparently nothing the matter with it."

"At the Dribblings, on what is now the farm of Low Curghie (Kirkmaiden), lived a cottar who was the owner of two cows. One morning on going to the byre one of the cows was on the ground and unable to rise. The people did not know what to do, but as luck would have it, the same old woman that cured the horse at The Clash happened to come in, and was informed of the trouble, and was asked if she could do anything, and was promised a piece of butter for her trouble. She went and looked at the cow, and said someone with an 'ill e'e had overlooked it,' *i.e.*, witched it, and proceeded to walk round it two or three times, talking to herself, and then gave it a tap with her stick and told the animal to get up, she was all right now. The cow immediately got to her feet and commenced feeding."

"At a farm-house in the vicinity of Logan an old woman, a reputed witch, was in the habit of receiving the greater part of her sustenance from the farmer and his wife. The farmer began to get tired of this sorning, and one day took his courage in both hands and turned the witch at the gate. The old woman of course was sorely displeased, and told him that he would soon have plenty of 'beef,' and in the course of a day or two many of his cattle had taken the muir-ill. Next time the old woman wanted to go to the house she was not hindered. She got her usual supply, and thereafter not another beast took the disease."

It is related of the same old woman that once she wanted some favour off the factor on Logan, and one day as he rode past her dwelling she hailed him. Not caring to be troubled with her he made the excuse that his horse would not stand as it was young and very restive; but she said she would soon make it stand, and by some spell so terrified the animal that it stood trembling while the sweat was running over its hooves.

"The farm of the Grennan, in the Rhinns, had been taken or was reported to have been taken over the sitting tenant's head; and the new tenants, when they took possession, were regarded with general disfavour. The farm good-wife was a bustling, energetic woman, with some pretensions as to good looks, and was always extremely busy. One day an old-fashioned diminutive woman knocked at the door and asked for a wee pickle meal. The good-wife answered in an off-hand manner that she had no meal for her, and told her to 'tak' the gait.' The old woman looked at her steadily for a short time, and then said, 'My good woman, you are strong and healthy just now, but strong and weel as ye are, that can sune be altered, and big as ye are in yer way, the hearse is no' bigget that will tak' ye to the kirkyaird, and a dung-cairt will ha'e to ser' ye.' In less than a year the gude-wife died, and the hearse broke down at the road-end leading to the farm, and could come no further, and as a matter of fact a farm-cart had to be employed to carry the corpse to the churchyard."

The influence of the "evil eye" has been somewhat crudely recorded in verse under the heading of "Galloway Traditions: The Blink o' an Ill E'e," in the *Galloway Register* for 1832, an almost forgotten periodical published at Stranraer. It is here set forth, as it minutely expresses and brings out, though in homely fashion, how belief in witchcraft and its powers was intimately bound up with the every-day conditions of the life of the times:—

"He thrave for a while,
And a prettier bairn was'na seen in a mile;
Lang ere Beltane, however, he was sairly backgane
And shilped to naething but mere skin and bane.
The mither grieved sair—thought her Sandy wad die—

Folk a' said he had got a blink o' an ill e'e,
And the health o' the baby wad bravely in time turn
If he had the blessing o' auld Luckie Lymeburn.
Now the mither min'd weel, that on ae Friday morn
Auld Luckie gaed past, but nae word did she say,
And the bairn had soon after begun to decay.
Ane an' a' then agreed that the child wadna mend, or
Do one mair guid till auld Luckie they'd send for;
Luckie Lymeburn is sent for, and soon there appears
A haggart wee grannnum sair bent down in years,
Whase e'en, wild demeanour, every appearance was sic,
That you'd easily hae guess'd that she dealt wi' Auld Nick.
Auld Luckie had lang kept the country in dread—
Nae bairn was unweil, nor beast suddenly dead,
Nae time had the horses stood up in the plough,
Nor when drying the malt had the kiln tain alow,
Nae roof o' a byre fa'en down in the night,
Nor storm at the fishing, the boatmen affright,
But 'twas aye Luckie Lymeburn that bare a' the blame o't,
While Luckie took pride and rejoiced at the name o't.
Thro' dread that her glamour might harm o' their gear,
O' ought in the house they aye ga'e her a share,
And ilk dame through the land was in terror o' Luckie,
From the point of Kirkcolm to her ain Carrick-mickie.
Ere Sandy is mentioned the mither takes care
To sooth the auld dame and to speak her right fair;
Anon, then, she tells how her boy's lang been ill,
And a' the folk say she's a hantle o' skill—
Begs she'll look at the bairn and see what's the matter,
And when neist at the mill she winna forget her.
Auld Granny saw well thro' the mither's contrivance,
So she looks on the bairn and wishes him thrivance—
Says he'll soon come about and be healthy and gay,
If dipt at the Co'[1] the first Sunday o' May.
The boy's health came round, as auld Luckie had said,
But ere Sandy came round Luckie Lymeburn was dead.
The laws against witches were now very stric',
And Luckie's accused that she dealt wi' Auld Nick—
That lately a storm she had raised on the coast,
In which many braw fishing boats had been lost;
Last winter that she and her conjuring ban'
Had smoor'd a' the sheep on the fells o' Dunman
But chief, that in concert wi' Luckie Agnew,
She had sunk, off the Mull, a fine ship with her crew.
The ship had been bound for Hibernia's main,
And smoothly was gliding o'er the watery plain
With the wind in her rear, when a furious blast,
While off the Mull head, sudden rose from the west,

[1] The Well of the Co', Kirkmaiden, once much celebrated for the healing and medicinal properties of its waters.

And lays to the breeze the gallant ship's side,
And round and round whirls her in th' eddy o' th' tide.
Meantime the old hags, on the hill, are in view,
And boiling their caldron, or winding their clue,
New charms still they try, but they try them in vain:
The seamen still strove, nor their purpose could gain,
The waves are still threat'ning the ship to o'erwhelm;
The crew, one by one, have relinquished the helm.
Long, long the crew labour'd the vessel to stay,
Nor rudder nor sail would the vessel obey,
When forth steps a tar, a regardless old sinner,
And swore he'd her steer though the devil were in her;
When instant the weird-woman's spells take effect,
She sinks 'mang the rocks, and soon's floating a wreck—
For these, and some deeds of a similar kind
Were Luckies Agnew and Lymeburn arraigned.
Their trial comes on—full confession they make—
In the auld burgh o' Wigton they're burnt at the stake."

The metamorphosis to brute-form on the part of the witch or warlock is one of the most persistent traditions concerning witchcraft. In the south-west country the favourite animal-form selected was that of the hare, very probably on account of its fleetness of foot. Of this the following are examples:—

"A young man from Kirkmaiden found work at a distance, and as means of travel were not so convenient as now, it was a number of years before he found opportunity to visit his native parish. At the end of some years he returned, however, about New-Year time, and taking down a gun that was in his mother's house, remarked that he would go out to the Inshanks Moor and see if he could get a hare for the dinner on New-Year's Day. His mother told him to be careful he was not caught poaching. He had not been long in the moor when a hare got up, at which he shot repeatedly, but apparently without effect. At last he came to the conclusion that the hare was one of the numerous Kirkmaiden witches, and thought he would try the effect of silver. The hare had observed him, and at once inquired if he would shoot his own mother? Much startled, he desisted and went home, took to his bed, and did not rise for five years, though he could take his food well enough, and apparently was in good enough health. He had no power to rise until his mother died, when his strength being most wonderfully restored, he left his bed, dressed himself and attended the funeral."

Another reputed witch lived near the Church of Kirkmaiden, and it is told by a woman of the neighbourhood how her grandmother lived beside her, and having occasion to go to the well in the gloaming one evening something gave a sound, not unlike the noise one makes when clapping mud with a spade, and immediately a hare hopped past her on the road, and went over the dyke into the garden. When she went round the end of the house her neighbour was climbing over the dyke, and the old woman firmly believed it was the witch she saw the moment before in the form of a hare, which had returned to human shape just before she saw her again.

In connection with the phenomenon of transformation to brute-form an interesting point must be accentuated, and that is that an animal bewitched or about to be sacrificed by witchcraft was believed by some subtle power to gain and absorb to itself some considerable part of the spirit or entity of the witch or warlock working the spell, which not uncommonly led to detection of the spell-worker. An example of this may also be quoted:—

"A farmer of Galloway, coming to a new farm with a fine and healthy stock, saw them die away one by one at stall and at stake. His last one was lying sprawling almost in death, when a fellow-farmer got him to consider his stock as bewitched and attempt its relief accordingly. He placed a pile of dried wood round his cow, setting it on fire. The flame began to catch hold of the victim, and its outer parts to consume, when a man, reputed to be a warlock, came flying over the fields, yelling horribly and loudly, conjuring the farmer to slake the fire. 'Kep skaith wha brings't,' exclaimed the farmer, heaping on more fuel. He tore his clothes in distraction, for his body was beginning to fry with the burning of his spirit. The farmer, unwilling to drive even the devil to despair, made him swear peace to all that was or should be his, and then unloosed his imprisoned spirit by quenching the fire."

The counterpart of magical migration through the air has also its examples, for within the memory of people still living there was an old woman lived at Logan Mill, who whenever she had a mind to travel, got astride of the nearest dyke, and was at once conveyed to wherever she wished. At least it was said so.

Another reputed witch who dwelt in the neighbourhood of Port Logan was much troubled with shortness of breath, and was easily tired. When she found herself in this condition of exhaustion away from her home she was credited with entering the nearest field where horses and cattle were grazing, and mounting one, to "ride post" straight for home.

The following elegy, which has been preserved in the collection of poems known as the *Nithsdale Minstrel*, fully illustrates the dread in which the Kirkmaiden witches were held, and more particularly the relief experienced when death removed the baneful influence of "Meg Elson," a witch of much repute:—

Meg Elson's Elegy.

"Kirkmaiden dames may crously craw
And cock their nose fu' canty,
For Maggy Elson's now awa',
That lately bragged sae vaunty
That she could kill each cow an' ca',
An' make their milk fu' scanty—
Since Death's gi'en Maggy's neck a thraw,
They'll a' hae butter plenty,
In lumps each day.

Ye fishermen, a' roun' the shore,
Huzza wi' might and mettle,
Nae mair ye'll furnish frae your store
A cod for Maggy's kettle—
Nae mair ye'll fear the clouds that lour,
Nor storms that roun' you rattle,
Lest, conjured up by cantrip power,
They coup you wi' a brattle
I' the sea some day.

Ye ewes that bleat the knowes out o'er,
Ye kye that roam the valley,
Nae dread of Maggy's magic glower
Need henceforth mair assail ye:
Nae horse nor mare, by Circean power,
Shall now turn up its belly,

For Death has lock'd Meg's prison door,
And gi'en the keys to Kelly
To keep this day."

Passing to the Machars of Galloway, a curious witch-story comes from Whithorn corresponding to and somewhat similar in trend to the first acts in the dramatic happenings of "Tam o' Shanter," and the story already told of Dalry Kirk:—

"Long ago there lived in Whithorn a tailor who was an elder of the Church, and who used to 'whip the cat,' that is, go to the country to ply his trade. Being once engaged at a farm-house, the farmer told him to bring his wife with him and spend an afternoon at the farm. The invitation was accepted, and on returning at night, the attention of the knight of the needle and his better-half was attracted to an old kiln, situated at the low end of the 'Rotten Row,' from which rays of light were emanating. This surprised the worthy couple, all the more as the old kiln had for long been in a state of disuse. Their curiosity being thus awakened, they approached to look through the chinks of the door, when to their astonishment they beheld a sight somewhat similar to that seen by 'Tam o' Shanter' at 'Alloway's Auld Haunted Kirk.' Among the *dramatis personæ* who should they recognise but the minister's wife, whom they both knew well. She, along with a bevy of withered hags, was engaged in cantrips, being distinguished by a peculiar kind of garter which she wore. Next Sabbath the tailor elder demanded a meeting of the Kirk-Session; but the minister declared that the story was a monstrosity, as his wife had not been out of bed that night. Not being easily repressed, however, the tailor requested that the minister's wife should be brought then and there before the Session. When she appeared it was found that she had on the identical garters she had worn on the night when she was seen by the triumphant tailor. This startling and overwhelming corroboration of the truth of the 'fama' quite nonplussed the minister, and as the story has it, before the next Sunday he and his lady were 'owre the Borders an' awa'.'"

A Dalry story may now be quoted which is specially concerned with the actual evil workings of his Satanic Majesty himself:—

"The Rev. Mr Boyd, who was appointed minister of Dalry in 1690, after his return from Holland, whither he had fled during the persecution, and who died in 1741 in his 83rd year, had a daughter to whom the devil took a fancy. He once came to the manse in the form of a bumble-bee, but was driven away by a chance pious exclamation. Another time he arrived in the form of a handsome young gentleman, fascinated the damsel, induced her to play cards with him on a Sunday, and bore her off on a black horse. Fortunately the minister saw the occurrence, and also a cloven hoof hanging at the stirrup, and shouted to his daughter to come back for Christ's sake, and the devil let her drop to the ground nothing the worse."

In connection with the parish of Kells it may be noted that a member of the old baronial family of Shaws of Craigenbay and Craigend, Sir Chesney Shaw, is reputed to have been strangled by a witch in the guise of a black cat. The deed took place in the Tower of Craigend.

A prominent land-mark in this Dalry and Carsphairn district is the "Carlin's Cairn," which, from its name, might be taken to have some special link with the witchcraft of the district. It has however, a more patriotic origin, which is set forth in Barbour's *Unique Traditions*:—

"This cairn is perched on the summit of the Kells Rhynns, and may be discerned at 15 miles distance to the south. Some say it was thrown together to commemorate the burning of a witch, others, that it was erected on the spot where an old female Covenanter was murdered by Grierson of Lag, and this last tradition stands somewhat countenanced by the well-known facts that Grierson was laird of Garryhorn and other lands in the neighbourhood of this

ancient cairn, and that his party pursued and slaughtered some staunch Presbyterians in the environs of Loch Doon. Yet the foundation of the cairn can boast of a much older date than the persecutions under Charles the Second, for it was collected by the venerable old woman who at once was the protectress and hostess of King Robert the Bruce, ... and from the circumstances of the cairn being collected under the auspices of a woman, that cairn immediately bore, and for 500 years hath continued to bear the name of 'Carlin's Cairn.'"

Other place-names associated with witchcraft are the "Witch Rocks of Portpatrick," where tradition tells that on these characteristic-looking pinnacles, the witches in their midnight flight rested for a little while, ere winging their further flight to Ireland.

In the neighbouring parish of Stoneykirk there occurs Barnamon (*Barr-nam-ban*) and Cairnmon (*Cairn-nam-ban*) which, being interpreted, may read—"the gap, or round hill, of the witches."

The following well-recounted witch narrative was communicated to the Dumfries and Galloway Antiquarian Society to illustrate a point of superstitious custom. It has here a wider mission in accentuating bewitchment in angry retaliation, evil incantation overpowered by holy influence, and the breaking of witch-power by "*scoring* above the breath.":—

"In the olden time, when Galloway was stocked with the black breed of cattle, there was a carle who had a score of cows, not one of which had a white hair on it; they were the pride of the owner, and the admiration of all who saw them. One day while they were being driven out, the carle's dog worried the cat of an old woman who lived in a hut hard by, and though he had always treated her with great kindness, and expressed sorrow for what his dog had done, she cursed him and all his belongings. Afterwards, when the cows began to calve, instead of giving fine rich milk, as formerly, they only gave a thin watery ooze on which the calves dwined away to skin and bone. During this unfortunate state of affairs a pilgrim on his journey, probably to the shrine of St. Ninian, sought lodgings for the night. The wife of the carle, though rather unwilling to take in a stranger during the absence of her husband, who was on a journey, eventually granted his request. On her making excuse for the poverty of the milk she offered, when he tasted it he said the cows were bewitched, and for her kindness he would tell her what would break the spell, which was to put some 'cowsherne' into the mouths of the calves before they were allowed to suck. As the carle approached his house, when returning from his journey, he noticed a bright light in the hut of the old hag which had cursed him. Curiosity induced him to look in, when he saw a pot on the fire, into which she was stirring something and muttering incantations all the while till it boiled, when, instead of milk as she doubtless expected, nothing came up but 'cowsherne.' He told his wife what he had seen, and she told him what the pilgrim had told her to do, and which she had done, which left no doubt that it was the ungrateful old witch who had bewitched their cows. Next day, when she was expecting her usual dole, the carle's wife caught hold of her before she had time to cast any cantrip, and scored her above the breath until she drew blood, with a crooked nail from a worn horse-shoe, which left her powerless to cast any further spells. The cows now gave as rich a yield of milk as formerly, and the custom then began, of putting 'cowsherne' into the mouths of newly born calves, was continued long after witchcraft had ceased to be a power in the land."

The following four examples of "witch narrative" are gathered from the southern district of Kirkcudbrightshire:—

"Many years ago there lived near Whinnieliggate, on a somewhat lonely part of the road which leads from Kirkcudbright to Dumfries, an old woman with the reputation of being a witch. She was feared to such an extent that her neighbours kept her meal-chest full, and

furnished her with food, clothes, and all she required. An old residenter in Kelton Hill or Rhonehouse, now passed away, remembered her well, and has left a very minute description of her appearance. He told how she was of small spare build, wizened of figure and face, squinted outward with one eye, the eyes themselves being small, but of peculiar whitish green colour, her nose hooked and drooping over very ugly teeth. She swathed her straggling grey locks in a black napkin or handkerchief, wore grey drugget, and a saffron-tinted shawl with spots of black and green darned into the semblance of frogs, toads, spiders, and jackdaws, with a coiled adder or snake roughly sewn round the border. Her shoes or bauchles were home-made from the untanned hides of black Galloway calves, skins not difficult for her to get. The cottage in which she lived was as quaint as herself, both inside and out. A huge bed of orpine (stone crop) grew over one of its thatched sides, the thatch being half straw and half broom; at each end grew luxuriantly long wavering broom bushes, and a barberry[2] shrub, densely covered with fruit in its season. A row of hair ropes draped the lintel of the small windows at the front of the cottage, from which was suspended the whitened skulls of hares, and ravens, rooks or corbies. The interior was also garnished with dried kail-stocks, leg and arm bones, no doubt picked up in the churchyard, all arranged in the form of a star, and over her bed-head hung a roughly drawn circle of the signs of the zodiac. She was often to be seen wandering about the fields in moonlight nights with a gnarled old blackthorn stick with a ram's horn head, and was altogether generally regarded as uncanny. The old man who thus describes her person and surroundings told of two occasions in which he suffered at her hands. He was at one time engaged with a farmer in the parish of Kelton, and one day he and a son of the farmer set out for the town of Kirkcudbright with two heavily laden carts of hay, the farmer in a jocular way calling after them as they left, 'Noo Johnie, yer cairts are a' fair and square the noo, and let's see ye reach Kirkcudbright without scathe, for ye maun mind ye hae tae pass auld Jean on the wey. Dinna ye stop aboot her door or say ocht tae her, tae offend her. Gude kens hoo she may tak' it.' Johnie was of a very sceptical nature about such characters as Jean, and replied, 'Man, Maister M'C——, dae ye ken a wudna care the crack o' a coo's thumb gin a' the wutches ooten the ill bit war on the road,' and so they set out. When passing the cottage, sure enough, the old woman appeared at the door, and, as was her wont, had to ask several questions as to where cam' they frae? and whar wur they gaun? who owned the hay and the horses? and so on. The lad, who was a bit of a 'limb,' recklessly asked her what the deil business it was of hers, and John said, 'Aye, deed faith aye, boy! that's just true. Come away.' And so they lumbered away down through the woods by the Brocklock Burn, when suddenly a hare banged across the road, right under the foremost horse's nose, crossed and recrossed several times, till both the horses became so restless and unmanageable that they backed and backed against the old hedge on the roadside, and in a few minutes both carts went over the brow into the wood, dragging the horses with them. The harness fortunately snapped in pieces, saving them from being strangled. Johnie and the boy were compelled to walk into the town for help, where they told the story of Jean's malevolence. Johnie's second adventure took place some years afterwards. On passing with a cart of potatoes to be shipped from Kirkcudbright to Liverpool by the old *Fin M'Coul* Johnie refused to give Jean two or three potatoes for seed, with the result that his horse backed his cart right into the then almost unprotected harbour, and they were with great difficulty rescued."

"The parish of Twynholm in days gone by had its witch. 'Old Meg' (as the reputed witch was called by the neighbours) had for some years got her supply of butter from one of the farms quite close to the village of Twynholm, and the goodwife, to safeguard her very fine dairy of cows, always gave old Meg a small print, or pat, extra for luck. All went well until one day a

[2] These berries make excellent preserves.

merchant came to the farm seeking a large quantity of butter for the season, and offering such a good price that a bargain was at once struck. The farmer's wife was obliged to tell her small customers, Meg among the number, that she 'would not be able tae gie them ony mair butter as she had a freen in the trade who would need all she could spare, and more if she had it.' Meg was the only one to murmur at the information, and did so in no unmistakable terms. 'Aye, woman,' said she, 'y'er getting far ower prood and big tae ser' a puir bodie. Folk sood na' seek tae haud their heeds ower high ower puir folk. There's aye a doonfa' tae sic pridefu' weys.' 'Weel, Margaret,' said the farmer's wife, 'ye're no a richt-thinkin', weel-mindet buddy or ye wudna turn on me the wey yer daen efter a' my kindness tae ye; sae I wad juist be as weel pleased if ye'd pass my door and try somebody else tae gie ye mair than I hae ony guid wull tae gie ye.' Meg left in great anger, and before a week was ended three of the farmer's cows died, and one broke its leg."

"Away back in the days when the steampacket and railway were almost unknown along the south or Solway shore of Scotland large numbers of sailing craft plied between ports and creeks along the Scottish, Irish, and English coasts, every little port at all safe for landing being the busy scene of arrival and departure, and the discharge of cargo with almost every tide. A small group of houses usually marked these little havens, generally made up of an inn, a few fishermen's cottages, huts, and sail-lofts. On the Rerwick, or Monkland shore as it was then called, four or five of these little hamlets stood, some on the actual shore, others a short way inland. The incident which follows was founded upon the visit of three young sailors, who had for a day or two been living pretty freely, in a clachan about two miles from where their craft, a handy topsail schooner, lay at Burnfoot. On the rough moor road-side which led down from the clachan to the coast there lived in a small shieling a middle-aged woman, recognised by most of her neighbours and by seafaring men coming to these parts as an unscrupulous and rather vindictive old woman, supposed to be a witch.

The three sailors had to pass this cottage on their way down to join their ship, and before setting out decided to go right past her home rather than take a round-about way to avoid her, which was at first suggested. As they came to her door she was standing watching and evidently waiting for them. 'Ye'r a fine lot you to gang away wi' a schooner,' she called to them as they came up. 'Ye had a fine time o't up by at Rab's Howff, yet nane o' ye thocht it worth yer while tae look in an see me in the bye-gaun; but 'am naebody, an' canna wheedle aboot ye like Jean o' the Howff, an' wile yer twa-three bawbees frae ooten yer pooches, an' sen' ye awa' as empty as ma meal poke.' The youngest of the three, being elated and reckless with drink, commenced to mock and taunt the old woman, his companions foolishly joining him also in jeering at her, until soon she was almost beside herself with rage. Shaking her fist at them as they passed on she pursued them with threat and invective that brought a chill of terror to their young hearts, and made them glad to find themselves at last beyond the range of her bitter tongue. The tragic sequel, coincident or otherwise, now falls to be related. Two nights later they set sail to cross to the Cumberland side of the Solway. The weather was threatening when they left, and a stiff breeze quickly developed into half a gale of wind. The schooner, which was very light, was observed to be making very bad weather of it, and to be drifting back towards the coast they had left. The gathering darkness of the night soon shut them out of sight, but early next morning the vessel lay a broken wreck on the rocky shore, and several weeks afterwards the bodies of her crew were washed ashore."

"In a somewhat sparsely populated district in the parish of Balmaghie there lived, with a crippled husband, a wrinkled-visaged old woman who was reckoned by all who lived near her as an uncanny character. She dwelt in a small thatched cottage well away from the public road, and had attached to her cottage a small croft or patch, half of which was used as a garden, the remainder as a gang for pigs and poultry. Not far from where she lived

abounded long strips of meadow land, liable to be in wet seasons submerged by the backwaters of the Dee. About a mile from the cottage was a farm where a number of cows were kept, the farmer usually disposing of the butter made up every week to small shopkeepers, and in the villages near by. He was always very chary about passing the old woman's cottage with his basket of butter and eggs, feeling sure of a bad market should she chance to get a glimpse at the contents of the basket. Moreover, he would gladly have dispensed with the peace-offering he was obliged to make in the form of a pound of butter or a dozen or so of eggs, which was considered a sure safeguard. To avoid her he had taken a new route, crossing a ford higher up the water and going over a hill to another village, where he would have little chance of coming in contact with her. One day however, he found that his plan was discovered, and that to persist in it would be to court disaster. Crossing the moor he observed the old woman busily gathering birns[3] and small whin roots. She was undoubtedly watching and waiting for him, and was the first to speak. 'Aye, aye, man; ye maun reckon me gey blin' no' tae see ye stavering oot o' the gate among moss holes tae get ooten my wey. Ye hae wat yer cloots monie a mornin' tae keep awa' frae my hoose, and for nae ither guid reason than tae save twa or three eggs or a morsel o' butter that ony weel-minded neebor wud at ony time gie an auld donnert cripple tae feed and shelter. Losh, man, but ye hae a puir, mean speerit. Yer auld faither wudna hae din ony sic thing, an' mony a soup o' tea a hae geen 'im when he used to ca' in on his hame-gaun frae the toon gey weel the waur o' a dram.' Annoyed at being challenged the farmer was not quite in a mood to laugh the matter off, and accordingly he, with some degree of temper, told the old woman to go to a place where neither birns nor whin roots were needed for kindling purposes. About a mile further over the moor he met a neighbour's boy hurrying along, making for his farm to ask him to come over to help his master to pull a cow out of a hole in the peat-moss. He at once went, asking the lad to carry one of his baskets to enable them to get along faster. They left the two baskets at the end of a haystack near the muir farm, and crossed over to the moss where they could see the farmer and his wife doing their utmost to keep the cow's head above the mire. Additional strength of arm however, soon brought the cow out of her dangerous position, and they retired for a little to the farm-house for a dram. 'Dod,' said the owner of the baskets, 'I houp nae hairm has come the butter an' eggs. I left them ower-by at the end o' the hey-stack yonner.' 'O, they'll be a' richt,' said the farmer's wife; 'but Johnie 'll gang ower and bring them, sae sit still 'til he fetches them.' Johnie went as told, and came back with the tidings that 'the auld soo had eaten nearly all the butter an' broken maist o' the eggs, had pit her feet thro' the bottom o' the butter-skep, and made a deil o' a haun o' everything.' 'Aye, aye,' quoth the farmer; 'juist what I micht hae expeckit efter the look I got frae that auld deevel in woman's shape doonbye.' His neighbour was silent and seemed strangely put out, and when at last he found speech it was to say, 'Man Sanny, she's du'n baith o' us! Dae ye ken I refused her a pig juist last week, an' that accoonts for "crummie" in the moss-hole.'"

A story which illustrates how witch-power was not always an influence for evil is recounted in the folk-lore of Tynron:—

"An old farmer who died some years ago in Tynron related his experience with a witch in Closeburn when he was a boy. He was carting freestone from a neighbouring quarry, when his horse came to a standstill at the witch's door. Two other carters passed him, and only jeered both at the witch and the boy, when the former, to whom he had always been civil, came forward, and with a slight push adjusted the ponderous stone, which had slipped and was stopping the wheel. 'Now, go,' she said; 'thou wilt find them at the gate below

[3] Heather after being burned.

Gilchristland.' At that very spot he found the perplexed carters standing, both horses trembling and sweating, so that he easily went past them and got to his goal first."

No reference to witchcraft in the south-west of Scotland would be complete without some reference to the witches of Crawick Mill, near Sanquhar. The following allusion is drawn from a recently published work on the folk-lore of Upper Nithsdale, and in it will be observed how the witch phenomenon of change into the form of a hare, and being shot at in that form, again repeats itself:—

"The village of Crawick Mill, near Sanquhar, was a noted place for witches, and appears to have been a sort of headquarters for the sisterhood. Their doings and ongoings have been talked of far and near, and many a tale is told of revels at the 'Witches' Stairs'—a huge rock among the picturesque linns of Crawick, where, in company of other kindred spirits gathered from all parts of the country, they planned their deeds of evil, and cast their cantrips to the hurt of those who had come under their displeasure. In many different ways were these inflicted. Sometimes the farmer's best cow would lose its milk; a mare would miss foal; or the churn would be spellbound, and the dairymaid might churn and churn, and churn again, but no butter would come. No class of people was safe. The malignant power of the witches reached all classes of society; and even the minister's churn on one occasion would yield no butter. Everything had been tried without effect. The manse of Sanquhar at that time was situated close to the river on the site now occupied by the farm-house of Blackaddie, and the good man told the servant girl to carry the churn to the other side of the Nith, thinking that the crossing of a running stream would break the spell. But it was to no purpose; neither was the rowan tree branch that was fixed in the byre, nor the horse-shoe nailed behind the door. The power of the witch was too strong for the minister; but his wife was more successful. She made up a nice roll of butter, part of a former churning, and, with a pitcher of milk, sent it as a present to the beldam at Crawick Mill, who was thought to have wrought the mischief. The gift was thankfully received, and the churn did well ever after.

"Robert Stitt, honest man, was the miller at Crawick Mill, and well respected by everybody. One day, however, he refused one of the Crawick witches a peck of meal; she was enraged at the refusal, and told him 'he would rue that ere mony days passed.' About a week afterwards, on a dark night, Crawick was rolling in full flood. The miller went to put down the sluice, missed his footing, fell into the water, and was carried off by the torrent and drowned. A young man going a journey started early in the morning, and, shortly after he set out, met one of the witches, when some words passed between them. She said to him, 'Ye're gaun briskly awa', my lad, but ye'll come ridin' hame the nicht.' The poor fellow got his leg broken that day, and was brought home in a cart as the witch predicted. An old woman named Nannie is said to have been the last of the uncanny crew that dwelt on the banks of the Crawick. She appears to have been a person superior in intelligence and forethought to her neighbours. She knew that she was considered a witch, and she rather encouraged the idea; it kept her neighbours in awe, and also helped her to get a living—many a present she got from the ignorant and superstitious to secure themselves from her spells."

"One of the most famous witches of tradition belonging to Corrie (Dumfriesshire) was the witch-wife of the Wyliehole, whose strange exploits and infernal doings were the subject of many a winter evening's conversation around the farmer's hearth.

"She was represented as having been terribly implacable in her resentments, and those who fell under her displeasure were certain to feel all the severity of her revenge. She pursued them incessantly with strange accidents and misfortunes, sometimes with nocturnal visits in the form of fierce wild cats and weasels, and not only disturbed their repose but kept them in constant terror of their lives. She seems also to have been somewhat peculiar in her

movements, as she was seen, on one occasion, on the top of Burnswark crags switching lint by moonlight."

It may now be well to dwell for a little on the popular measures resorted to, to counteract witch influence and render it futile.

Relief and protection were sought in various ways. Charm and popular antidote had an abiding place in the domestic usage of the day, and faith, if wedded to empirical methods, was at all events all-prevailing. The mountain ash or rowan tree was believed to have a strong counter influence against unholy rite, and a very usual custom was to plait a branch and fasten it above the byre door to ensure the protection of their cows. Young women wore strings of rowan berries as beads on a string of the same colour, implicitly believing

"Rowan tree and red threid,
Put the witches to their speed"—

and Robert Heron, in his *Journey through the Western Counties of Scotland* (1792), further illustrates this point of superstitious observance by reference to an acquaintance:—"An anti-burgher clergyman in these parts, who actually procured from a person who pretended to skill in these charms, two small pieces of wood, curiously wrought, to be kept in his father's cow-house as a security for the health of his cows. It is common (he adds) to bend into a cow's tail a small piece of mountain ash-wood as a charm against witchcraft."

Inside the cottage the rowan bunch was suspended from the top of the corner-cupboard or box-bed. Salt was supposed to possess a strong power of evil resistance in various ways, not least in the operation of "churning," a handful being added to the cream before even commencing. To this day old horse-shoes are nailed over stable and byre doors "for luck," a vague application of what in the older days was specific belief in their potency as a charm against witch-mischief.

Stones with holes through them naturally perforated by the action of the water, popularly called "elf-cups," were also considered to possess protective power and were commonly nailed over the stable door.

It was further quite usual, when passing the hut of any old woman whom people eyed askance, to put the thumb upon the palm of the hand and close the fingers over it—a relic of the sign of the cross—to avert the evil eye.

A clear stone, called an "adder-bead" (supposed to be made in some mysterious way by the co-operation of thirteen adders), a robin's breast, and a fox's tongue, were other favoured charms. The witches and warlocks themselves were supposed to wear a protective, jacket-like garment, which had, at a certain mystic time of a March moon, been woven from the skins of water-snakes. These were popularly known as "warlock feckets." Silver alone could pierce such garments and seems to have possessed properties entirely opposed to the invincibility of these disciples of Satan. Nothing could turn or stop a silver bullet which not only destroyed the illusion and restored the guise which had been assumed, to the original witch-form, but even inflicted bodily pain and wound.

"An old woman, still alive, tells how her father was going to Drummore on one occasion by the road past Terally (Kirkmaiden), and saw a man a short distance in front of him carrying a gun. A hare jumped over the dyke on to the road in front of the man with the gun, who at once shot at it, but apparently missed. He fired four more shots at it, but the hare only jumped on the road as if making sport of them. Before he fired the next shot however, he slipped a threepenny piece into the gun, and that had effect. The hare limped into a whin bush near by,

and when the two men went to look for it they found a reputed witch lying with a broken leg."

An oft-practised rite in connection with the supposed bewitchment of a cow, and its failure to yield milk, was as follows:—

"A young maiden milked whatever dregs of milk the cow had left, which was of a sanguineous nature and poisonous quality. This was poured warm from the cow into a brass pan, and, every inlet to the house being closed, was placed over a gentle fire until it began to heat. Pins were dropped in and closely stirred with a wand of rowan; when boiling, rusty nails were thrown in and more fuel added."

The witch or warlock who had wrought the mischief were in some subtle way affected, and suffered pain so long as the distillation of the charm was continued; and the further point is brought out that the potency of the charm could even drag the perpetrators of the evil to the scene of their witch-work.

There is a hitherto unrecorded story bearing on this point:—

"Andrew M'Murray, farmer in Mountsallie, in the Rhinns of Galloway at one time, one morning found one of his cows very ill. In the middle of the uneasiness about the condition of the cow a tailor 'whup-the-cat' arrived at the farm-house to do some sewing, and among the others, went out to look at the cow. He at once said the cow was witched, and told them of a way to find out the person who had done so. They got the cow to her feet, and took whatever milk she had from her, and put it in a pot with a number of pins in it, and set it on the fire to boil, with a green turf on the top of the lid. When the pot began to boil dry, a near neighbour, who was a reputed witch, arrived, apparently in a state of great pain, and excitedly asked to see the cow. Immediately the cow saw her it jumped to its feet, broke its binding, ran out of the byre, and did not stop till it was at the top of Tordoo, a round hill in the neighbourhood."

The Dalry district, as already seen, is comparatively rich in uncannie reminiscence, one of which also accentuates this particular point:—

"The cow of a Dalry crofter became nearly yell quite unexpectedly. A neighbour said she would soon find out the reason. She boiled a quantity of needles and pins in some milk drippings from the cow, when an old woman who was reputed to be a witch knocked at the window and begged her to give over boiling as she was pricked all over, and if they did so the cow would soon be all right, which accordingly happened."

Two "cantrip incantations" concerned with love-making, strung together in rhyme, have been handed down:—

"In the pingle or the pan,
Or the haurpan o' man,
Boil the heart's-bluid o' the tade,
Wi' the tallow o' the gled;
Hawcket kail an' hen-dirt,
Chow'd cheese an chicken-wort,
Yallow puddocks champit sma',
Spiders ten, and gellocks twa,
Sclaters twa, frae foggy dykes,
Bumbees twunty, frae their bykes,
Asks frae stinking lochens blue,
Ay, will make a better stue;

Bachelors maun hae a charm,
Hearts they hae fu' o' harm."

The second, while of much the same character, has evidently more special reference to the weaker sex:—

"Yirbs for the blinking queen,
Seeth now, when it is e'en,
Boortree branches, yellow gowans,
Berry rasps and berry rowans;
Deil's milk frae thrissles saft,
Clover blades frae aff the craft;
Binwud leaves and blinmen's baws,
Heather bells and wither'd haws;
Something sweet, something sour,
Time about wi' mild and door;
Hinnie-suckles, bluidy-fingers,
Napple roots and nettle stingers,
Bags o' bees and gall in bladders,
Gowks' spittles, pizion adders:
May dew and fumarts' tears,
Nool shearings, nowt's neers,
Mix, mix, six and six,
And the auld maid's cantrip fix."

In Allan Ramsay's pastoral play of the *Gentle Shepherd* a vivid word-painting occurs of the popular estimation of the witch methods and witch beliefs of the times.

The passage occurs where "Bauldy," love-stricken and despairing, goes to seek the aid of "Mause," an old woman supposed to be a witch:—

"'Tis sair to thole; I'll try some witchcraft art.
……
Here Mausey lives, a witch that for sma' price
Can cast her cantraips, and gie me advice,
She can o'ercast the night and cloud the moon,
And mak the deils obedient to her crune;
At midnight hours, o'er the kirkyard she raves,
And howks unchristen'd weans out of their graves;
Boils up their livers in a warlock's pow,
Rins withershins about the hemlock low;
And seven times does her prayers backwards pray,
Till Plotcock comes with lumps of Lapland clay,
Mixt with the venom of black taids and snakes;
Of this unsonsy pictures aft she makes
Of ony ane she hates, and gars expire,
With slow and racking pains afore a fire,
Stuck fu' of pins; the devilish pictures melt;
The pain by fowk they represent is felt."

An old form of incantation extracted from a witch confession in 1662[4] refers to the form of witchcraft just alluded to in the *Gentle Shepherd*—the modelling in clay of the object of resentment and the piercing and maiming of such effigies to compass corresponding bodily harm. In this instance, wasting illness was intended to be induced by subjecting the diminutive clay figure to roasting over a fire:—

"In the Divellis nam, we powr in this water amang this mowld (meall)
For long duyning[5] and ill heall;
We putt it into the fyre,
That it may be brunt both stick and stowre,
It salbe[6] brunt with owr will
As any sticle[7] upon a kill.[8]"

A further forceful illustration of this particular form of spell-casting may be quoted from the confession of a reputed witch, "Janet Breadheid," who was brought before the Sheriff-Principal of Elgin and Forres in 1662.

It is here referred to as the family against whom the evil was directed was that of "Hay of Park," an evident off-shoot of a main stem of the Hays—the Hays of Errol (Perthshire)—a family represented in the south-west of Scotland by the Hays of Park, who inherited part of the lands of the Abbey of Glenluce immediately after the Reformation. The old family seat, now tenanted by farm servants, is generally described as the "Old House of Park."

The following is the quotation:—"My husband brought hom the clay in his plaid (newk). It ves maid in my hows; and the Divell himself with ws. We brak the clay werie small, lyk meil, (and) sifted it with a siew, and powred in vater amongst it, with wordis that the Divell leardned vs (in the Di.) Vellis nam. I brought hom the water, in a pig, out of the Rud-wall. We were all upon owr (kneyes) and our hair about owr eyes, and owr handis liftet up to the Divell, and owr eyes stedfast looking (upon him) praying and saying wordis which he learned ws, thryse ower, for destroyeing of this Lairdis (meall) children, and to mak his hows airles. It was werie sore wrought, lyk rye-bowt. It was about the bignes of a feadge or pow. It was just maid lyk the bairn; it vanted no mark of any maill child, such as heid, face, eyes, nose, mowth lippes, etc., and the handis of it folded downe by its sydis. It ves putt to the fyre, first till it scrunked, and then a cleir fyre about it, till it ves hard. And then we took out of the fyre, in the Divell's nam; and we laid a clowt about it and did lay (it) on a knag, and sometimes under a chist. Each day we would water, and then rost and bek it; and turn it at the fyre, each other day, whill that bairne died; and then layed it up, and steired it not untill the nixt bairne wes borne; And then, within half an year efter that bairne was born, (we) took it out again out of the cradle and clowt, and would dip it now and than among water, and beck (it) and rost it at the fyre, each other day once, as ve did against the other that was dead, untill that bairn (died) also."

The following is an example of a "Devil's Grace":—

"We eat this meat in the Divellis nam,
With sorrow, and sych,[9] and meikle shame,
We sall destroy hows and hald;

[4] "Confessions of Isobell Goudie."
[5] Dwining
[6] Shall be.
[7] Stubble
[8] Kiln
[9] Sighing

Both sheip and noat in till the fald.
Little good sall come to the fore
Of all the rest of the little store."

The following extract from a rare and fascinating work, *The Book of Galloway* (1745), possesses two points of much interest. It includes the prophetic utterings of a witch called Meg Macmuldroch at the "cannie moment" when Sir William Douglas of Gelston, whose name is so intimately associated with the creation and development of the town of Castle-Douglas, was born:—

"And anon as she came to the burden of her prophecy, pointing her quivering fingers to the sky, and repeating the following words with much emphasis:—'I looked at the starnies and they were in the right airt. It was full tide, and bein' lown and in the deid howe o' nicht, in Sandy Black's fey, I heard the sough o' the sea and the o'erswak o' the waves as they broke their bellies on the sawns o' Wigtown. There was a scaum i' the lift; the young mune was in the auld mune's arms, that was bad and guid—bad for the father, guid for the son; and as sure as the de'ils in the King's croft o' Stocking,[10] here's my benison and malison, mak' o't what ye wull.

'Grief and scaith, the faither to his death;
Thrift and thrive to the bairn alive.'"

The second point contained is the practical application and mention of several witchcraft and old-world expressions, some of which have just been referred to in dealing with the counteraction of witch-force:—

"'Greater pity,' said the minister abruptly, 'that the penalties against witchcraft are now done away with' ... She has already cast her glamour of the evil eye on this man. His very horse has been hag-ridden overnight, and in the mornin', sair forfochten wi' nocturnal sweats, and the "adder-stane" winna bring remeid. His cow was weel fed, for ye ken 'the cow gives her milk by the mou', but the crone has milked the tether,' and his twa stirks are stannin' slaverin' at baith mouth and een, and its neither side-ill, quarter-ill, tail-ill, muir-ill, or water-ill, and its no the rinnin' doun, the black spauld, or the warbles, but a clear case of elf-shot, though a piece of rowan has been tied to their tails.... John went first to Shennaton on the water o' Bladnoch, bad land at the best, for it girns a' summer and greets a' winter. There he couldna leeve, so his 'fire was slockened,' and here he's half deid, an' a' through the witches."

In concluding this chapter further notice may be taken of the quite common practice in those days, of the fears of the country-side being traded upon by cunning old women supposed to possess, or pretending to possess, witch-power. In wholesome dread of the malign influence of the "uncannie e'en" these old women were propitiated by lavish presents of produce and provender, and so skillfully did many of them play their parts that they lived comfortably and bien at the expense of their neighbours, who were only too glad to send new milk, cheese, meal, and even to cast their peats and help with the rents to make "the e'en look kindly" and avert possible disaster, all of which is graphically alluded to and set forth in Allan Cunningham's "Pawky Auld Kimmer":—

"There's a pawky auld Kimmer wons low i' the glen;
Nane kens how auld Kimmer maun fecht and maun fen;
Kimmer gets maut, and Kimmer gets meal,
And cantie lives Kimmer, richt couthie an' hale;

[10] A famous haunt of witches in the parish of Rerwick.

Kimmer gets bread, and Kimmer gets cheese,
An’ Kimmer’s uncannie e’en keep her at ease.
‘I rede ye speak lowne, lest Kimmer should hear ye;
Come sain ye, come cross ye, an’ Gude be near ye!’”

III. Witchcraft Trials And Persecution

"Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live."
—*Exodus xxii., 18.*

LITTLE is heard of witchcraft in Scotland before the latter half of the 16th century, but in the year 1563, in the reign of Mary, Queen of Scotland, a strenuous Act directed against the practice of witchcraft became law, and was most rigorously enforced. As this has been described as the law under which all the subsequent witch trials took place its significant phraseology may in part be quoted:—

"The Estates enact that nae person take upon hand to use ony matter of witchcrafts, sorcery or necromancy, nor give themselves furth to have ony sic craft or knowledge thereof; also that nae person seek ony help, response, or consultation at ony sic users or abusers of witchcraft under the pain of death."

Curiously enough the passing of this and similar Acts was attended by results as unexpected as they were unforeseen. Belief in witchcraft became the passion of public credulity. Accusations, generally false and often even ludicrous in their solemn foolishness, were trumped up, and action followed, that hurried countless helpless human beings to the stake to die a cruel and shameful death. It was a time of terror, an epoch of superstitious sacrifice, extending and gathering force as the reign of Mary merged into the Regency, only finding pause at the removal of James VI. of Scotland to London, there to preside over the united destinies of these islands. As is well known, this monarch evinced a more than personal interest in matters pertaining to the "unseen world," and that, gathering up his ideas and conclusions, he embodied them in a singular treatise entitled *Daemonologie*.[11] Less creditable to his memory it is told that not only did he favour executions for this alleged crime, but actually took pleasure in witnessing the sacrifice of the condemned.

With the death of James a phase of quiescence in witch quest and sacrifice is entered upon, a lull which lasted for some fifteen years. It was again, however, to be broken, this time by the unfortunate intervention and misdirected zeal of the Church itself. The General Assembly, stimulated by a desire for Puritanical perfection, awakened the slumbering crudity of belief, that direct Satanic Power stalked abroad in the land in the form of witchcraft. Condemnatory Acts were passed in the years 1640-43-44-45 and 49. Again the stake and tar faggot blazed. The Levitical law was accepted as a too literal injunction, and from this time forward it is the clergy who particularly figure as the pursuers of witches, keen and relentless to a degree; and yet with it all, however misguided the efforts of these Churchmen, however cruel their methods, it is only just to their memories to believe in their purity of motive, and to give them all credit for pious and earnest desire to combat and stamp out what to them was in very truth a great evil.

Different methods were adopted to establish proof and justify the cases for the accusers, but the one test specially relied upon was to find the actual presence of what has already been

[11] Extract from King James's *Daemonologie concerning Sorcery and Witchcraft* (1597):—
"The persons that give themselves to witchcraft are of two sorts, rich and of better accompt, poore and of baser degree. These two degrees answere to the passions in them, which the divell uses as means to entice them to his service: for such of them as are in great miserie and povertie, he allures to follow him, by promising unto them great riches and worldly commoditie. Such as though rich, yet burne in a desperate desire of revenge, he allures them by promises to get their turne satisfied to their heart's contentment."

described as the "witch mark"[12] upon the person of the suspected. When this was found, or supposed to be found, it was the deliberate practice to pass through it a sharp needle-like instrument, and if no pain was felt or blood drawn, then guilt was held to be firmly established.

So frequent were the accusations that the "pricking of witches" became a recognised calling: one individual, John Kincaid by name, having such a reputation for skill in this unhallowed work that he seems to have been employed in the principal witch trials of this period, such an entry as—

"Item, mair to Jon Kinked for brodding of her

VI. lib. Scotts"

being of quite common occurrence in the notes of expenses still on record.

It is to this second or later period of persecution that the record of witch charge and punishment in the south-west of Scotland really belongs, and from 1656 the records of the civil and ecclesiastical courts teem with accounts of searching enquiry and trial. It must further be remembered that over and above the regularly constituted enquiries of State and Church a great number of Commissions were granted by the Privy Council to gentlemen in every county, and almost in every parish, to try persons accused of witchcraft, many of whom suffered the extreme penalty,[13] and of which no particulars can now be gleaned.

It is now our purpose to set forth as completely as possible such relative matter and extracts from existing documents as will describe the proceedings as they actually took place in the distinctive localities of the Dumfries and Galloway district, but it may perhaps be here fittingly noted, not without a certain sense of gratification, that this south-western district, though far from blameless, compares more than favourably with other districts in Scotland, both in fairness of judgment and rigour of punishment.

Proceedings in Galloway.

Presbytery of Kirkcudbright, April, 1662.—A person, named James Welsh, confessed himself guilty of the crime of witchcraft before the Presbytery of Kirkcudbright; but the justices refused to put him upon his trial, because he was a minor when he acknowledged his guilt, and had retracted his extra-judicial confession; but on the 17th of April, 1662, they ordered him to be scourged and put in the correction house, having so grossly "prevaricated and delated so many honest persons."

Kirkcudbright, 1671.—At an Assize held in the burgh of Dumfries in 1671 eight or more females were charged with witchcraft; five of them were eventually sent for trial to Kirkcudbright.

Dalry Kirk-Session, 1696.—Elspeth M'Ewen, an old woman living alone at a place called Bogha, near the farm of Cubbox, in Balmaclellan, was suspected by the country-side of

[12] "The witch mark is sometimes like a blewspot, or a little tate, or reid spots, like flea-biting; sometimes also the flesh is sunk in, and hallow, and this is put in secret places, as among the hair of the head, or eyebrows, within the lips, under the armpits, *et sic de ceteris*." Mr Robert, minister at Aberfoill, in his *Secret Commonwealth*, describes the witch's mark—"A spot that I have seen as a small mole, horny, and brown-coloured; through which mark, when a large brass pin was thrust (both in buttock, nose, and rooff of the mouth) till it bowed and became crooked, the witches, both men and women nather felt a pain nor did bleed, nor knew the precise time when this was being done to them (their eyes only being covered)."*—Law's "Memorials," ed. by C. Kirkpatrick Sharpe.*

[13] The extreme penalty took two forms. The condemned were either in the first place strangled or, to use an old expression, "wirreit" and then burned; or, worse still, they were straightway burned quick (alive).

various acts of "witching." In particular, she was believed to have at her command a wooden pin that was movable and that could be withdrawn from the base of the rafters resting on the walls of the cottage, which particular part of the building was in these old days called the "kipple foot."

With this pin Elspeth was supposed to have the supernatural power of drawing an exhaustive milk supply from her neighbour's cows merely by placing it in contact with the udder, and this it was reported she practised freely. Other cantrips laid to her door included capricious interference with the laying power of her neighbour's hens, causing them sometimes to fail altogether, at others to produce in amazing plenteousness.

At last complaint was made to the Session, and the beadle, by name M'Lambroch, was sent away with the minister's mare to bring her before the Session. On the journey there is a tradition that the mare in a panic of fright sweated great drops of blood at the rising hill near the Manse, since known as the "Bluidy Brae."

After being examined she was sent to Kirkcudbright, where she lay in prison for about two years.

Dalry Kirk-Session, October 15th, 1697.—The following entry evidently refers to the expense of her maintenance in prison: "Given for alimenting Elspet M'Koun, alledged of witchcraft in prison, £01.01.00."

Kirkcudbright, 1698.—In Kirkcudbright prison Elspeth M'Ewen was so inhumanely treated that she frequently implored her tormentors to terminate a life which had become a grievous burden to her.

In March, 1698, a Commission was appointed by the Privy Council for her trial, along with another woman, Mary Millar, also accused of witchcraft, "to meet and conveen at Kirkcudbright." The following is an extract from the said Commission:—

Extract from "Commission for Judging of Elspeth M'Cowen and Mary Millar, alleadged Guilty of Witchcraft, 1698."

"The Lords of his Majesties privie Councill, being informed that Elspeth M'Cowen and Mary Millar, both within the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright, presently prisoners within the tolboth of Kirkcudbright, are alleaged guilty of the horid cryme of witchcraft, and hes committed severall malifices; and considering it will be a great deall of charges and expenses to bring the saids Elspeth M'Cowen and Mary Millar to this place, in order to a tryall before the Lords commissioners of justiciary: Besides, that severall inconveniences may aryse by there transportation. And the saids Lords lykewayes considering that this horid cryme cannot be tryed and judged by any persons in the countrie without a warrant and commission from their Lordships for that effect; And the saids Lords being desyreous to have the said matter brought to a tryall, that the persones guilty may receive condigne punishment, and others may be deterred from committing so horid a cryme in time coming; They do hereby give full power, warrant and commission, to Sir John Maxwell of Pollock,—Maxwell of Dalswintoune, Hugh M'Guffock of Rusco, Adam Newall of Barskeoche, Dunbar of Machrymore, Thomas Alexander, Stewart Depute of Kirkcudbright, Robert M'Clellend of Barmagachan, and Mr Alexander Fergussone of Isle, Advocate; And declare any three of the foresaids persones to be a sufficient quorum, the said Stewart Depute of Kirkcudbright being one of the three, To take tryall off, and to judge and do justice upon the saids Elspeth M'Cowen and Mary Millar, for the cryme of witchcraft. And in order thereto, To meitt and conveen at Kirkcudbright, the second ffryday of Apryle next to come, and there to accept for this present commission, and upon there acceptance to administrate the oath of fidelity to the person whom the Lord Justice Clerk or James Montgomery of Langshare, Clerk to the Justice

Court, shall depute and substitute to be clerk to the present Commissione, With power to the saids Commissioners or their said quorum, to choyse their own Clerk for whom they shall be answerable, In caise that the saids Lords Justice Clerk and James Montgomery, shall refuse to nominate a Clerk in this matter, they being first requyred so to doe, With power lykewayes to the saids persones hereby commissionat or their said quorum, To create, make, and constitute Serjants, Dempsters, and other Members of the said court, And to Issue out and cause raise precepts or lybells of indictment at the instance of Samuell Cairnmount, writer in Kirkcudbright, as procurator fiscall for his Majesties interest in the said matter, against the saids Elspeth M'Cowen and Mary Millar, accused of Witchcraft, ffor sumonding and citeing them upon ffyfteen dayes, by delyvering to them a full copie of the lybell or indictment, with the names and designationes of the Assyzers and witnesses subjoined; And for citeing there assyzers and witnesses in the ordinary and under the usual paynes and certificationes, To compear before the saids Commissioners hereby commissionat, ... With power to the saids Commissioners or their said quorums, To decern and Adjudge them to be burned, or otherwise to be execute to death within such space and after such a manner as they shall think fit, and appoints the saids commissioners, there said quorum or Clerk, to transmit the haill process which shall be ledd before them against the said Elspeth M'Cowen and Mary Millar, and severall steps thereof and verdict of the inquest to be given thereupon to the saids Lords of his Majesties privie Councill, betwixt and the ffyfteenth day of June nixt to come."

On the 26th of July the committee of Privy Council reported that they had examined the proceedings of the commissioners in the case of Elspeth M'Ewen (the report signed by the Lord Advocate), who had been pronounced guilty upon her own confession and the evidence of witnesses "of a compact and correspondence with the devil, and of charms and of accession to malefices." It was ordered that the sentence of death against Elspeth should be executed under care of the Steward of Kirkcudbright and his deputies.

Found guilty by her own confession, a certain means to end a miserable life, Elspeth M'Ewen suffered the extreme penalty of being burned at the stake, the execution taking place in what is now known as Silver Craigs Park, on the 24th day of August, 1698.

It would thus appear that the executioner (William Kirk) had to be kept in jail in order that he should be forthcoming at the execution. He seems to have been an old, infirm man, without relations or friends, and on 8th July, 1699, he addressed the following petition to the Provost and Magistrates:—

"To the Right Honorable my Lord Provest, Baylies, and Cownsell of the Royal Burgh of Kirkcut.—Humbly sheweth, That yor Honors patchioner is in great straits in this dear time and lik to sterv for hwnger, and whan I go to the cowntrie and foks many of them has it not and others of them that hes it say they are overburdened with poor folk that they are not able to stand before them, and they will bid me go hom to the town to maintain me and cast stanes at me. May it therefore please your honors to look upon my indigent condition and help me for the Lord sake, and yor honors pettioner shall ever pray."

In answer to the above "earnest cry and prayer" there appears the following entry in the "Thessr's" account:—

"8th Jully, 1699.

"The sd day the magistrates and Counsell ordains the Thessr. to give the petitioner the next week six shill Scots forby his weekly allowance."

Another document, which throws a curious side-light on Elspeth M'Ewen's trial, is the sentence against one Janet Corbie, who advised Elspeth to plead not guilty. It is as follows:—

"Kirkcudbright, — day of July, 1698.

"The same day, it being most palpably and cleirly evident and made appear to ye magistrates and Consell yt. Janet Corbie, dauter of Wm. Corbie, hath been and as yet continues in a most scandlous carrige, abusing of her neybors by scandlous expressions, whereffor there hath been fformer ffines put upon her, and that she is a persoun yt leeves by pyckering and stealing as is most justly suspect yrof, and yt she hath been endevouring to harden Elspeth M'Keoun, wha is in ye laigh sellar as ane wich, in endevouring to dissuad her to confess and that people sinned ther sowl wha said she was a wich, and ffor her constant practis in abuse of ye Lord's Day emploing herselff yrin ofthymes in stealing her neybors guids such as unyuns and bowcaill and taking them to ye countrie and makin sale yr of, and sevll oyr thing yt upon just grownds could be mayd appere so yt to long she hath been suffered to resyde in this place; yrfor, and yt ye place may be troubled with such a miscrent, and scandlous person nae langer in tym coming, ye magistrates and consell out of a due sens of yr dutie and of ye justice of her sentens, ordains the said Janet Corbie to remain in prison while Munday morning neist att ten o'clock and then to be taken ffurth of the tolboth by ye officers and wt tuck of drum to be transported over the ferry bote, to be exported in all tyme coming from ye sosiety or convercacioune of all guid Christians and indwellers in ye place, and never to return yrto, prohibiting and discharging all inhabitants, qur parents, relaciouns, or any oyrs wtin ye toun's bouns, to harbor, reset, convers, commune with, or entertane the said Janet or receve her to their society or company at any place or tyme in all tyme coming, and yt under ye pain of fforty pounds Scots muney to be peyd by ilk transgressor, toties quoties to ye toun's Thessr. atower whatever oyer punishment the magistrets and consell sall think fit further to impose, and ordains thir presents to be publish at ye Mercat Cross yt non may pretend ignorans in tyme coming, and the magistrats ordane to see the sentence put in execution."

Extracts from Minute Book of the Kirk-Session of Kirkcudbright.

"Janet M'Robert in Milnburn is delated to the Session for Witchcraft, the signs and instances qrof (whereof) are afterwards recorded. The Session therefor recommends to the Magistrates to apprehend and incarcerate her till tryall be had of that matter."

"Feb. 6, 1701.

"As to Janet M'Robert in Milnburn, it is delated by Elizabeth Lauchlon, lawfull daughter to John Lauchlon yr., (there) that the sd. (said) Elizabeth went to Janet's house, when she was not within, and looking in at the door saw a wheel going about and spinning without the help of any person seen by her, and she went in and essayed to lay hold of the said wheel, but was beat back to the door and her head was hurt, though she saw nobody. And yt. (that) after she was in the said Janet's House (being at school with her) the Devil appeared to her in the likeness of a man, and did bid her deliver herself over to him, from the crown of her head to the sole of her foot, which she refused to do, saying she would rather give herself to God Almighty. After the Devil went away the sd. (said) Janet, who was present with her, laid bonds on her not to tell. And yr after he came a second time to her, being in Janet's house alone, in the likeness of a gentleman, and desired her to go with him, and yr after disappeared, seeming not to go out at the door.

"Robert Crichton's wife farther delates, that when she was winnowing corn in Bailie Dunbar's barn, the said Janet came in to her and helped her, tho' not desired, till she had done, and desired of her some chaff for her cow. She gave her a small quantity in her apron, with which she seemed not to be satisfied, so upon the morrow thereafter, the said Robert Crichton's wife's breast swelled to a great height, which continued for about the space of five

weeks, so that the young child who was then sucking decayed and vanished away to a shadow, and immediately yr after their cow took such a distemper that her milk had neither the colour nor taste that it used to have, so yt no use could be made of it, all which happened about three years ago.

"It is further delated by Howell, that being one day in John Robertson's in the Milnburn, he desired to buy two hens. They said they had none, but perhaps Janet M'Robert would do it, and accordingly he asked Janet, who answered she had none to sell to him. He replied, 'you have them to eat my goodmother's bear when it is sown; but (said he), my rough lad (meaning his dog) will perhaps bring them to me.' She answered, 'your rough lad will bring none of my hens this two days;' and before that he went to the town, the dog went mad to the beholding of many.

"Further, it is delated, that a friend of the said Janet's living in Rerwick, whose wife was lying on childbed, did send his daughter to Janet to borrow some money which she refused to give at the first, yet upon a second consideration she gave her two fourteens, but still assured the Lass that she would lose them. 'What,' (says the Lass) 'am I a child yet?' and for the mare security she took a purse out of her pocket in which there were no holes, and took out some turmour (turmerick) which she had in it, and did put in the two fourteens and threw the neck of her purse (as she used perhaps to do) assuring herself that she should not lose them now, and went home, and when she came there, she opened the purse to take out the two fourteens, and she had nothing.

"Further, it is delated by John M'Gympser's wife, Agnes Kirk, that the said Janet came one day there, and desired a hare's bouk (carcase) which she refused, and since that time their dog hath neither been able to run or take ane hare."

"Feb. 12th, 1701.

"As to Janet M'Robert, John Bodden in Milnburn delates, that at the laik wake of his child three years ago, Patrick Linton's son heard a great noise about Janet's house, so yt he was afraid to go out at the door, and John Bodden himself going to the door heard it also, at which he was greatly affrighted. Upon the morrow yr after, the said Janet went into John's house, and they told her what they heard the night before about her house. Janet answered, 'It is nothing but my clocken hen'; but John declared that 'all the hens within twenty miles would not have made such a noise'

."The sd. John further delates that, upon the Wednesday after Janet was incarcerated, he did see about cock-crow a candle going through the said Janet's house, but saw nothing holding it."

The Finding—

"April 10th, 1701.

"As to Janet M'Robert, an extract of the delations against her being sent to Edinburgh, and a commission written for to pursue her legally it was denyed in regard they judged the delations not to be sufficient presumptions of guilt, so as to found a process of that nature. Notwithstanding thereof the said Janet consented to an act of banishment, and went hence to Ireland."

Extracts from Session Book of Twynholm.

"18th April, 1703.

"Jean M'Murrie in Irelandton, suspect of witchcraft, being aprehended and incarcerated in the tolbooth of Kirkcudbright upon a warrant from the civil magistrate, the minr. (minister) is

desired to cause cite to the next Session any whom he can find to have any presumptions of witchcraft agt the said Jean."

"25th April, 1703.

"The minister reports that he (as he was desired) has caused cite some persons anent Jean M'Murrie's suspected witchcraft, such as—

"1st. Florence Sprot, who being called and compearing, declares that by the report of the country Jean M'Murrie has been under the name of a witch for many years.

"2d. John M'Gown in Culcray, in Tongland, declares, that he having a daughter of Jean M'Murrie's with him, the said Jean came one day to his house before her daughter went from him, and the sd Jean having conceived some anger because her daughter came to him without the said Jean's consent, she staying a little in his house, went away to a neighbour's house, and stayed there all night, and the said John going to her to-morrow, when she saw the said John she inquired how it came to pass that he took her daughter without her consent; and he desiring her back again to his house, but she by no entreatie wd (would) go to his house, and left the said John in a rage, and within about four days his wife took a dreadful stitch thro' her, as if she had been stricken with a whinger or knife, and his wife desiring earnestly that Jean M'Murrie would come and see her, but the sd Jean would never come to see her (altho' bidden by Janet Dallan in Irlandton), and so the said John's wife continued in great pain until she died.

"3d. Issobel M'Gown in Netherton, who, being called and compearing, declares that Jean M'Murrie has been under the name of a witch for many years by the report of the country.

"4th. Christian Bisset in Glencroft, declares that Jean M'Murrie has been under the name of a witch since she came to the parish, which is more than ten years."

"2nd May, 1703.

"Janet M'Haffie in the Mark of Twynhame, declares that, in harvest 1700, Jean M'Murrie came one night to the said Mark after they had been at the Mill, and the said Janet M'Haffie going to milk the kye, disowned the said Jean (not knowing that it was she), neither did any other about the Mark own the said Jean that night, and Jean going away without any alms that night, upon the morrow their milk was made useless, having a loathsome smell, likewise the said Janet M'Haffie fell sick, and was like a daft body for about eight days, at the end whereof both the sd. Janet and their milk grew better."

"2nd May, 1703.

"Margaret Kingan in Inglishtown, declares along with Quintin Furmount, kirk-officer, that John Neilson in Waltrees said to them, that this last ware Jean M'Murrie was selling about a peck of corn to the said John, and the said John would not give the said Jean what she would have for the said corn, and so the said Jean went away from him in anger, and the said John's horse did sweat until he died."

"2nd May, 1703.

"Robert Gelly and Sarah M'Nacht, in Chappell in Tongland, heaving been hearing sermon in Twynhame this day, were desired by the minister to wait upon the Session, which was to meet after sermon, which accordingly they did, and the said Sarah declares before the Session that upon a day about Midsummer last, Jean M'Murrie came into the Chappel and sought a piece bread to a lass that she had with her, and Sarah M'Nacht said she had no bread ready. Jean M'Murrie said, she (viz. the lass that was with her) would it may be take some of these

pottage (Sarah having some pottage among her hands) but, however, Sarah gave her none, and Jean M‘Murrie going away muttering, said, either ‘you may have more loss,’ or ‘you shall have more loss,’ and within about six hours or thereby thereafter, Robert Gelly lost a horse, and that the said Jean came never to Robert Gelly’s house since that time, and the said Robert declares that he has still the thoughts that his horse was killed with divelrie.”

“2nd May, 1703.

“Robert Bryce, Robert M‘Burnie, and William Brown, ruling elders, declared that Thomas Craig in Barwhinnock said to them that upon a day more than two years ago Jean M‘Murrie came to his house and sought his horse, and began to discourse to the sd Thomas and his wife about flesh. Thomas said they had no flesh. She went away in a rage and said, ‘God send them more against the next time she should come there,’ and within a week the said Thomas lost a quey by drowning.”

The finding:—

“9th May, 1703.

“Robert Bryce attended the Presbytery. The minister reports that Jean M‘Murray, having sought an Act of Banishment to transport herself out of the Stewartrie of Kirkcudbright within or at the end of ten days, and never to be found within the same again under the pain of death, is let out of Prison.”

Members of the Kirk-Session of Twynholm at this time:—William Clark, Minister; James Robison, Thomas Robison, John Herries, Ninian M‘Nae, Robert Bryce, James Milrae, William Milrae, William Brown, Thomas Sproat, James M‘Kenna, Alexander Halliday, Robert M‘Burnie.

Parish of Urr.—The following is an extract from the Presbytery records of Dumfries, dated 22nd April, 1656:—

“John M‘Quhan in Urr, compeared, confessing that he went to Dundrennan, to a witch-wife, for medicine for his sick wife, and that he got a salve for her, and that the wife said to him, ‘If the salve went in his wife would live, if not she would die.’ Janet Thomson in Urr, compearing, confessed that she went to the said witch, and got a salve to her mother, and that the witch bade her take her mother, and lay her furth twenty-four hours; and said that her mother got her sickness between the mill and her ain house, and bade her tak her to the place where she took it, and wash her with (elder) leaves. She also confessed that the deceased Thomas M‘Minn and his friends sent her at another time to the same witch, whose name is Janet Miller. They were both rebuked (by the Presbytery), and referred to their own Session to be rebuked from the pillar in sackcloth, and the witch Janet Miller was further detained, the parish minister to announce from the pulpit that all who could were required to give evidence ‘of sic devilish practices.’”

Kirkpatrick-Durham Kirk-Session.—At Bridge of Urr, Isobel M‘Minn called Jean Wallace a witch. Jean told the Session. Both women were summoned to appear. The Session decided there was no witchcraft in the matter.

“The Session, having shown them the evil of such strife and scolding, and having exhorted them to live in peace and be reconciled to each other, made them promise each to other that no such strife should be between them any more.”

Parish of Carsphairn.—An arbitrary incident of witch detection took place during the ministry of John Semple, a man who, if somewhat eccentric, was graced with extraordinary piety and natural ability.

Of him it is recorded that "Upon a certain time when a neighbouring minister was distributing tokens before the Sacrament, and was reaching a token to a certain woman, Mr Semple (standing by) said 'Hold your hand, she hath gotten too many tokens already: she is a witch,' which, though none suspected her then, she herself confessed to be true, and was deservedly put to death for the same."

John Semple died at Carsphairn about the year 1667.

Extract from Minnigaff Kirk-Session Records.—"There being a flagrant report yt. some persons in this parish in and about the house of Barcly (Bargaly) have practised that piece of devilrie, commonly called 'turning the riddle,' as also it being reported yt. ye principal person is one Malley Redmond, an Irish woman, for present nurse in the house of Barcly to ye young lady Tonderghie, as also yt. Alex. Kelly, Gilbert Kelly his son, and Marion Murray, formerly servant in Barcly, now in Holme, were witnesses yrto, the Session appoints ye said Malley and ye said witnesses to be cited to ye nixt meeting."

Malley, after some delay, at length appeared, but positively denied having "practised that piece of devilry turning the riddle," but acknowledged that she had seen it done in her father's house in Ireland by two girls on the occasion of something having been stolen, "to fear ye guilty person yt. it might restore yt. was stolen." Malley was exhorted to be ingenuous, but she persisted in asserting her innocence. The Session, therefore, resolved to proceed to proof. The proceedings occupy a number of pages, and are too long for insertion; but the particulars are comprehended in the deposition of Marrion Murray:—

"Marrion Murray, aged 18 years, having been sworn, purged of malice and partial counsel, deponeth yt. she (not having seen any other person doing it before her), together with ye nurse held the riddle between ym. having a pair of little schissors fastened into ye rim of the riddle, whereof ye nurse Malley Redmond held one point and she the other, and that ye nurse mumbled some words mentioning Peter and Paul, and that when the nurse said these words the riddle stirred less or more, and after ye nurse had said ye words she bad ye deponent say them too, and that she accordingly said the same things back again to the nurse, and that the deponent had said to ye nurse Malley before ever she meddled with it that if she knew yr. was anything evil in doing of it she would not meddle with it, and ye nurse replied yr. was no evil in it, and further that to sift the meddling with it she offered to take ye child from ye lady's arms, but ye young lady put her to it, bidding her go do it. As also yt. further ye said Marion depones yt. ye same day, a little after, ye young lady bad her go to ye barn and yr do it over again with ye nurse, which she positively refused, whereupon ye young lady did it herself with all the circumstances she and the nurse had done it in the chambers before; moreover, that some days after, the chamber door being close upon the young lady and her nurse Malley, ye deponent, looking through a hole in ye door, saw ye nurse and ye lady standing and ye riddle betwixt ym. as before, but heard nothing. And further, yt. ye lady and her nurse bad her deny these things, but did not bid her swear to it."

For her participation in the affair the young lady Tonderghie, Mrs Janet Blair, was cited before the Session, and having expressed her penitence for being ensnared into such sinful practices, she and Marion Murray subscribed a declaration to be read before the congregation, "abhorring and renouncing all spelles and charmes usual to wizards; and having been rebooked and exhorted to greater watchfulness for the future, they were dismissed."

The originator of the affair, Malley Redmond, after making her appearance to be "rebooked" before the congregation, was banished the parish. But the execution of the sentence was, through influence, delayed "till Tonderghie younger, his child, should be weaned."

Parish of New Luce.—The only point of interest in connection with the parish of New Luce is that the chief witness against Maggie Osborne, who was burned as a witch at Ayr, was an elder in the Moor Kirk of Luce, to which reference has already been made.

Parish of Whithorn.—An old woman named Elspeth M'Keand lived on the farm of Palmallet, near Whithorn. On one occasion she was arraigned before the magistrates of Whithorn for some supposed uncannie doings, but the authorities, not endorsing the general belief, set her at liberty. So disappointed and enraged were the community at her liberation that they caught her and inserted a host of new brass pins in her body, and afterwards dragged her down to the shore at Dinnans, holding her below water until life was nearly extinct. The old woman never fairly recovered from this cruel treatment, and when she died her remains were objected to as not being fit to rest in the Kirkyaird.

Parish of Kirkmaiden.—In the parish of Kirkmaiden we find a zealous prosecutor of witches in the person of the Rev. Mr Marshall, who was ordained in 1697. He was assisted in his efforts by a woman brought from the town of Wigtown, who was credited with possessing an expert faculty of at once being able to distinguish and pick out witches and warlocks from amongst ordinary mortals, however similar to them in outward appearance.

All the adults in the parish were summoned to attend at the Parish Church on a given date and passed through the church from one door to the other. The minister placed himself in the precentor's box, with writing materials at his hand, the witch-finder being seated beside him. When witch or warlock passed, the woman tramped on the minister's toes and the name was at once recorded. A long list was thus made out, and the Kirk-Session afterwards inquired into the charges brought against the various individuals, which proceedings were afterwards inserted in the Session records.

The stigma thus cast upon many families in the district was only removed by influence being brought to bear to destroy by burning the accusing pages of the Session records.

Tradition asserts that retribution at the hands of the Kirkmaiden witches overtook the reverend gentleman, for, taking his accustomed walk from the manse to the church, a hare running out of the churchyard crossed his path, and from that time forward he was never again able to open his mouth in the pulpit of Kirkmaiden Church. He was shortly afterwards translated to Kirkcolm, and though he often visited Kirkmaiden he could never occupy the pulpit, even on the day of Sacramental observance.

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So late as 1805 a trial took place at Kirkcudbright connected with witchcraft which aroused considerable excitement in the district, creating keen interest as well in legal circles.

This was the trial of "Jean Maxwell," who was accused of "pretending to exercise witchcraft, sorcery, enchantment, and conjuration, and undertaking to tell fortunes."

The point which is of note, and calls for accentuation is, that Jean Maxwell was arraigned, not for being a witch, but for the imposition of pretending to possess witch power. This has been commented upon by Professor John Ferguson of Glasgow in his paper, "Bibliographical Notes on the Witchcraft Literature of Scotland" (*Publications of the Edinburgh Bibliographical Society*, vol. iii., 74 (1899), in which he says: "It will be noticed that Jean is indicted for pretending to exercise witchcraft, etc. In fact, the indictment is made under the Act of George II., cap. 5, which repeals the statutes against witchcraft.... It is an interesting case, as having occurred under the repealing Act."

The following is the indictment:—

"Jean Maxwell, present prisoner in the Tolbooth of Kirkcudbright, you are indicted at the instance of Robert Gordon, writer in Kirkcudbright, Procurator-Fiscal of the Steward Court of the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright for his Majesty's interest; that albeit by the Act of Parliament passed in the ninth year of the Reign of King George the Second, Cap. 5th, intituled 'An Act to repeal the Statute made in the first year of the Reign of James the First, intituled, "An Act against Conjuration, Witchcraft, and dealing with Evil and Witched Spirits;" except so much thereof as repeals an Act of the fifth year of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth, against Conjurations, Inchantments, and Witchcraft.' And to repeal an Act passed in the Parliament of Scotland in the Ninth Parliament of Queen Mary, intituled 'Anentis Witchcraft; and for punishing such persons as pretend to exercise or use any kind of Witchcraft, Sorcery, Inchantment, or Conjuration.' It is enacted 'That if any person shall from and after the twenty-fourth day of June next, pretend to exercise or use any kind of Witchcraft, Sorcery, Inchantment, or Conjuration, or undertake to tell Fortunes or pretend from his or her skill or knowledge in ocult or crafty science, to discover where or in what manner any goods or chattels supposed to have been lost, may be found; every person so offending being therefore lawfully convicted on Indictment of Information, in that part of Great Britain called England; or on Indictment or Libel, in that part of Great Britain called Scotland, shall for every such offence suffer imprisonment for the space of one whole year without Bail or Mainprize; and once in every quarter of the said year, in some Market Town of the proper County, upon the Market Day there, stand openly on the Pillory for the space of one hour; and also shall (if the Court by which such Judgment shall be given think fit) be obliged to give surety for his or her good behaviour, in such sum, and for such time as the said Court shall judge proper, according to the circumstances of the offence; and in such case shall be further imprisoned until such sureties be given.'

"Notwithstanding of the said Act of Parliament, you, the said Jean Maxwell, are Guilty, Actor, Art and Part of pretending to exercise Witchcraft, Sorcery, Inchantment, and Conjuration; and of undertaking to tell fortunes, &c., &c. (in the manner particularly mentioned in the Deposition of Jean Davidson, hereto annexed). In so far as you the said Jean Maxwell, did, upon Thursday the twenty-seventh, Friday the twenty-eighth, and Saturday the twenty-ninth days of December last, in the year one thousand eight hundred and four, and upon Tuesday the first and Tuesday the eighth days of January last, in the year one thousand eight hundred and five, or upon some one or other of the days or nights of these months, or of the month of November immediately preceding, or of the month of February immediately following, at Little Cocklick, in the Parish of Urr, and Stewartry of Kirkcudbright, pretend to Tell Fortunes by Tea Cups and the grounds of Tea; and did tell to Jean Davidson, Servant to Francis Scott, farmer in Little Cocklick aforesaid, that she would soon bear a Bastard to a certain young man, Hugh Rafferton; which you said you could prevent by certain means. And you, the said Jean Maxwell, caused the said Jean Davidson to rub or anoint her forehead and other parts of her head with a liquid contained in bottle produced by you, which so much intoxicated and disordered the said Jean Davidson that she would have done anything that you the said Jean Maxwell had asked her to do; and you the said Jean Maxwell, availing yourself of the situation that she the said Jean Davidson was in, declared to her that the Devil would speedily appear and tear her in pieces, unless she obeyed you, the said Jean Maxwell, in every particular. And you, the said Jean Maxwell, caused the said Jean Davidson take oaths of Secrecy for the purpose of concealing your wicked and felonious purposes. That on the said twenty-seventh day of December last you, the said Jean Maxwell, caused the said Jean Davidson produce a Guinea Note, which you pretended to hold up in a small bit of paper, putting round it some lint, and stitching in it nine pins, after which you gave it to the said Jean Davidson and ordered her to cast it into the fire, which she did accordingly. And you, the said Jean Maxwell, then ordered the said Jean Davidson to bring one of her shifts

and three shillings with it, which you sewed up in the tail of the shift, and said that the shift was to be consumed in the fire, as an Offering to the Devil, who was to appear at the time of the burning of the shift, in the shape of either a Bull or a Swine; and at the same time you, the said Jean Maxwell, gave to the said Jean Davidson a powder sewed up in a piece of fine linen and stuck through with nine pins, which you injoined her to wear at her breast till the day of her death, and tell no mortal of it. That on the said twenty-eighth day of December last you, the said Jean Maxwell, told the said Jean Davidson that the Devil had rejected two sixpences of the money formerly sent him in the tail of the shift; that he insisted in lieu of the sixpences to have two shillings with heads on them; and that he was up and stirring, and must be satisfied; and the said Jean Davidson, having furnished the shillings, you, the said Jean Maxwell, after stamping on the ground twice or thrice with your foot, pretended to hand them to Satan as if he had stood behind you. That on the said twenty-ninth day of December last you, the said Jean Maxwell, declared to the said Jean Davidson that the Devil was still up, and that he must have a man's shirt of plain linen, and in it a shoulder of mutton; and the said Jean Davidson, terrified by your threats, gave you a check shirt of the said Francis Scott's, her master, together with a Shoulder of Mutton, also his property, tied up in the shirt; and you the said Jean Maxwell, tied up these articles in your own Budget; and then, telling the said Jean Davidson that all this was insufficient to lay the Devil, you asked her for half-a-crown more; and the said Jean Davidson in confusion and fright gave you a Dollar, which you said would do as well, and that at any rate it must not be taken back being once offered; and then you the said Jean Maxwell, went to the back of the byre at Little Cocklick aforesaid, and returned and told the said Jean Davidson that you had laid the Devil so that he could not come nearer her than the back of the byre, but cautioned her strongly not to travel that way nor farther after it was dark. That on the said first day of January last, you the said Jean Maxwell returned to Little Cocklick aforesaid, and told the said Jean Davidson, that Hugh Rafferton was to be with her on the Thursday ensuing, very lovingly and ready to marry her, or do whatever she should ask of him: and moreover, you the said Jean Maxwell declared that, if the said Jean Davidson used Hugh Rafferton harshly, and refused to marry him, Hugh Rafferton would lose his reason and go stark mad at the end of eight weeks; that in the meantime however you must have another Guinea Note for the Devil, with a faced shilling in it; and the money was furnished by the said Jean Davidson; when you the said Jean Maxwell clipped or pretended to cut the note, in small pieces with scissors, pretending that in this manner it was to be presented to the Devil alongst with the faced shilling. That soon after this, you the said Jean Maxwell, told the said Jean Davidson that the first note was not accepted, and that you must have an Old and very Tattered Note and three Shillings more, which having been furnished by the said Jean Davidson, you the said Jean Maxwell bound up the Note with paper and lint, and having stuck it with nine pins gave it to the said Jean Davidson who threw it into the fire; and you the said Jean Maxwell, after stamping on the ground, handed the three Shillings behind you so that Satan might receive them as you pretended he had received the former presents; that these things being done, you the said Jean Maxwell left the said Jean Davidson at her father's house at Killymingan, in the Parish of Kirkgunzeon, on the said first day of January last, declaring that Hugh Rafferton should wait on her in deep humility on the Thursday ensuing; and that all the money offered to Satan should be returned into the said Jean Davidson's Chest on the subsequent Friday morning by sun-rising; and that all should be, and really was, perfectly right. That on the said eighth day of January last you the said Jean Maxwell again waited on the said Jean Davidson, at the house of the said Francis Scott, in Little Cocklick aforesaid, and told that all was gone wrong, that the Devil had proved too strong for you, the said Jean Maxwell, and had rent a check apron given you by the said Jean Davidson formerly for a burnt offering; and you the said Jean Maxwell pretended to show the distinct marks of Satan's claws, and the mark of his

Thumb on your arm, adding, that he could not be laid without the aid of John M'George, commonly called the 'Devil-Raiser' of Urr; and for that end, you the said Jean Maxwell demanded Two Notes more, and three pieces of flesh meat, one of them to be pork, which you professed to roll up at great peril in the check apron; and you the said Jean Maxwell also insisted to have the said Jean Davidson's duffle cloak, but the said Jean Davidson, having by this time got into the use of her reason, got the better of the terror of the oaths of secresy imposed upon her by the said Jean Maxwell, managed so as to detain you until a Constable was sent for, who took you into Custody and carried you before the Reverend Dr James Muirhead of Logan, one of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright, in whose presence you emitted a Declaration, upon the ninth day of January last, in the year one thousand eight hundred and five, which Declaration is subscribed by your mark, and by the said Dr James Muirhead, because you declared that you could not write; and the said declaration being to be used in evidence against you the said Jean Maxwell, will in due time be lodged with the Steward Clerk, that you may have an opportunity of seeing the same.

"At least times and place aforesaid, witchcraft, sorcery, inchantment, and conjuration, were pretended to be exercised and used, and fortunes were undertaken to be told, all in manner particularly before mentioned; and you the said Jean Maxwell, are Guilty Actor, Art and Part of the said crimes; All which, or part thereof, being found proven by the Verdict of an Assize before the Steward-Depute of the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright, and his Substitutes, in a Court to be holden by them or either of them within the Court-House of Kirkcudbright, upon the twenty-first day of June, in the present year one thousand eight hundred and five; you the said Jean Maxwell, Ought to be imprisoned in the Tolbooth of Kirkcudbright by the space of one whole year without Bail or Mainprize; and once in every quarter of the said year, to stand Openly in the Jugs or Pillory, at the Market Cross of the Burgh of Kirkcudbright, by the space of one hour; and to be farther imprisoned in the said Tolbooth, for your good behaviour, in such sum and for such time as the said court shall judge proper, agreeably to the provisions and enactments of the said Act of Parliament, to deter others from committing the like crimes in time coming."

The Procurator-Fiscal concluded his Proof, and the Steward-Depute remitted the Cause to the Verdict of the Assize.

The persons that passed upon the Assize of the said Jean Maxwell, returned their Verdict to the Court; and the tenor thereof is as follows:—

"At Kirkcudbright, the 21st day of June, 1805, the Assize being enclosed, did make choice of Alexander Melville of Barwhar to be their Chancellor, and William Mure, Factor for the Earl of Selkirk, to be their Clerk; and having considered the Indictment raised at the instance of Robert Gordon, Writer in Kirkcudbright, Procurator-Fiscal of Court for His Majesty's interest, against Jean Maxwell, present Prisoner in the Tolbooth of Kirkcudbright, the Pannel, with the Interlocutor of the Steward-Depute of the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright thereon, and the whole Proof adduced, they Unanimously Find the said Jean Maxwell Guilty of the Crimes charged against her in the said Indictment. In Testimony, whereof, &c.

(Signed) Alexr. Melville, Chancellor.
(") Will. Mure, Clerk."

(Court adjourned for a week.)

"Kirkcudbright, 28th June, 1805.

"The Steward-Depute having considered the Verdict of the Assize, bearing date the twenty-first day of June current, and returned into Court that day against Jean Maxwell, the Pannel,

whereby she is found guilty of pretending to exercise witchcraft, sorcery, inchantment, and conjuration, and of undertaking to tell fortunes, contrary to the Enactments and Provisions of the Act of Parliament passed in the 5th year of the Reign of King George the Second, Chapter fifth, in the manner charged against her in the Indictment, at instance of the Procurator-Fiscal of Court; the Steward Depute, in respect of the said Verdict, Decerns and Adjudges the said Jean Maxwell to be carried back from the Bar to the Tolbooth of Kirkcudbright, and to be Imprisoned therein for the space of One Whole Year, without Bail or Mainprize; and Once in every Quarter of the said year to stand openly upon a Market day in the Jugs or Pillory, at the Market Cross of the Burgh of Kirkcudbright, for the space of One Hour, &c.—(Signed) Alexr. Gordon."

It only remains to be added that this sentence was rigorously carried out.

A small, and now scarce volume, containing a full account of the trial, was published at Kirkcudbright the same year, of which the following is a copy of the title-page:—

REMARKABLE TRIAL
OF
JEAN MAXWELL
THE
Galloway Sorceress:

Which took place at Kirkcudbright
on the twenty-eighth day of June last,
1805:

For Pretending to Exercise
WITCHCRAFT, SORCERY, INCHANTMENT,
CONJURATION, etc.

"And that distilled by Magic slights
Shall raise such artificial sprights,
As by the strength of their illusion
Shall draw him on to his confusion."
—*Macbeth.*

KIRKCUDBRIGHT:
Printed by Alexander Gordon.
1805.

Proceedings in Dumfriesshire.

Concerning Dumfriesshire there falls to be recorded numerous instances of accusation and trial, which includes the ever-to-be-regretted consummation of fanaticism in this district—the burning of nine unhappy women on the Sands of Dumfries in the year 1659.

Burgh of Dumfries.

Extract from the Dumfries Burgh Treasurer's Books, May 27th, 1657.—Detailed items of expenditure incurred at the burning of two women convicted of witchcraft: "For 38 load of peitts to burn the two women, £3 12s (Scots). Mair, given to William Edgar for ane tar barrell, 12s; for ane herring barrell, 14s. Given to John Shotrick, for carrying the twa barrells to the pledge (house), 6s. Mair, given to the four officers that day that the whiches was burnt, at the provest and bayillis command, 24s. Given to Thomas Anderson for the two stoups and the two steaves (to which the women were tied), 30s."

Resolution of Kirk-Session of Dumfries, 1658.—The Kirk-Session of Dumfries, after solemn deliberation on the subject, required the minister to announce from the pulpit that all persons having evidence to give against such as were under suspicion of "the heinous and abominable sin of witchcraft," should be ready to furnish the same to the Session without delay; and at their next meeting the elders wisely qualified the order, by resolving that anyone who charged another with being guilty of "sic devilisch practises," without due reason, should be visited with the severest discipline of the Kirk.

Official Information regarding the burning of the nine women on the Sands of Dumfries, 13th April, 1659.

These women were first strangled and then burned. The following particulars were gleaned from the books of the High Court of Justiciary kept at the Register House, Edinburgh:—

1659.—The Court was opened at Dumfries on the 2nd of April, in the above year, by the "Commissioners in Criminal Cases to the people in Scotland," Judge Mosley and Judge Lawrence; and that ten women, each charged with divers acts of witchcraft, were brought before them for trial. The proceedings appear to have lasted until the 5th. One of the accused, Helen Tait, had a rather narrow escape—the jury finding by a plurality of voices that the "dittay" in her case was "not cleirly proven." Nevertheless, before being dismissed from the bar, she was required to find security to the extent of £50 sterling for her good behaviour, and that she would banish herself from the parish. The nine other unfortunates were all convicted, as is shown by the subjoined minute, giving the finding of the jury and the deliverance of the judge, as pronounced by the official dempster, "F. Goyyen":—

"*Drumfreis, the 5th of Apryle, 1659.*—The Commissioners adjudges Agnes Comenes, Janet M'Gowane, Jean Tomson, Margt. Clerk, Janet M'Kendrig, Agnes Clerk, Janet Corsane, Helen Moorhead, and Janet Callon, as found guilty of the severall articles of witchcraft mentioned in the dittayes, to be tane upon Wednesday come eight days to the ordinar place of execution for the burghe of Drumfreis, and ther, betuing 2 and 4 hours of the afternoon, to be strangled at staikes till they be dead, and therefter ther bodyes to be burned to ashes, and all ther moveable goods to be esheite. Further, it is ordained that Helen Moorhead's moveables be intromitted with by the Shereff of Nithsdaile, to seize upon and herrie the samin for the King's use."

Resolution of the Dumfries Presbytery regarding the attendance of clergymen before the carrying out of the sentence, and at the actual "burning" of the women, on the Sands:—

"5th April, 1659.

"The Presbytery have appoynted Mr Hugh Henrison, Mr Wm. M'Gore, Mr George Campbell, Mr John Brown, Mr Jo. Welsh, Mr George Johnston, Mr Wm. Hay, and Mr Gabriel Semple, to attend the nine witches, and that they tak thair own convenient opportunity to confer with them; also that they be assisting to the brethren of Dumfries and Galloway the day of the Execution."

Dumfries, 14th November, 1664.—An edict from the Town Council: "The Counsall being informed that Janet Burnes, commonly reputed a witche, and quho hath bein banished out of severall burghis, and put out of this burgh in the month of August last, for cheating the people upon pretence of knowledge of all things done by them in tym past, or that may fall out in tym cuming, with certification to be scurgit if ever she was sein within the burgh theireafter; and being well informed that she was sein within the town on Saturday, they have ordaint that intimation be made by touk of drum, that non of the inhabitants resset or give meit or drink unto the said Janet Burnes."

Court of Justiciary, Tolbooth of Dumfries, May 18th, 1671.—Warrant for the execution of two alleged witches: "Magistrates of Drumfreis, Forasmuch as in ane Court of Justiciarie, holden be us within the Tolbuthe of Drumfreis, upon the fyftein day of May instant, Janet Muldritche, and Elspeth Thomsone, now found guiltie be ane assyze of the severall articles of witchcraft specified in the verdict given against them thereanent, were decerned and adjudged be us, The Lords Commissioners of Justiciary, to be tane upon Thursday next, the eighteen day of May instant, betwixt two and four houres in the afternoune, to (the) ordinare place of executione, for the toune of Drumfreis, and there to be worried at ane stake till they be dead; and theirafter their bodies to be burnt to ashes, and all their moveable goods and geir to be escheit. You shall thairfoir cause put the said sentence to due executione, whereanent their presents shall be your warrand. Given at Drumfreis the sixteen day of May, 1671."

Court of Justiciary, Dumfries, 1709.—Last trial for witchcraft in Scotland: The accused was named Elspeth Rule; the indictment against her being that she was by habit and repute a witch, and had used threatening expressions towards persons at enmity with her, who, in consequence of such menace, suffered from the death of friends or the loss of cattle, while one of them became mad.

The jury by a majority of votes found the charges proven; and the judge condemned the prisoner to be burned upon the cheek with a hot iron and banished for life. It is told how, when this brutal act of branding the cheek was being carried out, smoke was seen issuing from the poor woman's mouth.

Dumfries and Major Weir, the notorious Edinburgh warlock—a slight connecting link with Dumfries.

In his more youthful days Major Weir led an active military life, serving as an officer in the Puritan Army during the Civil War (1641). In the Registers of the Estates under March 3rd, 1647, reference is made to a supplication by Major Thomas Weir, asking "that the Parliament wald ordain John Acheson, Keeper of the Magazine, to re-deliver to the supplicant the band given by him to the said John upon the receipt of are thousand weight of poulder, two thousand weight of match, and an thousand weight of ball, sent with the supplicant to Dumfries for furnishing that part of the country."

Presbytery of Dumfries (Southern District), March, 1692.—Marion Dickson in Blackshaw, Isobel Dickson in Locherwood, Agnes Dickson (daughter of Isobel), and Marion Herbertson in Mouswaldbank, had for a long time been "suspected of the abominable and horrid crime of witchcraft," and were believed to have "committed many grievous malefices upon several persons their neighbours and others." It was declared to be damnifying "to all good men and women living in the country thereabouts, who cannot assure themselves of safety of their lives by such frequent malefices as they commit."

Under these circumstances, James Fraid, John Martin, William Nicolson, and Thomas Jaffrey in Blackshaw, John Dickson in Slop of Locherwoods, John Dickson in Locherwoods, and John Dickson in Overton of Locherwoods, took it upon them to apprehend the women, and carried them to be imprisoned at Dumfries by the sheriff, which, however, the sheriff did not consent to till after the six men had granted a bond engaging to prosecute. Fortified with a certificate from the Presbytery of Dumfries, who were "fully convinced of the guilt (of the women), and of the many malefices committed by them," the men applied to the Privy Council for a commission to try the delinquents.

The Lords ordered the women to be transported to Edinburgh for trial.

Kirk-Session of Caerlaverock.—Charge of alleged divination brought at their instance, before the Dumfries Presbytery, 22nd March, 1697: "Compeared John Fergusson in Woodbarns,

who acknowledged his scandalous carriage in charming and turning the key at Bankend conform to the accusation, but says he knew not there was any evil in it. The Presbytery appoint him to stand on the pillar in the church of Caerlaverock, and be sharply rebuked for his scandalous *practice* and recommends him to the magistrates to be secured till he give bail to answer and satisfy conform to this act."

The actual circumstance connected with this charge of alleged divination are briefly as follows:—About the middle of January, 1697, two men returning from Dumfries entered the tavern of William Nairns at Bankend of Caerlaverock. These were John Fergusson of Woodbarns, Cummertrees, and William Richardson, Cummertreestown. On leaving the inn Richardson discovered that a sack of provisions had been taken from the saddle of his horse which had been tied to a ring at the door. Entering the house, he made known his loss, declaiming loudly against the thief. In the utmost sympathy with his friend's loss, Fergusson declared he could soon find out who the thief was, and called out that two Bibles should be brought to him at once, to which the landlord stoutly demurred; but Fergusson threatened that unless he got his own way he "would make bloody work among them," and two Bibles were accordingly brought to the said John Fergusson, "who brought a key out of his pocket and put the one end of it within one Bible and the bowl end out, clasping the Bible upon it, and two holding the bowl of the key upon their fingers. The said John then read three verses of the 50th Psalm out of the second Bible, beginning always at the 18th verse, always naming a person before he began to read, till they came to William M'Kinnell in the same town; and when they named him, and were reading the said Scripture, the key and the Bible turned about and fell on the table. This was done three times, as attested by James Tait, mason, who is quartered in Townhead; James Fergusson, servitor to George Maxwell of Isle; George Fergusson in Bankend; and William Nairns, in whose house it was done."

Extracts from Irongray Kirk-Session Records.

"September 24th, 1691.

"David Muirhead of Drumpark and his wife, being called before the Session and examined anent ane strife betwixt them and Janet Sinklar, submitted themselves to the will of the Session. Janet Sinklar also submitted to the will of the Session for saying that she doubted Drumpark's wife of murder and witchcraft, and is appointed to receive publick rebuke before the congregation."

"August 30, 1691.

"William Anderson in Hall of Forest, being called before the Session for bringing his child to a smith to be charmed with ane forge hammer, confessed his sin and received a rebuke before the Session."

"November 13, 1692.

"John Charters in Barncleugh, being called before the Session as witness nominat by James Wright to prove witchcraft against Janet Kirk, denied that he knew anything of witchcraft in her. Margaret Smyth, wife of John Jonston, being called before the Session, declared in her hearing that Janet Kirk, being brought in to Elizabeth Jonston, being grievously tormented with sickness like to distraction, pronounced these words, that 'if God had taken the health from her let Him given it again, and if the devil had taken it from her to give it her again.' On which she was rebuked."

"April 16th, 1693.

"Jean Stot (Ingleston) confessed before the Session that she blessed God if Jean Grier's prayings had any pith that they lighted on a kow and not on a person, and did say that Jean

Kirkpatrick did gather root grown briers on a Saboth day, and nominat Agnes Patton for a witness."

The Session found "wrath and malice among the inhabitants of Ingleston," and the minister was sent as peacemaker. "Jean Stot obeyed the minister and forgave Jean Grier, and also required forgiveness of her, which she refused till further advisement."

Parish of Irongray.—Traditional account of the sacrifice of a reputed witch by enclosing her in a tar-barrel, setting it alight, and rolling it into the Water of Cluden:—

"In the reign of James VI. of Scotland, or under the early Government of his son Charles, tradition tells of a woman that was burnt as a witch in the Parish of Irongray, about seven miles west from Dumfries. In a little mud-walled cottage, in the lower end of the Bishop's Forest, and nigh the banks of the Water of Cluden, resided a poor widow woman, who earned her bread by spinning with a *pole*, and by weaving stockings from a clue of yarn depending from her bead-strings. She lived alone, and was frequently seen on a summer's eve, sitting upon a jagged rock, which overhung the Routing burn, or gathering sticks, late in a November evening, among the rowan-tree roots, nigh the dells which signalise the sides of that romantic stream. She had also, sometimes, lying in her window a black-letter Bible, whose boards are covered with the skin of a *fumart*, and which had two very grotesque clasps of brass to close it with when she chose. Her lips were sometimes seen to be moving when she went to church, and she was observed to predict shower or sunshine at certain periods, which predictions often came to be realised....

"The Bishop of Galloway was repeatedly urged to punish this witch; and lest it should be reported to the king that he refused to punish witches, he at last caused her to be brought before him, nigh to the spot. She was rudely forced from her dwelling, and several neighbours of middle or of old age were cited to declare all the wicked things she had done.

"She was sentenced to be drowned in the Routing burn, but the crowd insisted that she should be shut up in a tar-barrel and hurled into the Cluden. Almost against the Bishop's consent, this latter death was consummated. The wretched woman was enclosed in a barrel, fire was set to it, and it was rolled, in a blaze, into the waters of Cluden.

"Such, says the tradition of no very doubtful date, was the savage end of one who was reputed a witch. The spot where, 'tis said, the prelate sat, is yet called Bishop's Butt. The well from which she drew the water for her domestic use, and where the young rustic belles washed their faces, still retains the name of the Witch's Well; and a pool in the Cluden, nigh to the well, often bears the name of the Witch's Pool. Even some rocks nigh to the Routing Bridge are still pointed out, where she was wont to sit; and a hollow into which, say some, she used to throw an elfin clue. That wood yet feathering the hill side west from Drumpark, always bears the name of the Bishop's Forest; and the sylvan ravine, furrowed by a brawling brook, has been, by some now in their graves, named the Warlock's Glen."

Parish of Closeburn.—Janet Fraser, called before the Presbytery of Dumfries, 1691. Her remarkable revelations:—

"The person is a young woman, unmarried, of the age of about twenty years, whose name is Jonet Fraser, or, as we in the south used to pronounce it, Frissel, who then lived, and yet lives, with her father, Thomas Frissell, a weaver to his trade, a man of unblamed conversation, in the sheriffdome of Dumfries, in the countrey thereof called Nithisdale, and parochin of Closeburn, six miles, or thereby, from the town of Dumfriece.

"She is, and hath been for a long time, a person in the judgment of all that know her a serious Christian; and was for a good time before this befell her, more then ordinary exercised in private condition with God, as the relation after-specified gives the reader a little touch.

"She can read print, but cannot write herself; but whatever she saw in vision, was at times able to give ane exact account of it, after all was over; and accordingly did give the relation following to some creditable gentlemen, and some country people, her acquaintance:—

"The time of my exercise was eight years, and all this time was troubled with the appearance of a thing like a *bee*, and other times like a black man, and that also at severall times, and in severall places.

"Then at the end of the eight year, I being at prayer, the black man did appear as at other times, he being upon the one side of me, and there appearing upon the other side a bonny hand and a rod in it, and the rod was budding; and I said, 'Is that Thy hand and Thy rod, O Lord?' And I was content to embrace the one, and flee the other. Then, upon that night eight nights, I was coming home near hand unto my dwelling, I grew very drowsie, and fell asleep, and there was a voice said to me, 'Awake, why sleepest thou?' And there was lightning round about me; and I looking up to the top of a bush that was at my hand, there was the shape of a dove that went alongst with me in company to the house.

"Then, about three quarters of a year thereafter, the rod appeared again to be a double rod, or a rod that was springing and forthcoming, and after that time I was never troubled with the black man any more."

Her first revelation was on the 4th of June, 1684, but it is very difficult to make out what her visions portended:—"On the 5th day of November, 1684, I being at prayer, there appeared unto me, in a bodily shape, three persons (as to my sight all in white), and they goe round about me the way the sun goeth; their coming was still after one manner, when I was at my duty, only I discern he that spoke first at one time, spoke first at all times, and so continued to speak by course, with Scripture notes, naming books, chapter, and verse—sometimes all the verse, sometimes a part."

She was greatly concerned about the *suffering remnant*, and had many mysterious responses as to that. This intercourse with spirits continued for some years, and is very circumstantially detailed in the MS., at the conclusion of which is this additional miracle:—

"Besides what the reader has had formerly, he has likewise this following account of a passage that befell this holy woman, the 1st May, 1687, which was Sunday. This Jonet Frazer, and a young lass, a sister daughter of hers, about 17 or 18 years of age, having gone out into the fields, and both of them lying down on the grass near the water of Nith, which is but a bow-draught from her father's house, and both of them reading their Bibles, and lying about the distance of four yards the one from the other, this Jonet Frazer is taken with a great drouth, and goes to the water of Nith to take a drink, leaving her Bible open at the place where she was reading, which was the 34th chap. of Esaiah, from verse 5 to 11, inclusive, which begins—'For my sword shall be bathed in heaven; behold it shall come down on the people of Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment,' etc. And when she had returned immediately as shoon as she could take a drink of water, she sees her Bible is coloured with bloud, as she thought, though afterwards, upon inspection and tryall it was not bloud, but red as bloud, and such as no person by the colour could discern from bloud; upon which she asks the other lass, 'If any thing had been near her Bible?' And she answered, 'Nothing that she saw.' She asks, 'How could it then be that her Bible was covered over with bloud?' Which both of them going near, found to be the very same place where Jonet was reading, viz., from verse 5 to 11, and some farther of the 34th chap., so as the print was not at

all legible. The other lass would have her wipe off the blood, but she could not, but carried it as it was to her father, and a brother of hers, a godly young man, who is dead since, and some others, and did show it to them, who were curious to taste it, and it had a welsh taste, as if it had been some metear; the hens and birds would not pick it up.

"The very next Lord's day, 8th May, this Jonet being in her father's barn about ane hour alone, some little time before sunset, she came to the door of the barn to read, and while she was reading, about the 49th verse of Jeremiah, the like bloud did cover all that place which she was reading, viz., from the 46th verse to the 54th, as I remember, so thick as it marred all the print and made it unintelligible, nor did she ever perceive it fall down upon the book, or observe it till it did cover and spread over all that place; and it is to be remarked, she was standing within the door, the thatch of the barn being over her head and over the book that she was reading on, and that the bloud covered the print in the very time wherein she was reading, it spread over that part of it.

"The very next Sabbath thereafter, 15th of May, while she is again in that same barn, reading the 14th chap. of Revelations, the like bloud fell on the book, and covered all the chapter from the 9th verse to the end of the chapter, in the very act of the reading it, and which, she said, that she perceived it not, but about half ane inches distance from the book before it fell down upon it.

"The relater heirof is Maister Henry Maxwell, of Dalswinton, who dwells within two miles of the place where she dwells; saw the Bible, and the bloud upon all the three places of that Bible, which is still extant.

"It is not bloud, for it is as tough as glew, and will not be scrapped off by a knife as bloud will; but it is so like bloud as none can discern any difference by the colour."

After this course of vision and bloody showers, Mrs Frazer, it would appear, fell under the suspicion of dealing with evil, in the place of good, spirits. For in the year 1691 she was called before the Presbytery and confessed: "That she pretended to prophecying and seeing of visions, and that she had sinned greatly in being deluded by Satin, causing her prophecie and see things future. Her book was appointed to be examined by two of the Presbytery; and on her second appearance she acknowledged that she was possessed by some evil spirit, and humbly besought the prayer of the ministers and of all others; upon which the further examination of herself and the witnesses was delayed. Nothing more is heard of her."

Records of Penpont Presbytery, 1706.

From January to March in the year 1706 the Presbytery of Penpont was occupied with the case of the Rev. Peter Rae, minister of Kirkbride. Mr Rae was slandered by a woman who alleged that he called her a "witch," and when sick said to her, "They say you have my health, so give it again if you have it," and also called her to come near hand him, and when she came he presently bled her on the "forrit" (forehead).

It was proved that Mr Rae did call her a witch, and did in his illness endeavour to draw blood from her brow, for which he was rebuked.

In 1737 Mr Rae was translated from Kirkbride (an extinct parish in Nithsdale now embraced in the parishes of Durisdeer and Sanquhar) and became minister of Kirkconnel. He was also clerk to the Presbytery of Penpont, before whom in earlier years he appeared. He is perhaps better known as the author of *The History of the Late Rebellion*[14] (1715). A man of

[14] Printed in Dumfries by his brother, Robert Rae, 1718.

outstanding ability, his memory is honoured by a mural tablet placed in the south wall of Kirkconnel church.

Glencairn Kirk-Session Records.

"Apryl nynth, 1694."—Case of Margret M'Kinch (not "*M'Onrick*," as given by Monteith,[15] p. 44). In the evidence it is stated that:

"Robert Muir in Dunregon came in to James Rodgerson's hous, drew his knyf and offered to blood her abov ye b——" [paper torn—breath (?)].

"On Apryl nynth, 1694, Margt. M'Kinch gave in an wrytten list of ye names who had sclandered her by calling her an witch, earnestly desiring ye Session to put the same to —— [proof(?)] that she myght be free from ye scandal."

[Gap in the records, 1694-1700.]

10th September, 1704.—"Appoints yt it be publickly intimate upon Sabbath first that no Heritor, tennent, or Householder whatsomever within this paroch resett our harbour Jaunet Harestanes, sometime in Keir paroch, with certification."

24th September, 1704.—"Appointment obeyed in makeing intimation anent Jaunet Harestanes, reputed to be under the *mala-fama* of witchcraft."

14th November, 1707.—Case of Alexander Deuart (not "*Douart*" as given by Monteith, p. 44):—

Alex. Deuart, gardener, at Maxwelton, is charged with having "brought back some stolen goods by charm or enchantment or some other pretended ocult quality in herbs, along with some mutterings and gestures, as makes him so commonly reputed a charmer that he is sought unto by persons from divers corners of the country to the great scandal of religion. The said Alex. being interrogated primo—Did you bring back those things which was stolen from Maxwelton—aiz., six pair sheets, ten ——— [undecipherable], three aprons, at one time; a large silver tumbler at another time; and a book at a third time?

A. Yes; I was the causer, but had no hand in it myself.

Q. Did you not take money for the bringing of them back?

A. I told them I could do such things if it was not injurious to any, and told that he took money for the bringing of them back.

Q. How did you bring them back?

A. I cannot tell that, for I promised not to tell where I received my art.

Q. Did you make use of herbs as it is reported of you in order to the bringing of them back?

A. I did make use of herbs in part, but not for the bringing of them back.

Q. How did you make use of the herbs that you might know where they were?

A. I laid them under my head and dreamed of them.

Q. What are the herbs which had that effect upon your sleep?

A. I will not tell that to any living if they should saw me asunder.

Q. How came the cloaths back?

[15] *The Parish of Glencairn*, Rev. John Monteith.

A. I must cause some brother of trade who dwells near hand them to tell them who have them that they must be brought back and they should not be wronged.

Q. Why did you not tell of the people who took away these cloaths, seeing thieves ought to be discovered for the good of the country?

A. It doth not belong to me to put out any man, otherwise I should be in eternity this day eight days.

Q. Did any person bring the things back, or how came they back?

A. I brought them not back, but the people who took them away brought them back.

Q. But how could the silver tumbler be brought back and put in a fast-locked room?

A. The person who took it flung it in at the window upon one of the shelves.

(*Notandum*—Now it was told him that all the windows were fast-snecked, as the servants who went in to take up the tumbler declared.)

Q. Did you not say when the tumbler was got, 'I must have the hair that was in and about it, for it is the hair of a horse which belonged to a man who is shortly to be hanged for stealing?'

A. Yes.

Q. Did you not say to Sir Walter Laurie, 'lock me ever so close in a room and I will cause all the cloaths that were taken away hang down upon the spouts of the tower upon the morrow morning?'

A. Yes.

Q. Did you not say before me, the Minister, 'lock the cloaths again in as fast a room as you can, and I'll cause them, for a little money, go all back in the place where they were?'

A. Yes.

Q. Why did you not bring back the silver spoon that was lost?

A. It was in Edinburgh, and the name was scraped out, and I could not bring it back until I went to Edinburgh.

Q. Why did you not bring back the mattock and other things?

A. It had been on fire.

Q. Why did you not bring back all the aprons, for there is one of them awanting yet?

A. I could not bring it back because it was burnt, and when a thing is hid beneath the ground or the like I can't get wott of that.

Q. Did you not mutter some words when you used these charms?

A. Yes.

Q. What are they?

A. 'Cloaths, cloaths, cloaths, and other things lost.'

Q. Whether did you use such charms afore Hallow-een as throwing nuts in the fire, sowing seeds up and down the house, and herbs to every corner, going backwards from the fire to the door, round the close backwards, up the stairs backward, and to your bed backward?

A. Yes.

Q. Being told by a Minister that from what he had heard there was either devolrie in it, or he was the thief himself. To which he replied, 'I shall make it out to be no devolrie; or if it be devolrie, it is unknown to me.'

Q. Did you not bring back a book of Mrs Violet's?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you not say you could cause any woman in London come down to you if but told her name?

A. I could do it, and I can.

Q. Did you not say in the presence of Sir Walter Laurie, Bailie Corbet in Dumfries, James Gordoun, Wryter, Yr., and me, that you could cause any of us dance naked?

A. I did, if you would take what I give you; and also added that he could cause any woman follow him if she would take what he would give her.

Q. Alexander, where learned you that art?

A. I learned it from the gardener at Arnistoun, now dead, but was at my brothering.

Q. But are there any alyve that was at your brothering?

A. No.

After all which, the Moderator said unto him: 'Saunders, did you not say to me when I was poseing you privately about these things, and telling you that from all I had heard from you that I was convinced that you were either a thief or a devol?' and you replied, 'Pursue me, sir, before either Session or Presbytery, and I shall show that I am neither.' And now, Saunders, after all these interrogatories are considered, I rather think you did take these things yourself, and therefore you can get no testificat (certificate) until your business be further cognosed upon."

13th July, 21st Sept., and 26th Oct., 1712.—Complaint from Jean Howatson in Nies that Margaret Nivison in Crichen had called her "a witch and a resetter of witches."

Both rebuked for their "scandelous and offensive expressions," and "Injoyned to abstain from any such offensive carriage in time comeing, certifying withall that if they be found quarrolling with one another unjustly this process shall be revived again upon them."

Indirect references affecting Durisdeer and Torthorwald.

Parish of Durisdeer.—In 1591 a member of the family of Douglas of Drumlanrig, "Barbara Naipar, spous to Archibald Douglas," was accused of witchcraft and condemned to be burned on the Castle Hill of Edinburgh. Examination of the indictment shows that the charge was really implication in the crime by countenancing and seeking help from "users and abusers of witchcraft," which, as we have seen, carried with it the extreme penalty.

The following is the extract from Pitcairn's *Criminal Trials*:—

"May 8, 1591.—Barbara Naipar, spous to Archibald Douglas, burges of Edinburgh (brother to the Laird of Carschogill), Dilaitit of sindrie poyntis of witchcraft, contenit in Dittay gewin in against hir be Mr David M'gill of Cranstoun—Rydell, advocat to our soverane lord.

"The Assyse, be the mouth of Robert Cuningham, chancillor, ffand, pronunceit, and declarit the said Barbara Naipar to be fylit, culpabill and convict of the seiking of consultation from Annie Sampsoune, ane wich, for the help of Dame Jeane Lyonne, Lady Angus, to keip hir from vomiting quhen sche was in breeding of barne. Item, for the consulting with the said

Annie Sampsoune, for causing of the said Dame Jeane Lyonne, Lady Angus, to love hir, and to gif hir the geir awin hir agayne, and geiving of ane ring for this purpois to the said Anny, quhill sche had send her ane courchie (kerchief) of linning and swa for contravening of the Act of Parliament, in consulting with hir and seiking of hir help, being ane wich, &c."

"Dome was pronunceit against Barbara Naipar, the sister-in-law of the Laird of Coshogle."[16]

Torthorwald, 1596.—As Saul consulted the Witch of Endor, so in later days was the powers of witchcraft invoked by the most exalted to find out what fate or fortune the future held for them.

Of the wife of Captain James Stewart, Earl of Arran, it is told "that she got a response from the witches that she would be the greatest woman in Scotland, and that her husband should have the highest head in that kingdom. Both which fell out; for she died, being all swelled out in an extraordinary manner; and he, riding to the south, was pursued by the Lord Torthoral (called Douglas[17]), whose whole family the said Captain James intended to have extirpated, and was killed, and his head carried on the point of a spear and placed upon the battlements of Torthorwald Castle."

[16] Coshogle mansion-house or keep, belonging to the Douglases, was situated on the hill overhanging the Enterkine burn, above the farm-house of the same name. A marriage stone, built into a cottage wall, is all that remains of the structure.

[17] Sir James Douglas of Parkhead, styled Lord Torthorwald as having married the heiress of that barony, was afterwards run through the body on the High Street of Edinburgh by a nephew of Captain James Stewart, and died without uttering one word. On clearing away the rubbish, which till lately covered the pavement of the Chapel at Holyrood House, his tombstone was found, with this mutilated inscription:—"Heir lyes ane nobil and potent Lord James Douglas—and Cairlell and Torthorall wha mariet Daime Elizabeth Cairlell, air and heretrix yr. of, wha was slaine in Edinburgh ye 14 day of July, in ye yeir God 1608."—*Law's Memories.*

IV. Fairies And Brownies

"There's als much virtue, sense, and pith,
In Annan or the Water of Nith,
Which quietly slips by Dumfries,
Als any water in all Greece;
For there, and several other places,
About mill-dams, and green brae faces,
Both eldrich elfs and brownies stayed,
And green-gowned fairies daunced and played."
—*Effigies Clericorum.*

NO part of the folk-lore of a district finds more favour than that particular vestige which tells of the doings of "fairies and brownies," the mere expression "fairy" at once calling up and suggesting green-clad dainty figures, dwelling amid picturesque sylvan surroundings; although probably the memory of the "brownie," and the stories of his helpful midnight task, strike the more human note.

It is the "fairy," however, outshining the humbler toiling "brownie," not only in gallant bearing and romantic surroundings, but in the further possession of greater supernatural power, that is the more fascinating survival of superstitious tradition.

Popularly imagined, they were diminutive in form, elegant in appearance, and richly attired. They dwelt in a land of their own, in woodland dells where

"Underneath the sylvan shade
The fairies' spacious bower was made,"

or in beautiful palaces underneath the green conical mounds, so numerous, particularly in Galloway and the south-west of Scotland. Their lives and affairs were ruled by the utmost ceremony and grandeur. A King or Queen presided over their destinies. Their pageants and tournaments were the very reflection of Courtly gallantry. Processions were a frequent form of display; and clothed in exquisite green raiment, and mounted on bravely caparisoned milk-white steeds of the finest mettle, they passed with haughty mien and lordly air, that impressed to the utmost the minds of the mortals who might chance to meet them in all their pomp and bravery. The banquet-board and feast also were daily in evidence, and through their princely halls, to the most exquisite music, the stately dance went round.

The attitude of the fairies towards mankind was, generally speaking, kindly and helpful, so much so that by the country people they were often termed the "good neighbours" and the "wee fouk"; but underneath all their display of nobility, an elfin craftiness and capriciousness of disposition existed, malignant to a degree. They did not, for example, ride unarmed, but had bows and arrows of peculiar power and potency slung at their sides ready to assail the too curious human being or menacing beast. The bows themselves were fashioned from the ribs of men buried "where three Lairds' lands meet," and the arrows, which hung in quivers made from adders' sloughs, were "tipped with deadly plagues." When mortals offended, it was on their cattle the fairies usually wreaked their vengeance by shooting them with their magic bows and arrows. Such elf-shot cattle exhibited all the symptoms of malignant cramp. Animals quite as innocent, but who, blunderingly unconscious, threatened to trample their diminutive bodies under foot as they passed along, were as summarily treated—at least that was a common explanation to account for puzzling forms of cattle-ill; for the wound of the

true elf arrow was so small that evidence of penetration was almost impossible of vision, unless by the eye of those favoured and deeply skilled in fairy-craft practice. A less vague and more material description of the fairy arrows was, that "these fatal shafts were formed of the bog reed, pointed with white field flint, and dipped in the dew of hemlock." To this day the triangular flints of the Stone Age are associated with the fairy superstition, being popularly known as "elf bolts," and the occasional turning up of these flints on cultivated land, finds a superstitious explanation in the belief that a shower of these arrows discharged into a field was quite sufficient to blast and wither the expected crop.

The special characteristic of the evil element in the disposition of the fairies was however, a persistent practice of kidnapping unchristened infants, substituting for them baby imps of their own, which in old-world phraseology were known as "changelings." Such changelings could only be detected and expelled by certain charms and mystic practice, which also permitted the real babe to be restored. The explanation of such kidnapping was that every seventh year "Kain," in the form of a living sacrifice from the ranks of the fairies, was demanded by Satan, their master, as the price of the supernatural privileges they enjoyed, but as a mortal infant was as readily accepted, the fairies naturally acted in accordance, much preferring to lay a human babe at the feet of the Evil One.

Very naturally the thought of such disastrous possibilities to the domestic life and joy of the people created means and measures to render this particular design of the fairies impotent and inefficient. The cutting of a cross on the head of the cradle, or even over the doorway of the cottage itself, was supposed to "kep skaith" by means of its sacred significance; and immediately before the birth of a child it was a common practice to surround the expectant mother with everything about the household made of steel, such as scissors, wool-clippers, knives, needles, and so forth, which it was firmly believed kept the evil disposition of the fairy spirits at bay, and prevented any unhallowed tampering with the child. It was also customary for the friends of the house when the child was born, to form a guarding circle round it during the darkness of the night, while one of their number was specially employed in waving about the open leaves of a Bible. The risk of abduction immediately ceased after the child was christened. It may here be mentioned that at all times the sound of a church bell immediately broke the fairy power and spell.

The abduction of human beings was not altogether confined to babes, and it will be remembered that James Hogg's fine ballad of "Kilmeny" is founded on a young maiden being carried off to Fairyland, who in the course of time is allowed to return to the world again when, as so beautifully expressed in the ballad,

"Late, late in the gloamin'
Kilmeny cam' hame."

Young married women were more especially liable to be carried off, for the utilitarian purpose of nursing the fairy children, and young men were also occasionally supposed to be stolen away.

It may be noted that it was not considered good for mortals to meet with fairies face to face, however much by accident. Death might even follow such a meeting, although apparently quite natural in form.

Touching upon the very core of unreality of fairy semblance it would seem to have been a general belief, that seen through eyes of those gifted with supernatural power such as in olden days the "seers" were believed to possess, the whole fairy fabric crumbled to its true appearance. Golden treasure became ordinary stone, fairy palace changed to gloomy cavern, and the beautiful beings themselves became ugly and repulsive goblins.

Before passing to gather up the remnants of this fairy-lore in Galloway and Dumfriesshire, it may be of interest to refer to the theory which has been advanced to account for the firm belief by our forefathers in the existence of "fairies and brownies," which briefly is, that fairies and brownies were none other than straggling and isolated survivors of the race of the ancient Pictish Kingdom of Scotland, for like the fairy and brownie of popular imagination, the Picts dwelt in underground abodes, being what is termed "mound-dwellers." They were a small people, untiring in their labours, and possessing great strength, or as it has been aptly expressed, "they were 'unca wee' bodies, but terribly strong." As well as being small in stature, they were hairy in body and fleet of foot. They were clever builders, as their underground dwellings excavated at the hands of antiquarians throughout Scotland yet affirm. Indeed there is a tradition that the 12th century Cathedral of Glasgow was largely built by industrious and skilful Picts, brought from Galloway for that purpose.

A strong point in the theory certainly is, that the localities known as the prehistoric abiding places of the Picts are almost invariably associated with fairy-lore and tradition, which has floated down to us on the misty tides of time. At all events it may be in part at least accepted, in so far as it is founded on a basis of fact, and if it does not quite explain the splendour and high-born attributes of Fairyland, it at least goes far to account for the unvarying popular description of "Brownie"—his untiring energy, his shy disposition, and his not very attractive appearance, all of which William Nicholson has painted with strokes of genius in his matchless poem, "The Brownie of Blednoch."[18]

Fairies in Galloway.

The great distinctive headland of the Mull of Galloway is traditionally described as the scene of the last stand made by the Picts, as they were driven backwards and seawards to destruction by the overwhelming force of the Scots.

"There rose a King in Scotland,
A fell man to his foes,
He smote the Picts in battle,
He hunted them like roes,
Over miles of red mountain
He hunted as they fled
And strewed the dwarfish bodies
Of the dying and the dead."

Not far from this classic spot, a favourite haunt of the fairies is located. South of Portankill there is a small fortification called the Dunnan. On this spot there came once upon a time to a man sitting there, on a fine summer evening, an old-fashioned looking, diminutive woman dressed in green, carrying a tiny ailing child on her back, and holding a little wooden water stoup in her hand. She earnestly asked this man to go to the far-famed and quite near "Well of the Co'" and bring her some of the healing water for the decrepit little morsel she carried, as she was tired and done. Churlishly enough the man refused, and roughly told her she could go her own errands. The little woman bore his abuse patiently enough, then, naming him, solemnly warned him "never again to sit down on her hoose-riggin' or he might look to it"—and then somehow she seemed to disappear. The man began to regret his ungracious conduct, all the more that it was generally believed that beneath the "Dunnan" lived the fairies, and if that was so, then at that very moment he was actually on their "hoose-riggin'." Much disturbed in mind, he made for home; but tradition affirms that from that day forward

[18] Another theory associates the fairies with the dwarfish Lapps or Finns who, driven out of their own country, settled in the outlying districts of Scotland.

everything went wrong—cattle died and crops failed, and eventually, going one night to the Dunnan to watch a vessel that was likely to come ashore and so help his own evil plight, he was stricken with illness at the hands of the fairies—so the country-side said—and died.

There is yet another rather dramatic relic of fairy-lore concerning Kirkmaiden, which tells of an attempt by the fairies to seize upon the newly-born child of a herd and his wife, who were in the service of Sir Godfrey M'Culloch, and who lived in a little cottage at Auchneight, which was frustrated by a timely call for Divine aid. On the afternoon of the day of his son's birth the herd received an urgent message to proceed at once to his master's castle of Cardoness, in the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright. There were many little domestic matters to attend to before the poor man could leave his wife and child to set out on his long journey, and the night was already well advanced before he left his home. It was not without anxiety and misgiving he took his way north along the western shore of Luce Bay, "down the path towards the Loup and the Co' of the Grennan," a place with a very uncanny reputation, for it was the night of the last day of October—of all times of the year the most dreaded by mortals—the night

"When Fairies ... dance,
Or ower the lays, with splendid blaze,
On sprightly coursers prance."

It was very dark, and his progress was slow. When he reached the "Loup" he was rather startled to see a faint glimmering light seawards. To his consternation this came steadily towards him, and gradually took the form of a coach lighted with blue lamps, drawn by six horses, and coming smartly on. It passed, and he could see it was crowded with elfish figures and surrounded by a galloping body-guard. His terror was not abated when he was made aware that a little blue torch, a sure forerunner of death, was burning on the side of the track they had passed along. Meanwhile his young wife and child were all alone in the cottage. About midnight the mother, to whom the night seemed unending, was startled by hearing the trample of horses, the jingle of bridles, the lumber of wheels, and a buzzing sound of voices. Clasping the child close in her arms, terror-stricken she waited. The door of the cottage flew open. The whole kitchen was lit up with a strange unnatural light, and she saw her bed surrounded by a throng of little excited green-clad people, who kept up a constant chattering. Then one more richly clad and taller than the others imperiously waved his hand for silence, and addressing the almost crazed woman, said—

"This is Hallow-eve. We have come for your child, and him we must have."

"Oh, God forbid!" shrieked the poor woman in her agony, and almost instantly there was darkness and silence as of the grave.

When the poor woman came to her senses, for she had fainted, she made bold to leave her bed, and lighting her cruisie lamp, she was overjoyed to find that her child was sleeping sweetly and soundly. Everything in the cottage was evidently undisturbed.

As some slight corroboration of this legend, it is told how the tenant of Barncorkerie, going to his door about midnight that same Hallow-eve, was startled to see a group of tiny horsemen riding in hot haste through the meadows a bowshot from his door.

The story of the Barncorkerie Fairy, in this same immediate neighbourhood, illustrates how the good offices of the fairy aided an old helpless woman in her day of necessity at the expense of an undutiful son.

On the road shorewards to Portencockerie Bay (Kirkmaiden) there is a bypath by way of what is known as the Bishop's Castle. One day there came by this road an old woman, weary

of foot and sad of heart. Sitting down she wept quietly to herself, bemoaning her poverty and the unkindness of her son, and more particularly of his new-made wife, who scorned her and refused to give her even the bare necessities of life. With her eyes fixed on the ground, she almost unconsciously let her attention turn to a round whorl-like stone, with a hole through it, lying at her feet. Not attaching much importance to it she, almost absent-mindedly, picked it up, and as she did so she thought she heard some one whispering to her, but turning round and seeing no one she became a little frightened, and putting the curious little stone in her pocket, she rose to make her way home, which, by the way, bore the curious name of "Keekafar."

That same night, at the gloaming, as she was lighting her cruisie lamp, the cottage door seemed to open of its own accord, and, looking down, she saw a diminutive little woman clad in green, who, with a pleasant smile, asked how she prospered?

The old woman was a proud old woman, so she answered that she was getting along very comfortably.

But the little old woman laughed a kindly laugh and said, "Not much comfort an' a toom meal-barrel in the hoose."

The Fairy, for it was a fairy, chatted away to her for a little, and gradually won from her the whole story of her troubles; then, as she rose to go, she said, "If ye've still got that queer little stone ye fand to-day wi' the hole in it, just tie a little bit grey wurset thread through it, and lay it on the meal-ark. It'll maybes be a help."

Next night, about the same time (as it afterwards appeared), the old woman's son Godfrey, who lived with his wife on his own little croft at Portencockerie, was startled to find when he came home a little tiny woman perched on a high stool at his fireside.

"What want ye here?" he cried; and his wife, joining him, began to scold also. "Tak' yer gait, we want nae beggars here," she shouted.

The Fairy looked at them steadily with her little grey piercing eyes, then stepping from the stool on to the long wooden kitchen settle she turned to the frightened man and woman, and in a tiny penetrating voice that made them even more frightened, said—"The poor folk! much they get at your hands! But thy old mother shall never want; she shall live at your cost. Her meal-ark will be always full, and yours shall supply it!"

And so it came about. Godfrey and his wife, under the influence of fear, tried hard to make amends, but the old woman received their advances with the utmost indifference.

The Compass Stone, on the hill above Port Logan towards the south, was also a favourite place for the fairies holding their gatherings, and there is a small field at Logan known as the Fairy Park. It is said that a large company of fairies were observed by two individuals, who at the time were not near each other, crossing the fields near Kenmure, in the parish of Stoneykirk. One of the individuals said they seemed to be all talking together, and there was a continual buzz of conversation as of a large assemblage of people gathered together.

A hill between Ringuinea and the Float is associated with the fairies. Two young women went from Ringuinea one summer morning to bring the cows home to be milked, when they met what seemed to be a very beautiful child, whom they unsuccessfully made every endeavour to catch hold of. Skilfully, however, and with evident little exertion, the little figure eluded their grasp, with the result that their futile chase led to their being hopelessly behind time for the milking.

Another story tells that the farmer of Ringuinea was going down the Black Brae, when he met a very small person handsomely dressed in green. Thinking it was a strange child, he enquired where he was going so early in the morning. The supposed child answered that there was an ox down below that had annoyed him and his people for a long time by always standing on the top of their dwelling-place, but that he would trouble them no more. The farmer proceeded down the brae, and found one of his best bullocks lying dead. He went for assistance, and proceeding to skin the bullock, and knowing what to look for, they found an elf-shot right through the heart.

Kirkmaiden seems to have been a much-favoured district of the "wee fouk." The Nick of the Balloch, on the road from Barncorkerie to Castle Clanyard, Curghie Glen, and the Grennan were notoriously fairy-occupied; and between Kirkbride and Killumpha their imaginary tracks left on the stones and rocks used to be pointed out and traced. There is a curious lingering tradition in the Rhinns that the fairies of Kirkmaiden always wore red caps instead of green.

Before passing from this district of the Rhinns, reference may be made to what was firmly believed to be the kidnapping by fairies of a little boy of two years of age. The child wandered out unperceived by its mother. On being missed, an anxious search was made during the whole day by almost every person in the neighbourhood, but no trace of the child could be found. Late in the evening, however, from the top of the heugh, beside Slock-an-a-gowre, he was discovered, by the merest accident, asleep on a green plot on the cliff far below, fully two miles from his home. How he got there to this day is a mystery. To assume that any person carried or left him there seems highly improbable, and to suppose the child to have of itself crossed dykes, drains, glens, and cornfields seems even more improbable. It was therefore attributed to the fairies, all the more that the little boy lisped that he had followed other little boys wearing green clothes.[19]

Away midst the solitary grandeur of the high lands of Galloway, where the Merrick lordly towers, and where the bleat of the sheep and the cry of the whaup, the tumble and plash of burn and stream, are the only sounds that greet the shepherd's ear as he pursues his long and lonely beat, a beautiful fairy legend lingers, though human and homely enough in its trend:—

"A shepherd's family had just taken possession of a newly-erected onstead, in a very secluded spot among 'the hills o' Gallowa',' when the goodwife was, one day, surprised by the entrance of a little woman, who hurriedly asked for the loan of a 'pickle saut.' This, of course, was readily granted; but the goodwife was so flurried by the appearance of 'a neibor' in such a lonely place, and at such a very great distance from all known habitations, that she did not observe when the little woman withdrew or which way she went. Next day, however, the same little woman re-entered the cottage, and duly paid the borrowed 'saut.' This time the goodwife was more alert, and as she turned to replace 'the saut in the sautkit' she observed 'wi' the tail o' her e'e' that the little woman moved off towards the door, and then made a sudden 'bolt out.' Following quickly, the goodwife saw her unceremonious visitor run down a small declivity towards a tree which stood at 'the house en'.' She passed behind the tree, but did not emerge on the other side, and the goodwife, seeing no place of concealment, assumed she was a fairy.

[19] The mother of William Nicholson the poet, a native of Borgue, where her family had long been settled, and a woman of great intelligence, often told that in her day there lived a man belonging to Borgue parish whose mother and grandmother had been examined before the Kirk-Session regarding his having been carried away by the fairies.

In a few days her little ‘neibor’ again returned, and continued from time to time to make similar visits—borrowing and lending small articles, evidently with a view to produce an intimacy; and it was uniformly remarked that, on retiring, she proceeded straight to the tree, and then suddenly ‘gaed out o’ sight.’

One day, while the goodwife was at the door, emptying some dirty water into the jaw-hole (sink or cesspool), her now familiar acquaintance came to her and said:

‘Goodwife, ye’re really a very obliging bodie! Wad ye be sae good as turn the lade o’ your jaw-hole anither way, as a’ your foul water rins directly in at my door? It stands in the howe there, on the aff-side o’ that tree, at the corner o’ your house en’.’

The mystery was now fully cleared up—the little woman was indeed a fairy; and the door of her invisible habitation being situated ‘on the aff-side o’ the tree at the house en’,’ it could easily be conceived how she must there necessarily ‘gae out o’ sight’ as she entered her sight-eluding portal.”

Probably the most characteristic fairy story extant in the whole south-western district of Scotland is that which centres round the green mound on which the ruined Castle of Myrton, a stronghold of the M‘Cullochs in bygone days, stands. Within the policies of Monreith House, in the parish of Mochrum, on the beautifully-wooded shore of the White Loch of Myrton, this mound of Myrton is peculiarly interesting in the links its story joins of prehistoric days, fairy tradition, and seventeenth century family history.

The following account is drawn from *The Hereditary Sheriffs of Galloway*:—

“Sir Godfrey M‘Culloch, having squandered his patrimony and sold his estates in Mochrum to the Maxwells of Monreith, took up house at Cardoness. Here a neighbour, William Gordon, having poinded some cattle straying on his lands, Sir Godfrey joined a party illegally convened to release them. A fray was the result, in which M‘Culloch, in the words of his indictment, ‘did shot at the said Gordon with a gun charged, and by the shot broke his thigh-bone and leg, so that he immediately fell to the ground, and within a few hours thereafter died of the same shot wound.’ Sir Godfrey fled the country, and some years after ventured on a Sunday to attend a Church in Edinburgh. A Galloway man was among the congregation, who, recognising him, jumped up and cried: ‘Pit to the door; there’s a murderer in the kirk!’ This was done, M‘Culloch arrested, tried, condemned, and his head ‘stricken fra his body’ the 5th of March, 1697.”

So say the *Criminal Records*. There is a very different local version of the story:—

Long before the fatal encounter, and before he had entered on the evil courses which led to his ruin, Sir Godfrey, young and curly, sat at a window in the Tower of Myrtoun watching the operations of a gang of workmen forming a new sewer from his house to the White Loch below it. Suddenly he was startled by the apparition close beside him of a very little old man whose hair and beard were snowy white, whose strangely-cut costume was green, and who seemed in a state of furious wrath. Sir Godfrey received him, notwithstanding, with the greatest urbanity, and begged to be told in what way he could serve him.

The answer was a startling one: “M‘Culloch,” said the visitor, “I am the King of the Brownies![20] My palace has been for ages in the mound on which your Tower stands, and you are driving your common sewer right through my chalmer of dais.”

[20] “Brownie” here synonymus with “Fairy.”

Sir Godfrey, confounded, threw up the window and ordered the workmen to stop at once, professing his perfect readiness to make the drain in any such direction as might least incommode his Majesty, if he would graciously indicate the same. His courtesy was accepted, and Sir Godfrey received a promise in return from the now mollified potentate that he, the said King, would stand by and help him in the time of his greatest need.

It was long after this that the Knight of Myrtoun disposed of his enemy in the summary way we have already mentioned, and for which he was condemned to die. The procession had started for the place of execution; a crowd was collected to see the awful sight, when the spectators were surprised by seeing a very little man with white hair and beard, dressed, too, in an antique suit of green, and mounted on a white horse. He issued from the castle rock, crossed the loch without a moment's hesitation, and rode straight up to the cart on which Sir Godfrey, accompanied by the executioner and a minister, was standing. They plainly saw Sir Godfrey get on the horse behind the little man, who was no other than the King of the Brownies (and thus fulfilled his promise by arriving in his hour of need): the two recrossed the loch, and, mounting the castle rock, they disappeared. When the astonished crowd again turned their eyes to the cart a figure was still there, and wondrous like Sir Godfrey; it was, therefore, generally believed that he had met a felon's doom, and most people thought no more about it. A few only knew better, but these cared little to speak about the matter. At rare intervals, however, one of the initiated would impart the story to a friend, and tell how a head had rolled upon the ground, leaving a bleeding trunk upon the scaffold; then adding in a confidential whisper, "It was no' him ava; it was just a kin' o' glamour."

The presence of fairies was not unknown in the Whithorn district, and a realistic account of the last appearance of the fairies there has been preserved in *Droll Recollections of Whithorn*, by James F. Cannon:—

"A farmer's wife on the Glasserton estate was engaged in washing at a stream near her house, when a trig little creature of her own sex, and perfectly human in shape and general semblance, suddenly arrested her attention. The mistress stared with amazement at the mite of a body that stood by her side, and the astonishment of the former was not lessened when, with an appealing look on her tiny features, the elf solicited the favour of 'a wee sowp o' milk for an unweel wean.' They then entered freely into conversation, and walked together to the byre, where the Fairy was duly supplied with what she had asked for. She was very profuse with her thanks, and foretold that her donor would never be without a pinch of snuff (of all things) while she should require it. It was not a very hazardous prediction, nor did it give promise of great remuneration for the obligation conferred; but there was a note of gratitude in it which was thoroughly appreciated by her to whom it was spoken. I believe, however, there was an additional hint dropped that the milk pails of the elf's patroness would always be well filled, and her husband's field crops abundant."

A poetical version of the above tradition has been elaborated by Mr Cannon, and appears in the *Bards of Galloway*, under the title of "The Langhill Fairy."[21]

"Riddling in the reek" was the common country-side expression for a rough-and-ready method of treating a fairy changeling so that it might be restored to its proper human constitution. A realistic account of such an ordeal is preserved in *Galloway Gossip* (Wigtownshire). It sets forth how a child, whose parents lived in Sorbie village, behaved in such a fretful, passionate, and vixenish way that the parents were at last forced to the unwelcome conclusion that it was not their child at all, but a changeling. Much distressed

[21] Langhill (now Longhill), adjacent to the Rispain Roman Camp, about a mile from Whithorn on the Glasserton Road.

they sought the advice of a wise woman living at Kirkinner, who plainly enough substantiated the suspicion. Beseeching her help, the sybil pointed out the great risk they all ran with interference with things uncanny, but on their consenting to place themselves entirely in her hands and implicitly obey her in every detail, she promised to make the attempt to restore their child on the following Aul' Hallowe'en Nicht.

"When Aul' Hallowe'en came, everything was ready and set in order, and just a few minutes before nine, in came Lucky M'Robert, and without saying a word steekit the door ahint her.

She then set two stools beside the fire, which, as usual at that time and for long after, was made on a slightly raised place in the middle of the floor, paved with water-stones. She motioned Peggy and Jamie to sit down on them, and lighting the candle, with the ether-stane on it, put it on the kerl, or long candlestick, and set it between them, and then took the rowan-wood and biggit it on the fire.

The wean looked terrified, and ran under the bed, but she pulled it out and tied his legs and arms together with some red clouts she had in her pouch, and threw't into the riddle, and lifting it up went towards the fire, the wean twining and kicking and swearing most viciously.

Mally had previously breeked her petticoats, and as soon as a thick reek rose from the burning rowan-tree, she held the wean amang the thickest o't, and riddled it in the riddle till ye wud hae thocht it wud hae been chokit.

The wean cursed and yelled, and spat at her, and called her a' that was bad, but she took nae notice; then it begged and fleech't with the father and mother to save't, for it was chokin', and went on pitiful, and then it begood and cursed them, and abused them terribly.

Then there came knockings to the door, and cries and noisings all over the house; but she riddled away, and nobody ever heeded them, till at last the wean gave a great scraich, and rase out of the riddle, and gaed whirling up amang the reek like a corkscrew, and out at the lumhead, out of sight.

Everything was then quiet for a minute or two, and at last a gentle knocking came to the door, and Mally asked who was there, and a voice cried—

'Let me in, I'm wee Tammie M'K——.'"

The district of Dalry seems to have been particularly favoured by the beings of supernatural power. Witchcraft abounded, and now we shall see that Fairyland was represented.

The place, above all, of fairy association was the Holm Glen, with which is associated a legend of the abduction of a youth, and an abortive attempt to win freedom after serving seven years. Round this vestige of fairy-lore Dr Robert Trotter has woven a well-told mantle of narrative, from which an extract is well worth quoting:—

"I rose early upon the morning of Hallowe'en, and having dressed myself, I went out to the harvest field, just as the minute hand of my watch pointed to half-past five. I began busily to arrange and set up the stooks, which a storm of wind and rain the preceding evening had blown down. I had not been long occupied in this manner when I heard the tramping of horses' feet, the giggling and laughing of the riders, and the jingling of their bridle bits. I instantly turned round to see what this troop of early travellers could be; but my eye rested not then on the broad holm of Dalarran and the grey turrets of Kenmure Castle, of which there was a goodly prospect from the place where I stood—but it fell upon the tall form of a young man standing close by my side, dressed in a riding-cloak of the lightest Lincoln green ever worn by a Nottingham Archer. By his side hung a hunting-horn of the purest silver,

whilst his spurs and the diamond chased scabbard of his sword glanced clear and bright in the rays of the rising sun.

'I wish thee good speed, John Gordon,' said he in a well-known voice. 'I am thy old friend William Hoatson, who, thou mayest remember, was found drowned about seven years since in the Water of Taarfe, near Red Lyon. But I am not dead, as is generally believed, but was carried away by the fairies of Holm Glen, and a body resembling mine placed in the river ford. And I have been permitted to appear unto thee at this time, knowing that thou art a fearless man, and one that seeketh after the Kingdom of Heaven; and I request thee, in the name of Heaven, that this night thou wilt win me back to my family and to the world!'

I expressed the happiness which I felt in meeting so unexpectedly with one whom I had so long considered to be dead. I shook him heartily by the hand, and offered him my friendship and assistance.

'Oh, John!' said he, 'this night will I be offered up a sacrifice in hell, and thou alone can save me from destruction.'

He spoke this so mournfully that the tears trickled down my cheek, and I sobbed aloud.

'Wilt thou promise,' continued he, 'to come this night at twelve o'clock, unarmed and alone, and stand by this ancient thorn-bush, where thou wilt see forty-one horsemen riding past, everyone dressed as I am at present? Pull me down from the chestnut-brown steed upon which I ride, for I will be the last man of that gay troop. They will turn me into a variety of frightful shapes in thy arms, and lastly into the appearance of a red-hot coulter; but thou must hold me fast in the name of Heaven, for if thou let me slip from thy hands they will take thee soul and body, and I also will be lost for ever!'"

The conclusion of the story is not very happy, for John's courage entirely failed him. Through fear he refused his aid, but ever afterwards was haunted and crossed by the evil influence of the night-riding of the fairies of Holm Glen.

Other places in Kirkcudbrightshire which have the lingering touch of fairy romance hovering around them are Hazelfield, Auchencairn, the Nick of Lochenkit, "where the fairies have been seen dancing in thousands by the pale light o' the new moon on her third nicht," and on the "rugged height of Bengairn."

The last Galloway fairy reminiscence we shall quote before passing into Dumfriesshire illustrates the malignant side of their nature, and tells of the drowning of the Morrisons in Edingham Loch, near the present town of Dalbeattie:—

"A' the hale o' braid Gallowa' has heard the story of the drownin' o' hale ane-an'-twenty o' the Morrisons o' Orr, in the Loch of Edingham, nae farder gane than Yule was a seven year. Ye mind that year the frost held on frae Hallowe'en till Februar, and at Yule the ice was mair than thretty inches in thickness, and wad hae carried a' the fouk in sax parishes roun' wi' perfect safety. On that day mony a weel-fared, sturdy chiel had been busy plying the channelstane, wi' a' their skill an' might, frae early morn, and it was not till the last blinks of the sun had lang disappeared off Brownie Fells that the contest was putten aff till the following day, and ilka ane turned his face homewards. But they hadna ha'en their feet three minutes on the side when the moon glowered o'er the tappin o' Lotus, and showed the ice they had so lately left, clad wi' unco players frae side to side; and muckle mirth, din, and deray was there, bumpers o' the red wine were flowin' roun', and there tripped maidens, jimp and tall as yon rowan-trees by the burnie side and fairer than the snow on Logan braes. Swiftly the weary players returned to the margin of the loch, but nane durst venture on the ice for a considerable time. But there were three neibor lairds, in the three Mailins of Culloch,

Cocklick, and Drumlane. A' the three were surnamed Morrison, and ilka ane had seven strapping sons, wha never feared skaith frae man nor deil, and sae they a' quickly joined the thrang. Bit strange to tell, the very moment the last o' the ane-an'-twenty was aboon deep water, the ice rent from en' to en' wi' a crack a thousan' times louder than thunner, and dancers, players, and Morrisons a' disappeared in the twinkling of an eye, and the ice again resumed its former solidity, without crack or flaw. And mony a time sinsyne has the midnight wanderer observed the loch covered o'er with light-footed dancers, blithely footing it on the limpid wave, and among them the three-times-seven youths, gaily clad in elfin weeds of sylvan green, and mounted on gallant steeds of the milk-white foam. Their spears are of the green bulrashes with targets of the braidest flutterbaus; they ha'e braid swords o' the segg, and cockades of the water-lily; but they ay tak' the gate lang or the first peep o' day, and the place they left retains no the sma'est prent o' their airie feet, nor nane can tell the gate they fled."

On the sharp descent of the Dalbeattie Road towards Dumfries there yet lingers the tradition of fairy song and music being heard 'mid the leafy surroundings of the Long Wood.

Fairies in Dumfriesshire.

To Allan Cunningham we are indebted for several examples of fairy-lore gathered together in his own particular district of Nithsdale.

The three following illustrate the expression of gratitude on the part of the fairies when a good turn was served, or a request complied with:—

"Two lads were opening with the plow a fairy-haunted field, and one of them had described a circle around a fairy-thorn, which was not to be plowed. They were surprised when, on ending the furrow, a green table was placed there, heaped with the choicest cheese, bread, and wine. He who marked out the thorn sat down without hesitation, eating and drinking heartily, saying, 'Fair fa' the hands whilk gie.' His fellow-servant lashed his steeds, refusing to partake. The courteous plowman 'thrave,' said my informer, 'like a breckan, and was a proverb for wisdom and an oracle of local rural knowledge ever after!'

A woman of Auchencreath, in Nithsdale, was one day sifting meal warm from the mill; a little, cleanly arrayed, beautiful woman came to her, holding out a basin of antique workmanship, requesting her courteously to fill it with her new meal. Her demand was cheerfully complied with. In a week the comely little dame returned with the borrowed meal. She breathed over it, setting it down basin and all, saying aloud, 'Be never toom.' The guidwife lived to a goodly age, without ever seeing the bottom of her blessed basin.

A woman, who lived in the ancient Burgh of Lochmaben, was returning late one evening to her home from a gossiping. A little, lovely boy, dressed in green, came to her, saying, 'Coupe yere dish-water farther frae yere doorstep; it pits out our fire!' This request was complied with, and plenty abode in the good woman's house all her days."

The advent of summer was an occasion of special rejoicing on the part of the fairies, and was celebrated by a triumphal march or ride known as the "Fairy Rade," which was accompanied by much, and brave, display.

The ceremony usually took place on the eve of Roodmas (May 3rd), and the following account is supposed to have been narrated by an old Nithsdale woman to Allan Cunningham:—

“I’ the nicht afore Roodsmass,[22] I had trysted wi’ a neebor lass, a Scots mile frae hame, to tak anent buying braws i’ the Fair. We hadnae sutten lang aneath the haw-buss till we heard the loud laugh o’ fowk riding, wi’ the jingling o’ bridles an’ the clanking o’ hoofs. We banged up, thinking they wad ryde owre us—we kent nae but it was drunken fowk riding to the Fair i’ the fore-nicht. We glowr’d roun’ and roun’, an’ sune saw it was the Fairie Fowks’ Rade. We cowered down till they passed by. A leam o’ light was dancing owre them, mair bonnie than moon-shine; they were a’ wee, wee fowk, wi’ green scarfs on, but ane that rade foremost, and that ane was a guid deal langer than the lave, wi’ bonnie lang hair bun’ about wi’ a strap, whilk glented lyke stars. They rade on braw wee whyte naigs, wi’ unco lang swoaping tails an’ manes hung wi’ whustles that the win’ played on. This, an’ their tongues whan they sang, was like the soun’ of a far-awa’ Psalm. Marion and me was in a brade lea fiel’ whare they cam’ by us; a high hedge o’ haw-trees keepit them frae gaun through Johnnie Corrie’s corn, but they lap a’ owre’t like sparrows an’ gallop’d into a green knowe beyont it. We gaed i’ the morning to look at the tredded corn, but the fient a hoof-mark was there, nor a blade broken.”

The accompanying almost idealistic fairy-tale accentuates the idea of the instinct of natural affection with which the fairies were always credited, and their preference for a human mother to nurse their offspring:—

“A fine young woman of Nithsdale was sitting singing and rocking her child, when a pretty lady came into her cottage, covered with a fairy mantle. She carried a beautiful child in her arms, swaddled in green silk.

‘Nurse my child,’ said the Fairy.

The young woman, conscious to whom the child belonged, took it kindly in her arms and laid it to her breast.

The lady instantly disappeared, saying, ‘Nurse kin’, an’ ne’er want!’

The young mother nurtured the two babes, and was astonished whenever she awoke at finding the richest suits of apparel for both children, with meat of most delicious flavour. This food tasted, says tradition, like loaf mixed with wine and honey. It possessed more miraculous properties than the wilderness manna, preserving its relish even over the seventh day.

On the approach of summer the Fairy lady came to see her child. It bounded with joy when it beheld her. She was much delighted with its freshness and activity, and taking it in her arms, she bade the nurse follow. Passing through some scroggy woods, skirting the side of a beautiful green hill, they walked midway up. On its sunward slope a door opened, disclosing a beauteous porch, which they entered, and the turf closed behind them. The Fairy dropped three drops of a precious dew on the nurse’s left eye-lid, and they entered a land of most pleasant and abundant promise. It was watered with fine looping rivulets, and yellow with corn; the fairest trees enclosed its fields, laden with fruit, which dropped honey.

The nurse was rewarded with finest webs of cloth and food of ever-during substance. Boxes of salves, for restoring mortal health and curing mortal wounds and infirmities, were bestowed on her, with a promise of never needing.

[22] Roodmass: The festival of the finding of the Holy Cross (May 3rd).

The Fairy dropped a green dew over her right eye, and bade her look. She beheld many of her lost friends and acquaintances doing menial drudgery, reaping the corn and gathering the fruits.

‘This,’ said she, ‘is the punishment of evil deeds!’

The Fairy passed her hand over her eye, and restored its mortal faculties. She was conducted to the porch, but had the address to secure the heavenly salve.

She lived, and enjoyed the gift of discerning the earth-visiting spirits, till she was the mother of many children; but happening to meet the Fairy lady who gave her the child, she attempted to shake hands with her.

‘What e’e d’ye see me wi’?’ whispered she.

‘Wi’ them baith,’ said the dame.

She breathed on her eyes, and even the power of the box failed to restore their gifts again!”

The element of romantic imagery is also manifest in the following tradition:—

“A young man of Nithsdale, being on a love intrigue, was enchanted with wild and delightful music and the sound of mingled voices, more charming than aught that mortal breath could utter. With a romantic daring peculiar to a Scottish lover he followed the sound, and discovered the fairy banquet. A green table, with feet of gold, was placed across a small rivulet, and richly furnished with pure bread and wines of sweetest flavour. Their minstrelsy was raised from small reeds and stalks of corn. He was invited to partake in the dance, and presented with a cup of wine. He was allowed to depart, and was ever after endowed with the second sight.”

A vivid example of the method of restoring a “changeling” to its own natural and innocent form has already been described in connection with Sorbie village, in Wigtownshire. The following, quite as realistic, describes a similar uncanny ceremony in Dumfriesshire:—

“A beautiful child, of Caerlaverock, in Nithsdale, on the second day of its birth, and before its baptism, was changed, none knew how, for an antiquated elf of hideous aspect. It kept the family awake with its nightly yells; biting the mother’s breasts; and would neither be cradled or nursed. The mother, obliged to be from home, left it in charge of the servant girl.

The poor lass was sitting bemoaning herself. ‘Wer’t nae for thy girning face I would knock the big, winnow the corn, and grun the meal!’

‘Lowse the cradle band,’ quoth the elf, ‘and tent the neighbours, an’ I’ll work yer wark.’

Up started the elf, the wind arose, the corn was chafed, the outlyers were foddered, the hand-mill moved around, as by instinct, and the knocking mell did its work with amazing rapidity.

The lass and her elfin servant rested and diverted themselves, till, on the mistress’s approach, it was restored to the cradle, and began to yell anew. The girl took the first opportunity of slyly telling her mistress the adventure.

‘What’ll we do wi’ the wee diel?’ said she.

‘I’ll work it a pirn,’ replied the lass.

At the middle hour of night, the chimney-top was covered up, and every inlet barred and closed. The embers were blown up until glowing hot, and the maid, undressing the elf, tossed it on the fire. It uttered the wildest and most piercing yells, and, in a moment, the fairies were heard moaning at every wonted avenue, and rattling at the window boards, at the chimney head, and at the door.

‘In the name o’ God, bring back the bairn!’ cried the lass.

The window flew up; the earthly child was laid unharmed on the mother’s lap, while its grisly substitute flew up the chimney with a loud laugh.”[23]

A further narrative, bringing out the idea of gratitude for a favour, and resentment at insult, has been gleaned from the parish of Closeburn:—

“Two men were ploughing down, in Closeburn parish, when they both felt a strong smell of burning cake. One of them said in an off-hand kind o’ way—

‘Yer cake’s burnin’.’

‘Make us a spurtle tae burn it wi’, then,’ said a voice apparently close at hand.

The man, good-naturedly, did as directed, and laid the article down on the ground. On returning to the spot he found the spurtle taken away, and bread and cheese left in its place. He partook of both, and likewise gave some to his horses, but his companion would neither taste himself nor allow his horses to taste. An affront of this kind could not be overlooked, and he had not gone many steps until he dropped down dead in the furrow.”

A noted fairy tryste in this Nithsdale district was the Ward-Law Hill, Dalswinton. It came to pass, however, that the green ring where the fairies had danced and gambolled became in the times of the Persecution a place of worship. On this account no longer could the fairy revelry and dance continue, and it was firmly believed in the district that sounds of lamentation and regret, proceeding from no earthly voices, were heard in the neighbourhood of this favourite fairy-haunt for many years afterwards.

The gardens of Drumlanrig Palace (Thornhill) were also a reputed gathering-place of the fairies, who were often seen dancing in the gloaming in the glade opposite to Jock o’ the Horn.[24]

There is a “Fairy Knowe” at Sanquhar, described by Simpson[25] as “a beautiful little green knoll which overlooks what is called the Waird, ... formerly covered with the waving broom, with green spaces here and there, the dancing-places of the sportive fairies.”

The braes of Polveoch, at the west end of the Bank Wood, between Kirkconnel and Sanquhar, was also a favourite trysting-place of the fairies. “Here the good little folks assembled on May Day to celebrate the advent of summer; contingents came in from Kello Water, Glen Aylmer, and Glen Wharry, and when all had gathered together they rode merrily over the knowes towards the Bale Hill, in whose sunward slope a beauteous doorway was said to open for them, which they entered two at a time, the green turf closing over the last pair to get in.”

In Annandale the great fairy strength and palace lay in the heart of Burnswark Hill. The reputation of these Annandale fairies seems to have been rather disposed towards evil than good. Young men as well as young women were carried off, the former to act as very slaves

[23] “When the mother’s vigilance hinders the fairies from carrying her child away, or changing it, the touch of fairy hands and their unearthly breath make it wither away in every limb and lineament like a blighted ear of corn, saving the countenance, which unchangeably retains the sacred stamp of divinity. The way to cure a breath-blasted child is worthy of notice. The child is undressed and laid out in unbleached linen new from the loom. Water is brought from a blessed well, in the utmost silence, before sunrise, in a pitcher never before wet; in which the child is washed, and its clothes dipped by the fingers of a maiden. Its limbs, on the third morning’s experiment, plump up, and all its former vigour returns.”—*Allan Cunningham, in “Cromek’s Remains of Nithsdale and Galloway Song.”*

[24] The leaden figure of a man connected with a cascade, once a prominent feature of the gardens.

[25] Simpson’s *History of Sanquhar*.

and beasts of burden. The following is the account of the abduction of a young woman belonging to Corrie:—

"One fair Corrie damsel, who was supposed to have died, appeared to her brother, and informed him that she was not dead, but kept in bondage among the fairies, who, when they carried her off, had left in the bed an image of her, which had been buried in her stead. She entreated him to repair alone to the barn on the following night, set open the doors, and watch there till the hour of midnight, when he would see three forms pass before him, of which she would be the last. She told him he was then to seize fast hold of her, to repeat certain words which she instructed him to use, and that he might thus effect her rescue. Unfortunately, the brother's courage failed him when the hour of trial came, so that the captive sister was never released from elfin thraldom and restored to her family."

It may be noted in passing that all the place-names in this district ending in "sheen" refer to fairy occupation of the land. *Sidh* (pronounced shee) is a fairy, with the diminutive *sidhean* (sheen), which more especially carries the meaning of Fairy Hill. Examples of these may be cited in Auchensheen, Colvend; Brishie, Minnigaff; Knocknishy, Whithorn; and Shawn, Stoneykirk.

The Brownie.

The "Brownie,"[26] as already indicated, was a domestic spirit of a familiar and useful kind. Grotesque in figure, small in stature, but very strong, his presence and help were cheerfully accepted in the farm-steading or household he elected to serve. His self-imposed and often heavy task was always performed in the dark hours of the night. No work came amiss to Brownie—reaping, threshing, sheep-shearing, and gathering, churning, and even meaner kitchen drudgery—and all in the most disinterested fashion, a bowl of cream, or as Nicholson phrases it, "a cogfu' o' brose" being all that he would accept at their hands. The offer, indeed, of other than this simple food, or the leaving out for him of clothing, was fatal, and compelled Brownie, in obedience to some condition of his existence not understood, to forsake the abode of the gift-givers and depart, generally reluctantly, to seek other quarters.

However arduous the efforts of the night it would seem that he was always finished in sufficient good time to drink his cream at leasure and blow up the smouldering embers of the fire to bask his full length in its warmth, for at heart Brownie was, when not actually working, much disposed to take his ease. At first cock-crow, however, he disappeared.

Endowed with a life of many years, he seems to have been attached in some instances to the same family for generations, but his service was only given to good and worthy people, although isolated instances of help to the unfortunate poor were common enough experiences.

[26] The "Brownie" of Scotland corresponds with the "Robin Goodfellow" of England.
"Tells how the drudging goblin sweat
To earn his cream bowl duly set,
When in one night, ere glimpse of morn,
His shadowy flail hath threshed the corn
That ten day labourers could not end;
Then lies him down the lubber fiend,
And, stretched out all the chimney's length,
Basks at the fire his hairy strength,
And crop-full out of door he flings
Ere the first cock his matin rings."
—*Il Penseroso*

He would also seem to have had the moral welfare of young folks at heart, and would seat himself at the kitchen fireside and listen to their chatter. He was singularly alive to unworthy intentions, particularly in connection with love affairs, which he took means of opposing in his own way.

The prosperity of the family with whom he had attached himself was affected by their disposition and actions towards him, of which the following is an example:—

"A place called Liethin Hall, in Dumfriesshire, was the hereditary dwelling of a noted brownie. He had lived there, as he once communicated in confidence to an old woman, for three hundred years. He appeared only once to every new master, and indeed seldom shewed more than his hand to anyone. On the decease of a beloved master he was heard to make moan, and would not partake of his wonted delicacy for many days. The heir of the land arrived from foreign parts and took possession of his father's inheritance. The faithful Brownie shewed himself, and profered homage. The spruce Laird was offended to see such a famine-faced, wrinkled domestic, and ordered him meat and drink, with a new suit of clean livery. The brownie departed, repeating loud and frequently these ruin-boding lines—

'Ca, cuttie, ca!
A' the luck o' Liethin Ha'
Gangs wi' me to Bodsbeck Ha.'

Liethin Ha' was, in a few years, in ruins, and 'bonnie Bodsbeck' flourished under the luck-bringing patronage of the brownie."

In the olden days there was a brownie attached to the family of Maxwell of Dalswinton said to be so energetic as to easily perform the work of ten men, and threshing with such vigour as to keep the servants awake at nights with the dirling of its elfin flail.

He seems to have been passionately devoted to the service of the Laird's daughter, a strikingly comely dame. A lover naturally appeared, and their meetings were made all the easier through Brownie's help, and eventually he saw his beloved lady married to a husband he heartily approved of.

"In course of time the hour of need came nigh, and a servant was sent away to bring the 'canny wife.' The night was dark as a December night could be, and the wind was heavy among the groves of oak. The brownie, enraged at the loitering serving-man, wrapped himself in his lady's fur cloak; and though the Nith was foaming high flood, his steed, impelled by supernatural spur and whip, passed it like an arrow. Mounting the dame behind him, he took the deep water back again to the amazement of the worthy woman, who beheld the red waves tumbling around her, yet the steed's foot-locks were dry.

'Ride nae by the auld pool,' quo' she, 'lest we should meet wi' Brownie.'

He replied—'Fear nae, dame, ye've met a' the brownies ye will meet.'

Placing her down at the hall gate, he hastened to the stable, where the servant lad was just pulling on his boots; he unbuckled the bridle from his steed, and gave him a most afflicting drubbing."

There is a sequel to this story which does not end happily: "It was the time of the Reformation; and a priest, more zealous than wise, exhorted the Laird to have this Imp of Heathenism baptised, to which he in an evil hour consented, and the worthy reforming saint concealed himself in the barn to surprise the brownie at his work. He appeared like a little, wrinkled, ancient man, and began his nightly moil. The priest leapt from his ambush, and

dashed the baptismal water in his face, solemnly repeating the set form of Christian rite. The poor brownie set up a frightful and agonising yell, and instantly vanished never to return."

Allan Cunningham further tells of a brownie of a humorous turn of mind who held sway about Newabbey:—"The Abbey lands in the parish of Newabbey, were the residence of a very sportive one. He loved to be, betimes, somewhat mischievous. Two lasses, having made a fine bowlful of buttered brose, had taken it into the byre to sup while it was yet dark. In the haste of concealment they had brought but one spoon; so they placed the bowl between them, and took a spoonful by turns.

'I hae got but three sups,' cried the one, 'an' it's a' done!'

'It's a' done, indeed,' cried the other.

'Ha, ha!' laughed a third voice, 'Brownie has gotten the maist o't.'"

As indicating the great skill in gathering the sheep together, the following tradition lingers in Galloway of a brownie who had spent the night long at this task. In the morning not only had he the sheep together, but amongst them was half a dozen hares. "Deil tak' thae wee grey beasties," he muttered, when this was pointed out to him, "they cost me mair fash than a' the lave o' them."

In Scottish literature the brownie has a distinctive place, his unique and wonder-creating personality being used with rare effect. It is, however, the particular part of Scotland we are dealing with—the south-west—that has produced the most typical examples, in prose as well as in poetry, for Dumfriesshire claims that fine Covenanting story, "The Brownie of Bodsbeck," while Galloway has yielded that inimitable poetical gem, "The Brownie of Blednoch," the quotation of which in full may fittingly close the chapter:—

The Brownie of Blednoch.

There cam a strange wight to our town-en'
And the fient a body did him ken';
He tirled na lang, but he glided ben
Wi' a dreary, dreary hum.

His face did glare like the glow o' the west,
When the drumlie cloud has it half o'ercast;
Or the struggling moon when she's sair distrest—
O sirs! 'twas Aiken-drum.

I trow the bauldest stood aback,
Wi' a gape and a glower till their lugs did crack,
As the shapeless phantom mum'ling spak—
"Hae ye wark for Aiken-drum?"

O had ye seen the bairns' fright,
As they stared at this wild and unyirthly wight,
As he stauket in 'tween the dark and the light,
And graned out, "Aiken-drum!"

"Sauf us!" quoth Jock, "d'ye see sic een;"
Cries Kate, "There's a hole where a nose should hae been;
And the mouth's like a gash which a horn had ri'en;
Wow! keep's frae Aiken-drum!"

The black dog, growling, cowered his tail,
The lassie swarfed, loot fa' the pail,
Rob's lingle brack as he men't the flail,
At the sight o' Aiken-drum.

His matted head on his breast did rest,
A lang blue beard wan'ered down like a vest;
But the glare o' his e'e nae Bard hath exprest,
Nor the skimes o' Aiken-drum.

Roun' his hairy form there was naething seen
But a philibeg o' the rashes green,
And his knotted knees played ay knoit between;
What a sight was Aiken-drum!

On his wauchie arms three claws did meet,
As they trailed on the grun' by his taeless feet;
E'en the auld guidman himsel' did sweat,
To look at Aiken-drum.

But he drew a score, himsel' did sain,
The auld wife tried, but her tongue was gane;
While the young ane closer clasped her wean,
And turned frae Aiken-drum.

But the canny auld wife cam' till her breath,
And she deemed the Bible might ward aff scaith,
Be it benshee, bogle, ghaist, or wraith—
But it fear'dna Aiken-drum.

"His presence protect us!" quoth the auld guidman;
"What wad ye, whare won ye—by sea or by lan'?
I conjure ye speak—by the Beuk in my haun!"
What a grane gae Aiken-drum.

"I lived in a lan' whar we saw nae sky,
I dwalt in a spot whare a burn rins na by;
But I'se dwall now wi' you, if ye like to try—
Hae ye wark for Aiken-drum?

"I'll shiel' a' your sheep i' the mornin' sune,
I'll berry your crap by the light o' the moon,
And baa the bairns wi' an unken'd tune,
If ye'll keep puir Aiken-drum.

"I'll loup the linn when ye canna wade,
I'll kirn the kirn, and I'll turn the bread;
And the wildest fillie that ever ran rede
I'se tame't," quoth Aiken-drum!

"To wear the tod frae the flock on the fell—
To gather the dew frae the heather-bell—
And to look at my face in your clear crystal well,
Might gie pleasure to Aiken-drum.

"I'se seek nae guids, gear, bond, nor mark;
I use nae beddin', shoon, nor sark;
But a cogfu' o' brose 'tween the light and dark,
Is the wage o' Aiken-drum."

Quoth the wylie auld wife, "The thing speaks weel;
Our workers are scant—we hae routh o' meal;
Gif he'll do as he says—be he man, be he de'il,
Wow! we'll try this Aiken-drum."

But the wenches skirled "He's no' be here!
His eldritch look gars us swarf wi' fear,
And the fient a ane will the house come near,
If they think but o' Aiken-drum.

"For a foul and a stalwart ghaist is he,
Despair sits brooding aboon his e'e bree,
And unchancie to light o' a maiden's e'e,
Is the grim glower o' Aiken-drum."

"Puir slipmalabors! ye hae little wit;
Is'tna Hallowmas now, and the crap out yet?"
Sae she silenced them a' wi' a stamp o' her fit;
"Sit yer wa's down, Aiken-drum."

Roun' a' that side what wark was dune,
By the streamer's gleam, or the glance o' the moon;
A word or a wish—and the Brownie cam' sune,
Sae helpfu' was Aiken-drum.

But he slade ay awa' or the sun was up,
He ne'er could look straught on Macmillan's cup;[27]
They watched—but nane saw him his brose ever sup,
Nor a spune sought Aiken-drum.

On Blednoch banks, and on crystal Cree,
For mony a day a toiled wight was he;
While the bairns played harmless roun' his knee,
Sae social was Aiken-drum.

But a new-made wife, fu' o' rippish freaks,
Fond o' a things feat for the first five weeks,
Laid a mouldy pair o' her ain man's breeks;
By the brose o' Aiken-drum.

Let the learned decide, when they convene,
What spell was him and the breeks between;

[27] A communion cup, belonging to M'Millan, the well-known ousted minister of Balmaghie, and founder of a variety of the species *Covenanter*. This cup was treasured by a zealous disciple in the parish of Kirkcowan, and long used as a test by which to ascertain the orthodoxy of suspected persons. If, on taking the precious relic into his hand, the person trembled, or gave other symptoms of agitation, he was denounced as having bowed the knee to Baal, and sacrificed at the altar of idolatry; and it required, through his future life, no common exertion in the good cause, to efface the stigma thus fixed upon him.—*Note to original edition.*

For frae that day forth he was nae mair seen,
And sair missed was Aiken-drum.

He was heard by a herd gaun by the *Thrieve*,
Crying “Lang, lang now may I greet and grieve;
For alas! I hae gotten baith fee and leave,
O, luckless Aiken-drum.”

Awa’! ye wrangling sceptic tribe,
Wi’ your *pros* and your *cons* wad ye decide
’Gain the ’sponsible voice o’ a hale country-side
On the facts ’bout Aiken-drum?

Though the “Brownie o’ Blednoch” lang be gane,
The mark o’ his feet’s left on mony a stane;
And mony a wife and mony a wean
Tell the feats o’ Aiken-drum.

E’en now, light loons that jibe and sneer
At spiritual guests and a’ sic gear,
At the Glashnoch Mill hae swat wi’ fear,
And looked roun’ for Aiken-drum.

And guidly fo’ks hae gotten a fright,
When the moon was set, and the stars gied nae light,
At the roaring linn in the howe o’ the night,
Wi’ sughs like Aiken-drum.

V. Wraiths And Warnings

"There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in our philosophy."
—*Hamlet.*

IN the bygone days of a more primitive and simple life, widespread belief existed in the outward and physical manifestation of the call of Death, which took the form of what were commonly known as "wraiths" and "warnings."

The "wraith" was the natural-looking semblance of one about to die, or just immediately dead, appearing life-like, usually at some distance from the body, but so realistic as to be unvaryingly mistaken for the actual person. A further point is, that such appearances gave rise to no fear or apprehension unless seen at some considerable distance from their usual surroundings.

The "warning," on the other hand, refers to noises and sounds heard within the immediate precincts of the sick-chamber, but without any physical explanation or evidence of the cause, although the nature of the sound or other phenomenon might be simple enough in character. Such unusual occurrences happening under usual circumstances carried with them the superstitious significance of the near presence of death.

In dealing, firstly, with the wraith, it may at once be noted that a great many accounts of such appearances are still existent in the south-west of Scotland.

The following is a hitherto unrecorded instance which happened in the early twenties of last century in the neighbourhood of Dalbeattie:—

"In the late autumn of the year 182—, an old man, a cottar on a farm in the parish of Buittle, was raising a basketful of potatoes in his 'yaird,' on the rise of the hill slope that lifts itself into rugged prominence as it stretches towards Palnackie past Kirkennan Woods. His son William was away at Glencaple Quay (a distance of twelve miles as the crow flies) with a Water of Urr sloop unloading timber, and was not expected home before the end of the week. The old man had just finished his task when he very distinctly saw the figure of his son passing from the roadway and turn round the end of the house as if to go inside. Somewhat surprised, the old man lifted his basket and walked down the garden path into the kitchen, where his daughter Margaret was preparing the mid-day meal.

'What brings Wullie hame 'ee noo, and whaur's he gaun?' was the double query he put to his daughter.

'Guidsake, faither! what are ye talkin' aboot? There's nae Wullie here,' answered Margaret, startled out of her usual composure.

'But I saw him come roon' the house-en', and he had a queer drawn look aboot his face that fairly fleyed me! I houp there's naething happened him!'

The old man, almost absently, looked at the brass-faced clock ticking in the corner between the fireplace and the white-scoured dresser, and saw that it was ten minutes to twelve. In the evening twilight a messenger rode up to the little homestead and broke the sad news of the death by drowning of 'Wullie,' a few minutes before twelve that day, when the tide was at its full, and almost at the very time that his father had seen his semblance, with drawn face, pass the house-en'. He had fallen between the side of the sloop and the quay wall, to almost immediately disappear, very probably having received serious injury as he fell."

Another typical example may be cited from the Glencairn district, the folk-lore of which has been so exhaustively collected by Mr John Corrie:—

"One afternoon a well-known lady, Mrs G——, was setting out to call upon a neighbour who lived about half-a-mile distant across the moor, when she saw her friend, evidently bent upon the same errand, coming towards herself. Retracing her steps, she entered the house again to wait her friend's arrival. Her expected visitor not appearing, Mrs G—— went to the door to see what detained her, but although she looked in every direction there was no one to be seen. As the afternoon was now well advanced, Mrs G—— decided to defer her visit until the following day. Walking across on the morrow, she remarked in the course of conversation:

'I saw you on the way to see me yesterday! What made you turn half-road?'

'Me coming to see you!' exclaimed her friend, 'I can assure you I wasna that, for I was scarce frae my ain fireside the hale day.'

A week later Mrs G——'s friend and neighbour died, and her corpse was carried to the churchyard, over the very track her wraith had appeared on the afternoon of her intended call."

At Dunreggan, Moniaive, as curious an instance happened some fifty years ago, when the father of a schoolboy, sitting at the fireside with his wife, saw the semblance of his son enter the cottage and pass "doon the hoose." Not greatly surprised, but still wondering, he called his wife's attention to the early return of the boy from school. Very sceptical, and assuring him that he must be mistaken, the good woman went herself into the room, to find nothing there, although she looked behind the door and elsewhere to make sure that no boyish prank was being played. Despite her assurances the husband was not convinced, and remained in a very uneasy state of mind, when soon afterwards his worst fears were realised, and the body of the boy was brought home, to pass through the kitchen to be laid upon the bed—"doon the hoose."

MacTaggart, in his *Gallovidian Encyclopedia*, gives several examples, of which the following instance which happened to a very intimate friend, of whose intelligence and probity he had the highest regard, may be given:—

"Last vacans" (quoth he), "I gaed awa' to my uncle's, or rather my grandfather's, to stap a week or twa, and play mysel' amang the Moorhills, neive trouts, and learn twa or three tunes on the flute. Weel, I hadna been there ony time aworth till I saw as queer a thing as ought ever I saw, or may see. A'm out at the house-en' ae morning, about aught o'clock, and a bonny harrest morning it was: Weel, ye see, a'm making a bit grinwan to mysel' to tak' down wi' me to a deep pool that was i' the burn fu' o' trouts, and this I was gaun to do after breakfast time, for as yet I hadna gat my sowens. Weel, ye see, I'm tying on my grin wi' a bit o' wax'd thread, whan by the house-en' comes my auld grandfather wi' his clicked staff, that he ay had wi' him, in ae han', and in the tither his auld loofie o' a mitten, which he hadna as yet drawn on. He cam' close by me, and gaed a kinn o' a luik at what I was doing, then wised himsel' awa' alang the hip o' o'e hill, to look how the nowt did, and twa young foals, as was his usual wont. Weel, awa' he gaed; I was sae thrang when he gaed by that I never spake to him, neither did he to me, and I began to think about this when I was mair at leisure, and gaed a glent the road he tuik, just to see like how the auld body was coming on, for he was on the borders o' four score, yet a fearie fell auld carle, and as kine a body as ever I saw; sae I gaed a glent, as I was saying, alang by the scarrow o'e hill, and did see him winglan awa' by the back side o' the auld saugh Lochan. And in course o' time, maybe no' ten minutes after, I stepped my waes in to see gin I could get a cap or twa o' sowens and get off to the trouts;

whan wha think ye's just sitting on the sattle-stane at the ingle-cheek taking a blaw o' the pipe—but auld granfaither.

'Lord, preserve me,' said I, and said na mair; I glowr'd about me awsomly.

'What's wrang wi' the boy?' (quoth my auntie).

'Come out' (quo' I) 'and I'll tell ye,' which she did.

We gaed up the hill a bit, to be sure, as she said, o' the thing I had seen; we saw nought ava, and came back again in an unco way. That vera night granfaither grew ill, which was on a Saturday teen, and he was dead, puir body, or sax o'clock on Monday morning."

From the Farm of Killumpha, in Kirkmaiden, comes another kindred episode:—

"The farmer's wife, Mrs Anderson, had gone to Ayrshire on a visit to her father. One night during her absence John M'Gurl, the cotman, was gaun through the close after dark to take a look at the horses and see that everything was right; for the outhouses were a good way from the dwelling-house, maybe three hundred yards. When he was crossing ower from the byres to go to the stable he saw a white-clad woman coming towards him, which he thought was very like the figure of Mrs Anderson, and he wondered if she had come back unexpectedly. She came quite close to him, and he saw plainly it was her, and stopped to speak to her, but she suddenly disappeared. Next night news came that Mrs Anderson was dead, and had died suddenly."

At Balgreggan House, in the same district, a young woman in the service of the house was much startled to meet, as she passed along a passage with a lighted lamp in her hand, the semblance of a gentleman of the house, attired in military dress, and whom she knew perfectly well was far from his home at the time. The local confirmation of the uncanny nature of the appearance bears that about the same time the gentleman had actually died abroad.

The last example to be quoted has a personal interest, being an incident in the family history of the writer:—

One clear moonlight Sunday night, also in the early twenties of the last century, a young girl, who afterwards became my paternal grandmother, was returning home from a neighbouring farm in the near district of Dalbeattie. She was walking along, with never a thought in her head of anything approaching the supernatural, when to her dismay and consternation she was noiselessly joined by a figure in white, who passed through, be it noticed, and did not leap or jump over, a rough larch fence running along the roadside. The figure accompanied her along a short straight part of the road, then left her as noiselessly as it had approached. Taking to her heels, and with only the spur that terror can give, she reached her own door, to tumble into the farm kitchen and collapse on the floor.

The sequel of the episode is, that three days later, a coasting schooner, in which her brother was a sailor, was caught in a strong gale of wind whilst on the passage from Liverpool to the Water of Urr, and was never more heard tell of. My grandfather, or rather the lad who was to be my grandfather, scoured the Solway shore from point to point on horseback for several days, but all that the sea gave up was a small wooden chisel technically known as a "fid," used for splicing large ropes, and which bore the initials of the young girl's brother, and which is now in the writer's possession.[28]

[28] Several striking examples of wraith appearance may be found in Wilson's *Folk-lore of Uppermost Nithsdale* (1904).

The “warning,” at all events what is accepted as such, has many forms and varieties. Some of the more commonly accepted forms are the switch-like strokes, usually three in number, across the window of the sick-chamber, or even other windows in the house; the falling of pictures without apparent cause; the baying of dogs in the watches of the night; the footfall and apparent sound of footsteps in the house, heard overhead or coming along passages, or ascending or descending stairs, and so realistic that the door is expectantly opened, only to find nothing there; the stopping of clocks at the time of the passing of the spirit; and the noise as of approaching wheels and crunching gravel at the doors of country houses when death hovers near.

Many examples and accounts of such things taking place are extant and seriously believed in; indeed, there is not a parish in the whole district we are treating of but on enquiry gives ample proof of the generality of belief in such portents.

Belief in the switch-like strokes across the window is in this district, perhaps, the commonest of all.

Of the footfall type an example may be quoted from Moniaive. It is told how an old lady, in her younger days in the service of a medical man in Moniaive, for a time heard persistent strange footfalls in an upper room of the house. The doctor afterwards was seized with sudden illness, lay down on a sofa and died over the very spot where the strange noises had been heard.

Only the other day an account of the mysterious stopping of a clock associated with death appeared in the local newspapers, which may in part be given:—

“Mrs Stoba, who lived alone in a cottage at Greenmill, Caerlaverock, died suddenly during the night of Thursday last, from heart failure. Her blind not being drawn up on Friday morning, some neighbours forced the door about half-past ten, and found that she had passed away. It is a singular coincidence that an eight-day clock which had been her property, and is now in the house of her son, the burgh officer of Dumfries, stopped at five minutes before midnight on Thursday, although it was wound up, and there was no apparent reason for the stoppage.”

A special form of warning is the “Licht before Death.” In the parish of Tynron it is recounted how this mysterious light illumined up, on one occasion, the whole interior of a byre where a woman was engaged milking cows, and how afterwards she learned that her mother had died the same evening.

Mr John Corrie (Moniaive) gives a good example of this form from the parish of Glencairn:—

“An old Glencairn lady, on looking out of the door one dark night, saw a strange light shining in the vicinity of a house where an acquaintance lived. Entering the house she commented on what she had seen, and expressed the hope that ‘it wasna the deid licht.’ Her fears were ridiculed, but next morning it transpired that a member of the family over whose dwelling the light was seen had committed suicide.”

There is another illustration from Glencairn, and perhaps a more valuable one, on account of the precision of its details:—

“Peggy D——, when going to lock her door one night, saw a light go past, carried, as she supposed, by a neighbour. There was nothing unusual in this, but there was a high stone dyke with a flight of steps in it close to the foot of the garden, and she was surprised to see the light and supposed light-bearer pass right through the obstructing fence as if nothing of the kind had been there, and although the ground below the house was very uneven, the light itself

was never lost sight of for a moment. Peggy, rooted to the spot, watched the light go down through the fields, then along the public road until the churchyard was reached. When turning in that direction it passed through the locked gate with the same apparent ease that the other obstacles had been surmounted, and, entering the graveyard, became lost to sight among the tombstones. A week later Peggy D——'s daughter was carried a corpse to the same churchyard."

Other old and significant terms associated with the premonition of death are the "dead-watch," or "dede-chack," really the peculiar clicking noise made by wood-worms; and the "dede-drap," which was the rather eerie sound made by the intermittent falling of a drop of water from the eaves; and "dead-bell," a tingling in the ears, believed to announce a friend's death.

Other expressions of a similar nature are the "dede-spall," which is the semi-molten part of the grease of a candle (so called from its resemblance to wood-shaving) when it falls over the edge in semi-circular form, and which, if pronounced, and turning with an appearance of persistence toward some person in particular, was supposed to indicate the approaching hand of death.

Another curious term is the "dede-nip," whose origin is a little more puzzling. It is described as a blue mark which appears on the body of a person about to die and without the physical explanation of a blow. It is also associated with the "blew-spot" of witchcraft already described.[29]

The following selected verses from "The Death of Dear-meal Johnny," by the Bard of Corrie (Dumfriesshire), are quoted on account of their reference to several of these old-world superstitious terms:—

"Oft his wraith had been seen gliding
'Mang the meal sacks i' the spence,
Till the house, folks scarce could bide in,
Terrified maist out o' sense.

'Neath his head the death-watch tinkled,
Constant as the lapse of time;
Frae his bed the dead licht twinkled,
Wi' its blue and sulphurous flame.

'Neath the bed auld Bawty[30] scrapit,
A' day, thrang as thrang could be;
Made a hole, sae grave-like shapit,
Folk glowered quaking in to see.

On the dreary kirkyaird road, aye
By night he raised sic eldritch howls;
Weel he kenned his maister's body
Soon must mix amang the mools.

Frae the wattles dead-draps spatter'd;
At the can'les dead-speals hang;

[29] A wonderfully graphic account of a manifestation of "deid lichts" to a Dumfries lady occurs in the *Dumfries and Galloway Monthly Magazine*, 1822, p. 169.
[30] The dog.

Pyets rave the thack, and chatter'd;
In folk's lugs the dead-bell rang."

The last class of warnings to be noticed are special appearances and portents occurring before death in well-known local families.

In the family of Kirkpatrick of Closeburn the tradition was, that when a death was about to take place in the family a swan invariably made its appearance on the loch that surrounded the castle. "The last omen of this nature on record saddened the nuptials of Sir Thomas, the first baronet, when marrying for the third time. On the wedding-day his son, Roger, went out of the castle, and, happening to turn his eyes towards the loch, descried the fatal bird. Returning, overwhelmed with melancholy, his father rallied him on his desponding appearance, alleging a stepmother to be the cause of his sadness, when the young man only answered 'Perhaps ere long you may also be sorrowful,' expiring suddenly that very night."

The death of a member of the family of Craigdarroch is believed to be heralded by a sudden and simultaneous peal of household bells.

In Western Galloway there lingers a tradition concerning the old church of Kirkmaiden (in Fernes), the ancient burying-place of the M'Cullochs of Myrton, whose lands, in 1682, passed to the Maxwells of Monreith. When the parish ceased to exist as a separate parish and was joined to that of Glasserton, the pulpit and bell were removed to be taken across Luce Bay, there to be placed in the new church of the same name of Kirkmaiden. Although the day was fine and the wind fair, a storm sprang up, and down went boat and bell to the bottom, for, as true believers knew, the bell had been consecrated, and on no account could it ring 'neath the rafters of a Presbyterian building. Yet, ring it did not cease to do, for on the approaching death of any of the representatives of the old family of Myrton a solemn knell comes up from the watery depths to record the passing of the soul to the vast unknown.

"An' certes, there are nane, I trow,
That by Kirkmaiden bide,
Will, when they hear the wraith-bell jow,
Gae oot at Lammastide."

VI. Death Customs And Funeral Ceremony

"Or ever the silver cord be loosed."
—*Ecclesiastes xii. 6.*

WHEN that sure hand called Death knocked at the cottar's or laird's door, or stalked with unhalting step into moorland farm or upland home to beckon away some weary inmate, the actual decease, or passing, was of itself associated with significant observance.

The nearest relative bent down to the dying face to receive the last breath. The door was kept ajar,[31] although not too wide, that the spirit might be untrammelled in its flight.[32]

The spirit fled the poor dead eyes were closed, also by the nearest relative, and generally kept so by means of copper coins placed upon them.

The looking-glass in the death-chamber was covered with a white cloth. The clock was stopped, or at least the striking-weight removed. The daily routine of work was discontinued, such days of enforced idleness being known as the "dead days." On the farm, for example, no matter the season, the appropriate labour of ploughing, seed sowing, or even harvest, at once ceased. The household companions of dog and cat were rigidly excluded from the stricken house; indeed, it was not uncommon for the cat to be imprisoned beneath an inverted tub, for it was believed that if either of these animals should jump or cross over the dead body, the welfare of the spirit of the deceased would certainly be affected.

The body was then washed, and dressed in its last garments, the hands of females being crossed over the breast, those of the other sex being extended by the sides. Last of all a plate of salt was placed upon the breast, either from the higher idea of future life being signified by the salt, which is the emblem of perpetuity, or from a more practical notion, however unlikely, that by this means the body would be prevented from swelling.

Of the curious custom of "sin-eating"—that is, the placing of a piece of bread upon the salt by a recognised individual known as the sin-eater, who, for money reward, at the same time partook of it, thereby, as it was believed, absorbing to himself all the sins of the deceased—there is little to be gleaned in this district. The term "dishaloof" still exists, however, as a vestige of the custom in lowland Scotland.

There falls to be mentioned here a quaint superstition associated with "bee folklore," as described by the late Patrick Dudgeon, Esq. of Cargen, Kirkcudbrightshire, who specially studied this matter. The custom was, when a death took place, to at once go to the bee-hives, or skeps, and whisper the tidings of the sad event to the bees. This was followed by "putting the bees in mourning"—that is, attaching black ribbons to each of the skeps.[33]

Mr Dudgeon, in a paper on the subject, observes that "the custom was very general some time ago, and several of my correspondents mention instances of old people having seen it observed. It is not altogether extinct yet."

[31] "Open lock, end strife,
Come death and pass life."
—"Meg Merrilees" in *Guy Mannering*.

[32] There seems to have been some variation in this usage. On the Borders, for example, the door was usually left wide open. (See Preparatory Note to "Young Bengie," *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*.)

[33] Bearing upon this last statement of Mr Dudgeon's, the writer has been told of a comparatively recent instance in the parish of Anwoth.

The last toilet completed, it was the usual custom for friends and neighbours to manifest their sympathy by watching, or "waulking," the dead. Through the long hours of night, by the glimmering candle-light at the silent bedside, this was really a service that called for some resolution, as tales of dead bodies coming back to life were fully believed in these superstitious days. Occasionally special candles were used for "the watching," known as Yule candles. These were the remains of specially large candles burned at Yule, and extinguished at the close of the day, what was left of the candle being carefully preserved and locked away, to be burned at the owners' own "waulking."

Visiting the house of the dead for the sake of seeing the corpse was a regular practice, and, it may be added, that to touch the corpse was considered a sure safeguard against all eerie dreams of death and ghostly trappings, as well as a counter-influence to illness and disease.

With the encoffining, or "kistin'" of the dead, a further, stage was reached. The ceremony was apparently religious, and one of deep solemnity, the minister, or one of his elders or deacons, attending to see the remains of the deceased placed in the coffin, to offer up prayer, and generally to console and sympathise with the bereaved. In reality, the official presence of the minister, elder or deacon, was directly due to an Act of Parliament,[34] actually framed and passed, incongruous as it may appear, for the "improvement of Linen manufacture within the Kingdom." The clerical representative was present in the house of mourning, to be fully satisfied that "the corpse was shrouded in home made linen, and that not exceeding in value twenty shillings per ell."

This curious Act had as curious a sequel, for, prompted by an evident spirit of fair dealing, the Linen Act was rescinded in the first Parliament of Queen Anne in favour of a "Woollen Act," insisting upon the exclusive use of "wool" as a material for shrouds, under exactly the same pains and penalties as the previous Act laid down to compel the use of linen. In course of time such rigid intrusive conditions, despite the law, came to be disregarded, and people shrouded their dead as they thought best, and in material of their own choice. It was, however, usual for the undertaker to safeguard those concerned in any such infringement by charging half the statutory fine in his account, taking credit to himself for the other half as being the informer against himself. This was usually entered as the first item of his undertaking expenses, being expressed in his bill against the relatives as: "To paying the penalty under the Act for burying in Scots Linen."

The custom of relatives and intimate friends being at the encoffining or "kistin'" is to some extent associated with the "lykewake," or "latewake," of Roman Catholic usage. Although now quite unknown among adherents of the Scottish Presbyterian Church, such

[34] "In the second session of the first Parliament of James VII., held at Edinburgh, 1686, an Act was passed called the 'Act for Burying in Scots Linen,' in which it was ordained, for the encouragement of the linen manufactures within the kingdom, that no person whatsoever, of high or low degree, should be buried in any shirt, sheet, or anything else, except in plain linen or cloth, of Hards made and spun within the kingdom, and without lace or point. There was specially prohibited the use of Holland, or other linen cloth made in other kingdoms: and of silk, woollen, gold, or silver, or any other stuff than what was made of Hards spun and wrought within the kingdom, under the penalty of 300 pounds Scots for a nobleman, and 200 pounds for every other person for each offence. One-half of this penalty was to go to the informer, and the other half to the poor of the parish of where the body should be interred. And, for the better discovery of contraveners, it was ordained that every minister within the kingdom should keep an account and register of all persons buried in his parish. A certificate upon oath, in writing, duly attested by two "famous" persons, was to be delivered by one of the relatives to the minister within eight days, declaring that the deceased person had been shrouded in the manner prescribed; which certificate was to be recorded without charge. The penalty was to be sued for by the minister before any judge competent; and if he should prove negligent in pursuing the contraveners within six months after the interment, he himself was liable for the said fine."—*Life and Times of Rev. John Wightman, D.D., of Kirkmahoe.*

wakes were at one time common enough, even after the Reformation. They were, however, attended by such unseemly behaviour that in 1645 the General Assembly passed an edict to suppress them.

That the custom still continued is brought out by the knowledge that in 1701 it was found necessary to revive and enforce the statute against the practice.

The culminating feature of the rites of bereavement, the funeral ceremony, was in these old days (particularly between the years 1700 and 1800) an occasion altogether outstanding in social importance. It was an occasion, however, very often marred by the profuse liberality and use of stimulants, lavish hospitality in the house of mourning being too frequently followed by ludicrous and extraordinary results as the body was being conveyed to its last resting-place. "A funeral party," for example, "had wended their way for miles through deep snow over Eskdale Moor, bound for Moffat Churchyard. On arriving at the burial-ground it was actually discovered that they had dropped the coffin by the way, the back having fallen from the cart on which it was being conveyed."

Ten o'clock in the morning saw the commencement of the funeral ceremonies, this being so generally understood that no special hour was mentioned in "the bidding to the buriall." The setting-out for the churchyard, however, or the "liftin'," as it was termed, did not, as a rule, take place for several hours later, and in many instances not until well on in the afternoon. This delay, as well as giving ample time to partake of refreshment, was really meant to enable all the guests to gather together, many of them travelling long distances, which were not made shorter by bad roads or inclement weather. A precaution sometimes taken before the company moved off was to send someone to the top of the nearest height to signal when the horizon was clear and no more guests in sight.

The place of entertainment was usually the barn. Planks laid along the tops of wooden trestles formed a large table, on which were piled up a superabundance of food and drink, while a constant feature of the entertainment was an imposing array of tobacco pipes already filled by the women who had sat beside, or watched, the dead body. It was not considered seemly for the women of the house to mingle with the male guests. The usual custom in Galloway and Nithsdale was for the women folk to sit together in a room apart.

As the company gathered they formed themselves into relays—for the number of guests as a rule exceeded the accommodation of even the largest barn—and entered the place set aside for refreshment. This took the form of what were known as "services," and these in their usual order were, after each guest had been proffered a pipe of tobacco:—

(a) Bread and cheese, with ale and porter.

(b) A glass of whisky, with again bread and cheese.

(c) A glass of rum and biscuits.

(d) A glass of brandy and currant bun.

(e) Wine and shortbread (or burial bread).

It was not, be it mentioned in passing, a very unusual thing for some of the company to enter the barn again, and undertake the "services" a second time.

The natural consequence of all this is obvious, but to a certain extent the situation could be saved by the use of a private receptacle called the "droddy bottle," into which the liquor could be poured to be taken home, or at least carried outside. Before partaking of each individual "service" it was solemnised by the minister offering up an appropriate prayer, a clerical task which must have been trying in the extreme.

As instancing the prodigality of preparation in the way of food, notice may be taken of a funeral in the parish of Mochrum, where two bushels (160 lbs.) of shortbread were provided, and it is quite unnecessary to suggest that the supply of spirits would be in proportion.

Of the expenses of funerals in a higher rank of life those incurred on the deaths of Grierson of Lag and his third son, John Grierson, afford full and interesting information. Mr John Grierson, third son of the Laird of Lag, died early in 1730, and to one Jean Scott the purveying of the meat and drink considered requisite for the friends attending the funeral was entrusted. The bill came to about £160 Scots.[35] When the Laird himself died, on the last day of the year 1733, there was a repetition of the feasting and drinking at the house of the deceased, at the kirkyard, and at an adjoining house, which had evidently been requisitioned for the accommodation of several of the gentlemen, among whom were Lord Stormonth, Sir Thomas Kirkpatrick, Maxwell of Carriel, and others who had come from a distance to assist. The account begins two days before the death of the Laird, and ends on January 14. In round figures the cost of the meat and drink consumed at the Laird's funeral came to £240 Scots.

Grim legend clings around the account of Lag's last illness and his funeral. "During the latter part of his life Sir Robert had taken up his abode in his town-lodging in Dumfries. It was an ancient pile of building of singular construction, facing the principal part of the High Street of the town, known as the 'Plainstones.' This old house was called the 'Turnpike,' from the spiral staircase, a characteristic of it, as of many of the old Edinburgh houses; it was situated at the head of what was called the Turnpike Close, and little more than two hundred yards from the Nith. The best known of the many legends regarding Lag is this: that when he came near his end, and was sorely tormented with gout, he had relays of servants posted so as to hand up from one to another a succession of buckets of cold water from the Nith, that he might cool his burning limbs—but the moment his feet were inserted into the water it began to fizz and boil.

In this old Turnpike house[36] Sir Robert died on the 31st December, 1733. It is related that on this occasion a 'corbie' (raven) of preternatural blackness and malignity of aspect, perched himself on the coffin, and would not be driven off, but accompanied the funeral cortège to the grave in the churchyard of Dunscore.

Moreover, when the funeral procession started, and had got some little way on the Galloway side of the Nith, it was found that the horses, with all their struggles, and dripping with perspiration, from some mysterious cause could move the hearse no further. Sir Thomas Kirkpatrick, of Closeburn, the old friend and comrade of Lag (and his relative), who was believed to be deep in some branches of the Black Art, was one of the mourners. This gentleman, the stoutest of Non-jurors, on this occasion swore a great oath that he would drive the hearse of Lag 'though —— were in it!' and ordered a team of beautiful Spanish horses of his own to be harnessed in place of the others. Sir Thomas mounted and took the reins, when the horses instantly dashed off at a furious gallop that he could in no wise restrain, and abated nought of their headlong pace till they reached the churchyard of Dunscore, where they suddenly pulled up—and died."

[35] Scots money, equal to one-twelfth value of our present currency, abandoned after 1760.

[36] "An old antiquarian friend, long since dead, told me that Sir Robert had grown so corpulent in his latter days that his body could not be decently carried down the winding stair for burial; and that accordingly a portion of the wall between the two windows looking on to the Plainstones had to be temporarily removed, and that through the wide vacancy thus created the coffin was lowered down. My informant, who was old enough to remember all about the taking down of the lodging in 1826, added that the appearance of the wall between the windows justified the tradition."—Letter from Wm. M'Dowall, Esq., author of the *History of Dumfries*, to Lieut.-Col. Alexander Fergusson, author of the *Laird of Lag*.

When the funeral cortège did start, as already indicated, curious though quite consequent sequels were far from uncommon. Solemnity and deep drinking only too frequently ended in unaffected hilarity or even dissension.

MacTaggart, in his *Gallovidian Encyclopædia*, has caught and well recorded the boisterous spirit of this grim funeral festivity, as the following graphic description amply shows:—

"At last the Laird o' the Bowertree Buss gaed his last pawt, was straughted, dressed, coffined and a'; and I was bidden to his burial the Tuesday after. There I gaed, and there were met a wheen fine boys. Tam o' Todholes, and Wull o' the Slack war there; Neil Wulson, the fisher, and Wull Rain, the gunner, too. The first service that came roun' was strong farintosh, famous peat reek. There was nae grief amang us. The Laird had plenty, had neither wife nor a wean, sae wha cud greet? We drew close to ither, and began the cracks ding-dang, while every minute roun' came anither reamin' service. I faun' the bees i' my head bizzin' strong i' a wee time. The inside o' the burial house was like the inside o' a Kelton-hill tent; a banter came frae the tae side of the room, and was sent back wi' a jibe frae the ither. Lifting at last began to be talked about, and at last lift we did. 'Whaever wished for a pouchfu' o' drink might tak' it.' This was the order; sae mony a douce black coat hang side wi' a heavy bottle. On we gaed wi' the Laird, his weight we faun' na. Wull Weer we left ahin drunk on the spot. Rob Fisher took a sheer as we came down the green brae, and landed himself in a rossen o' breers. Whaup-nebbed Samuel fell aff the drift too. I saw him as we came across Howmcraig; the drink was gaen frae him like couters. Whan we came to the Taffdyke that rins cross Barrend there we laid the Laird down till we took a rest awee. The inside o' pouches war than turned out, bottle after bottle was touted owre; we rowed about, and some warsled. At last a game at the quoits was proposed; we played, but how we played I kenna. Whan we got tae the kirkyard the sun was jist plumpin' down; we pat the coffin twice in the grave wrang, and as often had to draw't out again. We got it to fit at last, and in wi' the moulds on't. The grave-digger we made a beast o'."

A notable exception to the practice of the period was the funeral of William Burnes, father of the National Bard, who was borne from Lochlea to Alloway Kirkyard, a distance of twelve miles, not a drop of anything excepting a draught of water from a roadside stream being tasted.

The funeral festivities, however, did not end with the lowering of the dead into the grave. There yet remained the final entertainment at the house of the bereaved. If within reasonable distance at all the funeral party returned from the churchyard to partake of the entertainment known as the "draigie,"[37] or "dredgy." Again the drinking was long and deep, with results that can only too readily be imagined.

But it must not be assumed that such scenes and proceedings passed without protest on the part of the Church and those who had the welfare of decency and morality at heart. The Presbytery of Penpont, for example, in 1736 issued the following warning to their own district:—

"Yet further how unaccountable and scandalous are the large gatherings and unbecoming behaviour at burials and 'lake-wacks,' also in some places how many are grossly unmannerly in coming to burials without invitation. How extravagant are many in their preparations for such occasions, and in giving much drink, and driving it too frequently, before and after the corpse is enterred, and keeping the company too long together; how many scandalouslie drink until they be drunk on such occasions; this practice cannot but be

[37] A corrupt form of the Latin "dirige," from a Catholic chant for the dead.

hurtfull, therefore ought to be discouraged and reformed, and people that are not ashamed to be so vilely unmannerly as to thrust themselves into such meetings without being called ought to be affronted."

Despite protest and counsel, however, the custom of supplying refreshment to mourners in the form of "services" lingered until well into the nineteenth century.

Much good was, however, done in the south-west district of Scotland by the firm position taken up by Dr Henry Duncan of Ruthwell, Dumfriesshire, a personality whose memory is still held in the highest esteem and respect. The method adopted was characteristic of the man, and is described by himself in the Statistical Account of his Parish:—

"The present incumbent fell on a simple expedient by which this practice has been completely abolished. Having engaged the co-operation of some of the leading men in the parish, he drew up a subscription paper, binding the subscribers, among other less important regulations, to give only *one* service when they had the melancholy duty of presiding at a funeral themselves, and to partake of only one service when they attended the funeral of a neighbour. This paper was readily subscribed by almost every head of a family in the parish, and whatever was injurious in the practice was abolished at once, ... and, speaking generally, may be said to have effectually rooted out the former practice throughout the whole surrounding district" (March, 1834).

After the funeral, certain old rites and customs were carried out. On the death of a tenant the mart, or herezeld (heriot, or best aucht) was seized by the landowner to substantiate his title. The bed and straw on which the deceased had lain were burned in the open field. Concerning this practice Joseph Train in a note to *Strains of the Mountain Muse*, describes how, "as soon as the corpse is taken from the bed on which the person died, all the straw or heather of which it was composed is taken out and burned in a place where no beast can get near it, and they pretend to find next morning in the ashes the print of the foot of that person in the family who shall die first."

A short reference may here be made to the custom of burial without coffins.

The spirit of economy went far indeed in these older days, for burial, particularly of the poor, took place either without a coffin at all, or they were carried to the grave in one of common and general use, from which they were removed and buried when the grave-side was reached.

A doubtful advance upon this method was the introduction of the "slip-coffin," which permitted of a bolt being drawn when lowered to the bottom of the grave. A hinged bottom was in this way relieved, which left the poor dead body in the closest of contact with mother earth. The motive, of course, was economy, and its use practically restricted to paupers. On the authority of Edgar, author of *Old Church Life in Scotland* (1886), it is gratifying to note that none of these uncoffined interments had taken place in the South of Scotland for at least 150 years.

In this connection a story somewhat against the "cloth" may be given:—

"A worthy Galloway minister, feeling that the newly-passed Poor Law Act with its assessments was burdensome to his flock, seriously proposed to the Parochial Board of his district that to narrow down the rates a 'slip-coffin' should be made for the poor, out of which the body could be slipped into its narrow home. The proposal met with scant consideration, and during the rest of his lifetime the well-meaning man was known as 'Slip.'"

Before the days of hearses the coffin was borne to the grave on two long poles or hand-spokes. Over the simple bare coffin the "mort-cloth" was spread, for the use of which the "Kirk-Session" made a charge, the money received being devoted to the relief of the poor of

the parish. As superstitious custom refused the rites of Christian burial to those who died by their own hand, so was also the use of the "mort-cloth" withheld.

Until comparatively recent days the bodies of suicides were buried at the meeting of four cross roads, or at all events at some lonely, unfrequented spot, the remains having not unusually the additional indignity of being impaled by a stake practised upon them. It is of interest to note that the name of the "Stake Moss," Sanquhar, may be traced to this callous practice.

A superstition of the churchyard itself that still lingers and is worthy of notice, is that the north side is less hallowed than the other portions of "God's Acre." The origin of this comes from the Scriptural description of the last judgment (Matthew xxv.), which tells how "He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on His left."

A recent local writer has thus embodied the idea and its probable derivation:—

"This superstition (he says) is said to have originated in the New Testament story of the Day of Judgment, when the Lord on entering His house (the entrance of the old churches being at the west end, or on the south near the west) would separate the sheep from the goats—the former to His right hand, the south; and the latter to his left, the north. Our forefathers would not see their dear ones among the goats, 'for evil,' said they, 'is there.' This credulous imagining is not exemplified in the kirkyard alone. Many of our old pre-Reformation churches exhibit evidence of the superstition in the entire absence of windows in their north walls; and in general it would appear that in mediæval times there was a common belief in the evil influence of the north, and that thence came all kinds of ill.

"In Sanquhar Kirkyard it is evident that the superstition prevailed until comparatively modern times, for there are no headstones on the north side of the kirk earlier than the beginning of the last century, all the older monuments being to the south of the kirk, and at its east and west ends."

To the simple earnest dweller in the country there comes at times the thought that brings with it a comfort all its own, that after "life's fitful fever" they will be quietly laid to rest underneath the green turf, within the shadow of the kirk itself. Of this the origin of Carsphairn parish, in the uplands of Galloway, gives telling proof; for in the year 1645 complaint was made to the Scottish Parliament that in the parishes of Dairy and Kells numbers of people had to be buried in the fields, because the houses in which they lived and died were twelve miles from a churchyard. The issue of this was, that the district of Carsphairn was erected into a separate parish, and the indignity of such burials came to an end.

Before closing a chapter devoted to "death custom" and "funeral ceremony," the use of the "dead bell" must certainly be referred to.

In these old days when methods of conveying news and information were restricted, it was the routine practice when a death occurred for the "beadle" (sexton) to go, bell in hand, around the district, pausing at intervals to ring the "passing bell"[38] more particularly in front of the houses of friends of the deceased, announcing at the same time not only the death but also the day of burial. The usual form of his intimation which, with uncovered head, he delivered was:—

[38] A commonly used term for the dead bell is "skellat."

"Brethren and sisters,—I hereby let ye to wit that our brother (or sister), named (name, address, and occupation), departed this life at —— of the clock, according to the pleasure Almighty God, and you are all invited to attend the funeral on ——."

Particular reference to this custom in the town of Dumfries is given in the Itinerary of John Ray, naturalist, who visited the town in August, 1662:—

"Here (he says) ... we observed the manner of their burials, which is this: when anyone dies the sexton or bellman goeth about the streets, with a small bell in his hand, which he tinkleth all along as he goeth, and now and then he makes a stance, and proclaims who is dead, and invites the people to come to the funeral."

On the day of the funeral it was again customary for the "beadle" to ring the bell, walking in front of the funeral procession ringing it as he went. This is also noticed by Ray, who notes that "The people and ministers ... accompany the corpse to the grave ... with the bell before them." This usage has passed to a form, common enough to this day, particularly in the country, of tolling the church bell as the funeral cortège approaches the churchyard.

In the scarce *Book of Galloway* it is recorded how "the beadle had rung the 'passing bell[39] on the bellknowe of Penninghame,' and it was heard again when the mourners approached the graveyard."

The ringing of the "dead bell" had its origin in the superstitious idea that by this means evil spirits were held at bay.

[39] The bell here referred to was the old bell of St. Ninian, the "Clog Rinny" or bell of Saint Ninian, made of malleable iron coated with bronze, and which only measured 6½ inches in height. It is mentioned in the accounts of James IV.: "March 17, 1506, in Penyghame to ane man that bure Saint Ninian's bell ix.*s.*" It was in existence at old Penninghame in 1684 when Symson wrote, one hundred and seventy years after. It is described and illustrated in Wilsons' *Prehistoric Annals of Scotland* (1857).

VII. Ghost Lore And Haunted Houses

"There are many ghost stories which we do not feel at liberty to challenge."

—*Sir Walter Scott.*

PASSING now to gather up the details of superstitious vestige as they present themselves in the form of ghost traditions and memories of ghost-haunted houses, we find in the district of Dumfries and Galloway much of interest to set forth.

Traversing from Western Galloway to Eastern Dumfriesshire, gleaning as we go, the legend connected with Dunskey Castle, which yet in ruined solitude stands sentinel over the rock-bound shore and restless sea at Portpatrick, first calls for mention.

The story goes back to the occupation of the Castle in the fourteenth century by Walter de Curry, a turbulent sea rover, who, becoming much incensed at the outspoken and fearless utterances of an Irish piper whom he had taken prisoner and compelled to his service as minstrel and jester, condemned the unfortunate man to a lingering death from starvation in the Castle dungeons.

Tradition asserts, however, that the piper found his way into a secret subterranean passage leading from the Castle to a cave on the sea-shore, from which, however, he was unable to find egress, and where he perished miserably.

Along this passage the troubled ghost of the piper was long reputed to march, backwards and forwards, playing the weirdest of pipe music, and so indicating, as was firmly believed, to the awe-stricken listeners above, the line of direction of the secret underground passage.[40]

Perhaps the best-known Galloway ghost story is that of the Ghost of Galdenoch Tower, in the parish of Leswalt. The Tower was at one time the property of the Agnews of Galdenoch, but falling on evil days their name disappeared from the roll of proprietors, when it was used as a farm-house. For this, however, it was given up, for no other reason than that it was firmly believed to be haunted. The tradition as told by Sir Andrew Agnew is as follows:—

"A scion of the house had fought in one of the battles for the Covenant, and after a defeat had craved food and shelter at a house near the scene of the disaster. He was admitted by the owner, a rough blustering fellow of Royalist leanings, who allowed him to share in the family supper; and after a long crack over the incidents of the day, let him make up a bed by the ingle-side fire. The young soldier rose early, and was in the act of leaving when his host barred his access to the door, grumbling that he doubted whether he had been on the right side the day before. Convinced that he meant to detain him, the youth produced his pistol and shot his entertainer dead; then rushing to the stables, saddled up, and made his way to the west.

Arrived safely at the Galdenoch, the fatted calf was killed, and having fought all his battles over again round the family board, he went to bed. But hardly had the lights been extinguished in the tower than strange sounds announced a new arrival, which proved to be the ghost of the slain malignant, who not only disturbed the repose of his slayer, but made life unendurable to all within.

[40] Curiously enough, a few years ago, workmen engaged in the Portpatrick water and drainage scheme stumbled upon a large cavernous space at the very place where the reputed sounds of the ghostly pipe music were heard.

Nightly his pranks continued, and even after a change of owners the annoyance was continued to the new tenant and his family. One cold winter's night they sat round the kitchen fire playing a well-known game. A burning stick passed merrily from hand to hand:

'About wi' that! about wi' that!
Keep alive the priest-cat!'

The spark was extinguished, and the forfeit was about to be declared, when one of the party, looking at the hearth, which was now one brilliant mass of transparent red, observed, 'It wadna be hannie to steal a coal the noo;' but hardly were the words out of his mouth when a glowing peat disappeared as if by magic, leaving as clear a vacuum in the fire as when a brick is displaced from a solid archway. 'That beats a',' was re-echoed through the wondering group; and but a few moments elapsed before there was a cry of 'Fire' and the farm-steading was in flames. In the thatch of the barn that identical 'cube of fire' was inserted, and no one doubted that it had been done by the ghost. The range of buildings was preserved with difficulty by the united exertions of the party.

The tenant's mother sat one morning at her spinning-wheel; an invisible power bore her along, and plunged her in the Mill-Isle burn, a voice mumbling the while, 'I'll dip thee, I'll draw thee,' till the old dame became unconscious. Great was the surprise of the family at dinner-time when grandmamma was missed. Every corner of the buildings was searched. The goodman and his wife became alarmed, while the lads and lassies ran madly about interrogating one another with 'Where's granny?' At last a well-known voice was heard—'I've washed granny in the burn, and laid her on the dyke to dry!' Away the whole party ran; and sure enough the poor old woman lay naked on the dyke, half dead with cold and fright.

Several of the neighbouring clergymen tried to lay this ghost, but all in vain. If they sang, the ghost drowned the united efforts of the company. Eventually, however, it was laid by the Rev. Mr Marshall of Kirkcolm, already referred to as a zealous prosecutor of witches, by the almost unclerical method of roaring and shouting it down."

On the confines of Stoneykirk parish, in the Moor of the Genoch, there is a plantation locally known as "Lodnagappal Plantin'," [41] concerning which report tells of an apparition in the form of a headless woman who almost invariably carried a light for the dire purpose of luring the unwary to death in the treacherous moss-holes so numerous in the neighbourhood.

Fuller details are available of yet another "white woman" and her unwelcome methods. Early last century, when the mail packet crossed from Portpatrick to Ireland, a carrier, who lived at High Ardwell, regularly journeyed backwards and forwards to Portpatrick to bring supplies for the district. On his way home he was more than once alarmed and troubled by a woman in white, who stopped his horse and even caused his cart to break down. Once, indeed, the horse was so affected that it became quite incapable of moving the load, compelling the carrier in great distress to unyoke, and, mounting the horse, to make for home. His fears were not much lessened by finding that the white lady was seated behind him.

The appearances of the ghost became more frequent as time went on, and eventually the white woman manifested a desire to embrace the carrier, indicating that if he yielded even only to listen once to her whispered devotion he might be freed altogether from future interference. The carrier, after a good deal of doubt and hesitation, at last yielded, but, wishing to have some substantial barrier between himself and his ghostly lover, stipulated that she should come to the little back-window of his cottage on a particular night. The appointed time came, but the carrier, still very doubtful, had planned accordingly. Cautiously

[41] Lodnagappal (Celtic): The swamp of the horses.

and partially was the window opened. The white figure was there. Bending down to what appeared to be the man's face—but what was really the skull of a horse held towards her—there was a swift savage thrust of the ghostly face and half of the protruding horse's skull was severed. Thwarted in this unexpected way, the evil spirit slunk away, muttering "Hard, hard, are the banes and gristle of your face!" At least that is what the tradition tells.

Another tale concerns Auchabrick House, in Kirkmaiden, not far from Port Logan. The usually accepted story is pretty much as follows: The troth of a young lady of the house was plighted to a young gentleman whose fortune was not quite equal to his rank in life. It was the days of privateering, and to amass some means the young fellow joined an enterprise of this kind, and was fortunate enough to find himself aboard a superior and successful vessel.

Whilst abroad he sent home to the lady of his heart a silk dress and a considerable sum of money. These, however, fell into the hands of an unscrupulous brother, who appropriated them to his own use. Perplexed at not receiving news from home and acknowledgment, the lover wrote again and again, but the letters were always intercepted by the brother.

Disaster came, and the wanderer never reached home to learn the true state of matters, but his ghost came to haunt the place. Fasten the doors as securely as they might, it always obtained an entry, and the scratch of a ghostly pen was heard writing and rewriting the stolen letters. Different plans were tried to relieve this eerie state of affairs. On one occasion a Bible was placed behind the door through which the ghost seemed to pass, but this was followed by terrifying and distracting noises, while the house itself was shaken as if by storm and gale.

It was also believed that the semblance of the ship on which the wanderer pursued his calling as a privateer was at times seen to sail along a field above the house.

A variation of the main story is that it was a brother of one of the former ladies of Auchabrick whose shade haunted the place. He had fallen from his horse and been fatally injured, his ghost taking the form of a young man, booted and spurred, riding a grey horse.

At Cardrain, in the same locality, there is another tradition of an apparition on horseback which time and again rode up to the house, made fast the horse to a rope hanging from the thatch, then wandered all through the place.

In the neighbourhood of Tirally the shade of a departed medical man was believed to frequent and wander along the sea-shore. There is an authentic account of the house he occupied being of necessity given up by the tenant who succeeded him after his death, on account of the strange persistent and disturbing noises heard in it.

Passing from the Rhinns of Galloway to the Machars, through the district of Glenluce, the surprising story of the Devil of Glenluce should naturally find a place. It will, however, be included in the Appendix, in all its quaintness, as it occurs in *Satan's Invisible World*, published in 1685.

In the history of the town of Wigtown no character stands out in stronger relief than Provost Coltran, proprietor of Drummorall. In 1683, along with David Graham, brother of Claverhouse, and Sir Godfrey M'Culloch, he was appointed to administer the test to the people of Galloway, and was Chief Magistrate at the drowning of the Martyrs on Wigtown Sands (May 11th, 1685). His private character does not seem to have been beyond reproach, and it was commonly said that in his life time he had sold himself to the Devil.

The story still lingers that at his death the windows of his house looked as if they were in a blaze of fire, clearly indicating to the popular mind that the Devil was getting his own, and for long afterwards his ghost, a terrifying figure snorting fire from his nostrils, walked the earth. Even the house where he lived and died was for many years avoided after night-fall.

Not far from the village of Bladnoch, on the farm of Kirkwaugh, is a spot known as the Packman's Grave, round which a grim story lingers:—

"Tradition has it that an enterprising packman lived in or near Wigtown long ago. He had a consignment of cloth on board a vessel which put into a local port. The ship was plague-stricken, and the people in the district, fearing that the infection might spread by means of the packman and his cloth, seized both the merchant and his wares, and taking them to Kirkwaugh dug a deep grave, in which they were deposited—the packman alive. Even until lately people imagined they saw lights and heard knocks at the spot, which gets the name of the Packman's Grave to this day."

Near Sorbie is the farm of Claunch, concerning which there is an old-world memory of a spectral carriage and pair of horses. The origin of the tradition is unknown, but the following is an authentic account of its appearance furnished by a correspondent:—

"I can, however, recall the strange experience of one who avowed that it had come within his ken. He was a blacksmith by trade, and had been doing some work at the farm. It was a fine moonlight evening when he gathered his tools together and started on his walk to Whithorn, where he lived. It chanced that the farmer by whom he had been employed during the day accompanied him as far as the entrance to the farmyard. As they were crossing the courtyard, what certainly seemed a spectral carriage and pair of horses galloped past them, and in another moment disappeared as if it never had been.

'What in the name of wonder was that?' ejaculated the smith; to which the farmer replied—

'It's mair than I can tell—but it's no' the first glint o't I hae gotten, although I haena seen't aften. But dinna ye come owre what ye hae seen—nae guid'll come o' talkin' aboot it.'"

The old parish manse of Whithorn, which adjoined the churchyard near to its main entrance, and which was demolished a good many years ago, had rather an uncanny reputation, but nothing very definite can be gleaned to explain this. It certainly was, however, avoided after darkness fell. A little short lane off the public road, between the north end of Whithorn and the Bishopton Crofts, is associated with an appearance denoting foul play towards a very young child. But the most important ghostly reminiscence that can be gathered in this locality refers to the ghost at Craigdhu, in the parish of Glasserton, on the shore-road from Whithorn to Port-William. The following account was communicated by a native of the district:—

"Many rumours used to be afloat in my younger days of people being terrified by some unearthly shape or other which was believed to show itself at Craigdhu. Such stories were, however, rather conflicting, some declaring that it was a spectre of human form and proportions, while others held that it was more like a huge quadruped of an unknown species; but I confine my notes to personal testimonies of three individuals whom I knew. The first of these was a hard-working farm servant, who insisted that he had seen the something—whatever it was—not once or twice, but repeatedly. The second testifier was a wood-sawyer, who had occasion to spend a night in the house belonging to the farm. His first consciousness of the ghost's presence was when he was ascending the stair to the sleeping apartment, which a companion and himself were to occupy. This was manifested by the distinct sound of a lady's silk dress passing him and his bed-fellow on their way to the garret which was to be their dormitory. But that, though eerie enough, was nothing to what was to follow. As soon as they had extinguished their candle and crept into bed *something* leapt on the bed and dealt the unfortunate couple some well directed blows with what seemed like a heavy blunt instrument. The third witness was an ex-magistrate of Whithorn, who told that he was almost run to earth by the goblin. He was just able to evade it by reaching the farm-house door as he was actually being overtaken. Throwing himself against the door, he was admitted by the farmer himself

without a moment's delay. The latter at once conjectured the cause of his breathlessness and terror—'Aye! come in, my frien', come in. I ken gey weel what has happened; but ye're safe here, an' as welcome as I can mak' ye, to bide till daylicht.'"

The roofless ruin of the little pre-Reformation Church of Kirkmaiden (in Fernes) in Glasserton parish, so beautifully situated on the very verge of Luce Bay, has among other associations a tradition of supernatural intervention and tragedy.

Many tides have ebbed and flowed since the night of a merry gathering in the old house of Moure, the original home of the Maxwells of Monreith. As the evening wore on, some harmless rallying and boasting took place concerning bravery and indifference towards darkness and things uncanny. Among the guests was a young man in the hey-day of youth and recklessness, who rashly wagered that he would that very night, and without delay, ride to the Maiden Kirk and bring away the church bible as a proof that he had been there. Amidst much careless talk and banter he galloped off. The night wore on, but the young man did not return. As it was but a short ride from Moure to the Kirk the greatest anxiety prevailed. Next day, in a bleak spot, his dead body was found, as also his horse lying stiff beside him. Of robbery and violence there was no evidence, but the entrails of both man and beast had been carefully drawn from their bodies, and were found twisted and entwined round some old thorn bushes close beside them. It was afterwards found that he had reached the church and was on his way back.

Some ten miles northward, along this eastern shore of Luce Bay, are the ruined Barracks of Auchenmalg, built in the days of the free-trade as a means of suppressing the traffic. A whisper of the old building being haunted exists, but further than that the idea is associated with some deed of violence in the smuggling days nothing very definite can be gleaned.

Passing from Wigtownshire, by way of Kirkcowan, towards Kirkcudbrightshire, it may be noted that Dr Trotter has preserved a ghost story concerning Craighlaw House, originally a fifteenth century square keep, now the oldest part of a mansion-house of three distinct periods. The story conveys that the ghost appeared on one occasion by the side of the large arched kitchen fire-place, during the absence of the cook at the well. Much alarmed at the sight on her return she screamed and collapsed. Her master, sceptical of anything supernatural, fervently expressed the wish that he himself might meet the cause of the alarm, which he actually did, and shot at it with no effect, much to his own alarm. Dr Trotter adds that "since the ghost was laid everything has been quiet."

In Kirkcudbrightshire, still passing eastwards, the legends and eerie associations that cluster around Machermore Castle first meet us, and call for narration.

The following details are taken from an article entitled "The White Lady of Machermore," contributed to the *Galloway Gazette* some years ago by James G. Kinna, author of the *History of the Parish of Minnigaff*:—

"Pleasantly situated on the east bank of the Cree, about a mile from the town, Machermore Castle is a prominent feature in the landscape as the traveller approaches Newton-Stewart by rail from the south. For wellnigh three hundred years the grey old Castle of Machermore bravely weathered the storms, and it would have continued to do so unscathed had not modern times necessitated structural changes. The Castle now presents a happy instance of the blending of the old and new styles of architecture—an adaptation of the past to present requirements.

It is a curious circumstance that although certain spots near Machermore Castle have always been associated with the name of the White Lady no one has ever actually seen the

mysterious being. And yet there are few of the older residenters in the parish of Minnigaff who have not heard their grandfathers speak of her as a reality.

Machermore Castle is believed to have been built about the latter end of the sixteenth century. Tradition says that it was at first intended to build the Castle on the higher ground, a little to the north-east of the present site, but that during the night the foundation stones were always removed, so that what was built during the day was carried off by unseen hands and deposited in another place. As it was no use to strive against the supernatural, the Castle was eventually built where the materials were always found in the morning.

In the Castle itself was a room reputed to be haunted. In this instance the particular apartment was in the north-west angle, and was always known as Duncan's room. Projecting from the top corner of the outer wall in the same part of the Castle was the finely-carved figurehead of a man. A close inspection revealed the fact that the neck was encircled by an exquisitely-chiselled lace ruffle of the Tudor period. This piece of sculpture was always known as Duncan's head. On the floor of Duncan's room there was the mark of a bloody hand, distinctly showing the impress of the fingers, thumb, and palm. It was said that removing that part of the flooring had been tried so as to eradicate all trace of the bygone tragedy, but the mark of the bloody hand appeared in the new wood as fresh as before. From the history of Machermore at least this legend is ineffaceable, and the annals of the parish of Minnigaff are incomplete which do not contain a reference to this remarkable phenomenon.

It is a good many years since the incident I am about to relate took place, but the circumstances are as fresh in my memory as if it had happened but yesternight; nor am I ever likely to forget my first and only visit from the White Lady. On that occasion I happened to be the sole occupant of Duncan's room, but as usage had worn off all prejudice against the occupation of that particular bedroom amongst the members of the household, little or no importance was attached to the general belief that the room was haunted.

It was a midsummer night, and I had been asleep, but had awakened, and lay wondering what time it was, just as a clock on one of the landings struck twelve. As the last stroke died away I distinctly heard a footstep coming upstairs. All being perfectly quiet in the Castle at that hour, I could hear the slightest sound. Nearer and nearer to the door of my room came the midnight visitant, until it seemed to enter; but although the room was flooded with moonlight I saw no one come in, yet I was perfectly conscious that some mysterious presence was near me. I was not in the least frightened at the time. Although wide awake I could see nothing. A peculiar sound resembling the opening and shutting of a stiff drawer now came from the corner of the room where was the impress of the bloody hand. I then sat up in bed and called out, "Who's there? what do you want?" but got no answer. After this I must confess to feeling uncomfortable, a state which changed to something like positive fear as a rustling sound resembling that made by a silk dress passed out of the room. All this time the door remained closed. Nothing, therefore, possessing a material body could either have entered or left the room without its entrance or exit being noticed, but although I looked in the direction from which the moving sound proceeded nothing could be seen. It was with a sense of relief that I listened with bated breath and palpitating heart to the retreating footsteps as they slowly descended the stairs and gradually died away in the distance, and then all was silent again, ... and here the mystery rests."

There is a tradition that somewhere about Machermore Castle there is buried under a flat stone a kettle full of gold:

"Between the Castle and the River Cree
Lies enough o' gold to set a' Scotland free."

The spell of the White Lady for good or evil is exercised no longer in the ancestral home of the Dunbars of Machermore.

Between Kirkdale House and Cassencarry, on the beautiful sea-girt road leading from Creetown to Gatehouse, there stood many years ago a little cottage in a sequestered situation among the woods, where a young girl was murdered by her sweetheart under the saddest of circumstances.

In and around the cottage immediately afterwards unaccountable noises were heard, and the ghost of the unfortunate girl seen, which curiously enough, as the tradition tells, at once ceased when the young man was brought to justice.

There is also a further tradition about a gypsy killing a woman near Kirkdale Bridge. At twelve o'clock at night, it is said, the ghost of a woman with half of her head cut off, and all clad in white, appears at Kirkdale Bridge, and slowly wends its way along the road and disappears by the wooded pathway leading to Kirkdale Bank. This apparition is firmly believed in by folks in that locality.

The district of Dalry has furnished us with tales of witch and fairy lore. Of ghost tradition there are also authentic details, of which the most important concerns the old mansion-house of Glenlee. The following details are extracts from a paper on the subject contributed to the *Gallovidian* (Winter, 1900):—

"In the north of Kirkcudbrightshire, in the beautiful district of the Glenkens, on the banks of the Ken, nearly opposite to the village of Dalry but on the other side of the river, stands the fine mansion-house of Glenlee Park, at one time the residence of Lord Glenlee, one of the Judges of the Court of Session. Silent and solitary, and untenanted for years now except by a caretaker, this eligible residence has the reputation of being haunted by a lady who walks about dressed in grey silk.

A lady, who is still alive, tells how the grey lady appeared to her one evening as she was sitting in front of her dressing-glass waiting on her maid to come and do up her hair. While looking into the mirror she became aware of someone or something behind her, and then saw a lady enter by the door of her room, pass across the floor, and disappear through a door which communicated with a dressing-room. As the house was full of company at the time she wondered whether some of the strangers had mistaken the way to her room; but she waited in vain for her return, and just as she was thinking of going to explore the mystery it occurred to her that there had been no sound of doors opening or of footfalls on the floor, nor was there any sound in the direction in which the lady had disappeared, and finally it struck her that the lady was not dressed like anyone in the house.

On another occasion the same lady was sitting up with her husband, who was seriously ill, and during the night a kind of rap was heard on the door, or about the door, which roused her to go and see what it was. Upon opening the door a face stared at her, but spoke not, and passed silently along the dimly-lighted corridor out of sight.

A guest at Glenlee, before going off to some entertainment one evening ran up to his bedroom for something or other, and to his surprise there was a lady standing at his dressing-table putting some finishing touches to her toilette. He at once withdrew, thinking that some of the ladies in the hurry of the moment had gone into the wrong bedroom. When he came down again they were all upon the point of departure, and called to him to come along—but before getting into the carriage he said,

'You have forgotten one of the ladies.'

'Oh, no!' they said, 'everyone is here, and but for your lingering we should have been off.'

One evening at dark the butler was hastening down the avenue on some errand to the lodge-keeper's, when suddenly a lady hurried past him, and he heard nothing but a faint rustle as of her dress, or the faint flickering of the remaining autumn leaves in the breeze overhead. As it was at a time when all the ladies were supposed to be indoors curiosity piqued him to follow her and watch her movements. She hurried on without once looking round, and finally disappeared through a disused cellar door which he knew to be locked and rusted from want of use. Not till then did it strike the butler that there was anything uncanny about the lady that had hurried past him in the gloom of the evening.

No satisfactory explanation of these unpleasant experiences has ever been established.

Mr Blacklock, in his notes on *Twenty Years' Holidaying in the Glenkens*, makes mention of the Glenlee ghost, and adds that Lady Ashburton was said to have poisoned her husband, who was afflicted with *morbus pediculus*. 'Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap'—and there is a further tradition that Lady Ashburton's butler poisoned her in turn, in order to possess himself of some valuables which he coveted.

The disturbances are chiefly connected with the old part of the house, the bedroom and dressing-room previously mentioned, which seem to be the chief haunts of this yet unlaid ghost."

In the village of Dalry itself there stood a row of houses called Bogle-Hole, on the site now occupied by the school. In one of these houses a man was said to have poisoned his wife, and the ghost of the murdered woman has, according to credible authority, appeared even within recent years.

The following singular story is connected with the lonely district of the Moor of Corsock:

"Many years ago a drover, while making his way north and crossing that wild and thinly populated district which lies between the head of the parish of Parton and the Moor of Corsock had the following uncanny experience: He had left the Parton district late in the afternoon with the intention of reaching a farm-house some miles north of the village of Corsock. By the time he reached the path over Corsock Hill, however, it had become dark, and occasional flashes of lightning foretold that a storm was at hand. With loud peals of thunder, vivid flashes of lightning, and a downpour of rain the storm at last broke. The only shelter near at hand was some thorn bushes by the roadside, under which the drover crept and stayed for fully an hour, while the storm raged and the darkness increased. When the storm had somewhat abated the drover set out once more, hurrying as fast as the darkness would allow him. He had reached a very desolate part of the moor when his collie gave a low whine and crept close to his master's heels. The drover stood up for a moment to try and find a reason for the dog's behaviour, when down in the glen between the hills he heard what at first appeared the sound of bagpipes, which increased quickly to a shrill piercing wailing that struck terror to his heart, the collie creeping closer and closer to his heel whining in a way that showed he was as much frightened as his master.

Standing irresolute, a blaze of blue light flashed right in front of him, in the centre of which appeared the figure of a piper, his pipes standing like horns against the background of blue light. The figure moved backwards and forwards playing the wildest of music all the time. It next seemed to come nearer and nearer, and the drover, now transfixed to earth with terror, saw that the piper was headless, and his body so thin that surrounding hills and country could be seen right throught it. A blinding flash of fire, followed by an ear-splitting clap of thunder, brought matters to a close for the time being, and the drover fell prostrate among the heather. When he recovered his senses the strange light had gone, and with it the headless piper. The storm had cleared off, and in due time he reached the farm, where he was put up for the night.

When he told his story no one spoke for a moment or two, then the farmer's aged father broke silence: 'Aye, aye, lad, ye hae seen the ghost o' the piper wha was murdered on his wey frae Patiesthorn.[42] I hae had the same fearsome experience myself, tho' its mair than saxty years syne.'"

In the Dundrennan district of Kirkcudbright a persisted belief lingers concerning a headless lady haunting the Buckland Glen. The following narrative which has been handed down lends an increased interest to the tradition:—

Long ago a Monkland farmer, accompanied by one of his farm-lads, was on his return from Kirkcudbright at a very late hour. The farmer was riding a small Highland pony, the boy being on foot. It was about midnight when they got to that part of Buckland Glen where a small bridge crosses the Buckland Burn. They had just crossed the bridge when the pony suddenly stood up and swerved, almost throwing the farmer out of the saddle.

"What's wrang wi' ye the nicht, Maggie—what's tae fricht ye, my lass?"

"Eh, Maister, did ye see that?" whispered the lad. "See—yonner it's again!"

The old man looked, and muttering to himself whispered, "Aye, it's there, laddie! It's a' true what hes been mony a time telt! That's the ghost o' the headless leddy wha was murdered in the glen in the aul' wicked times. We'll no gang by, but gang doon the lane and slip hame by Gilroanie."

Turning the quivering pony they wended their way along the woods which thickly fringe the Buckland Burn, as it leads to the shore at the Manxman's Lake, and reached home without further difficulty than keeping in hand the frightened pony. The curious fact was a week later discovered that two disreputable characters had lain in wait, for the purpose of robbery or perhaps worse, at a lonely turn on the Bombie road about a quarter of a mile from Buckland Brig. They had learned that the farmer had been to Kirkcudbright to draw a sum of money, and, had the sudden appearance of the Buckland ghost not turned their path, another tragedy might have been that night enacted in the Buckland Glen.

Concerning the parish of Rerwick the account of "A true relation of an apparition, expressions, and actings of a spirit which infested the house of Andrew Mackie, in Ringcroft of Stocking, in the parish of Rerwick, in the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright in Scotland, 1695, by Mr Alexander Telfair, Minister of that parish, and attested by many other persons who were also eye and ear witnesses," will be found in its original form in the Appendix.

One of the most interesting weird stories connected with Galloway, centres round a mansion-house in the neighbourhood of Castle-Douglas.

A lady renting it for a few years tells how she was twice or thrice disturbed in the night by hearing a horse trotting round to the front door, and on getting up to look out of the window always found there was nothing to be seen, and nothing to be done but to return shivering to bed. Several years after, returning to the neighbourhood, she met the owner of the house, who asked her to go and see the improvements he had recently effected. On being shown over the house she was told that the room she had slept in had had the partition taken down between it and the dressing-room next it to make a large room, and strangely enough, when taking down the wall, a horse's skull was discovered built into the wall.

The only connecting link to the above curious circumstance is that a former proprietor paid a hurried visit to the town of Dumfries at the time of the terrible epidemic of cholera (1832),

[42] Patiesthorn, situated at the north end of Parton Mill, overlooking Drumrash and Skirmers and the Ken below Kenmure Castle. There is no house now—only Patiesthorn Wood.

the journey being naturally accomplished in these days on horseback. Unfortunately, he contracted the disease and died shortly after his return.

Until some years ago a huge boulder lay at the roadside on the way from Dalbeattie to Colvend, not far from the cottage known as the "Wood Forester's." The story was, that this was the scene of foul play long ago, the victim being a woman, whose ghost afterwards haunted the neighbourhood in the black hours of the night.

Bearing upon this, an exceedingly graphic account has been furnished the writer of such an apparition having been seen by the captain of a local coasting vessel[43] late one night as he was walking from Kippford to Dalbeattie. It made its appearance near Aikieslak, which is the next house to the "Wood Forester's," and not very far away. The figure walked in front, stopped when he stopped, and finally disappeared, to his intense relief, in the wood to the left.

The parish of Kirkbean is particularly rich in ghostly record, no fewer than six haunted, or once haunted localities having been noted. Traversing the parish from Southwick towards Newabbey, the first eerie place of note is a field above Torrorie known as the "Murder Fall." The ghost in this instance was that of a man who came to an untimely end by hanging.

Between Mainsriddel and Prestonmill there is a sequestered part of the road known as "Derry's How," once reputed to be haunted by an evil spirit in the form of a black four-footed beast. The third uncanny place was a farm-house in this same immediate neighbourhood. The ghostly manifestation was here that of sound—well-defined sounds of footsteps passing along a passage to the foot of a staircase, pausing, then seeming to return along the passage again. The sound persisted for many years, and was recognised and described by different individuals always as footsteps, which of themselves were so natural as to give rise to no alarm.

Between Prestonmill and Kirkbean—midway between the two villages—there is a small plantation, with, on the other side of the road, a larger wood. The road itself at this particular part forms a hollow. This natural arrangement of wood and road, known locally as the "Howlet's Close," was the reputed domain of a "lady in white," but so little can be gleaned concerning her appearance that even the origin of the tradition seems to be quite forgotten.

The "Three Cross Roads" near Arbigland is the next spot of ghost-lore association, round which there lingers a rather romantic tale. A young lady, a member of the well-known family of Craik (of Arbigland) had fixed her affections upon a young groom in her father's employment, a lad of good physique and manners, but, of course, apart in social status. The course of true love, however, did not run true, the romantic attachment having a most tragic ending. One day a single report of fire-arms was heard, and soon afterwards the lifeless body of the young man, whose name was Dunn, was discovered. The law took the view of suicide having been committed, but it was generally believed in the district that a brother of the young lady, incensed at her devotion to one he thought so far beneath her, had himself taken the young man's life. This deed of violence took place at the "Three Cross Roads," and this was the place where the victim's ghost was afterwards reported to have been seen.

Another part of the road on the confines of the parish, and near to where it enters that of Newabbey, is associated with the midnight wanderings of yet another "lady in white," but concerning this "poor ghost" also, tradition withholds her story.

[43] Captain John Garmory of the *Bardsea*, lost afterwards with all hands on the passage from Liverpool to the Water of Urr.

There comes down through the long flight of centuries, a curious old story of supernatural sequence to the tragic death of John Comyn at the high altar of the Minorite Friary in Dumfries (February 10th, 1306), when the impetuous dagger-thrust of the Bruce, followed by the death dealing strokes of Kirkpatrick and Lindsay, completed the all-significant tale of murder and sacrilege.

The terrors of the day had passed, and night had fallen. With simple and earnest pomp the death-watch over the slain was being held by the troubled and anxious Friars. Wearily the hours dragged on. It was the dead of night, and many of them slumbered—all indeed, save one aged Friar, who, as the chronicler[44] tells, "with terror and astonishment heard a ghostly voice mournfully call out, 'How long, O Lord, shall vengeance be deferred?' and in reply an answering wail, 'Endure with patience until the anniversary of this day shall return for the fifty-second time,'" rising to the chancel roof with terrible clearness. The aged monk bowed his head, praying earnestly that evil might be averted, but it was otherwise to fall out.

Fifty-two years have passed away, and the hand of hospitality is being extended in the fortress of Caerlaverock Castle. In the great hall the flickering firelight fitfully lights up the faces of two men who have been served with a parting cup of wine, for the hour draws late. The host is Roger Kirkpatrick, the guest James Lindsay, and they are the sons of Kirkpatrick and Lindsay, whose daggers despatched the Red Comyn. Goodwill and friendship evidently prevail as they rise to part for the night, but the rift is in the lute, and an ugly savage look comes to the face of Lindsay as he is left alone in his room in the west tower.

An hour later a stealthy figure creeps up the eastern turret stair. There is a single well-directed thrust, and deep sleep becomes the deeper sleep of death, so sure has been the stroke that sends Roger Kirkpatrick, son of "Mak' Siccar," to his doom.

A bridled and a saddled steed stands beyond the confines of the castle walls, and Lindsay, leaping to his seat, terror at his heart, rides into the darkness of the night. Daybreak comes, the alarm is given, and almost red-handed the murderer is taken, not three miles from the castle gates, from which he had deemed himself many leagues away.

Hurried to Dumfries, doom is pronounced, and the common place of execution claims him for its own. The ghostly call of the night, "How long?" echoing through the monastery walls, is fulfilled.

With the history of the South-western district of Scotland the life story of Sir Robert Grierson of Lag, or "Aul' Lag," as he is to this day called, is intimately associated. In a previous chapter we have dealt with the superstitious happenings at his death and funeral. Mention must now be made of a legend which concerns the passing of his soul, and which is not yet forgotten in Dumfries and Galloway.

The year of grace, 1733, was wearing fast towards Yule, when one stormy night a small vessel found herself overtaken, at the mouth of the Solway, by a gale of wind that was almost too much for her. Close-hauled and fighting for every foot of sea-way she was slowly forcing her way up-channel against the angry north-west blast when a strange adventure befel her. In a lull following a savage squall the moon broke through the black flying cloud, lighting up the storm-tossed sea and revealing to those aboard another struggling sail far astern. Curiously the seamen gazed, but searching glance gave place to wonder, and wonder to fear, when they saw what had at first seemed a craft like themselves, come rushing onwards in the very teeth of the wind, and with as much ease as if running "free" before it. The moon dipped, and again darkness descended on the face of the waters, but not for long. Once again

[44] Walter Bower, or Bowmaker, Abbot of Inchcolm.

the moonlight pierced the curtain of flying cloud. Then was seen what surely was the strangest craft that ever sailed the tossing Solway sea—a great State-coach, drawn by six jet-black horses, with out-riders, coachmen, and a great retinue of torch-bearers, footmen, and followers, furiously driving onwards over the foam-crested waves. As the phantom carriage plunged nearer, the skipper, regaining some little of his courage, ran forwards, hailing in sailor fashion—"Where bound? and where from?"—and the answer came back, clear and distinct across the raging waters—"To tryst with Lag! Dumfries! from—Hell!"

A similar legend exists in connection with the death of William, Duke of Queensberry, appointed High Commissioner to James VII., 1685, and whose attitude towards the Covenanters is still remembered against him.

"Concerning the death of the Duke of Drumlanrig, *alias* Queensberry, we have the following relation: That a young man perfectly well acquainted with the Duke (probably one of those he had formerly banished), being now a sailor and in foreign countries, while the ship was upon the coast of Naples and Sicily, near one of the burning mountains, one day they espied a coach and six, all in black, going towards the mount with great velocity; when it came past them they were so near that they could perceive the dimensions and features of one that sat in it.

The young man said to the rest—'If I could believe my own eyes, or if I ever saw one like another, I would say that it is the Duke.'

In an instant they heard an audible voice echo from the mount—'Open to the Duke of Drumlanrig!' upon which the coach, now near the mount, vanished.

The young man took pen and paper, and upon his return found it exactly answer the day and hour the Duke died."

Of Drumlanrig Castle itself, the writer of *Drumlanrig and the Douglases* notes, that "like all old baronial residences, this castle was believed to be haunted by the ghosts of the dead. The most alarming legend was connected with what was known as the 'Bloody Passage,' where a foul murder had been committed, and the very spot was marked out by the stains of blood, which no housemaid's scrubbing could obliterate. It is the passage on the south side of the castle running above the drawing-room, from which a number of bed-chambers enter. Here, at midnight, the perturbed spirit of a lady, in her night clothes, parades, bewailing her sad fate, but by whom she had suffered tradition tells not. There is also a haunted room on the east side of the castle, on the fourth storey from the ground, where in former times fearful noises used to be heard."

Passing from Thornhill to Moniaive by way of Penpont and Tynron a conspicuous land-mark is the truncated peak of Tynron Doon, the abrupt ending of the hill range dividing the valley of the Scaur from that of the Shinnel. Round Tynron Doon there linger memories of a spectre in the form of a headless horseman restlessly riding a black horse. The local tradition is, that the ghost was that of a young gentleman of the family of M'Milligan of Dalgarnock, who had gone to offer his addresses to the daughter of the Laird of Tynron Castle. His presence was objected to, however, by one of the young lady's brothers. Hot words followed, and in high wrath the suitor rode off; but mistaking his way he galloped over the steepest part of the hill and broke his neck, and so, with curses and words of evil on his very lips, his spirit was not allowed to pass untroubled to the realms beyond.

In the adjoining parish of Glencairn the following ghost vestiges have been gleaned:—"At Auchenstroan and Marwhirn a white woman is seen; at Pentoot and Gaps Mill 'pens' a crying child (supposed to have been murdered) is heard. The Nut Wood at Maxwellton was long supposed to harbour an emissary of the Evil One, and woe betide the traveller who failed to

gain the running waters of Cairn or Shinnel. Jarbruck and Kirkland bridges were also of evil repute."

In the district of Sanquhar there are numerous stories of supernatural appearance and ghostly visit.

Connected with Sanquhar Castle, or Crichton Peel as it is otherwise termed, now a ruined remnant, there are two distinctive ghost legends.

The first is concerned with the fate—in the far-off old unhappy days—of a servitor of Sir Thomas Kirkpatrick of Closeburn, who "suffered" innocently at the hands of the sixth Lord Crichton. In this instance the ghost was not seen, but manifested its presence by strange chain-clanking noises within the castle walls.

The other is yet another "Lady in White," whose rare appearance foretold grief or misfortune to the Crichton family. The legend runs that it was the ghost of a young maiden who had been wronged and murdered by one of the Lords of Sanquhar.

Littlemark, a small farm on the Eliock estate, three miles from Sanquhar, was the scene, some two hundred years ago, of the murder of a pedlar, who came into the district with a large and valuable quantity of goods carried on a pack-horse.

The ghost which was supposed to haunt the neighbourhood was curiously enough not that of the pedlar himself, but took the form of the bundle or "pack" itself, moving slowly above and along the ground.

Stories which tell of the visitations and appearances of the ghost of Abraham Crichton, erstwhile Provost of Sanquhar, are to this day well remembered in the district. A merchant in Sanquhar, he seems in life to have been a shrewd and active citizen, with the reputation of being very wealthy. In 1734 he became Provost, succeeding his brother in that office, and also inheriting the possession of Carco. But evil days came, and in 1741 he was declared a bankrupt. The deed which seems chiefly to have marked him out for unrest in the next world was the share he took in the abolition of the services in the old parish church of Kirkbride and of its existence as a separate parish. An actual attempt, at his instigation, to "ding doon the Whigs' sanctuary," to use his own expression, was frustrated by Divine intervention—it was said—in the form of a violent storm. The workmen were obliged to desist, and shortly afterwards Abraham met his death by a fall from his horse near Dalpeddar. With this as an introduction, let Dr Simpson continue the story as it is set down in the *History of Sanquhar*:—"Though declared a bankrupt before his death, the good people of Sanquhar were convinced that he must have somewhere secreted his money, and acted a fradulent part. On this account it was supposed that he could not rest in his grave, and hence the belief of his frequent appearances in the sombre churchyard, to the affrightment of all and sundry who passed near the burying-ground in the evening dusk. The veritable apparition of this worthy was firmly credited by the populace, who were kept in a state of perpetual alarm. Many a maid, with her milk-pail on her head, dashed the whole to the ground when the ghost showed himself at a kirkyard wall, and ran home screaming with affright, and finally fell on the floor in a faint. The exploits of the resuscitated Provost was endless. He assailed all who dared to pass near his resting-place, young and old, men and women. The consternation became universal, the attention of the whole district was directed to the subject, which, indeed, became a topic of discussion throughout the south-west of Scotland. Its merits were discussed

also in the Edinburgh forum, and attracted the attention of the learned North Briton, Thomas Rudiman.[45]

At length the matter came to a crisis, and it was found necessary to do something to allay the popular excitement. In those days it was believed that certain sacred charms were effectual in allaying a ghost, and that the charm, whatever it might be, was chiefly to be employed by a minister of the gospel. The next thing, then, was to find a person of this order who had the sanctity and fortitude necessary to accomplish the feat. The individual fixed on was a venerable minister of the name of Hunter, in the parish of Penpont. During the night he went to the churchyard, and on the following day gave out that he had laid Abraham's ghost, and that in future no person need have the least alarm in passing the churchyard, as he never again would trouble anyone. Mr Hunter's statement was implicitly believed, and nothing supernatural has since been seen within the ancient burying-ground of Sanquhar. To add to the seeming mystery which Mr Hunter wished to keep up, when questioned on what he had said or done to the spirit he replied, 'No person shall ever know that.' In order, however, to prevent all such annoyances for the time coming, and to retain Abraham more effectually within the bounds of his narrow cell, it was deemed prudent to keep down the flat gravestone with a strong band of iron or stout chain. This precaution, it was supposed, would keep the popular mind more at ease."

To Poldean, in Wamphray, situated at the north-west corner of the parish, on the Annan, about five miles from Moffat, there is a curious old-world ghost reference in *Law's Memorials*, edited by Kirkpatrick Sharp. In the narrative, which is here given, Poldean is described as "Powdine in Annandale":—

"Also in the south-west border of Scotland, in Annandale, there is a house called Powdine belonging to a gentleman called Johnston; that house hath been haunted these fifty or sixty years. At my coming to Worcester, 1651, I spoke with the gentleman (being myself quartered within two miles of the house). He told me many extraordinary relations consisting in his own knowledge; and I carried him to my master, to whom he made the same relations—noises and apparitions, drums and trumpets heard before the last war; yea, he said, some English soldiers quartered in his house were soundly beaten by that irresistible inhabitant.... He tells me that the spirit now speaks, and appears frequently in the shape of a naked arm."

Three and a half miles north-east of Lochmaben, on the banks of the Annan, stands the turreted ruin of Spedlins Tower, the old home of the Jardines of Applegarth.

Grim, gaunt, and lonely, one of the best accredited ghost legends in the south-west of Scotland lingers round its walls. The story has been told many times, and the version here selected is that of Francis Grose, the antiquary, who described the Tower in his *Antiquities of Scotland* (1789-91):—

"Spedlins Tower is chiefly famous for being haunted by a bogle or ghost. As the relation will enliven the dullness of antiquarian disquisition, I will here relate it as it was told me by an honest woman who resides on the spot, and who, I will be sworn from her manner, believed every syllable of it. In the time of the late Sir John Jardine's grandfather, a person named Porteous, living in the parish of Applegarth, was taken up on suspicion of setting fire to a mill, and confined in the lord's prison, the pit or dungeon, at this castle. The lord being suddenly called to Edinburgh on some pressing and unexpected business, in his hurry forgot to leave the key of the pit, which he always held in his own custody. Before he discovered his

[45] The account of these wonderful happenings was published in the form of a chapbook, and obtained a large circulation.

mistake and could send back the key—which he did the moment he found it out—the man was starved to death, having first, through the extremity of hunger, gnawed off one of his hands. Ever after that time the castle was terribly haunted till a Chaplain of the family exorcised and confined the bogle to the pit, whence it could never come out, so long as a large Bible, which he had used on that business, remained in the castle. It is said that the Chaplain did not long survive this operation. The ghost, however, kept quietly within the bounds of his prison till a long time after, when the Bible, which was used by the whole family, required a new binding, for which purpose it was sent to Edinburgh. The ghost, taking advantage of its absence, was extremely boisterous in the pit, seeming as if it would break through the iron door, and making a noise like that of a large bird fluttering its wings. The Bible being returned, and the pit filled up, everything has since remained perfectly quiet. But the good woman declared, that should it again be taken off the premises no consideration whatever would induce her to remain there a single night."

Jardine Hall, the new home of the Jardines, to which the family had removed, is situated on the opposite side of the river Annan, its windows overlooking the old walls of Spedlins Tower. It also was by no means free from a share of the haunting of the dead miller, for during the time the Bible had gone to Edinburgh to be re-bound, the ghost, getting out of the dungeon, crossed the river and presented itself at the new house, making a great disturbance, and actually hauling the baronet and his lady out of bed. Some accounts indeed, say that so terrifying was its behaviour that the unhappy owner of Jardine Hall refused to wait until the Bible was repaired, but recalled it hastily before it reached the Capital, in order that its holy presence might quell the restless spirit and keep it confined to its dungeon.

The Bible which plays so prominent a part in the story is an old black-letter edition, printed by Robert Baker, a.d. 1634. It is covered with old calf-skin, and inclosed in a massive brass-bound box made out of one of the old beams of Spedlins Tower itself, which, needless to say, is most carefully preserved.

The spirited ballad of "The Prisoner of Spedlins," by Robert Chambers, may here not inappropriately be included:—

To Edinburgh, to Edinburgh,
The Jardine he maun ride;
He locks the gates behind him,
For lang he means to bide,

And he, nor any of his train,
While minding thus to flit,
Thinks of the weary prisoner
Deep in the castle pit.

They were not gane a day, a day,
A day but barely four,
When neighbours spake of dismal cries
Were heard from Spedlins Tower.

They mingled wi' the sighs of trees
And the thud-thud o' the linn;
But nae ane thocht 'twas a deein' man
That made that eldrich din.

At last they mind the gipsy loon
In dungeon lay unfed;

But ere the castle key was got
The gipsy loon was dead.

They found the wretch stretch'd out at length
Upon the cold, cold stone,
With starting eyes and hollow cheek,
And arms peeled to the bone.
……
Now Spedlins is an eerie house,
For oft at mirk midnight
The wail of Porteous' starving cry
Fills a' that house wi' fright:

"O let me out, O let me out,
Sharp hunger cuts me sore;
If ye suffer me to perish so,
I'll haunt you evermore."

O sad, sad was the Jardine then,
His heart was sorely smit;
Till he could wish himself had been
Left in that deadly pit.

But "Cheer up," cried his lady fair,
"'Tis purpose makes the sin;
And where the heart has had no part
God holds his creature clean."

Then Jardine sought a holy man
To lay that vexing sprite;
And for a week that holy man
Was praying day and night.

And all that time in Spedlins House
Was held a solemn fast,
Till the cries waxed low, and the boglebo
In the deep red sea was cast.
……
There lies a Bible in Spedlins Ha',
And while it there shall lie
Nae Jardine can tormented be
With Porteous' starving cry.

But Applegarth's an altered man,
He is no longer gay;
The thought of Porteous clings to him
Until his dying day.

The mansion-house of Knockhill, in the parish of Hoddom, was the scene of a tragedy in the earlier part of last century, which had the sequence of ghost visitation. It is referred to in the "Irvings of Hoddom," an interesting contribution to the family history of the district. Shortly the story is as follows:—A young man named Bell who had been surreptitiously visiting his sweetheart, one of the maids in the house, was heard by the butler, who shot him as he was escaping through a basement window. The butler was tried and acquitted, but Knockhill was afterwards haunted by the ghost of the victim so much that servants would not remain. At last

the proprietor, then a Mr Scott, asked the Rev. W. Wallace Duncan, then helper to Mr Yorstoun, parish minister, to sleep in the house, with the result, it is told, that from then the ghost disappeared from Knockhill.

In this same parish of Hoddom, the student of Carlyle will remember that "old John Orr," the only schoolmaster that Carlyle's father ever had, "laid a ghost." It was in "some house or room at Orchard, in the parish of Hoddom. He entered the haunted place, was closeted in it for some time, speaking and praying. The ghost was really and truly laid, for no one heard more of it."

Bonshaw Tower, on the Kirtle (parish of Annan), the original home of the Irvings, also contributes to the ghost-lore of the district.

Tradition tells that a daughter of the house was thrown from the battlements of the Tower by her own relatives, whom she had deeply incensed by her determination to marry a "Maxwell," with which family the Irvings held long and bitter feud. It is, or rather was, the ghost of this young lady who haunted the Tower of Bonshaw, but she has not been visible within living memory.

Blackett Tower, also on the Kirtle (parish of Kirkpatrick-Fleming), was a border fortress well known in the records of border raid and foray. It was for long the home of the family of Bell.

The ruined tower has a ghost legend which claims it as the abode of a spectre known as "Old Red-Cap, or Bloody Bell." A poetical descriptive reference to the tower and its phantom occurs in the poem of "Fair Helen." The passage is of undoubted vigour and masterly touch, and is here given, the author, William Scott Irving, at the same time offering the opinion "that the legends and anecdotes of 'Bloody Bell' would fill a large quarto volume":

Of Blackett's Towers strange tales are told:
The legendary lore of old,
That dread belief, whose mystic spell
Could people Gothic vault or cell
With being of terrific form,
And superstition bound the charm.
'Tis said, that here, at the night's high noon,
When broad and red the eastern moon
Beams through the chinks of its vast saloon,
A ghastly phantom takes its stand
On the wall that frowns o'er wear and strand,
A bloody dagger in its hand,
And ever and aye on the hollow gale
Is heard its honorie and wail
Dying along the distant vale.
The 'nighted peasant starts aghast
To hear its shriekings on the blast;
Turns him to brave the wintry wind,
Nor dares he lingering look behind,
But hurries across the moaning flood,
And deems its waters swollen with blood—
Such are the tales at Lyke-wake drear,
When the unholy hour of night draws near,
When the ban-dog howls, and the lights burn blue,
And the phantom fleets before the view;

When “Red-Cap” wakes his eldrich cry,
And the winds of the wold come moaning by.

The Old Hall of Ecclefechan (Kirkconnel Hall) is also supposed to be haunted. Little is known about it, but the opinion has been expressed that “the mysterious apparition of the ‘Ha’ Ghost’ seems to have haunted the place from the distant past, and its mysterious and noisy demonstrations have from time to time disturbed the residents. It is said to make its appearance before and at the time of the death of any member of the family.”

In the parish of Eskdalemuir there is a farm-house called Todshawhill. It is on the Black Esk, about three miles in a south-westerly direction from the Parish Church. With the name of this farm there is associated the memory of something uncanny, known far and wide as the “Bogle of Todshawhill.” It seems rather to have been a “brownie” than a “ghost,” but some account of it is here given as described by Dr Brown and embodied in an antiquarian account of the parish. According to Dr Brown, one of the bogle’s biographers, this creature made a stay of a week, less or more, at Todshawhill farmhouse, disappearing for the most part during the day, only to reappear towards evening. Its freaks and eccentricities very naturally attracted a number of people to the neighbourhood, and among the number, Thomas Bell from Westside, the neighbouring farmer, who, in order to assure himself that it had flesh and blood like other folks, took it up in his arms and fully satisfied himself that it had its ample share of both. In appearance it resembled an old woman above the middle, with very short legs and thighs, and it affected a style of walk at once so comical and undignified that the Rev. Dr aforesaid was compelled to pronounce it “waddling.” The first intimation or indication of its presence in these parts was given, I understand, at the head of Todshawhill Bog, where some young callants who were engaged in fastening up the horses of the farm heard a cry at some little distance off—“Tint, Tint, Tint”—to which one of the lads, William Nichol by name, at once replied, “You shall not tine and me here,” and then the lads made off, helter-skelter, with the misshapen little creature at their heels. In his terror one of the lads fell head foremost into a hole or moss hag, and the creature, “waddling” past him to get at the rest, came into violent contact with a cow, which, naturally resenting such unceremonious treatment, pushed at it with its horns, whereupon the creature replied, “God help me, what means the cow?” This expression soothed, if it did not wholly allay, the fears of all concerned, for they at once concluded that if the creature had been a spirit it would not have mentioned the name of Deity in the way it did.

The last account to be quoted of supernatural visitation in the south-western district of Scotland is a particularly striking one, and is taken from an interesting contribution to a recent number of *Chambers’s Journal* dealing with apparitions:—

“In the Lowlands of Scotland stood an old manor house, where the owner’s wife was on her death-bed. The ancient furniture still remained in the room, so the invalid lay in a four-post bed, with curtains all round it, wherein many generations of the family had been born and died. The curtains were drawn at its foot and on the side nearest the wall, but they were open on the other to a blazing fire, before which sat an attendant nurse. A tall screen on her left hand shielded her from the draught from a door, whose top was visible above it; and as the nurse sat there she became conscious that the door was opening and that a hand seemed to rest for a moment on the top of the screen. Presently, as she watched, half-paralysed with fear, a figure appeared from behind the screen—the figure of a young woman clothed in a sacque of rich brocade, over a pink silk petticoat, and wearing a head-dress of the time of Queen Anne. This figure advanced with a gentle undulating movement to the bed and bent down over it. Then the nurse jumped up and stretched out her hand to the bell-pull; and, lo!

when she looked again the figure had vanished, and her patient lay there dead, with an expression of rapturous content on her sunken face.

Later, when the last sad rites had been accomplished, this nurse wandered into the picture gallery in company with the housekeeper, and pausing before a certain portrait, exclaimed that there was the original of the unknown lady.

'Ah,' came the answer, 'that lady lived here when Queen Anne was on the throne. They say she had a sad life with her lord, and died young. Ever since she is believed, when the mistress of the manor dies, to appear beside the bed, and—and'——

'You need not tell me more,' said the nurse, 'for I also have seen her.'"

No account of superstitious belief in Galloway would be complete without reference to three remarkable tracts, giving quaint and circumstantial accounts of alleged supernatural visitations from the spirit-world beyond. In their order of publication these are—(*a*) "The Surprising Story of the Devil of Glenluce"; (*b*) "A True Account of an Apparition which infested the house of Andrew Mackie, in Ringcroft, Parish of Rerwick, and Stewartry of Kirkcudbright in 1695, ... Mr Alexander Telfair"; and (*c*) "The Laird o' Coul's Ghost."

The "Devil of Glenluce" first appeared in an old work on *Hydrostaticks* by George Sinclair, Professor of Philosophy and afterwards of Mathematics in the University of Glasgow. This work was published in 1672. It was again printed in his more important work, *Satan's Invisible World*, in 1685. The theme is concerned with the persecution of one Gilbert Campbell, a weaver, and his family, in the village of Glenluce, by an evil and tormenting spirit. As a chapbook this curious work had a very wide circulation.

The "True Account of the Rerwick Apparition" when first published called for two editions within the first year, and with many alterations it was also published in London under the title of "New Confutation of Sadducism, being a narrative of a Spirit which infested the house of Andrew Mackie of Ringcroft, Galloway, in 1695." Only the site of Ringcroft of Stoking, marked by some old fir trees, remains, near the village of Auchencairn.

"The Laird o' Coul's Ghost" seems to have originally appeared as a chapbook, and is thought to have been first published in 1750. It is supposed to be—and the purpose is quaintly carried out—an account of four conferences which the Rev. William Ogilvie (Minister of Innerwick, East Lothian, 1715-1729), held with the restless spirit of Thomas Maxwell, Laird of Cuil, a small estate in the parish of Buittle, in Galloway, and who in his lifetime had done a dishonourable action which tormented him beyond the grave.

As these tracts have a direct bearing on the general consideration of superstitious record in the South-west of Scotland, and as they are not particularly easy of access, it has been deemed advisable to reprint them, and include them as an appendix to this volume.

Appendix

"Surprising Story of the Devil of Glenluce," reprinted from *Satan's Invisible World*, written by George Sinclair, and printed in Edinburgh in the year 1685.

This is that famous and notable Story of the Devil of Glenluce, which I published in my *Hydrostaticks*, *anno* 1672, and which since hath been transcribed word by word by a learned pen, and published in the late book intitutled *Saducismus Triumphaius*, whom nothing but the truth thereof, and usefulness for refuting Atheism could have perswaded to transcribe. The subject matter then of this story is a true and short account of the troubles wherewith the family of one Gilbert Campbel, by profession a Weaver in the old Parish of Glenluce in Galloway, was exercised. I have adventured to publish it *de novo* in this book, first because it was but hudled up among purposes of another nature. But now I have reduced it to its own proper place. Next, because this story is more full, being enlarged with new additions, which were not in the former, and ends not so abruptly, as the other did.

It happened (says my informer, Gilbert Campbel's son, who was then a student of philosophy in the Colledge of Glasgow) that after one Alexander Agnew, a bold and sturdy beggar, who afterwards was hanged at Drumfries for blasphemy, had threatened hurt to the familie because he had not gotten such an almes as he required, the said Gilbert Campbel was often-times hindered in the exercise of his calling, and yet could not know by what means this was done. This Agnew, among many blasphemous expressions had this one, when he was interrogate by the judges whether or not he thought there was a God, he answered, he knew no God but salt, meal, and water. When the stirs began first there was a whistling heard both within and without the house. And Jennet Campbel, going one day to the well to bring home some water, was conveyed with a shril whistling about her ears, which made her say, "I would fain hear thee speake as well as whistle." Hereupon it said, after a threatening manner, "I'le cast thee Jennet into the well." The voice was most exactlie like the damsel's voice, and did resemble it to the life. The gentlewoman that heard this and was a witness thought the voice was very near to her own ears, and said the whistling was such as children use to make with their smal slender glass whistles.

About the middle of November the Foul-Fiend came on with new and extraordinary assaults, by throwing of stones in at the doors and windows and down the chimney-head, which were of great quantity and thrown with force, yet by God's providence there was not one person in the family that was hurt. This did necessitate Gilbert Campbel to reveale that to the Minister of the Parish and to some other neighbours and friends which hitherto he had suffered secretly. Notwithstanding of this, his trouble was enlarged; for not long after he found often-times his warp and threeds cut as with a pair of sizzers, and not only so, but their apparel were cut after the same manner, even while they were wearing them—their coats, bonnets, hose, shoes—but could not discern how or by what mean. Only it pleased God to preserve their persons, that the least harm was not done. Yet in the night time they had not liberty to sleep, something coming and pulling their bedcloaths and linnings off them and leaving their bodies naked. Next their chests and trunks were opened and all things in them strawed here and there. Likewise the parts of their working-instruments which had escaped were carried away and hid in holes and bores of the house, where hardly they could be found again. Nay, what ever piece of cloath or household-stuff was in any part of the house it was carried away and so cut and abused that the goodman was necessitate in all haste and speed to remove and transport the rest to a neighbour's house, and he himself compelled to quite the exercise of his calling, whereby he only maintained his family. Yet he resolved to remain in his house for

a season; during which time some persons about, not very judicious, counselled him to send his children out of the family here and there to try whom the trouble did most follow, assuring him that this trouble was not against the whole family, but against some one person or other in it, whom he too willingly obeyed. Yet, for the space of four or five dayes there were no remarkable assaults as before. The Minister hearing thereof shewed him the evil of such a course, and assured him that if he repented not and called back his children he might not expect that his trouble would end in a right way. The children that were nigh by being brought home, no trouble followed, till one of his sons called Thomas that was farest off came home. Then did the Devil begin afresh, for upon the Lord's Day following, in the afternoon, the house was set on fire; but by the help of some neighbors going home from sermon, the fire was put out and the house saved, not much loss being done. And Munday after being spent in private prayer and fasting, the house was again set on fire upon the Tuesday about nine o'clock in the morning, yet by the speedy help of neighbors it was saved, little skaith being done.

The Weaver being thus vexed and wearied both day and night, went to the Minister of the Parish, an honest and Godly man, desiring him to let his son Thomas abide with him for a time, who condescended, but withal assured him that he would find himself deceived; and so it came to pass, for notwithstanding that the lad was without the family yet were they that remained in it sore troubled both in the day time and night season, so that they were forced to wake till midnight and sometimes all the night over, during which time the persons within the family suffered many losses, as the cutting of their cloaths, the throwing of piets, the pulling down of turff and feal from the roof and walls of the house, and the stealing of their cloaths, and the pricking of their flesh and skin with pins.

Some Ministers about, having conveened at the place for a solemn humiliation, perswaded Gilbert Campbel to call back his son Thomas, notwithstanding of whatsoever hazard might follow. The boy returning home affirmed that he heard a voice speak to him, forbidding him to enter within the house or in any other place where his father's calling was exercised. Yet he entered, but was sore abused, till he was forced to return to the Minister's house again.

Upon Munday, the 12 of February, the rest of the family began to hear a voice speak to them, but could not well know from whence it came. Yet from evening till midnight too much vain discourse was kept up with Satan, and many idle and impertinent questions proposed, without that due fear of God that should have been upon their spirits under so rare and extraordinary a trial. They came that length in familiar discourse with the Foul-Thief that they were no more afrayed to keep up the clash with him than to speak to one another. In this they pleased him well, for he desired no better than to have sacrifices offered to him. The Minister, hearing of this, went to the house upon the Tuesday, being accompanied with some gentlemen, one James Bailie of Carphin, Alexander Bailie of Dunraged, Mr Robert Hay, and a gentlewoman called Mistris Douglas, whom the Minister's wife did accompanie.

At their first in-coming the Devil says, "*Quum literarum*, is good Latine." These are the first words of the Latine rudiments which schollars are taught when they go to the grammar school. He crys again, "A dog."

The Minister, thinking that he had spoken it to him, said, "He took it not ill to be reviled by Satan, since his Master had troden that path before him."

Answered Satan, "It was not you, sir, I spoke it to; I meant by the dog there," for there was a dog standing behind backs.

This passing, they all went to prayer, which being ended, they heard a voice speaking out of the ground from under a bed in the proper countrey dialect, which he did counterfeit exactly,

saying, “Would you know the witches of Glenluce? I will tell you them”—and so related four or five persons’ names that went under a bad report.

The Weaver informed the company that one of them was dead long ago.

The Devil answered and said, “It is true, she is dead long ago, but her spirit is living with us in the world.”

The Minister replied, saying (though it was not convenient to speak to such an excommunicat and intercommuned person), “The Lord rebuke thee, Satan, and put thee to silence; we are not to receive information from thee whatsoever fame any person goes under; thou are seeking to seduce this family, for Satan’s kingdom is not divided against itself.”

After which all went to prayer again, which being ended (for during the time of prayer no noise or trouble was made, except once that a loud fearful youel was heard at a distance) the Devil with many threatnings boasted and terrified the lad Tom, who had come back that day with the Minister, that if he did not depart out of the house he would set all on fire.

The Minister answered and said, “The Lord will preserve the house and the lad too, seeing he is one of the family and hath God’s warrant to tarry in it.”

The Fiend answered, “He shall not get liberty to tarry; he was once put out already, and shal not abide here, though I should pursue him to the end of the world.”

The Minister replied, “The Lord will stop thy malice against him.”

And then they all went to prayer again, which being ended, the Devil said, “Give me a spade and a shovel, and depart from the house for seven days, and I will make a grave and ly down in it, and shall trouble you no more.”

The goodman answered, “Not so much as a straw shal be given thee through God’s assistance, even though that would do it.” The Minister also added, “God shal remove thee in due time.”

The Spirit answered, “I will not remove for you; I have my commission from Christ to tarry and vex this family.”

The Minister answered, “A permission thou hast indeed, but God will stop it in due time.”

The Devil replied, “I have, sir, a commission which perhaps will last longer than your own.”

The Minister died in the year 1655, in December. The Devil had told them that he had given his commission to Tom to keep.

The company enquired at the lad, who said there was a something put into his pocket, but it did not tarry.

After this the Minister and the gentlemen arose and went to the place whence the voice seemed to come, to try if they could see or find any thing. After diligent search, nothing being found, the gentlemen began to say, “We think this voice speaks out of the children,” for some of them were in their beds.

The Foul-Spirit answered, “You lie; God shall judge you for your lying, and I and my father will come and fetch you to hell with warlock thieves:” and so the Devil discharged the gentlemen to speak any thing, saying, “Let him speak that hath a commission (meaning the Minister), for he is the servant of God.”

The gentlemen, returning back with the Minister, sat down near the place whence the voice seemed to come, and he opening his mouth spake to them after this manner: “The Lord will rebuke this spirit in his own time and cast it out.”

The Devil answering, said, “It is written in the *9th of Mark*, The Disciples could not cast him out.”

The Minister replyed, “What the Disciples could not do, yet the Lord, having hightned the parents’ faith, for His own glory did cast him out and so shall He thee.”

The Devil replyed, “It is written in the *4th of Luke*, ‘And He departed and left him for a season.’”

The Minister said, “The Lord in the dayes of His humiliation not only got the victory over Satan in that assault in the wilderness, but when he came again his success was no better, for it is written (*John 14*), ‘Behold the Prince of this World cometh and hath nothing in me,’ and being now in glory He will fulfil His promise, and (*Rom. 16*) ‘God shal bruise Satan under your feet shortly.’”

The Devil answered, “It is written (*Matth. 25*) ‘There were ten virgins, five wise & five foolish; and the bridegroom came, the foolish virgins had no oyl in their lamps, and went unto the wise to seek oyl, and the wise said, Go and buy for your selves; and while they went the bridegroom came and entered in, and the door was shut, and the foolish virgins were sent to hell’s fire.’”

The Minister answered, “The Lord knows the sincerity of His servants, and though there be sin and folly in us here, yet there is a fountain opened to the house of David for sin and for uncleanness. When He hath washen us and pardoned our sins for His name’s sake He will cast the unclean spirit out of the land.”

The Devil answered and said, “Sir, you should have cited for that place of Scripture the 13 chap. of *Zech.*,” and so he began at the first verse and repeated several verses, and concluded with these words, “‘In that day I will cause the prophet and the unclean spirit pass out of the land’; but afterwards it is written, ‘I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.’”

The Minister answered and said, “Well are we that our blessed Shepherd was smitten, and thereby hath bruised thy head, and albeit in the hour of His sufferings His Disciples forsook Him (*Matth. 26*). Yet now having ascended on high He sits in glory, and is preserving, gathering in, and turning His hand upon His little ones, and will save His poor ones in this family from thy malice.”

The Minister returning back a little and standing upon the floor, the Devil said, “I knew not these Scriptures till my father taught me them.”

Then the Minister conjured him to tell whence he was.

The Foul-Fiend replyed that he was an evil spirit come from the bottomless pit of hell to vex this house, and that Satan was his father; and presently there appeared a naked hand and an arm, from the elbow down, beating upon the floor till the house did shake again, and also he uttered a most fearful and loud cry, saying, “Come up, Father, come up; I will send my father among you; see, there he is behind your backs.”

The Minister said, “I saw indeed an hand and an arm when the stroak was given, and heard.”

The Devil said to him, “Say you that? It was not my hand, it was my father’s: my hand is more black in the loof.”

“O,” said Gilbert Campbel, “that I might see thee as well as I hear thee!”

“Would you see me?” says the Foul-Thief; “put out the candle and I shal come butt the house among you like fire balls. I shall let you see me indeed.”

Alexander Bailie of Dunraged says to the Minister, “Let us go ben and see if there be any hand to be seen.”

The Devil answered, “No, let him come ben alone; he is a good honest man, his single word may be believed.”

About this time the Devil abused Mr Robert Hay, a very honest gentleman, very ill, with his tongue, calling him witch and warlock. A little after, the Devil cryes (it seems out of purpose and in a purpose), “A witch, a witch, ther’s a witch sitting upon the ruist, take her away:” he meant a hen sitting upon the balk of the house.

These things being past, all went to prayer, during which time he was silent. Prayer being ended, the Devil answered and said, “If the goodman’s son’s prayers at the Colledge of Glasgow did not prevail with God: my father and I had wrought a mischief here ere now.”

To which Alexander Bailie of Dunraged replied, “Well, well, I see you confess there is a God, and that prayer prevails with Him, and therefore we must pray to God, and commit the event to Him.”

To whom the Devil replied, “Yea, sir, you speak of prayer with your broad-lipped hat (for the gentleman had lately gotten a hat in the fashion with broad lipps). I’le bring a pair of shears from my father, which shall clip the lipps off it a little.” Whereupon he presently imagined that he heard and felt a pair of shears going round about his hat, which caused him lift it to see if the Foul-Thief had medled with it.

During this time several things, but of less moment, passed, as that he would have Tom a merchant, Rob a smith, John a minister, and Hue a lawier, all which in some measure came to pass. As to Jennet, the goodman’s daughter, he cryes to her, “Jennet Campbel, Jennet Campbel, wilt thou cast me thy belt?”

Quoth she, “what a widdy would thou do with my belt?”

“I would fain (says he) fasten my loose bones closs together with it.”

A younger daughter sitting busking her puppies, as young girls use to do, being threatned by the Fiend that he would ding out her harns, that is, brain her, answered without being concerned, “No, if God be to the fore,” and so fell to her work again.

The goodwife of the house having brought out some bread was breaking it, to give everyone of the company a piece.

Cryes he, “Grissel Wyllie, Grissel Wyllie, give me a piece of that hard bread (for so they call their oat cakes). I have gotten nothing this day but a bit from Marrit”—that is, as they speak in that countrey, Margaret.

The Minister said, “Beware of that, for it is a sacrificing to the Devil.”

The girle was called for, and asked if she gave him any hard bread. “No,” says she, “but when I was eating my due piece this morning something came and clicked it out of my hand.”

The evening being now far spent, it was thought fit that every one should withdraw to his own home. Then did the Devil cry out fearfully, “Let not the Minister goe home, I shall burn the house if he go,” and many other ways did he threaten.

After the Minister had gone foorth Gilbert Campbel was very instant with him to tarry, whereupon he returned, all the rest going home. When he came into the house the Devil gave a great gaff of laughter: “You have now, sir, done my bidding.”

“Not thine,” answered the other, “but in obedience to God have I returned to bear this man companie, whom thou doest afflict.” Then did the Minister call upon God, and when prayer was ended he discharged the Weaver and all the persons of the familie to speak a word to the Devil, and when it spake that they should only kneel down and speak to God.

The Devil then roared mightily and cryed out, “What! will ye not speake to me? I shall strike the bairns and do all manner of mischief.”

But after that time no answer was made to it, and so for a long time no speech was heard. Several times hath he beat the children in their beds, and the claps of his loof upon their buttocks would have been heard, but without any trouble to them. While the Minister and gentlemen were standing at the door readie to go home the Minister’s wife and the goodwife were within.

Then cryed Satan, “Grissel, put out the candle.”

Sayes she to the Minister’s wife, “Shall I do it?”

“No,” says the other, “For then you shal obey the Devil.”

Upon this he cryes again with a louder shout, “Put out the candle.” The candle still burns. The third time he cries, “Put out the candle,” and no obedience being given to him he did so often reiterate these words and magnify his voice that it was astonishment to hear him, which made them stop their ears, they thinking the sound was just at their ears. At last the candle was put out. “Now,” says he, “I’le trouble you no more this night.”

I must insert here what I heard from one of the Ministers of that Presbytrie, who with the rest were appointed to meet at the Weaver’s house for prayer and other exercises of that kind. When the day came, five only met. But before they went in they stood a while in the croft, which layes round about the house, consulting what to do. They resolved upon two things—First, there should be no words of conjuration used, as commanding him in the name of God to tell whence he was or to depart from the familie, for which they thought they had no call from God. Secondly, that when the Devil spake none should answer him, but hold on in their worshipping of God and the duties they were called to. When all of them had prayed by turns and three of them had spoken a word or two from the Scripture, they prayed again, and then ended without any disturbance. When that brother who informed me had gone out, one Hue Nisbet, one of the company, came running after him, desiring him to come back, for he had begun to whistle. “No,” sayes the other, “I tarried as long as God called me, but go in again I will not.”

After this the said Gilbert suffered much loss, and had many sad nights, not two nights in one week free, and thus it continued till April; from April till July he had some respite and ease, but after he was molested with new assaults, and even their victuals were so abused that the family was in hazard of starving, and that which they eat gave them not their ordinary satisfaction they were wont to find.

In this sore and sad affliction Gilbert Campbel resolved to make his addresses to the Synod of Presbyters for advice and counsel what to do, which was appointed to conveen in October, 1655—namely, whether to forsake the house or not? The Synod, by their committy appointed to meet at Glenluce in February, 1656, thought fit that a solemn humiliation should be kept through all the bounds of the Synod; and, among other causes, to request God in behalf of that afflicted family, which, being done carefully, the event was that his troubles grew less till April, and from April to August he was altogether free. About which time the Devil began with new assaults, and taking the ready meat that was in the house did sometimes hide it in holes by the door-posts, and at other times did hide it under the beds, and sometimes among

the bedcloaths, and under the linnings, and at last did carry it quite away, till nothing was left there, save bread and water. This minds me of a small passage, as a proof of what is said. The goodwife one morning making pottage for the children's breakfasts had the tree-plate, wherein the meal lay, snatched from her quickly.

"Well," says she, "let me have the plate again." Whereupon it came flying at her without any skaith done. 'Tis like if she had sought the meale too she might have got it; such is his civility when he is entreated. A small homage will please him ere he want all. After this he exercised his malice and cruelty against all persons in the family in wearying them in the night time by stirring and moving thorow the house, so that they had no rest for noise, which continued all the moneth of August after this manner. After which time the Devil grew yet worse by roaring, and terrifying them by casting of stones, by striking them with staves on their beds in the night time. And upon the 18 of September, about midnight, he cryed out with a loud voice, "I shall burn the house." And about three or four nights after he set one of the beds on fire, which was soon put out without any prejudice, except the bed itself.

Thus I have written a short and true account of all the material passages which occurred. To write every particular, especially of lesser moment, would fill a large volum. The goodman lived several years after this in the same house; and it seems that by some conjuration or other the Devil suffered himself to be put away, and gave the Weaver a peaceable habitation. This Weaver has been a very odd man that endured so long these marvellous disturbances.

"A True Relation of an Apparition, Expressions and Actings, of a Spirit which infested the house of Andrew Mackie, in Ringcroft of Stocking, in the Parish of Rerwick, in the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright, in Scotland." Printed in Edinburgh by George Mosman, and sold at his shop in the Parliament Close, 1696.

Whereas many are desirous to know the truth of the matter, as to the Evil Spirit and its actings, that troubled the family of Andrew Mackie, in Ringcroft of Stocking, &c., and are liable to be mis-informed, as I do find by the reports that come to my own ears of that matter; therefore that satisfaction may be given, and such mistakes cured or prevented, I, the Minister of the said parish (who was present several times, and was witness to many of its actings, and have heard an account of the whole of its methods and actings from the persons present, towards whom, and before whom it did act), have given the ensuing and short account of the whole matter, which I can attest to be the very truth as to that affair; and before I come to the relation itself, I premise these things with respect to what might have been the occasion and rise of that spirit's appearing and acting.

1. The said Andrew Mackie being a mason to his employment, 'tis given out, that when he took the mason word, he devoted his first child to the Devil; but I am certainly informed he never took the same, and knows not what that word is. He is outwardly moral; there is nothing known to his life and conversation, but honest, civil, and harmless, beyond many of his neighbours; doth delight in the company of the best; and when he was under the trouble of that evil spirit, did pray to the great satisfaction of many. As for his wife and children, none have imputed any thing to them as the rise of it, nor is there any ground, for aught I know, for any to do so.

2. Whereas it is given out that a woman, *sub mala fama*, did leave some clothes in that house in the custody of the said Andrew Mackie, and died before they were given up to her, and he and his wife should have kept some of them back from her friends. I did seriously pose both him and his wife upon the matter; they declared they knew not what things were left, being bound up in a sack, but did deliver entirely to her friends all they received from the woman, which I am apt to believe.

3. Whereas one, —— Macknaught, who sometime before possessed the house, did not thrive in his own person or goods. It seems he had sent his son to a witch-wife who lived then at the Routing Bridge, in the parish of Irongray, to enquire what might be the cause of the decay of his person and goods. The youth, meeting with some foreign soldiers, went abroad to Flanders, and did not return with an answer. Some years after there was one John Redick in this parish who, having had occasion to go abroad, met with the said young Macknaught in Flanders, and they knowing other, Macknaught enquired after his father and other friends; and finding the said John Redick was to go home, desired him to go to his father, or whoever dwelt in the Ringcroft, and desire them to raise the door threshold, and search till they found a tooth, and burn it, for none who dwelt in that house would thrive till that was done. The said John Redick coming home, and finding the old man Macknaught dead and his wife out of that place, did never mention the matter nor further mind it till this trouble was in Andrew Mackie's family, then he spoke of it and told the matter to myself. Betwixt Macknaught's death and Andrew Mackie's possession of this house there was one Thomas Telfair who possessed it some years. What way he heard the report of what the witch-wife had said to Macknaught's son I cannot tell; but he searched the door threshold and found something like a tooth, did compare it with the tooth of a man, horse, nolt, and sheep (as he said to me), but could not say which it did resemble, only it did resemble a tooth. He did cast it into the fire, where it burnt like a candle or so much tallow; yet he never knew any trouble about that house by night or by day, before or after, during his possession. These things premised being suspected to have been the occasion of the troubles, and there being no more known as to them than what is now declared, I do think the matter still unknown what may have given a rise thereto, but leaving this I subjoin the matter as follows:

In the month of February, 1695, the said Andrew Mackie had some young beasts, which in the night-time were still loosed and their bindings broken, he taking it to be the unrulyness of the beasts, did make stronger and stronger bindings, of withes and other things, but still all were broken. At last he suspected it to be some other thing, whereupon he removed them out of that place; and the first night thereafter one of them was bound with a hair-tedder to the back of the house, so strait that the feet of the beast only touched the ground, but could move no way else, yet it sustained no hurt. Another night, when the family were all sleeping, there was the full of a back creel of peats set together in the midst of the house floor, and fire put in them; the smoke wakened the family, otherwise the house had been burnt; yet nothing all the time was either seen or heard.

Upon the 7th of March there were stones thrown in the house in all the places of it; but it could not be discovered from whence they came, what, or who threw them. After this manner it continued till the Sabbath, now and then throwing both in the night and day, but was busiest throwing in the night-time.

Upon Saturday, the family being all without, the children coming in saw something which they thought to be a body sitting by the fireside, with a blanket (or cloth) about it, whereat they were afraid. The youngest, being a boy about nine or ten years of age, did chide the rest saying, "Why are you feared, let us saine (or bless) ourselves, and then there is no ground to fear it." He perceived the blanket to be his, and saining (or blessing) himself, ran and pulled the blanket from it saying, "Be what it will, it hath nothing to do with my blanket;" and then they found it to be a fourfooted stool set upon the end, and the blanket cast over it.

Upon the Sabbath, being the 11th of March, the crook and pot-cleps were taken away, and were awanting four days, and were found at last on a loft, where they had been sought several times before.—This is attested by Charles Macklellan of Colline, and John Cairns in Hardhills. It was observed that the stones which hit any person had not half their natural

weight; and the throwing was more frequent on the Sabbath than at other times, and especially in time of prayer, above all other times, it was busiest then, throwing most at the person praying. The said Andrew Mackie told the matter to me upon Sabbath after sermon.

Upon the Tuesday thereafter I went to the house, did stay a considerable time with them and prayed twice, and there was no trouble. Then I came out with a resolution to leave the house, and as I was standing speaking to some men at the barn end I saw two little stones drop down on the croft at a little distance from me, and then immediately some crying out of the house that it was become as ill as ever within; whereupon I went into the house again, and as I was at prayer it threw several stones at me, but they did no hurt, being very small; and after there was no more trouble till the eighteenth day of March, and then it began as before, and threw more frequently greater stones, whose strokes were sorer where they hit, and thus it continued to the 21st. Then I went to the house, and stayed a great part of the night, but was greatly troubled; stones and several other things were thrown at me, I was struck several times on the sides and shoulders very sharply with a great staff, so that those who were present heard the noise of the strokes. That night it tore off the bedside, and rapped upon the chests and boards as one calling for access.—This is attested by Charles Macklellan of Colline, William Mackminn, and John Tait in Torr. That night as I was once at prayer, leaning on a bedside, I felt something pressing on my arm; I, casting my eyes thither, perceived a little white hand and arm from the elbow down, but presently it evanished. It is to be observed that, notwithstanding of all that was felt and heard, from the first to the last of this matter, there was never anything seen, except that hand I saw; and a friend of the said Andrew Mackie's said he saw as it were a young boy about the age of fourteen years, with gray clothes, and a bonnet on his head, but presently disappeared, as also what the three children saw sitting at the fireside.

Upon the 22d the trouble still increased, both against the family and against the neighbours who came to visit them, by throwing stones and beating them with staves; so that some were forced to leave the house before their inclination.—This is attested by Charles Macklellan in Colline, and Andrew Tait in Torr. Some it would have met as they came to the house, and stoned with stones about the yards, and in like manner stoned as they went from the house, of whom Thomas Telfair in Stocking was one. It made a little wound on the said Andrew Mackie's brow; did thrust several times at his shoulder, he not regarding; at last it gripped him so by the hair, that he thought something like nails of fingers scratched his skin. It dragged severals up and down the house by the cloathes.—This is attested by Andrew Tait. It gripped one Keige, miller in Auchencairn, so by his side that he entreated his neighbours to help, and cried it would rive the side from him. That night it lifted the cloathes off the children as they were sleeping in bed, and beat them on the hips as if it had been with one's hand, so that all that were in the house heard it. The door bar and other things would go through the house as if a person had been carrying them in their hand, yet nothing seen doing it.—This is attested by John Telfair in Auchinleck, and others. It rattled on the chests and bedsides with a staff, and made a great noise; and thus it continued by throwing stones, striking with staves and rattling in the house, till the 2d of April. At night it cryed "Whist, whist," at every sentence in the close of prayer; and it whistled so distinctly that the dog barked and ran to the door, as if one had been calling to hound him.

Aprile 3d, it whistled several times and cryed "Whist, whist."—This is attested by Andrew Tait.

Upon the 4th of April Charles Macklellan of Colline, landlord, with the said Andrew Mackie, went to a certain number of ministers met at Buittle, and gave them an account of the matter, whereupon these ministers made public prayers for the family, and two of their number, viz.,

Mr Andrew Ewart, minister of Kells, and Mr John Murdo, minister of Crossmichael, came to the house and spent that night in fasting and praying, but it was very cruel against them, especially by throwing great stones, some of them about half a stone weight. It wounded Mr Andrew Ewart twice in the head, to the effusion of his blood, it pulled off his wig in time of prayer, and when he was holding out his napkin betwixt his hands it cast a stone in the napkin and therewith threw it from him. It gave Mr John Murdo several sore strokes, yet the wounds and bruises received did soon cure. There were none in the house that night escaped from its fury and cruelty. That night it threw a fiery peat amongst the people, but it did no hurt, it only disturbed them in time of prayer. And also in the dawning as they rose from prayer the stones poured down on all who were in the house to their hurt.—This is attested by Mr Andrew Ewart, Mr John Murdo, Charles Macklellan, and John Tait.

Upon the 5th of April it set some thatch straw on fire which was in the barn yard; at night, the house being very throng with neighbours, the stones were still thrown down among them. As the said Andrew Mackie and his wife went out to bring in some peats to the fire, when she came to the door she found a broad stone to shake under her foot, which she never knew to be loose before; she resolved with herself to see what was beneath it in the morning thereafter.

Upon the 6th of April, when the house was quiet, she went to the stone and there found seven small bones, with blood and some flesh, all closed in a piece of old suddled paper; the blood was fresh and bright. The sight whereof troubled her, and being afraid laid all down again and ran to Colline's house, being a quarter of a mile distant; but in that time it was worse than ever before, by throwing stones and fire balls in and about the house, but the fire as it lighted did evanish. In that time it threw a hot stone into the bed betwixt the children, which burnt through the bed-cloathes; and after it was taken out by the man's eldest son, and had layen on the floor more than an hour and a half, the said Charles Macklellan of Colline could not hold it in his hand for heat.—This is attested by Charles Macklellan. It thrust a staff through the wall of the house above the children in the bed, shook it over them and groaned. When Colline came to the house he went to prayer before he offered to lift the bones; all the time he was at prayer it was most cruel, but as soon as he took up the bones the trouble ceased.—This is attested by Charles Macklellan. He sent them presently to me, upon sight whereof I went immediately to the house. While I was at prayer it threw great stones which hit me, but did no hurt, then there was no more trouble that night.

The 7th of April being Sabbath, it began again and threw stones, and wounded William Macminn, a blacksmith, on the head; it cast a plough-sock at him and also a trough stone upwards of three stone weight, which did fall upon his back, yet he was not hurt thereby.—Attested by William Macminn. It set the house twice on fire, yet there was no hurt done, in respect some neighbours were in the house who helped to quench it. At night in the twilight as John Mackie, the said Andrew Mackie's eldest son, was coming home, near to the house, there was an extraordinary light fell about him and went before him to the house with a swift motion; that night it continued after its wonted manner.

April 8th, in the morning as Andrew Mackie went down the close he found a letter both written and sealed with blood. It was directed on the back thus, "3 years thou shall have to repent a nett it well," and within was written, "Wo be to thee Scotland Repent and tak warning for the doors of haven ar all Redy bart against thee, I am sent for a warning to thee to flee to God yet troublt shall this man be for twenty days, repent repent repent Scotland or else thou shall." In the middle of the day the persons alive who lived in that house since it was built, being about twenty-eight years, were conveined by appointment of the civil magistrate before Colline, myself, and others, and did all touch the bones, in respect there was some

suspicion of secret murder committed in the place, but nothing was found to discover the same.

Upon the 9th of April the letter and bones were sent to the ministers, who were all occasionally met at Kirkcudbright; they appointed five of their number, viz., Mr John Murdo, Mr James Monteith, Mr John Macmillan, Mr Samuel Spalding, and Mr William Falconer, with me, to go to the house and spend so much time as we were able in fasting and prayer.

Upon the 10th of April we went to the house, and no sooner did I begin to open my mouth but it threw stones at me and all within the house, but still worst at him who was at duty. It came often with such force upon the house that it made all the house to shake, it broke a hole through the timber and thatch of the house and powred in great stones, one whereof, more than a quarter weight, fell upon Mr Monteith's back, yet he was not hurt. It threw another with great force at him when he was praying, bigger than a man's fist, which hit him on the breast, yet he was neither hurt nor moved thereby. It was thought fit that one of our number with another person should go by turns and stand under the hole in the outside, so there was no more trouble from that place; but the barn being joined to the end of the house, it brake down the barn door and mid wall and threw stones up the house, but did no great hurt. It gripped and handled the legs of some as with a man's hand, it hoised up the feet of others while standing on the ground, thus it did to William Lennox of Millhouse, myself, and others. In this manner it continued till ten o'clock at night, but after that there was no more trouble while we were about the house.—This is attested by Messrs James Monteith, John Murdo, Samuel Spalding, Wm. Falconer, William Lennox, and John Tait.

The 11th, 12th, and 13th it was worse than ever it was before, for not one that came into the house did escape heavy strokes. There was one Andrew Tait in Torr, as he was coming to stay with the family all night, by the way his dog catched a thulmart, when he came in he cast it by in the house; thereafter there were other three young men who came in also, and when they were all at prayer the Evil Spirit beat them with the dead thulmart and threw it before them. The three who knew it not to be in the house were greatly affrighted, especially one Samuel Thomson, a chapman, whom it also gripped by the side and back, and thrust as if it had been an hand beneath his clothes and into his pockets, he was so affrighted that he took sickness immediately.—This is attested by Andrew Tait.

The 14th being the Sabbath, it set some straw on fire that was in the barn yard, and threw stones till ten o'clock at night; it threw an dike spade at the said Andrew Mackie, with the mouth toward him, but he received no hurt; while an meal-sive was tossed up and down the house, the said Andrew Mackie takes hold of it, and as it were with difficulty gets the grip keeped, at last all within the rim is torn out. Thereafter it threw a handful of the sive rolled together at Thomas Robertson in Airds, who was witness to this, yet in all its actings there was never any thing seen, but what I mentioned before.

Upon the 15th of April, William Anderson, a drover, and James Paterson, his son-in-law, came to the house with Colline in the evening. Colline going home a while within night, the said Andrew Mackie sent his sons to convey him; as they returned they were cruelly stoned, and the stones rolled amongst their legs, like to break them. Shortly after they came in, it wounded William Anderson on the head, to the great effusion of his blood. In time of prayer it whistled, groaned, and cryed "Whist, whist."—This is attested by John Cairns.

The 16th it continued whisting, groaning, whistling, and throwing stones in time of prayer; it cryed "Bo, bo," and kick, cuck, and shook men back and forward, and hoised them up as if to lift them off their knees.—This is attested by Andrew Tait.

The whole family went from the house, and left five honest neighbours to wait on the same all night; but there was no hurt done to them, nor the family where they were, nor to those neighbours who stayed in the said Andrew Mackie's house, only the cattle were cast over other to the hazard of killing them, as they were bound to the stakes, and some of them were loosed.—This is attested by John Cairns.

Upon the 18th they returned to their house again, and there was no hurt to them or their cattle that night, except in a little house, where there were some sheep, it coupled them together in pairs by the neck with straw ropes, made of an bottle of straw, which it took off an loft in the stable and carried to the sheep house, which is three or four pair of butts (arrow shots) distant, and it made more ropes than it needed for binding the sheep, which it left beside the straw in the sheep-house.—This is attested by Andrew Tait.

Upon the 19th it fired the straw in the barn, but Andrew Mackie put it out, (being there threshing) without doing any harm. It shot staves through the wall at him, but did no hurt.

The 20th, it continued throwing stones, whistling, and whisting, with all its former words. When it hit any person, and said, "Take you that till you get more," that person was sure immediately of another; but when it said, "Take you that," the person got no more for a while.—This is attested by John Tait.

The 21st, 22nd, and 23rd it continued casting stones, beating with staves, and throwing peat mud in the faces of all in the house, especially in time of prayer, with all its former tricks.

The 24th being a day of humiliation appointed to be kept in the parish for that cause, all that day from morning till night it continued in a most fearful manner without intermission, throwing stones with such cruelty and force that all in the house feared lest they should be killed.

The 25th it threw stones all night, but did no great hurt.

The 26th it threw stones in the evening and knocked several times on a chest, as one to have access; and began to speak and call those that were sitting in the house witches and rooks, and said it would take them to hell. The people then in the house said among themselves, if it had any to speak to it now, it would speak. In the meantime Andrew Mackie was sleeping. They wakened him, and then he, hearing it say "Thou shalt be troubled till Tuesday," asked, "Who gave thee a commission?"

To whom it answered, "God gave me a commission, and I am sent to warn the land to repent, for a judgment is to come if the land do not quickly repent," and commanded him to reveal it upon his peril; and if the land did not repent it said it would go to its father and get a commission to return with a hundred worse than itself, and would trouble every particular family in the land.

Andrew Mackie said to those that were with him, "If I should tell this I would not be believed."

Then it said, "Fetch betters; fetch the Minister of the parish and two honest men upon Tuesday's night, and I shall declare before them what I have to say." Then it said, "Praise me and I will whistle to you; worship me and I will trouble you no more."

Then Andrew Mackie said, "The Lord who delivered the three children out of the fiery furnace, deliver me and mine this night from the temptations of Satan."

Then it replied, "You might as well have said, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego." In the meantime, while Andrew Mackie was speaking, there was one James Telfair in Buittle who was adding a word, to whom it said, "You are basely bred, meddling in other men's

discourse, wherein you are not concerned." It likewise said, "Remove your goods, for I will burn the house."

He answered, "The Lord stop Satan's fury and hinder him of his designs."

Then it said, "I will do it, or you shall guide well."—All this is attested by John Tait in Torr and several others who cannot subscribe.

Upon the 27th it set fire to the house seven times.

The 28th, being the Sabbath, from sun-rising till sun-setting it still set the house on fire—as it was quenched in one part, instantly it was fired in another—and in the evening, when it could not get its designs fulfilled in burning the house, it pulled down the end of the house, all the stonework thereof, so that they could not abide in it any longer, but went and kindled their fire in the stable.

Upon the Sabbath night it pulled one of the children out of the bed, gripping him, as he thought, by the craig and shoulders; and took up a block of a tree as great as a plough-head, and held above the children, saying, "If I had a commission I would brain them." Thus it expressed itself, in the hearing of all who were in the house.—Attested by William Macminn and John Crosby.

The 29th, being Monday, it continued setting fire to the house. The said Andrew Mackie finding the house so frequently set on fire, and being weary quenching it, he went and put out all the fire that was about the house, and poured water upon the hearth; yet after it fired the house several times, when there was no fire within a quarter of a mile of the house.—This is attested by Charles Macklellan and John Cairnes. In the midst of the day, as Andrew Mackie was threshing in the barn, it whispered in the wall and then cried, "Andrew, Andrew," but he gave no answer to it. Then with an austere angry voice as it were, it said, "Speak;" yet he gave no answer. Then it said, "Be not troubled; you shall have no more trouble, except some casting of stones upon Tuesday to fulfill the promise," and said, "Take away your straw." I went to the house about 11 o'clock; it fired the house once after I went there. I stayed all night till betwixt three and four on Tuesday's morning, during which time there was no trouble about the house, except two little stones dropped down at the fireside as we were sitting down at our first entry. A little after I went away it began to throw stones as formerly.—This is attested by Charles Macklellan and John Tait.

Upon Tuesday's night, being the 30th of April, Charles Macklellan of Colline, with several neighbours, were in the barn. As he was at prayer he observed a black thing in the corner of the barn, and it did encrease as if it would fill the whole house. He could not discern it to have any form but as if it had been a black cloud; it was affrightning to them all, and then it threw bear-chaff and other mud upon their faces; and after did gripp severals that were in the house by the middle of the body, by the arms and other parts of their bodies, so strait that some said for five days thereafter that they thought they felt these gripps. After an hour or two of the night was thus past there was no more trouble.—This is attested by Charles Macklellan, Thomas Macminn, Andrew Paline, John Cairnes, and John Tait.

Upon Wednesday's night, being the 1st of May, it fired a little sheep-house; the sheep were got out safe, but the sheep-house was wholly burnt. Since there has not been any trouble about the house by night nor by day.

Now all things aforesaid, being of undoubted verity, therefore I conclude with that of the Apostle, *1 Peter v., 8-9*, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist steadfast in the faith."

This relation is attested, as to what they particularly saw, heard, and felt, by Andrew Ewart, minister of Kells; James Monteith, minister of Borgue; John Murdo, minister of Crossmichael; Samuel Spalding, minister of Parton; William Falconer, minister of Kelton; Charles Macklellan of Colline, William Lennox of Millhouse, Andrew Tait in Torr, John Tait in Torr, John Cairns in Hardhills, William Macminn, John Crosby, Thomas Macminn, Andrew Paline, &c.

"The Laird o' Coul's Ghost: an Eighteenth Century Chapbook. An Account of Mr Maxwell, Laird of Coul, his Appearance after Death to Mr Ogilvie, a Minister of the present Establishment at Innerwick." (Abridged.)

Upon the third day of February, 1722, at seven o'clock at night, after I had parted with Thurston [his name Cant], and was coming up the Burial Road, one came riding up after me: upon hearing the noise of his horse's feet, I took it to be Thurston, but upon looking back, and seeing the horse of a greyish colour, I called "Who is there?" The answer was, "The Laird of Coul [his name Maxwell], be not afraid." Then looking to him by the help of the dark light which the moon afforded, I took him to be Collector Castellow designing to put a trick upon me, and immediately I struck at him with all my force with my cane, thinking I should leave upon him a mark, to make him remember his presumption; but being sensible, I aimed as well as ever I did in my life, yet my cane finding no resistance, but flying out of my hand the distance of about 60 feet, and observing it by its white head, I dismounted and took it up, and had some difficulty in mounting again, what by the ramping of my horse and what by reason of a certain kind of trembling throughout my whole joints, something likewise of anger had its share in the confusion; for, as I thought, he laughed when my staff flew away. Coming up with him again, who halted all the time I sought my staff, I asked once more "Who he was?" He answered, "The Laird of Coul." I enquired, "If he was the Laird of Coul, what brought him hither?" and "What was his business with me?"

Coul—The reason of my waiting on you is that I know you are disposed to do for me a thing which none of your brethren in Nithsdale will so much as attempt, though it serve to ever so good purposes. I told him I would never refuse to do a thing to serve a good purpose, if I thought I was obliged to do it as my duty. He answered, since I had undertaken what he found few in Nithsdale would, for he had tried some upon that subject, who were more obliged to him than ever I was, or to any person living: I drew my horse, and halted in surprise, asking what I had undertaken?

Ogilvie—Pray, Coul, who informed you that I talked at that rate?

Coul—You must know that we are acquainted with many things that the living know nothing about. These things you did say, and much more to that purpose; and all that I want is that you fulfil your promise and deliver my commissions to my loving wife.

Ogilvie—'Tis a pity, Coul, that you who know so many things, should not know the difference between an absolute and a conditional promise.

But did I ever say that if you would come to Innerwick and employ me that I would go all the way to Dumfries upon that errand? That is what never so much as once entered into my thought.

Coul—What was in your thought I do not pretend to know, but I can depend upon my information that these were your words; but I see you are in some disorder; I will wait on you again, when you have more presence of mind.

By the time we were got to James Dickson's inclosure below the churchyard, and while I was collecting in my mind whether ever I had spoken these words he alleged, he broke from me

through the churchyard with greater violence than ever any man on horseback is capable of, and with such a singing and buzzing noise as put me in greater disorder than I was all the time I was with him. I came to my house, and my wife observed something more than ordinary paleness in my countenance, and would allege that something ailed me. I called for a dram and told her I was a little uneasy. After I found myself a little eased and refreshed, I retired to my closet to meditate on this the most astonishing adventure of my whole life.

The Second Conference.

Upon the 5th of March, 1722. Being at Blarehead baptising the shepherd's child, I came off at sunsetting, or a very little after. Near Will. White's march the Laird of Coul came up with me on horseback as formerly, and, after his first salutation, bid me not be afraid, for he would do me no harm. I told him I was not in the least afraid, in the name of God and of Christ my Saviour, that he would do the least harm to me; for I knew that He in whom I trusted was stronger than all them put together, and if any of them should attempt even to do the horse I rode upon harm, as you have done to Dr Menzies' man,[46] if it be true that is said, and generally believed about Dumfries, I have free access to complain to my Lord and Master, to the lash of whose resentment you are as much liable now as before.

Coul—You need not multiply words upon that head, for you are as safe with me and safer, if safer can be, than when I was alive.

I said—Well then, Coul, let me have a peaceable and easy conversation with you for the time we ride together, and give me some information about the affairs of the other world, for no man inclines to lose his time in conversing with the dead without having a prospect of hearing and learning something that may be useful.

Coul—Well, sir, I will satisfy you as far as I think it proper and convenient. Let me know what information you want from me.

Ogilvie—Well, then, what sort of body is it that you appear in, and what sort of a horse is it that you ride on that appears so full of mettle?

Coul—You may depend upon it 'tis not the same body that I was witness to your marriage in, nor in which I died, for that is in the grave rotting; but it is such a body as answers me in a moment, for I can fly as fast as my soul can do without it, so that I can go to Dumfries and return again before you ride twice the length of your horse: nay, if I incline to go to London, or to Jerusalem, or to the moon, if you please, I can perform all these journeys equally soon, for it costs me nothing but a thought or wish; for this body you see is as fleet as your thought, for in the same moment of time that you carry your thoughts to Rome I can go there in person. And for my horse, he is much like myself, for 'tis Andrew Johnstoun, who was seven years my tenant, and he died 48 hours before me.

Ogilvie—So it seems when Andrew Johnstoun inclines to ride you must serve him for a horse, as he now does you?

The Third Conference.

Upon the 9th of April, 1722, as I was returning from Old Hamstocks, Coul struck up with me upon the back, at the foot of the ruinous inclosure before we come to Dodds. I told him his last conversation had proven so acceptable to me that I was well pleased to see him again,

[46] The first appearance that Coul made was to Dr Menzies' servant at a time he was watering his master's horse. At some subsequent appearance, while the lad was upon the same business, whether Coul had done him any real harm, or that the lad had fallen from his horse through fear and contusion, is uncertain, but so it was that the lad was found dead on the road.

and that there was a vast number of things which I wanted to inform myself further of, if he would be so good as to satisfy me.

Coul—Last time we met I refused you nothing that you asked, and now I expect you will refuse me nothing that I ask.

Ogilvie—Nothing, sir, that is in my power, or that I can with safety to my reputation and character. What then are your demands upon me?

Coul—All I desire is that, as you promised that Sabbath day, you will go to my wife, who now possesses all my effects, and tell her the following particulars, and desire her in my name to rectify these matters. First, that I was justly owing to Provost Crosby £500 Scots, and three years' interest; but upon hearing of his death, my good-brother (the laird of Chapel) and I did forge a discharge narrating the date of the bond, the sum, and other particulars, with this onerous clause that at that time it was fallen by and could not be found, with an obligation on the Provost's part to deliver up the bond as soon as he could hit upon it, and this discharge was dated three months before the Provost's death; and when his only son and successor, Andrew Crosby, wrote to me concerning this bond, I came to him and showed him that discharge, which silenced him, so that I got my bond without more ado. And when I heard of Robert Kennedy's death, with the same help of Chapel, I got a bill upon him for £190 sterling, which I got full and compleat payment of, and Chapel got the half. When I was in Dumfries the day Thomas Greer died, to whom I was owing an account of £36 sterling, Chapel, my good-brother, at that time was at London, and not being able of myself, being but a bad writer, to get a discharge of the account, which I wanted exceedingly, I met accidentally with Robert Boyd, a poor writer lad in Dumfries. I took him to Mrs Carrick's, gave him a bottle of wine and told him that I had paid Thomas Greer's account, but wanted a discharge, and if he would help me to it I would reward him. He flew away from me in great passion, saying he would rather be hanged, but if I had a mind for these things I had best wait till Chapel came home. This gave me great trouble, fearing that what he and I had formerly done was no secret. I followed Boyd to the street, made an apology that I was jesting, commended him for his honesty, and took him solemnly engaged that he should not repeat what had passed. I sent for my cousin Barnhourie, your good-brother, who with no difficulty, for one guinea and a half undertook and performed all that I wanted, and for one guinea more made me up a discharge for £200 Scots, which I was owing to your father-in-law and his friend Mr Morehead, which discharge I gave in to John Ewart when he required the money, and he, at my desire, produced it to you, which you sustained. A great many of the like instances were told, of which I cannot remember the persons' names and sums. But, added he, what vexes me more than all these is the injustice I did to Homer Maxwell, tenant to Lord Nithsdale, for whom I was factor. I had borrowed 2000 merks from him, 500 of which he borrowed from another hand, and I gave him my bond. For reasons I contrived, I obliged him to secrecy. He died within the year. He had nine children, and his wife had died a month before himself. I came to seal up his papers for my lord's security. His eldest daughter entreated me to look through them all, and to give her an account what was their stock and what was their debt. I very willingly undertook it, and in going through his papers I put my own bond in my pocket. His circumstances proved bad, and the nine children are now starving. These things I desire you to represent to my wife; take her brother with you, and let them be immediately rectified, for she has sufficient fund to do it upon, and, if that were done, I think I would be easy and happy. Therefore I hope you will make no delay.

Ogilvie—After a short pause I answered—'Tis a good errand, Coul, that you are sending me to do justice to the oppressed and injured; but notwithstanding that I see myself among the rest that come in for £200 Scots, yet I beg a little time to consider on the matter.

The Fourth Conference.

Upon the 10th of April, 1722, coming from Old Camus, upon the post road I met with Coul, as formerly, upon the head of the path called the *Pease*. He asked me if I had considered the matter he had recommended? I told him I had, and was in the same opinion that I was of when we parted: that I could not possibly undertake his commission unless he would give it in writing under his hand. I wanted nothing but reason to determine me, not only in that, but all other affairs of my life. I added that the list of his grievances was so long that I could not possibly remember them without being in writing.

I know, said he, that this is a mere evasion; but tell me if your neighbour, the laird of Thurston, will do it? I would gladly wait upon him.

Ogilvie—I am sure, said I, he will not, and if he inclined so I would do what I could to hinder him, for I think he has as little concern in these matters as I. But tell me, Coul, is it not as easy for you to write your story as it is to tell it, or to ride on—what-is-it-you-call-him? for I have forgotten your horse's name.

Coul—No, sir, 'tis not, and perhaps I may convince you of it afterwards.

Ogilvie—I would be glad to hear a reason that is solid for your not speaking to your wife yourself. But, however, any rational creature may see what a fool I would make of myself if I should go to Dumfries and tell your wife that you had appeared to me and told me of so many forgeries and villainies which you had committed, and that she behoved to make reparation. The event might, perhaps, be that she would scold me; for as 'tis very probable, she will be loth to part with any money she possesses, and therefore tell me I was mad, or possibly might pursue me for calumny. How could I vindicate myself? how should I prove that ever you had spoken with me? Mr Paton and the rest of my brethren would tell me that it was a devil who had appeared to me, and why should I repeat these things as truth, which he that was a liar from the beginning had told me? Chapel and Barnhourie would be upon my top and pursue me before the Commissary, and everybody will look upon me as brainsick or mad. Therefore, I entreat you, do not insist upon sending me an April errand. The reasonableness of my demand I leave to your consideration, as you did your former to mine, for I think what I ask is very just. But dropping these matters till our next interview, give me leave to enter upon some more diverting subject; and I do not know, Coul, but through the information given to me, you may do as much service to mankind as the redress of all the wrongs you have mentioned would amount to, &c.

Glossary

The student of Scots dialect will not always find the quoted vernacular running through the text quite pure, many words having been unconsciously modified by a too free use of phonetic spelling.

A

Adder-stane, the adder-bead charm.

Adowe, stir.

Airless, heirless.

Airt, direction.

Anon, immediately, thereupon.

Ask, newt.

Ava, at all.

Awsomly, in fear.

B

Backgane, not thriving, wasting.

Bags, entrails.

Bayillis, bailies.

Bees Bizin', noises in the head caused by alcohol.

Beldam, an old woman.

Beltane, the festival of May first.

Bek, bake.

Benison, prognostication for good.

Benshee, a banshee or fairy, really an Irish fairy.

Berry, thresh.

Besome, broom.

"Best Aucht," the most valuable possession, usually a horse or ox, claimed by the superior on the death of a farm tenant.

Bickering, moving noisily.

Bien, prosperous.

Biggit, built.

Binwud, ivy.

Black-Spauld (Spaul), a pleuritic disease of cattle.

Blew Spot, a significant witch-mark also another term for "dede-nip."

Blinmens' Baws, common puff-ball (devil's snuff-box).

Blinking, attractive, comely.

Bluidy-fingers, foxglove.

Bogle-bo, hobgoblin.

Boor-tree, elder-tree.

Bowcail, cabbage.

Bowte, to strike against.

Brattle, a clattering sound.

Breckan, bracken.

Breers, briars

"Brocken," the important mediæval place of witch festival in Germany (see *Faust*).

Brose, pease-meal mixed with boiling water.

Bumbee, humble-bee.

Butter-skep, butter-basket.

Byke, a wasp's or bee's nest.

C

"Ca cuttie ca," called upon to eat freely, even greedily.

"Cannie Moment," significant time.

Cantie, canty, contentedly.

Cantrip, charm or spell.

Cap, caup, a wooden bowl.

Carle, a man.

Certes, certainly.

Champit, bruised.

Channel-stane, curling-stone.

Chessel, the tub for pressing cheese.

Chicken-wort, chicken-weed.

Chist (Kist), a wooden box.

Chowed, chewed.

Clowt, cloth.

Cog, a wooden domestic vessel.

Cogfu', the full of such a vessel.

Compeared, appeared.

Coupe, to empty or capsize.

Couters, thick mucous secretion.

Couthie, in rude comfort.

Cower, to bend down.

Cowes, bushes, more particularly of the broom.

Cowsherne, cow-dung.

Craft, croft or field.

Crone, hag, old woman.

Crousely, proudly.

“Crummie,” a term for cows with usually crooked horns.

Crune, a murmuring sound, sometimes threatening.

Cruppen, contracted.

D

Dead-beli, See text, pages 210 to 213.

Dede-chack, See text, pages 210 to 213.

Dede-drap, See text, pages 210 to 213.

Deid-licht, See text, pages 210 to 213.

Dede-nip, See text, pages 210 to 213.

Dede-spall, See text, pages 210 to 213.

Dede-speal, See text, pages 210 to 213.

Dead-watch, See text, pages 210 to 213.

Deil’s Milk, milky sap.

Dempster, judge.

Deeray, disorder.

Divination, conjuration.

Dome, doom.

Donnert, stupid.

Door (Dour) here used in the sense of sour or astringent.

Drabbled, slobbered.

Drubbing, thrashing.

Drugget, coarse woollen cloth.

Drumlie, thick.

Dwined, pined away or wasted.

E

Een, eyes.

“Effigies Clericorum,” a mock poem on the clergie when they met to consult about taking the Test in the year 1681 (printed a.d. mdcxvii.).

Elfin, fairy.

Esheite, forfeited.

F

Fald, fold.

Farintosh, whisky.

Fash, trouble.

Fearie, used here in the sense of fearless.

Feat, tidy.

Feats, clever doings.

Fecket, under-jacket.

Fen, to strive hard for the means of livelihood.

Fey, a small field or croft.

Fient, no one at all.

Firsle, to rustle.

Fleyed, frightened.

Flutterbaws, puff-balls (see blinmens' baws).

Foggy, mossy.

Forfochten, exhausted.

Fowk, people.

Frenziet, eccentric, mad.

Fumart, pole-cat.

G

Gall, bile.

Gars, makes or compels.

Gaur, to compel.

Gellocks, earwigs.

Girn, girning, whining, or fretting.

Glamour, bewitchment.

Gled, kite.

Glented, sparkled, gleamed.

Glower, to gaze intently.

Gowan, mountain daisy.

Gowk's Spittles, plant froth (discharged by an insect, Cicada).

Greets, cries or weeps.

Grinwan, a noose of horse-hair attached to a stick or rod.

Grun, ground, referring to the grinding of grain.

Gyre-carline, a mother-witch.

H

Haed, possessed.

“Haggert wee granum,” a rather ragged small old woman.

Hag-ridden, bewitched (*lit.*, ridden by a witch).

Hald, hall.

Hale, well, in good health.

Hallow-eve, the night before All-Hallow.

Halve, a hand-fishing net on a wooden frame.

Hannie, suitable, a fitting time.

Hantle, much.

Haurned, roasted.

Haurpan, brain-pan or skull.

Hawcket, probably finely chopped.

Haws, fruit of the hawthorn.

Herezeld, the best beast on the land, given to the landlord on the death of a farm tenant.

Heriot, the fine exacted by the superior on the death of a tenant.

Herrie, confiscate.

Heugh, a small height or eminence.

Hip o’, shoulder or edge of.

Hinnie-suckles, honeysuckle.

Hoose-riggin’, roof.

Hooves, abdomen, (*lit.*, swollen by gaseous distension).

Howe, depth.

Houk, to dig up.

Howlet, an owl.

Hows, house.

Hynt, caught up.

I

Ilk, the same name.

Ill e’e, evil eye.

J

Jimp, neat and slender.

Jow, ringing of a bell.

K

Kain, rent or exchange in kind.

“Kelly,” Satan, Old Nick.

Kep Skaith, avert evil.

Keppit, caught.

Kilted, tucked up.

Kimmer, witch-wife or “gossip.”

Knag, keg, or wooden vessel.

“Knock the Big,” to hull the barley.

Kow, a goblin.

Kye, cows or oxen.

L

Lair, quagmire, to entice into a quagmire.

Lammastide, August, beginning of.

Lave, remainder.

Lift, vault of the heavens.

Lingle, leather-thong.

Lochen, small loch or tarn.

Loofie, fingerless glove.

Loupes, jumps.

Louring, lowering of clouds.

Louthe, abundance.

Lowne, silent, still.

Lowse, loosen.

Lugs, ears.

M

Malefices, offences.

Malison, prognostication for evil.

Mart, a fattened ox (killed at Martinmas for winter use).

Maun, must.

Maut, meal.

Meal-ark, meal chest.

Meall, male.

Meikle, much.

Meil, meal.

Mettle, with spirit.

“Milked the Tether,” extracted the milk by witchcraft through the halter.

Minnie, mother.

Mools, earth or soil.

Mort-Cloth, funeral pall.

Mou’, mouth.

Muir-ill, a disease specially affecting black cattle.

N

Naig, riding-horse or nag.

Napple-roots, heath peas.

Neers, kidneys.

Neist, nearest or next.

Nettle-stingers, nettle leaves.

Nieve, hand or fist.

Nob, nose, also boat’s prow.

Nool-shearings, horn parings.

Nowt, oxen (a corrupt form is noat).

O

O’erswak, sound of breakers.

Onstead, home or farm-steading.

P

Paddock, a frog.

Pawky, shrewd and crafty.

Pawt, movement of foot, kick.

Philibeg, a pouch worn in front of a kilt.

Pickle, small quantity.

Pig, an earthenware vessel.

Pingle, a small pan.

Pirn, a reel.

Pizion, poison.

Plotcock, the Devil.

Poulder, gun-powder.

Poyntis, points.

Pow, head or skull.

Preens, pins.

Puddocks (Yellow), here probably the toad-stool fungus.

Pyckering, pilfering.

Pyet, magpie.

Pyked, picked.

Q

Quarter-ill, a disease of cattle affecting one limb or quarter only.

Queen (Quean), girl, damsel.

R

Rasps, raspberries.

“Rave the Thack,” tear the thatch.

Reamin, full to overflowing.

Rede, wild.

Rede, counsel.

Reid, red.

Remeid, remedy.

Riddle, sieve.

Riddle-turning, divination by means of a riddle balanced on the points of scissors.

Rinnen Doon (Darn), a disease of cattle with diarrhœa present.

Rippish, cleanly.

Resset, receive.

Rossen, clump of thorns.

Routh, abundance.

Rowans, mountain-ash berries.

Rue, regret.

Rydand, riding.

Rye-bowt (Rybat), hewn stone.

S

Sain, to make the sign of the cross.

Sall, shall.

Samin, same.

Sark, shirt or chemise.

Saugh, willow.

Sawns, sands.

Scaith, injury.

Scaum, thin mist.

Scarrow (Scarrie), stony incline.

Sclater, wood-louse.

Scrunked, dried (*lit.*, shrunk).

Segg, yellow iris plant.

Sheip, sheep.

Shearings, clippings or parings.

Shieling, a shepherd's hut.

Shilped (Shilpit), puny and shrunken.

"Sich and Grein," sigh and regret.

Side-ill, a disease of cattle named from the situation of the disease.

Siew, sieve.

Sindrie, sundry.

Skaith, injury.

Skellet, dead-bell.

Skimes, side-glances.

Skirl, a shrill cry.

Slade, glided.

Slaverin', saliva running down.

Slockened, quenched, *i.e.*, put out.

Sludge, miry-mud.

Smoored, smothered.

Sorning, exacting free board and lodging.

Sough, moaning as of wind.

Sowens, a dish made by steeping, fermenting, and then boiling the husks or siftings of oats in water.

Spangs, leaps or bounds.

Spatter'd, dropped.

Spence, country parlour.

Spurtle, porridge-stick.

Stance, stand.

Starnies, stars.

Stavering, sauntering.

Stick and Stowre, completely.

Straughted, straightened in preparation for burial.

Stricken Hour, a full hour.

Stue, stew or concoction.

Sughs, moaning of the wind.

Swarfed, swooned.

Sweir, reluctant.

Switching, threshing with a thin stick or switch.

Syne, afterwards.

T

Tade, toad.

Tail-ill, a disease of animals affecting the tail.

“Tak’ the Gait,” peremptory dismissal.

Tain Alowe, caught fire.

Tappin, the crest of a hill.

Tate, spot (*lit.*, a small lock of hair).

Thackless, roofless.

Thigging, begging.

Thraw, a twist.

Threid, thread.

Thrissles, thistles.

Tirled, rattled at the door.

Tod, a fox.

Toom, empty.

Touk of Drum, sound of drum.

Tredded, trodden.

Trysted, made an appointment with.

U

Unca, unusually.

Unchancy, ill-omened.

Unsonsy, ill-proportioned.

Unyirthly, unearthly.

V

Vaunty, inclined to be boastful.

Vacans, holidays.

W

Walpurgis Night, Eve of First of May, a night of witch revelry (see witch Sabbath).

Wauchie, clammy.

Warbles, a parasitic worm disease of cattle.

Water-ill, a disease of the kidneys in cattle.

Wattles, wooden roof supports on which the thatch is placed.

Whomel'd, turned round and round (*lit.*, upset).

Whorled, wheeled or spun.

Wight, man or fellow.

Wind a Clew, a witchcraft rite in which a reel of coloured thread is wound.

Winglan, walking feebly.

Wirreit, strangled.

Wis, know.

Witch's Sabbath, the gathering together of all the witches of Scotland on the evening between the first Friday and Saturday of April.

Withre-shines, contrarily (*lit.*, against the sun's course).

Wons, dwells.

Wylie, wily.

Wyme, belly.

Wyte, blame.

Y

Yaird, yard or garden.

Yell, barren, dry.

Yestreen, last night.

Yill-boat, ale-barrel or brewing tub.

Yirbs, herbs.

Yowled, howled.

Yule, Christmas, also Hogmanay (December 31st).

THE END

****

Thanks for reading this and I hope you visit the site again - new books are added regularly so you'll always find something of interest :)