

ART. XIX.—*Hawkshead Folk-lore.—Charms, Superstition, Witchcraft, and Traditional Customs.* BY H. S. COWPER, F.S.A.

Communicated at Coniston, Sept. 16th, 1896.

IT may possibly be somewhat out of place to bring before the notice of a practical body such as the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archæological Society, subjects so eminently unpractical and fanciful as those mentioned in the title of this paper. But there is not, within the district worked by this Society, anything in the shape of Folk-lore Society, and I venture to think that some of the curious customs and superstitions, which will be hereafter mentioned, are, indeed, worthy of some sort of notice at our hands, for all of them, even those foolish ghost stories of more modern date, embody rather the traditional survivals of a past age, than the feelings of the present day.

First, I would call your attention to the subject of charms,—fanciful and superstitious remedies for various ailments: and in doing so I would beg you all to remember that although the old life of our dalesmen and statesmen was sufficiently remote from civilisation, and might well be expected to lead to an appreciation of all that is uncanny and inexplicable, yet the people were not, as a matter of fact, superstitious,—that is to say as compared with the people of some other parts of the kingdom. Superstition, indeed, is rather racial, and it is more among the Celtic counties than among the Saxon or Scandinavian, that the Folk-lorist and ghost-hunter may expect a good harvest.

But to return to charms. A year or two ago our member, Mr. S. Marshall, was good enough to send me some papers which he had found among the title deeds of the Skelwith

Skelwith Fold estate, near Ambleside. Amongst them were two curious charms for bleeding and burns, which had turned up among the papers of the Bullclose farm, of the years 1736-51. They run as follows :—

† To stop Bleeding in Man or Beast at any Distance, first you must have some Drops of ye Blood upon a Linen Ragg and wrap a Little Roman Vitrioll upon this Ragg put it under your oxter (armpit) and say these words thrice into yrself There was a Man Born in Bethlem of Judea Whose name was Called Christ. Baptized in the River Jordan In the Watter of the flood and the Child also was meak and good and as the watter stood So I desire thee the Blood of Such a person or Beast to stand in their Bodie in the name of the father son and Holy Ghost Amen. Then Look into the Ragg and at that moment the Blood stopeth the Blew powder is Turned into Blood by sympathy.

The other is as follows :—

To cure Burns or Scalds by Blowing thrice and Saying these words after each Blowing Coutha Cold under the Clay Trembleing is there any here that would Learn of the Dead to Cure the sores of Burning in the Name of God And in the name of God be it Amen. First say then Blow then say then Blow then say then Blow and it is done.

At the head of Esthwaite Lake, near where the road crosses the beck, between the town and Colthouse, once stood a gibbet (mentioned in the parish registers in 1672),

* Bullclose and Skelwith Fold both formerly belonged to the Bensons.

† Compare with these the following from the *Liber Loci Benedict de Whalley*, 1206-1316, cited in *Lancashire Folk-lore*, by Jno. Harland, F.S.A., and T. T. Wilkinson, F.R.A.S., 1882, p. 77.

“ For staunching bleeding from the nostrils, or from the wounds, an approved remedy—O God, be thou merciful to this Thy servant N., nor allow to flow from his body more than one drop of blood. So may it please the Son of God. So his mother Mary. In the name of the Father, stop O Blood! In the name of the Son stop, O Blood! In the name of the Holy Ghost, stop O Blood! In the name of the Holy Trinity.”

“ To staunch Bleeding : A Soldier of old thrust a lance into the side of the Saviour ; immediately there flowed thence blood and water—the blood of Redemption, and the water of Baptism. In the name of th Father X may the blood cease. In the name of the Son X may the blood remain. In the the name of the Holy Ghost X may no more blood flow from the mouth, vein, or nose.”

of

of which old inhabitants can still remember the stump standing. Within the memory of man there was a common belief that a fragment torn from the rotting fragment of this gallows, and placed in an aching tooth, formed a sure cure.

The old idea that the seventh son has a miraculous power of healing is well-known, and it has been conjectured that it owes its origin to the story of the seven sons of Sceva the Jew (Acts. xix, 13).* Of this superstition I have come across but one example. Mr. Tyson, of Hawkshead, who keeps the local branch of the Bank of Liverpool, was one of the old stock of Tysons of Little Langdale. He was one of a large family, and one of his brothers being a seventh son, was sought out by a woman working in the Coniston copper-mines, in order to be cured of some ailment on the arm, perhaps scrofula.† Mr. Tyson's brother held no faith in such healing, but the woman persisted, and came once every week for seven weeks, early in the morning, to Dale End farm, when the operator had to tie some sort of a charm or spell round her neck. The cure was effected, although the operator had no belief in it. The local value of this story, however, is somewhat lost, as it is believed that the patient was a Cornish or Devonshire woman, and brought the superstition with her.

A somewhat similar superstition comes from the hamlet of Outgate, where, within the memory of man, there resided a woman (one of a somewhat uncanny family, of whom more anon), who possessed the power of curing jaundice by a spell. In this case there may have really

* See Dr. Barnes' paper "On touching for King's evil," in Vol. xiii. of our *Transactions*, p. 362.

† In 1786 there is the following entry in Hawkshead Parish Account Book:—"Journey horse hire and expenses to Backbarrow to Eliner Preston to take her child to Mr. Kellets of Long Sleddale to be cured of a scabbed head 2/6." This may have been a charm, as there was then a doctor at Hawkshead.

been

been some power of diagnosis, for the patient had simply to take some urine to the operator, and no medicine was given.

DIVINATION (*Bibliomancy*).

Somewhat akin to these spells was Divination by Bible and key, of which I have heard of two instances within the parish. Unfortunately, old people who remember the existance of such practices have, as a rule, forgotten the details, but we must content ourselves with the evidence of the existance of them within the memory of man, which is, after all, the main point. The first case is that of John M——, of Outgate, father to Thos. M——, of Fieldheld, who recently died at an advanced age.

My informant believes that John M. (who gave up the use of the bible and key with advanced years), used it to ascertain if anyone was acting maliciously towards him. What exactly was done at the time, except that some words were spoken, cannot now be ascertained, but it was evidently a form of divination. Another instance was given me by Miss U——, of Monk Coniston, now about 75 years of age, who remembers, as a girl, seeing it practised by a servant at Hollow Oak, in Colton, to ascertain if some individual who had thrown a stone through her window was a certain groom whom she suspected. This took place some sixty years ago.*

* Divination by Bible and key. I extract the following from "*Lancashire Folk-lore*," where it is quoted from "Notes and Queries," vol. ii., p. 5. "When some choice specimen of the "*Lancashire Witches*" thinks it necessary to decide upon selecting a suitor from among the number of her admirers she not unfrequently calls in the aid of the Bible and a key to assist in deciding her choice. Having opened the Bible at the passage in Ruth "Whither thou goest will I go, &c." and having carefully placed the wards of the key upon the verses, she ties the book firmly with a piece of cord, and having mentioned the name of an admirer, she very solemnly repeats the passage in question, at the same time holding the bible suspended, by joining the ends of the little fingers inserted under the handle of the key. If the key retain its position during the repetition, the person whose name has been mentioned is considered to be rejected: and so another name is tried till the book turns round and falls through the fingers, which is held to be a sure token the name just mentioned is that of an individual who will certainly marry her."

SUPERSTITIOUS

SUPERSTITIOUS CUSTOMS.

Amongst the strange customs practised in out-of-the-way parts of the north, in former times, was that of firing over the house of a newly wedded couple, on the night after the marriage. This practice was observed till quite recent times in Hawkshead parish, and was certainly done some ten or eleven years ago, and is probably not extinct. I have been told that it was supposed to secure a plentiful issue of the marriage. On these occasions the firing party expected a present which was termed "hen silver".

There are, of course, innumerable other customs connected with marriages and births, but here it is only my intention to notice such survivals as I have heard of in the Hawkshead district. Thus I find it is still the custom for old ladies, when visiting a woman after child-birth, to carry with them a pound of sweet butter.

This brings to memory another butter custom, the practice of placing a twig of rowan in the cream to make the butter come. Rowan had powerful anti-witchcraft effects, and when butter would not come it was considered due to magic. I have heard a story of milk bewitched by a woman at Nibthwaite Grange, so that for days and days no butter could be churned.* Mr. W. G. Collingwood, in his recent paper on "Manx Names in Cumbria," mentions, as a possible survival of tree-worship, the dressing of trees with rags and crockery at Satterthwaite and Hawkshead hill. Well-worship was a common custom in Scotland, and with tree-worship can be traced in many parts of the world, the pilgrimage to wells being really one for health which was to come from the powers, whether supernatural or natural, of the water. But they are

* Mr. Ellwood (*Landnama Book of Iceland*, vol. xii., *Cum. and West. Arch. and Ant. Soc.*, p. 302) has shown us that the rowan was holy in Iceland, being dedicated to Thor, and connected with many superstitions. Thor was saved from drowning by a rowan tree.

extremely

extremely difficult matters to get the people of the country to speak of. If they have any faith, they fear to own to what they feel we should regard as superstition. This reticence, caused often by a dread of ridicule, makes it very difficult to gain information on what appear to be last surviving relics of pre-Christian rites in England.

Mr. Ellwood, in his paper on the Landnama Book,* has called our attention to the singular and interesting custom of keeping alight for generations the same household fire. Mr. Ellwood alludes to a "well-known instance in our own neighbourhood," by which I imagine, although he does not actually say so, he means the case of the lonely moorland farmsteads of Parkmoore and Lawson park on the fells to the east of Coniston. Of this subject Mr. A. Craig-Gibson, writing in 1864, says :—

Previous to the invention of lucifer matches, and probably for long after, the fire on the stone "hearths of these two 'Granges'" had not been extinguished, it was said, for many centuries, probably not even yet. Their fuel being peat, was easily kept smouldering throughout the longest night, while their distance from neighbours, and the consequent difficulty of providing means of re-lighting their fires, if extinguished, made their many generations of inmates careful to preserve them alight.

That in this remarkable custom there was more than the actual difficulty of making fire, cannot be doubted. There are plenty of savage races who have not matches, yet find the difficulty of obtaining fire by flint or friction, not such as to necessitate their keeping a never-dying fire. The origin and tradition, long lost now in the dim past, must have sprung, we can hardly doubt, from that strange yet perfectly explicable reverence so common in certain stages of civilisation, and so marked in the East, that the

* The Landnama Book of Iceland, as it illustrates the Dialect, Folk-lore, and Antiquities of Cumberland, Westmorland, and North Lancashire. *Transactions Cum. and West. Arch. and Ant. Soc.*, xii, p. 289-90.

flame

flame typified and symbolised the fertilising power of the sun, and of all things; in truth, the fountain head of all forms of nature worship.

I would mention one other curious custom in the parish, hardly, however, superstitious, though as it is unpublished and may be of remote antiquity, I venture to allude to here. As late as a generation since, there was held in the little hamlet of Outgate, a most curious law court, which in the belief of those who can yet recall it, was rather a frolic, than a traditional custom, handed down from old times. To this, however, I cannot help feeling a certain amount of doubt, and I place the subject before this Society in the hope that similar cases may be chronicled.

It appears that at Outgate certain of the residents were elected to certain dignities as follows:—

The Bishop	John Martin*
Lord Short of Birkwray	William Warriner, Birkwray
Justice	John Rigg†
Parson	Rowley Scales

This quorum sat upon and really adjudicated minor offences, imposing (as far as I can ascertain), small fines on cases of drunkenness, &c. The court did not, it appears, assemble on any special day of the year, and may really have acted as a slight check on the behaviour of the wilder spirits, in those days when petty sessions were held no nearer than Ulverston or Lakeside. It is worth notice that in the parish register, under burials, we find the following entry which may refer to the same custom two hundred and sixty years ago.

* His son Thomas Martin, commonly called "Tommy," died recently, and by his death the parish lost one whose honest nature made him beloved by all who knew him. Thomas Martin was a fine specimen of the old type of Furness cottager, and in his earlier years was a man of great personal strength.

† Father of the present Mr. James Rigg, of Lockhow.

February xxvijth Jo: Rigg lord.

Whether this Outgate mock court has any connection with the curious customs prevalent once in various parts of England, of choosing a mock mayor and holding a procession, and between which and the old village moot assemblies and certain customs practised by the non-Aryan castes in Indian villages, Mr. G. L. Gomme has suggested parallels in his work on "The Village Community," is worthy of consideration. We may hope that similar cases may be noticed in other parts of this district, which should form evidence to prove or disprove the question.

WITCHCRAFT.

There was nobbut twa witches iver com't into England
 T'ya was bacca, and t'udder was teea,
 Yan was borned, and t'udder was scorched to deeth.

Cumberland saying.

Although witchcraft was generally believed in all over England in the middle ages, relics of this superstition are, fortunately, not common now-a-days, and in the Hawkshead district there are few among the county people who can recall anything concerning the subject. An instance has already been referred to, of a woman bewitching the milk, which is, however, nearer akin to the "evil eye" than to real witchcraft. A queerer story, however, came to me from an old man now close on eighty, who distinctly remembers his mother talk of what appears to be a true witchcraft case. It appears that formerly, but how long since I could not ascertain, there lived at Outgate, a family of the name of W——, whose proceedings were generally so uncanny that there was much talk about them. One of them, a woman, was specially notorious, and possessed the faculty of changing her shape and appearing as an animal. The hounds while working the
 valley

valley would find a hare, and after an exciting chase after puss, she generally disappeared mysteriously near Outgate, leaving the hounds at fault. One day the hounds ran the hare right into the hamlet, and making straight for one of the houses, it jumped straight for an open window. At that moment, however, it was seized by the hind leg by the foremost hound, and at the same time came a wild screaming chorus from inside the house—

Switch Grandy switch
Here comes t'black bitch.

But it was too late, and as the excited huntsman ran to the spot, he found instead of the hare, the notorious witch of Outgate.

The only other witch story I am aware of, connected with this district, is that told in Mr. Graig-Gibson's interesting little book, "The Old Man."* Unfortunately, Mr. Gibson gives us no notes as to where he obtained the story, but I believe that old folks certainly have a tradition about a stone in Yewdale beck now, but whether they got it from Mr. Gibson's book, or he from them, is perhaps rather uncertain.

As Mr. Gibson's book is not easy to obtain, I quote him in full:—

In these pious and enlightened times, when the profession and practice of witchcraft were so common that very few women could grow old and ugly, especially if they were also poor, without being suspected of having sold their immortal part to the Father of evil, a very old woman whose name has not been preserved, but the certainty of whose commerce with the devil no one ever doubted, dwelt in a hut upon the point of land which runs into the lake near the mouth of this brook. After practising the ordinary routine of a witch-woman's life for several years, it is said that, as the time drew near for the fulfilment of her short-sighted bargain, she was seized

* *The Old Man*, or Ravings and Ramblings round Coniston. London, 1849, p. 74.

with

with terror and remorse, and resolved to try whether she might not find a means of nullifying the agreement and evading payment of the fearful penalty to be exacted from her in return for the evil power with which her master had endued her old age ; and, with this object, she visited a holy man, one of the monks of Saint Mary of Furness, who was stationed at the place now called Bank Ground, which stands pleasantly upon the opposite side of the lake. He, when made aware of all the hearings of the case, offered some hope of redemption from the consequences of her contract, on the conditions of teetotal abstinence from any future indulgence in the evil art, abnegation of the devil, his works and devices, and a course of penance so severe and protracted, as to make the penitent witch think the cure almost as bad as the disease, but concern for "her pore sole," as Wilfrid Jenkins pathetically designates it, determined her to accept of Father Brian's terms, provided he could secure her against the power of Satan in the interim. Being instructed to flee for her life, and to call loudly upon Father Brian and Saint Herbert for aid, should Beelzebub come, as was likely, to claim his own before the completion of her saving penance had rescued her from his dreaded clutches, she returned home, and turned over a new leaf, beginning to lead a tolerably exemplary life. As might be expected, the other contracting party was not long in hearing of this unpardonable breach of faith, and one evening he startled his quondam disciple by making his appearance at the door of her domicile, when she, remembering the monk's instructions, darted through the open window, and sped, with the speed of light, directly up the course of this beck (Yewdale Beck), screaming loudly for succour, as directed. She had reached the site of the bridge, and her pursuer was just about to lay his claws upon her, when the saint or the monk, or both heard her, and the devil's foot was set upon that stone, the heel sank into the ridge upon its surface, and the stone hardening, he was held fast by the heel, and thus, by the miraculous intervention of the dead saint or the living monk, the penitent witch escaped.

The scene of this story is a wooden bridge called Bannockstone bridge over Yewdale Beck, and a short distance south of the main road, where it crosses the beck. Bannockstone Bridge was formerly a stone erection, and Mr. Gibson instructs the visitor to examine beneath it a large stone bearing so remarkable an imprint of a heel, that it was the sight of it which caused him to inquire for a legend with the above result. I must confess that

that my search for a stone here, in any way remarkable, has been quite fruitless.

FAIRIES AND HOBTHRUSHES.

In Furness we are not in Fairyland, and enquiries as to traditions of the little people call forth the scantiest and vaguest information. Thus I learned from one old inhabitant that in his young days he heard strange stories of the doings of these folks in the fairs and market at Amble-side, and elsewhere. In the guise of ordinary folks they would mix with the crowds, and then, by blowing at the market women at the stalls, they became invisible, after which, taking a mean advantage of their position, they proceeded to steal things off the stalls. My informant remembered also that a certain place called "Frankhouse Steads" had a bad reputation this way. From his description this place (which seems to be unknown now and is not marked on any map), was somewhere in the vicinity of Tarnhaws. Strangely enough, this tradition was mixed up in my informant's head with the story of the robber, called Castlehow, who lived on Hawkshead Moor, and the date of the apprehension of whom is proved by the Parish Account Book, to have been as late as 1785.

In Langdale, however, we hear of a harmless sort of spirit, which seems akin to the "brownie" or hobthush.* The places which were reputed to be visited by this harmless being were the "Busk" and the "Forge," and the principal occupation of the visitor seems to have been the churning of the farmer's cream by night, when the family had retired to rest. A wasteful goblin he seems to

* The hobthrush (*Dickinson's Glossary*, English Dialect Society) was also sometimes called the "throbthrush" (see the *Lonsdale Magazine*, vol. iii, p. 254). He was, as a rule, a good devil, often helping the farmer in his work, but as often as not performing some mischievous prank, which did more harm than the good he had done. Churning for the farmer seems to have been a favourite pastime. This gentle goblin seems now extinct, or I should have procured one to exhibit to the Society. *Requiescat in pace.*

have

have been in this case, for near the latter place the people used to find bits of butter scattered about in the woods, apparently dropped by the uncanny visitor in his flight.

DOBBIES AND FLAYANS.

Formerly, I am told by one of the oldest inhabitants of the parish, that Dobbies and Flayans were "aw up and down," and children hardly dare put their noses out of the doors at night. Be this as it may, the stories one can get concerning them are neither very fearful nor very numerous. There are, however, certain localities which have long had a bad reputation, which, indeed, clings to most of them, and in some of these, there are not a few living people who can say something on the subject. My own belief is that in most cases we have in these haunts, very early forms of northern superstition, which generally get localised on certain sites, on the occurrence of tragedies such as suicides or murders.

It is very curious that the road which runs on the margin of Esthwaite, on every side, is badly haunted in several places. The most widely known and least explicable, however, is certainly the Waterside Boggle, which has frightened many an honest man on the road between Lake Field, the residence of the late Mrs. Ogden, and the cottage at Waterside, which was at one time the Claife poorhouse. The peculiarity of the uncanny place is the various forms the appearance has taken. It has been seen as a man in light blue, as an animal, neither calf nor donkey, as a white fox or foxes. In most cases the apparition is sighted by a night pedestrian, and when approached, suddenly and silently disappears.

It is worth while noting that it is not only to the uneducated, commonly supposed to be the more superstitious, that the Becksid Boggle has appeared. One of the vicars of the parish used to tell his friends how, walking one night from Sawrey, he was approaching the
poorhouse

poorhouse, when he observed an old lady in an old fashioned bonnet walking before him. It was early in spring, and there had been a snow shower so that the road was all white. The vicar trudged along till he was abreast of the figure, and then, thinking she was probably a parishioner, he bade her "good-night" as he passed. As there was no reply he turned to see who this unsociable old body was. To his horror, under the wide brimmed bonnet, he saw a death-like countenance with goggle eyes, which gleamed like coloured glass with a light behind them. The apparition then suddenly disappeared through a gap in the wall. The vicar, astounded, went up to the wall, but no trace of the figure could be seen. He then looked back along the road which he had come. The moon was bright, and he noticed a strange thing. The snow bore only the tracks of one pair of feet, and those were his own.

There is, however, one form in which the "boggle" appears, which is rather significant, and as far as can be made out by enquiry, it is the form in which it has oftenest appeared. Pedestrians, at night, on coming to this part of the road, would see a white calf in the road, and this would suddenly disappear, followed instantly by a sound as if a cartload of stones was being emptied into the lake, or sometimes into the road. Trivial as this may sound, it is interesting. It appears we have here a tradition of the Teutonic "Barguest," or "Barnghaist." A form of this went under the name of "Trash," and consisted of a big dog which walked with an awful splashing sound. Sometimes Trash "sinks at the feet of the persons to whom he appears with a loud splashing noise, as if a heavy stone were thrown into the miry road."*

In making enquiries about this notorious haunt, I was informed that an old woman was still living who had

* Harland and Wilkinson, *Lancashire Folk-lore*.

spoken with the ghost itself. Of course I interviewed her at once. The old lady is now very advanced in years, and though somewhat of a cripple, owing to an accident in Coniston copper mines, where she worked years ago, yet, intellectually, perfectly vigorous. The story she told me as she sat in her cottage, over the fire, was a strange one.

It appears that some thirty or so years ago, she went to live with her mother at the poorhouse. Her mother being seriously ill and my informant having to nurse her. The first uncanny thing that happened was that the house suddenly appeared to be on fire, and old N. ran out shiftless, in her fright, screaming that the house was burning. She was got into the building, and it was some time before she could be persuaded that what appeared to her as fire, was but fodder for animals.

But I ken aw about it—ower mich. There was a man ca'd Roger D——. as should have gone to foreign parts to join his brother or summat. But ya year i' summer he hed been warking amang t'hay, and to ga yam, he took a boat frae below t'How across t'laake. There was a chap ca'd S——, a wicked chap as hed had a terrble quarrel wi' Roger, and they say he was ligging quiet and set on Roger as he was landing near t'poor'us. There mud hev been terrible wark afore aw was over. S——. was found lying nigh de'ad i't' rooad, and niver spak again. Jim H——. fund him, and carried him home. As for Roger they fund his body stark and stiff in t'water, and there was nea doubt that S——. had drowned him.

But warst of aw, ya day efter this, Roger came intil t'poor'us, when I was with mother. I hed niver seen him alive, but mother hed, and knew him well. It was late ya evening. Roger walked straight into the house, dressed in his best Sunday clothes, and held out his hand to me, and said summat I dud'nt ken. I kna'd nowt of who he was, and took his hand. It was ca'd as ice. I kened somehow as I'd done wrang. He went til t'mantel and struck a light with some matches. But efter we fund as niver yan hed been touched. As he left t'room mother said "Bairn, whatever hev ye done, its Roger D——." I was almaist deead wi' terror. But he'll niver come again willn't Roger sin he's been spokken wi' and touched.

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I came away from the house fully believing that I had run the Waterside Boggle to earth, but not so. On making enquiries of one or two elderly men, with clear memories, and no particular taste for the uncanny, I found that the death of D——. occurred somewhere between thirty and thirty-seven years ago. That it was absolutely certain that he was not murdered, but accidentally drowned, and that the place in question was badly haunted prior to his death. Indeed there was a suicide here a long while prior to the drowning case, and even before that the place had a bad reputation. The story, however, is useful and instructive, as showing how the people are apt to fix upon a tragedy to account for a superstition which in itself may be of remote antiquity. One of the most practical farmers in the locality, and a man eminently unsuperstitious, informed me that the most remarkable thing about the place was the fact that cattle often became panic-struck with terror near the poorhouse, and could be hardly got to pass it. He himself had experienced this more than once, and in a marked degree. There are also numerous stories about carriage-horses shying badly at the same place.

On the opposite side of the lake, we have another instance of the fixing of an old form of superstition upon the site of a tragedy. An old woman, called Nelly N——, is said to have been murdered at or near the Howe farm, and although suspicion fell on more than one, it would appear that nobody was brought to book. The story goes that the woman owned a bag of spade guineas, which she used to take to market and there count, with the result that somebody's cupidity being aroused, the old lady was murdered for them. Anyhow, it is said that after her death the guineas were never found. The story goes that as carts go along the road at night, Nelly suddenly jumps upon them. This is, apparently, a relic of the Scandinavian Skrat, whose kinsman the German Schrat

Schrat or Schritel used to jump into carts, which immediately became so heavy that they could not be drawn by the horse.

The only ghost, at the foot of the lake, appears to be a lady without a head.

At the northern end of the lake we find a haunted locality at the residence called Belmont, built about one hundred ago, by the Rev. Reginald Braithwaite, Incumbent of Hawkshead. In this case the "walk" is not only at the house, but upon the avenue leading to the house, along the main road to the end of Scarhouse lane, leading from Colthouse, and even in the lane itself. There appears to be no tradition as to the origin of the ghost, which, like the Beckside Boggle, manifests itself in a variety of ways. Servants living in the house have heard fearful and indescribable sounds at night, and in the morning have found all the doors wide open. Sometimes at night, travellers have seen all the windows brilliantly lit up, when the house was known to be empty. One of my informants has seen the gate securely locked to fly wide open as she passed, without any visible agency, and I have been informed on credible authority, that a highly respected native of the district, now a "boots" in a neighbouring town, was well nigh frightened out of his wits when young, by an appearance here.

The Belmont Dobbie occasionally manifests itself in human form, when it appears as a tall figure, generally described as that of a woman and robed in white. Thus it has been seen by rambles whose curiosity has prompted them to peer through the windows from outside, and also peramulating the adjacent roads.

The same old resident, in whose youthful days dobbies were "aw up and down," remembered a queer haunt at Smartfield, above Coniston. The place seems to have had a bad reputation, but the queerest things went on at

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a certain "hogus"* above the farm, which is, I think, close to the British cemetery and settlement on Banishhead moor. Here inanimate objects became animate, and one day a workman there, was almost scared to death, and driven back to the farm by the insane antics of a besom, which, leaning against the corner of the building when he arrived, suddenly dashed into the middle of the floor and executed a wild *pas de seul* round the scared rustic.

Some sixty or seventy years ago, a woman drowned herself in Rusland pool, in Colton, and afterwards she appeared often at the farmstead called Eling harth, or on the Kendal and Ulverston road, where she was in the habit of walking for a long while alongside the carrier's cart.

There are one or two haunts in or connected with the parish, which, unlike the above, have already had their chronicler, and therefore do not require telling here. Of these the place of honour must be given to the mysterious "Crier of Claife," mentioned in many guide books, and of which there is a good account in Tweddell's *Furness Past and Present*.† The introduction of steamboats, electric launches, and the building of the excellent Ferry Hotel, have, I think, scared this fleyin off Windermere.

Another is the Oxenfell Dobby, the story of which is cleverly described in dialect, in Mr. Craig-Gibson's *Folk-speech in Cumberland*. The story, as there told, is that a lover murdered a rival who had seen the object of their mutual affection to her home at Tilberthwaite, after a country dance. The scene of the tragedy was supposed to be on the wild lonely road between Hodge Close and Oxenfell Cross, and travellers would at night be startled by the sound of a fearful struggle in the darkness. I

* A hoghouse is a building on the fell for sheep to shelter in.

† Vol. I, p. 95.

find that the place still has the reputation among old folks of being haunted, although few people remember a story. The apparition, however, seems, as usual, to take other forms, for I have been told that sometimes a phantom coach-and-four was met on the main road near Oxenfell Cross. This is the more curious since it is but with comparatively recent times that the road has been changed from a rough hill road into a coachable road.

But ghosts are not yet extinct in the parish. There is now on the edge of one of the three lakes which have their shores within our parish, a handsome modern residence where a "lady in white" walks regularly, and is often seen by the inmates. This fair shade (for fair all who have seen her pronounce she is) appears anywhere in the house, and I believe at any hour. She causes no annoyance, is well behaved, and as far as is known, has no history. There is, however, a curious thing connected with a lonely farm on the fell at no great distance, which is worth chronicling, although there is nothing whatever to connect it with the ghost. The farmer was repairing or altering the wall of a small out-building in a ruined farm, which is close to his own. In doing this, a skull and several pieces of bone were found bedded in mortar, in a hole carefully prepared for them within the thickness of the wall. A doctor has seen the skull, and it is believed to be that of a woman. The other pieces of bone which were small, had been sawed in two. What seemed to bring the date of this tragedy down to recent times, was that the building had been re-roofed in modern times, and if the skull was there at the time it must have been found by the workmen. This, however, does not perhaps prove very much as it is quite conceivable that an ignorant workman, on making such a discovery, would pop the skull back into its hiding place, and hastily finish his job, thinking he had better not meddle with such a thing. But none of this part of the building seems very old, and probably

probably the tragedy, though there is no record of it, is of quite modern date. Curiously, the farm has been untenanted for many years, and is now becoming quite ruinous. There is no reason to believe it is more than a coincidence, but it is curious that the "woman in white" is dressed in a costume which accords with the probable date of the tragedy.
