

THE HEDLEY KOW.

AMONG the MSS. of George Allan the Antiquary, which are still in the possession of his relative, Robert Henry Allan, Esq., F.S.A., a very singular illustration of a Northumbrian superstition occurs. The Antiquary is cataloguing some books, which were sold in 1748, and one of them was a MS. transcript of Inquisitions, Deputacions, Sheriff's Precepts, &c., in the county palatine of Durham, in 4to. He thus proceeds :—

“At the end of this vol. there is a declaration made and signed by one Thomas Stevenson, of Framwellgate, in Durham, before Justice Burdus, and by him witnessed at the bottom, that on 7 Aug., 1729, between eight and nine at night, the said Stevenson, returning from Hedley, in Northumberland, saw an apparition that looked sometimes in the shape of a foal, sometimes of a man, which took the bridle from off his horse and beat him till he was sore, and misled him on foot three miles to Coalburne. And that a guide he had with him was beat in the same manner, and that it vanished not till daybreak, and then though he touched not the bridle, after it was taken from his horse, but as he felt the stripes of it, he found it bound about his waist. His horse he found where he first saw the apparition, by the Green bank top, and saith it was commonly reported by the neighbourhood, that a spirit called HEDLEY Kow did haunt that place.”

The Hedley Kow's character was “mischievous rather than malignant.” Assuming various shapes, he led his victims into mires and ponds, or would be a beast of burthen or a milch cow, and would slip out of the harness or upset the pail, always vanishing with a loud *nicker*. He was generally present at increases of the population, and full of mocking and tricks at such occasions. Altogether, the bogle was a type of a very numerous class of goblins, and those who are curious in his own particular frolics may refer to the *Rambles in Northumberland* and *Richardson's Table Book*, leg. div., i., 60.

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