

and peers ill-favourably from lush green things. Great umbel-bearing plants, blackthorns and briars strive to bury each lower wall; harts-tongue ferns loll from the empty joist-holes; fungus lifts its livid cowls beneath. Humble vegetations of orange and ebony hue cover the granite and nibble and gnaw thereat; the frost thrusts steel fingers between the stones; the lightning has visited here and hastened final downfall. Bats hang from little claws in the chimney and other dark crannies: by night the screech-owl cries around the ruin, by day the jack-daws caw and clatter in it, and at springtime plot with cynical frankness how best they may steal the frantic starling's young to fatten their own brood in the preeipice hard by.

This ruined farm is haunted, too, and where the hamlet of Postbridge stands—a mile distant, in its glade of beech and sycamore—you shall find those who still believe in ghosts at Dagger Farm. They will speak of apparitions that play their parts again under the light of the hunter's moon. But only a vanishing generation are upon terms of respect with these old-time shades, and such folks will go far before they risk a manifestation. Not an elderly moorman would be seen nigh this ruin at the appointed time: while as for the rising generation of the Board schools, though they possess the necessary courage