

her head and gave him a glance as he spoke, that seemed to him like a shy sort of approval.

"Ah, if you had troubles and losses like mine you might murmur," said Mrs. Fitzwalter, in a tone of reproof. "I like contentment; a contented mind, I tell the major, is a continual feast."

"It isn't a continual suit of clothes," suggested Norman.

"Well, now, I'll tell you what; suppose you were to write to a gentleman I know well in this City—a benevolent gentleman, rolling in money and just say how you've been robbed, and then fallen ill, and for want of clothes can get no employment, and ask him to send you a trifle to clothe you."

"Why that would be begging," interposed the youth.

"Well, pray, and why not? Who are you that you shouldn't do what your betters, young sir, have had to do?"

"Oh, while I can work I cannot beg."

"Hoity-toity! here's a grandee, Major! Our don, here—Norman Nobody, Esquire—doesn't like begging." She turned her head as she spoke, and her words were addressed to the Major, who entered the room at that moment, and growled out—

"Not beg! why, what's he doing here! What's a fellow that eats your bread, and wears your clothes, but a beggar?"

To be continued.

GHOSTS, WIZARDS, AND WITCHES.

A BELIEF in ghosts and witchcraft has more or less extensively prevailed in every age. And notwithstanding the scepticism as to things sacred, which is in too many quarters a marked characteristic of the nineteenth century, we are inclined to believe that it would require but little evidence even now to give currency to an adroit imposture or an assumption of peculiar gifts. Who has not in his own experience met with ghost stories which have for the time being created intense excitement, and unbinged the minds of hundreds. We well remember one in our young days, which was for weeks almost the sole topic of conversation in the English village in which we were born. We are not aware that the mystery was ever unravelled, but we well know that numbers came from all quarters, even from the county town, some ten miles distant, to listen for mysterious sounds which were said to issue at midnight from a particular spot on the wild heath which bordered the village. Strange tales were also told by the credulous villagers of fearful sights to be seen. Prominent among these was a milk-white steed, bearing at lightning speed the headless body of one who was declared to be—we know not on what evidence—a long deceased lady of the manor.

That strange sounds were heard in this instance is beyond doubt, but little by little the excitement died out. The best explanation we remember hearing of these noises was that they proceeded from some strange animal which for the time being had made S— heath its home. As to the milk-white steed and the headless trunk, terrible as they were to us in our early boyhood, they have long since resolved themselves into fictions of the heated imagination of the S— villagers, although we are not sure that we could even now pass the haunted spot at the dread hour of midnight without experiencing some unpleasant sensations.

We have been led to these remarks by the perusal of an article on "Imposture and Credulity," in the last number of the "Dublin University Magazine." As this subject possesses a peculiar fascination to many, we have determined to give our readers the benefit of a number of extracts from the article:

Sir Walter Scott relates that he fancied he saw the apparition of Lord Byron, soon after the noble bard's decease, in his own house at Abbotsford. The account runs thus: "Not long after the death of a late illustrious poet, who had filled, while living, a great station in the eye of the public, a literary friend, to whom he

had been well known, was engaged, during the darkening twilight of an autumn evening, in perusing one of the publications which professed to detail the habits and opinions of the distinguished individual who was now no more. As the reader had enjoyed the intimacy of the deceased to a considerable degree, he was deeply interested in the publication, which contained some particulars relating to himself and other friends. A visitor was sitting in the apartment, who was also engaged in reading. Their sitting-room opened into an entrance-hall rather fantastically fitted up with articles of armour, skins of wild animals, and the like. It was when laying down his book and passing into this hall, through which the moon was beginning to shine, that the individual of whom I speak saw right before him, and in a standing posture, the exact representation of his departed friend, whose recollection had been so strongly brought to his imagination. He stopped for a single moment, so as to notice the wonderful accuracy with which fancy had impressed upon the bodily eye the peculiarities of dress and posture of the illustrious writer. Sensible, however, of the delusion, he felt no sentiment save that of wonder at the extraordinary accuracy of the resemblance, and stepped onwards towards the figure, which resolved itself, as he approached, into the various materials of which it was composed. There were merely a screen, occupied by great coats, shawls, plaids, and such other articles as are usually found in a country entrance-hall. The spectator returned to the spot from which he had seen the illusion, and endeavoured, with all his power, to recall the image which had been so singularly vivid. But this was beyond his capacity; and the person who had witnessed the apparition, or more properly, whose excited state had been the means of raising it, had only to retire into the apartment, and tell his young friend under what a striking hallucination he had for a moment laboured." Sir Walter spoke of the strange incident, at the time, without reserve; and there could be no doubt it was a very remarkable deception of the optical powers. Many authentic ghost stories rest on the same class of evidence. In this category we should feel inclined to include the spectral head which haunted the late Earl Grey, but that it repeated its appearances, and, as we have heard or read, was also seen by other members of his family.

Many persons who are not at all given to superstition, have, nevertheless, feelings of weakness they cannot entirely subdue. Some consider a squint unlucky, and would not willingly retain a servant with obliquity of vision. Few like to sit down to dinner with a company of thirteen; and no sailor would commence a voyage on Friday if he could help it. In all ages and countries, up to a comparatively recent period, and under every degree of civilization, a belief in witchcraft, sorcery and astrology has been prevalent. Strong and highly cultivated minds have bowed under this conviction. Amongst them we may enumerate Luther, Bacon, and Dr. Johnson. When the inquisitive Boswell asked the great lexicographer what witches properly meant, "Why, sir," replied he, "they properly mean those who make use of the aid of evil spirits." Boswell—"There is no doubt, sir, a general report and belief of their having existed." Johnson—"Sir, you have not only the general report and belief, but you have many voluntary solemn confessions." In his Folio Dictionary, he defines "Witch—a woman given to unlawful acts."

It is surely not credible that witches should have effected what they are said in tales and legends to have done. Yet wise and great men have condemned witches to die. All mankind, in rude and civilized ages, have agreed in the agency of preternatural powers. The Act of Parliament which some suppose was intended to put an end to witchcraft, was passed, as Dr. Johnson said, to prevent persecution for what was not witchcraft. Men had ceased to believe in it; why and exactly when, we cannot tell, as we cannot tell the reason of many other things. Our British Solomon, King James, who was a staunch believer in the supernatural, classifies its professors. He says, in his Demonology,

"Magicians command the devils, witches are their servants." This opinion found many followers.

We still see horse-shoes, owls, hawks, &c., nailed on the doors of old barns. These supposed charms against sorcery were used even in pagan times, and date back to the Romans. Persons accused of witchcraft have been subjected to the most barbarous and unrelenting punishments. In thousands of cases, the victims, often quite innocent, were burnt alive, while others were drowned by the test applied. If, on being thrown into a pond, they did not sink, they were pronounced witches, and either stoned on the spot or reserved for the stake. Five hundred witches were burnt at Genoa, in three months, in 1515. One thousand in the diocese of Como, in a year. An incredible number in France, about 1520, when one sorcerer confessed to having 1,200 associates. More than 100,000 perished, mostly by the flames in Germany. Grandeis, the parish priest of Loudan, in France, was burnt on a charge of having bewitched a whole convent of nuns, A.D. 1634. In Bretagne, twenty poor women were put to death as witches in 1654. Maria Renata was burnt at Wurtzburg, in 1749. At Kalisch, in Poland, nine old women were burnt in January, 1775. And so recently as 1802, five were condemned by the Brahmins, Patna, for sorcery, and executed.

In England, under the reign of Henry the Eighth, A.D. 1541, a statute was enacted declaring all witchcraft and sorcery to be felony, without benefit of clergy. Again, in the 5th of Elizabeth and first of James. Barrington estimates the judicial murders for witchcraft in England, in two hundred years, at 30,000. Sir Matthew Hale burnt two persons for witchcraft in 1664. Three thousand suffered for this imputed crime under the Long Parliament. Northamptonshire and Huntingdon preserved the superstition longer than any other counties. Two pretended witches were executed at Northampton in 1705, while the *Spectator* was in course of publication in London, and five others some years afterwards. In 1716, Mrs. Hicks and her daughter, a child of nine years of age, were hanged as witches at Huntingdon. In Scotland thousands suffered. The last was at Dornoch, in 1722. The laws against witchcraft had lain dormant for many years, when an ignorant or malicious person attempting to revive them by finding a bill against a poor old woman in Surrey, they were formally repealed, in the tenth year of George the Second, A.D. 1736.

Examples bearing upon the subject of which we are now treating crowd upon us in numbers that would speedily fill a volume. Let us endeavour to select a few of the most remarkable and least familiar.

Wenceslaus, son to the Emperor Charles the Fourth, married Sophia, the Duke of Bavaria's daughter. When the union was to be solemnized, the Duke, knowing that his son-in-law delighted in magical tricks, sent to Prague for a waggon load of conjurers. While the most skilful amongst them were studying for some rare and unusual illusion, Wenceslaus's magician, called Zyto, who had sneaked in and hid himself in the crowd, suddenly appeared, with his mouth, as it seemed, cloven on both sides, and open to his very ears. He pounced upon the Duke's chief necromancer, and swallowed him up bodily, in his clothes as he stood, spitting out only his shoes because they were dirty and studded with large nails. He then vomited him up again into a huge cistern of water, and brought him in wringing wet, to the infinite delight of the whole company. The tale is gravely related, says Delrio, in the history of Bohemia, written by Dubravius, Bishop of Olmutz. This Zyto assumed now one face, now another, and heightened or diminished his stature at pleasure. When the king was carried in a litter with horses, Zyto seemed to follow him in another drawn by cocks. When at the royal table, he played strange pranks with the guests, changing their hands into the feet of an ox or the hoofs of a horse, so that they were unable to help themselves to anything in the dishes before them. If they looked out of the window, he beautified their heads with horns. To show that he could