

Literature to Francis Douce. "To Francis Douce, Esq.," the inscription reads, "these volumes of some Literary Researches are inscribed as a slight memorial of Friendship, and a grateful acknowledgment to a Lover of Literature." In the preface to the collected works of Isaac Disraeli, issued by his son, the present Benjamin Disraeli, we are informed that at the close of the last century the number of readers in the Library of the British Museum seldom ever exceeded six at a time, and that one of these was very constantly Francis Douce. He became the author of a highly-prized series of Illustrations of Shakespeare and Ancient Manners, and other cognate productions; he gathered likewise a private library—of which Dibdin, in his *Bibliomania*, says: "The library of Prospero (*i.e.* Douce) is acknowledged to be without a rival in its way. How pleasant it is," he exclaims, "only to contemplate such a goodly prospect of elegantly-bound volumes of old English and French literature! and to think of the matchless stores which they contain, relating to our ancient popular tales and romantic legends!" The volume from Douce's library which I possess is Francis Grose's "Provincial Glossary, with a Collection of Local Proverbs and Popular Superstitions." It has Douce's bookplate and a MS. note in his handwriting. Grose, in his preface, tells us of his having gathered his accounts of popular superstitions from the mouths of village historians as they were related to a closing circle of attentive hearers, assembled on a winter's evening round the capacious chimney of an old hall or manor-house; "for formerly," he goes on to say, rather amusingly to us in these later days of steam and electricity—"formerly, in countries remote from the metropolis, or which had no immediate intercourse with it, before newspapers and stagecoaches had imported skepticism and made every ploughman and thresher a politician and freethinker, ghosts, fairies and witches, with bloody murders committed by tinkers, formed a principal part of rural conversation in all large assemblies, and particularly those in Christmas holidays, during the burning of the yule-block." Then speaking of the habiliments in which ghosts were reported to have appeared, Grose happens to say: "One instance of an English ghost dressed in black is found in the celebrated ballad of William and Margaret, in the following lines: 'And clay-cold was her lily hand, That held her sable shroud.'" It is upon this point that Douce makes his manuscript remark in the margin. He desires us to note that "Mr. Bourne, the elegant translator of this song, thought this licence,