



## THE IGNIS FATUUS;

OR, WILL-O'-THE WISP.

In marshy and boggy places a light is sometimes seen to hover over the ground by night, appearing from a distance like a taper gleaming from some cottage window. The light is not stationary, and should any incautious traveller approach it, it moves before him, and thus leads him into bogs and marshes, where he is in danger of perishing.

This appearance is called *Ignis-fatuus*, or *vain*, or *wild fire*. It is also called *Will-o'-the Wisp* and *Jack-o'-Lantern*, by the country people, these being the names of a malignant spirit to whom the appearance was formerly attributed. Of late years the cause seems to have been well ascertained to be the lighting up of an inflammable gas produced by decaying animal and vegetable matter in bogs, marshes, and stagnant pools. It is found that when damp soils are drained and cultivated the *Will-o'-the-Wisp* disappears. Such has been the case with the extensive bogs and marshes which formerly occupied a large portion of the counties of Northampton, Huntingdon, Cambridge, Lincoln, Norfolk, and Suffolk.

In crossing the wild moors near the place where the counties of Northumberland and Cumberland join, the *Will-o'-the-Wisp*