

THE ROCKWOOD REVIEW

down mansion was an excellent indication of the long-standing and quality of blue blood to be credited to the family. Armour and chains, daggers and poison, long robes and rustling silks, a full assortment of blue lights and sulphurous fumes, were the stock in trade of these ancient worthies, and with these they had a large run of business, although there were interlopers, in the shape of mysterious blackfoals, seen by night only, and other like monsters, who now and again broke in upon the common monotony, and gave our ancestors opportunity to look upon other than the old original and orthodox ghost.

Tid-bits of excitement, equivalent to the sensation drama of to-day, were found too, in Omens of various kinds and sizes, while Charms gave an agreeable variety to life and its drudgeries. And here let us be charitable towards the great-great-great aforesaid, and remember that they couldn't find solace in a novel, or the more thrilling romance of a newspaper reporter or interviewer, that they had no Bazaars or Soirees, that Literary Societies within reach of the people were unknown, and that no daily Globe or Mail brought to them columns of telegraphed horrors or diurnal tragedies. Their fire-side stories were almost necessarily of the bloody-head-and-raw-bones stripe, and gave an enlivening of melancholic happiness to all sorts and conditions of men and women. Little wonder is there that our forefathers were a terribly nerve-shaken lot, although they fought great battles, gave each other exceedingly hard knocks, and made a prodigious display of heroism which required extensive pluck and a liberal supply of that we know as animal courage. Taking them all in all, however, and extending to them as much charity as christian-professing men ought to possess, we can see no reason for extolling the "Good Old

Times" in which they lived, or for preserving other than a pleasant memory of their better side.

But while we complacently say and think all this, may it not be well to ask ourselves the question, whether in view of the fact that the schoolmaster has been so long abroad in the land, we are so entirely absolved from participation in their dread of the indefinite, and so much superior to them in freedom from freaks of the imagination, as we ought to be? Let each put the interrogation individually. How many of us are actually above the influence of superstitious feeling, in one shape or other? If we were all to candidly confess, each would assert that he or she is not of the number, and that we all catch ourselves tripping at times in a manner not very flattering to self-esteem. Perhaps no average person would acknowledge a belief in ghosts, or profess a faith in spiritualism, or say that "Spooks" are to be seen at "the witching hour," travelling around as unconcernedly as they are said to have done two hundred years ago. And yet we can all name people who are not quite so plucky in the dark as in the daylight, who fancy that there are weird sounds at night, who start at a very small provocation after sunset, and who, sitting alone when midnight comes, don't like the whistling of the wind in a chimney, the peck of a bird at the window, or the rap of a dog's tail on an outside plank. We are not actually superstitious,—of course not—but we do sometimes allow the reins of imagination to hang loosely, and so are run away with before we know what we are about. Some people submit to having their fortunes told by cards, but never believe in such foolish performances, although they have known things so foretold to come true sometimes, and hope, singly hope—and not expect, you