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FIENDS, GHOSTS, AND SPRITES.

INCLUDING AN ACCOUNT OF

THE ORIGIN AND NATURE

OF

BELIEF IN THE SUPERNATURAL.

BY JOHN NETTEN RADCLIFFE.

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FIENDS, GHOSTS, AND SPRITES.

A belief in the supernatural has existed in all ages and among all nations.

To trace the origin of this belief, the causes of the various modifications it has undergone, and the phases it has assumed, is, perhaps, one of the most interesting researches to which the mind can be given,—interesting, inasmuch as we find pervading every part of it the effects of those passions and affections which are most powerful and permanent in our nature.

So general is the belief in a supreme and over-ruling Power, possessing attributes altogether different from and superior to human powers, and bending these and the forces of nature to its will, that the thought has been entertained by many that it is inborn in man. Such a doctrine is, however, refuted by an acquaintance with the inlets and modes of obtaining knowledge; by the [2]

fact that reason is necessary to its discovery; and by its uselessness.[1] "There are neither innate ideas nor innate propositions; but there is an innate power of understanding that shows itself in primitive notions, which, when put into speech, are expressed in propositions, which propositions, decomposed, produce, under the influence of abstraction and analysis, distinct ideas."[2]

Others have asserted and maintained that man derives his knowledge of the existence of Deity, and, consequently, of the supernatural, from the exercise of reason upon himself and his own powers by self-reflection. If he reflects upon the wonderful power of liberty and free-will which he possesses, on his relation to surrounding beings and things, and particularly on his imperfect, limited, and finite powers, it is argued that the antithetical proposition of infinite must of necessity be admitted. "I cannot have the idea of the finite and of imperfection without having that of perfection and of infinite. These two ideas are logically correlative."[3] Or if man extends his reasoning powers to the study or the contemplation "of the beauty, the order, the intelligence, [3]
the wisdom, and the perfection displayed throughout the universe; and as there must of necessity be in the cause what is witnessed in the effect, you reason from nature to its author, and from the existence of the perfection of the one you conclude the existence and perfection of the other."[4]

But many theologists maintain that the knowledge of a Deity, and of the existence of supernatural beings, is derived solely from revelation; and stern and prolonged have been the struggles in this country between the upholders of the rival tenets.

That no idea of a Deity, such as that which the Christian entertains, is to be found among the vague and undefined notions of supernatural power which are contained in the mythologies of pagan nations; that even the conceptions of Plato are to be summed up in the phrase "the unknown God;" and that the perfect idea of the Godhead is to be derived solely from Scripture, can be satisfactorily shown. But the conclusion sought to be established from this, that all our ideas of the supernatural are derived from this source, does not necessarily follow.

The postulate that man can derive a knowledge of the supernatural from the exercise of his [4]
mental powers alone, cannot either be affirmed or denied, but it is not improbable.

Perhaps the nearest approach to correctness which we are as yet capable of on this subject is as follows:—

After the creation of man, God revealed himself. The perfect knowledge of the Deity thus obtained, was perpetuated by a fragment of the human race, notwithstanding the baneful effects of the fall; and at the epoch of the deluge, the solitary family which escaped that mighty cataclysm, formed a centre from which anew the attributes and powers of the Godhead were made known in all their truth and purity. But again sin prevailed, and with the exception of one race, who alone treasured the true knowledge of the Deity, mankind lost by degrees the pure faith of their fathers; and as they receded from the light, the idea of the Godhead became obscured, and in the progress of time well nigh lost, and the vague and imperfect ideas of a supernatural Power derived from tradition, prompted to a terror and awe of some invisible yet mighty influence, unknown and inexplicable, but which was manifested to man in the more striking objects and the incomprehensible phenomena of nature, which were regarded and worshipped as the seats of this unknown Power, forming the substratum of those wonderful [5]
systems of mythology which have characterised successive eras and races.

"Once," writes Plato, referring to the earlier traditions of the Greeks, "one God governed the universe; but a great and extraordinary change taking place in the nature of men and things, infinitely for the worse (for originally there was perfect virtue and perfect happiness on earth), the command then devolved on Jupiter, with many inferior deities to preside over different departments under him."[5]

To state the influence which each of the elements indicated above—tradition and reason—have had in the development of mythology, is doubtless impossible.

The existence of the first element, *tradition*, is, to those who admit the truth of Scripture, undeniable, and it gives a clue to the elucidation of the leading principle in the belief in those gods, dæmons, fiends, sprites, &c., which, summed up, have constituted the objects of worship of different nations.

I. As in the course of generations the pristine revelation of the Godhead to man became obscured, and a vague and traditionary belief alone remained,—the conceptions, the thoughts [6]
and imaginations of each generation being implanted in the succeeding one, and influencing it by the force of habit, education, and authority,—man, impressed with an imperfect notion of a

supernatural Power, and ignorant of the forces of the material world, on seeking to unfold the source of those changes which he beheld in the budding forth of spring, the fervid beauty of summer, the maturity of autumn, and the stern grandeur of winter, conceived that the wonderful phenomena ever going on around him owed their origin and effects to the influence of supernatural agency, and marking their apparent dependence upon the sun and other orbs in space, he offered adoration to those luminaries. But when he still further analysed the changes occurring on the surface of the globe, and comprehended the influence of the more palpable forces and elements, and the inexhaustible variety and seeming disconnectedness of the phenomena which he witnessed, incapable of otherwise solving the mysteries which surrounded him, he deemed each as the work of a potent and indwelling Spirit.[6]

[7] Thus man concluded that he was surrounded by a world of supernatural beings, of different powers, attributes, and passions. The sun and moon, the planets and stars, were conceived to be the abodes of spiritual existences; and the effects caused by those orbs which more immediately influence our earth, were considered as the indications of the powers of their respective deities. So also the air, its clouds and currents; the ocean, with its mighty progeny of lakes and rivers; and the earth, its hills, dales, and organic forms, were peopled with incorporeal beings. Every object of beauty shadowed forth the operations of a beneficent Spirit; while devastating storms, barren places and deserts, and the convulsions of nature, betokened the malignancy of dæmons or fiends. According as a country's surface is harsh, rugged, barren, and storm-tossed, or clothed with lovely verdure and basking in the rays of a fervid sun, so do we find the principal characters of its mythology; stern, gigantic, and fierce gods or dæmons, or spirits more kind towards man, and full of beauty and grace. The passions and affections of man, for the same reasons, were considered to be under the sway of supernatural beings; in short, every operation of nature in the [8] organic or inorganic, in the mental or physical worlds, was deemed an indication of the existence of a supernatural Being which ruled and governed it.[7]

[9] These powers in the progress of time were personified and represented as possessed of passions and propensities similar to those of man; for the same finite and imperfect reason which had concluded that they dwelt in the phenomena they were supposed to explain, also deemed, being unable to conceive any higher type of existence than was seen in man himself, that they differed simply in degree of power, and were alike subject to those appetites and passions which characterised humanity.

This source of belief in spiritual existences is found dominant in the systems of mythology of all nations; and as it arises from causes which are inherant in man, it can easily be understood why there is so great a similarity in the primary mythological conceptions of different races.

[10] The mythologies of ancient Greece and Rome furnish a very perfect illustration of the influence which this cause has exercised in the development of the belief in supernatural beings, and no better method of illustration can be adopted, than a sketch of the physical signification of the principal deities, and classes of deities, of those countries.

The primitive religion of the Greeks and Romans would appear to have consisted in the worship of the heavenly bodies (Sabaism):—the Titans are nearly all personifications of the celestial orbs. Subsequently, their mythology assumed a more physical character, and the offspring of Cronos (Saturn, *time*), or the personifications of the firmament, atmosphere, sea, &c., formed the leading deities of the more developed system of religion, and the reign of Jupiter commenced.

In this system, the god Jupiter is symbolical of the upper regions of the atmosphere (*Æther*). Euripides writes:—

> "The vast, expanded, boundless sky behold,
> See it with soft embrace the earth enfold;
> This own the chief of deities above,
> And this acknowledge by the name of Jove."[8]

[11] At a later period this god was conceived to represent the soul of the world, diffused alike through animate and inanimate nature; or, as Virgil poetically describes it in the Æneid—(Book vi.):

> "The heaven and earth's compacted frame,
> And flowing waters, and the starry flame,
> And both the radiant lights, one common soul
> Inspires and feeds, and animates the whole.
> This active mind infused through all the space,
> Unites and mingles with the mighty mass.
> Hence man and beasts the breath of life obtain,
> And birds of air, and monsters of the main."

The god Apollo signifies the sun,—his prophetic power being symbolical of its influence in dispelling darkness; his knowledge of medicine and healing, signifies the influence of that luminary in revivifying and restoring the powers of organic life; his skill in music is symbolical of the central position of the sun among the seven planets, and its making harmony with them; and the harp upon which this god is depicted as playing, is furnished with seven strings, in emblem of the seven planets. *Pan* represents the universal world, and he is the emblem of fecundity. Hence this god is depicted in his upper part as a man, in his lower parts as a beast; "because the superior and celestial part of the world is beautiful, radiant and glorious, as the face of this god, whose horns resemble the rays of the sun, and the horns of the moon. The redness of his face is like the splendour of the sky; and the spotted skin that he wears is an image of the starry [12] firmament. In his lower parts he is shagged and deformed, which represents the shrubs, and wild beasts, and trees of the earth below. His goat's feet signify the solidity of the earth; and his pipe of seven reeds, that celestial harmony which is made by the seven planets. He has a shepherd's hook, crooked at the top, in his hand, which signifies the turning of the year into itself."[9]

The goddess *Cybele* was symbolical of the earth; *Juno*, of the air—the link between earthly and heavenly natures; *Vulcan*, of fire; *Æolus*, of the winds; *Diana*, of the moon; *Neptune*, of the sea; *Rusina*, of the country; *Ceres*, of the fruits of the earth; *Collina*, of the hills; *Vallonia*, of the valleys; *Silvanus*, of the woods, which teemed also with inferior deities—*satyrs* and *fauns; Seia* presided over all seed; *Flora*, flowers; *Proserpina* cherished the corn when it had sprung above the earth; *Volasia* folded the blade round it ere the beard broke out; *Nodosus* watched over the joints and knots of the stalk; *Patelina* governed the opened ear; *Lactusa* took charge when it became milky; *Matura* guarded and conducted it to maturity; *Hostilina* presided over the crop; and *Tutelina*, over the cutting.

Nymphs, goddesses of lovely form, and light and airy beauty, sported about the earth; a *Dryad* [13] presided over every tree; a *Hamadryad* was born, lived, and died with each oak; *Oreads* dwelt on the mountains; *Napëæ*, in the groves and valleys; *Lemoniads*, in the meadows and fields; *Nereiads*, in the ocean; *Naiads*, at the fountains; *Fluviales*, by the rivers: and *Lirinades*, by lakes and ponds.

Vesta presided over the vital heat of the body; *Janus* opened the gate of life to infant man; *Opis* assisted him when he came into the world; *Nascio* presided over the moment of birth; *Cunia* watched over the cradle, and while he lay and slept; *Vagitanus*, or *Vaticanus*, took care while the infant cried; *Rumina* presided while the child sucked the breast; *Potina* guarded the infant drinking; *Educa* watched over it while it received food; *Ossilago* "knit its bones" and hardened its body; *Carna* presided over the safety of the inward parts; the goddess *Nundina* had charge of the child on the ninth day—the day of purification; *Statilinus* taught the infant to stand and walk, and preserved it from falling; *Fabulinus* looked after the child when it began to speak; *Paventia* preserved it from fright; *Juventus* protected the beginning of youth; *Agenoria* excited man to action; *Strenua* encouraged him to behave bravely on all occasions; *Stimula* urged him to [14] extraordinary exertions; *Horta* exhorted him to noble actions; *Quis* gave peace and quietude; *Murcia* rendered man lazy, idle, and dull; *Adeona* protected him in his outgoings and incomings; *Vibilia* guarded wanderers; *Vacuna* protected the lazy and idle; *Fessonia* refreshed the weary; *Meditrina* healed injuries; *Vitula* presided over and gave mirth; *Volupia* governed pleasures; *Orbona* was a goddess supplicated that she might not leave parents destitute of children; *Pellonia* drove away enemies; *Numeria* endued men with the power of casting numbers; *Sentia* gave just and honourable sentiments; *Augerona* removed anguish from the mind; and *Consus* presided over good counsels.

Virtue also was worshipped as a goddess; and the several species of virtue were considered each as emanating from some godlike power, and *Faith*, *Hope*, *Justice*, *Piety*, *Peace*, *Fidelity*, *Liberty*, and *Money*, were worshipped as good deities; while, on the other hand, *Envy*, *Contumely*, *Impudence*, *Calumny*, *Fraud*, *Discord*, *Fury*, *Fame*, *Fortune*, *Fever*, and *Silence*, were supplicated as evil deities.

Minerva was symbolical of wisdom and chastity; *Mercury*, of eloquence—speech; *Venus* of ungovernable passions and desire; *Saturn*, time; *Momus*, mockery; *Silenus*, jesting; *Mars*, war; and *Bacchus*, wine. The *Muses* each represented an accomplishment. Thus, *Calliope* presided [15] over epic poetry; *Clio*, history; *Erato*, elegy and amorous song; *Thalia*, comedy, gay, light, and pleasing song; *Melpomene*, tragedy; *Terpsichore*, dancing; *Euterpe*, music; *Polyhymnia*, religious song; and *Urania*, the knowledge of celestial events.

Themis taught mankind what was honest, just, and right; *Astræa* was the goddess of justice; *Nemesis* punished vice, rewarded virtue, and taught mankind their duty.

Every action of man, both in his collective and individual capacity—everything in relation to his

household and domestic affairs—was also conceived to be governed by supernatural powers, which were classed under the names of *Penates* and *Lares*.

The *Penates*, as may well be imagined, were almost numberless, but they may be divided into three classes: 1st, those which presided over kingdoms and provinces; 2nd, those which presided over cities only; and 3rd, those presiding over houses and families. To instance to what an extent this belief was carried, a penate named *Ferculus* looked after the door; the goddess *Cardua* after the hinges; and *Limentius* protected the threshold.

The *Lares* were of human origin, and they presided also over houses, streets, and ways. Subsequently their power was extended to the country and the sea. [16]

To each person was also assigned two deities, termed *genii*. These spirits were subsidiary to the gods already mentioned, it being one of their duties to carry the prayers of men to them. The genii differed in nature and disposition, and were divided into two classes—the *good* and the *bad*. The *good genius* excited men to all actions of honour and virtue; the *evil genius* excited him to all manner of wickedness. The Greeks termed these genii *dæmons*, either from the terror and dread they created when they appeared, or from the wise answer they returned when consulted as oracles.

The ravages caused by an ever-gnawing conscience and by the effects of the evil passions, were attributed to three supernatural powers termed the *Furies—Alecto*, *Tisiphone*, and *Megæra*—who became symbolical of the avengers of wickedness; and lastly, Night, Sleep, and Death—*Nox*, *Mors*, and *Somnus*—were elevated among the gods.

This brief sketch will serve to show the leading principle entering into the formation of the Grecian and Roman mythology—a mythology containing more than 30,000 gods; and it will illustrate how every hidden power of nature as well in the organic as the inorganic world; and how every equally inexplicable operation of the human mind was referred, for an explanation, to [17] the influence of a supernatural power, which in the progress of time was personified, worshipped, and pourtrayed in such a form as best set forth the effects it was conceived to produce.

This source of the belief in the supernatural, as we have already stated, will be found to have prevailed among all nations; hence their primary mythological conceptions are one and the same, modified by the difference of climate, habits, &c.

Thus, of the gods of the ancient Britons—*Belin*, *Plennyd*, or *Granwyn*, possessed the attributes of, and was the same with, Apollo; *Gwydion*, or *Teutath*, had all the attributes of Mercury; *Daronwy*, *Taranwy*, or *Taranis*, the thunderer, of Jove; *Anras*, or *Andraste*, of Bellona; *He-us*, *Hesus*, *Hugadarn*, or *Hu-ysgwn*, united the characters of Bacchus and Mars; *Ked* and *Keridwen* answered to Ceres; *Llenwy* to Proserpine; *Olwen* and *Dwynwen* to Venus; and *Neivion* to Neptune.[10]

In the Scandinavian mythology the principal gods are personifications of physical and mental powers. *Odin*, the most powerful of the three beings first educed from chaotic confusion, possesses the attributes of Mercury; and according to Finn Magnusen, *Vili* is the personification of light; *Ve*, of fire. The two ravens which are depicted as sitting constantly upon the shoulders of [18] Odin, represent Mind and Memory; and of the principal gods, we find that *Thor* is symbolical of thunder; *Baldur* of the sun; *Njord* rules over the winds, sea, &c.; *Frey* is the god of rain, sunshine, and the fruits of the earth; *Tyr*, of war; *Bragi*, of wisdom and poetry; *Vidar*, of silence; *Forseti*, of law and justice; *Loki* is the personification of evil; *Frigga* is the goddess of the earth; and night, day, the moon, time, the present, the past, and the future, healing, chastity, abundance, love, courtesy, wisdom, and every form and passion and power of nature which the Scandinavians had separated and distinguished, each had its special and worshipped god.

The original worship of the Hindoos[11] was directed to the heavenly bodies, the elements, and natural objects. In the mandras, or prayers, which form the principal part of the Vedas, or sacred writings, the firmament, the sun, moon, fire, air, and spirit of the earth, are most frequently addressed. These writings inculcate the worship of the elements and planets, and differ from the [19] more recent and legendary poems which teach the worship of deified heroes and sages. In the Sanhitâ of the Rig-veda, the invocations which it contains are chiefly addressed to the deities of fire, the firmament, the winds, the seasons, the sun, and the moon, who are invited to be present at the sacrifices, or are appealed to for wealth or for their several beneficial qualities. The personified attributes of *Brahma*, *Vishnu*, and *Siva*, signifying respectively creation, preservation, and destruction, are due to a later and more refined era of Hindoo mythology; and the eight inferior deities ranking next in order to the *Trimurti*, and termed *Lokapalas*, are all personifications of natural objects and powers. Thus *Indra* is the god of, and is symbolical of the

visible heavens, thunder, lightning, storm, and rain; *Agni*, of fire; *Yama*, of the infernal regions; *Surya*, of the sun; *Varuna*, of water; *Parana*, of wind; *Kuvera*, of wealth; and *Soma*, or *Chandra*, of the moon.

The celebrated line which it is enjoined should be repeated without intermission, and which is the most holy passage in the Vedas, reads literally, "Let us meditate on the adorable light of Savitri (the sun—the divine ruler); may it guide our intellects." This, it is asserted, is addressed to the sun as the symbol of a divine and all-powerful being, and it is regarded as a proof of the monotheism of the Vedas. This explanation is, however, considered by some to be far from [20] satisfactory, and to offer greater difficulties than the text ever can when taken in a natural light.

The creed of Buddha contains similar traces of elemental worship. The five Buddhas and the five Bodhisattwas would appear to be personifications of the principal natural elements and phenomena.

In Persian mythology we find a similar deification of natural phenomena. In the creed of Zoroaster, which was a modification of pre-existing beliefs, there is an eternal almighty Being, *Zernane Akherene* (illimitable, uncreated time), who created *Ormuzd* (light, goodness); and *Ahrimann* (darkness, evil). Ormuzd created the universe, and the genii, or deities of light, of whom there are three classes.

1st Class. The seven *Amshaspands*, including *Ormuzd* himself. The remaining are *Bahman*, the genius of the region of light; *Ardibehesht*, of ethereal fire; *Sharwir*, of metals; *Sarpandomad*, of fruitfulness; *Khudad*, of time; *Amerdad*, of the vegetable world, flocks, and herds.

2nd Class. The twenty-seven *Izeds*, male and female—the *elementary* deities: e.g. *Khorsid*, the deity of the sun; *Mah*, of the moon; *Tashter*, of the dog-star, and of rain; *Rapitan*, the deity of [21] heat, &c. These deities were probably worshipped before the belief was reduced to a system.

3rd Class. The *Fervers*—the vivifying principles of nature, the ideal types of the material universe, corresponding in general with the *ideas* of Plato. Every one, even Ormuzd, has his Ferver. "An Iranite has thus constantly by his side his ideal type, or uncorrupted material image, to guide him through life and preserve him from evil."[12]

The Iranite worships light, fire, and water, as emblems of Ormuzd, in whom these elements are united; he does not worship the elementary spirits attached to them.

In China, the state religion—the religious system of Confucius—embodies the following objects of worship, arranged in three classes:—

1st Class. Ta sze, or *great sacrifices*, includes the worship of the heavens (*Yâng*), and the earth (*Yin*); and while worshipping the material heaven, they appear to consider that there exists an animating *intelligence* (*Tae-keih*) which presides over the world, rewarding virtue and vice. This class includes also deified sovereigns.

2nd Class. Choong-sze, *medium sacrifices*, includes the worship of gods of the land and grain, the sun and moon, genii, sages, gods of letters, inventors of agriculture, manufacturers, and useful arts. [22]

3rd Class. Seaon-sze, or *lesser sacrifices*, includes the worship of the ancient patron of the healing art; innumerable spirits of deceased statesmen, eminent scholars, martyrs to virtue, &c.; the principal phenomena of nature, as the clouds, rain, wind, thunder, each of which has its presiding god; the military banners (like the Romans); the god of war; *Loong-wang*, the dragon-king; the gods of rain and the watery elements; and *Tien-how*, the queen of heaven and goddess of the weather. The Chinese also believe in good and evil genii, and in tutelar spirits presiding over families, houses, and towns.[13]

In Africa, the mythology of its different nations is based on natural objects and phenomena. The natives of Ashanti and the neighbouring districts worship water, lakes, rivers, mountains, rocks and stones, leopards, panthers, wolves, crocodiles, &c., all of which are more or less powerful "fetishes;" and the Nubian worships the moon. The natives of Tahiti and the islands of the South Sea also derive their principal ideas of supernatural beings from material objects. In Mangareva, the largest of the Gambier Islands, the gods adored by the natives were principally personifications of natural objects. A god named *Tea* was the deity and creator of the sun, wind, [23] and water; *Rongo* was the god of rain; *Tairi*, of thunder; *Arikitenow*, of the ocean; *A-nghi*, of storms and famine; *Napitoiti*, of death, &c. The Tahitan conceives also that animals, trees, stones, &c., possess souls which, like his own, after destruction will have a subsequent existence. On the vast continent of South America we find numerous traces of elemental and natural worship. The aborigines of Paraguay supplicate the sun, moon, stars, thunder, lightning, groves, &c. In the

district bounded by the Orinoco, the Atabapo, the Rio Negro, and the Cassequiare, including an extent of about 8000 square miles, and scattered also over a still greater extent of this continent, are found rocks covered with colossal symbolical figures of crocodiles and tigers, household utensils, and of the sun and moon,—doubtless objects of adoration to nations of whose existence even tradition has not preserved a trace. It is also probable that the rocks thus engraved were regarded as sacred; for the Macusi Indians, inhabiting one portion of the districts where these sculptures are found, have the tradition that "the sole survivor of a general deluge repeopled the earth by changing stones into human beings."[14] The Incas of Peru—the children of the sun—
built magnificent temples, and adored that luminary; and the sculptures on the walls of the [24]
colossal temples and buildings of the Aztecs, the ancient inhabitants of Mexico, as well as the remains of the pyramids of the sun and moon at Teotihuacan, teach the same lesson with regard to that extinct race. The Pueblo Indians of New Mexico still perpetuate the holy fire "by the side of which the Aztecan kept a continual watch for the return to earth of Quetzalcoatl, the god of air." In a solitary cave of the mountains is preserved the undying fire, and its dim light is seen by the hunter if, by chance, led by the chase, he passes near to this lonely temple.[15] Among the tribes which inhabit the more northerly parts of the American continent, we find also similar traces of the important influence which natural phenomena have exercised in the development of their ideas of supernatural existences.

We could not well close this sketch without allusion to the Shaman religion, which is diffused throughout the principal nations of Asiatic Russia, a great part of the Tartars, the Eins, Samoiedes, Ostiaks, Mandshurs, Burats, and Tungsees; and it is even professed among the
Coriaks and Techuks, and people of the eastern islands. This system of religion is essentially [25]
founded upon the observation of natural phenomena: it teaches that the gods (*Burchans*) arose from the general mass of matter and spirit; and while inculcating the existence of a spiritual world, it instils the belief in the self-existence of matter.

These remarks will sufficiently show the important influence which the observation of natural phenomena has had in the development of the belief in the Supernatural of most nations; and it will fully indicate the primary reason of the correspondence of their principal mythological conceptions. A consideration of the different habits, degree of civilization, locality, &c., will also indicate the principal reason of the various modifications which the same mythological conception is found to present among different nations.

There was one Jupiter for Europe, and another for Africa; and the varied forms under which this god was worshipped, derived from the locality, habits, and other peculiarities of his worshippers, were very numerous. At Athens, the great Jupiter was the Olympian; at Rome, the Capitoline. There was the mild and the thundering Jupiter, the Jupiter Nicephorus, Opitulus, Fulminator, &c., all differing in some subordinate characters.

Ammon, of Egypt; Belus, of the Babylonians; Ibis, of the Phœnicians; Allah, of the Arabians; [26]
Beel, Baal, Beelphagor, Beelzebub, Beelzemer, &c., all possess the attributes of Jupiter, and are the same with that god.

The Buddha of India; Fohi, of the Chinese; Odin, or Woden, of the Scandinavians; and Gwydion, of the Ancient Britons, correspond with Mercury.

Vishnu, Brahma, Siva, and Krishna, the latter both of the Irish and Sanscrit, correspond with Apollo; whilst Arun, of the Irish and Hindoo superstitions, corresponds with the Aurora of the Greeks.

It is peculiarly interesting to mark in the writings of classic authors the earlier traces of a correct explanation of the causes operating in the changes observed in nature, and their influence in modifying the mythological ideas of the period. Socrates penetrated so far in the interpretation of certain physical phenomena as to discover that they might be explained without having recourse to the idea of supernatural agency. This is most interestingly shown in Aristophanes' comedy of "The Clouds" (B.C. 440). In this comedy, written for the purpose of throwing ridicule and contempt on the sophistical philosophy of Socrates, Strepsiades, an aged
and ignorant man, is represented as suffering from the excesses and expenses of his son [27]
Phidippides. He conceives the idea of studying logic, in order, by mere subtle reasoning, to overcome and cheat his creditors. He enrols himself as a pupil of Socrates, and in Act I, Scene 2, the following scene occurs:—

Str. Is not Olympian Jupiter our God?

Soc. What Jupiter? nay, jest not—there is none.

Str. How say'st thou? who then rains?—this first of all
Declare to me.

Soc. Why these (*the clouds*): by mighty signs
This I will prove to thee. Hast ever seen
Jove raining without clouds?—if it were so,
Through the clear fields of ether must he rain,
While these were far away.

Str. Now by Apollo,
Full well hast thou discours'd upon this point;
Till now, in truth, I thought 'twas Jupiter,
Distilling through a sieve. But tell me next,
Who is the thunderer?—this awakes my dread.

Soc. They thunder as they roll.

Str. But how, I pray?
Say, thou who darest all.

Soc. When they are fill'd
With water, and perforce impell'd along,
Driven precipitate, all full of rain,
They meet together, bursting with a crash.

Str. But who compels them thus to move along?
Is not this Jove?

Soc. No, but th'ætherial whirl.

In a subsequent part of the comedy (Act III, Scene 1) Strepsiades is represented as speaking of this idea of a whirlwind as a deified being, thus admirably showing the tendency of man to consider that which he could not comprehend as the result of supernatural agency, and to personify it. [28]

Str. Thou swearest now, by Jove.

Phid. I do.

Str. Thou see'st how good it is to learn,
There is no Jove, Phidippides.

Phid. Who then?

Str. A whirlwind reigns; having driven him, Jove, away.

It would seem, also, that Socrates himself was subject to the influence of this feeling; for a passage in Act V, Scene 1,[16] has led to the conclusion "that in the school of Socrates was placed an earthen image (δῖνος, the name of an earthen vessel as well as of the *whirlwind*, who has usurped the honours and attributes of Jove). (See Schol. ad Vesp. 617.) This, probably, was done by the philosopher as a sort of compensation for having expelled Jupiter (τὸν Διά) from his mythological system."[17] [29]

II. But the ideas derived from the contemplation of natural phenomena were not the sole sources of mythology, such as we have received it. Other and most powerful causes operated, and of those next in degree of importance were those feelings which prompted to the deification of men.

Persæus, a disciple of Zeno, "says, that they who have made discoveries advantageous to the life of man, should be esteemed as gods; and the very things, he says, which are healthful and beneficial, should have divine appellations; so that he thinks it not sufficient to call them the discoverers of gods, but that they themselves should be deemed divine."[18]

The author of the "Book of Wisdom" in the Apocrypha, details other causes which tended to the same result. He writes, (Chapter xiv, v. 15-21):—

"Thus, some parent mourning bitterly for a son who hath been taken from him, makes an image of his child: and him who before was *to his family* as a dead man, they now begin to worship as a god; rites and sacrifices being instituted, to be observed by his dependents. And in process of time, custom having established these as a law, an image set up by an impious tyrant receives divine honours. A man being unable to render such respect in their presence to those who dwelt remote from them, and having received their likeness, brought from far, they have proceeded to make a conspicuous image of any king to whom they inclined to pay divine honours, by which means, though absent, the ruler receives their solicitous homage, as though present with them. The exquisite pains bestowed by the artist has likewise contributed to this worship of the absent by ignorant men; for being willing to give perfect satisfaction to him for whom he doth it, he avails himself of all the resources of his art to produce a perfect resemblance. Thus the [30]

multitude, allured by the beauty of the statue, come to regard as a god him whom before they honoured but as a man. And this hath been the great delusion of humanity, that out of affection for the dead, or subserviency to their rulers, men have given to stocks and stones the incommunicable name of God."

Most systems of mythology contain examples of deities which have been derived from this source.

"It has been a general custom, likewise," writes Cicero,[19] "that men who have done important [31]
service to the public should be exalted to heaven by fame and universal consent. Thus Hercules, Castor and Pollux, Æsculapius and Liber, became gods; * * * thus, likewise, Romulus, or Quirinus —for they are thought to be the same—became a god. They are justly esteemed as deities, since their souls subsist and enjoy eternity, from whence they are perfect and immortal beings."

The Chinese, at the present day, deify and adore their deceased emperors, as well as the spirits of eminent statesmen, scholars, martyrs to virtue, &c.

It has occasionally happened that some great sage, on his apotheosis, had attributed to him that which he had simply expounded during life, and thus became the personification of the religious ideas he had entertained. Buddha, who lived, as nearly as can be ascertained, about 1000 years before Christ, attempted to reform Brahminical India. After death he was deified by his converts, and became the embodiment of the principles he had advocated when on earth; and his name, with various modifications, was applied to the system of cosmogony and religion which he had advocated. The Grand Lamas (*Chaberons*) of Thibet are regarded as incarnations (*avatars*) of Buddha, and as such are adored by the Thibetians and the various tribes of Tartars [32]
who roam over the vast district which extends from the banks of the Volga to Corea, in the Sea of Japan.

After the persecution which terminated in the expulsion of the followers of Buddha from Hindostan, the Hindoos, not content with their celestial gods or heroes, extended their adoration to various living individuals, particularly to the Brahmins and priests. Daughters under eight years of age are worshipped by them as forms of the goddess Bhavani (*Venus*); and at certain seasons of the year the Brahmin is worshipped by his wife, and the wives of Brahmins by other men.

Some writers have thought that all the gods of the ancients consisted of deified men. This is, however, an error; for the deification of men was an act second in order to the worship of natural objects and phenomena. The chronological position of this element of mythology has, among other reasons, led Bonomi to arrive at some interesting conclusions on the respective ages of the palaces of Nineveh.

On the walls of the palace at Khorsabad are found sculptured the winged and human-headed bulls, emblems of wisdom or the sun, the four-winged figures, typical of Ibis or Cronos, eagle-headed divinities, and other figures, which are conceived to be symbolical of constellations, and [33]
of astronomical phenomena. From these nobler and simpler ideas of Divinity it is inferred, that when this palace was built the worship of the Assyrians was comparatively pure. But on the walls of Nimroud, in addition to the symbolical representations found at Khorsabad, there are also indications of an increased number of divinities, from the presence of deified men; hence a reason for the belief in the degeneracy of the system of religion at the period when this palace was built, and consequently its more recent date.[20]

III. Another element has also exercised a considerable influence upon the mythologies of some nations, namely, *Scriptural narrative and traditions*. It is not improbable that several of the heathen myths have been derived from this source. Many, indeed, believe that all mythology arises from corrupted Scripture, and it is asserted that Deucalion is merely another name for Noah; Hercules for Samson; Arion for Jonah, and Bacchus is either Nimrod or Moses—for the former supposition the similarity of name being assigned; for the latter, among others, one of the names and some of the actions of this God. Thus, Bacchus was named *Bicornis, double-horned;* [34]
and the face of Moses appeared double-horned when he came down from the mountain where he had spoken to God,—the rays of glory darting from his brow having the semblance of radiant horns. The Bacchæ drew waters from the rocks by striking them with their thyrsi; and wherever they went, the land flowed with milk, honey, and wine. Bacchus caused the rivers Orontes and Hydaspes to dry up, by striking them with his thyrsus, and passed through them dry-shod,—an action similar to that of Moses at the passage of the Red Sea, &c. That Scripture narrative has had an important influence in determining the formation of mythology, is highly probable; and we have already shown that the primary revelation of a Godhead at the creation of man supplied an important initial excitement to that development of the belief in the supernatural which occurred

subsequent to the fall of man. The influence of Scriptural traditions on the myths of various nations it is probably impossible to unravel satisfactorily.

IV. Again, it has been supposed that the myths of the ancients, and of modern pagan nations, were allegorical; and that they were designed to represent a philosophical, moral, or religious truth under a fabulous form. Thus, the myth of the giant Typhon cutting away and carrying off the sinews of Jupiter, and that they were afterwards stolen from him by Mercury, and restored to [35]
Jupiter, is supposed to refer to powerful rebellions, by which the sinews of kings—their revenue and authority—are cut off; but by mildness of address, and wisdom of edicts, influencing the people, as it were, in a stolen manner, they recover their power and reconcile their subjects. And in the myth of the expedition of the gods against the giants, when the ass Silenus became of great service in dispersing them, on account of the terror excited by his braying, it is considered to be an allegory of those vast projects of rebels, which are mostly dissipated by light rumours and vain consternation. Minerva was fabled to have been born out of the head of Jupiter, because it was deemed that man did not in himself possess wisdom, but he derived it from divine inspiration; and this goddess was born armed, because a wise man clothed in wisdom and virtue is fortified against all the harms of life.

This element has undoubtedly had an important influence in the formation of the various myths, but it refers rather to an advanced stage in mythology, and to that period of development when a nation has made some progress in arts and literature.

These elements, and doubtless also others of which the effects are less easily unfolded, *e.g.* [36]
intercourse between various nations, dispersion of tribes, &c., have all exercised a greater or less degree of influence on the development and formation of the mythologies of different nations.

If we contemplate a race in the earlier phases of its existence, or one degraded in the scale of being, we find that its ideas of the supernatural are confined to the deification and worship of the simplest and most striking of the objects and phenomena of nature: as it has increased in civilization and learning, those deities have been represented in symbolical forms; and as civilization and the cultivation of the mind advances, and the knowledge of surrounding nature has become increased, so have the number of deities been multiplied by the deification of the less evident powers of nature, of kings, and of distinguished men, and then also allegory has come into play. Every variation in the character of a nation, and every era, has impressed more or less distinct marks on its mythology; and mythology, as we receive it now, is the sum of all those changes which have been impressed upon it from its earliest formation.

When Christianity dawned upon the world, its effect was not the immediate eradication or dispersion of the superstitious beliefs and observances then entertained: it induced a change in [37]
the form and nature of those beliefs.

At the commencement of the Christian era, certain men, inspired by the Holy Ghost, were enabled to cast aside all those thoughts and feelings derived from habit, education, and authority, and to receive at once, in all its purity and fulness, the light of the gospel—perhaps the most wonderful of all the miracles of Holy Writ. Such was not the case, however, with the majority of the earlier Christians. They did not thus throw off the superstitious beliefs of pagan origin, but modified them so as to concur, as they thought, with Scripture.

Thus, the Scriptures enunciated the doctrine of one sole, omnipotent, and omniscient God; and it fully defined a power of evil, and denounced idolatry. Hence the early Christian fathers were led to conceive, and teach, that the gods of the heathen were devils; and further, that their history, attributes, and worship, had been taught to mankind by the devils themselves.

> "Powers that erst in heaven sat on thrones;
> Though of their names in heavenly records now
> Be no memorial,—blotted out and razed,
> By their rebellion from the book of life,—
> ... wandering o'er the earth,
> Through God's high sufferance for the trial of man,
> By falsities and lies the greatest part [38]
> Of mankind they corrupted, to forsake
> God their Creator, and the invisible
> Glory of Him that made them to transform
> Oft to the image of a brute adorn'd
> With gay religions, full of pomp and gold,
> And devils to adore for deities;
> Then were they known to man by various names,
> And various idols through the heathen world."[21]

This phase being given to the existing superstitions, it will readily be understood how, under the form of devils, most of the principal classes of deities in pagan mythology were retained and believed in. Thus the elemental and primary gods of paganism were perpetuated under the name of *fiends*, *dæmons*, *genii*, &c.; and the terms *salamanders*, *undines*, &c., expressed certain spirits of fire and of water; in the form of *fairies*, *elves*, *sylphs*, &c., were retained the graceful Nymphs —Oreads, Dryads, &c.—of antiquity,—

"The light militia of the lower sky;"

the hidden parts of the earth were peopled with *dwarfs*, and other spirits of a more powerful nature; and spectral apparitions frighted the midnight hours of the watcher.

It is, therefore, to the retention of certain pagan superstitions in a modified form, that we are to attribute the origin of the belief in those unnumbered spirits, which, under the names of fiends, [39] dæmons, genii, fairies, fays, elves, sylphs, sprites, &c., have been supposed to surround us, and have hampered the imaginations of all Christian nations, and of which, to use the words of Pope—

"Some in the fields of purest æther play,
And bask and whiten in the blaze of day;
Some guide the course of wandering orbs on high,
Or roll the planets through the boundless sky;
Some, less refined, beneath the moon's pale light,
Pursue the stars that shoot athwart the night,
Or suck the mists in grosser air below,
Or dip their pinions in the painted bow,
Or brew fierce tempests on the wintry main,
Or o'er the glebe distil the kindly rain;
Others on earth o'er human race preside,
Watch all their ways, and all their actions guide."[22]

The belief that the heathen deities were devils, naturally led to the further conclusion, that the priests who sacrificed to those gods, and who were regarded as the medium of communication between the gods and man, held immediate converse with devils,—a belief subsequently extended to idolators in general, and to all those practising magic and sorcery. Instances of the natural alliance of a mythological idea to a Christian belief might be multiplied.

The power of evil, enunciated by the Scriptures, and spoken of as the "*Devil*," was early reputed to have appeared in a visible form, assuming the aspect of the god Pan, or of a faun or satyr, that [40] is, a horned figure, with hirsute frame, and the lower extremities of a goat, which indeed, until recently, was considered to be the most orthodox form of visibility for his Satanic Majesty. The connection of the power of evil with the gods of the most gloomy and hidden parts of nature is obvious: Pan, indeed, was the god of terror.

Frequently, also, Satan appeared under the form of a goat. The goat is an emblem of the sin-offering, and of the wicked at the day of judgment; hence it became symbolical of the Prince of Darkness, and in this form the devil most commonly appeared to the Jews, according to the Rabbins. In Leviticus (xvii. 7), where it is written "they shall no more offer sacrifices to devils," it is literally, to "hairy-ones"—goats. The symbol of the goat prompted to the nature of the form given to Pan in the Grecian and Roman mythology. Indeed, the Greeks derived their worship of that god from Egypt, where he was adored under the form of a goat; and it is fabled that he captivated Diana under the aspect of a white goat.

A singular superstition of the connection of the goat with Satan is entertained in some districts of this island. It is asserted that a goat is never visible for twenty-four hours consecutively, as [41] once in that time it must visit Satan to have its beard combed![23]

Another example of the wedding of a pagan myth to the Christian religion is this:—Most heathen nations believed in the existence of deities whose especial duty was to guard the threshold of the house, and prevent the entrance of evil spirits.

The Grecians and Romans had their Penates and Lars, and the Genoese retain the superstition at the present day.

The Lars (*familiares*) were the souls of men, who lingered about the dwellings and places they had formerly inhabited and frequented. They were represented by small images resembling monkeys, and covered with dog's skin; and these images were placed in a niche behind the door, or around the hearth. At the feet of the Lar was placed the figure of a dog, to intimate vigilance; and special festivals were devoted to them in the month of May, when offerings of fruit were presented, and the images were crowned with flowers.

Plautus (*Aulularia*) represents a Lar as using the following words:— [42]

"I am the family Lar
Of this house whence you see me coming out.
'Tis many years now that I keep and guard
This family; both father and grandsire
Of him that has it now, I aye protected."

Beneath the threshold of the Assyrian palaces at Nineveh were found images of a foul and ugly appearance (*teraphim*), some having a lynx's head and human body, others a lion's body and human head. Sentences were also inscribed on the threshold, and the winged bulls and figures were placed on each side of the portal. The intention was, doubtless, the prevention of the entrance of evil deities, and the protection of the household.[24]

The Chinese, Hindoos, and natives of Ashanti, believe in the existence of similar deities. The Bhûtas of Hindostan are a species of malevolent spirit, which are worshipped as tutelary deities. Every house and each family has its particular Bhûta, which is often represented by a shapeless [43] stone. Daily sacrifices are offered to it, in order to propitiate its evil disposition, and incline it to defend the house from the machinations of neighbouring Bhûtas. The native of Ashanti offers also daily sacrifices to his tutelary deity, which, under the form of a stone painted red, is placed upon a platform within his hut.

There are several remnants of this ancient superstition still in vogue in England. The common practice of nailing a horse-shoe behind the door, to terrify witches and prevent the entrance of evil spirits, is familiar to most persons. Formerly it was the custom to nail the horse-shoe to the threshold. Aubrey writes, in his *Miscellanies:* "Most houses of the west end of London have the horse-shoe on the threshold." In Monmouth Street, in 1797, many horse-shoes were to be seen fastened to the threshold. In 1813, Sir Henry Ellis counted seventeen horse-shoes in this position in that street, but in 1841 the number had diminished to five or six.

In some parts of England, naturally perforated stones are suspended behind the doors, with the same intention;[25] in others, jugs, of singular and often frightful form, are built into the walls of [44] the cottages—an interesting approximation to the Assyrian teraphim; and in Glamorganshire the walls of the houses are whitewashed, in order to terrify wandering spirits,—a mode of prevention which we should like to see more generally adopted, as it would doubtless prove of some effect in impeding the access of those roaming spirits of evil with which we have to contend most at the present day—cholera and fever.

According to Durandus, the dedication-crosses of the Roman Catholic churches were adopted under the influence of a feeling in every respect analogous to this ancient superstition. He writes that the crosses were used, "first, as a terror to evil spirits, that they, having been driven forth thence, may be terrified when they see the sign of the cross, and may not presume to enter therein again. Secondly, as a mark of triumph, for crosses be the banners of Christ, and the signs of his triumph.... Thirdly, that such as look on them may call to mind the passion of Christ, by which He hath consecrated his church; and their belief in his passion."[26]

But the influence of mythology on Christianity did not terminate with the mere natural results [45] of previous education, habits, &c. The church, under and subsequent to the reign of Constantine, reposing in the protection of the civil power, and not content with the natural veneration due to those early Christians who had struggled for the cross, and fallen martyrs or distinguished themselves by their long and protracted sufferings, insensibly, perhaps, at the first, and influenced by the same amiable feelings which led the pagan to deify his benefactors, indulged a degree of reverence to the memory of those holy men, which soon ripened into superstitious observances, and ultimately to their canonization and invocation. The Fathers of that period—Athanasius, Nazianzen, Chrysostom, &c.—encouraged the belief; and a rage was developed for the search of the remains and resting-places of the holy dead, to whom prayers were offered; and, in its encouragement of invocation of the dead, visions, miracles, prophetic dreams, relics, &c., the Roman church at this time rivalled the omens, divinations, oracles, and hero-worship of [46] one of the later phases of mythology.

The church even sought to promote the spread of Christianity by the adoption of certain pagan rites and ceremonies. No more remarkable and interesting example of this is to be found than in the annals of our own country. In the year of our Lord 601, in a letter "sent to the Abbot Mellitus, then going into Britain," Pope Gregory wrote as follows:—

"I have, upon mature deliberation on the affairs of the English, determined ... that the temples of the idols of that nation ought not to be destroyed; but let the idols that are in them be destroyed, let holy water be made and sprinkled in the said temples, let altars be erected, and

relics placed. For if those temples be well built, it is requisite that they be converted from the worship of devils to the service of the true God; that the nation, seeing that the temples are not destroyed, may remove error from their hearts, and knowing and adoring the true God, may the more familiarly resort to the places to which they have been accustomed. And because they have been used to slaughter many oxen in the sacrifices to devils, some solemnity must be exchanged for these on this account, as that on the day of dedication, or the nativities of the holy martyrs [47] whose relics are there deposited, they may build themselves huts of the boughs of trees about those churches which have been turned to that use from temples, and no more offer beasts to the devil, but kill cattle to the praise of God in their eating, and return thanks to the Giver of all things for their sustenance; to the end that, whilst some gratifications are outwardly permitted them, they may the more easily consent to the inward consolations of the grace of God."[27]

In A.D. 726, Pope Gregory II expressed his approval of image-worship, and because the Greek emperor refused to accede to this form of idolatry, he caused the tribute paid to him by Rome to be suspended, and even went to the extent of excommunicating him; and in 789, the second Nicene council re-established and confirmed the adoration of images.

Examples of the influence of these doctrines in the Roman and other churches may be multiplied.

The censers and lustration vessels of the priesthood are copied from the sacrificial vessels which were used in the pagan temples; the woollen fillet was transformed into the priest's amice; [48] and the *lituus*, or curved staff of the soothsayer, became the crozier of the bishop.

The sacred fountains of antiquity were perpetuated in a Christian form by dedication to a saint. Examples of this are afforded by the wells of St. Elian, in Denbighshire; St. Winifred, in Flintshire, &c.

In no respect, however, has the Romish church so closely followed the example of pagan nations, and borrowed from mythology, as in the deification of men, and the adoption of tutelary divinities.

As the mythology of ancient Rome and Greece had its gods who presided over countries, cities, towns, and the numerous actions and duties of man in his civil and religious life, to each of whom worship was offered and altars erected, so also the Romish church encouraged the belief in guardian saints, and in this respect its calendar rivals the Pantheon.

As fully did this church adopt the principle of the deification (*canonization*) of men—one of the most prominent of the characteristics of idolatry.

Thus the Romish calendar contains guardian saints of countries: St. George is the tutelary saint of England; St. Andrew, of Scotland; St. Patrick, of Ireland; St. Denis, of France; and St. Peter, of Flanders. Austria possesses two guardian saints, St. Colman and St. Leopold; Germany has *three*, [49] St. Martin, St. Boniface, and St. George Cataphrastus; and so on of all the countries of Europe.

There are also guardian saints of cities. St. Egidius presides over Edinburgh, St. Nicholas, Aberdeen; St. Peter succeeded Mars at Rome; St. Frideswide, Oxford; St. Genevieve, Paris; St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Januarius, Naples, &c.

Of the general body of tutelary saints the following list will afford an illustration:—

St. Agatha presides over nurses; St. Catherine and St. Gregory over studious persons; St. Christopher, St. Hermus, and St. Nicholas, over mariners; St. Cecilia, over musicians; St. Cosmos and Damian, over physicians, surgeons, and philosophers; St. Dismas and St. Nicholas, over thieves; St. Eustace and St. Hubert, over hunters; St. Felicitas, over young children; St. Julian, over pilgrims; St. Leonard and St. Barbara, over captives; St. Luke, painters; St. Martin and St. Urban over ale-knights, to prevent them falling in the kennel; St. Æthelbert and Ælian are invoked against thieves, &c.

St. Agatha presides over valleys; St. Anne, riches; St. Barbara, hills; St. Florian, fire; St. Sylvester, woods, &c.

St. Thomas presides over divines; St. Thomas à-Becket, blind men; St. Valentine, lovers; St. [50] Winifred, virgins; St. Joseph, carpenters; St. Anthony, swineherds and grocers; St. Arnhold, millers; St. Blaise, wool-combers; St. Catherine, spinners; St. Clement, tanners; St. Cloud, nailsmiths; St. Dunstan, goldsmiths; St. Elry, blacksmiths, farriers, &c.; St. Florian, mercers; St. Francis, butchers; St. George, clothiers; St. Goodman and St. Ann, tailors; St. Gore, potters; St. Hilary, coopers; St. Leodager, drapers; St. Crispin, shoemakers, &c.

St. Anthony protects hogs; St. Ferriol, geese; St. Gertrude, mice and eggs; St. Hubert, dogs; St.

Joy, horses, &c.

Numerous saints were invoked against diseases: *e.g.*, St. Clara against sore eyes; St. Genow, gout; St. Marus, palsies and convulsions; St. Sigismund, fevers, &c.

"There be many miracles assigned to saints," writes Barnaby Rich, in 1619, "that they say are good for all diseases: they can give sight to the blind, make the deafe to hear; they can restore limbs that be crippled, and make the lame go upright; they be good for horse, swine, and many other beasts. And women, also, have shee-saints.... They have saints to pray to when they be grieved with a third-day ague, when they be pained with toothache, or when they would be [51] revenged on their angry husbands.

"They have saints that be good amongst poultry when they have the pip, for geese when they do sit, to have a happy success in goslings; and, to be short, there is no disease, no sickness, no griefe, either amongst men or beasts, that hath not his physician among the saints."[28]

The Romish church also adopted the pagan belief in apparitions, and as the latter had supported the argument in favour of the existence of the gods by the fiction of their occasional manifestations in a visible form, so the former endeavoured to sustain its dogmas by fables of the apparition, from time to time, of its saints.

It is needless to dwell upon the manner in which this church pandered to the credulity of the people in this respect, for an example is before the world even at the present time in the apparition of the Blessed Virgin near La Salette, a village about four miles from Corps, a small town situated on the road between Grenoble and Gap.

The story is as follows:—On the 19th September, 1846, the Blessed Virgin appeared to two children, the one a boy aged 11, and the other a girl aged 14 years, who were watching cows near a fountain, in the hollow of a ravine in the mountains, about four miles from the church of [52] La Salette. When first seen, she was in a sitting position, the head resting upon the hands, and she "had on white shoes, with roses about her shoes. The roses were of all colours. Her socks were yellow, her apron yellow, and her gown white, with pearls all over it. She had a white neckerchief, with roses round it; a high cap, a little bent in front; a crown round her cap with roses. She had a very small chain, to which was attached a crucifix; on the right were some pincers, on the left a hammer; at the extremities of the cross was another huge chain, which fell, like the roses, round her handkerchief. Her face was white and long."

Addressing the children, tears coursing down her cheeks, she spoke to them on the wickedness of the peasantry, particularly their neglect of the Sabbath and of the duties of Lent, when they "go like dogs to the butchers' stalls." Then she foretold that if the men would not be converted, there should be no potatoes at Christmas, all the corn should be eaten up by animals, or if any did grow up, it should fall to dust when thrashed. There should be a great famine, preceding which "children below seven years of age should have convulsions, and die in the arms of those who held them; and the rest should do penance by hunger. Nuts and grapes also should perish. [53] But if men were converted, then the rocks and stones shall be changed into heaps of corn, and potatoes shall be sown all over the land." "The lady," in addition, confided to each of the children a secret which was not to be told to the other, but which they confided to the Pope in 1851. Then, after a little gossiping conversation, "the lady" vanished.

Soon after this apparition had been noised abroad, it was discovered that the waters of the fountain were possessed of marvellous healing properties, and many miraculous cures were effected by its use. Pilgrims flocked to the scene of the vision, and it is affirmed that in one day 60,000 of the faithful ascended the mountain.

Among others, the present Bishop of Orleans made a pilgrimage to the "holy mountain," and he was so impressed by the solemn feelings excited by treading on such holy ground, that he often ejaculated, "It cannot be but that the finger of God is here." Other ecclesiastics of rank also visited the spot, and the whole affair was officially sanctioned.

Nor did the matter rest here, for churches are being built, and dedicated to "Our Lady of Salette," in different countries; and a society has been established in England bearing her name. [54]

We have already alluded to the sacred fountains of heathen nations, and in the holy fountain of Salette we witness the modern development of a similar superstition. So also in the apparition of the Virgin the same credulity is traced which prompted the ancients to believe in the occasional appearance of their deities.

It is related that Castor and Pollux, the sons of Jupiter, by Leda the wife of Tyndarus, were seen fighting at the battle of Regillus; and that, subsequently, mounted on white horses, they appeared to P. Vatienus, as he journeyed by night to Rome, from his government of Reate, and told him

that King Perses had that day been taken prisoner.

On these legends Cicero remarks; "Do you believe that the Tyndaridæ, as you called them, that is, men sprung from men, and buried in Lacedemon, as we learn from Homer, who lived in the next age,—do you believe, I say, that they appeared to Vatienus on the road, mounted on white horses, without any servant to attend them, to tell the victory of the Romans to a country fellow rather than to M. Cato, who was that time the chief person of the senate? Do you take that print of a horse's hoof, which is now to be seen on a stone at Regillus, to be made by Castor's horse? [55] Should you not believe, what is probable, that the souls of eminent men, such as the Tyndaridæ, are divine and immortal, rather than that those bodies, which had been reduced to ashes, should mount on horses and fight in an army? If you say that was possible, you ought to show how it is so, and not amuse us with fabulous stories."

"Do you take these for fabulous stories?" says Balbus. "Is not the temple built by Posthumius in honour of Castor and Pollux, to be seen in the Forum? Is not the decree of the senate concerning Vatienus still subsisting?... Ought not such authorities to move you?"

"You oppose me," replies Cotta, "with stories, but I ask reasons of you."[29]

It would seem then that the parallelism is perfect, even to the building of temples, and the official recognition of the truth of the event.

Of the individual personages of ancient mythology very few traces remain in England, and these principally belong to the fairy belief. This superstition, of which the analogue is found in the Nymphs, Oreads, Dryads, Naiads, Lemoniads, and Nerieds, of ancient Greece and Rome, is still prevalent in certain districts of this country; and the extinction of the general belief, among [56] the lower orders, of one of the most noted of the personages which are met with in fairy lore, the *hobgoblin*, is comparatively of recent date. The name is, however, still familiar, and in use for certain vague manifestations of the supernatural, although the actual signification of the term is, to a great extent, lost sight of.

The hobgoblin is worthy of notice not only for its intrinsic interest, but also for the illustration which it affords of the intimate relationship which is often found to exist between the superstitions of different and even far distant nations.

This spirit, in his palmy days, was that fairy which attached itself to houses, and the neighbourhood of dwellings and churches (for even sacred edifices were not exempted from its influence). In disposition it was mischievous and sportive, although it often deigned, during the night, to perform many menial offices, and whatsoever building it attached itself to prospered. It was apt to take offence, particularly if, as a reward, money or clothes were placed for it in that part of the house it most frequented; but it was partial to cream, or some delicately prepared eatable, and any housewife who was careful to conciliate the spirit by administering to this taste, was certain to be well rewarded. As might be anticipated, it was a favourite character with poets, [57] and descriptions of its propensities and actions abound. Thus, in the "Midsummer Night's Dream" (Act II, Sc. 1), one of the Fairies is represented as addressing this spirit, and saying:—

"Either I mistake your shape and making quite,
Or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite
Called Robin Goodfellow. Are you not he
That frights the maidens of the villagery,
Skims milk, and labours in the quern,
And bootless makes the breathless housewife churn;
And sometimes makes the drink to bear no barm;
Misleads night-wanderers, laughing at their harm?
Those that Hobgoblin call you and sweet Puck,
You do their work and they shall have good luck,
Are not you he?

Puck. Thou speakest aright,
I am that merry wanderer of the night.
I jest to Oberon, and make him smile,
When I a fat and bean-fed horse beguile,
Neighing in likeness of a filly-foal;
And sometimes lurk I in a gossip's bowl,
In very likeness of a roasted crab,
And when she drinks against her lips I bob,
And on her withered dewlap pour the ale.
The wisest aunt telling the saddest tale,
Sometime for three-foot stool mistaketh me;
Then slip I from her bum, down topples she,
And *tailor* cries, and falls into a cough;

And then the whole quire hold their hips and loffe,
And waxen in their mirth, and reeze, and swear
A merrier hour was never wasted there."

Milton, in the "L'Allegro," writes of him in a different office, and— [58]

"Tells how the drudging goblin sweat,
To earn his cream-bowl duly set,
When in one night ere glimpse of morn,
His shadowy flail has thrashed the corn,
That ten day-lab'rers could not end:
Then lies him down the lubber-fiend,
And stretched out all the chimney's length,
Basks at the fire his hairy strength,
And cropfull out of doors he flings,
Ere the first cock his matin rings."

Another noted characteristic of this fairy is mentioned in the fine old song of Ben Johnson's:—

"When house or hearth doth sluttish lye,
I pinch the maidens black and blue;
The bed-clothes from the bed pull I,
And lay them naked all to view.
Twixt sleepe and wake
I do them take
And on the key-cold floor them throw:
If out they cry
Then forth I fly,
And loudly laugh out, ho! ho! ho!"

The hobgoblin is one of the widest-spread forms of fairy belief. In England it is also termed *Boggard*, *Puck*, *Robin Goodfellow*, and *Robin Hood;* it is the *Brownie* of Scotland; the *Cluricaune*, *Luricaune*, *Leprochaune*, &c., of Ireland; the *Kobold* of Germany; the *Servant* of Switzerland; the *Nis* of Denmark and Norway; the *Niägruiser* of the Feroes; the *Tomt-gubbe*, or *Tont*, of Sweden; [59] the *Phynnoderee* of the Isle of Man; the *Monaciello* of Naples; the *Duende* of Spain; the *Lutin*, or *Gobelin*, of France; and the *Para* of Finland appears to have some affinity with it.

The derivation of some of the principal names of this fairy is also of interest. From the Sclavonic *Bôg*, signifying *God*, come the words *boggard* and *boggart;* the Scottish *Bogle*, a hill-fairy; and probably, also, the words *Bug-bear* and *Bugaboo;* and from the Icelandic *Puki*, an evil spirit, come the English *Puke*, a devil, as also *Puck;* the Friesland *Puk;* the German *Putz*, or *Butz;* the Devonshire *Pixie;* the Irish *Pouke;* the Welsh *Pwcca*, and the words *big* and *bug*,—all names of certain varieties of the fairy-belief, and having the signification of an evil spirit.

Certain forms of pagan worship would appear to have been perpetuated unmodified in Christian countries even to the present time. A remarkable and singular illustration of this is found in Ireland.

Off the north-west coast of that kingdom are situated the islands of Inniskea, containing a population of about 400 human beings. Nominally the inhabitants are Christians, and under Roman Catholic tuition; in reality, they observe the ancient forms of Irish clan government, and are idolaters, worshipping rocks and stones. Their chief god is a stone idol termed *Nee-vougi*, [60] which has been preserved from time immemorial. It is clothed in homespun flannel, which arises from the custom of its votaries offering portions of their dress when addressing it. These fragments are sewed upon it by an old woman who has charge of the idol, and who officiates as priestess. It is invoked, among other things, to dash helpless ships upon the coast, and to calm the sea in order that the fishing may be successful.[30]

The adoration of rocks and stone pillars is one of the most ancient forms of idolatry on record. It probably took its origin from the custom of erecting stone pillars as a memorial, and consecrating them as altars on any extraordinary event or occasion. The earliest mention of this custom is found in Genesis (cxxviii, v. 10):—

"And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took up the stone he had put for his pillow, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it.

"And he called the name of that place Beth-El ... saying ... this stone which I have set up for a pillar shall be God's house."

Stones thus erected as memorials, and consecrated as altars, in the course of time were considered to be the abode of, or rather to be filled with, the divine power, which had manifested [61] itself there; and ultimately stone pillars were used as symbols of the Deity. Singularly formed

rocks and stones were also regarded in a similar light; and traces of this very ancient form of idolatry may be found in all parts of the world.

The "*animated stones*" of antiquity, which received divine honours, derived their names from Beth-El, as for example, Baithulia, Bethyllia, and Βαιτολια, signifying consecrated or living stones; and one of the modifications of Jupiter, *Jupiter Lapis* (a stone), was derived from this form of idolatry, and the most solemn of the Roman oaths was that taken in the name of this god.

Numerous traces of superstition are found scattered throughout England, and the countries of Western Europe, which are the lineal, although degenerated descendants of the superstitions of the mythological era of the respective nations, or rather races, dwelling there.

There are few large towns in Great Britain which do not contain one or more persons who profess to practise astrology, magic, or divination—*wise men*, as they are popularly designated; and the belief in charms and omens is far from being eradicated among a large mass of the population, particularly among those who dwell in secluded or mountainous districts. [62]

Not unfrequently events happen by which we may gauge the extent to which these superstitions are still entertained. Those who marked the effect which the appearance of the late comet had on the minds of many in this country, would perceive that a somewhat powerful feeling of superstitious dread, on the occurrence of remarkable celestial events, remained. The alarm excited among the credulous in England was, however, if anything, less marked than that caused in many parts of the continent[31] and in America.

Three years ago we had an opportunity of witnessing a singular exhibition of fear, which was excited in the inhabitants of the most impoverished districts of Leeds, by the prevalence of a [63] brilliant display of the aurora borealis. The scene paralleled the descriptions recorded of the effects produced by similar phenomena in the Middle Ages. The prevailing impression was, that the world was on the point of, if not in, the actual process of destruction; and in many the alarm became extreme, when, during the most magnificent period of the phenomena, several of the streamers became of a deep crimson and blue tint.

This display of the aurora extended over a vast extent of country, and a singular example of the feelings with which it was regarded in Spain was recorded at the time in the daily papers.

On the evening on which it occurred, it so happened that the subject of the homily in one of the churches of Madrid was the destruction of the world, and the day of judgment. At the conclusion of the service, and as the congregation were issuing from the church, the northern heavens were glowing with the brilliant and ever-varying light of the aurora. Startled by a phenomenon which is of somewhat rare occurrence in Spain, the idea at once occurred that the terrible events upon which the priest had been descanting were about to come to pass; the people rushed back to the steps of the altar, and while the aurora continued, the terror and confusion beggared all [64] description.

Another indication of the influence which the superstitions we have named exercise on the minds of certain classes, is the number of works on astrology, principally reprints, which have issued from the press during the last eight or nine years.

This ancient superstition, which is still practised by the Mahomedans, Chinese, &c., retains a hold upon the minds of many, even now. Its practice in this country is, however, most frequently combined with some of the minor forms of magic and divination; and those who profess a knowledge of these arts chiefly direct them to the ignoble purpose of detecting stolen articles.

In America, it would seem, from the advertisements which from time to time appear in the newspapers, that this superstition is flourishing with some vigour. We subjoin, in a note, specimens of these advertisements.[32]

The belief in charms and omens, which was one of the most important of the superstitions of [65] antiquity, is still entertained by the lower orders in many counties, and it forms one of the most striking features of the current folk-lore.

The Devonshire peasant will recite the 8th Psalm on three consecutive days, for three weeks, over his child, in order to prevent its being attacked with the thrush; and should the disease, notwithstanding this precaution, occur, he either plucks three rushes from a running stream, passes them through the mouth of the child, and then casts them into the stream, believing that the disease will decrease and disappear as the rushes float away; or seizing a duck, he will force [66] it to open wide its bill, and then placing it close to the mouth of the child, he hopes to see the affection vanish as the duck inhales the infant's breath.

The peasantry of Norfolk, Northampton, &c. have, for the prevention of epileptic fits, implicit

confidence in a ring made from nine sixpences, obtained, by gift, from persons of the opposite sex, or from the money contributed at the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

There is a charm for cramp in the leg which must be familiar to most persons. It runs thus:— [67]

"The devil is tying a knot in my leg!
Mark, Luke, and John, unloose it, I beg!
Crosses three we make to ease us,
Two for the thieves, and one for Christ Jesus."

This formula, with a little modification, was applicable also to other fleeting but painful affections. Coleridge states that when he was at the Blue-coat School there was a charm for one's foot when asleep, which ran thus:—

"Foot, foot, foot! is fast asleep!
Thumb, thumb, thumb! in spittle we steep;
Crosses three we make to ease us," &c.

We have seen a charm for the toothache, which we believe has now fallen into desuetude, but which, from its singularity, is worthy of preservation. It is as follows:—

"In the name of God: Amen.

"As Jesus Christ passed through the gates of Jerusalem, he heard one of his disciples weeping and wailing. Jesus saith unto him, Simon Peter, why weepest and wailest thou? Simon Peter saith unto him: Lord, the pain in my tooth is so grievous, I can do nothing. Jesus saith unto him: Arise, Simon, and the pain in thy tooth shall be eased; and whosoever shall keep those words in remembrance or writing shall never be troubled with the pain in the tooth:— [68]

"In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen."

The coral and bells which are suspended round the necks of children for their amusement, were originally used with very different intentions.

Those who professed the occult sciences attributed several very wonderful properties to coral, it being regarded by them as a preservative against evil spirits, poison, and certain diseases.

The ringing of bells was also, formerly, considered to be of great effect in terrifying and causing evil spirits to fly away. Nor did their influence cease there; they were esteemed efficacious for the dispersion of tempests; or, it would be more correct to say, that a cotemporary superstition was, that tempests, thunder and lightning, and high winds, were caused by evil spirits, or devils, who in this manner endeavoured to wreak their rage on man; hence, in the Golden Legend of Wynken de Worde, it is said that "evil spirytes that ben in the region of th' ayre, dowt much when they hear the bells rongen, an this is the cause why the bells ben rongen when it thondreth, and whanne great tempests and outrages of wether happen, to the ende that the feinds and wycked spirytes should be abashed and flee, and cease of the movynge of tempest." This superstition probably dates from the period when it became customary to [69] exorcise, bless, and baptize the bells suspended in churches,—a custom which originated in the tenth century.

The use of the coral and bells was derived from these superstitions, and they were at first suspended from the neck as an amulet which was protective from the influence of evil spirits.

Certain events are still regarded as omens by the peasantry in many districts.

If a magpie cross our path, it is said that we shall prove unlucky, unless we immediately cross ourselves; and an old rhyme says of the magpie:—

"One is a sign of sorrow; two are a sign of mirth;
Three are a sign of a wedding; and four a sign of a birth."

In Devonshire, if a person sees four magpies, it is regarded as an omen of death in his family. If a pigeon is seen sitting on a tree, or comes into the house; or if a swarm of bees alight on a dead tree, or the dead bough of a living tree, it forebodes death in the family of the owner. In Derbyshire, if the sun shines through the boughs of the apple-trees on Christmas day, it is considered as a presage of a good crop the ensuing year.

Of all the superstitions entertained previous to the advent of Christ, none have, however, been [70] more fully perpetuated among Christian nations than that of spectral apparitions,—the visible appearance of the deities worshipped, or of the disembodied spirits of the dead—*ghosts*.

This was due not only to the nature of the causes inducing spectral apparitions (causes which are inseparable from the physical constitution of man), but also to the confirmation which the

belief was thought to receive from Holy Writ.

The character of the superstition, as it has been retained down to the verge of the present period in our own country, and as it is still entertained in many countries, is very similar to that which it bore in the remotest periods of antiquity.

The deities of those nations who had distinct and defined ideas respecting their gods, are reputed to have appeared from time to time to their votaries, assuming the form in which they were most commonly pourtrayed in the temples.

Thus the gods which Æneas bore from the destruction of Troy and carried into Crete, appeared to him in that island:

> "'Twas night, when every creature, void of cares,
> The common gift of balmy slumbers shares;
> The statues of my gods (for such they seem'd),
> Those gods whom I from flaming Troy redeem'd,
> Before me stood, majestically bright, [71]
> Full in the beams of Phœbe's entering light.
> Then thus they spoke and eased my troubled mind:
> 'What from the Delian god thou go'st to find,
> He tells thee here, and sends us to relate.
> Those powers are we, companions of thy fate,
> Who from the burning town by thee were brought,
> Thy fortune follow'd, and thy safety wrought.
> Through seas and lands, as we thy steps attend,
> So shall our care thy glorious race befriend.
> An ample realm for thee thy fates ordain,
> A town that o'er the conquer'd world shall reign.
> Thou, mighty walls for mighty nations build;
> Nor let thy weary mind to labours yield:
> But change thy seat; for not the Delian god
> Nor we have given thee Crete for our abode.
> A land there is, Hesperia call'd of old,
> (The soil is fruitful, and the natives bold—
> Th' Œotrians held it once), by later fame
> Now call'd Italia from the leader's name.
> Iasius there, and Dardanus, were born;
> From thence we came and thither must return.
> Rise, and thy sire with these glad tidings greet:
> Search Italy; for Jove denies thee Crete.'
> Astonished at their voices and their sight,
> (Nor were they dreams, but visions of the night;
> I saw, I knew their faces, and descry'd,
> In perfect view, their hair with fillets tied),
> I started from my couch; a clammy sweat
> On all my limbs, and shivering body, sate.
> To heaven I lift my hands with pious haste,
> And sacred incense in the flames I cast."[33]

Among Christian nations visions of this character have also been common; and the religious writings of every age of the Church contain numerous instances of apparitions of the Trinity, of [72] our Lord, of the canonized, and the powers of evil.

But the most familiar phase of the ghost-belief is that of the visible manifestation of the spirits of the dead; and probably few, if any, races are without a superstition of this nature.

The Grecians and Romans believed that the souls of the dead (*manes*) roamed about the earth, having power to interfere with the affairs of man and inflict evil. The spirits of those who had been virtuous during life were distinguished by the name of *lares* (under which name we have in a previous page alluded to them as tutelary deities) or *manes;* and the spirits of the wicked were termed *larvæ*, or *lemures*, and often terrified the good, and haunted the wicked and impious. These ghosts were also deified, and they were known as the *Dii Manes;* and the stones erected over the graves in Roman burial-grounds had usually inscribed upon them the letters D.M., or D.M.S., that is, *Dîs Manibus*, or *Dîs Manibus Sacrum*,—"Sacred to the Manes Gods." Sacrifices were offered to these deities, the offerings being termed *religiosæ*, in contradistinction to those offered to the superior gods, which were denominated *sacræ;* and during the festivals held in honour of the ghosts (*Lemuria* or *Lemuralia*), it was customary to burn black beans over the [73] graves, and to beat kettles and drums, in order that, by the noxious odour of the former, and the noise of the latter, the ghosts might be frightened away, and no longer terrify their relations.

We have already given several examples illustrative of the parallelism which exists between the

accounts we possess of the apparitions of Grecian and Roman deities, and those manifestations of celestial personages which are recorded to have occurred in more modern times. A similar resemblance exists between the accounts given of the spectral appearance of the spirits of the dead.

In the Odyssey (B. XI), Ulysses, previous to descending into hell, is described as offering "solemn rites and holy vows" to the dead:—

> "When lo! appear'd along the dusky coasts,
> Thin, airy shoals of visionary ghosts;
> Fair, pensive youths, and soft, enamour'd maids;
> And wither'd elders, pale and wrinkled shades
> Ghastly with wounds, the form of warriors slain
> Stalk'd with majestic port, a martial train:
> These and a thousand more swarm'd o'er the ground,
> And all the dire assembly shriek'd around."

A striking illustration of the similarity of ancient and modern ghost-stories, in all essential points, is contained in the description given in the Æneis (B. II) of the apparition of the ghost of [74] Hector to Æneas, at the destruction of Troy:—

> "'Twas in the dead of night, when sleep repairs
> Our bodies worn with toils, our minds with cares,
> When Hector's ghost before my sight appears:
> A bloody shroud he seem'd, and bath'd in tears;
> Such as he was when by Pelides slain,
> Thessalian coursers dragg'd him o'er the plain;
> Swoll'n were his feet, as when the thongs were thrust
> Through the bored holes; his body black with dust;
> Unlike that Hector, who return'd from toils
> Of war, triumphant in Æacians' spoils,
> Or him, who made the fainting Greeks retire,
> And launch'd against their navy Phrygian fire.
> His hair and beard stood stiffen'd with his gore,
> And all the wounds he for his country bore
> Now streamed afresh, and with new purple ran."

An equally, if not more marked example, is recorded by Pliny, the consul at Sura.

A house at Athens was grievously haunted by a spirit, which, during the night, restlessly roamed through the apartments, dragging, apparently, a heavy chain after it. Athenodorus, the philosopher, hired the house, determined to reduce the spirit to order and silence. In the depth of the night, while pursuing his studies, the silence was broken by the noise of rattling chains, which approached the room where he sat. Presently, a spectre entered, and beckoned to him, but the philosopher took no notice. The spectre agitated its chains anew, and then he arose and, following his ghostly guide, he was led into the court-yard of the house, to a certain spot, when [75] the spectre vanished. He marked the place, and on the following day caused the ground to be dug up and searched, when beneath it they found the skeleton of a man in chains. The bones were publicly burned, and from that time the spirit ceased to haunt the mansion.

A belief in ghosts was one of the most prominent of the superstitions of the ancient inhabitants of Northern Europe. It was customary with the Scandinavians, as with the Grecians, to perform certain ceremonies at the tombs of the dead, to propitiate the ghosts, and facilitate their entrance into the halls of bliss.

The ghosts of the departed warriors, after they had entered their airy halls, were supposed to pursue pleasures similar in character to those which had engaged their attention on earth. They listened to the strains of immortal bards; followed the chase over the illimitable fields of heaven; visited the scenes of their former glories; and when resting within their tombs, they would talk of mortal men, and sing the songs of other worlds. Airy and unsubstantial as a wreath of mist, they often wandered on the surface of the earth. The ghost of a mighty hero, clothed in a panoply of lurid clouds, and armed with a meteor, might be seen brooding o'er his tomb, or attended "by a [76] ridge of formless shades," it swept across former battle-fields. The men of bygone days, wreathed in their vapoury robes, and reposing on clouds, hovered on the midnight blast, which bore in its mighty cadences the echoing sounds of the voices of the dead; or "like the new moon seen through the gathered mist, when the sky pours down its flaky snow, and the world is silent and dark,"[34] the spirits of the maidens glided over the rugged hills, or roamed on the pebbly shore.

The early Scandinavian traditions and historical writings, are pregnant with ghosts and other supernatural agents. Mr. Howitt[35] quotes from one of the Eddaic songs, which records the lives

of a hero named Helge and his wife Sigrun, the following singularly interesting scene.

Helge died, and the body was laid in its cairn. In the evening Sigrun's maid passed the cairn, and saw the ghost of Helge ride into it with a numerous train. Addressing the ghost, the maid said, "Is it an illusion that I see, or the Eve of the Mighty, that ye ride your horses and urge them with your spurs? Or are the heroes bound for their homes?" The ghost replied, "It is no illusion which thou seest, nor the Eve of the Mighty; though thou seest us, and we urge our horses with [77] our spurs; neither are the heroes bound for their homes."

The maid then went to her mistress and said, "Haste thee, Sigrun, from the hill of Seva, if the leader of the battle thou desirest to see. Open is the cairn; Helge is come; the war-scars bleed. Helge bade thee to still his dripping wound." Sigrun went to the cairn, and entering it, said to the shade of her dead husband, "Now am I as joyful of our meeting as Odin's ravens when, long-fasting, they scent the warm food, or the day-wearied when they behold the close of day. I will kiss my lifeless king before thou throwest off thy bloody cuirass. Thy hair, O Helge! is pierced through with frost, or with the dew of death is the hero slain. Cold are the hands of the friend of Högne. How, therefore, King, shall I find a cure for thee?"—"Thou only, Sigrun! on the hill of Seva," replied the ghost, "art the cause that Helge is here, slain by the dew of sorrow. Thou weepest, gold-adorned one! burning tears, maid of the sun-glowing south! Before thou sleepest, every tear shall fall bloody on the breast of the Prince, pierced through with the cold of thy grief. But we will drink the precious mead together, though we have lost gladness and lands. Yet no one sings a song of woe, though he sees a wound in my breast. Now are the brides closed in the [78] cairns, and the princely maidens are laid beside us."

Sigrun made a bed in the cairn, and said, "Here have I, Helge, prepared rest for thee; rest free from all trouble. Son of the Ylfinga! I will sleep in thy arms as formerly, when my hero lived." The ghost answered, "No longer will I say that thou art unfaithful on the hill of Seva. Since thou sleepest in the embrace of the dead in the cairn, thou fair daughter of Högur! And yet thou livest, offspring of kings! Time is to ride the red ways. Let the pale steed tramp the steeps of the air. In the west must we be, by the bridge Vindhjalen, ere the cock in Walhalla wakes the sons of victory."

In the Eyrbyggja Saga (written before A.D. 1264; period when the events recorded occurred, A.D. 883) is an account of certain spectral apparitions which followed the death of a lady whose commands upon the death-bed had not been obeyed. This story is almost unique in character, and it is a singularly interesting example of the ghost-belief of Iceland at an early period.

On the evening of the day when the corpse was being removed to a distant place of sepulture, an apparition of the lady was seen busily preparing victuals in the kitchen of the house where the [79] bearers reposed for the night. On the night when the conductors of the funeral returned home, a spectral appearance resembling a half-moon glided around the boarded walls of the mansion, in a direction opposite to that of the sun, and continued its revolutions until the domestics retired to rest. "This apparition was renewed every night during the whole week, and was pronounced by Thorer with the wooden leg to presage pestilence and mortality." Shortly after, a herdsman showed signs of being persecuted by demons, and one morning he was found dead in bed, "and then" (to quote literally from Sir Walter Scott's abstract of the Saga) "commenced a scene of ghost-seeing unheard of in the annals of superstition. The first victim was Thorer, who had presaged the calamity. Going out of doors one evening, he was grappled by the spectre of the deceased shepherd as he attempted to re-enter the house. His wooden leg stood him in poor stead in such an encounter; he was hurled to the earth and so fearfully beaten that he died in consequence of the bruises. Thorer was no sooner dead than his ghost associated itself to that of the herdsman, and joined him in pursuing and assaulting the inhabitants of Froda. Meantime an infectious disorder spread fast amongst them, and several of the bondsmen died one after the [80] other. Strange portents were seen within doors, the meal was displaced and mingled, and the dried fish flung about in a most alarming manner, without any visible agent. At length, while the servants were forming their evening circle around the fire, a spectre resembling the head of a seal-fish was seen to emerge out of the pavement of the room, bending its round black eyes full on the tapestried bed-curtains of Thorgunna (the deceased lady). Some of the domestics ventured to strike at the figure; but, far from giving way, it rather erected itself further from the floor, until Kiartan, who seemed to have a natural predominance over these supernatural prodigies, seizing a huge forge-hammer, struck the seal repeatedly on the head, and compelled it to disappear, forcing it down into the floor, as if he had driven a stake into the earth. This prodigy was found to intimate a new calamity. Thorodd, the master of the family, had some time before set forth on a voyage to bring home a cargo of dried fish; but, in crossing the river Enna, the skiff was lost, and he perished with the servants who attended him. A solemn funeral feast was held at Froda, in memory of the deceased, when, to the astonishment of the guests, the apparition of Thorodd and his followers seemed to enter the apartment dripping with water. Yet this vision

excited less horror than might have been expected; for the islanders, though nominally Christians, retained, among other superstitions, a belief that the spectres of such drowned persons as had been favourably received by the goddess Rana were wont to show themselves at their funeral feast. They saw, therefore, with some composure, Thorodd and his dripping attendants plant themselves by the fire, from which all mortal guests retreated to make room for them. It was supposed this apparition would not be renewed after the conclusion of the festival. But so far were their hopes disappointed, that, so soon as the mourning guests had departed, the fires being lighted, Thorodd and his comrades marched in on one side, drenched as before with water; on the other entered Thorer, heading all those who had died in the pestilence, and who appeared covered with dust. Both parties seized the seats by the fire, while the half-frozen and terrified domestics spent the night without either light or warmth. The same phenomenon took place the next night, though the fires had been lighted in a separate house, and at length Kiartan was obliged to compound matters with the spectres by kindling a large fire for them in the principal apartment, and one for the family and domestics in a separate hut. This prodigy continued during the whole feast of Jol. Other portents also happened to appal this devoted family; the contagious disease again broke forth, and when any one fell a sacrifice to it, his spectre was sure to join the troop of persecutors, who had now almost full possession of the mansion of Froda. Thorgrima Galldrakinna, wife of Thorer, was one of these victims; and, in short, of thirty servants belonging to the household, eighteen died, and five fled for fear of the apparitions, so that only seven remained in the service of Kiartan." [81] [82]

The trouble and annoyance from the spectres had now reached so serious a pitch that, by the advice of a maternal uncle, Kiartan instituted judicial measures against the spectres.

"A tribunal being then constituted, with the usual legal solemnities, a charge was preferred by Kiartan against Thorer with the wooden leg, by Thordo Kausa against Thorodd, and by others chosen as accusers against the individual spectres present, accusing them of molesting the mansion, and introducing death and disease among its inhabitants. All the solemn rites of judicial procedure were observed on this singular occasion; evidence was adduced, charges given, and the cause formally decided. It does not appear that the ghosts put themselves on their defence, so that sentence of ejectment was pronounced against them individually in due and legal form. When Thorer heard the judgment, he arose, and saying, 'I have sat while it was lawful for me to do so,' left the apartment by the door opposite to that at which the judicial assembly was constituted. Each of the spectres, as they heard their individual sentence, left the place, saying something which indicated their unwillingness to depart, until Thorodd himself was solemnly appointed to depart. 'We have here no longer,' said he, 'a peaceful dwelling, therefore will we remove.' Kiartan then entered the hall with his followers, and the priest, with holy water, and celebration of a solemn mass, completed the conquest over the goblins, which had been commenced by the power and authority of the Icelandic law." [83]

The spectral phenomena of the ancient Swedish folk-lore differs in no respect from the current histories of recent date. An interesting example of this is found in the beautiful ballad of Sir Ulf and Lady Sölfverlind.

Sir Ulf was a nobleman who had married a wife from a foreign country. After they had lived together eight years, and had had a family of three children, the Lady Sölfverlind died. In a short time he married again, and by his second wife, the Lady Stineborg, he had also several children. This lady, however, proved a cruel step-mother; for, as the ballad reads:— [84]

"Lady Stineborg's children went out to play,
Lady Sölfverlind's children sate weeping all day.
This know we of Ulf.

The youngest child it wept so loud,
That it woke its mother beneath the sod.
This know we of Ulf.

Lady Sölfverlind spoke to the angel-band:
'Is it granted to visit the earthly land?'
This know we of Ulf.

'It is granted from heaven to earth to go,
But thou must return ere the first cock crow.'
This know we of Ulf.

She came to the door, she tirled at the pin;
'Rise up, my children, and let me in.'
This know we of Ulf.

'On sticks and stones why lie you thus?'

'Nothing besides is given to us.'
This know we of Ulf.

'Why look ye, my children, so grim and so grey?'
'We have not been washed since thou went away.'
This know we of Ulf.

'Rise up, Lady Stineborg, hearken to me,
For I have a few words to speak unto thee!'
This know we of Ulf.

'I left behind me both upland and low,
Yet now my children must supperless go.'
This know we of Ulf.

'I left behind me both oxen and kine,
Yet now they go barefoot, these children of mine.'
This know we of Ulf.

[85]

'I left soft down pillows, full many a one,
Now hard sticks and stones are the bed they lie on!'
This know we of Ulf.

'Hadst thou to my children shown tenderness sweet,
God the Father in heaven had found thee a seat!'
This know we of Ulf.

'Have thy children in me a hard step-mother known?
Henceforth will I love them as well as my own!'
This know we of Ulf.

There ne'er was a lovelier sight in the sky,
Than Sölfverlind taking her children on high.
This know we of Ulf."[36]

The ghost-belief of Hindostan is one of the most important of the popular superstitions of that country. It differs from that of more westerly countries in the degree of reality with which the natives have invested it; for while the former look upon the interference of the spirits of the dead in the events of ordinary life as a circumstance of rare occurrence, and regard manifestations of this nature with an awe befitting their solemnity and supernatural character, the latter lives in an atmosphere of spectral beings, which are the spirits of those who have lived a wicked life on earth, and retain their malignant disposition unabated after death, if indeed it is not increased in intensity by the devil-like nature they assume, and exercise their evil powers in all the affairs of life, haunting the localities which they previously inhabited, and terrifying and tormenting alike [86] friend and foe. Neither are their terrors confined to mere occasional apparition, and to the fear excited by this, but to the power which they possess of interference by physical force; for they belabour with blows, or grievously affect with bodily ailments, the unhappy individuals whom they haunt, and often subject to inexpressible tortures those who have had the ill-hap to offend them. Hence the Hindoo dreads a ghost not so much on account of its supernatural character, abstractedly considered, as for the physical evil it may inflict upon him.

The ghosts of the wicked, and of the unmarried (as it is thought in some provinces), are alone permitted to wander on earth, and they have a partiality, like our own ghosts, for frequenting solitary places, woods, caverns, and ruins, from which they issue to exercise their baleful powers on man.

Sometimes a ghost will haunt a certain house, or a plot of ground, and become so obstreperous, that the occupier of the house is obliged to desert it, and the proprietor of the land to allow it to become waste. But it has happened that if the spirit was that of an old proprietor, a deed executed in its name has appeased it, and it has no more troubled the place.

These spirits are called, in the Deccan, *Vîrikas*, and in the more southerly parts of India, [87] *Paisâchi*. It is customary to erect small shrines to them, formed of a pile of stones, on the top of which is a sheltered cavity, containing an image, or a rough, shapeless stone, to which offerings of cloth, rice, &c., are presented from time to time. This propitiatory sacrifice is, in general, found to be an efficient method of obtaining immunity from the malignant pranks of the ghosts; but if it be neglected, they will visit the unfortunate sinner with torments and misfortune, or, appearing to him by night, intimate the miseries hanging over his head, unless he quickly amends himself, and offers up the necessary gifts.

Dr. Buchanan relates a story of the apparition of a *Paisâchi* which occurred during his journey in Mysore. His cook had been taken ill, and died; orders had been given to secure his effects for

the benefit of his wife and children, "but on inspection, after his death, no money could be found. Whether he had been plundered as soon as he became insensible, and that a guilty conscience occasioned fears among his companions, or whether the sudden manner of his death occasioned suspicions, I cannot say; but it was immediately believed that he would become a *Paisâchi*, and all my people were filled with terror. The butler imagined that the *Paisâchi* appeared to him at [88] night with a black silk handkerchief tied round its head, and gave him instructions to take all the effects of the deceased to his family; upon this, the latter, being a man of courage, put his shoes on the right side of the door, which he considered to be a sure preventive against such intruders. Next night a cattle-driver, lying in all the agonies of nocturnal terror, saw the appearance of a dog enter, and smell round the place where the man had died; when, to his utter dismay, the spectre gradually grew larger and larger, and at length, having assumed the form of the cook, vanished with a shriek. The poor man had not the courage to use the slippers, but lay till morning in a kind of stupor. After this, even the minds of the *sepoys* were appalled, and when I happened to be awake I heard the sentries, by way of keeping up their courage, singing with a tremulous voice."

There is a class of men called *Cani*, or *Shaycana*, who are supposed to have the power of ejecting and frightening away troublesome spirits by the performance of certain mystic ceremonies. It is requisite, first, to ascertain whether the offending ghost is that of a stranger, or if it belong to any deceased member of the family; for it would seem that much more powerful incantations are required to get rid of a family ghost, which seems to have the opinion that it has [89] a right to haunt its relations in the flesh, than to eject the ghost of a stranger. The latter, according to Dr. Buchanan, may be got rid of for a fanam, or about ninepence sterling; the former requires expensive sacrifices and many prayers, therefore the fee is much larger.

The Chinese have a great dread of ghosts, particularly of the ghosts of those who have come to an untimely end. They suspend in their houses, for the purpose of preventing the entrance of these spirits, and of defending themselves from their influence, a cruciform piece of iron, to which is attached pieces of perforated money, the coinage of emperors who have been deified, and who are conceived to exercise a protective power over their votaries.

The superstitions of the modern Egyptians and of the Arabs are rich in ghosts.

The term *éfreet* is applied to the ghosts of dead persons, as well as to evil genii, by the Egyptians; and the following story, related by Mr. Lane, will illustrate the nature of this superstition as it is entertained by that people.

"I had once a humorous cook, who was somewhat addicted to the intoxicating hhasheesh: soon after he had entered my service, I heard him, one evening, muttering and exclaiming on the stairs, as if in surprise at some event; and then politely saying, "But why are you sitting here in [90] the draught? Do me the favour to come up into the kitchen, and amuse me with your conversation a little." The civil address not being answered, was repeated and varied several times, till I called out to the man, and asked him to whom he was speaking. "The éfreet of a Turkish soldier," he replied, "is sitting on the stairs, smoking his pipe, and refuses to move; he came up from the well below: pray step and see him." On my going to the stairs, and telling the servant that I could see nothing, he only remarked that it was because I had a clear conscience. He was told afterwards that the house had long been haunted; but asserted that he had not been previously informed of the supposed cause; which was the fact of a Turkish soldier having been murdered there. My cook professed to see this éfreet frequently after."[37]

The Arabs entertain a considerable degree of fear and respect for ghosts.

Mr. Bayle St. John states that when travelling through the Libyan desert, in 1847, he saw a burial-place of the Bedouin Arabs, in the centre of which were confusedly scattered "camel-howdahs" (*tachterwans*), stirrups, household utensils, small ploughs, &c., which had been left [91] there by the Arabs, when commencing a journey, under the care of the ghost of a defunct sheikh, who had been interred there.[38]

Some of the aboriginal tribes of South America believe in the occasional apparition of the souls of the dead.

Soon after the Roman Catholic mission was established at Bahia, an eclipse of the moon occurred; the savages, fully armed, rushed in terror to the mission, and when the priest inquired the cause of their alarm, they responded that the moon was the abode of the souls of the dead, and that on that night they had collected there in such numbers that they darkened its surface: this was a sure sign of evil.

Such is a brief sketch of the ghost-belief of several nations, ancient and modern.

This belief, in its essential characteristics, was the same in the remote periods of antiquity as in more recent times; and a similar analogy exists between the modifications of it which are now entertained in different and widely separated countries.

The variations which it is found to possess are dependent upon those peculiarities of habit, religion, and social life which characterize each nation. This fact gives an important clue by [92] which we may unravel the actual nature of the phenomena which are embodied in the belief. But previously to entering upon this task it is requisite to point out a remote consequence of mythological and legendary lore which exercises a highly important influence on the minds of most if not all persons at the present time.

The numerous myths which were retained, the implicit faith reposed in them, and the great extent to which the practice of the occult sciences was carried in the Middle Ages, fostered ideas respecting the influence which supernatural beings exercised in the ordinary affairs of life, which rivalled in extent and variety those entertained before the Christian era; but they received perhaps a more gloomy character from the doctrine of the agency of devils.

The prevalence of these superstitions throws a wild and weird-like shadow over the history of those periods, and one of the chief results was that the records of local and general events became pregnant with mysterious occurrences and supernatural interpositions; and a mass of legends, teeming with remnants of ancient myths, more or less modified, giants, demons, witches, wizards, ghosts, portents, &c., have been perpetuated to modern times, and have formed an inexhaustible mine to the novelist and romance-writer. [93]

There are few localities in England which do not possess legends or tradition of this nature; and the standard nursery and children's tales are full of supernatural personages and occurrences in which are set aside all the known laws of matter and force, and time and space are alike annihilated. Many of these tales are of great interest, for in them we find degenerated forms of some of the most ancient traditions and myths of our own and other races.

The adventures of *Jack the Giant-Killer*, the most celebrated of all celebrated nursery heroes, are for the most part derived from the fabulous era of our own country, and from Scandinavian mythology; and the whole tale is a degraded and vitiated tradition in which the deeds of Corineus, a celebrated personage in the mythical history of Britain, and Prince Arthur; the adventures of Thor, the god of thunder, and other Scandinavian deities, are jumbled together in strange confusion.

Geoffrey of Monmouth, in his British History[39] states that the early inhabitants of this island were giants. Brutus, a grandson of Ascanius, the companion of Æneas in his flight from Troy, and Corineus, also of Trojan descent, guided by a dream, discovered Britain, and delighted with "the [94] pleasant situation of the place, the plenty of rivers abounding with fish, and the engaging prospect of its woods," they became desirous of fixing their habitation in so desirable a country, and landing, drove the giants into the fastnesses of the mountains, and divided the country.

To Corineus was apportioned that part of the island which we call Cornwall, and it is recorded that he had selected this portion of the island for his share, because "it was a diversion to him to encounter the said giants, which were in greater numbers there than in all the other provinces that fell to the share of his companions."

Corineus is described as being "an ardent man in matters of council, and of great courage and boldness; who in an encounter with any person, even of gigantic stature, would immediately overthrow him as if he were a child."

In the same fabulous history (B. X, ch. 3) it is stated, that a giant who had invaded our shores, and taken refuge at the top of St. Michael's Mount, was attacked by King Arthur in the night and killed; the country being thus freed "from a most destructive and voracious monster."

Some of Jack's principal adventures are derived from the ancient Eddas and Sagas of Scandinavia.

The incident which represents Jack as having overheard a giant, upon whose hospitality he had [95] intruded, muttering—

> "Though you lodge with me this night,
> You shall not see the morning light;
> My club shall dash your brains out quite;"

and in which he had evaded the catastrophe by placing a log of wood in the bed, he lying quietly in a corner, while the giant furiously beat with his club the inanimate object, thinking to dash him to pieces; and the delightfully cool response of Jack to the wonder-struck giant when he beheld

him safe and sound in the morning, and inquired if he had not been disturbed in the night,—"No, nothing worth mentioning, I believe a rat struck me with his tail two or three times:"—this incident is a modification of an adventure which occurred to Thor on his journey to the land of giants, and it is found in some form or other in the folk-lore of every nation in the north of Europe.

Thor, while journeying to the land of giants, met with one of that race named Skrymir. They formed a companionship, and the whole of the provisions were placed in the giant's wallet. At night, when they stopped to rest, Skrymir at once lay down and fell asleep, previously handing [96] the wallet to Thor in order that he might refresh himself. Thor was unable to open it, and wroth with the giant for his apparent insensibility and the mode in which he had tied the knots, he seized his mighty hammer and flung it at the giant's head. Skrymir awaking, asked whether a leaf had fallen on his head, and then he fell asleep again. Thor again struck him with his hammer, and it apparently sank deep into his skull; and the giant again awoke, and asked, "Did an acorn fall on my head? How fares it with thee, Thor?" Thor, incensed beyond measure, waited until the giant again slept, and then exerting all his power, dashed his hammer at the head of the sleeping monster, into which it sank up to the handle. Skrymir, rising up, rubbed his cheek and said, "Are there any birds perched on this tree? Methought, when I awoke, some moss from the branches fell on my head."

Skrymir, distrusting Thor, had before he slept interposed a huge rock betwixt himself and the god, and upon this Thor had unwittingly exercised his strength.

The adventure in which Jack is represented as outwitting a giant in eating, by placing his food in a large leathern receptacle beneath his vesture, and then ripping it up, and defying the giant to do the same, whereupon the giant seizes a knife, plunges it into his breast and kills himself, is [97] contained also in stories which are prevalent among the Swedes, Norwegians, Germans, Servians, and Persians.

The Swedish version is as follows:—"In the evening, when the giant and his boy were about to sup, the crone placed a large dish of porridge before them. "That would be excellent," said the boy, "if we were to try which could eat the most, father or I." The giant was ready for the trial, and they began to eat with all their might. But the boy was crafty: he had tied his wallet before his chest, and for every spoonful that entered his mouth, he let two fall into the wallet. When the giant had despatched seven bowls of porridge, he had taken his fill, and sat puffing and blowing, and unable to swallow another spoonful; but the boy continued with just as much good-will as when he began. The giant asked him how it was, that he who was so little could eat so much. "Father, I will soon show you: when I have eaten as much as I can contain, I slit up my stomach, and then I can take in as much again." Saying these words, he took a knife and ripped up the wallet, so that the porridge ran out. The giant thought this a capital plan, and that he would do the like. But when he stuck the knife in his stomach, the blood began to flow, and the end of the matter was that it proved his death."[40] [98]

The sword of sharpness, and the cloak which rendered the wearer invisible, and by the aid of which Jack won so many important victories, are two of the principal supernatural elements in the *Nibelungenlied*. In this ancient legend, which contains the same tragical story as the still more ancient Scandinavian poem, the *Völundar-Kvida*, the sword "Balmurg" is described:—

> "a broad and mighty blade,
> With such keen-cutting edges, that straight its way it made,
> Where'er it smote on helmet:"

and the cloud-cloak which Siegfried took from the dwarf Albric, is pourtrayed as—

> "A vesture that hight cloud-cloak, marvellous to tell,
> Whoever has it on him, may keep him safe and well
> From cuts and stabs of foemen; him none can hear or see,
> As soon as he is in it, but see and hear can he
> Whate'er he will around him, and thus must needs prevail;
> He grows besides far stronger; so goes the wondrous tale."[41]

The story of *Cinderella, or the Glass Slipper*, is of great antiquity, and versions of it are found in many countries.

Ælian, who lived about A.D. 225, relates that, as Rhodope, a celebrated Greek courtezan, who [99] had been carried into Egypt, was bathing one day, an eagle carried off one of her slippers, and as it flew over Memphis, where king Psammetichus was at that time sitting in tribunal, it let fall the sandal into his bosom. Astonished at the occurrence, and at the smallness of the sandal, he caused inquiries to be made for its owner, whom, when he had discovered, he married.

Old versions of this story are found in Norway, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, France, Italy, Wallachia, Servia, Russia, Poland, and Wales.[42]

In *Jack and the Bean-stalk*, the bean is evidently a version of the ash Ygdrasil of the Edda, reaching from hell to heaven; and the golden hen, harp, &c., are familiar features in northern stories.

Puss in Boots, the *Seven-league Boots*, &c., have their prototypes in Scandinavian folk-lore; and the two last-mentioned tales, as well as others, are probably of considerable antiquity.

Tales derived from these sources and composed of such elements, and fables in which beasts, birds, and fishes are represented as speaking and reasoning in a manner that puts man to the blush, are among the earliest things engrafted in the infant mind; and ever now

[100]

"By night
The village-matron round the blazing hearth,
Suspends the infant-audience with her tales,
Breathing astonishment—of witching rhymes,
Of evil spirits: of the death-bed call
Of him who robb'd the widow, and devoured
The orphan's portion: of unquiet souls
Risen from the grave to ease the heavy guilt
Of deeds in life concealed; of shapes that walk
At dead of night, and clank their chains and wave
The torch of hell around the murderer's bed.
At every solemn pause the crowd recoil,
Gazing each other speechless, and congeal'd
With shiv'ring sighs; till eager for the event,
Around the beldam all erect they hang,
Each trembling heart with grateful terror quell'd."

Ideas of mysterious and supernatural powers, vague, undefined, and frightful, are thus instilled into the child, and influence it unchecked and uncontrolled by the Scriptural doctrines of the invisible which are taught to it. At first the two trains of thought derived from these antithetical sources go on separately and distinctly; the more frightful and wonderful events of legendary lore and fable having a much greater influence, and forming a deeper impression on the mind of the child, whose reasoning powers are still in abeyance to the emotions, than the Scriptural doctrines of the supernatural. As it advances in years these trains of thought insensibly blend; the more rampant absurdities of the supernatural framework of legendary and ghost-lore are discarded; but the less obvious and more insidious portions remain to a greater or less extent, and they are [101] so graven in the mind, that they become part and parcel of it, and in whatever manner they may be subsequently modified in form, it is probable that they are never eradicated, but form a medium which gives a false and deceptive gloss to all our ideas upon those matters which are not immediately within the ken of reason, or which are more clearly attributable to other agency than the forces of the material word—such matters, for example, as are contained in Holy Writ.

Hence our ideas of the supernatural are derived from two sources—from legendary lore and from Scripture; and this results, that although in after-life the more glaring errors and absurdities of the former are removed, those only being retained which are thought to be compatible with Holy Writ, yet the idea of the supernatural thus obtained, foreign from revelation, is retained in a vague and undefined form, and its origin and sources being lost sight of, it is regarded as an innate consciousness of the existence of supernatural beings, and prompts to the ready reception and belief of mysterious and not readily explicable phenomena being the result of supernatural agency.

That proclivity to the belief in supernatural interpositions, that vague notion of spiritual beings, [102] that so-called innate consciousness of the existence of the supernatural, which most persons possess more or less of, and which is totally inconsistent with the clear and perfect doctrine of the invisible taught in the Gospel, is, we believe, derived solely from the infant mind and earlier periods of youth being poisoned by the supernatural events and phenomena detailed in fabulous, legendary, and ghost-lore.[43]

This substratum of superstition is the prime cause of the retention of those figments of degenerated and christianized mythology which are yet found among us, and for the persistence of the most generally received of these figments—*ghosts*. It is also a highly important element in the formation of that state of the mind which is from time to time manifested in singular and [103] wide-spreading delusions respecting the communication of the spirit-world with man, and of which we have examples before us at the present time in the prevalent follies of "spirit-rapping" and "table-talking."

The belief in ghosts does not now possess those glaring features which were attached to it at the commencement of the present century, hence it is less obtrusive; but it is very far from being extinguished, as some would teach, and its "etiology" is of interest, because it leads to the elucidation of the principal causes and sources of the fallacies to which the senses of man are subject, and by which he has been led in the remotest periods of antiquity, as well as at the [104] present time, to frame those mighty trammels of superstition from which the mind in vain strives to disentangle itself completely.

The doctrine that the spirits of the dead return to visit the scenes which were dear to them during the body's existence, is in itself awfully solemn and sublime. Man, prone to believe in supernatural interpositions (from causes already explained), and trusting altogether to the evidence of his senses, for many ages received this doctrine unquestioned; and aided by a fertile imagination, he clothed it with attributes which, although absurd in the main, yet as appealing to some of the deepest and warmest affections and passions of our nature, cannot even now be contemplated without exciting sensations of awe, if not fear.

The thought that the spirits of those who, during life, were bound to us by the closest ties of affection, are ever near, scrutinizing our actions and thoughts, and prompting us ever and anon to that course which would most tend to our profit here and our joy hereafter[44]—shielding us, like guardian angels, from the wiles of those wandering spirits who, like the "Wicked One" that [105] came softly up to Christian in the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and "whisperingly suggested many grievous blasphemies to him, which he verily thought had proceeded from his own mind," [45] seek to tempt us to destruction,—such a thought thrills through the soul of every one, and fills it with strange and undefined emotions of blended joy and fear.

Few can free themselves altogether from the emotion of terror which is almost necessarily connected with scenes polluted by murder, or by other outbreaks of man's foulest passions. This feeling acting on the minds of the superstitious and ignorant, has led them to people with [106] spectres all those places which have obtained notoriety from being the scene of some terrible ebullition of human frailty and wickedness.

Thus, the glen where murder had been committed; the pond in which the mother had immersed her new-born infant; the hoary ruin pregnant with horrid legends of the past; the rocks over which the inebriated drunkard fell; the four cross roads where the suicide was impaled; the dwelling of the miser, or of him who did unjustly to the orphan; and the willow-banks of the still-flowing river into which the love-lorn maiden had cast herself,—each had its spectre, and at the midnight hour the ghost of the murdered bared to the moon the mementos of its foul and most unnatural end; the spectre of the murderer, writhing in agony, rattled its gibbet-chains; the suffocating sobs of the drowning infant were borne on the fitful breeze; hideous spectres hovered o'er the deserted ruin; the ghost of the miser guarded its quondam treasures; the cruel guardian and the suicide shrieked forth the agonies of the damned; and the phantom of the deceived maiden gliding on the banks of her watery grave, mingled its plaintive wails with each sough of the midnight wind.

But, alas! this prolific source of terror and romance must be consigned to the delusions of the [107] past; and the churchyard—erst pregnant with "thin-sheeted phantoms"—is now also shorn of its gloomy horrors, and regarded alone as the last quiet resting-place of man on earth.

Even when glimpses of the spirit-world are vouchsafed to those who still firmly believe in occasional visitations from its inhabitants, it would seem that the fashion of their appearance has become more in accordance with the quiet well-regulated ideas of the age. The major part of those terrible attributes of the nether world, that of old were delighted in, are no longer exhibited, and they are numbered with the things that have been. The form which appertained to Satan himself—the cloven foot, the forked tail, the hirsute frame, and the horned head—must also vanish before the march of civilisation; hence Mephistopheles, in the "Faust" of Goëthe, is represented as saying:—

"Refinement too, which smoothens all
  O'er which it in the world has pass'd,
Has been extended in its call,
  And reached the devil, too, at last.
That northern phantom found no more can be,
Horns, tail, and claws, we now no longer see,
  As for the foot—I cannot spare it,
  But were I openly to wear it,
  It might do greater harm than good
  To me among the multitude.
And so like many a youth beside, [108]
  Who bravely to the eye appears,

Yet something still contrives to hide,
I've worn false calves for many years!"

The phenomena upon which the belief of the occasional manifestation of disembodied spirits to man is founded, may be accounted for without having recourse to the doctrine of supernatural interposition.

Our senses and our reasoning powers are apt to err. We may deceive ourselves, and are liable to be deceived by an erroneous appreciation of the sensations which we receive from the objects surrounding us—*illusions*—but of the nature of which we may readily convince ourselves.

Illusions of the *sight* may arise either from an error of judgment, or from a disordered state of the eye.

Of those illusions arising from an error of judgment, perhaps none bear directly upon our subject. Examples of this kind of illusion are the broken appearance of a stick partially immersed in water; the apparent movement of trees, houses, &c., past a train in motion, or the banks of a river past a steamboat.

Illusions arising from a disordered condition of the eye, prompting the imagination, are a prolific source of ghost-seeing.

In the obscurity of the evening, or during the darkness of the night (particularly on those nights [109] which are cloudy, and the darkness seems to rest on the ground), the difficulty with which we distinguish any object to which the attention is directed, is liable to induce a disordered state of the eye, the effects of which are very startling.

"The imperfect view which we obtain of such objects forces us to fix the eye more steadily upon them; but the more exertion we make to ascertain what they are, the greater difficulties do we encounter to accomplish our object. The eye is actually thrown into a state of the most painful agitation, the object will swell and contract, and partly disappear, and it will again become visible when the eye has recovered from the delirium into which it has been thrown."[46]

This illusion is increased by a disturbed condition of the pupil of the eye.

The pupil is surrounded by a muscle called the *iris*, by the contraction and dilatation of which the size of the opening is increased or diminished, and a greater or less amount of light admitted to the eye. On a dark night, or during the twilight, the pupil is dilated to its utmost extent, so that every available ray of light may enter. In this condition the eye is not able to accommodate itself to near objects, and they become more indistinct; shadowy, and confused. [110]

Under these circumstances, an object to which the attention is strongly attracted, may appear to assume strange variations in form,—now increasing, now diminishing in size, now approaching nearer, now going further off, or anon disappearing altogether; and a bush, a guide-post, a stoop, &c., will seem as though it assumed the most startling changes in size and appearance. Add the effects of the imagination, and we shall at once perceive a source of the various goblins, boggards, and other strange sights which have been supposed to haunt many of our byeways and deserted places.

To illustrate this form of illusion: a man with whom we were acquainted tells the following tale:—When young, he, one evening, had a quarrel with his mother about some trifling affair, and in defiance of her grief and supplications he left home late at night, intending to enter the army. It was very dark and stormy, and as he proceeded along a bye-path, suddenly a tall object arrested his attention; startled, he stood still, when, to his utter horror and astonishment, the object increased in size, and seemed as though about to pounce upon him; it then vanished, and anon appeared again. Terrified beyond measure, and conceiving that Satan had waylaid him for forsaking his mother, the poor man fell on his knees, and exclaimed: "O good Lord Devil, do not [111] take me, and I'll go back to my mother, and be a good lad!" It is unnecessary to dwell upon the goggle eyes burning with flames which he imagined Satan to possess; suffice it that he remained before the supposed devil some time, overcome with terror, when a blink of the rising moon showed that he was laid at the foot of the stump of a tree. Heartily ashamed of his fear, he rose up, slunk back home, and made peace with his mother.[47]

This will suffice as an example of the most degraded form of ghost-life with which our highways and byeways have been peopled by the superstitious and illiterate,—illusions which have arisen from the effects of a disturbed condition of the visual organ on an excited imagination. Burns humorously describes this variety of ghost in his "Address to the Deil:"

"Ae dreary, windy, winter night,
The stars shot down wi' sklentin' light,

Wi' you, mysel, I gat a fright,
Ayont the lough:
Ye like a rash-bush stood in sight
Wi' waving sugh.

[112]

"The cudgel in my nieve did shake,
Each bristled hair stood like a stake,
When wi' an eldricht stour, quaick—quaick—
Amang the springs,
Awa ye squatter'd like a drake,
On whistling wings."

Another form of illusion is induced by objects seen indistinctly when the mind is disturbed and pre-occupied by some powerful and painful emotion.

"A lady was once passing through a wood, in the darkening twilight of a stormy evening, to visit a friend who was watching over a dying child. The clouds were thick, the rain beginning to fall; darkness was increasing; the wind was moaning mournfully through the trees. The lady's heart almost failed her as she saw that she had a mile to walk through the woods in the gathering gloom. But the reflection of the situation of her friend forbade her turning back. Excited and trembling, she called to her aid a nervous resolution, and pressed onward. She had not proceeded far, when she beheld in the path before her the movement of some very indistinct [113] object. It appeared to keep a little distance in advance of her, and as she made efforts to get nearer to see what it was, it seemed proportionally to recede. The lady began to feel rather unpleasantly. There was some pale white object certainly discernable before her, and it appeared mysteriously to float along at a regular distance without any effort at motion. Notwithstanding the lady's good sense and unusual resolution, a cold chill began to come over her; she made every effort to resist her fears, and soon succeeded in drawing nearer the mysterious object, when she was appalled at beholding the features of her friend's child, cold in death, wrapt in its shroud. She gazed earnestly, and then it remained distinct and clear before her eyes. She considered it a monition that her friend's child was dead, and that she must hasten on to her aid; but there was the apparition directly in her path; she must pass it. Taking up a little stick, she forced herself along to the object, and behold, some little animal scampered away. It was this that her excited imagination had transformed into the corpse of an infant in its winding-sheet." [48]

Sir Walter Scott relates an interesting case of illusion occasioned by an accidental arrangement [114] of some articles of clothing:—

"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 the deceased 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 position, 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 [115] peculiarities of dress and posture of the illustrious poet. 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. These were merely a screen, occupied by great-coats, shawls, plaids, and such other articles as usually are 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 return, and tell the young friend he had left, under what a striking hallucination he had for a moment laboured."[49]

The liability to illusion or hallucination in that transitional state of the mind when it reverts to surrounding objects, after it has been pre-occupied with some absorbing and intense thought, is very strikingly shown in the above case. It is very similar to that condition of the mind which obtains between sleeping and waking, when it is well known that our dreams are most vivid and brilliant.

Dr. Ferriar relates the following interesting case of illusion occasioned by a ray of moonlight acting upon the mind of an individual just awaking from a horrid dream. [116]

"A gentleman was benighted while travelling alone in a remote part of the highlands of Scotland, and was compelled to ask shelter for the night at a small lonely hut. When he was conducted to his bedroom, the landlady observed with mysterious reluctance, that he would find the window very insecure. On examination, part of the wall appeared to have been broken down to enlarge the opening. After some inquiry, he was told, that a pedlar, who had lodged in the room a short time before, had committed suicide, and was found hanging behind the door in the morning.

"According to one of the superstitions of the country, it was deemed improper to remove the body through the door of the house; and to convey it through the window was impossible without removing part of the wall. Some hints were dropped that the room had been subsequently haunted by the poor man's spirit.

"My friend laid his arms, properly prepared against intrusion of any kind, by the bedside, and retired to rest, not without some degree of apprehension. He was visited in a dream by a frightful [117] apparition, and awaking in agony, found himself sitting up in bed with a pistol grasped in his right hand. On casting a fearful glance round the room, he discovered, by the moonlight, a corpse dressed in a shroud, leaned against the wall close by the window. With much difficulty he summoned up resolution to approach the dismal object, the features of which, and the minutest parts of the funeral apparel, he perceived distinctly. He passed one hand over it, felt nothing, and staggered back to the bed. After a long interval, and much reasoning with himself, he renewed his investigation, and at length discovered that the object of his terrors was produced by the moonbeams forming a long bright image through the broken window, on which his fancy, impressed by his dream, had produced with mischievous accuracy, the lineaments of a body prepared for interment."

There are some illusions which arise from certain of the laws of action of impressions on the *retina*—that tissue of the eye in which the changes necessary to the excitation of the sensation of light by luminous rays are induced.

A sensation excited in the retina is not momentary, or during the continuance of the exciting cause alone, but it persists some seconds after that has been withdrawn. Thus if the end of a burning stick be rapidly moved in a circle before the eyes, it gives rise to the sensation of an [118] uninterrupted circle of light; the sensation excited on each part of the retina enduring for a certain period after the luminous point has passed.

The following instance is an example of an illusion, having relation to our subject, from this cause.

A gentleman had been earnestly regarding a small and very beautiful painting of the Virgin and Child. On turning round from the contemplation of it, he was surprised at finding a woman of the full size, with an infant in her arms, standing before him. On examining the figures more closely he, however, found that the woman wanted the lower fourth of the body, and this at once led to a correct appreciation of the nature of the phantom. The painting he had been viewing was a three-parts length, and it was the persistence of the image upon the retina for a short period after he had turned from it, which had given rise to the phantom.

A species of divination is made use of in India which has its origin in an illusion of this nature, and of which the following is an interesting example:—

A lady who was about to undertake a long journey, was persuaded by a Moonshee to walk on [119] the verandah and consult her fate.

"It was a clear calm night, the moon was full, and not the faintest speck in the sky disturbed her reign. The Ganges was like a flood of silver light, hastening on in charmed silence; while on the green smooth sward on which they walked a tall shrub here and there stood erect and motionless. The young lady, whose impressions were probably deepened by the mystical words of the Moonshee, felt a kind of awe stealing over her; she looked round upon the accustomed scene as if in some new and strange world; and when the old man motioned her to stop, as they reached an open space on the sward, she obeyed with an indescribable thrill.

"'Look there,' said he, pointing to her shadow, which fell tall and dark upon the grass. 'Do you see it?'

"'Yes,' said she faintly, yet beginning to be ashamed. 'How sharply defined are its edges! It looks like something you could touch!'

"'But look longer, look better, look steadfastly. Is it still definite?'

"'A kind of halo begins to gather round it: my eyes dazzle.'

"'Then raise them to the heavens; fix them on yonder blue sky. What do you see?'

"'I see it still; but it is as white as mist, and of a gigantic size.' [120]

"'Has it a head?' asked the Moonshee in an anxious whisper.

"'Yes, it is complete in all its parts; but now it melts—floats—disappears.'

"'Thank God!' said the old man: 'your journey shall be prosperous, such is the will of Heaven.'" [50]

When a steady gaze is maintained upon an object until the retina is exhausted, which is shown by the imperfect vision, or "dazzling," and the eyes are then suddenly directed away from it to an uniformly coloured surface, an image of the object, from the persistence of the impression, as already stated, will still remain for a short period upon the retina; but another phenomenon is also observed, for the exhausted condition of the retina renders it incapable of responding, during its continuation, to the impression of the original colour of the object, and the spectrum appears of a different colour. To this spectral colour the term *complementary* or *accidental* is applied; and if the colour of the object be red, the complementary colour will be green; if yellow, deep purple; if black, white, &c., and *vice versâ*. Thus then the spectral apparition witnessed in the above relation receives a ready and intelligible explanation. [121]

The sense of *hearing* is also subject to illusions: for example, when a timid person mistakes the rustling of leaves in a forest for the voices of robbers; or the soughing of the wind among the trees, in some place of evil repute, for the moaning of a wandering and unhappy spirit.

The varied and undefined noises often produced by the wind when sweeping over an irregular surface, among rocks and trees, on the surface of water, in forests, or secluded and deep glens; and the mysterious sounds occasioned by the rushing of the water in the hollows and caverns of a rock-bound coast, have been fertile sources of illusion among the superstitious.

The ancient Romans listening to the inexplicable sounds which assailed the ear in solitary and wooded places, fabled that they were the voices of the wood deities, or as Lucretius beautifully expresses it:—

> "The neighbouring swains believe, or fondly vaunt,
> Satyrs and nymphs the rural regions haunt;
> That fauns with wanton revel and delight
> Disturb the sober silence of the night:
> That music's blended notes are heard around,
> The plaintive voice, and harp's according sound:
> And well they know when Pan, the sylvan god,
> (While o'er his brows the piny honours nod,)
> With bending lip awakes the vocal reeds, [122]
> And the charmed ears of listening satyrs feeds.
> With joy these tales they tell, or tales like these,
> And fill the woods with fabled deities."[51]

As the winds swept over the wild heaths of the north, or roared amid the mountain passes, bearing upon their bosom the heavy mantling clouds which enwreathed the ghosts of the heroes of old, often in their varied tones did the ancient Celt conceive that he heard the voices of the dead; and he who was stricken with misery deemed that his forefathers called upon him to hasten to the land of shadows. "The ghosts of fathers," they say, "call away the souls of their race while they behold them lonely in the midst of woe." Or when an eddy of wind sweeping into the hall awoke a cadence of music as it played over the strings of the harps suspended there, the hearers shrunk as the notes thrilled through them, and fearfully whispered that the ghosts of the dead touched the strings, and asked whose death of all the mighty the ghostly music portended. "The harps of the bards, untouched, sound mournful over the hill."[52]

The supernatural framework of many legends depends upon illusions of the hearing of a similar character.

At Crosmere, near Ellesmere, in Shropshire, there is a tradition that a chapel once stood on the [123]
borders of the lake, and it was long believed that when the waters were ruffled by the wind the sound of the bells might be heard beneath the surface; and an old story records that, long ago, a church and village were entombed by an earthquake, near the spot where Raleigh, in Nottinghamshire, now stands; and that at Christmas, even now, the bells may be heard solemnly

tolling deep in the bosom of the earth.

Among the Cornish miners a very singular superstition prevails, which is due to the sounds occurring in old and deserted workings, from the dropping of water and other causes. These noises are supposed to be produced by certain spirits, which are termed "*Knockers*," and, according to the author of "Yeast; a Problem," the miners hold that "they are *the ghosts of the old Jews that crucified our Lord, and were sent for slaves by the Roman Emperors to work the mines;* and we find their old smelting-houses, which we call *Jews' houses*, and their blocks, at the bottom of the great bogs, which we call *Jews' tin;* and there is a town among us, too, which we call *Market Jew*, but the old name was *Marazion*, that means the Bitterness of Zion, they tell me; and bitter work it was for them, no doubt, poor souls! We used to break into the old shafts and adits which they had made, and find old stags'-horn pickaxes that crumbled to pieces when we brought [124] them to grass. And they say that, if a man will listen of a still night about those old shafts, he may hear the ghosts of them at working, knocking, and picking, as clear as if there was a man at work in the next level."[53]

But the most common cause of illusion from sound arises from the difficulty which all more or less experience, of tracing the direction of a sound, particularly if it be indistinct. The ascertainment of the direction of a sound, and the distance of the sonorous body, is an act of judgment, and it is the result of experience. The power may be cultivated to a great extent, and many savage tribes possess it in a very high degree; but among civilized nations, where the sounds requisite to be attended to are principally of a point-blank character, and where the necessity for the cultivation of that nicety of hearing which is required in forest life does not exist, the power of distinguishing the direction and distance of sounds is very imperfect.

The intensity of the sound, and the position of the ears, contribute to the formation of a correct judgment; but if the two ears have precisely the same relation to the point from which the sound issues, as when it occurs directly before or behind, it is impossible to distinguish by the sensation [125] alone whether the sound arises in the front or the rear.

The most familiar and striking illustration of the difficulty experienced in determining the direction of sound, is *ventriloquism*. By a cultivation of the power of speaking without the aid of the lips, and by keeping the muscles of the face in a state of passiveness, the ventriloquist, on giving the mind of the listener a certain leading idea, will induce him to think that he hears voices issuing from the floor, from the ceiling, from within him, or from any position but the correct one; and by a modification of the intensity of the sound, it may be made to appear as if it arose at different distances, as when voices are heard in the distance, which gradually approach the listener, come close to him, pass by, and are again lost in the distance. Although perfectly aware of the deception, there are few who can correct the impressions received, and trace them to their legitimate source.

This uncertainty of distinguishing the direction and the nature of sounds has been a prolific source of belief in supernatural occurrences, and the majority, if not all, of those mysterious noises which are so common in old houses, and which it was customary, from inability to discover their origin, to attribute to spiritual agency, have been due to this cause. The yielding of wood- [126] work, the scouring of vermin, the sighing of the wind in chinks and crannies, have been transformed by excited and superstitious imaginations into the sighing, or whispering, or knocking of wandering ghosts, and there is, perhaps, not a town or village in England which has not at one time or other had one or more houses reputed to be haunted by incorporeal visitants who have thus announced their presence.

Sir David Brewster relates an interesting example of illusion arising from this source. "A gentleman devoid of all superstitious feelings, and living in a house free from any gloomy associations, heard, night after night, in his bedroom, a singular noise, unlike any ordinary sound to which he was accustomed. He had slept in the same room for years without hearing it, and he attributed it at first to some change of circumstances in the roof or in the walls of the room; but after the strictest examination no cause could be found for it. It occurred only once in the night; it was heard almost every night with few interruptions. It was over in an instant, and it never took place till after the gentleman had gone to bed. It was always distinctly heard by his companion, to whose time of going to bed it had no relation. It depended on the gentleman alone, [127] and it followed him into another apartment with another bed, on the opposite side of the house. Accustomed to such investigations, he made the most diligent but fruitless search into its cause. The consideration that the sound had a special reference to him alone, operated upon his imagination, and he did not scruple to acknowledge that the recurrence of the mysterious sound induced a superstitious feeling at the moment. Many months afterwards it was found that the sound arose from the partial opening of the door of a wardrobe which was within a few feet of the gentleman's head, and which had been taken into the other apartment. This wardrobe was almost

always opened before he retired to bed, and the door being a little too tight, it gradually forced itself open with a sort of dull sound, resembling the note of a drum. As the door had only started half an inch out of its place, its change of position never attracted attention. The sound, indeed, seemed to come in a different direction, and from a greater distance.

"When sounds so mysterious in their origin are heard by persons predisposed to a belief in the marvellous, their influence over the mind must be very powerful. An inquiry into their origin, if made at all, will be made more in the hope of confirming than of removing the original impression, and the unfortunate victim of his own fears will also be the willing dupe of his own judgment."[54] [128]

Not unfrequently the difficulty of distinguishing the direction of sound has been made the basis of imposition upon the credulous; and when it is considered how readily the judgment is led into error in this respect, even when aware of the deception practised, as in ventriloquism, the easy facility with which it is imposed upon when superstitious feelings are excited, and the wide-spread delusions which have thus arisen, cannot be wondered at.

The Cock-lane ghost is a familiar example of a deception of this nature: but this, and every other delusion of a similar character, sink into insignificance before a delusion of our own day and times—*Spirit-rapping*.

The idea of a communication of the spiritual world with man by the intervention of *raps*, is not new. A writer in a recent number of "Notes and Queries,"[55] gives the following example of an early instance of this kind in England.

"Rushton Hall, near Kettering, in Northamptonshire, was long the residence of the ancient and distinguished family of Treshams. In the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the mansion was occupied by Sir Thomas Tresham, who was a pedant and a fanatic; but who was an important character in his time by reason of his great wealth and powerful connections. There is a lodge at Rushton, situate about half-a-mile from the old hall, now in ruins, but covered all over within and without with emblems of the Trinity. This lodge is known to have been built by Sir Thomas Tresham; but his precise motive for selecting this mode of illustrating his favourite doctrine was unknown until it appeared from a letter written by himself about the year 1584, and discovered in a bundle of books and papers inclosed since 1605, in a wall of the old mansion, and brought to light about twenty years ago. The following relation of a "rapping" or "knocking" is extracted from this letter:— [129]

"If it be demanded why I labour so much in the Trinity and Passion of Christ to depaint in this chamber, this is the principal instance thereof; that at my last being hither committed"—(referring to his commitments for recusancy, which had been frequent)—"and I usually having my servants here allowed me, to read nightly an hour to me after supper, it fortuned that Fulcis, my then servant, reading in the "Christian Resolution," in the treatise of "Proof that there is a God, &c.," there was upon a wainscot table at that instant three loud knocks (as if it had been with an iron hammer) given; to the great amazing of me and my two servants, Fulcis and Nilkton." [130]

Another example of early "spirit-rapping" is the celebrated ghost of "*Old Jeffreys*," at the Epworth Parsonage, during the childhood of the Revds. John and Charles Wesley.

The conception of a familiar correspondence between the spirit-world and man by means of knocks and raps is, however, an idea of modern times, and for which we are indebted to America, although it would seem that in 1835 we were on the eve of making this unenviable discovery in our own country, for the invisible cause of certain noisy disturbances in a house occupied by a Captain Molesworth at Trinity, near Edinburgh, in that year, would, it is asserted, respond to a question by knocks, if it could be answered numerically; as, for example, "How many people are there in the room?" when it would answer by as many knocks. This so-called spirit seemed at times to be drumming a certain tune. The knocks in this case had some very intimate connection with a sick girl, a daughter of Captain Molesworth; for they accompanied her, and wherever she was there they prevailed most. [131]

In 1846, or 1847, a house in the village of Hydesville, State of New York, America, was reported to be haunted by certain noises, as knockings on the doors, panels, floors, ceilings, &c., of which the source could not be ascertained; and chairs and tables were occasionally displaced, and crockery broken by some invisible power. When the noises and disturbances first commenced, it is stated that the house was occupied by a man named Weekman; but subsequently it passed into the possession of a person called Fox, who had two daughters, Catherine and Margaretta, and during their residence in it, not only did the knockings and irregular motions of the furniture persist, but they increased in intensity, variety, and frequency of occurrence, and it was ascertained by the young women that the knocks would mimic sounds

which they made, and even respond to questions put orally. A code of signals in the affirmative and negative was next arranged, and by going over the letters of the alphabet, and the affirmative signal duly occurring at certain letters, which were recorded, a system of correspondence was established with the invisible, but apparently intelligent, source of the disturbances. By this method it was ascertained that the cause of the noises, and other [132] indications of invisible power, professed to be the spirit of a man named Charles Ryan, who, while in the flesh, had resided in that house; had been foully murdered there; the corpse interred in a certain part of the cellar; and had left a family of five children, all of whom were then alive. These revelations caused, as may well be imagined, a great sensation in the village, and, notwithstanding that no such person as Charles Ryan had ever lived there, or in that house, and that on searching the cellar carefully no remains of a corpse were found, the imposition and delusion was persisted in. It is scarcely necessary to add that as yet no one has come forward to claim kindred with the first of the disembodied spirits that held communication with man.

Several committees were appointed to investigate the matter, but they failed to ascertain the cause of the sounds, and by common consent, no natural cause being evident, it was assumed, *therefore*, that the cause was supernatural.

Subsequently, the Fox family removed to Rochester, and singular to say, the spirit-sounds followed them. Noises began also to be heard in other houses and towns, and it was soon found that many females, equally with the Misses Fox, possessed the power of communicating familiarly through the medium of sounds, with the spirit-world. In an almost incredibly brief [133] space of time, this delusion swept over the United States, and multitudes from all ranks and conditions of society gave in their accession to the system of belief into which it was quickly moulded.

Certain persons only were found to possess the power of summoning the spiritual knocks at pleasure; these were principally females, and they were termed "*mediums*." The belief itself was spoken of under the simple term of "*Spirit-rapping*," and its advocates and believers as "*Rappers*," or "*Rappites*."

Each "medium," somehow or other, managed to interweave his or her own views with the spirit-revelations, and the spirits themselves did not hesitate in simple set phrase to give the lie to one another; consequently, the revelations and doctrines inculcated are somewhat varied and inconsistent. The most generally received doctrine at the present time may, however, be summed up as follows:—The "knocks," "raps," and other manifestations of invisible power, are caused by the spirits of the dead, who, by direct permission of the Almighty (according to the more religious), or by self-discovery on the part of the spirits (according to a statement made by the spirit of Benjamin Franklin), are enabled to communicate with their fellow-men by various sounds and exhibitions of physical power. This correspondence was permitted by God in consequence of [134] the great advance which the Americans in particular, and mankind in general, had made towards perfection; and it is intimated that if the present rate of progression towards perfection continue, we shall soon be able to have intercourse by voice and sight with the spirit-world. As it is, certain persons possess these privileges in full, and the mass of Christians, *if believers*, have so grown in goodness that the religion of the present day—Biblical religion—is no longer needed, and Christianity is to be regarded as a state of probation that *was* requisite to attain the perfection now arrived at; but this transition state being passed, from the elevation of the spirit-world we can see that many of its doctrines form now a mighty and dangerous slough, in which we are in danger of being smothered.

The ideas entertained by mankind respecting spiritual existences are singularly incorrect; notwithstanding this, however, most of the spirits, as when in the body, entertain some peculiarity of doctrine, which shows that even in the "spheres" opinions are divided on this point. The most general opinion states that the spirit-world surrounds the earth, and is divided into seven spheres, which are subdivided into seven other spheres, and these again admit of still [135] further division,—a geography evidently derived from Mahomedanism, and the old monkish legends of the septate division of hell, purgatory, and paradise. In the first of the spheres the lowest orders of spirits reside. These form the most degraded class of spirit-life, and are unhappy compared with those in the higher spheres; but the lowest degree of their unhappiness exceeds the highest degree of man's pleasures. Into this sphere pass all those who have had an unsatisfactory character on earth; while those who have been more correct in their conduct pass immediately into the sphere which approximates to their degree of goodness. The residence of any spirit in the lower spheres is not constant; for, exposed to heavenly influences, it goes on gradually improving, and as it sublimes, it ascends through the higher spheres, until at last the seventh sphere is attained, where it is fulfilled with bliss, and enters the presence of God. Hence we find St. Paul and Tom Paine, Calvin and Napoleon, Wesley and Shelley, united in friendly brotherhood. There is no hell, such as is taught in the Scriptures, and no eternal punishment, and

man carries into the spirit-world his passions and propensities, and relative degrees of ignorance and knowledge. The spirit of Calvin stated that the spirits understood all languages intuitively; [136] but this has been refuted by an immense majority of spirits, and it is certain that they know no other languages than those they were acquainted with on earth. Indeed, it is requisite to have rudimental education in our own language in heaven. "I have no friends to teach me how to spell," said a spirit named Jack Waters. Another, named Frank Copland, was unable to make any satisfactory communication, from being "an illiterate youth" when he died; and the "medium" to whom this communication was made, kindly advised the spirit to get the soul of a deceased sister to teach him. He did so, and in three months it was ascertained that he had made very creditable progress in spelling, &c. The amusements of the "spirits" consist of music, concerts, dancing, card-playing, &c., and they live in a species of concubinage. They dress according to fancy, but the male spirits generally wear trousers, hats or turbans, and beards. They have also condescended to teach certain celestial architectural vagaries. They *lie* like mortals, and coolly admit it; and it is occasionally necessary to put the spirits on oath! They are very liable to error, and the spirit of General Washington, equally careless of grammar and orthography, revealed, that they "many times make mistakes, and so we are called liars; but this is owing to our neglect [137] of the records that are given us, and also to evel spirits; but we will try to be more careful or correct after we have becom more use to writing for our friends." The spirits speak with the utmost contempt and abhorrence of the religious beliefs of the present day, and regard the Bible as unfit for general perusal, from the errors (due to the translators) which it contains; and this assertion is fittingly crowned by the statement that it emanates under a special communication from St. Paul himself.

Notwithstanding the painful absurdity and frightful blasphemy of these doctrines (which satisfactorily show the class of persons by whom the delusion is fostered, and the flagrant character of the imposition), clergymen, judges, and persons distinguished in literature have permitted themselves to be led away by the delusion, each establishing some conscientious clause or giving a peculiar phase to the belief, in order to exculpate themselves from the charge of contributing to some of the more outrageous dogmas of this strange delusion.

The phenomena which led to the delusion were sounds of various kinds and intensity, which were called up by the "medium" at will, apparently in various parts of the room in which the "*séances*" were held, but principally beneath the table at which she sat; and the movement of [138] certain articles of furniture. The intelligent correspondence with the "raps" (for the furniture-moving was merely indicative of the *power* of the suppositious spirits) was by questions uttered audibly, mentally, or in writing, to which replies were given by repeated raps—an affirmative; or by silence—a negative; or the words of the response were spelled out by running over the alphabet—the affirmative knocks taking place when the finger or pencil rested on the letters required to form the sentence. Some more highly-gifted mediums, pervaded by a spiritual afflatus, were enabled to write the answers; and others shadowed them forth in dancing.

If we reflect for a moment upon the difficulty which most persons experience in detecting the direction and position of sounds, particularly when the mind is under the dominion of certain ideas, we may readily imagine how at the first the delusion of spirit-rapping obtained credence among the credulous and ignorant. It was, however, soon ascertained that an imposition was being practised; and very shortly after the development of the mania, a "medium" came forward and confessed the deception practised, and the mode in which she had carried it out. This "medium," named Mrs. Norman Culvers, had been taught the mode of deception by Margaretta [139] Fox, one of the original "mediums;" and she stated that the raps were produced by the toes, the listener's mind being distracted by directing the attention, by a fixed gaze or otherwise, to certain parts of the room, from which he was instructed that the sounds came. By the confession of other "mediums," and by observation, it was ascertained that, in addition to the rapping by the toes, raps were produced by a lateral movement of the knee-joint, and the joints of the thumb and fingers (the "cracking" of the joints, a familiar phenomenon); by the action of the feet against the leg of the table, or by the movement of the soles of the shoes one against another; and lastly, by a hammer ingeniously fixed in the woodwork of the table. It was further shown to demonstration, that in no case when the "mediums" were placed in positions where none of the before-mentioned methods of rapping could occur, did the raps take place; that in no case could the "spirits" reply correctly to a single question, when the querist, by an impassibility of countenance and scrupulous care over his actions, did not betray his thoughts, or indicate the letters constituting the words he required; and that the "spirits" might be led to answer the most absurd and incorrect questions, utterly unconscious of imposition or error. [140]

Notwithstanding this exposure, the delusion is persisted in; and it is principally maintained by the occasional correct replies which are given by the medium to questions of which none present could be acquainted with the answer, but the querist; and many men, even of considerable

literary attainments, have been led into the delusion by this simple phenomenon alone.

A careful examination of the details of the spirit-communications, and the confessions of the mediums already alluded to, will show that in no case was there a correct response given to questions when precautions were taken to guard against the indication given by the countenance or by the actions to the medium, and even this was not sufficient to prevent a multitude of errors being fallen into.

The pure spirit-communications which have been received from the Apostles, Franklin, Washington, &c., vary according to the mediums to which they have been vouchsafed, and often flatly contradict each other; in itself a sufficient indication of the glaring character of the delusion.

Some, admitting the spiritual origin of the "raps" have gone a little further, and enunciated the opinion that the "rappings" occur through the influence of electricity or magnetism which the [141] spirits wield; "and if," writes N. P. Willis, "disembodied spirits are still moving consciously among us, and have thus *found an agent at last—electricity—by which they can communicate with the world they have left*, it must soon, in the progressive nature of things, ripen to an intercourse between this and the spirit-world." Surely an electric condition that would cause sonorous "raps," and tables, chairs, &c., to dance jigs, and imitate ships tossed in a storm, would be within reach of the test of experiment. Such a test, however, has never been attempted; and thus it is men, even of high standing in literature, with the utmost coolness plunge into conjectures respecting the operations of forces of which they seem to be unacquainted even with the signification of the terms. For electricity and magnetism are no vague names, but terms applied to certain phenomena which are readily ascertained, and without the presence of which we are not justified in using them.

We have already sufficiently shown the illusions to which the sense of hearing is liable, and the influence they have had in the formation of the belief in spirit-rapping is evident. The disposition of the mind in contributing towards this and allied delusions requires a brief comment.

The substratum of superstition which is found to prevail more or less in most persons, is a [142] never-failing source of delusion; and it is the groundwork upon which the impostor acts. Readily excited and brought into play by phenomena of which the origin is not palpably evident, it seizes with avidity upon doctrines which pander to its taste for mystery and wonder; and a suggestion, whether direct or implied, induces a condition of the mind that interposes an almost insuperable bar to the healthy action of the reason. This unconscious action of the mind, under the influence of leading ideas, is the prime foundation of those illusions of the senses of which we have illustrations in the pseudo sciences of "mesmerism," "electro-biology," &c., all the phenomena of which may be produced by simply inducing certain trains of thought.

When Goëthe represented Mephistopheles as saying—

> "*Whispered suggestions* are the devil's rôle,"

it was with a profound perception of the powerful influence they exercise in the creation of delusions.

The throngs which crowd around the table of the "medium," go pregnant with a desire to see a mystery, and filled with a vague fear of the supernatural influences to which they may be subjected. This is increased by the interval of from five minutes to half an hour which is allowed [143] to intervene between the commencement of the *séance*, and the first "rap" from the spirits; and during this period the mind is kept to the utmost tension by listening, or is well exercised by attending to the anecdotes illustrative of the power of the spirits which are detailed by the medium, and it is thus brought into the state that is requisite for the perfection of the delusion. In the condition of the mind thus induced, the medium has little difficulty in leading her credulous hearer to whatever length it may be desired, and a careful examination of the countenance and the hand will suffice for a correct response to the majority of the questions which may be proposed.

The want of discrimination of the facts from the theories invented to explain them, is another and great source of delusion; for the majority it suffices that if the "raps" occur, or the table moves, it is sufficiently demonstrative that it is by the influence of spirits; and it is a much less difficult matter to them to believe that the phenomena arises from supernatural than natural agency.

Certain luminous phenomena, phosphorescent flames, luminous clouds, glistening stars, &c., have been observed when the spirit-manifestations have occurred in profound darkness. These [144] appearances were dependent upon a disordered condition of the eye, which will be fully dwelt

upon in a subsequent part of this work.

The irregular and violent movements of the furniture which occurred when the *séances* were held in *darkened* apartments, were the result of the most palpable collusion. There were certain movements of the tables, however, around which the experimenters sat when eliciting the spirit-rappings, that could not be attributed to this source; and an examination of these motions showed that if several persons arranged themselves around a table, and rested their hands slightly upon it, after a longer or shorter period motion would occur, which was to a great extent under the control of the will, although the experimenters were not aware that they exerted any force whatever upon the table; and further, it was ascertained that a table thus set in motion would respond by rapping with the legs, to questions propounded to it, and that with a facility equal to the most perfect "medium."

This interesting phenomenon soon attracted considerable attention, for it was certain that neither collusion nor wilful deception were concerned in it; and it could be produced by persons who did not pretend to the character of "mediums;" indeed, out of a company of several [145] individuals it was pretty certain that some could be found capable of inducing the phenomenon.

The "Rappites" looked upon it simply as another and more general manifestation of the spirit-world; others, imbued with the pseudo-scientific dogmas of animal magnetism, odylism, &c., sought an explanation in the principles of their respective theories; some regarded it as the result of Satanic agency; and lastly, those best capable of judging on the question, looked upon the motion as the result of muscular force exerted unconsciously by the experimenters, and in accordance with certain well-known laws of muscular and mental action.

The doctrine of Satanic agency has excited great attention in this country, from the fact of its being propounded and advocated by certain clergymen of our Established Church, who not content with regarding it as one of those "great wonders" which are to prelude the reign of Anti-christ, have even sought by this agency to verify the truths of the immortality of the soul, eternity, the existence of a hell; thus seeking a confirmation of the Scripture from the devil himself, and comically identifying themselves with the principles so pithily expressed by Ralpho: —

> "Those principles I've quoted late, [146]
> Prove that the godly may allege
> For anything their privilege,
> And to the devil himself may go,
> If they have motives thereunto:
> For as there is a war between
> The dev'l and them, it is no sin
> If they, by subtle stratagem,
> Make use of him, as he does them."[56]

The answer to this explication, as well as to those other explications based on the doctrines of the "Rappites," and the principles of the pseudo-sciences, is found in the simple fact, that if care be taken to ascertain the sources of motion which arise from the experimenters themselves, and to obviate their influence in the experiment, neither movements nor responses occur; and by a careful examination of the conditions requisite for the perfection of the experiment, and an experimental illustration of them, we arrive at the conclusion that "table-moving" and "table-talking" are the result solely of muscular action exercised unconsciously under the influence of certain expectant ideas.

If we proceed in the examination of this question as in that of every other physical question, by seeking the conditions requisite for the fulfilment of the experiment, and examining their nature, we observe that the position of the persons who perform it is one that would give rise to certain [147] easily understood and comprehensible results. The hands are placed upon the table in such a position that the experimenter exercises the least degree of pressure of which he can be conscious, and in this position they are kept for a longer or shorter period, but generally averaging from twenty to thirty minutes. Whether the individual be sitting or standing, the protracted exertion of the muscles to keep the hand in so constrained a position, gives rise to considerable fatigue, which is manifested by the usual painful sensations in the over-exercised parts; and these sensations have been sagely compared by the advocates of the pseudo-sciences to those experienced by electric or electro-magnetic currents. As the muscular fatigue and the painful state of tension into which the muscles are thrown increase, the sensations by which we judge of the amount of pressure exercised upon a given object diminishes, and unless the degree of pressure exercised is checked by information derived through some other sense, it goes on ever increasing in a direct ratio until the whole weight of the hand, the arm, and even the shoulders of the person so standing is unconsciously thrown upon the table, and a degree of force

exercised, which is sufficient to induce the movements we witness in the table experimented on. [148]

The inertia of the table is as thoroughly destroyed by the amount of force thus brought to bear upon it, as if a more intense force had acted momentarily. The period of suspense which occurs previous to the first movement taking place, is that during which the force communicated by the hand is equally diffused through the table, and the moment this happens, as no body can be set in motion until the motion has been imparted to every integral particle of that body, a slight additional force will be sufficient to overcome the resistence of surrounding media, and cause it to change its position. Hence a comparatively slight force exercised over a long period will not unfrequently induce effects equal to those caused by a greater degree of force exercised during a short period of time.

We often witness the practical application of this principle. If we observe two men endeavouring to move a railway carriage upon the line, we shall notice that they do not at the first exert all their strength in one powerful, and what would probably prove exhaustive and futile, effort, but placing their backs against the carriage, they will push with a continuous and gradually increasing effort for several seconds, or even longer, when a slight movement will be perceived in the carriage, and a slight additional exercise of force will set it in motion. So also, as [149] we have seen in quarries, when several men have endeavoured to move a large mass of stone with a lever, they have not used one long and powerful effort, but a succession of slighter ones, until a tremulous motion has been seen in the mass, when by one exertion of force they have hurled it from its place.

The degree of pressure exercised by any given persons will be in the inverse ratio of the degree of control which they can exercise over the muscular system, and over their ideas; hence the phenomena of table-turning and table-talking are most fully developed by those who are possessed of but a low degree of volitional power, and in whom the passions and emotions are paramount, as in young females, boys, or those who are influenced by certain dominant ideas: and as these conditions vary in different persons to an almost endless extent, it would follow that the power of exciting the movements of the table and responses, as well as the nature and degree of the responses, would vary in a similar degree, which is found to be the case; and the rule of response is, as one of the supporters of the Satanic theory (the Rev. N. S. Godfrey) very naïvely remarks, "whatever the investigator wishes it to be."

The directive force in the phenomena of table-moving is derived from certain habitual actions [150] of the muscles, as in the direction from right to left, from the customary use of the right hand; and the influence which our ideas exercise upon the muscular system, unwittingly and involuntarily on our part.

This, as well as the preceding remarks, are all capable of being experimentally illustrated and demonstrated; and Professor Faraday,[57] by a rigorous series of experiments, has shown that it is upon these principles that the phenomena depend.

By the use of a most ingenious and simple piece of mechanism connected with an index, he showed the extent to which we exercise a certain degree of force and directive power unconsciously, and the nature of this directive power; and the result was:—

"That when the parties saw the index it remained very steady; when it was hidden from them, or they looked away from it, it wavered about, though they believed that they always pressed directly downwards; and when the table did not move, there was still a resultant hand-force in the direction in which it was wished the table should move, which, however, was exercised quite unwittingly by the party operating. This resultant it is which, in the course of the waiting-time, [151] while the fingers and hands become stiff, numb, and insensible by continued pressure, grows up to an amount sufficient to move the table or the substances pressed upon. But the most valuable effect of this test-apparatus is the corrective power it possesses over the mind of the table-turner. As soon as the index is placed before the most earnest, and they perceive—as in my presence they have always done—that it tells truly whether they are pressing downwards only or obliquely, then all effects of table-turning cease, even though the parties persevere, earnestly desiring motion, till they become weary and worn-out. No prompting or checking of the hand is heeded; *the power is gone;* and this only because the parties are made conscious of what they are really doing mechanically, and so are unable unwittingly to deceive themselves."

An experiment is familiar to many persons by which a ring, being suspended by means of a piece of thread to one of the fingers, may be caused to beat responses against a glass surface (as that of a tumbler), in answer to certain queries put audibly; or, if the ring be held by the questioner, it is requisite merely that the questions be conceived mentally. This, to many, a puzzling phenomenon is dependent upon precisely the same cause as "table-talking"—a movement caused by muscular action developed unconsciously under the influence of certain [152]

ideational states of the mind.

It is an interesting fact, that a species of divination is mentioned by Ammianus Marcellinus, in which a ring, used after the above fashion, and a table, consecrated by mystic rites, were used. We are indebted to the Rev. J. W. Thomas, of Dewsbury, for the following quotation from the works of this author, who lived about the middle of the fourth century. The quotation is taken from the first chapter of the twenty-ninth book ("Construximus, magnifici judices, ad cortinæ similitudinem Delphicæ," &c.):—

"Noble judges, this unfortunate little table which you see, we constructed of laurel-rods with fearful rites (or ill-omened signs), after the likeness of the Delphic tripod; and (it having been) virtually consecrated with imprecations of mystic incantations (secret hymns), and many splendid and long-continued preparations, we at length used (*lit.* moved) it; and of using (moving) it, as often as it was consulted about secret things, this was the method. It was placed in the middle of a clean house, with a round plate made of divers metallic materials, correctly (*lit.* purely) put upon it, on whose extreme circumference the twenty-four letters of the alphabet were learnedly engraven, separated by spaces accurately measured. A person [gifted] with ceremonial science [153]
stood at it, clothed in linen garments, his feet in linen socks, a wreath round his head, bearing branches of a lucky tree, a fortunate omen having been obtained from the deity who is the author of predictions, by hymns conceived (Apollo); weighing with scales a pensile ring, formed (or furnished) with very fine Carpathian thread, consecrated with mystic rites, which (or who) by distinct intervals falling by leaps on every letter retained, makes heroic verses agreeing with (or answering to) the interrogatories, to the completed numbers and metres, such as the Delphic ones are read, or those given by the oracles of the Branchidæ. Thus then to those who inquired of us who should succeed to the present imperial government, for being swept in every part [as] it has been mentioned, and the ring leaping touched (went through) two syllables, ΘEO; with the addition of the last letter (last additional letter), one present cried out 'Theodorus!' (as the name portended) by the decree of fate (by castal necessity)."

This paragraph embodies the defence of one Hilarius, who, together with a certain Patricius, was charged with having spread abroad prophecies adverse to the throne of the Emperor Valens.

A correspondent of "Notes and Queries" (Vol. IX., p. 201) quotes the following interesting [154]
passage from the "Apologeticus" of Tertullian, cap. xxiii.: ("Porro si et magi phantasmata," &c.):—

"Moreover, if magical professors also exhibit phantoms and defame the souls of the departed; if they press oracles out of childrens' talk; if they play many miracles with mountebank tricks, and if they send dreams, having once the power assisting them, of inviting angels and demons, *by whom*, and she-goats, *and tables, they were accustomed to divine;* how much more, &c."

The correspondent remarks: "Here table-divination, by means of angels and demons, seems distinctly alluded to. How like the modern system! The context of this passage, as well as the extract itself, will suggest singular coincidence between modern and ancient pretensions of this class."

The sense of *touch* rarely leads to illusions which are referred to the supernatural, except under the influence of powerful superstitious feelings, when it is generally connected with illusions of the other senses.

The influence of fear in developing illusions of the senses of sight, hearing, and touch, has been well pourtrayed in Beaumont and Fletcher's comedy of "The Beggar's Bush" (Act V, Scene 1):

Boor. Mistress, it grows somewhat pretty and dark. [155]

Gertrude. What then?

Boor. Nay, nothing. Do not think I am afraid,
Although, perhaps, you are.

Ger. I am not. Forward!

Boor. Sure but you are. Give me your hand; fear nothing.
There's one leg in the wood; do not fall backwards!
What a sweat one on's are in; you or I!
Pray God it do not prove the plague. Yet sure
It has infected me; for I sweat too:
It runs out at my knees. Feel, feel, I pray you!

Ger. What ails the fellow?

Boor. Hark! hark! I beseech you:
Do you hear nothing?

Ger. No.

Boor. List! a wild hog;
He grunts! now 'tis a bear; this wood is full of 'em!
And now a wolf, mistress; a wolf! a wolf!
It is the howling of a wolf.

Ger. The braying of an ass, is it not?

Boor. Oh, now one has me!
Oh my left ham! farewell!

Ger. Look to your shanks,
Your breech is safe enough; the wolf's a fern-brake.

Boor. But see, see, see! there is a serpent in it!
'T has eyes as broad as platters; it spits fire!
Now it creeps tow'rds us; help me and say my prayers!
'T hath swallowed me almost; my breath is stopt:
I cannot speak! Do I speak, mistress?—tell me.

Ger. Why thou strange timorous sot, canst thou perceive
Anything i' th' bush but a poor glowworm.

Boor. It may be 'tis but a glowworm now; but 'twill
Grow to a fire-drake presently.

Ger. Come then from it!
I have a precious guide of you, and courteous,
That gives me leave to lead myself the way thus. [*Holla.*

Boor. It thunders; you hear that now?

Ger. I hear one holla.

[156]

Boor. 'Tis thunder! thunder! see a flash of lightning
Are you not blasted, mistress? Pull your mask off;
'T has play'd the barber with me here: I have lost
My beard, my beard! Pray God you be not shaven;
'T will spoil your marriage, mistress.

Ger. What strange wonders fear fancies in a coward!

Boor. Now the earth opens!

Ger. Prithee hold thy peace.

We have now glanced at the principal illusions to which the senses of sight and hearing are liable, and the bearing which they have on the subject of spectral apparitions and other phenomena which it has been customary to regard as manifestations of the supernatural.

But a false appreciation of sensations excited by natural objects is not the only mode in which we are liable to be deceived, for we are apt to regard sensations excited by the action of the mind, or by a disordered condition of the nervous system, or both combined—subjective sensations—as sensations excited by natural objects—objective sensations.

To the erroneous perceptions arising from this source the term *hallucination* has been given, and the phantasmata to which they give rise are more important than those arising from illusions, since the judgment is often unable to correct them, and they may impose equally on the wisest and the most ignorant.

[157]

It is a law in physiology that a nerve of special sensation, (including in that term its central as well as its peripheral terminations,) in whatever manner it may be excited, can only produce that sensation to which it is appointed. Thus the nerve of sight, whether it be excited by natural or artificial light, or mechanical stimulus from without, or by morbid changes within, can only give rise to the sensation of light; the nerve of hearing, sound; the nerve of smell, odours; and so on.

If the ball of the eye is pressed upon (say by the finger at the inner angle) when the eyelids are closed, or the light otherwise excluded, certain luminous figures will be perceived. This arises from the pressure exciting the inner coat of the eye (the *retina*), which is formed principally by the expansion of the nerve of light (the *optic nerve*), and is the tissue in which the changes necessary for the production of the sensation of light are induced by the rays of light from without.

The luminous figures caused by mechanical excitation of this, the peripheral termination of the nerve of sight, vary in intensity in different individuals and at different times. They are sometimes very brilliant, and have been observed to be iridescent. In form they are circular, radiating, or regularly divided into squares, which have been compared by Purkinje to the figures produced by the vibrations communicated to a fine powder scattered on a plate of glass, along one edge of

[158]

which a violin-bow is drawn; or to the rhomboidal figures formed on the surface of water in a glass, thrown into vibration by the same means.

A familiar illustration of the excitation of a sensation of light by mechanical stimulus is the brilliant sparks of light, starlike figures, &c., caused by a blow on the eye, or by a fall on the head.

A sensation of light may also be caused by the passage of a current of electricity through the eyeball; by mental emotion, as grief, passion, &c.; and by a morbid state of the brain or optic nerve. It is often also induced by a disordered state of the health, and under this condition the luminous appearance occasionally assumes a bluish, green, yellow, or even red tint.

When an excess of blood is determined in the vessels of the eye, either from position or other cause, a luminous arborescent figure is occasionally observed in the field of vision on entering a dark apartment. This, according to Purkinje, is due to pressure on the retina by the distended blood-vessels. A luminous spot is also sometimes observed isochronous with the pulse.

In ourselves, in ordinary health a lambent bluish coloured cloud of light constantly floats before the eyes in a darkened apartment; and there are probably few who would not perceive a greater [159] or less sensation of light on being shut up in profound darkness.

On the spontaneous appearance of light in the field of vision when it is darkened, Müller, the distinguished Prussian physiologist, writes:—"If we observe the field of vision, keeping the eyes closed, it occasionally happens that we perceive not only a certain degree of luminousness, but further, that we discover a more marked glimmering of light, affecting even, in certain cases, the form of circular waves, which are developed from the centre towards the periphery, where they disappear. Sometimes the faint light resembles a nebulosity, spots, and more rarely, in myself, it is reproduced with a certain rhythm. To this spontaneous appearance of light in the eye, which is always very vague, are related the more clearly delineated forms which show themselves at the moment we are about to fall asleep, and which depend upon the influence of the imagination isolating the nebulous glimmerings one from the other, and clothing them with more distinct forms."[58]

The degree to which this sensation of light is produced in health, and the power which the [160] imagination has over it, vary greatly in different individuals.

Müller writes:—

"I had occasion, in 1828, to converse with Göethe upon this subject, which had an equal interest for both of us. Knowing that when I was tranquilly extended in bed, the eyes closed, but not asleep, I frequently perceived figures that I could observe distinctly, he was curious to know what I experienced then: I told him that my will had not any influence either upon the production or the metamorphoses of these figures, and that I never distinguished anything symmetrical, anything that had the character of vegetation. Göethe, on the contrary, was able to appoint at will a theme, which afterwards transformed itself, after a fashion apparently involuntary, but always in obedience to the laws of harmony and symmetry: a difference between two men, of which one possessed the poetical imagination in the highest degree of development, whilst the other devoted his life to the study of reality and of nature.

"Göethe says, 'When I close the eyes, on lowering the head, I imagine that I see a flower in the middle of my visual organ; this flower does not for a moment preserve its form: it is quickly decomposed, and from its interior are born other flowers with coloured or sometimes green [161] petals; these are not natural flowers, but fantastic, nevertheless regular, figures, such as the roses of sculptors. It was impossible for me to regard this creation fixedly, but it continued as long as I wished, without increasing or diminishing. Even when I figured to me a disc charged with various colours, I saw continually borne from the centre towards the circumference, new forms comparable to those that I could perceive in a kaleidoscope."[59]

Illusions arising from the production of the sensation of light, whether by pressure, mental emotion, or a disordered state of the health, have been a most prolific source of ghosts.

Imagine a person suffering from severe grief occasioned by the loss of a friend or relative; or one subject to superstitious terrors. On retiring to rest in a darkened apartment, the attention is attracted and wonder raised by the appearance of a cloud of pale white, or blueish coloured light (the colours which ghosts love to deck themselves in, and which are most readily excited) floating before the eyes. Unacquainted with its nature and source, he is naturally startled, and his superstitious fears are awakened. The imagination next coming into play, the luminous cloud is [162] moulded into the form of the person recently dead, or of the superstitious ideas most prominent in the mind of the individual at the time.

Or suppose a superstitious person passing, in the obscurity of the night, a place where some foul crime had been perpetrated. Terror gives rise to the production of a vivid sensation of light in the field of vision, and the imagination, as in the previous case, works out the rest.

The following cases are examples of the influence which the spontaneous appearance of light in the field of vision exercises in the development of spectral apparitions.

A gentleman who had lost his wife from a painful and protracted disease, for some time subsequently was troubled by her phantom, which remained before his eyes so long as he was in obscurity. On a light being brought, or during the day, this spectre vanished, but no sooner was he placed in darkness than it appeared vividly limned before him, and was a source of constant terror.[60]

This phantom was evidently due to the production of the sensation of light in the field of vision, and the subsequent effects of the imagination.

A gentleman with whom we are acquainted happened, when young, to have a severe fall on the [163]
head. After this accident and until he attained the age of eleven years, he was subject to visions of brilliant and variously coloured light, when he retired to bed at night, and all light in his room had been extinguished. Occasionally these visions were so gorgeous and resplendent that he is accustomed to compare them to the jewelled decorations of the palaces of the genii in the Arabian Nights' Entertainment. When about eleven years of age he got possession of a volume of legends and romances, which were pregnant with supernatural events and personages; and a friend injudiciously gave him a work full of ghost-stories, and entitled, "News from the Invisible World." These works he read with avidity, and the effect upon the mind was such that henceforth his nightly visions were transformed into foul, horrid, and often variously coloured spectres, rendering the period of time intervening between retiring to rest and sleep, one of unmitigated terror, and it became necessary to have a light constantly burning in the room until sleep occurred. After the twelfth year the intensity of the visions rapidly diminished, and at length only occurred when he turned himself upon his face in bed. In this position a sensation as if the bed had passed from under him occurred, and his eye formed the centre of a circle of imps which [164]
whirled rapidly round it. The number of these spectres next began to diminish, and by the time he was fifteen years of age, but one remained, and this appeared only occasionally. This solitary spectre gradually lost its fiend-like form, and assumed that of a respectable-looking old Roman, clothed in a toga; and it at length vanished to re-appear no more.

This gentleman has for many years been free from any spectral apparition; but hard study, mental emotion, a disordered state of the health, or pressure with the finger on the eyeball, is apt to occasion a brilliant evolution of coloured light in the field of vision.

The spontaneous appearance of light in the visual field, in this case, formed the substratum upon which the mind moulded the spectres; and it is interesting to remark the influence which the perusal of a volume of legends and ghost-stories, and subsequent classical studies, had in determining the form of the phantasma.

To the same cause—the subjective phenomena of vision—are due the various coloured lights or luminous appearances which, in the experiments of Reichenbach, the believers in animal magnetism, mesmerism, and electro-biology, are supposed to have been seen issue, by the "susceptible," from the poles of magnets placed in darkened apartments, from so-called [165]
magnetised bodies, or from bodies placed in the conditions which the respective theories demand.

All the sensations of light that are experienced under these circumstances, and which have been sought to be explained by the assumption of the "od" force, or by the influence of magnetism, &c., are dependent on that excitation of a sensation of light in the eye when plunged into darkness, or when under certain mental emotions which we have fully explained.

This has been demonstrated by positive experiment; for if we take any of the "susceptibles," and, indeed, others, and place them in a darkened apartment, we may by simple suggestions excite all the luminous sensations attributed to the supposititious "od" force, or to "animal magnetism."

The luminous appearances which certain "sensitives" have averred that they witnessed over graves, were due also to the subjective phenomena of vision, excited by an expectant idea.

A young clergyman named Billing, who acted as an amanuensis to Pfeffer, the blind poet, asserted that he constantly saw, at night, a luminous cloud resting in one position in the poet's garden; and on search being made beneath the surface of the ground, at the spot occupied by [166]
this phantasm, the remains of a skeleton were found.

Reichenbach concluded from this that the process of decomposition of a corpse going on in the grave, probably like what is observed in other forms of chemical action, gave rise to luminous appearances which were visible to highly "sensitive" persons.

"It appeared possible," he writes, "that such a person might see over graves in which mouldering bodies lie, something similar to that which Billing had seen. Mademoiselle Reichel had the courage, rare in her sex, to gratify this wish of the author. On two very dark nights she allowed herself to be taken from the Castle of Reisenberg, where she was living with the author's family, to the neighbouring churchyard of Grunzing. The result justified his anticipation in the most beautiful manner. She very soon saw a light, and observed on one of the graves, along its length, a delicate breathing flame; she also saw the same thing, only weaker, on a second grave. But she saw neither witches nor ghosts. She described the fiery appearance as a shining vapour, one to two spans high, extending as far as the grave, and floating near its surface. Sometime afterwards she was taken to two large cemeteries near Vienna, where several burials occur daily, [167] and graves lie about by thousands. Here she saw numerous graves provided with similar lights. Wherever she looked she saw luminous masses scattered about. But this appearance was most vivid over the newest graves, while on the oldest it could not be perceived. She described the appearance less as a clear flame than as a dense vaporous mass of fire, intermediate between fog and flame. On many graves the flame was four feet high, so that when she stood on them it surrounded her up to the neck. If she thrust her hand into it, it was like putting it into a dense fiery cloud. She betrayed no uneasiness, because she had all her life been accustomed to such emanations, and had seen the same, in the author's experiments, often produced by natural causes."[61]

The total neglect of those precautions which are requisite to obviate the influence of expectant ideas and the subjective phenomena of vision in this experiment is most strange, and it is painful to witness men like Reichenbach, Gregory, and others, thus stumbling over some of the simplest facts of physiology and psychology, and utterly prostituting the name and calling of science.

Singular and fallacious as are the pseudo-scientific doctrines just mentioned, they are exceeded [168] by the extraordinary speculations of other writers, who also appear to hold in utter contempt the ordinary laws of action of the senses. For example, Mrs. Crowe writes of the sensation of light perceived by somnambules and dreamers, and of the still more simple phenomenon of the sensation of light induced by the inhalation of ether, in the following manner:—

"All somnambules of the highest order,—and when I make use of this expression, I repeat that I do not allude to the subjects of mesmeric experiments, but to those extraordinary cases of disease, the particulars of which have been recorded by various continental physicians of eminence,—all persons in that condition describe themselves as hearing and seeing, not by the ordinary organs, but by some means the idea of which they cannot convey further than that they are pervaded by light; and that this is not the *ordinary* physical light is evident, inasmuch as they generally see best in the dark,—a remarkable instance of which I myself witnessed.

"I never had the slightest idea of this internal light till, in the way of experiment, I inhaled the sulphuric ether; but I am now very well able to conceive it; for, after first feeling an agreeable warmth pervading my limbs, my next sensation was to find myself—I cannot say in this heavenly [169] light, for the light was in *me*—I was pervaded by it; it was not perceived by my eyes, which were closed, but perceived internally, I cannot tell how. Of what nature this heavenly light was—I cannot forbear calling it *heavenly*, for it was like nothing on earth—I know not,"[62] &c.

The sense of *hearing*, like that of sight, in whatever manner it may be excited, only gives rise to the sensation of sound; *e.g.*, when an electric current is passed through it, or a severe blow is struck upon it, and causes it "to ring," as it is expressed in common parlance. The rushing and other sounds—as of the ringing of bells, rustling of leaves, &c.—caused by a disordered state of the circulation in the head, are other examples; and there are perhaps few persons who have not at some time or other, started, and responded to their name, or to calls which they suppose they have heard, in the voice of persons who were at a distance, or who had not spoken.

A similar excitation of the nerves of *taste* and *smell* will also give rise to their special sensations; but disorder of these nerves and their centres will rarely excite hallucinations, except in connection with a disturbed condition of the senses of sight and hearing. [170]

Such are the simplest forms of hallucination of the senses of sight, hearing, taste, and smell; and we have seen that all the phenomena of light, colour, sound, taste, and smell, can occur in man without the presence of natural or artificial light, sonorous undulations of the air, sapid or odorous substances.

We are now in a position to comprehend more fully that, by the action of the imagination and

emotions alone, the changes going on in the nervous centres may be so far disturbed that the whole of those sensations which are generally excited by agents external to the body may be called into play, and the mental idea assume, in light, colour and shade, sound, taste and touch, all the distinctness and definitiveness which appertains to an actual object within the sphere of the respective senses, and be considered as such.

If the mind revert to any of the varied sensations which are stored up in the memory, and are within the power of the will to recall, an image is conjured up before the "mind's eye," such that we can describe it as though a real object stood before us; and if it be that of a person—a parent, a friend, or one bound by even still stronger ties—every lineament, every peculiarity, is depicted with a fidelity but little less than that we should be capable of were the individual actually [171] present before us; or should it be a scene which has been treasured up for its grandeur, its loveliness, or for its being endeared to us by still stronger feelings, every characteristic feature, every object, is minutely and truly described; and did we possess the power of limning, not unfrequently we should find little difficulty in transferring the mental image to the canvass. "I think I see him now"—"She might be before me"—"I can call to mind every tree and stone, so vivid is the memory"—are forms of expression in constant use, and they contain the germ of the simplest form of ideal hallucination to which we are subject.

Under the influence of love, grief, remorse, or other powerful and protracted emotion, the ideas upon which the mind is concentrated assume a vividness, in many persons little short of the reality; and when Victorian, addressing Preciosa in the "Spanish Student" (Act I, Scene 3), is represented as saying:—

> "Thou comest between me and those books too often;
> I see thy face in everything I see;
> The paintings on the chapel wear thy looks,
> The canticles are changed to sarabands;
> And with the learned doctors of the schools,
> I see thee dance cachucas;"

he makes use of no exaggerated poetical tropes or figures, but speaks the simple fact.[63] [172]

A painful illustration of the vividness of the mental image under powerful emotion is afforded by a passage in "The Dream" of Lord Byron, in which he describes the images of the object and scenes of his youthful and only love, that occupied his mind, and rendered him insensible to the ceremony of his marriage until he was aroused from his abstraction by the congratulations of the bystanders.

> "He spoke
> The fitting vows, but heard not his own words,
> And all things reel'd around him; he could see
> Not that which was, nor that which should have been,—
> But the old mansion, and the accustom'd hall,
> And the remember'd chambers, and the place,
> The day, the hour, the sunshine, and the shade,
> All things pertaining to that place and hour,
> And her who was his destiny, came back,
> And thrust themselves between him and the light."

The protracted devotion of the thoughts to the memory of those whom the grave has severed from us, or from whom we are separated by distance, and which is induced by grief, gives also to the mental image great vividness. Exquisitely beautiful and true is the sentence placed in the [173] mouth of Constance, when blamed for the grief she entertained on being separated from Prince Arthur:—

> "Grief fills the room up of my absent child,
> Lies in his bed, walks up and down with me;
> Puts on his pretty looks, repeats his words,
> Remembers me of all his gracious parts,
> Stuffs out his vacant garments with his form:
> Then have I reason to be fond of grief."

In direct proportion to the concentration of the mind in the contemplation of its own actions, is the brilliancy and distinctness of the ideas which pass athwart it; and in the state of abstraction or of reverie, when from intense meditation, or from mere inactivity, the sensations derived from surrounding objects are not attended to, the ideas are so defined that they differ but little from actual objects in the sensations they excite. So also in sleep, if, from any cause, physical or mental, we are roused into a state of semi-consciousness, as in dreaming, the phantasms of former events, stored up in the memory, and by certain sensations or trains of thought thrown to

the surface, differ in no respect—light, colour, shade, or sound—from the sensations derived from the objects represented.

Should, therefore, the concentration of the mind upon any subject be such as to disturb the [174] natural functions of the brain, the mental image is liable to excite sensations, and to be pourtrayed with a distinctness and "outness" which approximates to, or equals, that of a real object, and it is regarded as such.

In the majority of individuals the concentration and intensity of feeling necessary for the production of hallucinations is of rare occurrence, and it is found only under such conditions as profound grief caused by death under painful or peculiar circumstances; from terror, excited by causes bringing powerful superstitious feelings into play—under which circumstances the hallucinations induced are generally transitory—or by emotions inordinately protracted; hence it is that we find visions of the dead among the most common of the temporary hallucinations. In the studious, and men of powerful thought, the mind being habituated to absorption in its own ideas, it not unfrequently happens that hallucinations occur from a disordered state of the brain induced by continued mental labour. These hallucinations are generally very vivid, and may arise either voluntarily or involuntarily, and may become habitual without the health being seriously disturbed.

It will be seen, therefore, that the action of the mental powers alone is sufficient to give rise to sensations which are regarded as resulting from actual objects; and that from the simple [175] vividness of the mental image, which is common to most persons, we may trace their effects, in a gradually ascending scale, in inducing mental conditions in which the brilliancy of the image is such that, for the time, it completely occupies the attention, and shuts out, as it were, the sensations derived from objects before the field of vision,—and in the formation of ideas so vivid and defined, that they take their position among surrounding, and excite the sensations proper to external, objects.

We have thus far spoken of the effects of the imagination on the healthy frame, but in certain disordered conditions of the nervous system, occurring either alone, or in connection with other and more general morbid alterations in the economy, hallucinations are more apt to occur than in health. The system in this state is more susceptible of the effects of emotion, and the images arising in the mind are more vivid than would happen from the same degree of excitement in health, and are readily converted into hallucinations. This is witnessed in certain forms of hysteria, febrile diseases, &c.; hence, in these disordered conditions of the system, the hallucinations are not to be attributed to the action of the mind, so much as to a morbid susceptibility to undergo those changes requisite to the production of hallucinations; and these [176] are, consequently, induced by grades of emotion and by influences which would not have caused that in ordinary health.

On the other hand, the action of the mind in the development of hallucinations equally induces certain diseased states, either special or general. Even simple and temporary hallucination, in whatever manner caused, must be regarded as an indication that the changes going on in the nervous centres have passed the bounds of health; and according as the causes inducing hallucinations are more or less protracted, or the hallucinations are more or less persistent or frequent, so we may mark a greater or less deterioration in the mental powers, the nervous or the general system, or indications of more acute disease, to progress along with them, until the acme is reached in insanity, idiocy, or some more rapidly progressive and equally formidable disease.

To illustrate these remarks: Blake, the artist, who, after the death of Sir Joshua Reynolds, enjoyed great fame as a portrait-painter, owed his celebrity, in great part, to the singular fact that he required but one or, at the most, two sittings, from those whose portraits he painted. He was accustomed to regard the person who sat to him attentively for about half an hour, sketching from time to time on the canvas, and he would then pass on to another subject. When he wished [177] to continue the first portrait, on placing the canvas before him, he had the power of calling up so vivid a mental image of the personage, the outline of whose face was depicted upon it, that it assumed all the appearance of reality, and he perceived it in the position in which he required it to be. From this phantasm he painted, turning from the canvas and regarding it as he would have done had the representative of the phantom been there in person. By degrees he began to lose the distinction between the real and the imaginary objects, and at length a complete confusion of the mind occurred, rendering it necessary for him to be confined in an asylum. During his residence there, his insanity was marked by an exaggeration of that vivid power of imagination he had possessed previously; for he at will could summon before him the phantoms of any of the personages of history, and he held long and sensible conversations with Michael Angelo, Moses, Semiramis, Richard III, &c., all of whom appeared to him, when he desired, in the vivid hues and

distinct outlines of reality.

Talma, the great French tragedian, had the power, when upon the stage, of causing the vestments of his audience to disappear, and of depicting them as skeletons. When the hallucination was complete, and he had filled the theatre with these ghastly auditors, he was [178] enabled to give the fullest and most surprising force to his performance.

Examples of the influence of powerful and protracted emotions in inducing hallucinations are numerous. Dr. Conolly relates the case of a gentleman who, when at one time in great danger of being wrecked in a small boat on the Eddystone rocks, in the moment of greatest peril saw his family before him.

M. Boismont quotes the case of a world-known general who, when in a combat one day, was surrounded by the enemy, and in so great danger that escape seemed impossible. He, nevertheless, contrived to escape; but the impression made upon him was such, that afterwards, until a late period of life, he occasionally suffered from an hallucination in which the scene of danger was again presented before him and re-enacted; and when subsequently on a throne, sometimes the silence of the palace would be disturbed by his cries, as he struggled and fought with his phantom foes. The hallucination was momentary.

The intense emotion which Sir Richard Croft experienced on being summoned to attend the Princess Charlotte of Wales on her death-bed was such, that he saw her form, habited in white, [179] glide along before his carriage.

A case is related by Boismont of a lady who, while suffering from the depression occasioned by receiving information that her daughter was seriously ill, heard a voice which addressed to her the words, "Lovest thou me?" The lady responded immediately, "Lord, thou knowest that I have placed all my confidence in thee, and that I love thee with all my soul." The voice then said, "Dost thou give her to me?" The lady trembled with fear, but summoning courage, she replied, "However painful the sacrifice may be, let Thy will be accomplished." This lady was deeply pious, and the hallucination arose from the powerful and painful emotion caused by the sudden news of her daughter's illness, inducing that disordered state of the nervous system, in which the thoughts naturally engendered in one who submitted everything to the Almighty, became audible.

The combined influence of love and sorrow has been a powerful source of hallucinations, and many of those wild and beautiful legends and tales which are scattered throughout the kingdom, recording the apparition of a deceased or distant lover to his betrothed, have been due to this cause.

Thus, as in the old ballad:— [180]

"When it was grown to dark midnight,
  And all were fast asleep,
In came Margaret's grimly ghost,
  And stood at William's feet."

Or in the story of "Isabella," by Boccacio, so beautifully rendered by Keats:—

"It was a vision. In the drowsy gloom,
  The dull of midnight, at her couch's foot
Lorenzo stood, and wept: the forest tomb
  Had marr'd his glossy hair, which once could shoot
Lustre into the sun, and put cold doom
  Upon his lips, and taken the soft lute
From his lorn voice, and past his loamed ears
Had made a miry channel for his tears.

Strange sound it was, when the pale shadow spoke;
  For there was striving in its piteous tongue,
To speak as when on earth it was awake,
  And Isabella on its music hung:
Languor there was in it, and tremulous shake,
  As in a palsied Druid's harp unstrung;
And through it moaned a ghostly under-song,
Like hoarse night-gusts sepulchral briers among.

Its eyes, though wild, were still all dewy bright
  With love, and kept all phantom fear aloof
From the poor girl by magic of their light,
  The while it did unthread the horrid woof
Of the late darken'd time—the murd'rous spite
  Of pride and avarice—the dark pine roof
In the forest—and the sodden turfed dell,

When, without any word, from stabs it fell.

Saying moreover, "Isabel, my sweet!
  Red whortle-berries droop above my head,
And a large flint-stone weighs upon my feet;
  Around me beeches and high chesnuts shed
Their leaves and prickly nuts; a sheep-fold bleat [181]
  Comes from beyond the river to my bed:
Go shed one tear upon my heather-bloom,
And it shall comfort me within the tomb.

"I am a shadow now, alas! alas!
  Upon the skirts of human nature dwelling
Alone: I chaunt alone the holy mass,
  While little sounds of life are round me knelling,
And glossy bees at noon do fieldward pass,
  And many a chapel bell the hour is telling,
Paining me through: those sounds grow strange to me,
And thou art distant in humanity."

Some of these apparitions have, in all probability, been illusions caused by an object indistinctly seen in the pale moonlight, or by an accidental arrangement of the furniture of the apartment, transformed by an imagination devoted to the subject of its own sorrows, or influenced by a vivid dream, into the idea at the moment most prominent in the mind.

The influence of remorse, or of those terrible emotions which accrue to the murderer on the perpetration of the foul deed, in causing hallucinations, is well known.

The ghost of Banquo (Macbeth, Act III, Scene 3) is a type of many wondrous histories:—

"Prythee, see there! Behold! Look! Lo!—How say you?
Why what can I? If thou canst nod, speak too.
If charnel-houses, and our graves, must send
Those that we bury, back, our monuments
Shall be the maws of kites."

Vanderkiste[64] relates the story of a convict who had murdered an overseer, and taken to the [182]
bush:—

"He lived in the woods, and came armed to the huts to demand provisions for some time, but imagined he was continually haunted by the spirit of the man he had murdered. At last he delivered himself up to the authorities, declaring his life a burden. He was seen for days, dogged, as he conceived, by the spectre of his victim, and escaping from tree to tree."

Sir Walter Scott records the story, that the captain of a slaver, in a fit of anger, shot at, and mortally wounded, one of his sailors. As the man was dying, he fixed his eyes upon the captain, and said, "Sir, you have done for me, but I will never leave you." The captain became grave and moody, and some time after he invited the mate into the cabin, and addressing him, said, "I need not tell you, Jack, what sort of hand we have got on board with us. He told me he would never leave me, and he has kept his word. You only see him now and then, but he is always by my side, and never out of my sight. At this very moment I see him. I am determined to bear it no longer, and I have resolved to leave you." Soon after this, the captain, watching an opportunity when he [183]
was unobserved, plunged into the sea: the mate rushed to the side of the ship, and the captain perceiving him, extended his hands upwards, exclaimed; "By ——, Bill is with me now!" and sunk.

One of the most remarkable examples of hallucination arising from the feelings excited by cold-blooded murder is recorded by Boismont:—

"A duellist, who had killed sixteen persons in single combat, was constantly accompanied by their phantoms; they never left him night or day."

The solitary hours of Charles IX were made frightful by the shrieks and cries which had reached him during the massacre of the Eve of St. Bartholomew, and he was haunted for many days subsequent to its occurrence by hideous and bloody faces. Taking Ambrose Paré aside, at one time, he remarked that he wished they had not comprised in the massacre the aged and children.

No cause is, however, so apt to engender hallucinations as religious enthusiasm, or an inordinate or rather fanatical occupation of the mind in the contemplation of religious subjects.

In the saint-visions which are so numerously scattered in the annals of Christian churches and which were so common under the self-denying and ascetic rules of some of the monastic orders, [184]
we have examples; and Spenser's "Hermit" furnishes the type of this species of hallucination:—

"Thence forward by that painfull way they pas
Forth to an hill, that was both steepe and hy;
On top whereof a sacred chapel was,
And eke a little hermitage thereby,
Wherein an aged holy man did lie,
That day and night said his devotion,
Ne other worldly busines did apply:
His name was Heavenly Contemplation;
Of God and goodness, was his meditation.

Great grace that old man to him given had;
For God he often saw from heavens hight:
All were his earthly eien both blunt and bad,
And through great age had lost their kindly sight,
Yet wondrous quick and persaunt was his spright,
As eagles eie, that can behold the sunne."

The Virgin appeared to Ignatius Loyola, and confirming his designs, urged him to the enterprise he had in view for the establishment of the Roman Catholic church on a surer basis. Satan came visibly to Luther and contended with him, sometimes worsting him in argument. Swedenborg beheld in visions the heavenly scenes which his imagination had pourtrayed; while Pascal wrote he beheld an abyss of flames beside his writing-table; and Symeon Stylites conceived that Satan had appeared to him under the form of Jesus Christ, and invited him to ascend to heaven in a chariot drawn by cherubim. Symeon put out his foot to enter the chariot, [185] when the whole vanished; and, as a punishment for his presumption, the offending thigh was affected with an ulcer, which obliged him to rest upon one leg for the remainder of his life.

It is important to comprehend fully the influence of the imagination in developing visions of this nature, particularly in a disordered state of the health, from the important effects which they have exercised and still exercise upon mankind.

The following example is an interesting illustration of the nature and source of these hallucinations:

Some years ago considerable attention was excited in Germany by the publication of a series of visions which a lady of considerable literary attainments and high character had beheld, and for which she believed that she was indebted to divine favour.

The hallucinations which she experienced had first been noted in the fourth year of her age, when one day, as she was dressing a doll, and for greater convenience had placed a large folio Bible beneath her feet, she heard a voice exclaim: "Put the book where you found it!" She did not immediately obey the order, as she saw no one, but in a few moments the mandate was repeated, [186] and she thought some one took hold of her face. This hallucination, according to Dr. Hibbert, is to be regarded as a renovated feeling arising from some prior remonstrances regarding the holy volume; and, we would add, together with the altered sensation experienced in the face, was evidently due to the earlier stages of a disease which occasioned the more fully developed visions. After this period, she devoted herself to the study of the Scriptures; and her labours, in this respect, were incessant and protracted. In her seventh year she saw, when playing, a vision of a clear flame which entered the chamber door, in the centre of which was a strong bright light, described as about the size of a child six years old. This vision endured about half an hour. No other vision is mentioned until the period of her marriage, which proved unfortunate, embittering her life and causing her constantly to meditate on death. It was in this state of mind that the principal visions to which she was subjected occurred. On one occasion, after receiving some ill-treatment from her husband, broken down in spirits, and thinking the Lord had forsaken her, she made a resolution to desist from prayer. On retiring to bed, she repented the decision she had made, and prayed fervently. She awoke in the morning before daybreak, and was surprised to find the room vividly illuminated, and that at the bedside was seated a heavenly figure, in the [187] form of an old man. This phantom was dressed in a blueish robe, and had bright hair; and the countenance shone like the clearest red and white crystal. It regarded her benignantly, and said, "*Proceed, proceed, proceed!*" At first the words were unintelligible to her, but a young and beautiful angel, which appeared on the other side of the bed, exclaimed: "*Proceed in prayer, proceed in faith, proceed in trials!*" After this the devil appeared, pulled her by the hair, and tormented her in other ways, until the angel interfered, and drove him away. Satan in this case assumed his usual hideous garb. Subsequently one of the angels exclaimed, three times: "Lord, this is sufficient;" and while saying these words, the lady beheld large wings on his shoulders, and knew him to be an angel of God. The light and the angels then vanished, and the lady felt eased of her grief, and arose.

If the nature of the figures and the mode of action in these visions had not sufficed to show how

completely they were dependent upon dominant ideas and a disordered state of the nervous system, the history of the case would demonstrate it. The early, protracted, and inordinate study of religious beliefs, similar to that which laid the basis of Swedenborg's visions; the painful state [188] of the mind induced by her unhappy marriage, and disease, were the source of the hallucinations to which she was subject; for it was ascertained that when the visions occurred she always suffered from slight attacks of epilepsy.

Intense and protracted mental exertion frequently gives rise to hallucinations.

A medical gentleman in Edinburgh, while seated one evening in his library, after a period of excessive study, on raising his head, was startled by perceiving at the opposite side of the table the spectre of a gentleman who had died under melancholy circumstances some days previously, and at whose post-mortem examination he had assisted.

That excessive action of the imagination, and consequent absorption of the mind in its own workings, to exclusion of external sensations, which is common in men of genius, has been a fertile source of hallucinations.

In some instances the hallucinations have been "counterfeit presentments" of the ideas which have been most prominent in the mind; in others they have had no relation to that condition.

Spinello, who had painted the Fall of the Angels, thought that he was haunted by the frightful devils which he had depicted. He was rendered so miserable by this hallucination that he destroyed himself. One of our own artists, who was much engaged in painting caricatures, [189] became haunted by the distorted faces he drew; and the deep melancholy and terror which accompanied these apparitions caused him to commit suicide. Müller, who executed the copper-plate of the Sixtine Madonna, had more lovely visions. Towards the close of his life the Virgin appeared to him, and thanking him for the affection he had shown towards her, invited him to follow her to heaven. To achieve this, the artist starved himself to death. Beethoven, who became completely deaf in the decline of life, often heard his sublime compositions performed distinctly.

It is related of Ben Jonson, that he spent the whole of one night in regarding his great toe, around which he saw Tartars, Turks, Romans, and Catholics climbing up, and struggling and fighting. Goëthe, when out riding one day, was surprised to see an exact image of himself on horseback, dressed in a light-coloured coat, riding towards him.

A similar kind of hallucination to this of Goëthe's has been observed as a precursor of certain forms of insanity, and in the delirium of fever.

Boismont records the case of a gentleman who was troubled with a spectral image of himself, which he had the power of calling before him voluntarily. This, for several years, was a source of [190] amusement to him; but by degrees this phantom became more persistent, arose involuntarily, and addressed him. The hallucination then assumed a still graver character, for his double would dispute with him, and often foil him in argument; and coincidently with this phase of the disease the gentleman became melancholy, and he ultimately committed suicide.

The imagination rarely gives rise to hallucinations of the senses of touch, taste, or smell alone. The sweet-smelling odours which are stated to have been experienced during the visions of angels and saints; and the foul and sulphurous fumes which have accompanied apparitions of the infernals, are, however, to be attributed to this cause.

Thus far our illustrations and remarks have been confined to that class of hallucinations which are induced principally by the action of the imagination, mental emotion, or excessive exertion of the reasoning powers.

There is, however, another class of hallucinations dependent upon certain disordered states of the general health and nervous system, which have an important bearing upon the belief in the supernatural.

The simplest forms of hallucination of this class are those occasionally observed during the [191] initiatory stages of some diseases, after the termination of exhausting affections, or during temporary morbid conditions of the brain.

The following examples will illustrate the nature of the hallucinations arising from these sources.

A lady, with whom we are acquainted, was walking early one morning in a lonely and unfrequented path, which was open to the eye for some distance. On approaching its termination, she was surprised to see a lady advancing towards her, dressed in deep mourning, and reading a book. Struck by the peculiar beauty of the lady's face, she turned round to gaze upon her as she passed; but, to her surprise, the figure vanished. Startled and alarmed, she hurried home, and

almost immediately afterwards was seized with shiverings, and suffered from a violent attack of fever, characterised by severe cerebral disturbance. The hallucination in this case was caused by the changes induced in the nervous system by the initiatory stages of the disease.

A young lady recovering from a severe attack of fever, was left in charge of the house during a fine Sunday evening in autumn, the remainder of the family having gone to church. A thunder-storm came on, with heavy rain, and she became very anxious about her aged father. On going [192] into the room generally occupied by the family, there, to her great astonishment, she beheld, as she thought, her father sitting in his usual position. Supposing that he must have returned from church unwell, she advanced, placed her hand upon the semblance, and found nothing. Although startled, she attributed the vision to its proper cause, anxiety and weakness; but though she went in and out of the room several times, the spectre persisted for a considerable period.

A merchant, while sitting in his counting-house, was annoyed by hearing voices outside the door conversing freely respecting his character, and speaking of him as a dishonoured man. Thinking it was some trick of his friends, he quietly opened the door, and was astonished to find no one. On closing it the voices again began in a similar strain; and on re-opening the door he still found no one. Alarmed, he left his office, and proceeded home, but the voices followed him, threatening punishment for imaginary crimes. This hallucination was accompanied by other signs of a disordered state of the brain, and it was not until after a period of entire relaxation from business, and a daily game at cricket, that the phantom-voices ceased.

There are certain formidable disorders of the nervous system in which hallucinations affect all [193] the senses.

The following is an example of the diseases of this class, and it will show the influence which they are liable to exert in the development of certain forms of superstition.

A maiden lady, aged forty years, who from early youth had been of a very susceptible and restless disposition, suffered from hallucinations which persisted for many years.

At first the sight alone was affected, and she saw numerous persons of singular and fantastic form. Subsequently she heard voices, which professed to have taken up their abode in her stomach, and addressed her from thence. These voices tormented her; commanded all her actions; informed her of what took place within the body; gave her instructions upon diseases, and even prescribed for them. The voices gave her information respecting the characters of divers persons, and occasionally endowed her with the power of expressing herself in terms more florid and fluent than she was accustomed to. Often the voices conversed on geography, grammar, rhetoric, &c.; and they would reprove her when she had done amiss. They told her that she was possessed, and although she was not superstitious, and fully recognized the hallucinations she suffered from, she at this time sought a priest to exorcise her, thought much of [194] eternity, and sometimes gave herself up to despair. At one time the voices told her she would become queen; often they conversed with her upon strange, and sometimes even abominable subjects; then they would say things extremely comical, and make her laugh. They would please, and then mock her, and then assail her more violently than ever, and spoil like harpies everything she touched or did. If she took a glass of water, the voices would call out that it was poisoned; and frequently they urged her to destroy herself. When she walked out, if she passed a female, the voices would cry out that she carried musk (the odour of which the lady abominated) and immediately she smelt this odour; if a man passed her, she was affected with the smell of tobacco. The voices often gave her no rest until she did what they liked, and they even ordered her to Paris, to place herself under the care of physicians there.

The visions she suffered from were very singular. Her apartment was filled with persons of all characters and descriptions; numerous processions defiled before her, and some of the figures had but one half the body, a profile, or one eye; they were large or small, and occasionally underwent singular and fantastic changes of form. [195]

The food she took did not possess its natural taste, and the voices often gave unpleasant savours, to prevent her eating.

When she journeyed, she felt as if soaked with water, and she would attempt to wring her clothes.

Addressing one of her physicians, when the malady was fully developed, she said, "I know that it is monomania, but the voices are stronger than my will. I wish you to prescribe for me, it is impossible for me to remain in one place."[65]

This case is an interesting illustration of a form of disease, which, when developed in persons who are subject to religious enthusiasm, has given rise to the belief of possession with devils

(*demonomania*). Instances of this disease are frequently met with in the French asylums.

Many other forms of hallucination occur in insanity, monomania, fever, hysteria, and other diseases, in dreams, and from the influence of certain poisonous substances taken into the system. Some of these hallucinations are of considerable interest, since they have been the prime cause of many superstitions.

In addition to the hallucinations of the hearing already mentioned, in certain diseases, words [196] spoken in the right ear have been heard in the left, and *vice versâ;* and under the influence of opium or haschish (prepared from the Indian hemp), the sense becomes, occasionally, so developed, that a word pronounced low, or a slight movement, sounds like a peal of thunder. Hallucinations of the sight have occasionally presented figures of colossal stature, or of extreme diminutiveness; or the patient has conceived the idea that he was so tall that he was unable to walk erect in a lofty apartment, or so diminutive that he dreaded the movements of any near to him, lest they should do him harm. Pleasant or fetid odours are sometimes constantly present to the smell. Feuchtersleben states the case of a lady who was long haunted with the effluvia as of a charnel-house. The taste is subjected to hallucinations of exquisitely flavoured viands and wines; or the reverse, no food being taken; or everything taken presents one undeviating flavour, which may be pleasant or unpleasant, or it has no taste at all. A sensation of *flying* is not uncommon. Boismont has a friend who frequently experiences this sensation, and it often occurs in dreams. A friend of ours is in the habit of dreaming that he is suspended about a foot above the surface of the earth, and is carried along by simple volition, without movement of the limbs; and St. Jerome [197] states, that often in dreams he flew from the earth over mountains and seas. Our ideas of depth and space are sometimes increased in dreams to an extent that is inexpressible and almost bewildering; and the sensation of falling into an abyss is common to the dreamer. The idea of time is often extended indefinitely; in the space of a single night, days, weeks, years, and even ages, have appeared to elapse. Transformation of the figure is occasionally met with among the hallucinations of insanity; and in the state induced by haschish, the singular and fantastic forms which those under its influence, and the parties surrounding them, have appeared to undergo, are of great interest. "The eyelashes," writes one gentleman, "lengthened themselves indefinitely, and rolled themselves as threads of gold on little ivory bobbins, which turned unassisted, with frightful rapidity.... I still saw my comrades at certain moments, but *deformed*, half men, half plants, with the pensive airs of an ibis standing on one foot, of ostriches flapping their wings, &c."—"I imagined that I was the parroquet of the Queen of Sheba, and I imitated as well as I was able the cries of this praiseworthy bird."

In the state caused by haschish it occasionally also happens that the person under its influence [198] may be caused to speak or act in any manner that is suggested to him. This phenomenon is also seen in dreams; in both conditions the half-awakened mind automatically pursues the train of thought which has been suggested to it either by the voice or by certain sensations.

Lastly, in certain disordered conditions of the system, the person has the power of looking, as it were, into himself, and ascertaining what is going on there, or of extending his sensual powers beyond the bounds of their ordinary sphere, and ascertaining what transpires in other places, or at a distance of many miles (*clairvoyance*). The gentleman from whose experience of the effects of haschish we have already quoted, thought he could look at will into his stomach, and that he saw there, in the form of an emerald, from which escaped millions of sparkles, the drug he had swallowed.

By a careful consideration of the illusions and hallucinations to which we are liable, we obtain a clue to unravel the wild fantasies which constitute the greater part of the most prominent superstitions.

If we reflect on the superstitious ideas which filled the minds of our forefathers, and follow them back, in their deepening intensity, into the middle ages, we can easily imagine how the irregular and fantastic figures which an indistinct and disordered vision gave rise to in the gloom [199] of the night, were transformed into fiends and demons; how spectres, clothed in their horrid white and blue panoply, were seen stalking over the earth, and haunting the murder-stained castle, glade, and forest; how the dimly illuminated mists of the evening and morning shadowed forth the forms of the dead, and the spirits of the waters and the air; how in the mist of Killarney, an O'Donoghue, mounted on his milk-white steed, and attended by a host of fairy forms, swept over the beautiful lake; and a spectral array arose night after night from the bed of the rushing Moldau, and besieged the walls of Prague; how the moonbeams chequering the deep recesses of the woods, and the banks and meadows overhung with foliage, were metamorphised into fairies; how the wind howling among the rocks and mountains, sweeping through the valleys, or whispering amid the trees and about the nooks and corners of the turretted castle and ruinous mansion, bore on its bosom the sounds of spectre-horsemen, demon-hunters, and fiend-like

hounds, or the wail and lamentations of wandering and lost spirits, and the shrieks of the infernals; and how the billows, rushing into the caverns and deep fissures in the cliffs of a rock-bound coast, filled the air with the mysterious and incomprehensible language of the spirits of the deep. [200]

A clue also is obtained to other forms of superstition.

The power which the witch was supposed to possess of transporting herself from place to place, and which those self-deluded wretches themselves believed; and the orgies of the witch-sabbath, which were again and again deposed to, were hallucinations due to a form of insanity—for we may so call it—prevailing at the period, which was determined by the nature of the superstitious beliefs entertained. The real character of this superstition is well shown by an incident which is recorded by Jung-Stilling.

He writes:—"I am acquainted with a tale, for the truth of which I can vouch, because it is taken from the official documents of an old witch-process. An old woman was imprisoned, put to the torture, and confessed all that witches are generally charged with. Amongst others, she also denounced a neighbour of hers, who had been with her on the Blocksberg, the preceding Walpurgis night. This woman was called, and asked if it were true what the prisoner said of her? On which she stated that, on Walpurgis eve she had called upon this woman, because she had something to say to her. On entering her kitchen, she found the prisoner busy in preparing a decoction of herbs. On asking her what she was boiling, she said, with a smiling and mysterious [201] mien, "Wilt thou go with me to the Brocken?" From curiosity, and in order to ascertain what there was in the matter, she answered, "Yes: I should like to go well enough." On which the prisoner chattered some time about the feast, and the dance, and the enormous goat. She then drank of the decoction, and offered it to her, saying: "There, take a hearty drink of it, that thou mayest be able to ride through the air:" she likewise put the pot to her mouth, and made as if she drank of it, but did not taste a drop. During this, the prisoner had put a pitchfork between her legs, and placed herself upon the hearth; that she soon sunk down, and began to sleep and snore: after having looked on for some time, she was at length tired of it, and went home.

The next morning, the prisoner came to her, and said, "Well, how dost thou like being at the Brocken? Sith, there were glorious doings." On which she had laughed heartily, and told her that she had not drunk of the potion, and that she, the prisoner, had not been at the Brocken, but had slept with her pitchfork upon the hearth. That the woman, on this, became angry, and said to her, that she ought not to deny having been at the Brocken, and having danced and kissed the goat." [202] [66]

Gassendi relates an experiment to the same effect. He anointed some peasants with a pomade made of belladonna or opium, persuading them that the operation would convey them to the witch-sabbath. After a profound sleep, they awoke, and told how they had been present at the sabbath, and the pleasures they had enjoyed.

Stupifying and intoxicating drugs were, in all probability, freely used by sorcerers, and in the ancient mysteries, and to their use is to be attributed many of the illusions and hallucinations which are familiar in the details of the practice of the occult sciences.

Jung-Stilling quotes a singularly interesting example of a method of practising one of the most important processes of magic; and an examination of it satisfactory shows the manner in which some of the most striking of the deceptions of that art were brought about, and how it happened that the professor, as well as the student, was equally deluded.

In Eckhartshausen's "Key to Magic" there is an account of a young Scotsman "who, though he meddled not with the conjuration of spirits, and such like charlatanry, had learned, however, a [203] remarkable piece of art from a Jew, which he communicated also to Eckhartshausen, and made the experiment with him,—which is surprising, and worthy of perusal. He that wishes to raise and see any particular spirit, *must prepare himself for it, for some days together, both spiritually and physically*. There are also particular and remarkable requisites and relations necessary betwixt such a spirit and the person who wishes to see it—relations which cannot otherwise be explained, than on the ground of the intervention of some secret influence from the invisible world. After all these precautions, a vapour is produced in a room, from certain materials which Eckhartshausen, with propriety, does not divulge, on account of the dangerous abuse which might be made of it, which visibly forms itself into a figure which bears a resemblance to that which the person wishes to see. In this there is no question of any magic-lantern or optical artifice; but the vapour really forms a human figure, similar to that which the individual desires to behold. I will now insert the conclusion of the story in Eckhartshausen's own words:—

"Some time after the departure of the stranger, that is, the Scotsman, I made the experiment

for one of my friends. He saw as I did, and had the same sensations.

"The observations that we made were these. As soon as the ingredients were thrown into the [204]
chafing-dish, a whitish body forms itself, that seems to hover above the chafing-dish, as large as life.

"It possesses the likeness of the person whom we wished to see, only the visage is of an ashy paleness.

"On approaching the figure, one is conscious of a resistance, similar to that which is felt when going against a strong wind, which drives one back.

"If one speaks with it, one remembers no more distinctly what is spoken; and when the appearance vanishes, one feels as if awakening from a dream. The head is stupified, and a contraction is felt about the abdomen. It is also very singular that the same appearance presents itself when one is in the dark, or when looking upon dark objects.

"The unpleasantness of this sensation was the reason why I was unwilling to repeat the experiment, although often urged to do so by many individuals."[67]

It would be difficult to conceive any more powerful method of inducing hallucinations than that detailed in this instructive and interesting recital. The previous schooling of the imagination, in [205]
order thoroughly to imbue it with the train of ideas requisite for the full development of the phenomenon, and the subsequent intoxication induced by the inhalation of powerful narcotic vapours—an intoxication which, as we have already seen in the example of haschish, is peculiarly apt to the development of hallucinations—will sufficiently account for the illusion of the smoke of the chafing-dish presenting any figure which the mind desires to see. The difficulty which the experimenter experienced in approaching the phantom, and which he compares to the resistance which is felt when contending against a strong wind, was evidently due to the powerful emotion which he experienced depriving him of that control of the voluntary muscles, such as we find in a person paralyzed by fear or astonishment; or perhaps it was rather a feeling similar to that experienced in nightmare, when, whatever effort we may make, we feel almost incapable of motion.

The action of the narcotic vapour alone was sufficient to induce hallucinations; for, persuaded by a very experienced physician, who "maintained that the narcotic ingredients which formed the vapour must of necessity violently affect the imagination, and might be very injurious, according to circumstances," Eckhartshausen made the experiment on himself without previous
preparation; "but," he writes, "scarcely had I cast the quantum of ingredients into the chafing- [206]
dish, when a figure presented itself. I was, however, seized with such a horror, that I was obliged to leave the room. I was very ill during three hours, and thought I saw the figure always before me. Towards evening, after inhaling the fumes of vinegar, and drinking it with water, I was better again; but for three weeks afterwards I felt a debility: and the strangest part of the matter is, that when I remember the circumstance, and look for some time upon any dark object, this ashy pale figure still presents itself very vividly to my sight. After this I no longer dared to make any experiments with it."

The use of intoxicating and stupifying drugs doubtless contributed also to the development of those ideas of strange and wonderful transformations and anomalies of form with which the legends and romances of Oriental and European nations teem. In the examples of hallucinations we have already given from this source, we find the key to the explanation of several of these transformations; and the elaborated supernatural framework of fairy tales, in which men are changed without compunction into inferior animals, trees, or vegetables, has probably had a similar origin.

The state of "clairvoyance," and that condition of the nervous system which is found in certain [207]
diseases, dreams, and under the influence of narcotic poisons, in which, by suggestions, in whatever manner given, certain actions and trains of thought may be excited at the will of the suggestor, is seen also, and may be induced at will in those conditions of the system which are summed up under the terms "mesmerism," "animal magnetism," "electro-biology," &c.; and the theories which have been invented to explain them, and which are expressed in the above names, are not only needless, but inconsistent with the facts observed. The so-called mesmeric and electro-biological trance is strictly allied to certain forms of dreaming; and the whole of the results witnessed may be explained by certain admitted physiological and physical laws of action, and are due to leading trains of thought which are excited by suggestions direct or indirect. As to the higher faculty of prevision claimed in this state, we are not aware that, as yet, a single trustworthy instance has been established.

There is a class of spectral apparitions which differ from those which we have already dwelt

upon, inasmuch as they have appeared to foreshadow, or have occurred coincidently with, the death of an individual; or they have made known events occurring at a distance, or have brought to light things else hidden by the grave. [208]

In the deepening gloom of twilight the seer of Scotland often witnessed the *wraiths* of those who were about to die, wreathed in the ascending mists of the night, troop in ghostly silence before his horror-stricken vision; and the *Bodach Glas* crossed the path of the death-laden Mac Ivor; the *Bodac au Dun*, or Ghost of the Hill, warned the Rothmurchan of approaching calamity; the spectre of the Bloody Hand scared the Kincardines; the *Bodach Gartin* glided in significant horror through the gloomy passages of Gartnibeg House; and the Girl with the Hairy Left Hand —*Manch Monlach*—pointed to the death-bolt about to carry weeping and wailing into the halls of Tulloch Gorus.

The spectral *fetch* shadowed forth in the sister isle the dark course of death; while the Banshee mourned with the frightful accents of the dead over the dying scions of the ancient families. Hovering near the sorrow-laden mansion, her robe flowing wide in the night air, and her tangled tresses borne upon the wind, she cried the keen of another world adown the vaulted passages, and sobbed in ghastly agony her bitter lamentations.

The *Gwrâch y Rhibyn*—Hag of the Dribble—when the night had covered the earth, spread out her leathern-like wings, and flitting before the house of the death-stricken Cambrians, shrieked in harsh, broken, and prolonged tones their names. [209]

In our own land the spectres of all those who would die in the parish during the year might be seen walking in ghostly procession to the church, or entering its portals, by him who would watch, three years consecutively, during the last hour of the night and the first hour of the morning, in the porch, on the Eve of St. Mark, or would kneel and look through the keyhole of the door of the sanctuary at midnight on the Eve of St. John the Baptist.

The *White Lady*, who haunts the ancient castle of the celebrated Bohemian family of Rosenberg-Neuhaus, and who also appears from time to time in the castles of the allied families of Brandenburg, Baden, and Darmstadt,—Trzebon, Islubocka, Bechin, and Tretzen, and even has been seen in Berlin, Bayreuth, and at Carlsrhue is of historical notoriety. Tall of stature, attired in white, and wearing a white widow's veil adorned with ribbons, through the folds of which, and from within her, a faint light has been seen to glimmer, she glides with a modest air through the corridors and apartments of those castles and palaces in which the death of one of her family is about to occur; and she has been seen at other times, and oft, with the aspect and air as though the spirit had a melancholy pleasure in visiting and hovering about her descendants. It is said to [210] be the ghost of one Perchta Von Rosenberg, who was born between A.D. 1420 and 1430, and subsequently married to John Von Lichtenstein, a rich and profligate baron, who so embittered her life that she was obliged to seek relief from her relatives, and she died borne down with the insults and indescribable distress she endured. Among the old paintings of the family of Rosenberg was found a portrait of this lady, attired after the fashion of the times, and bearing an exact resemblance to the "*White Lady*." In December, 1628, she appeared in Berlin, and was heard to exclaim, "Veni, judica vivos et mortuos: judicium mihi adhuc superest!"—"Come, judge the living and the dead; my fate is not yet decided."

The *Klage-weib* (Mourning Woman) when the storm is driving the rift before it, and the moon shines fitfully and faintly on the earth, may be seen stalking along, her gigantic and shadowy form enveloped in dark flowing grave-clothes, her deathlike countenance and deep cavernous eyes freezing the unhappy spectator with horror, while, extending her vast arm, she sweeps it above the cottage marked out by death.

In the Tyrol also, the phantom of a white woman looks in at the window of a house where a person must die. [211]

These are examples of spectral apparitions foreboding death and misfortune, which the lapse of ages and the influence of superstition have invested with a semblance of reality, approximating them in apparent truthfulness to historical facts.

It is a needless, and would be a thankless task, to show how these notions were the legitimate result of the ideas of the supernatural entertained at the period when they were developed; and how when the superstitions once assumed a definite form, the slightest illusion during the period of sickness or calamity, whether observed in the castellated mansion, pregnant generally with deeds of darkness or blood, or in the twilight or the storm of a moon-lit night, were converted into these phantoms;[68] or the imperfectly remembered dream, or its vivid depiction of the superstition, shadowed forth the same.

Scant of romance, and that wild and thrilling medium through which many of our old legends

are seen, we have handed to us numerous business-like stories, some of very recent date, in which the same principles are involved as in the legends we have detailed, and which demand [212] grave attention, from the honest truthfulness with which they are evidently detailed, and the events which they appear to have foreshadowed.

Let us examine some of these instances, and endeavour to ascertain whether they come under the character of illusions or hallucinations; or whether they are to be placed in another category, and to be regarded as the results of supernatural agency, as is most frequently done.

In "Blackwood's Magazine" for 1840, there is a letter which contains the following statement:—

"The 'Hawk' being on her passage from the Cape of Good Hope towards the island of Java, and myself having the charge of the middle watch, between one and two in the morning I was taken suddenly ill, which obliged me to send for the officer next in turn; I then went down on the gun-deck, and sent my boy for a light. In the meanwhile, I sat down on a chest in the steerage, under the after-grating, when I felt a gentle squeeze by a very cold hand; I started, and saw a figure in white; stepping back, I said, 'God's my life! who is that?' It stood and gazed at me a short time, stooped its head to get a more perfect view, sighed aloud, repeated the exclamation 'Oh!' three times, and instantly vanished. The night was fine, though the moon afforded through the gratings but a weak light, so that little of feature could be seen, only a figure rather tall than otherwise, [213] and white-clad. My boy returning now with a light, I sent him to the cabins of all the officers, when he brought me word that not one of them had been stirring. Coming afterwards to St. Helena, homeward-bound, hearing of my sister's death, and finding the time so nearly coinciding, it added much to my painful concern; and I have only to thank God, that when I saw what I now verily believe to have been her apparition (my sister Ann), I did not then know the melancholy occasion of it."

The superstitious feelings which we find pervading the mind of the gentleman relating this incident, and which is evinced by its termination; the circumstances under which the apparition took place, namely, a dim uncertain light, that most favourable to illusion; an attack of indisposition leading to alteration of the natural sensations; and lastly, and most important of all, the after-conclusion arrived at on hearing of the sister's death, and under the influence of which the account was written, and which, it is evident from the nature of the details, gave rise to that definite statement which has been recorded,—all tend to the conclusion that the spectre was an illusion, and that its significance was a phase imparted to it by superstitious feelings alone. [214]

The influence of subsequent conclusions in warping the real history of an event, and giving a definite and precise character to what would otherwise have been vague and inconclusive, as is witnessed in the above story, is one of the most important fallacies pervading ghost-stories. There is no source of self-deception to which we are exposed, more insidious; and it is requisite to keep it constantly in view, not only in relations of this nature, but in the examination of events of any kind whatever. The colouring which facts receive from this source, too often hides their real character; and the reciter is perfectly unconscious of the erroneous light which he casts upon them. Hence the importance of ascertaining the peculiar bias and tendencies of thought which appertain to one who records occurrences upon which important conclusions or theories may be based.

The vicious habit which has been common among the advocates of supernatural visitations, of supporting their opinions upon the assertions of men of known probity and honour, to the complete exclusion of an examination of the sources of delusion and error to which these men were liable from the character of their previous education, habits of thought, associations, &c., and from their imperfect acquaintance with the fallacies to which they may have been exposed, [215] has been a fertile source of error.

A so-called fact is not an abstract truth; it is simply a fact so far as it relates to the assertor, and the credence given to it by others depends upon the extent to which it agrees with their experience, or upon the knowledge that the assertor has by previous study or experience so far diminished the probability of error on the subject to which it relates, that the statement may be received without hesitation.

Another form of ghost-story is that in which the spirit of the dead has been compelled to wander in misery on the earth, for some crime or error, small or great, committed during life, and which, unless it be atoned for or rectified, prevents its eternal repose.

A story of this kind is given by Jung-Stilling, and however absurd it may be in some parts, it is interesting from the precision of its details enabling us to lay hold of a clue to the explanation of the majority of these tales.

In 1756, M. Doerien, one of the proctors of Caroline College, Brunswick, was taken ill and died,

shortly after "St. John's Day" (June 24th). Immediately before his death, he requested to see another of the proctors, M. Hoefer, having some communication of importance to make to him; [216] but before that gentleman arrived, death had taken place. After some time a report became prevalent in the college that the ghost of the deceased proctor had been seen; but as this proceeded merely from the young, little attention had been given to it. At length, in October, upwards of three months after the death of M. Doerien, as M. Hoefer was proceeding on his accustomed nightly round, between the hours of eleven and twelve, in one of the corridors he saw the spectre of that professor, clothed in a common night-gown and white night-cap. This unexpected sight terrified M. Hoefer somewhat, but recollecting that he was in the path of duty, he recovered himself, and advancing to the spectre, endeavoured to examine it by the light of the candle he held in his hand; but such a horror came over him, that he could scarcely withdraw the hand in which he extended the light, and from that moment it was so swollen, "that some months elapsed before it was healed." The following night he was accompanied in his rounds by a philosopher, Professor Oeder, who was rather sceptical on the subject of apparitions; but on approaching the spot in which the spectre had been seen on the previous evening, there they beheld it again in the same position.

Others attempted to gain a sight of the ghost, but it would not manifest itself, not even to MM. [217] Oeder and Hoefer, until the former gentleman, wearied with his useless watching during a somewhat prolonged period, exclaimed, "I have gone after the spirit long enough to please him; if he now wants anything, let him come to me." But what followed? About fourteen days after, when he was thinking about anything else than of ghosts, he was suddenly and rudely awakened, between three and four o'clock in the morning, by some external motion. On opening his eyes, he saw an apparition opposite to the bed, standing by the clothes-press, which was only two paces from it, that presented itself in the same attire as the spirit. He raised himself up, and could then clearly discern the whole face. He fixed his eyes steadfastly upon the phantom, until, after a period of eight minutes, it became invisible.

The next morning he was again awakened about the same time, and saw the same apparition, only with this difference, that the door of the press made a cracking noise, just as if some one leaned upon it. This time the spirit remained longer, so that Professor Oeder spoke to it as follows: "Get thee hence, thou evil spirit; what hast thou to do here?" At these words the phantom made all kinds of dreadful motions, waved its head, its hands, and its feet in such a manner, that [218] the terrified Professor began to pray, "Who trusts in God, &c.," and "God the Father dwell with us, &c.," on which the spirit vanished.

After eight days the spirit again appeared, "but with this difference, that it came from the press directly towards him, and inclined its head over him," whereupon the terrified Professor struck out at it, and the spirit retired; but no sooner had he laid down, than it again advanced, and he, noticing that its aspect was "more in sorrow than in anger," observed it attentively, and saw that the ghost had a short tobacco-pipe in its mouth. This circumstance and the spirit's mild mien induced him to address the ghost, and ask, "Are you still owing anything." He knew beforehand that the deceased had left some debts, and the amount of a few dollars, *which occasioned the inquiry*. The spirit looked attentively at this query; and at length, guided by the tobacco-pipe, when the Professor asked, "Are you perhaps owing something for tobacco?" the spirit retreated and suddenly disappeared. Measures were immediately taken to liquidate the debt which was found to be owing for tobacco.

The next night Professor Seidler remained with Oeder. The spirit again appeared, but not as formerly, at the press, but near it, close to the white wall. It was visible only to Oeder, his brother [219] professor merely seeing "something white." From this night Oeder burnt a night-lamp, and he no longer saw the apparition; but for some nights, at the same time, from three to five, he was troubled with uneasy sensations, and frequently heard a noise at the clothes-press and knocking at the door. By degrees these sensations passed away, and he discontinued the night-lamp; but the second night after, the spectre again appeared "at the accustomed hour, but visibly darker." It had, moreover, a new sign in its hand—"It was like a picture, and had a hole in the centre, into which the spirit frequently put its hand. After long ruminating and inquiring what the deceased might mean by these signs, so much was at length elicited, that a short time before his illness he had taken some paintings in a magic lantern from a picture-dealer on trial, which had not been returned. The paintings were given to the rightful owner, and from that time Oeder continued undisturbed."

In this story we notice, first, that a report was prevalent in the college, that the ghost of M. Doerien had been seen by several persons; and it is but natural to suppose that such a statement would exercise a powerful effect upon the mind of M. Hoefer, who had been placed in the painful position of being summoned to the death-bed of his friend, to receive a communication [220] "necessary to mention to him," but had arrived in time only to witness the death-struggle.

Upwards of three months after the death of M. Doerien, and when M. Hoefer was evidently in a disordered state of health, as is indicated by the swelling of the hand, and subsequent persistence of this swelling for some time, as this gentleman was making his usual rounds by the light of a taper in the dead of night, he witnesses the first apparition in a situation pregnant with associations of the deceased. The apparition may have been an illusion, suggested at first by some outlines indistinctly seen; or it may have been, and it is more probable to have been, an hallucination excited by the association of ideas in a person whose system was in a disordered state.

That connection of ideas, similar or dissimilar, which is acquired by habit or otherwise, so that one of them, in whatever manner we may become conscious of it, will suggest and give rise to the others, without the intervention of a voluntary action of the mind, is familiar to most persons.

The association which the mind habitually forms between certain objects and scenes, and persons connected with them, is most evident when a separation has been effected by death or removal to a distance; and, as is well-known, and has probably been painfully experienced by [221] most persons, when the mind has been rallying from a state of abstraction or reverie, the sight of some object, or an indistinct sound, which during the full activity of the faculties would not have been regarded, or would simply have sufficed to arouse an ordinary reminiscence, will cause to flash athwart the mind, a vivid and startling image of the deceased or far distant one.

We well remember some years ago, when a fellow-student, with whom we had been on very intimate terms, was cut off after a few days' illness. He had been in the habit of spending much time in our rooms. For some months after his death, particularly when wearied with study, a slight noise in the passage or at the door of the room has given rise to so vivid an impression that he was approaching, or at the door, that it has required an effort of the mind to quell the hallucination.

The apparition which M. Hoefer witnessed, was most probably an hallucination of this kind; the corridor, and position in which it occurred, recalling to memory, in all the vividness of reality, the form and lineaments of that deceased friend who had formerly frequented it along with him.

We have already seen an instance of a somewhat similar character, in the account given in a [222] previous paper of the apparition of a father, then alive, but absent at church, to his daughter at home. In that case the apparition was excited by the sight of the arm-chair generally occupied by the old gentleman, and connected with it alone, the association of the ideas being obvious; and the state of the brain forming, so to speak, the substratum of the hallucination, was induced by uneasiness caused by a heavy thunder-storm acting on a frame debilitated by fever.

The apparition of the following night, which was seen also by Professor Oeder, was, so far as M. Hoefer was concerned, a modification of the hallucination of the preceding night, prompted by the belief that the apparition he had witnessed was supernatural; and the precise similarity of the apparition professed to have been seen by M. Oeder, to that seen by M. Hoefer on that and the preceding night, would lead to the suspicion that in the former gentleman it was a trick of the imagination alone,—a suspicion confirmed by the subsequent progress of the tale.

Professor Oeder brooded upon the apparition he had witnessed, and, it is important to mark, made every endeavour for some time to obtain a second sight of it, but failed, until wearied out with his fruitless research, he ceased to hunt after it. Fourteen days afterwards, he states that he was suddenly and rudely awakened "by some external motion" (which is evidently an after- [223] conclusion derived from what followed), and saw the apparition of Doerien standing by the clothes-press.

In other words, he awoke suddenly out of a troubled sleep, and in the transition state between sleeping and waking, in which the mental images are as bright and defined as in dreams, the subject which had occupied his mind so much of late was presented before him in a visible form. As it not unfrequently happens when a dream has made a powerful impression on the mind, it is repeated again, so on the following night M. Oeder's hallucination occurred, but with the addition of a slight creaking noise of the clothes-press door.

Oeder was now fully convinced of the supernatural character of his visitant, and when the spectre again appeared to him, which was after a period of eight days, he having adopted the opinion at that period very prevalent, of troubled spirits, proceeded to inquire as to the cause of its visitations; and noticing a white tobacco-pipe in the spirit's mouth, and *knowing* that the deceased Doerien had "left some debts to the amount of a few dollars," he asked, "Are you perhaps owing for tobacco?" whereupon the spirit disappeared. Here then we find an hallucination, either in the dreaming or waking state, presenting the precise similitude of the [224] Professor's opinions and conceptions respecting the possible cause of the spectre.

The following night, when the spectre appeared again, a friend was with Oeder, but this friend saw "nothing further than something white,"—no very extraordinary sight in a room which had white walls, and was not perfectly dark.

From this time Oeder used a night-lamp, and the spectre no more appeared, but by certain sensations and noises he knew it was in the apartment.

The invisibility of the spectre, when the light was present, would indicate that a sensation of light excited in the eye by a disordered state of the head, such as we have fully dwelt upon in a previous part of the work, played an important part of the hallucination; and the disturbed sleep for so many nights, and uneasy sensations, point to a circumstance which we have not yet alluded to, that the Professor's health was not in good condition,—the probable cause of the whole series of hallucinations.

The uneasy sensations ceased, the light was dispensed with, the spectre again came, but it was darker, and contained a new sign in its hand, which, by following out a similar course of reasoning as upon the tobacco-pipe, and by long ruminating and inquiring, the Professor puzzled [225] out to signify some paintings belonging to a magic lantern which Doerien had received on trial before his death, and which had not been returned. They were sought up, sent to their rightful owner, and the apparition vanished to return no more.

It is to be remembered that this story, like most others of a similar nature, has been written under a full belief of the supernatural character of the apparitions, and it has received a colouring accordingly; and our comments suffice to show that no care, no attempt, has been made by the ghost-seer, to ascertain how much the apparitions might depend upon some illusion or hallucinations connected with his bodily health. The progress of the tale further shows that the apparitions occurred, in both M. Hoefer as well as Professor Oeder's case, in connection with symptoms of disordered health, and that they added nothing to what these gentlemen knew, or could work out, as M. Oeder did, by his own reason and judgment; in short, that they were simple images of ideas they already possessed or arrived at from the information they obtained.

Other sources of error in the judgment could be pointed out, and other causes of illusion and hallucination in the above tale, but we have written sufficient to show its worthlessness. [226]

One of the most formidable objections to the majority of ghost-stories of this nature is the insufficiency of the authority upon which they are given. In many instances we cannot trace them satisfactorily to their origin; in others, we have received them after they have passed through the hands of several persons; and in still more (as in the tales we have just analysed) there is intrinsic evidence that no endeavour has been made to obviate or elicit the sources of fallacy to which the ghost-seer has been exposed, and diminish as much as possible the chances of error.

The story of the "Last Hours of Lord Lyttleton" is a singularly interesting example of a ghost-story, based upon insufficient authority, and probably also upon a trivial circumstance, receiving almost universal credence; and it shows, moreover, how readily the superstitious feelings of the listeners will lead them to receive without due examination, tales which in themselves may be utterly void of satisfactory foundation; and induce them to retail subsequently an account which has probably received its precision and colouring from their imaginations alone.

Oft as the story has been told, we are necessitated again to quote it in part, in order to show more fully the nature of the authority upon which it depends. [227]

A gentleman, who was on a visit to Lord Lyttleton, writes:—

"I was at Pitt Place, Epsom, when Lord Lyttleton died; Lord Fortescue, Lady Flood, and the two Miss Amphletts, were also present. Lord Lyttleton had not long been returned from Ireland, and frequently had been seized with suffocating fits; he was attacked several times by them in the course of the preceding month, while he was at his house in Hill Street, Berkeley Square. It happened that he dreamt, three days before his death, that he saw a fluttering bird; and afterwards, that a woman appeared to him in white apparel, and said to him, 'Prepare to die, you will not exist three days.' His Lordship was much alarmed, and called to a servant from a closet adjoining, who found him much agitated, and in a profuse perspiration: the circumstance had a considerable effect all the next day on his Lordship's spirits. On the third day, while his Lordship was at breakfast with the above personages, he said, 'If I live over to-night, I shall have jockied the ghost, for this is the third day.' The whole party presently set off for Pitt Place, where they had not long arrived before his Lordship was visited by one of his accustomed fits; after a short interval, he recovered. He dined at five o'clock that day, and went to bed at eleven, when his [228] servant was about to give him rhubarb and mint-water; but his Lordship perceiving him stir it with a tooth-pick, called him a slovenly dog, and bade him go and fetch a tea-spoon; but on the man's return, he found his master in a fit, and the pillow being placed high, his chin bore hard

upon his neck, when the servant, instead of relieving his Lordship on the instant from his perilous situation, ran in his fright and called out for help, but on his return he found his Lordship dead."

The circumstances attending the apparition, as related by Lord Lyttleton, according to the statement of a relative of Lady Lyttleton's, were as follows:

"Two nights before, on his retiring to bed, after his servant was dismissed and his light extinguished, he had heard a noise resembling the fluttering of a dove at his chamber window. This attracted his attention to the spot; when, looking in the direction of the sound, he saw the figure of an unhappy female whom he had seduced and deserted, and who, when deserted, had put a violent end to her own existence, standing in the aperture of the window from which the fluttering sound had proceeded. The form approached the foot of the bed, the room was preternaturally light, the objects of the chamber were distinctly visible; raising her head and [229] pointing to a dial which stood on the mantel-piece of the chimney, the figure, with a severe solemnity of voice and manner, announced to the appalled and conscience-stricken man that, at that very hour, on the third day after the visitation, his life and his sins would be concluded, and nothing but their punishment remain, if he availed himself not of the warning to repentance which he had received. The eye of Lord Lyttleton glanced upon the dial, the hand was upon the stroke of twelve; again the apartment was involved in total darkness, the warning spirit disappeared, and bore away at her departure all the lightness of heart and buoyancy of spirit, ready flow of wit, and vivacity of manner, which had formerly been the pride and ornament of the unhappy being to whom she had delivered her tremendous summons."

From a passage in the Memoirs of Sir Nathanial Wraxall, it would seem that the sole authority for the above story was his Lordship's *valet-de-chambre*, for he writes:—

"Dining at Pitt Place, about four years after the death of Lord Lyttleton, in the year 1783, I had the curiosity to visit the bedchamber, where the casement-window, at which Lord Lyttleton asserted the dove appeared to flutter, was pointed out to me; and at his stepmother's, the Dowager Lady Lyttleton's, in Portugal Street, Grosvenor Square, I have frequently seen a [230] painting, which she herself executed, in 1780, expressly to commemorate the event; it hung in a conspicuous part of her drawing-room. There the dove appears at the window, while a female figure, habited in white, stands at the foot of the bed, announcing to Lord Lyttleton his dissolution. Every part of the picture was faithfully designed, *after the description given to her by the valet-de-chambre who attended him, to whom his master related all the circumstances*."

In addition it would appear, according to Lord Fortescue, that the only foundation upon which this story rests, is as follows:—

"I heard Lord Fortescue once say," writes a friend of Sir Walter Scott, "that he was in the house with him (Lord Lyttleton) at the time of the supposed visitation, and he mentioned the following circumstances as the only foundation for the extraordinary superstructure at which the world has wondered:—A woman of the party had one day lost a favourite bird, and all the men tried to recover it for her. Soon after, on assembling at breakfast, Lord Lyttleton complained of having passed a very bad night, and having been worried in his dreams by a repetition of the chase of the lady's bird. His death followed, as stated in the story."[69] [231]

It would seem highly probable, therefore, that this story has been framed much after the same fashion as that of the "three black crows," and the singular differences which we find in the versions we have given, fully confirm this view.

Connected with the foregoing story is another of the apparition of Lord Lyttleton, on the night of his death, to Miles Peter Andrews, one of his most intimate friends. This apparition occurred at Dartford Mills, where Mr. Andrews was then staying, and doubtless, in its origin and mode of development, the story is in every respect similar to that of Lord Lyttleton's.

The March number of "*Household Words*,"[70] for 1853, contains a ghost-story which exhibits another form of the belief, differing from those which we have already dwelt upon, and it is interesting from its comparatively recent occurrence, and from its having to a certain extent received the confirmation of a law-court.

In the colony of New South Wales, at a place called Penrith, distant from Sydney about thirty-seven miles, lived a farmer named Fisher. He was unmarried, about forty-five years old, and his [232] lands and stock were worth not less than £4000. Suddenly Fisher disappeared, and a neighbour, named Smith, gave out that he had gone to England for two or three years, and produced a written document authorizing him to act as his agent during his absence. As Fisher was an eccentric man, this sudden departure did not create much surprise, and it was declared to be "exactly like him."

About six months after Fisher's disappearance, an old man called Ben Weir, who had a small farm near Penrith, and who always drove his own cart to market, was returning from Sydney one night, when he beheld, seated on a rail which bounded the road—Fisher. *The night was very dark, and the distance of the fence from the middle of the road was at least twelve yards.* Weir, nevertheless, saw Fisher's figure seated on the rail. He pulled his old mare up, and called out, "Fisher, is that you?" No answer was returned, but there, still on the rail, sat the form of the man with whom he had been on the most intimate terms. Weir, who was not drunk, though he had had several glasses of strong liquor, jumped off his cart, and approached the rail. To his surprise, the form vanished.

Weir noticed that the ghost was marked by "a cruel gash" on the forehead, and that there was [233]
the appearance of fresh blood about it; and before leaving the spot, he marked it by breaking several branches of a sapling close by.

On returning home he told his story to his wife, who, however, told him that he was drunk, and ridiculed him.

On the following Thursday night, when old Ben was returning from market,—again in his cart, —he saw seated upon the same rail, the identical apparition. He had purposely abstained from drinking that day, and was in the full possession of all his senses.

Weir again told his wife of the apparition, to be again ridiculed by her, and he remarked, "Smith is a bad un! Do you think Fisher would ever have left this country without coming to bid you and me good-bye?"

The next morning Ben waited on a Mr. Grafton, a justice of the peace, who lived near to him, and told his tale. The magistrate was at first disposed to treat the account lightly, but after consideration, he summoned one of the aboriginal natives, and at sunrise met Weir at the place where the apparition had occurred, and which was sufficiently marked by the dead and broken branches of the sapling.

The rail was found to be stained in several places, and the native, without any previous [234]
intimation of the object of the search, was directed to examine them, and he shortly pronounced them to be "*white man's blood*," and searching about, he pointed out a spot whereon a body had been laid. "Not a single shower of rain had fallen for several months previously,—not sufficient to lay even the dust upon the roads. Notwithstanding this, however, the native succeeded in tracking the footsteps of one man to the unfrequented side of a pond at some distance. He gave it as his opinion that another man had been dragged thither. The savage walked round and round the pond, eagerly examining its borders, and the sedges and weeds springing up around it. At first he seemed baffled,—no clue had been washed ashore to show that anything unusual had been sunk in the pond; but having finished this examination, he laid himself down on his face, and looked keenly along the surface of the smooth and stagnant water. Presently he jumped up, uttered a cry peculiar to the natives when gratified by finding some long-sought object, clapped his hands, and pointing to the middle of the pond, to where the decomposition of some sunken substance had produced a slimy coating streaked with prismatic colours, he exclaimed, '*White man's fat!*' The pond was immediately searched; and, below the spot indicated, the remains of a [235]
body were discovered. A large stone and a rotted silk handkerchief were found near the body; these had been used to sink it."

By the teeth, and buttons upon the waistcoat, the body was identified as that of Fisher. Smith was arrested, and, upon this evidence, tried before the late Sir Francis Forbes, found guilty, sentenced to death, and hung; but previous to the execution, "he confessed that he, and he alone, committed the murder, and that it was upon the very rail where Weir swore that he had seen Fisher's ghost sitting, and that he had knocked out Fisher's brains with a tomahawk."

We quote this story as an interesting example of one of the best and most consistent of the tales of this kind, although it is probable that a more thorough investigation of the circumstances connected with it, would show an origin of a nature similar to that of the "Last Hours of Lord Lyttleton."

Several statements in the story require confirmation, and throw doubt upon the whole.

The assertion that Weir, on a "very dark" night, saw seated upon a rail, at a distance of *twelve yards*, a resemblance of Fisher which he took to be real, and was not aware of the actual nature of the appearance until he advanced towards it, is a statement too improbable to be worthy of [236]
credence unless supported by other and less objectionable evidence; and notwithstanding the extraordinary degree to which the visual and other senses of the aboriginal natives are, as we are aware, often developed, yet that they will enable them to state that an old blood-stain is produced by the blood of a white man, or that an iridescent scum floating at a distance on water is

produced by the fat of the white man, are statements which cannot be admitted without strong confirmatory evidence.

It not unfrequently happens that dreams appear to foreshadow events, the occurrence of which could not be anticipated by the reasoning faculties. Many of the instances recorded of this kind are after-conclusions founded upon imperfectly remembered dreams, and are consequently worthless. Such, for example, is the story stated by Mrs. Crowe of a gentleman "who has several times been conscious on awaking that he had been conversing with some one, whom he has been subsequently startled to hear had died at that period."[71]

Other dreams have received a verification from the natural results of the dreamer's superstitious folly.

Mrs. Crowe has quoted the following example from a continental newspaper:— [237]

"A letter from Hamburg contains the following curious story relative to the verification of a dream. It appears that a locksmith's apprentice, one morning lately, informed his master (Claude Soller), that on the previous night he dreamt that he had been assassinated on the road to Bergsdorff, a little town at about two hours' distance from Hamburg. The master laughed at the young man's credulity, and to prove that he himself had little faith in dreams, insisted upon sending him to Bergsdorff, with 140 rix dollars (£22 8*s.*), which he owed to his brother-in-law who resided in the town. The apprentice, after in vain imploring his master to change his intention, was compelled to set out at about eleven o'clock. On arriving at the village of Billwaerder, about halfway between Hamburg and Bergsdorff, he recollected his dream with terror but perceiving the baillie of the village at a little distance talking to some of his workmen, he accosted him, and acquainted him with his singular dream, at the same time requesting, that as he had money about his person, one of his workmen might be allowed to accompany him for protection across a small wood which lay in his way. The baillie smiled, and in obedience to his orders, one of the men set out with his young apprentice. The next day the corpse of the latter [238] was conveyed by some peasants to the baillie, along with a reaping-hook, which had been found by his side, and with which the throat of the murdered youth had been cut. The baillie immediately recognized the instrument as one which he had on the previous day given to the workman who had served as the apprentice's guide, for the purpose of pruning some willows. The workman was apprehended, and on being confronted with the body of his victim, made a full confession of his crime, adding that the recital of the dream had alone prompted him to commit the horrible act. The assassin, who is thirty-five years of age, was a native of Billwaerder, and previously to the perpetration of the murder, had always borne an irreproachable character."

It is well known that sensations from without will not only frequently excite dreaming, but will also often determine the character of the dreams. The following story is evidently an example of a dream of this nature.

On the 30th July, 1853, the dead body of a young woman was discovered in a field at Littleport, in the Isle of Ely. There could be little doubt that the woman had been murdered; and at the adjourned inquest held before Mr. W. Marshall, one of the coroners for the isle, on the 29th [239] August, the following extraordinary evidence was given:—

"James Jessop, an elderly respectable-looking labourer, with a face of the most perfect stolidity, and who possessed a most curiously shaped skull, broad and flat at the top, and projecting greatly on each side over the ears, deposed: 'I live about a furlong and a half from where the body was found. I have seen the body of the deceased. I had never seen her before her death. On the night of Friday, the 29th of July, I dreamt three successive times that I heard the cry of murder issuing from near the bottom of a close called Little Ditchment Close (the place where the body was found). The first time I dreamt I heard the cry, it woke me. I fell asleep again, and dreamt the same again. I then woke again, and told my wife. I could not rest; but I dreamt it again after that. I got up between four or five o'clock, but I did not go down to the Close, the wheat and barley in which have since been cut. I dreamt once, about twenty years ago, that I saw a woman hanging in a barn, and on passing the next morning the barn which appeared to me in my dream, I entered, and did find a woman there hanging, and cut her down just in time to save her life. I never told my wife I heard any cries of murder, but I have mentioned it to several [240] persons since. I saw the body on the Saturday it was found. I did not mention my dream to any one till a day or two after that. I saw the field distinctly in my dream, and the trees thereon, but I saw no person in it. On the night of the murder the wind lay from that spot to my house."

"Rhoda Jessop, wife of the last witness, stated that her husband related his dreams to her, on the evening of the day the body was found."[72]

It is highly probable, that in this instance, the screams of the unfortunate woman, borne upon

the wind, were the exciting cause of the dreams, and the direction from which the sound came would be sufficient to call up the associated idea of the fields in which the murder occurred. The powerful impression made upon the mind of the man, according to his own account, will sufficiently account for the repetition of the dreams; and the statement that the particulars of the dream were not related until after the finding of the body, must induce a little caution to the reception of the above version as an actual detail of the facts of the case. This remark applies also to the dream interpolated in the evidence.

Among the most vivid and connected dreams, are those excited by a dominant or absorbing [241]
train of thought, which has engaged the mind during waking hours, or by powerful or protracted emotion.

M. Boismont relates a dream, which he conceives is to be classed among the inexplicable phenomena of this nature, but which, with all deference to that distinguished psychologist, is rather to be placed in the category we have just named.

Miss R., gifted with an excellent judgment, and religious without bigotry, lived, before her marriage, at the house of an uncle, a celebrated physician, and a member of the Institute. She was at that time separated from her mother, who had been attacked, in the country, by a severe illness. One night, this young lady dreamed that she saw her mother before her, pale, disfigured, about to render the last breath, and showing particularly lively grief at not being surrounded by her children, of whom one, curé of one of the parishes in Paris, had emigrated to Spain, and the other was in Paris. Presently she heard her call upon her many times by her Christian name; whereupon the persons who surrounded her mother, supposing that she called her grand-daughter, who bore the same name, went to seek her in the neighbouring room, but a sign from the invalid apprised them that it was not the grand-daughter, but the daughter who resided in Paris, that she wished to see. Her appearance expressed the grief she felt at her absence; [242]
suddenly her features changed, became covered with the paleness of death, and she fell without life on the bed.

The lady had died during that night; and it was subsequently ascertained, that the circumstances delineated in the dream, simulated those which had occurred by the death-bed.

What are the circumstances of this case?—A mother dangerously ill—her children away from home. What more likely to occur to a child cognisant of these facts, than the train of thought which engendered and caused this dream? The events attending a death-bed scene under such circumstances were all but inevitable, and we cannot, justifiably, consider this case in any other light than that of a "simple coincidence."

Many physiologists and metaphysicians are of opinion, and there is much ground for the belief, that every sensation which has been actually experienced, may become the subject of perception at some future time, although, in the interval, all trace of its existence may have been lost, and it is beyond the power of the will to recall.

The phenomena upon which this opinion has been principally founded, have been observed in the delirium of certain febrile diseases, and in dreaming. [243]

There is a case on record of a woman, who, during the delirium of fever, repeated long passages in the Hebrew and Chaldaic tongues. When in health she was perfectly ignorant of these languages; and it was ascertained, that the sentences she spoke in her delirium, were correct passages from known writers in them. It was subsequently discovered, that at one period of her life she had lived with a clergyman who was in the habit of walking up and down the passage, reading aloud from Hebrew and Chaldaic works, and it was the sensations thus derived, and retained unconsciously to herself, which had been revivified by the changes induced during the progress of the fever.

A case is also recorded by Dr. Abercrombie, in which a servant-girl who had manifested no "ear" for, or pleasure in music, during sleep was heard to imitate the sounds of a violin, even the tuning, and to perform most complicated and difficult pieces of music. This girl had slept for some time, and much to her annoyance, in a room adjoining that occupied by an itinerant violinist who was somewhat of an enthusiast in his art, and was accustomed to spend a portion of the night in practising difficult pieces of music, often preventing this female from sleeping. The music she had thus heard, registered in the mind, so to speak, was repeated, unconsciously, [244]
during the disturbed action of the brain consequent upon imperfect health and dreaming.

The principle which has been deduced from these and similar cases, gives a ready explanation to numerous stories which it has been customary to regard as coming within the pale of the supernatural.

Those instances in which, during a dream, the places in which documents of value, which had been lost or misplaced, have been revealed, are examples of revivified sensations which had been lost sight of, and of which the return had been determined by the protracted exercise of the mind to recover the missing traces.

Sir Walter Scott, in his notes to "The Antiquary," relates the following highly interesting illustration:—

"Mr. R——d, of Bowland, a gentleman of landed property in the vale of Gala, was prosecuted for a very considerable sum, the accumulated arrears of tiend (or tithe), for which he was said to be indebted to a noble family, the titulars (lay improprietors of the tithes). Mr. R——d was strongly impressed with the belief, that his father had, by a form of process peculiar to the law of Scotland, purchased those lands from the titular; and therefore, that the present prosecution was [245] groundless. But after an industrious search among his father's papers, an investigation of the public records, and a careful inquiry among all persons who had transacted law business for his father, no evidence could be recovered to support his defence. The period was now near at hand, when he conceived the loss of the lawsuit to be inevitable, and he had formed his determination to ride to Edinburgh next day, and make the best bargain he could in the way of compromise. He even went to bed with this resolution, and with all the circumstances of the case floating upon his mind, had a dream to the following purpose.

"His father, who had been many years dead, appeared to him, he thought, and asked him why he was disturbed in his mind. In dreams men are not supprised at such apparitions. Mr. R——d thought he informed his father of the cause of his distress, adding, that the payment of a considerable sum of money was the more unpleasant to him, because he had a strong consciousness that it was not due, though he was unable to acquire any evidence in support of his belief. 'You are right, my son,' replied the paternal shade; 'I did acquire right to these tiends, for payment of which you are now prosecuted. The papers relating to the transaction are in the [246] hands of Mr. ——, a writer (or attorney), who is now retired from professional business, and resides at Inveresk, near Edinburgh. He was a person whom I employed on that occasion for a particular reason, but who never, on any other occasion, transacted business on my account. It is very possible,' pursued the vision, 'that Mr. —— may have forgotten a matter which is now of a very old date; but you may call it to his recollection by this token,—that when I came to pay his account, there was difficulty in getting change for a Portugal piece of gold, and that we were forced to drink out the balance at a tavern.'

"Mr. R——d awoke in the morning with all the words of the vision imprinted on his mind, and thought it worth while to ride across the country to Inveresk, instead of going straight to Edinburgh. When he came there, he waited on the gentleman mentioned in the dream, a very old man; without saying anything of the vision, he inquired whether he remembered having conducted such a matter for his deceased father. The old gentleman could not at first bring the circumstance to his recollection, but on mention of the Portugal piece of gold, the whole returned upon his memory; he made an immediate search for the papers, and recovered them; so that Mr. [247] R——d carried to Edinburgh the documents necessary to gain the cause which he was on the verge of losing.

"The author's theory is, that the dream was only the recapitulation of information which Mr. R——d had really received from his father while in life, but which at first he merely recalled as a general impression that the claim was settled. It is not uncommon for persons to recover, during sleep, the thread of ideas which they have lost during waking hours.

"It may be added, that this remarkable circumstance was attended with bad consequences to Mr. R——d, whose health and spirits were afterwards impaired by the attention which he thought himself obliged to pay to the visions of the night."

An instance which is related by Mrs. Crowe, receives its explanation also from this source.

"A case occurred not many years since in the North of Scotland, where a murder having been committed, a man came forward, saying, that he had dreamt that the pack of the murdered pedlar was hidden in a certain spot; whereon, a search being made, it was actually found. They at first concluded he was himself the assassin, but the real criminal was afterwards discovered; and it being asserted, though I have been told erroneously, that the two men had passed some time [248] together, since the murder, in a state of intoxication, it was decided that the crime, and the place of concealment, had been communicated to the pretended dreamer," &c.

If the statement that the murderer and the dreamer had spent some time together in a state of intoxication, after the murder had been committed, be correct, the supposition that the murder had been communicated to the dreamer, forgotten when the state of intoxication had passed

away, but subsequently recalled during the progress of a dream, affords an easy and natural explanation of the whole matter.

As an example of that class of dreams which are inexplicable, but which, unfortunately, are of little weight from the imperfect authority upon which they are given, and from the fact that they bear intrinsic evidence of having been received without inquiry into the circumstances under which they occurred, and the fallacies to which the dreamer and subsequent details had been exposed, we quote the following from the works of the Rev. John Wesley.[73]

"Among the congregation at Ambleside were a gentleman and his wife, who gave me a remarkable relation. She said she had often heard her brother relate, what an intimate [249] acquaintance had told her, that her husband was concerned in the rebellion of 1745. He was tried at Carlisle, and found guilty. The evening before he was to die, sitting and musing in her chair, she fell fast asleep. She dreamed one came to her and said, 'Go to such a part of the wall, and among the loose stones you will find a key, which you must carry to your husband.' She waked; but thinking it a common dream, paid no attention to it. Presently she fell asleep again, and dreamed the very same dream. She started up, put on her cloak and hat, and went to that part of the wall, and among the loose stones found a key. Having, with some difficulty, procured admission into the gaol, she gave this to her husband. It opened the door of his cell, as well as the lock of the prison door.(!) So at midnight he escaped for life."

It is not uncommon to find persons asserting that they have had dreams which have prefigured events, often trivial, in the common run of life.

Probably, without exception, these are irrelevant conclusions: the affirmative instances being marked, to the total neglect of the negative. For example:—A lady with whom we are acquainted was accustomed to relate a dream which she had had, in which she thought that she was in the [250] nursery watching one of her children play, when suddenly it tripped over the fender, and fell against the ribs of the grate, and before it could be extricated, the face was severely burned. On the following day the child she had seen in her dream, happened to have an accident in the nursery very similar to that she had seen occur in the dream.

On inquiry, however, it proved that dreams of this nature respecting her children were quite usual to the lady, and that at one time or other she had witnessed while sleeping almost all those accidents occur to which infant life is exposed. This was the only instance in which any one had apparently come true; and *until* this had occurred she had very properly and correctly attributed her dreams to the anxiety she naturally entertained respecting her young family.

Of all the divisions, or rather branches, of supernatural lore, none has obtained more universal credence, none has been more persistent, than that of *presentiments*.

A history of *presentiments* would form a curious, if not very instructive work, and it alone would almost suffice to indicate the absurdity of the belief in its main features.

We have instances of *high spirits* foreboding evil; *low spirits* foreboding the same; *sudden illness* shadowing forth calamity, *not* to the person affected, but to a companion; *sudden dullness of sight* presaging death—indeed a collection of these instances would show that every obscure [251] sensation, every variation of emotion or passion, preceding an evil occurrence, has at one time or other been regarded as a presentiment of that evil.

Jung-Stilling has so well described the nature of the faculty of presentiment, and the circumstances under which it is most commonly developed, that we cannot do better than quote the words of that celebrated writer on this subject. He writes:—

"As the developed faculty of presentiment is a capability of experiencing the arrangements which are made in the world of spirits, and executed in the visible world, second-sight certainly belongs also under this head. And as those who possess this capability are generally simple people, it again follows from hence, that a developed faculty of presentiment is by no means a quality which belongs solely to devout and pious people, or that it should be regarded as a divine gift; I take it, on the contrary, for a disease of the soul, which we ought rather to endeavour to heal than promote.

"He that has a natural disposition for it, and then fixes his imagination long and intensely, and therefore *magically*, upon a certain object, may at length be able, with respect to this object, to [252] foresee things which have reference to it. Grave-diggers, nurses, and such as are employed to undress and shroud the dead, watchmen, and the like, are accustomed to be continually reflecting on objects which stand in connexion with death and interment; what wonder, therefore, if their faculty of presentiment at length develop itself on these subjects; and I am inclined to maintain, that it may be promoted by drinking ardent spirits."[74]

In addition to this, Mrs. Crowe remarks:—

"It is worthy of observation that idiots often possess some gleams of this faculty of second-sight or presentiment; and it is probably on this account that they are in some countries held sacred. Presentiment, which I think may very probably be merely the vague and imperfect recollection of what we *knew* in our sleep, is often observed in drunken people."[75]

Cicero,[76] after relating the myth of the apparition of Tages, in Etruria, adds:—

"But I should indeed be more foolish than they who credit these things, if I seriously argue the matter."

Equally foolish it would be for us to attempt to show the absurdity of the foregoing opinions; [253] and we fear it would be a bootless and inutile task to argue with those who regard the statements of the studiously and transcendentally superstitious and ignorant, the incoherence of the drunkard, the depressed feelings experienced after a debauch, or the vague gleams of understanding in an idiot, as evidences of communication with the spirit-world.

We know two ladies gifted with the faculty of ordinary presentiment, and who boast (if we may use that expression) that they are members of a family of which no scion has died for years without some supernatural indication of its occurrence. We well remember *after* the information had been received by them of the death of the last male representative of one branch of the family, that they told how on the night of the death they happened to be awake in bed, when certain strange noises were heard about the bed-curtains, "as of a mouse" scrambling upon them, and immediately afterwards a blow was struck upon a large chest of drawers which stood opposite the foot of the bed, and the sound was as though the chest had been broken to pieces. We did not draw the inference which the ladies did from this circumstance, namely, that it was an intimation of the death of their relative, for, unfortunately for the romantic view of the question, [254] we knew that such nightly occurrences as these were somewhat common with them, and that a simple and comfortable house in a densely-populated manufacturing district had been peopled by them with nightly noises and sounds, audible alone to them, to such an extent, that the adaptation of a presentiment to any particular occurrence was a matter of little difficulty.

We also well remember, some years ago, when an infant brother lay dying, that our mother and the nurse were startled in the dead of night by a strange fluttering at the window. On the curtain being raised, the light of the candle showed a bird fluttering and beating against one of the panes. Was it an omen of death, and an emblem of the happy transition of the baby-spirit to another world? A few moments' examination soon showed that it was no spectre bird, but apparently a robin, which had been disturbed in the darkness, and was attracted by the light, and no sooner was the window darkened than it flew away.

Three days ago, we saw a woman who had been for some months in a delicate state of health. "Sir," she said, "what I have most to complain of is, that I always feel as if some great evil was about to befall myself or family." This feeling is common, in a greater or less degree, to that depressed state of the system preceding attacks of febrile and many other diseases, and is often [255] marked in hypocondriacism. Who, when suffering from slight indisposition, has not often felt this feeling of foreboding, of which the lowest grade is expressed in the ordinary phrase, low-spirits? This feeling, and thus derived, has been the substratum for those vague, so-called presentiments, which constitute the great bulk of instances in that doctrine; and the fallacy has been, that the mind, more readily affected by affirmative than by negative examples, has held to the former and neglected the latter, and deluded itself by an imperfect and too contracted view of the facts.

Boismont, the most recent writer on the doctrine of presentiments, writes:—

"In the greatest number of cases, they are not realised; in those where the event justifies them, they are only a reminiscence—a simple coincidence;—we admit all this. It is not the less true, that an unforeseen event, a strong prepossession, great restlessness, a sudden change in habits, any fear whatsoever, gives rise, at the moment, to presentiments which it would be difficult to deny by systematic credulity."[77]

Let us examine one or two of the cases which would lead so distinguished a psychologist to give [256] a certain degree of credence to this belief.

The Prince de Radzvil had adopted one of his nieces, an orphan. He inhabited a château in Gallicia, and this château had a large hall which separated the apartments of the Prince from those occupied by the children, and in order to communicate between the two suites of rooms it was necessary either to traverse the hall or the court.

The young Agnes, aged from five to six years, always uttered piercing cries every time that they

caused her to traverse the great hall. She indicated, with an expression of terror, an enormous picture which was suspended above the door, and which represented the Sibyl of Cuma. They endeavoured for a length of time to vanquish this repugnance, which they attributed to infant obstinacy; but as serious accidents happened from this violence, they ended by permitting her no more to enter the hall; and the young girl loved better, during ten or twelve years, to traverse in rain, snow, or cold, the vast court or the gardens, rather than pass under this door, which made so disagreeable an impression upon her.

The young Countess being of age to marry, and already betrothed, there was a reception at the château. The company, in the evening, wished to have some noisy game; they went into the great hall, where, moreover, the nuptial ball would be held. Animated by the young people who [257] surrounded her, Agnes did not hesitate to accompany the guests. But scarcely had she crossed the threshold of the door, than she wished to draw back, and she avowed her fear. They had caused her to pass first, according to custom, her betrothed, friends, and uncle, laughing at her childishness, closing the doors upon her. But the poor young girl wished to resist; and in shaking and beating the door, caused the picture to fall which was above it. This enormous mass bruised the head by one of its corners, and killed her immediately.

The scene of this story is an old castle in Gallicia, doubtless, like all similar places, having attached to it many strange and wonderful legends, and many servants fully imbued with these legends, and with all the folk-lore which a district like Gallicia contains. We have no information as to what amount of this lore the nurse indoctrinated into the child, or what use she may have made of the painting in order to terrify her little charge into submission from time to time. That an inquiry, special and distinct, upon this point was necessary ere the main point of the story could be substantiated, is evident; for the establishment of this influence would at once destroy the presentiment sought to be established; and to suppose that the child was brought up without [258] its mind being so poisoned, is to suppose a phenomenon uniquely rare. Again, the painting was a representation of the Sibyl of Cuma. In her early days, says classic history, this Sibyl was lovely; but after her short-sighted bargain with Apollo for a life as long in years as the number of grains of sand she held in her hand, forgetting to add the request for perennial beauty also, she shortly became old and decrepid, her form decayed, her countenance melancholy and pale, and her looks haggard; and it is as thus described, that we are generally accustomed to see her pourtrayed. But we are left in the dark as to whether the painting in question represented the Sibyl in early youth, in her decrepid maturity, or at the moment of inspiration, when, according to the Æneis (Book vi),—

> "Her colour changed; her face was not the same,
> And hollow groans from her deep spirit came.
> Her hair stood up, convulsive rage possess'd
> Her trembling limbs, and heaved her labouring breast.
> Greater than human kind she seem'd to look,
> And with an accent more than mortal spoke,
> Her staring eyes with sparkling fury roll;
> When all the god came rushing on her soul."

That the painting must have depicted the Sibyl in one of the two latter characters is almost certain, for in any other it would have been meaningless; and leaving the question of the extent to which her mind might be poisoned by folk-lore, or by the servants making the painting a [259] bugbear to her,—leaving this in abeyance, what must the effect of a frightful-looking and gigantic picture, staring the child in the face, have been upon a young mind? Little doubt need be entertained of the feeling of terror with which an infant eye would regard it, and we have already shown how such a feeling, being implanted there, would become a part and parcel of its nature, and be never subsequently eradicated.

We see this feeling manifested every day in the aversion which some individuals manifest to certain animals. From emotions taught during childhood and youth, and often lost sight of in mature years, a cat, a dog, a rat, a spider, a frog, &c., has become an object of such dread to some persons, that even in advanced life the presence of one has caused the utmost annoyance and terror.

The powerful and persistent influence of ideas thus associated has been clearly and pithily expressed by Locke,[78] and his first instance has an immediate bearing upon our subject:—

"The ideas of goblins and sprights have really no more to do with darkness than light, yet let but a foolish maid inculcate these often on the mind of a child, and raise them there together, [260] probably he shall never be able to separate them again so long as he lives, but darkness shall ever afterwards bring with it those frightful ideas, and they shall be so joined that he can no more bear the one than the other."

That the fall of the painting was caused by the vibrations occasioned by shaking and beating upon the door beneath it, seems certain; but that there was any *presentimental* connection (if we may so word it) between the fall of the painting and the previous dread of it,—any foreshadowing in this dread of the subsequent fall and its fatal consequences,—there is no satisfactory evidence whatever.

Another example of presentiment, quoted by Boismont, is the following:—

Two French gentlemen, refugees, who resided together in New York on terms of great amity, freighted a ship for India. Everything was prepared for their departure, and they waited only a favourable wind. One of them, B——, of a calm and placid temperament, apparently excited by the uncertainty and delay of the time of sailing, began to manifest a degree of restlessness which surprised his companion. One day he entered the apartment where his friend was engaged in writing letters for Europe, and under the influence of an excitement so great that he had difficulty to suppress it, he exclaimed: "Why lose time in writing letters?—they will never go to [261] their destination. Come with me and take a turn on the Battery. The wind may become favourable; we are, perhaps, nearer the point of departure than we suppose!" Acceding to the request, his friend accompanied him, and as they proceeded, arm-in-arm, he was astonished at the rapid and excited manner in which B—— walked. On reaching the Battery, B—— precipitated his rate of walking still more, until they approached the parapet. He spoke in a high and quick tone, expressing in florid terms his admiration of the scenery. Suddenly he arrested his incoherent discourse, and his friend separated from him. "I regarded him fixedly," to continue the narrative in the words of the narrator; "he turned away as if intimidated and cast-down. 'B——,' I cried, 'you intend to kill me, you wish to throw me from this height into the sea! Deny it, monster, if you dare!' The madman looked me in the face with haggard eyes for a moment, but I was careful not to lose his glance, and he lowered the head. He murmured some incoherent words, and sought to pass by me. I barred the way, extending my arms. After looking vaguely right and left, he threw himself on my neck, and melted into tears. 'It is true, it is true, my friend! The thought has haunted me night and day, as a torch of hell. It was for this end that I brought you [262] here; had you been but a foot from the border of the parapet, the work had been done.' The demon had abandoned him, his eyes were without expression, a foam covered his dried lips; the excitement was passed. I reconducted him to the house. Some days of repose, together with bleeding and low diet, re-established him completely; and what is still more extraordinary, we never more spoke of this event."

Are we, with Boismont, to regard this as an example of "sudden and mysterious inspiration?" Would it not have been still more mysterious if a minute examination of the countenance of a madman, who was talking incoherently near the verge of a precipitous descent, and big with intent to murder, had not been sufficient to unravel his purpose? We think it would, and that there is no evidence here of anything beyond the pale of the laws of common observation.

It would be needless to multiply instances of presentiment which have carried conviction to the minds of persons less accustomed to analyze the operations of the senses and intellect than Boismont, and in whom errors of observation are infinitely more likely to occur; nevertheless there are instances on record which, if the authority upon which they are stated be admitted, [263] receive no explanation from natural laws so far as we are yet acquainted with them.

One of the best and most striking examples of this kind is given on the authority of Mrs. Crowe.

She writes:—

"One of the most remarkable cases of presentiment I know, is that which occurred not very long since on board one of Her Majesty's ships, when lying off Portsmouth. The officers being one day at the mess-table, a young Lieutenant P. suddenly laid down his knife and fork, pushed away his plate, and turned extremely pale. He then rose from the table, covering his face with his hands, and retired from the room. The president of the mess, supposing him to be ill, sent one of the young men to inquire what was the matter. At first Mr. P. was unwilling to speak, but, on being pressed, he confessed that he had been seized by a sudden and irresistible impression that a brother he had then in India was dead. 'He died,' said he, 'on the 12th of August, at six o'clock; I am perfectly certain of it!' No argument could overthrow this conviction, which in due course of post was verified to the letter. The young man had died at Cawnpore, at the precise period [264] mentioned."[79]

A singular story is also related of the early days of the Empress Josephine, which may fitly be detailed here.

"She was born in the West Indies," writes Sir Archibald Alison, "and it had early been prophesied by an old negress that she should lose her first husband, be extremely unfortunate,

but that she should afterwards be greater than a queen. This prophecy, the authenticity of which is placed beyond a doubt, was fulfilled in the most singular manner. Her first husband, Count Alexander Beauharnais, a general in the army on the Rhine, had been guillotined during the Reign of Terror, solely on account of his belonging to the nobility; and she herself, who was also imprisoned at the same time, was only saved from impending death by the fall of Robespierre. So strongly was the prophecy impressed on her mind, that while lying in the dungeons of the Conciergerie, expecting every hour to be summoned to the Revolutionary Tribunal, she mentioned it to her fellow-prisoners, and, to amuse them, named some of them as ladies of the bed-chamber,—a jest which she afterwards lived to realise to one of their number."

Sir Archibald Alison adds the following note in confirmation of the prophecy:— [265]

"The author heard this prophecy in 1801, long before Napoleon's elevation to the throne, from the late Countess of Bath and the late Countess of Ancrum, who were educated in the same convent with Josephine, and had repeatedly heard her mention the circumstance in early youth." [80]

The most grave of the errors affecting the details of those occurrences which have been supposed to foreshadow events, or to have some inexplicable and supernatural connection with certain circumstances occurring coincidently with them, has been fully set forth by Lord Bacon, in the 46th Aphorism of the "Novum Organum," and to this *dictum* nothing needs to be added.

"The human understanding, when any proposition has been once laid down (either from general admission and belief, or from the pleasure it affords) forces everything else to add fresh support and confirmation, and although most cogent and abundant instances may exist to the contrary, yet either does not observe, or despises them, or gets rid of and rejects them by some distinction, with violent and injurious prejudice, rather than sacrifice the authority of its first conclusions. It was well answered by him who was shown in a temple the votive tablets [266] suspended by such as had escaped the peril of shipwreck, and was pressed as to whether he would then recognise the power of the gods, by an inquiry, "But where are the portraits of those who have perished in spite of their vows?" All superstition is much the same, whether it be that of astrology, dreams, omens, retributive judgment, or the like; in all of which the deluded believers observe events which are fulfilled, but neglect and pass over their failure, though it be much more common.... Besides, even in the absence of that eagerness and want of thought (which we have mentioned), it is the peculiar and perpetual error of the human understanding to be more moved and excited by affirmatives than negatives, whereas it ought duly and regularly to be impartial; nay, in establishing any true axiom, the negative instance is the most powerful."

We have now briefly examined the principal of those phenomena which it has been, and in many instances is, customary to ascribe to supernatural interposition; and we have endeavoured to ascertain how far they receive explanation from the known laws of action of the senses and reasoning faculties; and we have seen reason for the conclusion that they mainly come within the category of those laws. [267]

Of the exceptions to this conclusion, it is unfortunate that the authority upon which they depend is generally unsatisfactory, and the details imperfect in many of the most important particulars; and they, to use the words of Mrs. Crowe, (whose evidence in this respect is of considerable importance), "as they now stand, can have no scientific value; they cannot, in short, enter into the region of science at all, still less into that of philosophy. Whatever conclusions we may be led to form, cannot be founded on pure induction. We must confine ourselves wholly within the region of opinion; if we venture beyond this, we shall assuredly founder."[81]

We are not aware that this imperfection of details necessarily appertains to facts of this nature, and we simply require the same care against error which is expected and is exercised in other departments of inquiry; and until the instances presented bear evidence of this, we must entertain doubts, and decline to receive them as facts establishing such theories as have been endeavoured to be founded upon them.

The great progress of physiology and psychology is almost daily enabling us to grapple with sensuous phenomena which have hitherto been obscure; and it is never to be lost sight of in [268] researches into the domains of the so-called supernatural, that the knowledge we possess of our own powers is as yet very imperfect and limited.

APPENDIX. [269]

Extracts from Professor Faraday's Letter on Table Moving.

Athenæum, July 2, 1853, p. 801.

"The object which I had in view in my inquiry was, not to satisfy myself, for my conclusion had been formed already on the evidence of those who had turned tables,—but that I might be enabled to give a strong opinion, founded on facts, to the many who applied to me for it. Yet the proof which I sought for, and the method followed in the inquiry, were precisely of the same nature as those which I should adopt in any other physical investigation. The parties with whom I have worked were very honourable, very clear in their intentions, successful table-movers, very desirous of succeeding in establishing the existence of a peculiar power, thoroughly candid, and very effectual. It is with me a clear point that the table moves when the parties, though they strongly wish it, do not intend, and do not believe, that they move it by ordinary mechanical power. They say, the table draws their hands; that it moves first, and they have to follow it; that sometimes it even moves from under their hands. With some, the table will move to the right or [270] left, according as they wish or will it; with others, the direction of the first move is uncertain;—but all agree that the table moves the hands, and not the hands the table. Though I believe the parties do not intend to move the table, but obtain the result by a quasi-involuntary action, still I had no doubt of the influence of expectation upon their minds, and, through that, upon the success or failure of their efforts.

"The first point, therefore, was to remove all objections due to expectation—having relation to the substances which I might desire to use; so, plates of the most different bodies, electrically speaking, namely, sand-paper, mill-board, glue, glass, moist clay, tinfoil, card-board, gutta percha, vulcanized rubber, wood, &c., were made into a bundle, and placed on a table, under the hands of a turner. The table turned. Other bundles of other plates were submitted to different persons at other times,—and the tables turned. Henceforth, therefore, these substances may be used in the construction of apparatus. Neither during their use, nor at any other times, could the slightest trace of electrical or magnetic effects be obtained. At the same trials, it was readily ascertained that one person could produce the effect; and that the motion was not necessarily [271] circular, but might be in a straight line. No form of experiment or mode of observation that I could devise gave me the slightest indication of any peculiar natural force. No attraction or repulsion, or signs of tangential power appeared; nor anything which could be referred to other than the mere mechanical pressure exerted inadvertently by the turner. I therefore proceeded to analyze this pressure, or that part of it exerted in a horizontal direction; doing so, in the first instance, unawares to the party. A soft cement, consisting of wax and turpentine, or wax and pomatum, was prepared. Four or five pieces of smooth slippery card-board were attached one over the other by little pellets of the cement, and the lower of these to a piece of sand-paper resting on the table; the edges of these sheets overlapped slightly, and on the under surface a pencil line was drawn over the laps, so as to indicate position. The upper card-board was larger than the rest, so as to cover the whole from sight. Then the table-turner placed the hands upon the upper card, and we waited for the result. Now, the cement was strong enough to offer considerable resistence to mechanical motion, and also to retain the cards in any new position which they might acquire, and yet weak enough to give way slowly to a continued force. [272]

"When at last the tables, cards, and hands, all moved to the left together, and so a true result was obtained, I took up the pack. On examination, it was easy to see by the displacement of the parts of the line, that the hand had moved further than the table, and that the latter had lagged behind;—that the hand, in fact, had pushed the upper card to the left, and that the under cards and the table had followed and been dragged by it. In other similar cases, when the table had not moved, still the upper card was found to have moved, showing that the hand had carried it in the expected direction. It was evident, therefore, that the table had not drawn the hand and person round, nor had it moved simultaneously with the hand. The hand had left all things under it, behind, and the table evidently tended continually to keep the hand back.

"The next step was, to arrange an index, which should show whether the table moved first, or the hand moved before the table, or both moved or remained at rest together.... Two thin boards, nine and a-half by seven inches, were provided; a board, nine by five inches, was glued to the middle of the under side of one of these (to be called the table-board), so as to raise the edges free from the table; being placed on the table, near and parallel to its side, an upright pin was [273] fixed close to the further edge of the board, at the middle, to serve as the fulcrum for the indicating lever. Then, four glass rods, seven inches long, and a quarter of an inch in diameter,

were placed as rollers on different parts of this table-board, and the upper board placed on them; the rods permitted any required amount of pressure on the boards, with a free motion of the upper on the lower to the right and left. At the part corresponding to the pin in the lower board, a piece was cut out of the upper board, and a pin attached there, which, being bent downwards, entered the hole in the end of the short arm of the index lever: this part of the lever was of card-board: the indicating prolongation was a straight hay-stalk fifteen inches long. In order to restrain the motion of the upper board on the lower, two vulcanized rubber rings were passed round both, at the parts not resting on the table: these, whilst they tied the boards together, acted also as springs—and whilst they allowed the first, feeblest tendency to motion to be seen by the index, exerted, before the upper board had moved a quarter of an inch, sufficient power in pulling the upper board back from either side, to resist a strong lateral action of the hand.

"All being thus arranged, except that the lever was away, the two boards were tied together [274]
with string running parallel to the vulcanised rubber springs, so as to be immoveable in relation to each other. They were then placed on the table, and a table-turner sat down to them. The table very shortly moved in due order, showing that the apparatus offered no impediment to the action. A like apparatus, with metal rollers, produced the same result under the hands of another person. The index was now put into its place, and the string loosened, so that the springs should come into play. It was soon seen with the party that could will the motion in either direction (from whom the index was purposely hidden), that the hands were gradually creeping up in the direction before agreed upon, though the party certainly thought they were pressing downwards only. When shown that it was so, they were truly surprised; but when they lifted up their hands and immediately saw the index return to its normal position, they were convinced. When they looked at the index, and could see for themselves whether they were pressing truly downwards, or obliquely, so as to produce a resultant in the right or left handed direction, then such an effect never took place. Several tried, for a long while together, and with the best will in the world, but no motion, right or left, of the table or hand, or anything else, occurred. [275]

"I think the apparatus I have described may be useful to many who really wish to know the truth of nature, and who would prefer that truth to a mistaken conclusion, desired perhaps only because it seems to be new or strange. Persons do not know how difficult it is to press directly downward, or in any given direction against a fixed obstacle, or even to know only whether they are doing so or not, unless they have some indicator which, by visible motion or otherwise, shall instruct them; and this is more especially the case when the muscles of the fingers and hand have been cramped and rendered either tingling or insensible or cold by long-continued pressure. If a finger be pressed constantly into the corner of a window-frame for ten minutes or more, and then, continuing the pressure, the mind be directed to judge whether the force at a given moment is all horizontal or all downwards, or how much is in one direction and how much in the other, it will find great difficulty in deciding, and will, at last, become altogether uncertain,—at least such is my case. I know that a similar result occurs with others, for I have had two boards arranged, separated, not by rollers, but by plugs of vulcanized rubber; and with the vertical index, when a person with his hands on the upper board is requested to press only downwards, [276]
and the index is hidden from his sight, it moves to the right, to the left, to him and from him, and in all horizontal directions; so utterly unable is he strictly to fulfil his intention without a visible and correcting indicator. Now, such is the use of the instrument with the horizontal index and rollers; the mind is instructed and the involuntary or quasi-involuntary motion is checked in the commencement, and, therefore, never rises up to the degree needful to move the table, or even permanently the index itself. No one can suppose that looking at the index can in any way interfere with the transfer of electricity, or any other power, from the hand to the board under it, or to the table. If the board tends to move, it may do so; the index does not confine it; and if the table tends to move, there is no reason why it should not. If both were influenced by any power to move together, they may do so, as they did, indeed, when the apparatus was tied, and the mind and muscles left unwatched and unchecked."

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FOOTNOTES:

[1] Locke. Of Human Understanding, B. I, ch. 2.

[2] Cousin. Cours de l'Histoire de la Philosophie Moderne, edit. 1847, T. III, p. 269.

[3] Cousin. Op. cit., T. III, p. 368.

[4] Cousin. Op. cit., T. III, p. 370.

[5] Plato. Politicus. Mitford's Greece, Vol. I, p. 84.

[6] "Vain indeed is the life of all men in whom there is not the true knowledge of God: who, from the things which are seen to be good, have not been able to conceive aright of that which is goodness itself; nor, while they viewed the work, to acknowledge the architect: but have thought that either fire, or the wind, the swift air, or the stars in their courses, or the vast deep, or the sun and moon, were the deities presiding over the world."—*Liber Sapientiæ*, ch. 13, v. 1, 2. *Translation by Luke Howard, F.R.S.*

[7] An interesting illustration of the tendency of mankind in a state of savageism to attribute striking phenomena to supernatural agency, and deify the means through which they are apparently exhibited, occurred on the march of Cortes from Mexico to Honduras. During a deer-hunt, the horse which Cortes rode was taken ill. "It did not then die, though it would have been better if it had," says the devout but ruthless conqueror, parenthetically. A little while afterwards, having been courteously received by the Itzalan Indians, Cortes "entrusted them with the care of his horse Morgillo, which had been lamed, charging them to take great care of it, and attend to its recovery, as he prized it very highly, and telling them that when he had found the Spaniards he was in search of, he should send for his steed again. It was from no want of care on the part of the Itzaex, but rather from an excess of it, that Morgillo lost his life under their management; for in their anxiety to effect a cure, and regarding the animal as one endowed with reason, they gave him poultry and other meat to eat, and presented him with bunches of flowers, as they were accustomed to do to persons of rank when they were sick; a species of attention somewhat similar to that which the fool laughed at in *King Lear*, when he speaks of the cockney who for 'a pure kindness to his horse, buttered his hay.' The consequence of this unaccustomed style of medical treatment was, that Morgillo languished and died, and then a worse evil befell, for, observes the pious Villagutierre, "though some people say Canek burnt his idols in the presence of Cortes, there was in reality no burning of idols or anything else in that city of Tayasal; on the contrary, by leaving the horse with the infidel Itzaex, they obtained a greater and still more abominable idol than the many they had before." The meaning of this sentence is subsequently explained by the worthy chronicler informing us that, on the death of Morgillo, the Itzaex raised its effigy "in stone and mortar, very perfect," and worshipped it as a divinity. It was seated on its hind-quarters, on the floor of one of the temples, rising on its fore legs, with its hind legs bent under it. These barbarians adored it as the god of thunder and thunderbolts, calling him Tzinachac, which means the bride of thunder, or the thunderbolt. They gave it this name from having seen some of the Spaniards who were with Cortes fire their muskets over the horses' heads when they were hunting deer, and they believed the horses were the cause of the noise that was made, which they took for thunder, and the flash of the discharge and the smoke of the gunpowder for a thunderbolt."—*Fancourt's History of Yucatan. Athenæum.* 1854, p. 109.

[8] Cicero. De Naturâ Deorum, B. II, c. 25.

[9] Servius. Tooke's Pantheon, p. 198.

[10] Horæ Britannicæ. By Jno. Hughes, Vol. I., p. 235. 1818.

[11] The Garrows, a number of wild tribes occupying the district lying between the N.E. frontier of Bengal and the kingdom of Assam, in addition to the worship of Mâhâdeva, or Siva, adore also the sun and moon; and the *Khatties*, or *Catties*, another wild tribe inhabiting the peninsula of Guzerat, worship the sun.

[12] Blackwell. Mallet's Northern Antiquities. Bohn, 1847, p. 473.

[13] Davis. "The Chinese," Chap. xii.

[14] Humboldt. "Aspects of Nature," Vol. I., p. 198, note 51. "Steppes and Deserts."

[15] Ruxton. Adventures in Mexico and Rocky Mountains, p. 192.

[16] *Str.* That cursed Chærophon and Socrates,
Who have deceived both thee and me alike.

Phid. I must not act unjustly towards my teachers.

Str. Nay, nay, revere paternal Jupiter;

Phid. Paternal Jupiter! old fashion'd fool;
Is there a Jupiter?

Str. There is.

Phid. Not so,
Since having cast out Jove a whirlwind reigns.

Str. Not cast him out; but I imagin'd this,

Seeing the whirlwind here. O wretched ones,
To take thee, earthen image, for a god!

[17] Wheelwright's Translation, p. 124, and note. Oxford, 1837.

[18] Cicero. De Naturâ Deorum. B. I., ch. 15.

[19] Op. cit., B. II., c. 24.

[20] Bonomi. "Nineveh and its Palaces," pp. 139-264, &c.; Dr. Grotefend, Athenæum, June 26, 1853; Ravenshaw, Athenæum, July 16, 1853.

[21] Paradise Lost.

[22] Rape of the Lock. Ch. 1.

[23] The *black* colour which is popularly ascribed to the devil, was probably derived from old monkish legends, which affirmed that he often appeared as an Ethiopian. (Jortin. Vol. II., p. 13, ed. 1805.)

[24] Bonomi. Op. cit., p. 159. "The root, or the original word from which teraphim is derived, signifies, to relax with fear, to strike with terror, or 'Repheh,' an appaller, one who makes others faint or fail; a signification that singularly accords with the terrifying images found by Botta." The possible connection between these images and the images (*teraphim*) which Rachel had stolen from her father Laban, is of great interest.

[25] This custom is probably a relic of old Scandinavian mythology. In the "Prose Edda," it is stated, that the gods having captured Loki (the personification of evil), who had fled from their justly excited anger, "dragged him without commiseration into a cavern, wherein they placed three sharp-pointed rocks, boring a hole through each of them."

[26] Notes and Queries, Vol. VIII, p. 200.—Eusebius, in his *Oration* in praise of the Emperor Constantine, writes, that the Emperor honoured "the triumphall signe of the crosse, having really experienced and found the divine virtue that is therein. For by it the multitudes of his enemies were put to flight; by it the vaine ostentation of the enemies of God was suppressed, the petulant tongues of evil speakers and wicked men were silenced; by it the barbarous people were subdued; by it the invisible powers of the divil were vanquished and driven away; and by it the superstitious errors were confuted and abolished."

[27] Bede. Ecclesiastical History. B. I., ch. 30. Dr. Giles' Transl. Bohn.

[28] Brand's Popular Antiquities of Great Britain. Vol. I. p. 201. Note. Michaelmas Day.

[29] Cicero. De Naturâ Deorum. B. III., ch. 5.

[30] See "Notes and Queries." Sir J. E. Tennant, Vol. V., p. 121; W. Blood, &c., Vol. VIII., p. 413.

[31] The Berlin correspondent of the *Times* related the following incident:—

"The comet which has lately been visible, has served a priest, not far from Warsaw, with materials for a very curious sermon. After having summoned his congregation together, although it was neither Sunday nor festival, and shown them the comet, he informed them that this was the same star that had appeared to the Magi at the birth of the Saviour, and that it was only visible now in the Russian Empire. Its appearance on this occasion was to intimate to the Russian eagle, that the time was now come for it to spread out its wings, and embrace all mankind in one orthodox and sanctifying church. He showed them the star now standing immediately over Constantinople, and explained that the dull light of the nucleus indicated its sorrow at the delay of the Russian army in proceeding to its destination."

[32] "Madam Morrow, seventh daughter of a seventh daughter, and a descendant of a line of astrologers reaching back for centuries, will give ladies private lectures on all the events of life, in regard to health, wealth, love, courtship, and marriage. She is, without exception, the most wonderful astrologist in the world, or that has ever been known. She will even tell their very thoughts, and will show them the likenesses of their intended husbands and absent friends, which has astonished thousands during her absence in Europe. She will leave the city in a very short time. 76, Broome Street, between Cannon and Columbia. Gentlemen are not admitted."

"Madame la Compt flatters herself that she is competent by her great experience in the art of astrology, to give true information in regard to the past, present, and future. She is able to see clearly any losses her visitors may have sustained, and will give satisfactory information in regard to the way of recovery. She has, and continues to give perfect satisfaction. Ladies and gentlemen 50 cents. 13, Howard Street."

"Madame la Compt has been visited by over two hundred ladies and gentlemen the past week, and has given perfect satisfaction; and in consideration of the great patronage bestowed upon her, she will remain at 13, Howard Street, for four days more, when she

will positively sail for the South."

"Mrs. Alwin, renowned in Europe for her skill in foretelling the future, has arrived, and will furnish intelligence about all circumstances of life. She interprets dreams, law matters, and love, by astrology, books, and science, and tells to ladies and gentlemen the name of the persons they will marry; also the names of her visitors. Mrs. Alwin speaks the English, French, and German languages. Residence, 25, Rivington Street, upstairs, near the Bowery. Ladies 50 cents, gentlemen 1 dollar."

"Mrs. Prewster, from Philadelphia, tenders her services to the ladies and gentlemen of this city in astrology, love, and law matters, interpreting dreams, &c., by books and science, constantly relied on by Napoleon; and will tell the name of the lady or gentleman they will marry; also the names of the visitors. No. 59, Great Jones Street, corner of the Bowery. Ladies 50 cents, gentlemen 1 dollar."

"The celebrated Dr. F. Shuman, Swede by birth, just arrived in this city, offers his services in astrology, physiognomy, &c. He can be consulted in matters of love, marriage, past, present, and future events of life. Nativity calculated for ladies and gentlemen. Mr. S. has travelled through the greater part of the world in the last forty-two years, and is willing to give the most satisfactory information. Office, 175, Chambers Street, near Greenwich."

(From a recent number of the *New York Herald*. Notes and Queries, December 10, 1853, p. 561.)

[33] The Æneis. B. III.

[34] Carthon. Ossian.

[35] "The Literature and Romance of Northern Europe," by W. and Mary Howitt. Vol. I., p. 99.

[36] Howitt. "The Literature and Romance of Northern Europe." Vol. I.

[37] An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians; by E. W. Lane, Vol. I, p. 311.

[38] Adventures in the Libyan Desert, p. 22.

[39] B. I, ch. 13 and 16.

[40] Thorpe's Yule-Tide Stories. Bohn, p. 248. And Table of Contents, p. XIII.

[41] "The Fall of the Nibelungers," &c.; a Translation of the Nibelunge Nôt, or Nibelungenlied, by W. N. Lettsom, p. 59, St. 346, 347; p. 167, St. 983.

[42] Thorpe. Op. cit. Table of Contents, p. IX.

[43] "The marvellous stories, the frightful tales, the threats, which were so long the apanage of infancy, would dispose the naturally impressionable mind to receive all the fantastic creations of the period. Now, it is said, the system is completely changed, and they are taught to ridicule these ancient beliefs. This argument would be unanswerable if they spoke of colleges and boarding schools; but they forget the servants to whom are confided the early years of infants; thus is the nursery always reviving fooleries, terrors, and frightful stories, in the middle of which the infant grows. I will content me with one example, that of one of the celebrated poets of England, Robert Burns. 'I owed much in my infancy,' says this writer, 'to an old woman who lived with us, and who was extremely ignorant, and remarkably credulous and superstitious. No one in the country had a larger collection of tales and songs respecting devils, fairies, ghosts, sorcerers, magicians, jack-o'-lanterns, hobgoblins, phantoms, apparitions, charms, giants, dragons, &c.

"'Not only did these tales cultivate in me the germs of poesy, but they had such an effect upon my imagination, that, even now, in my night journeys, I have often, in spite of myself, the eye upon certain suspicious places; and although no one can be more sceptical in such matters, an effort of the reason is occasionally necessary to chase away these vain terrors.'

"'Darkness, obscurity, the silence of night, solitariness, contribute strongly to develop the feeling of terror so wrongly cast in the minds of infants. Their eye readily perceives frightful figures which regard them in a menacing manner; their chamber is peopled with assassins, robbers, devils, and monsters of all kinds."—*A. Brierre de Boismont. "Des Hallucinations; ou Histoire Raisonnée des Apparitions,"* &c. Ed. II, 1852, p. 362.

[44] This idea has been beautifully expressed by Longfellow in the "Voices of the Night."

"When the hours of day are numbered,
  And the voices of the night
Wake the better soul, that slumbered,
  To a holy calm delight,

Ere the evening lamps are lighted,
And like phantoms grim and tall,
Shadows from the fitful firelight
Dance upon the parlour wall;

Then the forms of the departed
Enter at the open door;
The beloved, the true-hearted,
Come to visit us once more." &c.

See also Washington Irving's Bracebridge Hall. St. Martin's Eve.

[45] "I looked to heaven, and tried to pray;
But or ever a prayer had gusht,
A wicked whisper came and made
My heart as dry as dust."

Coleridge. "Ancient Mariner."

[46] Brewster. Natural Magic, p. 15.

[47] A few hundred feet from the place where this occurred, is a lane (Oldfield Lane, Wortley, near Leeds) which was noted, many years ago, as the beat of one of those somewhat rare spectres, a headless ghost. Some are living even now who have *known* those who had seen this phantom. When last seen, it appeared as a comfortable-looking man, dressed in a drab-coat, and carried the head under the arm. As a Yorkshire version of a very ancient and wide-spread superstition, its memory is worth preserving. The belief in headless ghosts is found in many parts of England, Ireland (the *Dullahan* or *Dulachan*), Wales, Scotland, Spain, France, and Germany.

[48] Chambers' Miscellany. Art. "Spectral Apparitions," &c.

[49] Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft. 2nd Ed., p. 3.

[50] "Phantoms of the Far East." Chambers' Edinburgh Journal. Vol. XVII, p. 315.

[51] Busby's Lucretius, B. IV.

[52] Temora.

[53] Notes and Queries, Vol. VIII, p. 7.

[54] Letters on Natural Magic. 5th Ed., p. 166.

[55] D. Jardine, "Notes and Queries," Vol. VIII, p. 512, Nov. 26, 1853.

[56] Hudibras. Can. III.

[57] Athenæum. July 2, 1853, p. 801, and Appendix.

[58] Müller. "Manuel de Physiologie." Traduit par A. J. L. Jourdan. 2nd ed., 1851, par E. Littré, T. II., p. 388. See also ¶ A. B. C. E. F., Sect. V, "Phénomènes Subjectifs de Vision," p. 386.

[59] Müller. Op. cit., T. II, p. 549.

[60] Boismont. Op. cit., p. 74.

[61] "Researches on Magnetism, Electricity, &c., in their Relations to the Vital Force," by Karl von Reichenbach, Pts. I & II.

[62] "The Night Side of Nature," by Mrs. Crowe. Ed. 1853, p. 362.

[63] "I waste the matin lamp in sighs for thee,
Thy image steals between my God and me;
Thy voice I seem in every hymn to hear,
With every bead I drop too soft a tear."

Eloise and Abelard. Pope.

[64] Notes and Narrative of a Six Years' Mission principally among the Dens of London. By R. W. Vanderkiste, p. 182.

[65] Boismont. Op. cit., p. 110.

[66] "Theory of Pneumatology." By Dr. J. H. Jung-Stilling: translated by Saml. Jackson; p. 197, Lond., 1834.

[67] Op. cit., p. 200.

[68] The apparition of the "*White Lady*" was very irregular and uncertain, for many members of the family died without her spectre having been seen.

[69] "Demonology and Witchcraft." 2nd Ed., p. 350, note.

[70] "Household Words." Conducted by Charles Dickens, March, 1853, p. 6.

[71] Op. cit., p. 142.

[72] "Notes and Queries." Vol. VIII., p. 287.

[73] Ed. 1829, Vol. IV., p. 271.

[74] Op. cit., p. 182.

[75] Op. cit., p. 470.

[76] De. Divinatione et de Fato.

[77] Op. cit. p. 243.

[78] "Of Human Understanding." Bk. II, ch. 33, sect. 10.

[79] Op. cit., p. 65.

[80] "History of Europe," from 1789 to 1815. By Sir Archibald Alison, Bart. Chap. XX, Sect. 25, and notes.

[81] Op. cit., p. 10.

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