

# The Secret Commonwealth of Elves, Fauns & Fairies



Robert Kirk

# THE SECRET COMMONWEALTH OF ELVES FAUNS & FAIRIES



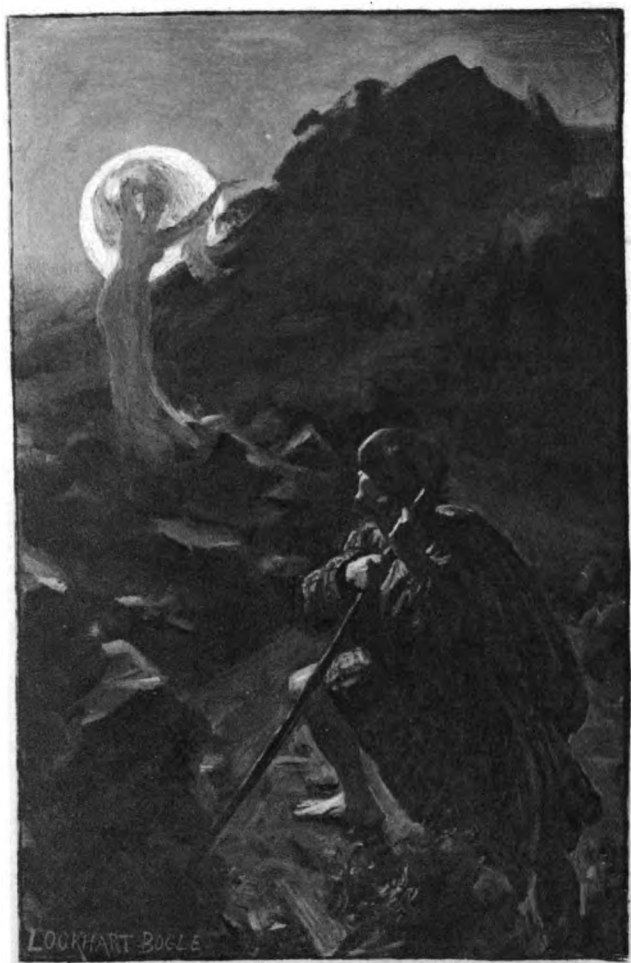
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**The Secret Commonwealth of  
Elves, Fauns, & Fairies**

**A Study in Folk-Lore & Psychical Research. The**

**Text by Robert Kirk, M.A., Minister of**

**Aberfoyle, A.D. 1691. The Comment**

**by Andrew Lang, M.A.**

**A.D. 1893**



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NUTT, IN THE STRAND**

## Dedication.

TO

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

O LOUIS ! you that like them maist,  
Ye're far frae kelpie, wraith, and ghaist,  
And fairy dames, no unco chaste,  
And haunted cell.  
Among a heathen clan ye're placed,  
That kens na hell !

Ye hae nae heather, peat, nor birks,  
Nae troot in a' your burnies lurks,  
There are nae bonny U.P. kirks,  
An awfu' place !  
Nane kens the Covenant o' Works  
Frae that of Grace !

But whiles, maybe, to them ye'll read  
Blads o' the Covenanting creed,  
And whiles their pagan wames ye'll feed  
On halesome parritch ;  
And syne ye'll gar them learn a screed  
O' the Shorter Carritch.

Yet thae uncovenanted shavers  
Hae rowth, ye say, o' clash and clavers  
O' gods and etins—auld wives' havers,  
But their delight ;  
The voice o' him that tells them quavers  
Just wi' fair fright.

And ye might tell, ayont the faem,  
Thae Hieland clashes o' oor hame.  
To speak the truth, I tak' na shame  
To half believe them ;  
And, stamped wi' TUSITALA's name,  
They'll a' receive them.

v

## DEDICATION.

And folk to come, ayont the sea,  
May hear the yowl of the Banshie,  
And frae the water-kelpie flee,  
    Ere a' things cease,  
And island bairns may stolen be  
    By the Folk o' Peace.

Faith, they might steal *us*, wi' ma will,  
And, ken'd I ony Fairy hill,  
I'd lay me down there, snod and still,  
    Their land to win,  
For, man, I've maistly had my fill  
    O' this world's din.



## **The Fairy Minister.**

IN MEMORY OF  
THE REV. ROBERT KIRK,  
WHO WENT TO HIS OWN HERD, AND ENTERED INTO  
THE LAND OF THE PEOPLE OF PEACE,  
IN THE YEAR OF GRACE SIXTEEN  
HUNDRED AND NINETY-TWO,  
AND OF HIS AGE  
FIFTY-TWO.

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People of Peace ! A peaceful man,  
Well worthy of your love was he,  
Who, while the roaring Garry ran  
Red with the life-blood of Dundee,  
While coats were turning, crowns were falling,  
Wandered along his valley still,  
And heard your mystic voices calling  
From fairy knowe and haunted hill.  
He heard, he saw, he knew too well  
The secrets of your fairy clan ;  
You stole him from the haunted dell,  
Who never more was seen of man.  
Now far from heaven, and safe from hell,  
Unknown of earth, he wanders free.  
Would that he might return and tell  
Of his mysterious company !  
For we have tired the Folk of Peace ;  
No more they tax our corn and oil ;  
Their dances on the moorland cease,  
The Brownie stints his wonted toil.  
No more shall any shepherd meet  
The ladies of the fairy clan,  
Nor are their deathly kisses sweet  
On lips of any earthly man.  
And half I envy him who now,  
Clothed in her Court's enchanted green,  
By moonlit loch or mountain's brow  
Is Chaplain to the Fairy Queen.

A. L.

# KIRK'S SECRET COMMONWEALTH.

## INTRODUCTION.

### I. THE HISTORY OF THE BOOK AND AUTHOR.

THE bibliography of the following little tract is extremely obscure. The title-page of the edition of 1815, which we reproduce, gives the date as 1691. Sir Walter Scott says in his *Demonology and Witchcraft* (1830, p. 163, note), "It was printed with the author's name in 1691, and reprinted, in 1815, for Longman & Co." But was there really a printed edition of 1691? Scott says that he never met with an example. Research in our great libraries has discovered none, and there is none save that of 1815 at Abbotsford. The reprint, of one hundred copies, was made, as it states, from no printed text, but from "a manuscript copy preserved in the Advocates' Library." On page 45 of the edition of 1815,

at the end of the comments on Lord Tarbott's Letters, there is a "Note by the Transcriber"—that is, the person who wrote out the manuscript in the Advocates' Library: "See the rest in a little manuscript belonging to Coline Kirk." Now Coline or Colin Kirk, Writer to the Signet, was the son of the Rev. Mr. Kirk, author of the tract. If the son had his father's book only in manuscript, it seems very probable that it was not printed in 1691; that the title-page is only the title-page of a manuscript. Till some printed text of 1691 is discovered, we may doubt, then, whether the hundred copies published in 1815, and now somewhat rare, be not the original printed edition. The editor has a copy of 1815, but it is the only one which he has met with for sale.

The Rev. Robert Kirk, the author of *The Secret Commonwealth*, was a student of theology at St. Andrews: his Master's degree, however, he took at Edinburgh. He was (and this is notable) the youngest and *seventh* son of Mr. James Kirk, minister of Aberfoyle, the place familiar to all readers of *Rob Roy*. As a seventh son, he was, no doubt, specially gifted, and in *The Secret Commonwealth* he lays some stress on

the mystic privileges of such birth. There may be "some secret virtue in the womb of the parent, which increaseth until the seventh son be borne, and decreaseth by the same degree afterwards." It would not surprise us if Mr. Kirk, no less than the Rev. Robert Blair of St. Andrews (1650-60), could heal scrofula by the touch, like royal persons—Charles III. in Italy, for example. As is well known to all, the House of Brunswick has no such powers. However this may have been, Mr. Kirk was probably drawn, by his seventh sonship, to a more careful study of psychical phenomena than most of his brethren bestowed. Little is known of his life. He was minister originally of Balquidder, whence, in 1685, he was transferred to Aberfoyle. This was no Covenanting district, and there is no bigotry in Mr. Kirk's dissertation. He was employed on an "Irish" translation of the Bible, and he published a Psalter in Gaelic (1684). He married, first, Isobel, daughter of Sir Colin Campbell of Mochester, who died in 1680, and, secondly, the daughter of Campbell of Fordy: this lady survived him. From his connection with Campbells, we may misdoubt him for a Whig. By his first wife he

had a son, Colin Kirk, W.S. ; by his second wife, a son who was minister of Dornoch. He died (if he did die, which is disputed) in 1692, aged about fifty-one ; his tomb was inscribed—

ROBERTUS KIRK, A.M.

Linguae Hiberniae Lumen.

The tomb, in Scott's time, was to be seen in the east end of the churchyard of Aberfoyle ; but the ashes of Mr. Kirk *are not there*. His successor, the Rev. Dr. Grahame, in his *Sketches of Picturesque Scenery*, informs us that, as Mr. Kirk was walking on a *dun-shi*, or fairy-hill, in his neighbourhood, he sunk down in a swoon, which was taken for death. "After the ceremony of a seeming funeral," writes Scott (*op. cit.*, p. 105), "the form of the Rev. Robert Kirk appeared to a relation, and commanded him to go to Grahame of Duchray. 'Say to Duchray, who is my cousin as well as your own, that I am not dead, but a captive in Fairyland ; and only one chance remains for my liberation. When the posthumous child, of which my wife has been delivered since my disappearance, shall be brought to baptism, I will appear in the room, when, if Duchray shall throw over my

head the knife or dirk which he holds in his hand, I may be restored to society ; but if this is neglected, I am lost for ever.'” True to his tryst, Mr. Kirk did appear at the christening, and “was visibly seen ;” but Duchray was so astonished that he did not throw his dirk over the head of the appearance, and to society Mr. Kirk has not yet been restored. This is extremely to be regretted, as he could now add matter of much importance to his treatise. Neither history nor tradition has more to tell about Mr. Robert Kirk, who seems to have been a man of good family, a student, and, as his book shows, an innocent and learned person.

## II. THE SECRET COMMONWEALTH.

The tract, of which the reader now knows the history, is a little volume of somewhat singular character. Written in 1691 by the Rev. Robert Kirk, minister of Aberfoyle, it is a kind of metaphysic of the Fairy world. Having lived through the period of the sufferings of the Kirk, the author might have been expected either to neglect Fairyland altogether, or to regard it as a mere appanage of Satan's kingdom—a “burn-

ing question" indeed, for some of the witches who suffered at Presbyterian hands were merely narrators of popular tales about the state of the dead. That she trafficked with the dead, and from a ghost won a medical recipe for the cure of Archbishop Adamson of St. Andrews, was the charge against Alison Pearson. "The Bischope keipit his castle lyk a tod in his holl, seik of a disease of grait fetiditie, and oftymes under the cure of women suspected of witchcraft, namlie, ane wha confessit hir to haiff learnit medecin of ane callit Mr. Wilyeam Simsone, that apeired divers tymes to hir efter his dead, and gaiff hir a buik. . . . She was execut in Edinbruche for a witch" (James Melville's *Diary*, p. 137, 1583). The Archbishop, like other witches, had a familiar in the form of a hare, which once ran before him down the street. These were the beliefs of men of learning like James, the nephew and companion of Andrew Melville. Even in our author's own time, Archbishop Sharp was accused of entertaining "the muckle black Deil" in his study at midnight, and of being "levitated" and dancing in the air. This last feat, creditable to a saint or a Neo-Platonist like Plotinus, was reckoned for

sin to Archbishop Sharp, as may be read in Wodrow's *Analecta*. Thus all Fairydom was commonly looked on as under the same guilt as witchcraft. Yet Mr. Kirk of Aberfoyle, living among Celtic people, treats the land of faery as a mere fact in nature, a world with its own laws, which he investigates without fear of the Accuser of the Brethren. We may thus regard him, even more than Wodrow, as an early student in folk-lore and in psychical research—topics which run into each other—and he shows nothing of the usual persecuting disposition. Nor, again, is Mr. Kirk like Glanvil and Henry More. He does not, save in his title-page and in one brief passage, make superstitious creeds or psychical phenomena into arguments and proofs against modern Sadducees. Firm in his belief, he treats his matter in a scientific spirit, as if he were dealing with generally recognised physical phenomena.

Our study of Mr. Kirk's little tractate must have a double aspect. It must be an essay partly on folk-lore, on popular beliefs, their relation to similar beliefs in other parts of the world, and the residuum of fact, preserved by tradition, which they may contain. On the



other hand, as mental phenomena are in question—such things as premonitions, hallucinations, abnormal or unusual experiences generally—a criticism of Mr. Kirk must verge on “Psychical Research.” The Society organised for that difficult subject certainly takes a vast deal of trouble about all manner of odd reports and strange visions. It “transfers” thoughts of no value, at a great expense of time and of serious hard work. But, as far as the writer has read the Society’s Proceedings, it “takes no keep,” as Malory says, of these affairs in their historical aspect. Whatever hallucination, or illusion, or imposture, or the “subliminal self” can do to-day, has always been done among peoples in every degree of civilisation. An historical study of the topic, as contained in trials for witchcraft, in the reports of travellers and missionaries, in the works of the seventeenth-century Platonists, More, Glanvill, Sinclair, and others, and in the rare tracts such as *The Devil in Glen Luce* and *The Just Devil of Woodstock*, not to mention Lavater, Wierus, Thyræus, Reginald Scott, and so on, is as necessary to the psychologist as to the folk-lorist.<sup>1</sup> If there be an element of fact

<sup>1</sup> Note (a), p. 81.

in modern hypnotic experiments (a matter on which I have really no opinion), it is plain that old magic and witchcraft are not mere illusions, or not commonplace illusions. The subliminal self has his stroke in these affairs. Assuredly the Psychologists should have an historical department. The evidence which they would find is, of course, vitiated in many obvious ways, but the evidence contains much that coincides with that of modern times, and the coincidence can hardly be designed—that is to say, the old Highland seers had no design of abetting modern inquiry. It may be, however, that their methods and ideas have been traditionally handed down to modern “sensitives” and “mediums.” At all events, here is an historical chapter, if it be but a chapter in “The History of Human Error.” These wide and multifarious topics can only be touched on lightly in this essay; the author will be content if he directs the attention of students with more leisure and a better library of *diablerie* to the matter. But first we glance at *The Secret Commonwealth* as folk-lorists.

## III. "THE SUBTERRANEAN INHABITANTS."

Mr. Kirk's first chapter, "Of the Subterranean Inhabitants," naturally suggests the recent speculations of Mr. MacRitchie. The gist of Mr. MacRitchie's *Testimony of Tradition* is that there once was a race of earth-dwellers in this island; that their artificial caves still exist; that this people survive in popular memory as "the legendary Feens," and as the Pechts of popular tales, in which they are regarded as dwarfs. "The Pechts were unco wee bodies, but terrible strang." Here, then, it might be thought that we have the origin of Fairy beliefs. There really was, on this showing, a dwarf race, who actually did live in the "fairy-hills," or howes, now commonly looked on as sepulchral monuments.

There is much in Mr. MacRitchie's theory which does not commend itself to me. The modern legends of Pechts as builders of Glasgow Cathedral, for example, do not appear to prove such a late survival of a race known as Picts, but are on a level with the old Greek belief that the Cyclopes built Mycenæ (*Testimony of Tradition*, p. 72). Granting, for the sake of discussion,

that there were still Picts or Pechs in Galloway when Glasgow Cathedral was built (in the twelfth century), these wild Galloway men, scourges of the English Border, were the very last people to be employed as masons. The truth is that the recent Scotch have entirely forgotten the ages of mediæval art. Accustomed to the ill-built barns of a robbed and stinted Kirk, they looked on the Cathedral as no work of ordinary human beings. It was a creation of the Pechts, as Mycenæ and Tiryns of the mighty walls were creations of the Cyclopes. By another coincidence, the well-known story of the last Pecht, who refuses to divulge the secret of the heather ale, is told in the Volsunga Saga, and in the *Nibelungenlied*, of the Last Niflung. Again, the breaking of a bar of iron, which he takes for a human arm, by the last Pecht is a tale current of the Drakos in modern Greece (see Chambers's *Popular Traditions of Scotland* for the last Pecht). I cannot believe that the historical Picts were a set of half-naked, dwarfish savages, hairy men living underground. These are the topics of Sir Arthur Wardour and Monkbarns. Mr. W. F. Skene may be said to have put the historic Picts in

their proper place as the ancestors of the Highlanders. The Pecht of legend answers to the Drakos and the Cyclopes: the beliefs about his habits may have been suggested by the tumuli, still more by the *brochs*: it seems less probable that they represent an historical memory. As to the Irish "Feens," the topic can only be discussed by Celtic scholars. But it does not follow, because the leader of the Feens seemed a dwarf among giants, that therefore his people were a dwarfish race.<sup>1</sup> The story proves no more than Gulliver's Travels.

Once more, we often read in the Sagas of a hero like Grettir, who opens a howe, has a conflict with a "barrow-wight," as Mr. Morris calls the "howe-dweller," and wins gold and weapons. But the dweller in the howe is often merely the able-bodied ghost of the Norseman, a known and named character, who is buried there; he is not a Pecht. Thus, as it seems to me, the Scotch and Celts possessed a theory of a legendary people, as did the Greeks. Whether any actual traditions of an earlier, perhaps a Finnish race, was at the bottom of the legend, is an obscure question. But, having such a

<sup>1</sup> *The Testimony of Tradition*, p. 75.

belief, the Scotch easily discovered homes for the fancied people in the sepulchral howes: they "combined their information." The Fairies, again, are composite creatures. As they came to births and christenings, and as Norse wise-wives (as in the Saga of Eric the Red) prophesied at festivals, Mr. MacRitchie combines his own information. The Wise-wife is a Finn woman, and Finn and Fairy amalgamate. But the Egyptians, as in the *Tale of Two Brothers* (Maspero, *Contes Egyptiens*), had their Hathors, who came and prophesied at births; the Greeks had their Moeræ, as in the story of Meleager and the burning brand. The Hathors and Moeræ play, in ancient Egypt and in ancient Greece, the part of Fairies at the christening, but surely they were not Finnish women! In short, though a memory of some old race may have mingled in the composite Fairy belief, this is at most but an element in the whole, and the part played by ancestral spirits, naturally earth-dwellers, is probably more important. Bishop Callaway has pointed out, in the preface to his *Zulu Tales*, that what the Highlanders say of the Fairies the Zulus say of "the Ancestors." In many ways, as when persons carried off to

Fairyland meet relations or friends lately deceased, who warn them, as Persephone and Steenie Steenson were warned, to eat no food in this place, Fairyland is clearly a memory of the pre-Christian Hades. There are other elements in the complex mass of Fairy tradition, but Chaucer knew "the Fairy Queen Proserpina," as Campion calls her, and it is plain that in very fact "the dread Persephone," the "Queen over death and the dead," had dwindled into the lady who borrows Tamlane in the ballad. Indeed Kirk mentions but does not approve of this explanation, "that those subterranean people are departed souls." Now, as was said, the dead are dwellers under earth. The worshippers of Chthonian Demeter (Achaia) beat the earth with wands; so does the Zulu sorcerer when he appeals to the Ancestors. And a Macdonald in Moidart, being pressed for his rent, beat the earth, and cried aloud to his dead chief, "Simon, hear me; you were always good to me."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In Father Macdonald's book on Moidart.

## IV. FAIRYLAND AND HADES.

Thus, to my mind at least, the *Subterranean Inhabitants* of Mr. Kirk's book are not so much a traditional recollection of a real dwarfish race living underground (a hypothesis of Sir Walter Scott's), as a lingering memory of the Chthonian beings, "the Ancestors." A good case in point is that of Bessie Dunlop, of Dalry, in Ayrshire, tried on 8th November 1576 for witchcraft. She dealt in medicine and white magic, and obtained her prescriptions from Thomas Reid, slain at Pinkie fight (1547), who often appeared to her, and tried to lead her off to Fairyland. She, like Alison Pearson, was "convict and burnt" (Scott's *Demonology*, p. 146, and Pitcairn's *Criminal Trials*). Both ladies knew the Fairy Queen, and Alison Pearson beheld Maitland of Lethington, and Buccleugh, in Fairyland, as is recounted in a rhymed satire on Archbishop Adamson (Dalzell's *Scottish Poems*, p. 321). These are excellent proofs that Fairyland was a kind of Hades, or home of the dead.

Mr. Kirk, who speaks of the *Sleagh Maith* as confidently as if he were discussing the habits of some remote race which he has visited, credits



them, as the Greek gods were credited, with the power of nourishing themselves on some fine essential part of human sacrifice, of human food, "some fine spirituous Liquors, that peirce like pure Air and Oil, on the poyson or substance of Corns and Liquors." Others, more gross, steal the actual grain, "as do Crowes and Mice." They are heard hammering in the howes: as Brownies they enter houses and cleanse the hearths. They are the Domovoy's, as the Russians call them. John Major, in his exposition of St. Matthew (1518, fol. xlviij.), gives perhaps the oldest account of Brownies, in a believing temper. Major styles them Fauni or *brobne*. They thrash as much grain in one night as twenty men could do. They throw stones about among people sitting by the fire. Whether they can predict future events is doubtful (see Mr. Constable in Major's *Greater Britain*, p. xxx. Edinburgh, 1892). To us they seem not much remote from the Roman Lares—spirits of the household, of the hearth. In all these creatures Mr. Kirk recognises "an abstruse People," who were before our more substantial race, whose furrows are still to be seen on the hill-tops. They never were, to his mind, plain palpable

folk ; they are only visible, in their quarterly flittings, to men of the second sight. That gift of vision includes not only power to see distant or future events, but the viewless forms of air. To shun the flittings, men visit church on the first Sunday of the quarter : then they will be hallowed against elf-shots, "these Arrows that fly in the dark." As is well known, superstition explained the Neolithic arrow-heads as Fairy weapons ; it does not follow that a tradition of a Neolithic people suggested the belief in Fairies. But we cannot deny absolutely that some such memory of an earlier race, a shy and fugitive people who used weapons of stone, may conceivably play its part in the Fairy legend.

Thence Mr. Kirk glides into that singular theory of savage metaphysics which somewhat resembles the Platonic doctrine of Ideas. All things, in Red Indian belief, have somewhere their ideal counterpart or "Father." Thus a donkey, when first seen, was regarded as "the Father" or archetype "of Rabbits." Now the second-sighted behold the "Double-man," "Doppel-ganger," "Astral Body," "Wraith," or what you will, of a living person, and that is merely his counterpart in the abstruse world. The

industry of the Psychical Society has collected much material—evidence, whatever its value, for the existence of the Double-man. We may call it a hallucination, which does not greatly increase our knowledge. From personal experience, and the experience of friends, I am constrained to believe that we may think we see a person who is not really present to the view—who may be in the next room, or downstairs, or a hundred miles off. This experience has occurred to the sane, the unimaginative, the healthy, the free from superstition, and in circumstances by no means mystic—for example, when the person supposed to be seen was not dying, nor distressed, nor in any but the most normal condition. Indeed, the cases when there was nothing abnormal in the state of the person seen are far more numerous, in my personal knowledge, than those in which the person seen was dying, or dead, or excited. The reverse appears to be the rule in the experience of the Psychical Society. “The actual proportion of coincidental to non-coincidental cases, after all deduction for possible sources of error, was in fact such that the probability against the supposition of chance coincidence became enormous, on the assumption of

ordinary accuracy on the part of informants" (Professor Sidgwick, *Proc. S.P.R.*, vol. viii. p. 607). Some 17,000 answers were collected. We must apparently accept these facts as not very abnormal nor very unusual, and doubtless as capable of some subjective explanation. But when such things occurred among imaginative and uneducated Highlanders, they became foundations and proofs of the doctrine of second sight—proofs, too, of the primitive metaphysical doctrine of counterparts and *correspondances*. "They avouch that every Element and different state of Being have Animals resembling these of another Element." By persons not knowing this, "the Roman invention of guardian Angels particularly assigned" has been promulgated. The guardian Angel of the Roman superstition is merely the Double or Co-walker—the type (in the viewless world) of the man in the apparent world. Thus are wraiths and ghosts explained by our Presbyterian psychologist and his Highland flock. All things universally have their types, their reflex: a man's type, or reflex, or "co-walker" may be seen at a distance from or near him during his life—nay, may be seen after his death. The gifted man of

second sight can tell the substantial figure from the airy counterpart. Sometimes the reflex anticipates the action of the reality: "was often seen of old to enter a House, by which the people knew that the Person of that Likeness was to visit them in a few days." It may have occurred to most of us to meet a person in the street whom we took for an acquaintance. It is not he, but we meet the real man a few paces farther on. Thus a distinguished officer, at home on leave, met a friend, as he tells me, in Piccadilly. The other passed without notice: the officer hesitated about following him, did not, and in some fifty yards met his man. There is probably no more in this than resemblance and coincidence, but this is the kind of thing which was worked by the Highlanders into their metaphysics.<sup>1</sup>

The end of the Co-walker is obscure. "This

<sup>1</sup> A much odder case is reported. Two young men photographed a reach of a river. In the photograph, when printed, was visible the dead body of a woman floating on the stream. The water was dragged. Nothing was found; but two or three days later a girl drowned herself in the pool! As the Reports of the Psychical Society sometimes say, "no confirmation has been obtained;" but this is a pleasing instance of the Reflex, and of second sight in a photographic camera.

Copy, Echo, or living Picture goes at last to his own Herd." Thus Ghosts are short-lived, and, according to M. d'Assier on the Manners of Posthumous Man (*L'Homme Posthume*), seldom survive for more than a century. By an airy being of this kind the Highlanders explained the false or morbid appetite. A "joint-eater" inhabited the patient; "he feeds two when he eats." As a rule, the Fairies get their food as witches do—take "the Pith and Milk from their Neighbours' Cows unto their own chiesehold, throw a Hair-tedder, at a great distance, by Airt Magic, only drawing a spigot fastened in a Post, which will bring Milk as farr as a Bull will be heard to roar." This is illustrated in the drinking scene in *Faust*. This kind of charge is familiar in trials for witchcraft.

In accordance with the whole metaphysics of the system of doubles, which are parasites on humanity, is the superstition of nurses stolen by Fairies, and of children kidnapped while changelings are left in their place. The latter accounts for sudden decline and loss of health by a child; he is not the original child, but a Fairy brat. To guard against this, bread (as human food hateful to Fairies—so the Kanekas carry a boiled

yam about at night), or the Bible, or iron is placed in the bed of childbirth. "Iron scares spirits," as the scholiast says of the drawn sword of Odysseus in Hades. The Fairy bride, in Wales, vanishes on being touched with iron. This belief probably came in when iron was a new, rare, and mysterious metal. The mortal nurses in Fairyland are pleasantly illustrated by the ballad

"I heard a cow lowe,  
A bonny, bonny cow lowe,"

in C. Kirkpatrick Sharpe's *Ballad Book*.<sup>1</sup> This part of the superstition is not easy to elucidate. Kirk repeats the well-known tales of the blinding of the mortal who saw too clearly "by making use of their Oyntments." Well-known examples occur in Gervase of Tilbury, and are cited in Scott's note on *Tamlane* in the *Border Minstrelsy*. As Homer fables of the dead, their speech is a kind of whistling like the cry of bats—another indication of the pre-Christian Hades.<sup>2</sup> They have feasts and burials; and Pashley, in his *Travels in Crete*, tells the well-known Border story of a man who fired on a

<sup>1</sup> It is also published in Mrs. Graham Tomson's *Border Ballads* (Walter Scott).

<sup>2</sup> Note (b), p. 81.

Fairy bridal, and heard a voice cry, "Ye have slain the bonny bridegroom." It is, of course, to be noted that the modern Greek superstition of the Nereids, who carry off mortal girls to dance with them till they pine away, answers to some of our Fairy legends, while it will hardly be maintained that the Nereids are a memory of pre-historic Finns. "Antic corybantic jollity" is a note of Nereids, as well as of the *Sleagh Maith*. "The Inconvenience of their *succubi*," the Fairy girls who make love to young men, is well known in the Breton ballad, *Le Sieur Nan*. The same superstition is current among the Kanekas of New Caledonia. My cousin, Mr. Atkinson, was visited by a young Kaneka, who twice or thrice returned to take leave of him with much emotion. When Mr. Atkinson asked what was the matter, the lad said that he had just met, as he thought, the girl of his heart in the forest. After a scene of dalliance she vanished, and he knew that she was a forest Fairy, and that he must die in three days, which he did. This is the "inconvenience of their *succubi*," regretted by Mr. Kirk. Thus it appears that the mass of these opinions is not local, nor Celtic merely, but of world-wide



diffusion. Thus Sir Walter Scott observes of the Afghans and Highlanders, "Their superstitions are the same, or nearly so. The *Gholée Beabacan* (demons of the desert) resemble the *Boddach* of the Highlanders, 'who walked the heath at midnight and at noon'" (*Quarterly Review*, xiv. 289). Again, Mr. Kirk says that "Were-wolves and Witches' true Bodies are (by the union of the spirit of Nature that runs thorow all, echoing and doubling the Blow towards another) wounded at home, when the astrial or assumed Bodies are stricken elsewhere." Thus, if a witch-hare is shot, the witch's real body is hurt in the same part; and Lafitau, in North America, found that when a Huron shot a witch-bird, the real magician was stricken in the same place. The theory that the Fairies appear as "a little rough Dog" is illustrated by the Welsh Dogs of Hell. *Blackwood's Magazine* for 1818 contains many examples of these Hell-dogs, which are often invested in a sheet of fire, as Rink says is the case among the Eskimo. Take a modern instance. "Mr. F. A. Paley and friend, walking home at night on a lonely road, see a large black dog rise from it, slowly walk to the side, and disappear. They search in vain. Mr. Paley

hears subsequently that this mysterious dog is the terror of the neighbourhood, but no such real dog is known." Date, summer 1837 (*Journ. of S.P.R.*, Feb. 1893, p. 31).

The dwellings of these airy shadows of mankind are, naturally, "Fairie Hills." There is such a hill, the Fairy Hill at Aberfoyle, where Mr. Kirk resided: Baillie Nicol Jarvie describes its legends in an admirable passage in *Rob Roy*. Mr. MacRitchie says, "How much of this 'howe' is artificial, or whether any of it is, remains to be discovered." It is much larger than most artificial tumuli. According to Mr. Kirk, the Highlanders "superstitiously believe the souls of their Predecessors to dwell" in the fairy-hills. "And for that end, say they, a Mote or Mount was dedicate beside every Churchyard, to receive the souls till their adjacent bodies arise, and so become as a Fairy hill." Here the Highland philosophers have conspicuously put the cart before the horse. The tumuli are much older than the churches, which were no doubt built beside them because the place had a sacred character. Two very good examples may be seen at Dalry, on the Ken, in Galloway, and at Parton, on Loch Ken. The grassy howes are

large and symmetrical, and the modern Presbyterian churches occupy old sites; at Parton there are ruins of the ancient Catholic church. Round the tumulus at Dalry, according to the local form of the *Märchen* of Hesione, a great dragon used to coil in triple folds, before it was killed by the blacksmith. Nobody, perhaps, can regard these tumuli, and many like them, as anything but sepulchral. On the road between Balantrae, in Ayrshire, and Stranraer, there is a beautiful tumulus above the sea, which at once recalls the barrow above the main that Elpenor in the *Odyssey*, asked Odysseus to build for him, "the memorial of a luckless man." In the *Argonautica* of Apollonius Rhodius, the ghost of a hero who fell at Troy appears to the adventurers on a tumulus like this of the Ayrshire coast. In speaking of these barrows Mr. Kirk tells how, during a famine about 1676, two women had a vision of a treasure hid in a fairy-hill. This they excavated, and discovered some coins "of good money." The great gold corslet of the British Museum is said to have been found in Wales, where tradition spoke of a ghost in golden armour which haunted a hillock. The hillock was excavated, and the golden corslet,

like the Shakespearian bricks, is "alive to testify" to the truth of the story.

#### V. FAIRIES AND PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.

The Fairy belief, we have said, is a composite thing. On the materials given by tradition, such as the memory, perhaps, of a pre-historic race, and by old religion, as in the thoughts about the pre-Christian Hades, poetry and fancy have been at work. Consumption, lingering disease, unexplained disappearances, sudden deaths, have been accounted for by the agency of the Fairies, or People of Peace. If the superstition included no more than this, we might regard it as a natural result of imagination, dealing with facts quite natural in the ordinary course of things. But there are elements in the belief which cannot be so easily dismissed. We must ask whether the abnormal phenomena which have been so frequently discussed, fought over, forgotten, and revived, do not enter into the general mass of folk-lore. They appear most notably in the two branches of Browniedom—of "Pixies," as they say in Devonshire, who haunt the house, and in the

alleged examples of the second sight. The former topic is the more obscure, if not the more curious. Let us examine the occurrences, then, which may have begotten the belief in Brownies, and in house-haunting Pixies or Fairies. These appearances may be alleged, on one hand, to be actual facts in Nature, the workings of some yet unexplained forces; or they may merely be the consequences of some very old traditional method of imposture, vulgar in itself, but still historical. That form of imposture, again, may be wrought either by conscious agents, or unconsciously and automatically by persons under the influence of somnambulism; or, finally, the phenomena may in various cases be due to any one of these three agencies, all of which may possibly be *veræ causæ*, as conscious imposture and trickery is certainly one *vera causa*.

In Mr. Kirk's book we meet "the invisible Wights which haunt Houses, . . . throw great Stones, Pieces of Earth and Wood at the Inhabitants," but "hurt them not at all." As we have said, Major (1518) calls these wights "Fauni or Brobne"—that is, Brownies—and says that they thrash as much grain in one

night as twenty men could do, and throw stones about. The legend of their working was common in Scotland, and a correspondent says that in Devonshire the belief in Pixies who set the house in order exists among the grandparents of the present generation. But the sportive is more common than the kindly aspect of Brownies. Through history we constantly find them causing objects to move without visible contact, and "acting in sport, like Buffoons and Drolls." In his *Letters on Demonology* (p. 377) Scott gives instances where the buffoon or droll was detected, and confessed that the rattlings of plates and movements of objects were caused by an apparatus of threads or horse-hair. He also quotes the famous doings of "The Just Devil of Woodstock" in 1649, which so perplexed and discomfited the Cromwellian Commissioners. He accounts for those annoyances by the confessions of Joe Collins of Oxford, "Funny Joe," which he quotes from Hone's *Every-Day Book*, while Hone quotes from the *British Magazine* of 1747. But the writer in the *British Magazine* gives no references or authorities for the authenticity of Funny Joe's confessions, nor even for the existence of Joseph.

Scott could not find his original in the pamphlets of the British Museum, and some of the statements attributed to Joe do not tally with the official account, and other contemporary documents collected in Sir Walter's *Woodstock*. Joe pretends, for example, to have been secretary to the Commission under the name of Giles Sharpe; but in the other accounts the secretary is named Browne. A Royalist Brownie or Polter-geist lies under shrewd suspicion, but Joe's own existence is unproved, and his alleged evidence is of no value. However, no sane person can dream of doubting that many a Brownie has been as much in flesh and blood as the Brownie of Bodsbeck in Hogg's story.

There remain the less easily explicable tales of strange and humorous disturbances, accompanied by loud sounds, rappings, the moving of objects without visible contact, and so forth.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps we may best examine these by taking modern instances, collected by the Psychical Society, in the first place, and then comparing them with cases recorded at distant times and in remote places. Some curious common features

<sup>1</sup> Many instances may be read of in a little anonymous work, *Obeah*. The scene is Hayti.

will be observed, and the evidence has at least the value of undesigned coincidence. Glanvil, Telfair (minister of Rerrick), the Wesleys, Dr. Adam Clarke, Increase Mather, were not modern students of psychical research. The modern Psychical Researchers, we fear, are not students of old legendary lore, which they dismiss on evidence not first-hand nor scientifically valid. Thus they do not seem to be aware that they are describing, almost in identical terms, phenomena identical with those noted by Telfair, Mather, Lavater, and the rest, and by those ancients attributed to devils. The modern recorders are not consciously copying from old accounts; the coincidences therefore have their value, as proving that certain phenomena have occurred and recurred. Now those phenomena may be due to conscious or to hysterical imposture, but they have been frequent and common enough to keep alive, and probably to originate, a part of the Fairy belief—that part which is concerned with Brownies and house-haunting Pixies, or Domovoy's. These, again, correspond to the tricky beings described by Mr. Leland in his *Etruscan Remains* as survivals of old Roman and Etruscan popular religions, while we find



similar occurrences in the Empire of the Incas not long after the Spanish conquest of Peru.<sup>1</sup>

Beginning, then, with what is nearest to us in time, we take Mr. F. W. H. Myers's essays "On the Alleged Movement of Objects without Contact, occurring not in the Presence of a Paid Medium."<sup>2</sup> The alleged phenomena are, of course, as common as blackberries in the presence of paid mediums, but are to the last degree untrustworthy. Even when there is no paid medium present, the mere contagious excitement which is said to be developed at *séances* makes all that is thought to occur there a story to be taken with plenty of salt.<sup>3</sup> One of Mr. Myers's examples was the result of *séances*, but it had features of great importance for the argument. It will be found in *Proc. S. P. R.*, vol. xix. p. 189, July 1891. The performers are Mr. C., Mrs. C., and Mr. H. Mr. C. and Mrs. C. are spoken of as good witnesses, known to Mr. Myers and Professor Barrett. Mr. H.'s health has suffered so much that he cannot be examined, and Mr.

<sup>1</sup> Note (c), p. 82.

<sup>2</sup> *Proc. S. P. R.*, July 1891, February 1892.

<sup>3</sup> As far as the author has watched *séances* personally, they have ended in nothing but "giggling and making giggle."

H. is the person who interests us here, for reasons which will be given later. All three were "unbelievers" in these matters. On the second evening "lights floated about the room," which was lit, apparently, by a full moon. "F." (who is also "H.") felt cold hands touching, and "hands" recur in the old pre-scientific accounts. The three mages were holding hands tightly at the time. Now Mr. H. had hitherto been in excellent health, but after his chair was dragged from under him, and he was "thrown down on the ground," he went into "a trance." His watch and ring (on the finger of a hand held by Mrs. C.) were carried to a remote part of the room. H. leaves the circle and sits at the window. Another figure walks through the room. H. returns, is "thrown down," his coat is dragged off, and his boots are discovered on a distant sofa. He asks for "something from home," goes into a trance, a photograph locked up by him at home is found on the table. His wife, in town, "being quite ignorant of our having had *séances*, told us that, at that very hour, a fearful crash occurred in his bedroom. The photograph vanished, and returned last night, when H. was in a trance." He is "thrown

down " again. He has "alternate fits of unconsciousness and raving delirium." The home of Mr. and Mrs. C. (not the house where they sat) is vexed by "figures," noises, knockings; "we were sprinkled with water in the night," haunted by sounds of drums and horns, and so forth. Before a "manifestation," "we all felt a sudden chill, like either a wave of intensely cold air passing, or a rapid decrease of temperature."<sup>1</sup>

This is a disgusting story if Mr. H.'s health was ruined by his presence at the performances. The point, however, is that he did behave in epileptic fashion while these events were in progress. It is natural to suppose that, in his "trances," he may have been capable, unconsciously, of feats physically and morally impossible to him in his normal condition. This explanation would not cover all the alleged occurrences, but would account for many of them.

<sup>1</sup> Some *séances* were held at — College, Oxford, about 1875. The performers were all athletic undergraduates. The breath of chill air was always felt "before anything happened," and, when the out-college men had gone, the owner of the rooms, in his bed-chamber, was disturbed by the racket which continued in the sitting-room. But I know not if he had sported his oak!

We now take an ancient instance, similar disturbances at Newberry, in New England, in 1679, similarly accompanied by the presence of an epileptic patient.<sup>1</sup> The house of William Morse was "strangely disquieted by a dæmon." The inmates were Morse, his wife, and their grandson, a boy whose age is not given. The trouble began on December 3, with a sound of heavy objects falling on the roof. On December 8, large stones and bricks "were thrown in at the west end of the house . . . the bedstead was lifted up from the floor, and the bed-staff flung out of the window, and a cat was hurled at the wife. A long staff danced up and down in the chimney. The man's wife put the staff in the fire, but she could not hold it there, inasmuch as it would forcibly fly out; yet after much ado, with joynt strength, they made it to burn. . . . A chair flew about, and at last lighted on the table, where victuals stood ready to eat, and was likely to spoil all, only by a nimble catching they saved some of their meat. . . . A chest was removed from place to place,

<sup>1</sup> *An Essay for the Recording of Illustrious Providences*, by Increase Mather. Boston, 1684; London, Reeves & Turner, 1890, pp. 101-111.

no hand touching it. Two keys would fly about, making a loud noise by knocking against each other. . . . As they lay in bed with their little boy between them, a great stone from the floor of the loft was thrown upon the man's stomach, and he turning it down upon the floor, it was once more thrown upon him." On January 23, 1680, "his ink-horn was taken away from him while he was writing" (he was keeping a diary of these events), "and when by all his seeking he could not find it, at last he saw it drop out of the air, down by the fire. . . . February 2, while he and his boy were eating of cheese, the pieces which he cut were wrested from them. . . . But as for the boy, he was a great sufferer in these afflictions, for on the 18th of December he, sitting by his grandfather, was hurried into great motions. The man made him stand between his legs, but the chair danced up and down, and was like to have cast both man and boy into the fire, and the child was tossed about in such a manner as that they feared his brains would have been beaten out."

All these contortions of the boy were apparently what M. Charcot calls *clownisms*.<sup>1</sup> When

<sup>1</sup> *Diseases of the Nervous System*, iii. 249. London, 1890.

taken to a doctor's house the boy "was free of disturbances," which returned with his return home. He barked like a dog, clucked like a hen, talked nonsense about "Powel," who pinched and bullied him. While he was in bed with the old people, "a pot with its contents was thrown upon them." They were clutched by hands, like Mr. and Mrs. C. Once a voice was heard singing, "Revenge, revenge is sweet." Finally a mate of a ship came, declared that the grandmother was not rightly suspected as a witch, and offered, if he were left alone with the boy, to cure him. "The mate came next day betimes, and the boy was with him till night; since which time his house, Morse saith, has not been molested with evil spirits." Probably the mate used a rope's end: the boy was more speedily cured than Mr. H.

The phenomena are those of droll or buffooning wights, as Mr. Kirk says, and no man can doubt that the boy was at the bottom of the whole affair. But whether he was capable, when well and conscious, of such diversions, is another question. Children like him produced the famous witch-mania in New England.

We have here, undeniably, a well-recorded

case, analogous to that of Mr. H. In a modern case of bell-ringing, heavy thumps, and movement of objects, the agent was "a young girl who had never been out to service before," and who passed the night in a state of wildly agitated somnambulism, repeating the whole of the Service for the day.<sup>1</sup> Mather gives several other examples, in which motives for trickery are manifest, while we hear nothing of an epileptic or hysterical patient.

In the majority of instances, ancient or modern, children are the agents. Thus we have "Physical Phenomena obtained in a Family Circle," that of Mr. and Mrs. Davis, with their children, at Rio Janeiro.<sup>2</sup> The time was 1888. Curiosity had been caused by "the notorious Henry Slade." There were "touches and grasps of hands." A table "ran after me" (Professor Alexander) "and attempted to hem me in," when only C., a little girl, was in the room. "As far as I could see, she did not even touch the table." The chair of Amy (aged thirteen months) was moved about, like that of Master Morse two hundred years earlier. A table jumped into the laps of the

<sup>1</sup> *Proc. S. P. R.*, xix. 160-173.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 173-189.

public. There were raps and thumps, which "seemed to shake the whole building." Lights floated about. A slate, covered with flour, was placed on C.'s lap; her hands lay on the table. Marks of fingers came on the flour, and, in answer to request, the mark of "a naked baby foot." The children present were wearing laced boots, and we are not told that little Amy was under the table. Bluish lights and the phantasm of a dog were seen.

All this answers to an ancient example—the disturbances in Mr. Wesley's house at Epworth, December 1715 to January 1716.<sup>1</sup> The house was a new one, rebuilt in 1709. We have Mr. Samuel Wesley's Journal, with many contemporary letters from members of the family, and later reminiscences. There were many lively girls in the house, and two servants—a maid and a man, recently engaged. The disturbances began with groanings; then came knockings, which flitted about the house. Mr. Wesley heard nothing till December 21. The knocks replied to those made by the family, but they never could imitate the sounds. Mrs. Wesley

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs of the Wesley Family*, by Adam Clarke, LL.D., F.A.S. London, 1823, pp. 161-200.



and Emily saw an object "like a badger" run from under a bed and vanish. The mastiff was much alarmed by the sounds. Mr. Wesley was "thrice pushed by invisible power." The bogie was a Jacobite, as was Mrs. Wesley: Mr. Wesley was for King George. The knocks were violent when that usurper was prayed for. They did not try praying for King James. Robin, the servant, saw a hand-mill work violently. "Naught vexed me but that it was empty. I thought, had it but been full of malt, he might have ground his heart out for me." But this was a jocosé, not an industrious devil. Robin called it "old Jeffries," after a gentleman lately dead; the family called it "Jeffrey," unless one name is a mere misspelling. It "seemed to sweep after" Nancy Wesley, when she swept the chambers. "She thought he might have done it for her, and saved her the trouble." Mrs. Wesley concealed the matter from her husband, "lest he should fancy it was against his own death" (Letter of January 12, 1716-17). This belief in noises foretelling death is very common; compare Scott's nocturnal disturbances at Abbotsford when Bullock, his agent in building it, was dying in London. The racket occurred on April

28 and 29, 1818, and Scott examined the scene "with Beardie's broadsword under my arm."<sup>1</sup> Bullock died in Tenterden Street, in London, whether on April 28 or 29 is not easily to be ascertained. "The noise resembled half a dozen men putting up boards and furniture, and nothing can be more certain than that there was nobody on the premises at the time."<sup>2</sup> The noises used to follow Hetty Wesley, and thump under her feet, as under those of C. in Professor Alexander's narrative. Mr. Wesley's plate "danced before him on the table a pretty while, without anybody's stirring the table."<sup>3</sup> The disturbances quieted down in January, but recurred on March 31. Similar phenomena had occurred "long before" in the family.<sup>4</sup> "The sound very often seemed in the air, in the middle of a room, nor could they ever make any such themselves by any contrivance."<sup>5</sup> On February 16, 1740, twenty-three years later, Emily writes to Jack about "that *wonderful thing* called by us *Jeffrey*."

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Terry, April 30. Lockhart, v. 309.

<sup>2</sup> Scott to Terry, May 16.

<sup>3</sup> Susannah Wesley to Samuel Wesley, March 27, 1717.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 193.

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 194.

. . . That something calls on me against any extraordinary new affliction."

Priestley styles this affair "the best-authenticated that is anywhere extant." He supposes it to have been "a trick of the servants, for mere amusement." The *modus operandi* is difficult to explain. We hear nothing of bad health or hysterics in the household.<sup>1</sup> For our purpose it is enough that a few incidents of this kind, however produced, might originate and keep alive the belief in Brownies, and

"That shrewd and knavish sprite  
Called Robin Goodfellow,"

who

"Frights the maidens of the villagery,  
Skims milk, and sometimes labours in the quern."

By a curious coincidence, we can show a case in which phenomena of the kind usually reported as occurring at *séances*, and in examples like that of William Morse, were actually accepted as manifestations of the *Sleagh Maith*, or Fairies. In his account of the disturbances in the Wesley family, Dr. Clarke, the author, averred that he had himself witnessed similar events. It thus became necessary to consult his *Life* (London,

<sup>1</sup> Note (d), p. 83.

1833). "In the history of my own life," says Dr. Clarke, "I have related this matter in sufficient detail."<sup>1</sup> Unluckily, in his *Life* (pp. 76, 77) he gives scarce any details. Previous to sudden deaths in a family called Church, the phenomena of falling plates, heavy tread, and other noises occurred. Mr. Clarke "sat up one whole night in the kitchen, and most distinctly heard the above noises." He was a born mystic, and even in childhood a reader of Cornelius Agrippa, and, later, of the alchemists. But he records the instance of a woman, who solemnly declared to Mrs. Clarke that a number of the *gentle people* (*Sleagh Maith*) "occasionally frequented her house; that they often conversed with her, one of them putting its hands on her eyes during the time, which hands she represented, from the sensation she had, to be about the size of those of a child of four or five years of age." The family were "worn down" with these visits, and from the mention of touches of hands it is pretty plain that we have to do with the kind of sprite who paws people at *séances*. But these sprites are recognised (the scene is the North of Ireland) as "gentle people," Folk of

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs of the Wesley Family*, p. 198.

Peace. The amusing thing is, that Mr. Clarke, while he believes in Mr. Wesley's Jeffrey, and in the supernatural origin of a noise in a kitchen, laughs at similar phenomena when assigned to Fairies. It is a mere difference of terminology.

Another old example may be given. It is Alexander Telfair's "True Relation" of disturbances at Ringcroft, in the parish of Rerrick.<sup>1</sup> The story is attested by the signatures of Ewart, minister of Kells, in Galloway; Monteith, minister of Borg; Murdoch, minister of Crosmichael, on Loch Ken; Spalding, minister at Parton, also by Loch Ken; Falconer, minister at Keltown; Mr. M'Lellan of Colline, Lennox of Milhouse, and a number of farmers. These were all neighbours, and all attested what they saw and heard. Robert Chambers says, "There never, perhaps, was any mystic history better attested. Few narrations of the kind have included occurrences and appearances which it was more difficult to reconcile with the theory of trick or imposture." Mr. Telfair himself had been

<sup>1</sup> Edinburgh: Mossman, 1696. There is a London reprint, of which I have a copy. The pamphlet is republished in Mr. Stevenson's edition of Sinclair's *Satan's Invisible World Discovered*, 1685-1871, Appendix, p. xix.

chaplain, in 1687, to Sir Thomas Kirkpatrick of Closeburn. He was then an Episcopalian.

Andrew Mackie was a stone-mason at Rerrick. On March 7 (1695?), and for long after, stones began to fly about in his house by night and day. "The stones which hit any person had not half their natural weight." Mackie complained to Telfair, his minister, who entered the house and prayed: nothing odd occurred. As he stood outside, he "saw two little stones drop down on the croft;" then he was asked to return, and was pelted inside the cottage. This was March 11. For a week there was no more trouble, then the disturbances began again. Mr. Telfair was sent for, and was pelted, beaten with a staff, and heard loud knockings. "That night, as I was at prayer, leaning on a bedside, I felt something lifting up my arm. I, casting my eyes thither, perceived a little white hand and arm from the elbow down, but presently it vanished." "There was never anything seen except that hand I saw," and an apparition of a boy in grey clothes. Sometimes the stoning went on in the open air.<sup>1</sup> There were plenty

<sup>1</sup> Compare similar phenomena in *Obeah*, and in Peruvian example, note (c), p. 82.

of touchings, grippings, and scratchings. "The door-bar" (a long, heavy piece of squared wood) "would go thorow the house as if a person were carrying it in their hand, yet nothing seen doing it." Here we compare, in *Proc. S. P. R.*, February 1892, the story of a carpenter's shop at Swanland, in Yorkshire, where pieces of wood were "levitated" into abnormal flight. No imposture was discovered, nor was the presence of any one person necessary.

The ministers of Kells and Cros michael were pelted with stones of eight pounds weight. On April 6, fire-balls floated through the cottage. When five ministers were present, "it made all the house shake, brake a hole through the thatch, and poured in great stones." "It handled the legs of some as with a man's hand;" it hoisted Mr. Telfair, Lennox of Millhouse, and others off the ground! A sieve flew through the house; Mackie caught it; a force gripped it, and pulled the interior part out of the rim. A day of humiliation was solemnly kept in the parish, which only excited the emulation of the disturbing agent; "it continued in a most fearful manner without intermission." Voices were heard, which talked nonsense of a semi-scriptural

kind; finally the thing died out early in May. By the way, on April 28, "it pulled down the end of the house, all the stone-work thereof."

This is a very odd case, as no suspicion is thrown on the children. The attestations of several witnesses are given, not only at the close, but for almost every separate incident. The vision of the white hand is agreeable.

*The Devil of Glen Luce*, in Galloway, was published by Sinclair in his *Hydrostaticks*, of all places, in 1672, and again in *Satan's Invisible World*, and by Glanvil in *Sadducismus Triumphatus*. In this affair a boy called Thomas, a son of the unlucky householder, was clearly the agent. The phenomena were stone-throwing, beating with sticks, levitation of a plate, and a great deal of voices, probably uttered by the aforesaid Thomas. The Synod ordered a day of humiliation (1655-56).

The affair of the Drummer of Tedworth (1661) is, or ought to be, too well known for quotation. The troubles began after Mr. Mompesson seized the drum of a vagrant musician. In the presence of a clergyman, chairs walked about the room of themselves, "a bed-staff was thrown at the minister, but so favourably that a lock of



wool could not have fallen more softly." The children, as usual, were especially haunted. A jingling of money was common, as it also was at Epworth. Lights wandered about the house, "blue and glimmering." The noise was persistent in the woodwork of the children's beds, while their hands were outside. The knocks answered knocks made by visitors. There were divers other marvels. The Drummer was suspected, but, consciously or not, the children were probably the agents. They seem to have been in their usual health.<sup>1</sup> In Galashiels (date not given), loud knocks on the floor accompanied a hystero-epileptic girl wherever she sat. In bed, "her body was so lifted up that many strong men were not able to keep it down." The minister, who could make nothing of her, was Mr. Wilkie; the girl was Margaret Wilson (Sinclair, p. 200).

This little parcel of strange stories may suffice to show that part of the Fairy belief is based on such incidents as still occur, or are reported to occur, just in the old fashion. It is for psychologists and physicians to ascertain how far, if at

<sup>1</sup> Glanvil's version is given in Sinclair's *Satan's Invisible World*.

all, the incidents are produced by hysterical, or epileptic, or somnambulistic patients. Common forthright trickery is usually detected in paid mediums. But the trickery simulates real events, or continues an old traditional form of imposture. The moral that parents should not allow their children to be present at *séances* hardly needs enforcing. Some of them may escape unharmed, but frightful injuries may be inflicted on health and on character.<sup>1</sup>

#### VI. SECOND SIGHT AND "TELEPATHY."

We have already hinted that events of an ordinary kind—illusions, cases of mistaken identity, or hallucination—are probably the groundwork in part of the Highland belief in second sight. Of course, if a certain proportion of hallucinations were or could be taken for "veridical," attention would be given to these alone: the others would be neglected. The Psychical Society has collected and examined hundreds of these cases in modern life.

The Society may find out, experimentally, whether second sight can be acquired in the manner described by Mr. Kirk—whether by

<sup>1</sup> Note (c), p. 85.

the hair tether, or by merely putting the foot under that of a seer. Thus contact is used in thought reading, as, in second sight, the seer by contact communicates his hallucination. Second sight itself is now called telepathy, which, however, does not essentially advance our knowledge of the subject. It is either very common, or people who choose to claim the possession of it are very common. In our society it is mere matter for idle tales; in the Highlands the second sight was a belief and a system. Mr. Pepys and Dr. Johnson investigated the matter, and Dr. Johnson came away open to conviction, but unconvinced. The Psychical Society is now examining second sight in the Highlands. It is interesting to learn that the Presbyterian seers justified their visions out of the Bible, which also justified the burning of these gifted men on occasion. Mr. Kirk is tolerant enough to ascribe their visions to a "bounty of Providence." This may have passed, north of the Highland line, but in Fife and the south the seers would speedily have been accommodated with a stake and tar-barrel. The writings of Wodrow and Mr. Robert Blair of St. Andrews (1650-60)

prove that if a savoury preacher wrought marvels, he was inspired, but if an amateur did the very same things, — prophesied, healed diseases, and so forth,—he, or she, was likely to be haled before the Presbytery, and possibly dragged to the stake. In the Highlands these invidious distinctions were less forcibly drawn. Mr. Kirk treats the whole question in his curiously cold scientific way. If these things occur, they are in the realm of Nature, and are results of causes which may be variously conjectured. They may be providential, or a sport of evolution, derived from “a complexionall Quality of the first acquirer,” which often becomes hereditary in his lineage.

Lord Tarbott's letter to an inquirer, Robert Boyle, is added by Mr. Kirk to his little treatise, with his own annotations. His belief that the Fairy sights could only be seen while the eyes are kept steady without twinkling, is attested by a well-known anecdote. On the afternoon of Culloden, a little girl, staying with Lord Lovat at Gortuleg, was reading in a window-seat. Chancing to look out, she saw a company of headlong riders hastening to the castle. Believing them to be the *Sleagh Maith*,

she tried hard to keep her eyes from twinkling, that she might not lose the vision. But these, alas! were no Fairies, they were Prince Charles and his men flying from the victorious English. The tale proves that the belief long survived the day of the minister of Aberfoyle. Lord Tarbott mentions, also, the vision of the shroud on the breast of a man about to die, which seems to be alluded to in the prophecy of Theoclymenus in the *Odyssey*. Lord Tarbott's tales are of the familiar kind, there are dozens of such in *Theophilus Insulanus*. Mr. Kirk's notes are chiefly remarkable for his citation of Walter Grahame's "evil eye," which killed what he praised,—a world-wide superstition, too common to need supporting by foreign and classical examples.

Unluckily, at this point Mr. Kirk abandons what we may call his scientific attitude. He has accounted for his "supernatural" affairs as not supernatural at all, but phenomena in Nature, and subject, like other phenomena, to laws. But now it occurs to him to explain the conduct of his *Sleagh Maith* as the result of missionary zeal on their part: "they endeavour to convince us of a Deity;" though, on the face

of his argument, a Co-walker no more proves a Deity than does an ordinary "walker." He may have been reading "the learned Dr. Mor" (More the Platonist), and may have altered his ideas. His account of a girl who learned, or rather composed, a long poem by aid of "our nimble and courteous spirits," affords an early example of what is called "an inspirational medium." It is unlucky that Mr. Kirk did not publish this work, of which he had a copy. The ordinary "spiritual" poetry may be written, as Dr. Johnson said of *Ossian*, "by any one who would abandon his mind to it." When Mr. Kirk maintains that Neolithic arrow-heads could not have been executed "by all the Airt of man," he relapses from his usual odd common-sense. He also believes in men who are magically shot-proof, like Claverhouse, who had to be shot by a silver bullet; like Archbishop Sharp, on whom his pious assassins erroneously held that their bullets took no effect; and like certain soldiers mentioned by Dugald Dalgetty of Drumthwacket. This absurd belief was very generally held by the Covenanters. Where his local superstitions and those of his generation are not concerned, Mr. Kirk recovers his clearness of intellect. In

Purgatory he finds only the pre-Christian Hades, "our Secret Republick," with an ecclesiastical colouring—"additional Fictions of Monks' doting and crazied Heads." Mr. Kirk did not perceive the danger involved in his own argument. If a Highland second-sighted man answers to a Hebrew prophet in his visions and trances, a Hebrew prophet is in danger of being no more considered than a Highland second-sighted man. However, it is to Mr. Kirk's praise that he shows no persecuting disposition as far as witches are concerned (though he has seen them pricked), and that he argues very fairly from his premisses, and within his limits.<sup>1</sup> He recognises the unity of spiritual phenomena and of popular beliefs, whether it springs from a common well-head of delusion in our nature, or whether it really has a source in the observation of peculiar and rather rare phenomena.

To the Edinburgh edition of 1815 (probably the only one) the editor added the work of Theophilus Insulanus on Second Sight. This is not rare nor expensive, and we do not reproduce it. One case of "telepathy" may be quoted from Theophilus.

<sup>1</sup> Note (f), p. 86.

“Donald Beaton, residenter in Hammir, related that, in his passage from Glasgow to the Isle of Sky, he stopped at Tippermory, a known harbour in the Isle of Mull.” Here some one gave him a loin of venison. Donald, whose wife’s mother was a seer, to try her powers, wished that piece of venison in her hands. “The same night the seer, who lived with her daughter, his wife, apprehended she saw him enter the house with a shapeless lump in his hands—she knew not what, but it resembled flesh, which gave herself and her daughter great joy, as they had despaired of him by his long absence.” This is “telepathy,” if telepathy there be.

Another picturesque tale shows how, on the night before the Rout of Moy, Patrick M’Caskill met the famed M’Rimmon (*sic*), M’Leod’s piper, in the town of Inverness, and saw him contract into the size of a boy of five or six, and expand again into his athletic proportions. M’Rimmon was killed in the Rout of Moy—an attempt to surprise and seize Prince Charles. Before leaving Skye he had prophesied—

“M’Leod shall come back,  
But M’Rimmon shall never.”



The editor is acquainted with a splendid case of second sight in Kensington. The seer was an accomplished English gentleman, and mentioned his vision at the moment to a witness who remembers and corroborates the statement. Thus the Hebrides and Highlands have no monopoly of second sight.

The researches of M. Charcot, M. Richet, and other psychologists do not at present help us much in the matter of veridical second sight. It is not a hallucination "suggested" to a hypnotised subject, but an impression produced by a remote person or event on a subject who has not been hypnotised at all. For example, Dr. Adam Clarke, in his *Life* (vol. ii. p. 16) tells us of Mr. Tracy Clarke, who, being in the Isle of Man with his son, dreamed that he had visited his wife in Liverpool. He told his son that Mrs. Clarke was looking very well, but, contrary to her habit, was sleeping in the best bedroom. On the day when Mr. Clarke said this, Mrs. Clarke, who had been sleeping in her best bedroom, told the little son who lay in her room that she had heard his father ride up to the house, stable his horse, open the door, come upstairs, and walk round her bed, but that she

could not see him. This is a case at least of second hearing, and has no hypnotic explanation.

We end in the candid spirit of Dr. Johnson, as far as the Polter-Geist and second sight are concerned—willing to be convinced, but far indeed from conviction. As to the Fairy belief, we conceive it to be a complex matter, from which tradition, with its memory of earth-dwellers, is not wholly absent, while more is due to a survival of the pre-Christian Hades, and to the belief in local spirits—the Vuis of Melanesia, the Nereids of ancient and modern Greece, the Lares of Rome, the fateful Mœræ and Hathors—old imaginings of a world not yet “dispeopled of its dreams.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The “earth-houses” in Scotland and the isles, which seem to have been inhabited at an early period, can seldom be called hills or mounds; being built for purposes of concealment, they are usually almost on a level with the surrounding land. The *Fairy hills*, on the other hand, are higher and much more notable, and were probably sepulchral. This, at least, is the impression left on me by Mr. MacRitchie’s book, *The Underground Life*. (Privately printed. Edinburgh, 1892.)





**Puss-in-Boots smells a rat.**



# AN ESSAY

OF

The Nature and Actions of the Subterranean (and, for the most Part,) Invisible People, heretofore going under the name of ELVES, FAUNES, and FAIRIES, or the lyke, among the Low-Country Scots, as they are described by those who have the SECOND SIGHT; and now, to occasion further Inquiry, collected and compared, by a Circumspect Inquirer residing among the Scottish-Irish in Scotland.

A



# Secret Commonwealth,

OR,

A Treatise displaying the Chiefe Curiosities  
as they are in Use among diverse of the  
People of Scotland to this Day ;  
SINGULARITIES for the  
most Part peculiar to  
that Nation.

A Subject not heretofore discoursed of by any of our  
Writers ; and yet ventured on in an Essay  
to suppress the impudent and growing  
Atheisme of this Age, and to  
satisfie the desire of some  
choice Freinds.

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*Then a Spirit passed before my Face, the Hair of my  
Flesh stood up ; it stood still, but I could not discern  
the Forme thereof ; ane Image was before mine Eyes.*  
—Job, 4. 15, 16.

*This is a REBELLIOUS PEOPLE, which say to the Siers, sie  
not ; and to the Prophets, prophesie not unto us right  
Things, bot speak unto us smoothe Things.*—Isaiah,  
30. 9, 10.

*And the Man whose Eyes were open hath said.*—Num-  
bers, 24. 15.

*For now we sie thorough a Glas darkly, but then Face to  
Face.*—1 Corinth. 13. 12.

*It doth not yet appear what we shall be ; but we shall be  
lyke God, and sie him as he is.*—1 John, 3. 2.

*Μη γιναντες μαιωδησονται υποκατωθεν υδατος και των  
γειτονων αυτον ;*—Job, 26. 5 (Septuag.).

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By MR ROBERT KIRK, Minister at Aberfoill

1691.





## CHAPTER I.

### OF THE SUBTERRANEAN INHABITANTS.



THESE *Siths*, or FAIRIES, they call *Sleagh Maith*, or the Good People, it would seem, to prevent the Dint of their ill Attempts, (for the Irish use to blefs all they fear Harme of;) and are said to be of a midle Nature betuixt Man and Angel, as were Dæmons thought to be of old; of intelligent studious Spirits, and light changable Bodies, (lyke those called Astral,) somewhat of the Nature of a condensed Cloud, and best seen in Twilight. Thes Bodies be so plyable thorough the Subtilty of the Spirits that agitate them, that they can make them appear or disappear att Pleasure. Some have Bodies or Vehicles so spungious, thin, and defecat, that they are fed by only sucking into some fine spirituous Liquors, that peirce lyke  
pure

pure Air and Oyl: others feid more grofs on the Foyfon or fubftance of Corns and Liquors, or Corne it felfe that grows on the Surface of the Earth, which thefe Fairies steall away, partly invifible, partly preying on the Grain, as do Crowes and Mice; wherefore in this fame Age, they are fome times heard to bake Bread, ftrike Hammers, and do fuch lyke Services within the little Hillocks they moft haunt: fome whereof of old, before the Gofpell difpelled Paganifm, and in fome barbarous Places as yet, enter Houfes after all are at reft, and fet the Kitchens in order, cleaning all the Veffels. Such Drags goe under the name of Brownies. When we have plenty, they have Scarcity at their Homes; and on the contrarie (for they are empowred to catch as much Prey everywhere as they please,) there Robberies notwithstanding oft tymes occaffion great Rickes of Corne not to bleed fo weill, (as they call it,) or prove fo copious by verie farr as wes expected by the Owner.

THERE Bodies of congealled Air are fome tymes caried aloft, other whiles grovell in different Schapes, and enter into any Cranie or Clift  
of

of the Earth where Air enters, to their ordinary Dwellings; the Earth being full of Cavities and Cells, and there being no Place nor Creature but is supposed to have other Animals (greater or lesser) living in or upon it as Inhabitants; and no such thing as a pure Wilderネス in the whole Universe.

2. WE then (the more terrestriall kind have now so numerously planted all Countreys,) do labour for that abstruse People, as well as for ourselves. Albeit, when severall Countreys were uninhabited by us, these had their easy Tillage above Ground, as we now. The Print of those Furrows do yet remaine to be seen on the Shoulders of very high Hills, which was done when the champayn Ground was Wood and Forrest.

THEY remove to other Lodgings at the Beginning of each Quarter of the Year, so traversing till Doomfday, being imputent and [impotent of?] staying in one Place, and finding some Ease by so purning [Journeying] and changing Habitations. Their chamælion-lyke Bodies swim in the Air near the Earth with Bag and Bagadge; and at such revolution of Time, SEERS, or Men  
of

of the SECOND SIGHT, (Females being feldome fo qualified) have very terrifying Encounters with them, even on High Ways ; who therefoir ufually fhune to travell abroad at thefe four Seafons of the Year, and thereby have made it a Cuf tome to this Day among the Scottifh-Irifh to keep Church duely evry firft Sunday of the Quarter to fene or hallow themfelves, their Corns and Cattell, from the Shots and Stealth of thefe wandring Tribes ; and many of thefe fuperftitious People will not be feen in Church againe till the nixt Quarter begin, as if no Duty were to be learned or done by them, but all the Ufe of Worfhup and Sermons were to fave them from thefe Arrows that fly in the Dark.<sup>1</sup>

THEY are diftributed in Tribes and Orders, and have Children, Nurfes, Mariages, Deaths, and Burialls, in appearance, even as we, (unlefs they fo do for a Mock-fhow, or to prognoficate fome fuch Things among us.)

3. THEY are clearly feen by thefe Men of the SECOND SIGHT to eat at Funeralls [and] Banquets ; hence many of the Scottifh-Irifh will not  
teaft

<sup>1</sup> Note (a), p. 86.

teast Meat at these Meittings, lest they have Communion with, or be poysoned by, them. So are they seen to carrie the Beer or Coffin with the Corps among the middle-earth Men to the Grave. Some Men of that exalted Sight (whither by Art or Nature) have told me they have seen at these Meittings a Doubleman, or the Shape of some Man in two places; that is, a superterranean and a subterranean Inhabitant, perfectly resembling one another in all Points, whom he notwithstanding could easily distinguish one from another, by some secret Tokens and Operations, and so go speak to the Man his Neighbour and Familiar, passing by the Apparition or Resemblance of him. They avouch that every Element and different State of Being have Animals resembling these of another Element; as there be Fishes sometimes at Sea resembling Monks of late Order in all their Hoods and Dresses; so as the Roman invention of good and bad Dæmons, and guardian Angels particularly assigned, is called by them an ignorant Mistake, sprung only from this Originall. They call this Reflex-man a Co-walker, every way like the  
Man,

Man, as a Twin-brother and Companion, haunting him as his shadow, as is oft seen and known among Men (resembling the Originall,) both before and after the Originall is dead; and was also often seen of old to enter a Hous, by which the People knew that the Person of that Liknes was to Visite them within a few days. This Copy, Echo, or living Picture, goes att laft to his own Herd. It accompanied that Person so long and frequently for Ends best known to it selfe, whither to guard him from the secret Assaults of some of its own Folks, or only as ane sportfull Ape to counterfeit all his Actions. However, the Stories of old WITCHES prove beyond contradiction, that all Sorts of People, Spirits which assume light aery Bodies, or crazed Bodies co-acted by forrein Spirits, seem to have some Pleasure, (at least to affuage from Pain or Melancholy,) by frisking and capering like Satyrs, or whistling and screeching (like un-lukie Birds) in their unhallowed Synagogues and Sabbath. If invited and earnestly required, these Companions make themselves knowne and familiar to Men; other wise, being  
in

in a different State and Element, they nather can nor will easily converse with them. They avouch that a Heluo, or Great-eater, hath a voracious Elve to be his attender, called a Joint-eater or Just-halver, feeding on the Pith or Quintessence of what the Man eats; and that therefoir he continues Lean like a Hawke or Heron, notwithstanding his devouring Appetite: yet it would seem that they convey that substance elsewhere, for these Subterraneans eat but little in their Dwellings; there Food being exactly clean, and served up by Pleasant Children, lyke enchanted Puppets. What Food they extract from us is conveyed to their Homes by secret Paths, as some skilfull Women do the Pith and Milk from their Neighbours Cows into their own Chiefe-hold thorow a Hair-tedder, at a great Distance, by Airt Magic, or by drawing a spickot fastened to a Post, which will bring milk as farr of as a Bull will be heard to roar.<sup>1</sup> The Chiefe made of the remaineing Milk of a Cow thus strain'd will swim in Water like a Cork. The Method they take to recover their Milk is a  
bitter

<sup>1</sup> Note (d), p. 87.



bitter chydng of the suspected Inchanters, charging them by a counter Charme to give them back their own, in God, or their Master's Name. But a little of the Mother's Dung stroakit on the Calves Mouth before it suck any, does prevent this theft.

4. THEIR Houses are called large and fair, and (unless att some odd occasions) unperceaveable by vulgar eyes, like Rachland, and other enchanted Islands, having fir Lights, continual Lamps, and Fires, often seen without Fuel to sustaine them. Women are yet alive who tell they were taken away when in Child-bed to nurse Fairie Children, a lingering voracious Image of their (them?) being left in their place, (like their Reflexion in a Mirrour,) which (as if it were some insatiable Spirit in an assumed Bodie) made first semblance to devour the Meats that it cunningly carried by, and then left the Carcase as if it expired and departed thence by a naturall and common Death. The Child, and Fire, with Food and other Necessaries, are set before the Nurse how soon she enters; but she nather perceaves any Passage out

out, nor fees what those People doe in other Rooms of the Lodging. When the Child is wained, the Nurse dies, or is conveyed back, or gets it to her choice to stay there. But if any Superterraneans be so subtil, as to practice Sights for procuring a Privacy to any of their Mysterics, (such as making use of their Oyntments, which as Gyges's Ring makes them invifible, or nimble, or casts them in a Trance, or alters their Shape, or makes Things appear at a vast Distance, &c.) they smite them without Paine, as with a Puff of Wind, and bereave them of both the naturall and acquired Sights in the twinkling of ane Eye, (both these Sights, where once they come, being in the same Organ and inseparable,) or they strick them Dumb. The Tramontains to this Day put Bread, the Bible, or a piece of Iron, in Womens Beds when travelling, to save them from being thus stollen; and they commonly report, that all uncouth, unknown Wights are terrified by nothing earthly so much as by cold Iron. They delivver the Reason to be that Hell lying betwixt the chill Tempests, and the Fire Brands of scalding Metals

Metals, and Iron of the North, (hence the Loadstone causes a tendency to that Point,) by an Antipathy thereto, these odious far-fencing Creatures shrug and fright at all that comes thence relating to so abhorred a Place, whence their Torment is either begun, or feared to come hereafter.

5. THEIR Apparell and Speech is like that of the People and Countrey under which they live: so are they seen to wear Plaids and variegated Garments in the Highlands of Scotland, and Suanochs therefore in Ireland. They speak but little, and that by way of whistling, clear, not rough. The verie Divels conjured in any Countrey, do answer in the Language of the Place; yet sometimes the Subterraneans speak more distinctly than at other times. Their Women are said to Spine very fine, to Dy, to Tossue, and Embroyder: but whither it is as manuell Operation of substantiall refined Stuffs, with apt and solid Instruments, or only curious Cob-webs, impalpable Rainbows, and a fantastic Imitation of the Actions of more terrestriall Mortalls, since it transcended all the

the Senfes of the Seere to difcerne whither, I leave to conjecture as I found it.

6. **THERE** Men travell much abroad, either prefaging or aping the difmall and tragicall Actions of fome amongft us ; and have alfo many difaftorous Doings of their own, as Convocations, Fighting, Gafhes, Wounds, and Burialls, both in the Earth and Air. They live much longer than wee ; yet die at laft, or [at] leaft vanifh from that State. 'Tis ane of their Tenets, that nothing perifheth, but (as the Sun and Year) every Thing goes in a Circle, leffer or greater, and is renewed and refrefhed in its Revolutions ; as 'tis another, that every Bodie in the Creation moves, (which is a fort of Life ;) and that nothing moves, but [h]as another Animal moving on it ; and fo on, to the utmoft minuteft Corpufcle that's capable to be a Receptacle of Life.

7. **THEY** are faid to have ariftocraticall Rulers and Laws, but no difcernible Religion, Love, or Devotion towards God, the bleffed Maker of all : they difappear whenever they hear his Name invocked, or the Name of JESUS, (at  
which

which all do bow willinglie, or by constraint, that dwell above or beneath within the Earth, Philip. 2. 10;) nor can they act ought at that Time after hearing of that sacred Name. The TABHAISVER, or Seer, that corresponds with this kind of Familiars, can bring them with a Spel to appear to himselfe or others when he pleases, as readily as Endor Witch to those of her Kind. He tells, they are ever readiest to go on hurtfull Errands, but feldome will be the Messengers of great Good to Men. He is not terrified with their Sight when he calls them, but seeing them in a surprize (as often he does) frights him extreamly. And glaid would he be quite of such, for the hideous Spectacles seen among them; as the torturing of some Wight, earnest ghostly flaring Looks, Skirmishes, and the like. They do not all the Harme which appearingly they have Power to do; nor are they perceaved to be in great Pain, save that they are usewally silent and fullen. They are said to have many pleasant toyish Books; but the operation of these Peices only appears in some Paroxisms of antic corybantic Jolity, as if  
ravisht

ravisht and prompted by a new Spirit entering into them at that Instant, lighter and mirrier than their own. Other Books they have of involved abstruse Sense, much like the Rosurcian [Rosycrucian] Style. They have nothing of the Bible, save collected Parcells for Charms and counter Charms; not to defend themselves withall, but to operate on other Animals, for they are a People invulnerable by our Weapons; and albeit Were-wolves and Witches true Bodies are (by the union of the Spirit of Nature that runs thorow all, echoing and doubling the Blow towards another) wounded at Home, when the astrial assumed Bodies are stricken elsewhere; as the Strings of a Second Harp, tune to ane unifon, Sounds, though only ane be struck; yet these People have not a second, or so grofs a Bodie at all, to be so pierced; but as Air, which when divyded units againe; or if they feel Pain by a Blow, they are better Physicians than wee, and quickly cure it. They are not subject to fore Sickneffes, but dwindle and decay at a certain Period, all about ane Age. Some say their continual Sadness is because of

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their

their pendulous State, (like those Men, Luc. 13. 2. 6.) as uncertain what at the last Revolution will become of them, when they are lock't up into ane unchangeable Condition; and if they have any frolic Fitts of Mirth, 'tis as the constrained grinning of a Mort-head, or rather as acted on a Stage, and moved by another, ther [than?] cordially comeing of themselves. But other Men of the Second Sight, being illiterate, and unwary in their Observations, learn from those; one averring those subterranean People to be departed Souls, attending awhile in this inferior State, and clothed with Bodies procured through their Almsdeeds in this Lyfe; fluid, active, ætheriall Vehicles to hold them, that they may not scatter, or wander, and be lost in the Totum, or their first Nothing; but if any were so impious as to have given no Alms, they say when the Souls of such do depairt, they sleep in an unactive State till they resume the terrestriall Bodies again: others, that what the Low-countrey Scotts calls a Wreath, and the Irish TAIBHSHE<sup>1</sup> or Death's Messenger, (appearing

<sup>1</sup> The *Death-candle* is called DRUIG.

pearing fometimes as a little rough Dog, and if croffed and conjured in Time, will be pacified by the Death of any other Creature instead of the fick Man,) is only exuvius Fumes of the Man approaching Death, exhal'd and congeal'd into a various Liknefs,<sup>1</sup> (as Ships and Armies are fometimes fhapt in the Air,) and called aftral Bodies, agitated as Wild-fire with Wind, and are neather Souls or counterfeiting Spirits; yet not a few avouch (as is faid,) that furelie thefe are a numerous People by them felves, having their own Polities. Which Diverfities of Judgments may occafion feverall Inconfonancies in this Re-hearfall, after the narroweft Scrutiny made about it.

8. THEIR Weapons are moft what folid earthly Bodies, nothing of Iron, but much of Stone, like to yellow foft Flint Spa, fhaped like a barbed Arrow-head, but flung like a Dairt, with great Force. Thefe Armes (cut by Airt and Tools it feems beyond humane) have fomething of the Nature of Thunderbolt fubtilty, and mortally wounding the vital Parts without breaking the Skin; of which Wounds I have obferved in Beasts,

<sup>1</sup> Note (c), p. 87.



Beasts, and felt them with my Hands. They are not as infallible Benjamites, hitting at a Hair's-breadth ; nor are they wholly unvanquishable, at least in Appearance.

THE MEN of that SECOND SIGHT do not discover strange Things when asked, but at Fits and Raptures, as if inspyred with some Genius at that Instant, which before did lurk in or about them. Thus I have frequently spoke to one of them, who in his Transport told he cut the Bodie of one of those People in two with his Iron Weapon, and so escaped this Onset, yet he saw nothing left behind of that appearing divyded ; at other Times he out wrestled [wrestled?] some of them. His Neibours often perceaved this Man to disapear at a certane Place, and about one Hour after to become visibible, and discover him selfe near a Bow-shot from the first Place. It was in that Place where he became invisable, said he, that the Subterraneans did encounter and combate with him. Those who are unseened or unsanctified (called Fey) are said to be pierced or wounded with those People's Weapons, which makes them do  
somewhat

somewhat verie unlike their former Practice, causing a sudden Alteration, yet the Cause thereof unperceivable at present; nor have they Power (either they cannot make use of their natural Powers, or ask't not the heavenly Aid,) to escape the Blow impendent. A Man of the Second Sight perceaved a Person standing by him (found to others view) wholly gored in Blood, and he (amazed-like) bid him instantly flee. The whole Man laught at his Airt and Warning, since there was no appearance of Danger. He had scarce contracted his Lips from Laughter, when unexpectedly his Enemy leapt in at his Side, and stab'd him with their Weapons. They also pierce Cows or other Animals, usewally said to be Elf-shot, whose purest Substance (if they die) these Subterraneans take to live on, viz. the aerial and ætherial Parts, the most spirituous Matter for prolonging of Life, such as Aquavitæ (moderately taken) is among Liquors, leaving the terrestrial behind. The Cure of such Hurts is, only for a Man to find out the Hole with his Finger; as if the Spirits flowing from a Man's  
warmed

warme Hand were Antidote sufficient againſt their poyſon'd Dairts.

9. As Birds and Beaſts, whoſe Bodies are much uſed to the Change of the frie and open Air, forſee Storms; ſo thoſe invifible People are more ſagacious to underſtand by the Books of Nature Things to come, than wee, who are peſtered with the groſſer Dregs of all elementary Mixtures, and have our purer Spirits choaked by them. The Deer ſcents out a Man and Powder (tho a late Invention) at a great Diſtance; a hungry Hunter, Bread; and the Raven, a Carrion: Ther Brains, being long clarified by the high and ſubtil Air, will obſerve a very ſmall Change in a Trice. Thus a Man of the Second Sight, perceaving the Operations of theſe forecasting invifible People among us, (indulged thorow a ſtupendious Providence to give Warnings of ſome remarkable Events, either in the Air, Earth, or Waters,) told he ſaw a Winding-ſhroud creeping on a walking healthful Perſons Legs till it come to the Knee; and afterwards it came up to the Midle, then to the Shoulders, and at laſt over the Head, which was viſible to

no

no other Person. And by observing the Spaces of Time betwixt the severall Stages, he easily guessed how long the Man was to live who wore the Shroud ; for when it approached his Head, he told that such a Person was ripe for the Grave.

10. THERE be many Places called Fairie-hills, which the Mountain People think impious and dangerous to peel or discover, by taking Earth or Wood from them ; superstitiously believing the Souls of their Prediceffors to dwell there.<sup>1</sup> And for that End (say they) a Mote or Mount was dedicate beside every Church-yard, to receive the Souls till their adjacent Bodies arise, and so become as a Fairie-hill ; they using Bodies of Air when called Abroad. They also affirme those Creatures that move invifibly in a House, and cast hug great Stones, but do no much Hurt, becaufe counter-wrought by some more courteous and charitable Spirits that are everywhere ready to defend Men, (Dan. 10. 13.) to be Souls that have not attained their Rest, thorough a vehement Desire of revealing a Murther or notable Injurie done or received,

or

<sup>1</sup> Note (d), p. 88.

or a Treafure that was forgot in their Lifyme on Earth, which when difclof'd to a Conjurer alone, the Ghost quite removes.

IN the nixt Country to that of my former Refidence, about the Year 1676, when there was fome Scarcity of Graine, a marvelous Illapfe and Vifion ftrongly ftruck the Imagination of two Women in one Night, living at a good Difance from one another, about a Treafure hid in a Hill, called SITHBHRUAICH, or Fayrie-hill. The Appearance of a Treafure was firft reprefented to the Fancy, and then an audible Voyce named the Place where it was to their awaking Senfes. Whereupon both arofe, and meitting accidentallie at the Place, difcovered their Defigne; and joyntly digging, found a Veffell as large as a Scottifh Peck, full of fmall Pieces of good Money, of ancient Coyn; which halving betuixt them, they fold in Difh-fulls for Difh-fulls of Meall to the Countrey People. Very many of undoubted Credit faw, and had of the Coyn to this Day. But whither it was a good or bad Angell, one of the fubterranean People, or the reftlefs Soul of him who hid it, that

that discovered it, and to what End it was done, I leave to the Examination of others.

11. THESE Subterraneans have Controversies, Doubts, Disputes, Feuds, and Siding of Parties; there being some Ignorance in all Creatures, and the vilest created Intelligences not compassing all Things. As to Vice and Sin, whatever their own Laws be, sure, according to ours, and Equity, natural, civil, and reveal'd, they transgress and commit Acts of Injustice, and Sin, by what is above said, as to their stealing of Nurseries to their Children, and that other sort of Plagiarism in catching our Children away, (may seem to heir some Estate in those invisible Dominions,) which never returne. For the Inconvenience of their Succubi, who tryst with Men, it is abominable; but for Swearing and Intemperance, they are not observed so subject to those Irregularities, as to Envy, Spite, Hypocrisie, Lying, and Diffimulation.

12. As our Religion obliges us not to make a peremptory and curious Search into these Obscurities, so that the Histories of all Ages give as many plain Examples of extraordinary Occurrences

Occurrances as make a modest Inquiry not contemptible. How much is written of Pigme's, Fairies, Nymphs, Syrens, Apparitions, which tho not the tenth Part true, yet could not spring of nothing! Even English Authors relate (of) Barry Island, in Glamorganfhire, that laying your Ear into a Clift of the Rocks, blowing of Bellows, striking of Hammers, clashing of Armour, fying of Iron, will be heard distinctly ever since Merlin inchaunted those fubterranean Wights to a solid manuall forging of Arm's to Aurelius Ambrosius and his Brittons, till he returned; which Merlin being killed in a Battell, and not coming to loofe the Knot, these active Vulcans are there ty'd to a perpetuall Labour. But to dip no deeper into this Well, I will nixt give some Account how the Seer my Informer comes to have this secret Way of Correspondence beyond other Mortalls.

THERE be odd Solemnities at investing a Man with the Priviledges of the whole Mistry of this Second Sight. He must run a Tedder of Hair (which bound a Corps to the Bier) in a Helix [?] about his Midle, from End to End; then

then bow his Head downwards, as did Elijah, 1 Kings, 18. 42. and look back thorough his Legs untill he see a Funerall advance till the People cross two Marches; or look thus back thorough a Hole where was a Knot of Fir. But if the Wind change Points while the Hair Tedder is ty'd about him, he is in Peril of his Life. The usefull Method for a curious Person to get a transient Sight of this otherwise invifible Crew of Subterraneans, (if impotently and over rashly fought,) is to put his [left Foot under the Wizard's right] Foot, and the Seer's Hand is put on the Inquirer's Head, who is to look over the Wizard's right Shoulder, (which has an ill Appearance, as if by this Ceremony an implicit Surrender were made of all betwixt the Wizard's Foot and his Hand, ere the Person can be admitted a privado to the Airt;) then will he see a Multitude of Wight's, like furious hardie Men, flocking to him haiftily from all Quarters, as thick as Atoms in the Air; which are no Nonentities or Phantasms, Creatures proceeding from an affrighted Apprehenfione, confused or crazed Sense, but Realities, appearing



ing to a stable Man in his awaking Sense, and enduring a rationall Tryall of their Being. These thorow Fear strick him breathless and speechless. The Wizard, defending the Lawfullness of his Skill, forbids such Horror, and comforts his Novice by telling of Zacharias, as being struck speechless at seeing Apparitions, Luke, 1. 20. Then he further maintains his Airt, by vouching Elifha to have had the same, and disclof'd it thus unto his Servant in 2 Kings, 6. 17. when he blinded the Syrians; and Peter in Act, 5. 9. forfeing the Death of Saphira, by perceiving as it were her Winding-sheet about her before hand; and Paul, in 2nd Corinth. 12. 4. who got such a Vision and Sight as should not, nor could be told. Elifha also in his Chamber saw Gehazi his Servant, at a great Distance, taking a reward from Naaman, 2d Kings, 5. 26. Hence were the Prophets frequently called SEERS, or Men of a 2d or more exalted Sight than others. He acts for his Purpose also Math. 4. 8. where the Devil undertakes to give even Jesus a Sight of all Nations, and the finest Things in the World, at one Glance, tho in their  
their

their naturall Situations and Stations at a vast Distance from other. And 'tis said expressly he did let see them; not in a Map it seems, nor by a phantastick magicall juggling of the Sight, which he could not impose upon so discovering a Person. It would appear then to have been a Sight of real solid Substances, and Things of worth, which he intended as a Bait for his Purpose. Whence it might seem, (comparing this Relation of Math. 4. 8. with the former,) that the extraordinary or Second Sight can be given by the Ministry of bad as well as good Spirits to those that will embrace it. And the Instance of Balaam and the Pytheniss make it nothing the less probable. Thus also the Seer trains his Scholler, by telling of the Gradations of Nature, ordered by a wise Providence; that as the Sight of Bats and Owls transcend that of Shrews and Moles, so the five Faculties of Men are clearer than those of Owls; as Eagles, Lynxes, and Cats are brighter than Mens. And again, that Men of the Second Sight (being designed to give warnings against secret Engys) surpass the ordinary Vision of other  
Men

Men, which is a native Habit in some, descended from their Ancestors, and acquired as an artificial Improvement of their natural Sight in others; resembling in their own Kind the usual artificial Helps of optic Glasses, (as Perspectives, Telescopes, and Microscopes,) without which artificial Aids those Men here treated of do perceive Things that, for their Smallness, or Subtlety, and Secrecy, are invisible to others, though daily conversant with them; they having such a Beam continually about them as that of the Sun, which when it shines clear only, lets common Eyes see the Atomes, in the Air, that without those Rayes they could not discern; for some have this Second Sight transmitted from Father to Son through the whole Family, without their own Consent or others teaching, proceeding only from a Bounty of Providence it seems, or by Compact, or by a complexionall Quality of the first Acquirer. As it may seem alike strange (yet nothing vicious) in such as Master Great-rake,<sup>1</sup> the Irish Stroaker, Seventh-sons, and others that cure the King's Evil, and

<sup>1</sup> Note (e), p. 88.

and chase away Defeases and Pains, with only stroaking of the affected Pairt; which (if it be not the Reliques of miraculous Operations, or some secret Virtue in the Womb, of the Parent, which increaseth until Seventh-sons be borne, and decreaseth by the same Degrees afterwards,) proceeds only from the sanitive Balsome of their healthfull Constitutions; Virtue going out from them by spirituous Effluxes unto the Patient, and their vigorous healthy Spirits affecting the sick as usefully the unhealthy Fumes of the sick infect the sound and whole.

13. THE Minor Sort of Seers prognosticate many future Events, only for a Month's Space, from the Shoulder-bone of a Sheep on which a Knife never came, (for as before is said, and the Nazarits of old had something of it) Iron hinders all the Operations of those that travel in the Intrigues of these hidden Dominions. By looking into the Bone, they will tell if Whoredom be committed in the Owner's House; what Money the Master of the Sheep had; if any will die out of that House for that Month; and if any Cattell there will take a Trake, as  
if

if Planet-struck. Then will they prescribe a Preservative and Prevention.

14. A WOMAN (it seems an Exception from the generall Rule,) singularlie wife in these Matters of Foirfight, living in Colafnach, an Isle of the Hebrides, (in the Time of the Marquefs of Montrose his Wars with the States in Scotland,) being notorious among many; and so examined by some that violently feazed that Isle, if she saw them coming or not? She said, she saw them coming many Hours before they came in View of the Isle. But earnestly looking, she some times took them for Enemyes, sometime for Friends; and moreover they look't as if they went from the Isle, not as Men approaching it, which made her not put the Inhabitants on their Guard. The Matter was, that the Barge wherein the Enemie failed, was a little befor taken from the Inhabitants of that same Isle, and the Men had their Backs towards the Isle, when they were plying the oares towards it. Thus this old Scout and Delphian Oracle was at least deceived, and did deceive. Being asked who gave her such Sights  
and

and Warnings, she said, that as soon as she set three Crosses of Straw upon the Palm of her Hand, a great ugly Beast sprang out of the Earth near her, and flew in the Air. If what she enquired had Success according to her Wish, the Beast would descend calmly, and lick up the Crosses. If it would not succeed, the Beast would furiously thrust her and the Crosses over on the Ground, and so vanish to his Place.

15. AMONG other Instances of undoubted Verity, proving in these the Being of such aerial People, or Species of Creatures not vulgarly known, I add the subsequent Relations, some whereof I have from my Acquaintance with the Actors and Patients, and the Rest from the Eye-witnesses to the Matter of Fact. The first whereof shall be of the Woman taken out of her Child-bed, and having a lingring Image of her substituted Bodie in her Roome, which Resemblance decay'd, dy'd, and was bur'd. But the Person stolen returning to her Husband after two Years Space, he being convinced by many undeniable Tokens that she

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was

was his former Wyfe, admitted her Home, and had diverſe Children by her. Among other Reports ſhe gave her Huſband, this was one : That ſhe perceived little what they did in the ſpacious Houſe ſhe lodg'd in, untill ſhe anointed one of her Eyes with a certain Unction that was by her ; which they perceaving to have acquainted her with their Actions, they fain'd her blind of that Eye with a Puff of their Breath. She found the Place full of Light, without any Fountain or Lamp from whence it did ſpring. This Perſon lived in the Countrey nixt to that of my laſt Reſidence, and might furniſh Matter of Diſpute amongſt Caſuiſts, whither if her Huſband had been mary'd in the Interim of her two Years Abſence, he was obliged to divorce from the ſecond Spouſe at the Return of the firſt. There is ane Airt, appearingly without Superſtition, for recovering of ſuch as are ſtolen, but think it ſuperfluous to infer it.

I SAW a Woman of fourtie Years of Age, and examined her (having another Clergie Man in my Companie) about a Report that paſt of her

her long fasting [*her Name is not intyre.*]<sup>1</sup> It was told by them of the House, as well as her selfe, that she tooke verie little or no Food for severall Years past; that she tarried in the Fields over Night, saw and conversed with a People she knew not, having wandered in seeking of her Sheep, and sleep't upon a Hillock, and finding her self transported to another Place before Day. The Woman had a Child since that Time, and is still prettie melanchollyous and silent, hardly ever seen to laugh. Her natural Heat and radical Moisture seem to be equally balanced, lyke ane unextinguished Lamp, and going in a Circle, not unlike to the faint Lyfe of Bees, and some Sort of Birds, that sleep all the Winter over, and revive in the Spring.

It is usuall in all magicall Airts to have the Candidates prepossessit with a Believe of their Tutor's Skill, and Ability to perform their Feats, and act their jugling Pranks and Legerdemain; but a Person called Stewart, possessed with a prejudice at that was spoken of the 2d Sight,

<sup>1</sup> Thus in the Manuscript, which is only a Transcript of Mr. Kirk's Original. Perhaps M<sup>o</sup>Intyre?

and



and living near to my House, was soe put to it by a Seer, before many Witneses, that he lost his Speech and Power of his Legs, and breathing excessively, as if expyryng, because of the many fearfull Wights that appeared to him. The Companie, were forced to carrie him into the House.

It is notoriously known what in Killin, within Perthshire, fell tragically out with a Yeoman that liv'd hard by, who coming into a Companie within an Ale-house, where a Seer sat at Table, that at the Sight of the Intrans Neighbour, the Seer starting, rose to go out of the House; and being asked the Reason of his hast, told that the intrans Man should die within two Days; at which News the named Intrans stabb'd the Seer, and was himself executed two Days after for the Fact.

A MINISTER, verie intelligent, but misbelieving all such Sights as were not ordinar, chancing to be in a narrow Lane with a Seer, who perceaving a Wight of a known Visage furiously to encounter them, the Seer desired the Minister to turn out of the Way; who scorning his Reason

Reason, and holding him selfe in the Path with them, when the Seer was going hastily out of the Way, they were both violently cast a fide to a good Distance, and the Fall made them lame for all their Lyfe. A little after the Minister was carried Home, one came to tol the Bell for the Death of the Man whose Representation met them in the narrow Path some Halfe ane Hour before.

ANOTHER Example is: A Seer in Kintyre, in Scotland, sitting at Table with diverse others, suddenly did cast his Head aside. The Companie asking him why he did it, he answered, that such a Friend of his, by Name, then in Ireland, threatened immediately to cast a Dishfull of Butter in his Face. The Men wrote down the Day and Hour, and sent to the Gentleman to know the Truth; which Deed the Gentleman declared he did at that verie Time, for he knew that his Friend was a Seer, and would make sport with it. The Men that were present, and examined the Matter exactly, told me this Story; and with all, that a Seer would with all his Opticks perceive no other Object so readily as this, at such a Distance.



A SUCCINT ACCOMPT  
OF  
MY LORD TARBOTT'S RELATIONS,  
IN A LETTER TO THE  
HONOURABLE ROBERT BOYLE, ESQUIRE,  
OF THE  
PREDICTIONS MADE BY SEERS,  
Whereof himself was Ear and Eye-witnes.

[I thought fit to adjoyne [it] hereunto, that I might not be thought singular in this Diffquisition; that the Mater of Façt might be undenyably made out; and that I might, with all Submission, give Annotations, with Animadversions, on his supposed Causes of that Phenomenon, with my Reafons of Dissent from his Judgement.]

SIR,

I HEARD very much, but beleived very little,  
of the Second Sight; yet its being assumed  
by

by severall of great Veracity, I was induced to make Inquirie after it in the Year 1652, being then confin'd to abide in the North of Scotland by the English Ufurpers. The more generall Accounts of it were, that many Highlanders, yet far more Islanders, were qualified with this Second Sight; that Men, Women, and Children, indistinctly, were subject to it, and Children, where Parents were not. Some times People came to age, who had it not when young, nor could any tell by what Means produced. It is a Trouble to most of them who are subject to it, and they would be rid of it any Rate if they could. The Sight is of no long Duration, only continuing so long as they can keep their Eyes steady without twinkling. The hardy therefore fix their look, that they may see the longer; but the timorous see only Glances, their Eyes always twinkles at the first Sight of the Object. That which generally is seen by them, are the Species of living Creatures, and of inanimate Things, which was in Motion, such as Ships, and Habits upon Persons. They never see the  
the

the Species of any Person who is already dead. What they foirfie fails not to exist in the Mode, and in that Place where it appears to them. They cannot well know what Space of Time shall interveen between the Apparition and the real Existence: But some of the hardiest and longest Experience have some Rules for Conjectures; as, if they see a Man with a throwding Sheet in the Apparition, they will conjecture at the Nearness or Remoteness of his Death by the more or less of his Bodie that is covered by it. They will ordinarily see their absent Friends, tho at a great Distance, some tymes no less than from America to Scotland, sitting, standing, or walking in some certain Place; and then they conclude with a Assurance that they will see them so and there. If a Man be in love with a Woman, they will ordinarily see the Species of that Man standing by her, and so likewise if a Woman be in love; and they conjecture at their Enjoyments (of each other) by the Species touching (of) the Person, or appearing at a Distance from her (if they enjoy not one another.) If they see  
the

the Species of any Person who is sick to die, they lie them covered over with the shrowding Sheet.

THESE Generalls I had verified to me by such of them as did lie, and were esteemed honest and sober by all the Neighbourhood; for I inquired after such for my Information. And because there were more of these Seers in the Isles of Lewis, Harris, and Uist, than in any other Place, I did entreat Sir James M'Donald (who is now dead) Sir Normand M'Leod, and Mr. Daniel Morison, a verie honest Person, (who are still alive,) to make Inquire in this uncouth Sight, and to acquaint me therewith; which they did, and all found an Agreement in these Generalls, and informed me of many Instances confirming what they said. But though Men of Discretion and Honour, being but at 2d Hand, I will choose rather to put myself than my Friends on the Hazard of being laughed at for incredible Relations.

I WAS once travelling in the Highlands, and a good Number of Servants with me, as is usuall there

there ; and one of them going a little before me, entering into a House where I was to stay all Night, and going haiftily to the Door, he fuddenly ftept back with a Screech, and did fall by a Stone, which hit his Foot. I asked what the Matter was, for he feemed to be very much frightened. He told me very ferioufly that I fhould not lodge in that Houfe, becaufe fhortly a dead Coffin would be carried out of it, for many were carrying of it when he was heard cry. I neglecting his Words, and flaying there, he faid to other of his Servants, he was forry for it, and that furely what he faw would fhortly come to pafs. Tho no fick Perfon was then there, yet the Landlord, a healthy Highlander, died of ane appoplectick Fit before I left the Houfe.

In the year 1653, Alexander Monro (afterward Lieut. Coll. to the Earl of Dunbarton's Regiment,) and I were walking in a Place called Ullabill, in Lochbroom, on a little Plain, at the Foot of a rugged Hill. There was a Servant working with a Spade in the Walk before us ; his Back was to us, and his Face to  
the



the Hill. Before we came to him, he let the Spade fall, and looked toward the Hill. He took Notice of us as wee passed neer by him, which made me look at him; and perceiving him to stair a little strangely, I conjectured him to be a Seer. I called at him, at which he started and smiled. What are you doing? said I. He answered, I have seen a very strange Thing; ane Army of Englishmen, leeding of Horfes, coming down that Hill; and a Number of them are come down to the Plain, and eating the Barley, which is growing in the Field neer to the Hill. This was on the 4th May, (for I notted the Day,) and it was four or fyve Days before the Barley was sown in the Field he spoke of. Alexander Monro asked him how he knew they were Englishmen? He said, because they were leeding of Horfes, and had on Hats and Bootts, which he knew no Scot Man would have there. We took little Notice of the whole Storie, as other than a foolish Vision; but wished that ane English Partie were there, we being then at Warr with them, and the Place almost unaccessable for Horfemen

men. But in the Beginning of August thereafter, the Earle of Middleton (then Lieut. for the King in the Highlands) having occasion to march a Party of his toward the South Highlands, he sent his Foot thorow a Place called Inverlawell; and the Fore-partie which was first down the Hill, did fall off eating the Barley which was on the litle Plain under it. And Monro calling to mynd what the Seer told us, in May preceeding, he wrote of it, and sent ane Express to me to Lochflin, in Ross, (where I then was) with it.

I HAD Occasion once to be in Companie where a Young Lady was, (excuse my not naming of Persons,) and I was told there was a notable Seer in the Companie. I called him to speak with me, as I did ordinarily when I found any of them; and after he had answered me to severall Questions, I asked if he knew any Person to be in love with that Lady. He said he did, but he knew not the Person; for during the two Dayes he had been in her Company, he perceived one standing neer her, and his Head leaning on her Shoulder; which he said  
did

did fore-tell that the Man should marrie her, and die before her, according to his Observa- tion. This was in the Year 1655. I desired him to describe the Person, which he did; so that I could conjecture, by the Description, of such a one, who was of that Ladyes Acquaintance, tho there were no thought of their Marriage till two Years thereafter. And having Occasion, in the Year 1657, to find this Seer, who was ane Islander, in Company with the other Person whom I conjectured to have been described by him, I called him aside, and asked if that was the Person he saw beside the Lady near two Years then past. He said it was he indeed, for he had seen that Lady just then standing by him Hand in Hand. This was some few Months before their Marriage, and that Man is since dead, and the Lady still alive.

I SHALL trouble you but with one more, which I thought most remarkable of any that occurred to me. In January 1652, the above mentioned Lieut. Coll. Alex. Monro and I happened to be in the House of one Wm. M'Cleud of Ferrinlea, in the County of Ross.

He

He, the Landlord, and I were fitting in three Chairs neir the Fire, and in the Corner of the great Chimney there were two Islanders, who were that verie Night come to the Hous, and were related to the Landlord. While the one of them was talking with Monro, I perceaved the other to look oddly toward me. From this Look, and his being ane Islander, I conjectured him a Seer, and asked him, at what he staid? He answered, by desiring me to rise from that Chair, for it was ane unluckie one. I asked him why. He answered, because there was a dead Man in the Chair nixt to me. Well, said I, if it be in the nixt Chair, I may keep mine own. But what is the Liknefs of the Man? He said he was a tall Man, with a long Grey Coat, booted, and one of his Legs hanging over the Arme of the Chair, and his head hanging dead to the other Side, and his Arme backward, as if it were brocken. There were some English Troops then quartered near that Place, and there being at that Time a great Frost after a Thaw, the Country was covered all over with Yce. Four or Fyve of the English ryding by  
this

this House some two Hours after the Vision, while we were sitting by the Fire, we heard a great Noise, which prov'd to be those Troopers, with the Help of other Servants, carrying in one of their Number, who had got a very mischeivous Fall, and had his Arme broke ; and falling frequently in swooning Fits, they brought him into the Hall, and set him in the verie Chair, and in the verie Posture that the Seer had prophesied. But the Man did not die, though he recovered with great Difficulty.

AMONG the Accounts given me by Sir Normand M'clud, there was one worth of special Notice, which was thus. There [was] a Gentleman in the Isle of Harris, who was always seen by the Seers with an Arrow in his Thigh. Such in the Isle who thought those prognostications infalliable, did not doubt but he would be shot in the Thigh before he died. Sir Normand told me that he heard it the Subject of their Discourse for many Years. At last he died without any such Accident. Sir Normand was at his Buriall, at St Clement's Church in the Harris. At the same Time, the Corps of  
another

another Gentleman was brought to be buried in the same verie Church. The Friends on either Side came to debate who should first enter the Church, and in a Trice from Words they came to Blows. One of the Number (who was arm'd with Bow and Arrows) let one fly among them. (Now everie Familie in that Isle have their Buriall-place in the Church in Stone Chests, and the Bodies are carried in open Biers to the Buriall-place.) Sir Normand having appeased the Tumult, one of the Arrows was found shot in the dead Man's Thigh. To this Sir Normand was a Witnes.

IN the Account which Mr Daniel Morison, Parson in the Lewis, gave me, there was one, tho it be heterogeneous from the subject, yet it may [be] worth your Notice. It was of a young Woman in his Parish, who was mightily frightened by seeing her own Image still before her, alwayes when she came to the open Air; the Back of the Image being alwayes to her, so that it was not a reflection as in a Mirrour, but the Species of such a Body as her own, and in a very like Habit, which appeared to herself

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continually before her. The Parson kept her a long while with him, but had no Remedy of her Evill, which troubled her exceedingly. I was told afterwards, that when she was four or fyve Years elder she saw it not.

THESE are Matters of FaCt, which I assure yow they are truly related. But these, and all others that occurred to me, by Information or otherwise, could never lead me into a remote Conjecture of the Cause of so extraordinary a Phænomenon. Whither it be a Quality in the Eyes of some People into these Pairs, concurring with a Quality in the Air also; whither such Species be every where, tho not seen by the Want of Eyes so qualified, or from whatever other Cause, I must leave to the Inquiry of clearer Judgements than mine. But a Hint may be taken from this image which appeared still to this Woman abovementioned, and from another mentioned by Aristotle, in the 4th of his Metaphysicks (if I remember right, for it is long since I read it;) as also from the common Opinion that young Infants (unfurnished with many Objects) do see Apparitions, which were  
not

not seen by those of elder Years; as like wife from this, that severalls did see the Second Sight when in the Highlands or Isles, yet when transported to live in other Countreys, especially in America, they quite lose this Qualitie, as was told me by a Gentleman who knew some of them in Barbadoes, who did see no Vision there, altho he knew them to be Seers when they lived in the Isles of Scotland.

Thus far my Lord Tarbett.

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MY LORD, after narrow Inquisition, hath delivered many true and remarkable observes on this Subject; yet to encourage a further Scrutiny, I crave leave to say,

THAT 1. But a few Women are endued with this Sight in respect of Men, and their Predictions not so certane.

2. This Sight is not criminal, since a Man can come by it unawares, and without his Consent; but it is certaine he see more fatall and fearfull Things than he do gladfome.

3. THE Seers avouch, that severalls who go  
to



to the *Siths*, (or People at Rest, and, in respect of us, in Peace,) before the natural Period of their Lyfe expyre, do frequently appear to them.

4. A VEHEMENT Defyre to attain this Airt is very helpfull to the Inquyrer; and the Species of ane Absent Friend, which appears to the Seers, as clearly as if he had sent his lively Picture to present it selfe before him, is no phantastick Shaddow of a sick Apprehension, but a reality, and a Messinger, coming for unknown Reasons, not from the originall Similitude of it selfe, but from a more swift and pragmantick People, which recreate them selves in offering secret Intelligence to Men, tho generally they are unacquainted with that Kind of Correspondence, as if they had lived in a different element from them.

5. THO my Collections were written long before I saw My Lord of Tarbett's, yet I am glad that his descriptions and mine correspond so nearly. The Maid my Lord mentions, who saw her Image still before her, futeth with the CO-WALKER named in my Account; which tho  
some

some, at first Thought, might conjecture to be by the Refraction of a Cloud or Mist, as in the Parelij, (the whole Air and every Drop of Water being a Mirrour to returne the Species of Things, were our vifive Faculty sharpe enough to apprehend them,) or a naturall Reflexion, from the same Reasons that an Echo can be redoubled by Airt; yet it were more safable to impute this Second Sight to a Quality infused into the Eye by ane Unction: for Witchies have a sleepe Oyntment, that, when applyed, troubles their Fantasies, advancing it to have unusuall Figures and Shapes represented to it, as if it were a Fit of Fanaticism, Hypochondriack Melancholly, or Possession of some insinuating Spirit, raising the Soul beyond its common Strain, if the palpable Instances and Realities seen, and innocently objected to the Senses did not disprove it, make the Matter a palpable Verity, and no Deception; yet since this Sight can be bestowed without Oyntment, or dangerous Compact, the Qualification is not of so bad an Originall. Therefore,

6. By my Lord's good Leave, I presume to  
say

say, that this Sight can be no Quality of the Air nor of the Eyes; becaus, 1. such as live in the same Air, and see all other Things as far off and as clearly, yet have not the SECOND SIGHT. 2. A SEER can give another Person this Sight transiently, by putting his Hand and Foot in the Posture he requires of him. 3. The unfulfilled Eyes of Infants can naturally perceive no new unaccustomed Objects, but what appear to other Men, unless exalted and clarified some Way, as Ballaam's Ass for a Time; tho in a Witches Eye the Beholder cannot see his own Image reflected, as in the Eyes of other People; so that Defect of Objects, as well as Diversities of the Subject, may appear differently on severall Tempers and Ages. 4. Tho also some are of so venomous a Constitution, by being radicated in Envy and Malice, that they pierce and kill (like a Cockatrice) whatever Creature they first set their Eye on in the Morning; so was it with Walter Grahame, some Time living in the Paroch wherein now I am, who killed his own Cow after commending its Fatness, and  
shot

shot a Hair with his Eyes, having praised its swiftness, (such was the Infection of an evil Eye;) albeit this was unusuall, yet he saw no Object but what was obvious to other Men as well as to himselfe. 5. If the being transported to live in another Countrey did obscure the Second Sight, nather the Parson nor the Maid needed be much troubled for her Reflexelfe; a little Peregrination, and going from her wonted Home, would have salved her Fear. Wherefore,

7. SINCE the Things seen by the Seers are real Entities, the Presages and Predictions found true, but a few endued with this Sight, and those not of bad Lyves, or addicted to Malifices, the true Solution of the Phænomenon seems rather to be, the courteous Endeavours of our fellow Creatures in the Invisible World to convince us, (in Opposition to Sadder's, Socinians, and Atheists,) of a Deity; of Spirits; of a possible and harmless Method of Correspondence betwixt Men and them, even in this Lyfe; of their Operation for our Caution and Warning; of the Orders and Degrees  
of

of Angells, whereof one Order, with Bodies of Air condensed and curiously shap't, may be next to Man, superior to him in Understanding, yet unconfirmed; and of their Region, Habitation, and Influences on Man, greater than that of Starrs on inanimat Bodies; a Knowledge (be-like) reserved for these last atheistick Ages, wherein the Profanity of Mens Lives hath debauched and blinded their Understanding, as to MOSES, JESUS, and the Prophets, (unless they get Convictions from Things formerly known,) as from the Regions of the Dead: nor doth the ceasing of the Visions, upon the Seers Transmigration into forrein Kingdoms, make his Lordship's Conjecture of the Quality of the Air and Eye a white the more probable; but, on the Contrary, it confirms greatly my Account of ane Invisible People, guardian over and care-full of Men, who have their different Offices and Abilities in distinct Counterey's, as appears in Dan. 10. 13. viz. about Israels, Grecia's, and Persia's assistant Princes, whereof who so prevaieth giveth Dominion and Ascendant to his Pupills and Vassalls over  
the

the opposite Armies and Countreys; so that every Countrey and Kingdom having their topical Spirits, or Powers assisting and governing them, the SCOTTISH SEER banished to America, being a Stranger there, as well to the invisible as to the visible Inhabitants, and wanting a Familiarity of his former Correspondents, he could not have the Favour and Warnings, by the severall Visions and Predictions which were wont to be granted him by these Acquaintances and Favourites in his own Countrey. For if what he wont to see were Realities, (as I have made appear,) 'twere too great an Honour for Scotland to have such seldom-seen Watchers and predominant Powers over it alone, acting in it so expressly, and all other Nations wholly destitute of the lyke; tho, without all peradventure, all other People wanted the right Key of their Cabinet, and the exact Method of Correspondence with them, except the sagacious active Scots, as many of them have retained it of a long Time, and by Surpryses and Raptures do often foirtell what in Kindness is really represented to them at severall

severall Occasions. To which Purpose the learned lynx-ey'd Mr. Baxter, on Rev. 12. 7. writting of the Fight betwixt Michaell and the Dragon, gives a verie pertinent Note, viz. That he knows not but ere any great Action (especiall tragically) is don on Earth, that first the Battell and Victory is acted and atchieved in the Air betwixt the good and evill Spirits: Thus he. It seems these were the mens Guardians; and the lyke Battells are oft tymes perceav'd in a Loaft in the Nycht-time; the Event of which myght easily be represented by some one of the Number to a Correspondent on Earth, as frequently the Report of great Actions have been more swiftly caried to other Countreys than all the Airt of us Mortals could possibly dispatch it. St. Austine, on Mark, 9. 4. giveth no small Intimation of this Truth, averring that Elias appeared with Jefus on the Mount in his proper Bodie, but Moses in ane aereall Bodie, assumed like the Angels who appeared, and had Ability to eat with Abraham, tho no Necessity on the Account of their Bodies. As lyke wise the late Doctrine of the Pre-existence  
of

of Souls, living into aereall Vehicles, gives a singular Hint of the Possibility of the Thing, if not a direct Prooff of the whole Assertion; which yet moreover may be illuminated by diverse other Instances of the lyke Nature, and as wonderfull, besides what is above said. As,

8. THE invifible Wights which haunt Houfes seem rather to be fome of our fubterranean Inhabitants, (which appear often to Men of the Second Sight,) than evill Spirits or Devills; becaufe, tho they throw great Stones, Pieces of Earth and Wood, at the Inhabitants, they hurt them not at all, as if they acted not maliciously, like Devills at all, but in Sport, lyke Buffoons and Drolls. All Ages have afforded fome obscure Testimonies of it, as Pythagoras his Doctrine of Transmigration; Socrates's Dæmon that gave him [Warning] of future Dangers; Platoe's classing them into various vehiculated Specieses of Spirits; Dionifius Areopagita's marshalling nyne Orders of Spirits, superiour and subordinate; the Poets their borrowing of the Philosophers, and adding



ing their own Fancies of Fountain, River, and Sea Nymphs, Wood, Hill, and Mountain Inhabitants, and that every Place and Thing, in Cities and Countreys, had speciall invifible regular Gods and Governours. Cardan fpeaks of his Father his feeing the Species of his Friend, in a moon-fhyn Night, riding fiercely by his Window on a white Horfe, the verie Night his Friend dy'd at a Vaft Distance from him ; by which he understood that fome Alteration would fuddenly enfue. Cornelius Agrippa, and the learned Dr. Mor, have feverall Paffages tending that Way. The Noctambulo's themfelves would appear to have fome forrein joquing Spirit poffeffing and fupporting them, when they walk on deep Waters and Topes of Houfes without Danger, when afleep and in the dark ; for it was no way probable that their Apprehenfion, and ftrong Imagination fetting the Animal Spirits a work to move the Body, could preferve it from finking in the Depth, or falling down head-long, when afleep, any more than when awake, the Body being then as ponderous as before ; and it is hard  
to

to attribute it to a Spirit flatelie evill and Enemy to Man, because the Noctambulo returns to his own Place safe. And the most furious Tribe of the Dæmons are not permitted by Providence to attacke Men so frequently either by Night or by Day: For in our Highlands, as there may be many fair Ladies of this aereal Order, which do often tryft with lascivious young Men, in the quality of Succubi, or lightfome Paramours and Strumpets, called *Leannain Sith*, or familiar Spirits (in Dewter. 18. 11.); so do many of our Hyghlanders, as if a strangling by the Night MARE, pressed with a fearfull Dream, or rather possessed by one of our aereall Neighbours, rise up fierce in the Night, and apprehending the neereft Weapons, do push and thrust at all Persons in the same Room with them, sometyes wounding their own Comerades to dead. The lyke whereof fell sadly out within a few Miles of me at the writting hereof. I add but one Instance more, of a very young Maid, who lived neir to my last Residence, that in one Night learned a large Peice of Poesy, by  
the

the frequent Repetition of it, from one of our nimble and courteous Spirits, whereof a Part was pious, the rest superstitious, (for I have a Copy of it,) and no other Person was ever heard to repeat it before, nor was the Maid capable to compose it of herself.

9. He demonstrated and made evident to Sense this extraordinary Vision of our Tra-mountain Seers, and what is seen by them, by what is said above, many haveing seen this same Spectres and Apparitions at once, having their vivive Faculties entire; for *non est disputandum de gustu*. Itt now remaines to shew that it is not unfutable to Reason nor the Holy Scriptures.

FIRST, That it is not repugnant to Reason, doeth appear from this, that it is no less strange for Immortal Sparks and Souls to come and be immerfed into grofs terrestrial elementary Bodies, and be so propagated, so nourished, so fed, soe cloathed as they are, and breathe in such ane Air and World prepared for them, then for Hollanders or Hollow-cavern Inhabitants to live and traffick among us, in another  
State

State of Being, without our Knowledge. For Raymond de Subinde, in his 3d Booke, Chap. 12. argues quaintly, that all Sorts of Living Creatures have a happie rational Politie of there own, with great Contentment; which Government and mutual Converse of theirs they all pride and pluim themselves, because it is as unknown to Man, as Man is to them. Much more, that the Sone of the HIGHEST SPIRIT should assume a Bodie like ours, convinces all the World that no other Thing that is possible needs be much wondered at.

2. The Manucodiata, or Bird of Paradife, living in the highest Region of the Air; common Birds in the second Region; Flies and Insects in the lowest; Men and Beasts on the Earth's Surface; Worms, Otters, Badgers, in Waters; lyke wise Hell is inhabited at the Centre, and Heaven in the Circumference: can we then think the middle Cavities of the Earth emptie? I have seen in Weems, (a Place in the Countie of Fyfe, in Scotland,) divers Caves cut out as vast Temples under Ground; the lyke is a Countie of England;  
in

in Malta is a Cave, wherein Stons of a curious Cut are thrown in great Numbers every Day ; so I have had barbed Arrow-heads of yellow Flint, that could not be cut so small and neat, of so brittle a Substance, by all the Airt of Man. It would seem therefor that these mention'd Works were done by certaine Spirits of pure Organs, and not by Devills, whose continual Torments could not allow them so much Leafure. Besides these, I have found fyve Curiosities in Scotland, not much observ'd to be elsewhere. 1. The Brounies, who in some Families are Drudges, clean the Houses and Dishes after all go to Bed, taking with him his Portion of Food and removing befor Day-break. 2. The Mafon Word, which tho some make a Mifterie of it, I will not conceal a little of what I know. It is lyke a Rabbini-cal Tradition, in way of Comment on Jachin and Boaz, the two Pillars erected in Solomon's Temple, (1 Kings, 7. 21.) with an Addition of some secret Signe delyvered from Hand to Hand, by which they know and become familiar one with another. 3. This Second Sight

Sight, so largely treated of before. 4. Charmes, and curing by them very many Difeases, sometimes by transferring the Sicknes to another. 5. A being Proof of Lead, Iron, and Silver, or a Brieve making Men invulnerable. Divers of our Scottish Commanders and Souldiers have been seen with blue Markes only, after they were shot with leaden Balls; which seems to be an Italian Trick, for they seem to be a People too curious and magically inclyned. Finally Iris-men, our Northern-Scottish, and our Athole Men are so much addicted to and delighted with Harps and Musick, as if, like King Saul, they were possessed with a forrein Spirit, only with this Difference, that Musick did put Saul's Pley-fellow a sleep, but roused and awaked our Men, vanquishing their own Spirits at Pleasure, as if they were impotent of its Powers, and unable to command it; for wee have seen some poor Beggars of them, chattering their Teeth for Cold, that how soon they saw the Fire, and heard the Harp, leapt thorow the Houfe like Goats and Satyrs. As there parallell Stories in all Countries and Ages

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reported

reported of these our obscure People, (which are no Dotages,) so is it no more of Necessitie to us fully to know their Beings and Manner of Life, then to understand distinctly the Politie of the nyne Orders of Angels; or with what Oyl the Lamp of the Sun is maintained so long and regularlie; or why the Moon is called a great Luminary in Scripture, while it only appears to be so; or if the Moon be truly inhabited, because Telescopes discover Seas and Mountains in it, as well as flaming Furnishes in the Sun; or why the Discovery of America was look't on as a Fairie Tale, and the Reporters hooted at as Inventors of ridiculous Utopias, or the first probable Asserters punished as Inventures of new Gods and Worlds; or why in England the King cures the Struma by stroaking, and the Seventh Son in Scotland; whither his temperat Complexion conveys a Balfome, and sucks out the corrupting Principles by a frequent warme fanative Contact, or whither the Parents of the Seventh Child put furth a more eminent Virtue to his Production than to all the Rest, as being the certain

certain Meridian and hight to which their Vigour ascends, and from that furth have a graduall declyning into a feebleness of the Bodie and its Production. And then, 1. Why is not the 7th Son infected himselfe by that Contagion he extracts from another? 2. How can continual stroaking with a cold Hand have foe strong a natural Operation, as to exhale all the Infections warming corroding Vapours. 3. Why may not a 7th Daughter have the same Vertue? So that it appears, albeit, a happie natural Constitution concurrence, yet something in it above Nature. Therefore every Age hath left some secret for its Discoverie; who knows but this Entercourse bewixt the two Kinds of rationall Inhabitants of the same Earth may be not only beleived shortly, but as friely entertain'd, and as well known, as now the Airt of Navigation, Printing, Limning, riding on Saddles with Stirrups, and the Discoveries of Microscopes, which were sometimes a great a Wonder, and as hard to be beleived.

10. THO I will not be so curious nor so peremptorie as he who will prove the Possibility



bility of the Philosopher's Stone from Scripture, Job, 28. 1. 2. Job, 22. 24. 25. ; or the Pluralitie of Worlds, from John, 14. 2. and Hebrews ij. 3. ; nor the Circulation of Blood from Eccles. 12. and 6. ; nor the Tanisfmanical Airt, from the Blind and Lame mentioned in 2d of Samuel, 5. 6. yet I humblie propofe thefe Passages which may give fome Light to our Subject at leaft, and fhew that this Polity and Rank of People is not a Thing impoffible, nor the modeft and innocent Scrutiny of them impertinent or unfafe. The Legion or Brigad of Spirits (mentioned Mark, 5. 10.) befought our Saviour not to fend them away out of the Countrey ; which fhows they were DÆMONES Locī, Topical Spirits, and peculiar Superintendents and Supervifors affign'd to that Province. And the Power over the Nations granted (Rev. 2. 26.) to the Conquerors of Vice and Infidelitie, Sound fomewhat to that Purpofe. Tobit had a Dæmon attending Marriage, Chap. 6. Verfe, 15 ; and in Matth. 4. and 5. ane evill Spirit came in a Vifible Shape to tempt our Saviour, who himfelfe denied

denied not the fenfible appearing of Ghosts to our Sight, but faid, their Bodies were not compofed of Flefh and Bones, as ours, Luke, 24. 39. And in Philip. 2. 10. our verie Subterraneans are expreffly faid to bow to the Name of JESUS. Elifha, not intellecually only, but fenfibly, faw Gehazi when out of the Reach of ane ordinary View. It wants not good Evidents that there are more managed by God's Spirits, good, evill, and intermediate Spirits, among Men in this World, then we are aware of; the good Spirits ingefting fair and heroick Apprehenfions and Images of Vertue and the divyne Life, thereby animating us to a $\acute$ t for a higher Happines, according to our Improvement; and relinquifhing us as ftrangely upon our Neglect, or our embracing the deceitfull fyrene-like Pictures and Re-prefentations of Pleafures and Gain, prefented to our Imaginations by evill and fportfull Angells, to allure to ane unthinking, ungenerous, and fenfual Lyfe; non of them having power to compell us to any Mifdemeanour without our flat Consent. Moreover, this Life  
of

of ours being called a Warfair, and God's fay-  
ing that at last there will be no Peace to the  
Wicked, our buffie and filent Companions also  
being called *Siths*, or *People at Rest and Quiet*,  
in respect of us; and withall many Ghosts  
appearing to Men that want this *Second Sight*,  
in the very Shapes, and speaking the same  
Language, they did when incorporate and alive  
with us; a Matter that is of ane old impre-  
scriptible Tradition, (*our Highlanders* making  
still a Distinction betwixt *Sluagh Saoghalta*  
and *Sluagh Sith*, averring that the Souls goe  
to the *Sith* when dislodged;) many real Trea-  
sures and Murders being discovered by Souls  
that pass from among our selves, or by the  
Kindness of these our airie Neighbours, non  
of which Spirits can be altogether inorganical.  
No less than the Confeits about Purgatory, or  
a State of Rescue; the *Limbus Patrum et Infan-  
tum*, Inventions, [which] tho misapplied, yet  
are not Chimæras, and altogether groundless.  
For *ab origine*, it is nothing but blash and  
faint Discoveries of this SECRET REPUBLICK of  
ours here treated on, and additional Fictions  
of

of Monks doting and crazied Heads, our Creed faying that our Saviour defcended *εις τὸν ᾗδου*, to the invifible Place and People. And many Divines fupposing that the Deity appear'd in a vifible Shape feen by Adam in the Cooll of the Day, and fpeaking to him with ane audible voice. And Jefus, probably by the Miniftery of invifible Attendants, conveying more meat of the fame Kind to the fyve Thowfand that wes fed by him with a very few Loaves and Fifhes, (for a new Creation it was not.) The Zijmjiim and Ochim, in Ifa. 13. 21. 22. Theſe Satyres, and doolfull unknown Creatures of Iflands and Deferts, feem to have a plain Proſpect that Way. Finally, the eternal Happinefs enjoyed in the 3d Heavens, being more myfterious than moſt of Men take it to be. It is not a ſenſe whollie adduced to Scripture to fay, that this SIGHT, and the due Objects of it, hath ſome Veſtige in holy Write, but rather 'tis modeſtly deduced from it.

II. It only now remains to anſear the obvious Objections againſt the Reality and Lawfullneſs of this Speculation.

Question



QUESTION 1. How do you folve the Second Sight from Compact and Witchcraft?

ANSWER. Tho this Correspondence with the Intermediate Unconfirm'd People (betwixt Man and Angell) be not ordinary to all of us who are Superterraneans, yet this SIGHT falling fome Persons by Accident, and its being connatural to others from their Birth, the Derivation of it cannot always be wicked. A too great Curiosity, indeed, to acqyre any unnecessary Airt, may be blameworthy; but diverse of the SECRET COMMONWEALTH may, by Permission, discover themselves as innocently to us, who are in another State, as some of us Men do to Fishes, which are in another Element, when we plunge and dive into the Bottom of the Seas, their native Region; and in Procefs of Time we may come to converse as familiarly with these nimble and agile Clans (but with greater Pleasure and Profit,) as we do now with the Chino's Antipodes.

QUESTION 2. Are they subject to Vice, Lusts? Passion, and Injustice, as we who live on the Surface of the Earth?

Answer

ANSWER. The Seers tell us that these wandering Aereal People have not such an Impetus and fatall Tendency to any Vice as Men, as not being drenched into so grofs and dregy Bodies as we, but yet are in ane imperfect State, and some of them making better Effays for heroick Actions than others; having the same Measures of Vertue and Vice as wee, and still expecting advancement to a higher and more splendid State of Lyfe. One of them is stronger than many Men, yet do not incline to hurt Mankind, except by Commiffion for a grofs Misdemeanour, as the destroying Angell of Ægypt, and the Affyrians, Exod. 12. 29. 2 Kings, 10. 35. They haunt most where is most Barbaritie; and therefoir our ignorant Ancestors, to prevent the Infults of that strange People, used as rude and course a Remedie; such as Exorcifms, Donations, and Vows: But how soon ever the true Piety prevailed in any Place, it did not put the Inhabitants beyond the Reach and Authoritie of these subtile inferiour Co-inhabitants and Colleagues of ours: The FATHER OF ALL SPIRITS, and the Person  
himselfe

himselfe, having the only Command of his Soul and Actions, a concurrence they may have to what is virtuously done ; for upon committing of a foul Deed, one will find a Demure upon his Soul, as if his cheerfull Colleague had deserted him.

QUESTION 3. Do these airie Tribes procreate ? If so, how are they nourished, and at what period of Time do they die ?

ANSWER. Supposing all Spirits to be created at once in the Beginning, Souls to pre-exist and to circle about into several States of Probationship ; to make them either totally unexcusable, or perfectly happie against the last Day, solves all the Difficulties. But in very Deed, and speaking futeable to the Nature of Things, there is no more Absurditie for a Spirit to inform an Infant in Bodie of Airs, than a Bodie composed of dull and druse Earth ; the best of Spirits have alwayes delyghted more to appear into aereal, than into terrestriall Bodyes. They feed most what on Quintessences, and aetheriall Effences. The Pith and Spirits only of Women's Milk feed their Children, being artificially

ficially conveyed, (as Air and Oyl sink into our Bodies,) to make them vigorous and fresh. And this shorter Way of conveying a pure Aliment, (without the usuall Digestions,) by transfusing it, and transpyring thorow the Pores into the Veins, Arteries, and Vessells that supplie the Bodie, is nothing more absurd, than ane Infant's being fed by the Navel before it is borne, or than a Plant, which groweth by attracting a livelie Juice from the Earth thorow many small Roots and Tendons, whose courser Pairs be adapted and made connatural to the Whole, doth quickly coalesce by the ambient Cold; and so are condens'd and bak'd up into a confirm'd Wood in the one, and solid Bodie of the Flesh and Bone in the other. A Notion which, if intertain'd and approv'd, may shew that the late Invention of soaking and transfusing (not Blood, but) athereal virtuall Spirits, may be usefull both for Nourishment and Health, whereof is a Vestige in the damnable Practise of evil Angells, their sucking of Blood and Spirits out of Witches Bodys (till they drew them into a deform'd and dry Leannefs,) to feed their own Vehicles



Vehicles withall, leaving what we call the Witches Mark behind ; a Spot that I have seen, as a small Mole, horny, and brown-coloured ; throw which Mark, when a large Brafs Pin was thrust (both in Buttock, Nose, and Rooff of the Mouth,) till it bowed and become crooked, the Witches, both Men and Women, nather felt a Pain, nor did bleed, nor knew the precife Time when this was adoin to them, (there Eyes only being covered.) Now the Air being a Body as well as Earth, no Reason can be given why there may not be Particles of more vivific Spirit form'd of it for Procreation, then is possible to be of Earth, which takes more Time and Pains to rarify and ripen it, ere it can come to have a prolific Virtue. And if our Aping Darlings did not thus procreate, there whole Number would be exhausted after a considerable Space of Time. For tho they are of more refyned Bodies and Intellectualls than wee, and of far less heavy and corruptive Humours, (which cause a Dissolution,) yet many of their Lives being dissoluant to right Reason and their own Laws,  
and

and their Vehicles not being wholly free of Lust and Passion, especially of the more spirituall and haughty Sins they pass (after a long healthy Life) into one Orb and Receptacle fitted for their Degree, till they come under the general Cognizance of the last Day.

QUESTION 4. Doth the acquiring of this Second Sight make any Change on the Acquirers Body, Mind, or Actions?

ANSWER. All uncouth SIGHTS enfeebles the SEER. Daniel, tho familiar with divine Visions, yet fell frequently down without Strength, when dazzled with a Power which had the Ascendant of, and passed on him beyond his Comprehension, Chap. 10. 8. 17. So our SEER is put in a Rapture, Transport, and sort of Death, as divested of his Body and all its Senses, when he is first made participant of this curious Peice of Knowledge: But it maketh no Wramp or Strain in the Understanding of any; only to the Fancy's of clownish or illiterate Men, it creates some Affrightments and Disturbances, because of the Strongness of the Showes, and their Unacquaintedness with them. And as for  
their

their Lyfe, the Perfons endued with this Rarity are, for the moſt Part, candid, honeſt, and ſociable People. If any of them be ſubject to Immoralities, this obſtruſe Skill is not to be blamed for it; for unleſs themſelves be the Tempters, the Colonies of the Inviſible Plantations, with which they intercommune, do provoke them by no Villainy or Malifice, nather at their firſt Acquaintance nor after a long Familiarity.

QUESTION 5. Doth not Sathan interpoſe in ſuch Caſes by many ſubtile unthought Inſinuations, as to him who let the Fly, or Familiar, go out of the Box, and yet found the Fly of his own putting in, as ſerviceable as the other would have been?

ANSWER. The Goodneſs of the Lyfe, and Deſigns of the ancient Prophets and Seers, was one of the beſt Prooffs of their Miſſion.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The original Tranſcriber has added :

"See the Reſt in a little Manuſcript belonging to Coline Kirk," probably the author's ſon of that name.—A.L.

## NOTE.

IN trying to collect evidence as to the Rerrick "evil spirit" from Kirk-Session Records, I have been most kindly assisted by the Rev. Mr. M'Conachie, Minister of Rerrick. Mr. M'Conachie finds that only two parishes in the Stewartry, Kells and Girthon, have records containing the years 1695, 1696. The records of Rerrick do not go so far back. We are therefore left to the pamphlet of 1696, by Telfair, which is an unusually business-like statement, the names of attesting witnesses being added in the marginal notes. For phenomena singularly similar to those of Rerrick, *Obeah*, by Mr. H. J. Bell, may be consulted. (*Obeah*, Sampson Low & Co., London, 1889, p. 93.)



## NOTES.

### INTRODUCTION.

*Note (a)*, p. xvi.—“The Psychical Society.”

The Psychical Society, as far as the writer is aware has not examined officially the old accounts of the phenomena which it investigates at present. The Catalogue of the Society's Library, however, proves that it does not lack the materials.

*Note (b)*, p. xxx.—“Their speech is a kind of whistling.”

That the voice of spirits is a kind of whistling, twittering, or chirping, is a very widely diffused and ancient belief. The ghosts in Homer twitter like bats; in New Caledonia an English settler found that he could scare the natives from a piece of ground by whistling there at night. Mr. Samuel Wesley says, “I followed the noise into almost every room in the house, both by day and by night, with lights and without, and have sat alone for some time, and, when I heard the noise, spoke to it to tell me what it was, but never heard any articulate voice, and only once or twice two or three feeble squeaks, a little louder than the chirping of a bird, and not like the noise of rats, which I have often heard” (*Memoirs of the Wesley Family*, p. 164). Professor Alexander mentions the “peculiar whistling sound” at some manifestations in Rio Janeiro as “rather frequent” (*Proc. S. P. R.*,

xix. 180). Here children were the mediums ; how did they get the idea of the traditional whistle ? See also the following note.

*Note (c), p. xl.*—"Not long after the Spanish conquest of Peru."

The phenomena alluded to here are said to have occurred in 1549. The evidence is a mere report by Cieza de Leon, who does not pretend to have been an eye-witness. But, as Mr. Clements Markham, Cieza's editor, remarks, the phenomena are analogous to those of spiritualism. At the very least, we find a belief in this kind of manifestation at a remote date, and in an outlandish place. Cieza says :<sup>1</sup>

"When the Adelantado Belalcazar was governor of the province of Popayan, and when Gomez Hernandez was his lieutenant in the town of Auzerma, there was a chief in a village called Pirsá, almost four leagues from the town, whose brother, a good-looking youth named Tamarangua, inspired by God, wished to go to the town of the Christians to receive baptism. But the devils did not wish that he should attain his desire, fearing to lose what seemed secure, so they frightened this Tamarangua in such sort that he was unable to do anything. God permitting it, the devils stationed themselves in a place where the chief alone could see them, in the shape of birds called *auras*. Finding himself so persecuted by the devils, he sent in great haste to a Christian living near, who came at once, and hearing what he wanted, signed him with the sign of the cross. But the devils then frightened him more than ever, appearing in hideous forms, which only were visible to

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<sup>1</sup> *The Travels of Pedro de Cieza de Leon*, ch. cxviii.

him. *The Christian only saw stones falling from the air and heard whistling.* A brother of one Juan Pacheco, citizen of the same town, then holding office in the place of Gomez Hernandez, who had gone to Caramanta, came from Auzerma with another man to visit the Indian chief. They say that Tamaraunga was much frightened and ill-treated by the devils, who carried him through the air from one place to another in presence of the Christians, he complaining and the devils whistling and shouting. Sometimes when the chief was sitting with a glass of liquor before him, the Christians saw the glass raised up in the air and put down empty, and a short time afterwards the wine was again poured into the cup from the air." Compare what Ibn Batuta, the old Arab traveller, saw at the court of the King of Delhi. The matter is discussed in Colonel Yule's *Marco Polo*.

This may suffice as a specimen of the manifestations. They continued while the chief was on his way to church; he was lifted into the air, and the Christians had to hold him down. In church the ghostly whistling was heard, and stones fell around, while the chief said that he saw devils standing upside down, and himself was thrown into that unusual posture. The combination of convulsive movements with the other phenomena is that which we have already remarked in the cases of "Mr. H." and the grandson of William Morse. Cieza de Leon says that the chief was not troubled after his baptism. The illusions of the newly-converted, so like those of the early Christian hermits, are described by Callaway in his *Zulu Tales*.

*Note (d), p. 1.*

Priestley's explanation of the Epworth disturbances is imposture by the servants, by way of a practical joke.



Coleridge, on the other hand, says that "all these stories, and I could produce fifty cases at least equally well authenticated, and, as far as the veracity of the narrators, and the single fact of their having seen and heard such and such sights or sounds, above all rational scepticism, are as much like one another as the symptoms of the same disease in different patients."

It is a pity that Coleridge did not produce his fifty well-authenticated examples. The similarity of the narratives everywhere, all the world over, is exactly what makes them interesting. Coleridge goes on: "This indeed I take to be the true and only solution—a contagious nervous disease, the acme, or intensest form of which is catalepsy" (Southey's *Wesley*, vol. i. p. 14, Coleridge's note). If there be such a contagious nervous disease, it is a very remarkable malady, and well worth examining. The Wesleys were not alarmed; they bantered the spirit; they wished they could set him to work; and beyond the trembling of the children when Jeffrey was knocking during their sleep, there is no sign of morbid conditions. A neighbouring clergyman, who was asked to pass a night in the house, saw and heard just what the others heard and saw.<sup>1</sup> The hypothesis of a contagious nervous disease, in which every witness exhibits the same symptoms of illusion in all parts of the world, is a theory which needs a good deal of verification. Where material traces of the disturbances remain, it is absurd to speak of contagious hallucinations. We must fall back on the hypothesis of trickery, or must say with Southey, "Such things may be preternatural, yet not miraculous; they may not be in the ordinary course of nature, yet imply no alteration of its laws." Any theory is more plausible than the idea that Mr. Wesley and Mr. Hoole

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Hoole's account, *Memoirs of the Wesleys*, p. 91.

were in a state bordering on catalepsy. Believers in hypnotism may think it possible that this, that, and the other persons, if they submitted themselves to hypnotic influences, might have the same hallucinations suggested to them. But there is no evidence, in the Epworth case nor in the Rerrick case, of any such matter. "So far as we yet know, sensory hallucination of several persons together, *who are not in a hypnotic state*, is a rare phenomenon, and therefore not a probable explanation" (*Proc. S. P. R.*, iv. 62). There is some evidence that epileptic patients suffer from the same illusions—for example, the presence of a woman in a red cloak; and in *delirium tremens* the "horrors" are usually similar. But that all the persons who enter a given house should be impressed by the same material illusions, as of chairs and tables, and even beds (like Nancy Wesley's) flying about, is a theory more incredible than the hypothesis either of trickery or of abnormal occurrences. When the disturbances always cease on the arrival of a competent witness, then it is not hard to say which theory we ought to choose. For imposture see next note.

*Note (c)*, p. lvii.—"Children at séances."

The phenomena discussed are most frequently connected with children, who may be regarded either as mediums or impostors, conscious or unconscious. In *Proc. S. P. R.*, iv. 25-42, Professor Barrett gives the case of a little girl whom he knew. She had raps wherever she went, even when alone with the Professor, who made her stand with her hands against the wall, at the greatest stretch of her arms, "with the muscles of the legs and arms all in tension." "A brisk pattering of raps" followed Professor Barrett's request. But he also mentions a boy "of juvenile piety," who "for twelve

months deceived his father, a distinguished surgeon, and all his family, by pretended spiritualistic manifestations, which appeared at first sight inexplicable, until the cunning trickery of the lad was discovered." The only difference between these cases is that an "outsider" discovered trickery in one instance and not in the other. This is a very ticklish kind of certainty, and it is plain that children can do a great deal in the way of mere imposture. The state of any young Wesley who might have been caught out is unenviable. Verily Mr. Wesley would not have spared for his crying.

*Note (f), p. lxii.*—"The pricking of witches."

It is pretty certain that some of these unlucky old women were pricked "in anæsthetic areas."

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*Note (a), p. 8.*—"These Arrows that fly in the Dark."

The arrows are the ancient flint arrow-heads, which Mr. Kirk later asserts to be too delicate for human artificers. On this matter Isabel Gowdie, the witch, confessed, "As for Elf arrows, the Divell sharpes them with his ain hand, and deliveris them to Elf boys, wha whyttlis and dightis them with a sharp thing lyk a paking needle; bot whan I was in Elfland, I saw them whytting and dighting them." Isabel described the manner in which witches use this artillery: "We spang them from the naillis of our thoombs," and with these she and her friends shot and slew many men and women. The confessions of Isabel Gowdie are in the third volume of Pitcairn's *Scottish Criminal Trials*. They contain little or nothing of the "psychical;" all is mere folk-lore, fairy tales, and charms derived from the old Catholic liturgy. The poor woman, having begun to fable, fabled

with manifest enjoyment and considerable power. It seems from her account that each "Covin," or assembly of witches, had a maiden in it, and "without our maiden we could do no great thing." On the other hand, an extraordinary case of an epileptic boy, who was hurled about, and beheld distant occurrences in trance, may be read in Chambers's *Domestic Annals of Scotland*, iii. 449. Candles used to go out when this boy, a third son of Lord Torpichen, was in the room. The date (1720) and the place (Mid-Lothian) prevented any one from being burned for bewitching him. A fast was proclaimed. The boy recovered, and did good service in the navy. He is said to have been "levitated" frequently."

*Note (b)*, p. 11.—"Milk thorow a hair-tedder."

Isabel Gowdie confessed to stealing milk from the cow by magic. "We plait the rope the wrong way, in the Devil's name, and we draw the tether between the cow's hind feet, and out betwixt her forward feet, in the Devil's name, and thereby take with us the cow's milk."

Mr. Kirk, it will be observed, does not connect the Fairy kingdom with that of Satan, as some of his contemporaries were inclined to do.

*Note (c)*, p. 19.—"The Wreath (wraith) . . . is only exuvius fumes of the Man, . . . exhaled and congealed into a various likeness."

What is this theory of "Men illiterate and unwary in their Observations," but Von Hartmann's doctrine of "the nerve force which issues from the body of the medium, and then proceeds to set up fresh centres of force in all neighbouring objects . . . while it still remains under the control of the medium's unconscious will"? See Mr. Walter Leaf on Hartmann's *Der Geisterhypothese des Spiritismus*, *Proc. S. P. R.*, xix. 293.

It is amusing to find a learned German coinciding in scientific theory with "ignorant and unwary" Highland seers. Both regard the phantasms as manifestations of "nerve-force," "exuvius fumes," and as "neither souls nor counterfeiting spirits."

*Note (d), p. 23.*—"Fairy hills."

The hypothesis that the Fairy belief may be a tradition of an ancient race dwelling in subterranean homes, is older than Mr. McRitchie or Sir Walter Scott. In his *Scottish Scenery* (1803), Dr. Cririe suggests that the germ of the Fairy myth is the existence of dispossessed aboriginals dwelling in subterranean houses, in some places called Picts' houses, covered with artificial mounds. The lights seen near the mounds are lights actually carried by the mound-dwellers. Dr. Cririe works out in some detail "this marvellously absurd supposition," as the *Quarterly Review* calls it (vol. lix., p. 280).

*Note (e), p. 30.*—"Master Greatrake, the Irish Stroaker."

Glanvill, in *Essays on Several Important Subjects* (1675), prints a letter from an Irish Bishop on Greatrex, the "stroker." He cured diseases "by a sanative contagion." According to the Bishop, Greatrex had an impression that he could do "faith-healing," and found that he could, but whether by virtue of some special power or by "the people's fancy," he knew not. He frequently failed, and his patients had relapses. See his own *Account of Strange Cures: in a Letter to Robert Boyle*. London, 1666.

## POSTSCRIPT.

It has been said that no trace can be found of a printed *Secret Commonwealth* before 1815. The present editor is inclined to believe that in 1699 the work was still in manuscript. In a letter of Lord Reay's to Mr. Samuel Pepys (Oct. 24, 1699), he says, "I have got a manuscript since I last came to Scotland, whose author, though a parson, after giving a very full account of the Second Sight, defends there being no sin in it. . . . With the first opportunity I shall send you a copy of his books." This description answers very well to Mr. Kirk's treatise, and to no other contemporary work with which I am acquainted, unless it be *A Discourse of the Second Sight*, by the Rev. Mr. John Frazer, minister of Tiree and Coll. There were, doubtless, other parsons busy with these topics; and the minister of Rerrick informs me that several MSS. by Mr. Telfair, author of the tract already

quoted, were only dispersed about 1877. Examples of these clerical psychical researchers may be found in C. K. Sharpe's prefatory notice to Law's *Memorials* (Edinburgh, 1818). Such an one is the Rev. Robert Knox, who writes from Cavers to the Rev. Mr. Wyllie on the case of Sir George Maxwell of Pollock. He dare not attribute the mediumship of Janet Douglas "positively to an evil cause. . . . *It is our ignorance of any natural agent that makes us impute the effects to evil spirits*" (*Memorials*, p. lxxv). Moreover, Lord Reay writes as if his "parson" were still alive in 1699, whereas Mr. Kirk "went to his own herd" in 1692. "I am promised the acquaintance of this man, of which I am very covetous." Lord Reay was at Durness, and may not have heard of the mishap which carried the minister of Aberfoyle into Fairyland. It may be added that Dr. Hickeys writes to Mr. Pepys about neolithic arrow heads as "a subject of near alliance to that of the Second Sight, and of witchcraft, which is akin to them both." He also speaks of "a very tragical, but authentic story told me by the Duke of Lauderdale, which happened in the family of Sir John Dalrymple, Laird of Stair,

and then Lord President. His Grace had no sooner told it me, but my Lord President coming into the room, he desired my Lord to tell it himself, which, altering his countenance, he did with a very melancholick air; but it is so long since that I dare not trust my memory with relating the particulars of it" (June 19, 1700).

Dr. Hickes calls the first Lord Stair "John," Scott calls him "James." There can be no doubt that Dr. Hickes refers to the woful tale of the bride of Lammermoor, who died on September 12, 1669. Law, in his *Memorials*, says she "was harled through the house"—by spirits, he means. This "harling" or tossing about of a patient, probably epileptic, we have noticed in many of the old stories, as in the modern instance of "Mr. H." Now, in his Introduction to the *Bride of Lammermoor*, Scott gives all the authorities at his command: Law, Symson's *Elegie*, and Hamilton of Whitelaw's *Satire*, which avers that Satan seized the bride and "threw the bridegroom from the nuptial bed." Sir Walter was unacquainted with Dr. Hickes' hint, which actually produces the bride's own father as evidence for a story which was plainly regarded as supernatural. It is most unlucky that Dr.



Hickes distrusted his memory. However, it is something to feel assured that "a memorable story" was accepted at the time by the family of the bride, and was known to Lauderdale.<sup>1</sup> Lauderdale himself, by the way, was a psychical researcher, and accommodated Richard Baxter with some accounts of haunted houses, published in his *World of Spirits*. One story of a haunted house, where a spectral hand appeared, he gives on the authority of "the Rev. James Sharp," afterwards the famous Archbishop. Lauderdale inspected the famed Loudun nuns, and saw only "wanton wenches singing bawdy songs in French." His letter to Mr. Baxter is dated March 12, 1659. His best haunted house is of the Epworth type.

<sup>1</sup> The letters to Pepys are quoted from his Correspondence, published as Vol. X. of his *Diary* (New York, 1885).

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