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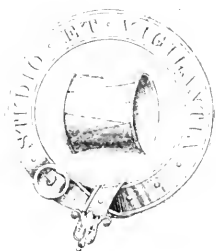
The
ASTROLOGER'S DAUGHTER
(A DERBYSHIRE LEGEND)
AND
OTHER POEMS.

WITH PROSE APPENDIX OF
PEAK LEGENDS



J. Castle Hall.

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THE ASTROLOGER'S DAUGHTER.

THE
ASTROLOGER'S DAUGHTER

(A DERBYSHIRE LEGEND)

AND

OTHER POEMS.

BY

JOSEPH CASTLE HALL, F.S.S., ETC.,

AUTHOR OF "THE CROW'S NEST." &C., &C.

ALSO

APPENDIX IN PROSE,
LEGENDS OF THE HIGH PEAK.

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P R E F A C E .



How the stories of the woods and streams of Derbyshire live in the memories of those who, midst their earliest associations, have heard and, in the innocence of their childhood, perhaps believe them! And what legendary lore those hills and dales of the Peak unfold!

I have, in the Appendix, given briefly the particulars of these traditions, the last of which is entitled "The Ghost of Stoke Hall Wood," which relates to an old ruin that stands only a few hundred yards from the scene of Fair Flora.

Many are the stories of other ruins scattered here and there through the woods stretching from Stoke towards Hathersage and Padley Wood, where the trees overhang the Derwent in canopies of graceful splendour, their shadows seeming to live beneath the silent waters, and, in the semi-darkness, to indulge in mystic movements, like the secret signals of a spirit-land.

Here is "Stoke Wood," or, as it is named in the poem, "Grindle Moor." At a junction of the turnpike where the Eyam road leaves that lying between Curver and Grindleford Bridge, may be seen, about a hundred yards to the west, in the wood, that lies much higher than the road, the figure of a female known as Fair Flora. There, on a pedestal of stone, in the quiet shade of the oak and pine, she stands, while the beholder involuntarily asks himself whence in this lonely spot comes an image so fair?

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FOLKLORE

Many and varied are the local traditions touching the origin of this statue, each more or less romantic. But probably the story which an old gipsy near to the spot once narrated to the writer excels alike in romance and antiquarian lore. The old hag was in company with other gipsies camping in the wood, and having noticed that a flower had been placed in the hand of the statue, I referred to the fact in conversation with the gipsy, when the latter, assuming a perfect acquaintance with the matter, told her strange tale.

On this legend of the gipsy is founded "The Astrologer's Daughter." And whether or not the story is altogether mythical, true it is that some hundred years ago there lived near Eyam an old man of extraordinary character, who was celebrated as an astrologer, as recorded in the works of Glover, Pendleton, and others, on the people and history of Derbyshire.

With reference to the remaining poems of the present collection, perhaps there is nothing to call for particular remark here. They are for the most part brief jottings of passing thoughts, many of them recorded for the purpose of enclosing in letters to my two sisters; bits of clay, as it were, which in the hands of a worthier potter might have been moulded into forms more deserving of preservation.

THE AUTHOR.

INDEX.

	PAGE.
THE ASTROLOGER'S DAUGHTER (A Legend of Derbyshire):—	
I.—The Cottage on the Moor	11
II.—Fair Flora and Victor	14
III.—Their Marriage	16
IV.—Flora's Dream	19
V.—Echoes of the Past	21
VI.—Victor's Return	22
VII.—Night (a Soliloquy)	24
VIII.—The Last Token	27
IX.—The Gleam of Light	29
X.—Immortal Leaves	31
THE WINDOWS OF THE SOUL	32
THE DREAM OF MUSIC	35
THE SISTER'S DOUBT	37
A VIOLET	41
EARTH'S MANY VOICES	42
A VALENTINE	44
BROTHERHOOD	45
MOTHER GONE	49
CHRISTMAS THOUGHTS	50
TO STONEHOUSE	52
THE SWELL	54

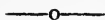
APPENDIX.

LEGENDS OF THE PEAK.

	PAGE
THE LOVER'S LEAP	58
THE WINNATS TRAGEDY—CASTLETON	59
THE BLACK DOG OF BRADWELL	61
THE HAUNTED HOUSE, SMALLDALE, NEAR BRADWELL	62
“POOR DICKEY'S” SKULL OF TUNSTED	63
PRINCE ARTHUR AND THE TWILIGHT SPECTRE OF HADDON	65
THE CURATE'S DREAM	68
THE MYSTERIOUS TREE AT HASSOP	71
THE GHOST OF STOKE HALL WOOD	72

THE
ASTROLOGER'S DAUGHTER

(A DERBYSHIRE LEGEND.)



“There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.”

SHAKESPEARE.

I.



OUR noblest thoughts are pictures lent from
Heaven,
That perish not; for who shall say that when
Forgotten here, they are not callèd back,
And hence for ever adorn the realms above?

Ye who believe one gleam of hope may, like
A guiding star, light up man's darkest hour;
Ye who believe in Destiny, and in
Mysterious wonders of the unseen world:
Ye who believe in woman's changeless love,
And in its beauty and undying power;—
List to the saddest tale that e'er the winds
O'er Grindleford in mournful whispers tell.

Upon the verge of Grindle Moor, where winds
In vespers oft-times meet, and from the

Neighbouring woodlands seem to bring strange secrets
from

Each sougning oak and whisking pine, the ruins
Of a little cot may yet be seen.

Anent its ruined walls, and looking o'er
The scene, as 'twere, a marble statue stands.

Look! yonder is the figure sweet and fair,
As of an angel e'er was conjured in

The mind of man. Yea, 'tis the figure of

A lovely female, who, with one arm raised,
Points upward to the sky, while in her hand

A rose of purest whiteness does she hold.

Ah, gentle reader! would'st thou know whence came
That flower of beauty? Why that image fair?

Then list to this, the legend of the rose.

Within yon cottage, years ago, there dwelt

An old man and his only child, a young

And lovely maiden. Fifteen years had passed

Since Flora, then a child of three or four,

Came with her parent to this moorland home.

The nearest village, Grindleford, is nigh

Upon a mile away. The winding path

That leads across the moor is rarely trod

By man or beast. Nor does the rushing train

E'er break the silence of the distant hills.

Oft was it said, some sad and sorrowful

Event had brought this stranger thus to seek

Rest from the world in a home so wild and drear.

A maid of rarest beauty Flora was ;
Around her head and shoulders flowed her hair,
Like clouds of gold. Her eyes, of deepest blue,
Though often filled with sadness, seemed to breathe
A language of the soul, than speech more pure.
So graceful was her form and sweet her smile,
So soft her voice, and kind her ev'ry act,
That in the village young and old alike
With gladness ever welcomed her. Their troubles,
Too, her presence would dispel, e'en as
The rays of dawn, when earth is wrapped in
Darkest pall, doth dry the dewdrops from each
Trembling leaf, and drive away the chilly gloom of
night.

And truly was the child the sunshine of
Her father's heart. His life had but one aim,
It seemed, and that his daughter's happiness.
In science was he deeply learned, and oft,
When Flora from the village school returned,
Would sit beside his child and train her mind
In knowledge of the heavens, till many stars
Were known by name. Nor did his teachings here
Remain. Her father had the deepest faith
In all the doctrines of Astrology.

And Flora, with an eagerness beyond
Her years, it seemed, was ever fain to know
About the wondrous things of which he spoke.

Ah ! to her

Astrology was no vain theory or
Pretence, but an absorbing truth and power.
Young as she was, her soul now seemed to reach
Almost to wells of superhuman thought.
In rapt attention would she sit and hear,
Whilst in his gravest tones her father taught
His mystic lore. Soon did she master all
The books so strange and stranger writings he
Possessed.

II.

One more companion now was often at
The side of Flora found. This was
Victor, son of a neighbouring squire. A noble youth
Of twenty-one or so, who often, when
His daily task was o'er, would run across
The moor to hear the stories of the heavens
That Flora with her voice of music told.
And often, when the sun was sinking low
Upon his crimson couch, Flora and her
Companion sat anent the garden path,
And as the stars peeped from the dark'ning sky,
Flora, with upward look and accents low,
Communed with them and sought to teach the youth
Their tidings to and ruling force o'er man.
But other thoughts were e'er in Victor's mind ;
To him the maiden soon became the source
Of deeper happiness than e'er he knew
Before. The windows of his soul seemed now

To ope, and through them beamed a wondrous dawn.
He loved her. And no human heart e'er beat
With truer love than Victor's for Flora.

It was upon a lovely eve in June
Their vows of constancy were first exchanged.
A thousand gorgeous tints had clothed the hills
Around, and mingled with the gold and
Purple hues that bathed the glorious canopy
Of heaven in shades of grandest harmony.

"Good night" had just been said by Victor to
Her father at his door, and Flora now
Had come with Victor down the garden path,
To say adieu e'er he across the moor
Should wend his way. A silent ling'ring at
The little gate there was, and then within
Her trembling hands Victor had placed his own.
Her eyes met his, and in that moment brief
Each read the secret of the other's love.

"Flora," at length he whispered, "can it be

"That I must ever leave thee thus and go

"And fight the world alone, or wilt thou ouce

"Be mine, and where I go, go also thou ?

"Thou knowest I love thee, yet thou may'st not know

"Life were an endless night without that love.

"Thou art my leading star, my fervent joy.

"Strange shadows seem to cross my path when thou

"Art far away, and fears crowd on my soul

"That some great harm to thee perchance may come.

“ But when, as now, I have thee by my side,
 “ All life is changed, and nought but happiness
 “ Then reigns within my heart. O Flora, speak ;
 “ Tell me thou dost love me.”

She raised her head

Once more and tried in vain to speak. Her eyes
 Were filled with tears, but deep within their
 Liquid depths were visioned signs of truest love.
 She spoke not, yet her love was doubly proven,
 And now, as Victor kissed her tears away,
 The deep emotions of their throbbing breasts
 Conveyed in silent speech from each to each
 A joy which to the heart alone is known.
 The seal of love—one kiss, and she was gone.

III.

A month had passed ; young Victor had been called
 Away from home. He hurries now once more
 Across the wild and rugged moor to see
 Fair Flora and her aged parent in
 Their peaceful home.
 With beating heart nears he the spot where last
 He said farewell to her so fondly loved.
 And there, beneath the deepening shadows of
 The old oak-trees, they meet once more.
 But strange it seems to Victor now to hear
 The broken sobs of Flora, and to feel
 Her fragile limbs as if with dread and
 Awful fear convulsed.

“Where hast thou been, and where goest thou hence?”

At last she faltered through her quiv'ring lips,

“Ah, Victor, didst thou not tell me that oft,

“When far away some shadow seemed to cross

“Thy path and fears o'ercame thy heart. Even so

“It is with me. I see thine eyes now filled

“With wonder that I know thou must again

“Depart e'en from thy native land, and that

“Before the morrow's sun doth rise thou must

“Be on thy way. Dear Victor, I have read

“This from the stars, whose beams have hither lit

“Thy way to-night o'er yonder moor.”

’Twas true, too true, alas! For Victor had

Been summoned by the King, an enemy

To meet upon the field of battle, and to

Defend his country's cause.

Just then a voice was heard within the house

Calling to Flora, and on hastening in

They found her father sick as unto death,

But gladly did he welcome Victor, and

His eyes are dim with tears as Victor now

The news of war unfolds, and as he hears

That Victor on the morrow joins the field.

Then thus the old man spake :

“My children, there is something I would say

“To you to-night, for truly do I know

“That ere the sun for many days hath run

“His course, my soul must leave its home below,

“And mingle with those beyond the grave.

"I pray thee, Victor, as thou lov'st my child,
 "Haste thee across to yonder Abbey on
 "The slope of Grindle Leigh. Seek there my old
 "And trusted friend the friar and hither bring him
 "To-night. What I must say concerns alike
 "Thyself, my child, and him."

With quickened step soon Victor hies away
 This strange command to carry out, nor does
 It seem that e'en an hour has passed
 Ere they return together, Victor and
 The priest. "I have a last request to make
 "Of thee to-night," the old man said, and took
 The friar's hand with friendly grasp.
 "Thou knowest that I have given my daughter's hand,
 "And she her heart, to this, the true and
 "Loving son of my dear friend of Grindleford,
 "Whose earnest hope it is, as 'tis my dying
 "Wish, to see them, by the holy ties
 "Of wedlock, joined in one. Dear Friar, if now
 "These two consent, I pray thee say the
 "Sacred words and make them one to-night."
 The Friar obeyed, nor were the lovers loth;
 In silence did they bow their heads, for seemed
 Their hearts too full to speak.

It was a beauteous night. The moonbeams streamed
 Upon each face, and lent a wondrous calm
 To all. The Friar, whose locks (for locks he wore)
 Of snowy whiteness fell like streaks of silver
 On his sombre garb, stood there and joined

Their hands, and slowly spoke the solemn words.
Then sweetly were their voices raised to sing
A nuptial hymn. The sounds in mingled strain
Flowed softly on the breeze far o'er the moor,
Nor seemed to die, e'en when the song had ceased,
But flowed on still in echoes through the sky.
Yea, doth tradition say that oft among
The secret voices of the summer night
Those echoes o'er the moor may yet be heard.
Their anthem ended, rose the old man on
His couch, and gave the Friar a packet sealed;
Contained therein were papers of moment,
And with them was his will, whereby he left
To Victor and to Flora all his wealth.

IV.

The hour when Victor must depart now
Nearer drew. The happy pair, in low and loving
Whispers, at the trysting-place of old,
Are speaking of their future happy years,
When Victor should returned be from war.
Then Flora cried again, "O Victor, must
"Thou go? Yet do I know thou must. Oh! may
"The powers divine guard thee from harm
"And bring thee safely back!
"Ah, wouldst thou know my dream last night about
"Our stars of fate? See there, above us now,
"Antares the name of one, Spica

“ Virginies another, and these are
“ The stars that rule our lives.
“ Well, as I watched those stars last night
“ Methought they passed beneath a sea of tears,
“ And for a while did one depart from sight
“ Yet far away upon a distant isle
“ Of adamant they met once more, then once again
“ Divided would their paths become, but though
“ From here huge waves of darkness rose between
“ The stars, still did the one that shone most fair
“ A gleam of light to t’other lend. At last
“ I saw across the sea, and far away,
“ Beyond the distant nebulae of yonder sky,
“ A glorious dawn broke forth, and midst
“ A scene of gorgeous lights, a double star,
“ These two became of dazzling power and beauty.
“ I know not all this dream portends, dear
“ Victor, yet I knew that we must parted be
“ Ere thou didst tell us all to-night.”
“ My dearest Flora,” then said Victor, “ true,
“ Thy dream was strange, yet do not let us to-night
“ Think of theme so sad. This is our wedding-
“ Day. My own true love! Come, I will kiss
“ Thy tears away, and with them vanish all
“ Thy melancholy thoughts.”
And thus they lingered long in fond converse,
Till now the hour had come when Victor must
E’en tear himself away. It was a sad

Farewell. Their happiness so young, their griefs
So early learned. Thus is the human lot.
Life is a Task to prove man's worth for
Better things that hence reward the good and true.
Ere Victor went, a compact each did make
That at the hour of eight upon the day
When he returned (where now they part) they both
Should meet again. One moment more, a last
Embrace, and he was gone.

v.

Twelve months have passed,
And now the little cottage stands with door
Ajar, and aspect wild and bare. Nor man
Nor child the silence of its threshold breaks.
By day the haunt of birds whose fluttering wings
Are ever heard amongst the straggling leaves
That now with mournful mien hang from its walls.
Yea, do the tiny leaves and swaying boughs
Of ev'ry tree around bend low their heads,
And long in vain for rest denied them by
The sleepless wind that ever seems to sing
A sad and endless requiem.
And night's dark shroud doth only lend the scene
A deeper beauty and the starlit sky
A diamond crown. But greater than the charm
Of all its beauty, is the wonder of

Its solitude. More mystic seems the spot
By night than are the wildest ocean waves ;
More lonely in the dusk of eve than darkest
Cave or desert wide and drear.
And on the midnight air the owl sends forth
His screech while perched upon the chimney top.
Then seems a chill of coldness and a strange
Convulsive fear to seize the earth around,
And ev'ry leaf coils close within itself.
A quiv'ring sob, as of a secret river's pulse,
And then the whirling wind, in silence
Hushed, stops on her endless path to list ;
Then deeply sighs, and with that sigh
Discordant echoes cease, and are resolved in sweet
And lulling chords, as of the sobbing strain
Of distant litanies. At last the sounds
In union seem to mingle with the
Echoes e'en of the song that now a year
Ago was heard. Then on the distant breeze
Once more they die away.

VI.

'Tis just twelve months to-night since Victor said
Farewell to his fair bride, so happy then.
Alas ! where is she now ? For Victor hath
This day returned to meet his love once more.
His cheek has lost its hue, his eye the fire
Of youth, as now he hurries o'er the heath

Of Grindle Moor. He lingers not, though often
Those within the village just traversed
Would call him back.

Each face and voice to him sad tidings tell,
Yet on he goes, nor stays to hear that which
His heart will not believe. And o'er the moor
At length the cottage is in sight. His heart
Beats quickly now, as mingled hopes and fears,
Within his heaving breast, strive each to be
Triumphant.

He finds the cottage tenantless, then looks
Around, and calls aloud her name, "Flora."
But distant echoes only answer back
One word, that faintly falls upon his ear
Until it dies away among the hills—
"Flora, Flora," and then still his heart stands,
And, lowly sinking to the earth, exclaims
The youth, "It is thy voice I hear. Oh tell
Me where thou art!"

'Tis near the hour of eight, still Victor waits,
And now, about a hundred yards along
The garden path, the trysting-place is reached.
And here again he stops. There, overhead,
The two bright stars shine as of yore, and as
He looks on them his mem'ry travels back.

Ah! well

Does he remember Flora's dream about
Those stars, and as he now recalls her words,

He also thinks of Flora's promise, there
 To meet him at this hour whene'er he should
 Return. He thinks too of his own sad fate
 Since that eventful night, and of the world
 He has with aching heart now fought so long
 In distant lands. Of many months of toil
 'Midst scenes of direst cruelty and wrong.
 Across the moor, the distant bells announce
 The hour of eight. The sounds, with softest cadence,
 Fall upon his ear and seem to fill
 The air with signs of untold mysteries.
 Anon the wind's rustling among the trees
 Close by would seem to whisper tales of night,
 And with each shadow of the silent earth
 A secret converse hold. And now doth
 Victor thus soliloquise, as changing thoughts
 Crowd fast across his mind :—

VII.

Serene and welcome angel,—peaceful Night,
 Within thy sure embrace the earth abides
 In sleep ; and as from out yon starry deep
 The moon throws forth a ray of silver light
 O'er mountain, stream, and dale, there seems a smile
 Of happiness to linger all around.
 For earth, e'en as a slumbering child, is wrapt
 In happy dreams.

Day now is dead !

Yet tranquil is its close when thou, O Night,

Thus with thy mantle cover'st all its acts,
And in its death bends o'er in silent awe.
And life, what is't? And what the great beyond?
Whence are the things of life more strange than e'er
Were fashioned in the phantom world of sleep?
Shall that—*To Come*—that unknown *night of life*,
With lamps of thought in countless millions lit
(Appealing through a sense whose birth beyond
The grave is sure), reveal to man that which
Is here unsolvèd and unsolvable?
Calm and mysterious Night! thou seem'st even now
To bring me to a realm where words are not
A means of speech, and where sweet music swells
Throughout all space in silent, yet harmonious,
Chords.

Dear night! what solace thou dost bring to man!
The weary and the horny-handed son
Of toil in thee doth ever find his best
Reward, for with thy sweetest smile thou dost
A full approval and acceptance breathe,
And softly whisper in his willing ear.
The soldier, with fast beating heart, and limbs
Begirt with human blood upon the field
Of battle, haileth thee, and feels thy balm
Of rest steal o'er his soul, as in thy
Shadowed pall he is enwrapped. The seaman, too,
When rocked upon the ocean wave, although
At thy approach he may not sleep, yet is

The anchor cast, and by thy secret power
His spirit is uplifted, and his eyes,
With tears bedimmed, are raised, perchance towards
Thy wondrous crown of stars. Then out his heart
Upon thy wings a prayer is borne to God.
Sweet angel Night! with thee we contemplate
The toil and strife of life, the follies of
The world. Sad picture 'tis thus conjured up
Of man, whose great ambition oft is gain :
Who in his feverish haste for gold denies
Himself the truest happiness that with
Contentment ever hand in hand is found.
O cold and soulless man, headlong going
Thus through this life ; thy ev'ry thought and act
Have but one end, and that a bauble vain !
Ay, though the world around thee truly floods
With beauty, and the music of the wind
And brooklet ever calls, yet no response
Escapes from thy dead heart. Nor hope nor love
For aught above thy selfish aim is felt.
O coward mind, that whispers thus were best !
Nay, then, 'twere better life were but a dream !
But 'tis the gate of life that's shut with thee
That reasoneth thus. Is not all pain of life
Outweighed in that we know that by this life
The pathway of our fellow-men may be
Made bright by noble acts of love that shall
Not die with us, but ever spread a ray

Of kindest light to those who follow on ?
And though our fondest and our dearest hopes
On earth perchance are blighted in their spring ;
Ay, though the truest and the purest love
E'er kindled deep within the human breast
Be rudely severed from its anchorage,
Yet dear shall grow the thoughts wherewith our griefs
Are linked henceforth unto their goal—itsself,
Beyond our reach. Yea, mem'ry shall bridge o'er
Th' abyss, and newer hopes shall then become
Our beacon lights.

And when with thee, O still and mystic Night,
Man thus reflects upon the joys and pains
Of life, he may, e'en to the end, when he
(As 'neath thy shroud he hath so often slept)
Shall fold his hands in the sure sleep of death,
Say to himself, "I am content," for then
Upon his tomb may fitly be inscribed
The words: "He lived."

VIII.

Then Victor gave a sudden start, for there
Before him stood fair Flora, clad in white !
Yes, calm and beautiful beyond the power
Of words to tell, she stood. Within her eyes
There was a sadness too unspeakable.
But in a language far more sure than speech,
Those eyes revealed her soul's unchanged love.
As Victor was about to speak and take

Her hand in his, she moved aside, and by
A gesture motioned Victor not to stir.
Now points she to a glittering star that,
Diamond-like, shines overhead.
And then she forward leans, and Victor sees
A gush of tears fall from her eyes upon
A rose of purest whiteness that she holds
Within her hand. No longer now he waits,
But quickly clasps his arms around her form.
O powers of mystery and mercy, help!
His arms have through that outline passed as through
A shadow. Now a great and awful fear
Has come o'er Victor's mind. For surely 'twas
Her spirit standing there. Yet was the rose
Retained by Victor's hand from hers!
"O Flora!" then at last did Victor cry,
"And art thou dead? Is this the token of
"Thy faithfulness, and of thy vow to keep
"The tryst? O Flora, Flora, love, come back,
"And let me also tell thee of my own
"Unbroken vows and why long my absence."
Again her arm is raised towards the sky,
Once more she points unto the light o'erhead.
And now she seems to rise towards that star.
Her eyes then gently close, and o'er her face
There comes a heavenlike peace. A moment more,
And nought in Flora's place is there beyond
The pale and glimmering moonlight beams,

And Victor sinks upon the ground as dead.
Alike his body and his mind to exhaustion yield.

IX.

'Tis ten o'clock when Victor here is found.
Two men who chance to-night to pass this way
Now lift him from the dewy earth, but still
He waketh not, nor does he hear or speak
Till he is laid with careful hands upon
A couch within the Friar's sacred home,
Across the heath at Grindle Leigh. The priest,
With loving voice, had called (in anxious fear)
His name. At once did Victor start and look
Around, and in response to questions then
He told his story. How in battle fierce
He wounded was, and how ere he was well
He had been carried far away by foes,
And then to exile sent. How he at length
Escaped, and night and day fled for his life,
Once more to seek those by whose side he fought.
Thus on and on he went, but found them not.
His native shire at last was reached, and there
He learned that peace had been proclaimed.
"And now," he said, "I homeward turned my steps,
"And over mount and dale I came along,
"Nor halted till I reached my loved one's home,
"Alas! to find it desolate. Oh, tell
"Me where is Flora?"
Then gravely spoke the Friar, and said:—
"I have for thee sad news, yet have I also

"News of gladness. I'll be brief.
 "Fair Flora's now in heaven. Three months ago
 "To-day she joined the angels there, but on
 "That morn she bore to thee a child, and she,
 "Thy daughter, liveth still, an emblem pure
 "Of love both lost and found. Yes, Flora's gone ;
 "Her father too has joined the throng above.
 "Ah, Victor, when 'twas given out that on
 "The field of battle thou hadst died, thy wife
 "E'en to the last denied the rumour sad,
 "And murmured 'No, he will come back to me.'"

The old man paused.

And now does Victor seem to rouse himself,
 As from a trance, for mem'ry cometh back.
 He looks upon the rose still in his hand,
 Then sinks once more upon his couch, and with
 A tremor in his voice, he tells the Friar
 What he beheld that night, and of the dream
 Of Flora, now a year ago. And 'tis
 In vain they tell him what he saw was but
 The phantom of his sleep, for then with
 Choking voice he speaks again : "O Flora, now
 "Do I thy vision understand. Ah, 'tis
 "Indeed a sea of tears through which we pass.
 "Gone art thou to those realms of thought and being
 "Which e'en in thy childhood thou didst seek
 "To probe. Yea, gone to mingle in that bright
 "And glorious dawn, e'en as thou didst foretell.

“ But we shall meet again, and though my path
“ Be dark, thou dost indeed a ray of light
“ Now lend, as in thy dream was seen. Oh, Friar!
“ Where is that gleam of light—my child?”

X.

In after years did Victor often, hand
In hand with his fair child (his life's new hope),
Repair to see the quiet spot where last
He saw his bride, and whereon he had placed
Her statue, chiselled from the finest
Alabaster marble. There within her hand
Did Victor place the wondrous snow-white rose,
As yonder, 'neath the shades of oak and pine,
Tradition says 'twill e'er remain, a
Holy thought to breathe to ev'ry passer by.
Ay, though some generations since have passed,
And in the old churchyard of Grindleford
Do sleep each one who knew those days, 'tis said
The token liveth still, held in that
Marble hand, and that fair Flora's tears like
Crystal dew hang on its fragrant and immortal leaves,
And these are symbols true that faithfulness
And love can never die, for Flora's acts
Of kindness deeply graven were within
The hearts of all the village folks around,
Whose children now have linked her name with what.
Is good, e'en as are linked our thoughts of light
And truth.

[FINIS.]

THE WINDOWS OF THE SOUL

Sister, is thy spirit drooping?
Do thy burdens dim life's goal?
Brother, does thy way seem dreary?
Ope the Windows of the Soul.

Ope the Windows : Love and Friendship,
These the saddest heart shall bless ;
Wondrous rays are they of splendour
From the sun of Happiness.

Ope the Windows : Duty, Labour,
Herein is life's surest zest :
Noble efforts banish languor,
Heralds Toil the sweetest rest.

Ope the Windows : Mirth and Gladness,
Beams are these e'er bright and new,
Pleasing lights, revealing ever
Hidden treasures to our view.

Ope the Windows : Art and Science,
Beauteous worlds of wonder find ;
Visions of their glitt'ring portals,
Halo-like, shall crown the mind.

Ope the sympathetic Window,
 Leading to the inmost heart,
 And the crimson glow of kindness
 Ever be your future chart.

Ope the Windows : Truth and Honour,
 Ever view their cloudless sky,
 Unto spotless lives revealing
 Glimpses of eternity.

Ope the sacred Windows widely
 Of religious Work and Prayer,
 Welcome rays of heavenly guidance,
 Quick dispelling ev'ry care.

Through these Windows Faith shall enter,
 And with Peace and Joy remain ;
 Doubt no more enthral the vision !
 Sorrow shall no longer reign.

Oh ! how happy now your daily
 Walks through ev'ry path of life ;
 Golden promise, richer harvest,
 Ever conquering earthly strife.

Brother ! art thou yet repining ?
 Wilt thou still thy dirges toll ?
 Nay, I know thou see'st the beacon
 Through the Windows of the Soul—

See'st the beacon, now so certain,
Of life's purpose, end, and aim—
Countless labours to accomplish,
Deeds of glory, works of fame.

Sister! wherefore then thy burden?
Whence thy sighs, thy tears, and gloom?
Mem'ry breathes their only requiem!
Hope stands Victor o'er their tomb!

Now within thine eyes so tender
Are there soulful wells of light:
Radiant stars, resplendent grandeur,
Signs Divine of Love and Right!

Sister! Brother! do not falter,
Each your lives anew enrol;
God to you assigns a mission,
Ope the Windows of the Soul!

THE DREAM OF MUSIC.*

Once, when wearied with life's battle,
From its ceaseless strife I turned—
Turned to seek midst silent woods that
Rest for which my soul so yearned.

Dreaming there, a sound of music,
Like an angel's distant lyre,
Reached me, and the flow'rs so *beauteous*
All around me formed a choir.

Rose their wondrous song to heaven,
While the echoes far above
Filled my beating heart with rapture,
Joyous as the dawn of love.

Then, like summer zephyrs dying,
Seemed the sounds almost to cease,
And the flow'rets softly whispered—
Whispered thus of hope and peace :—

* The following poem was recently set to music by the author (under a *nom de plume*), and copies may be had from him, price 2s. each. Address, 116, Mildmay Road, London, N.

“ Work thou on, nor doubt the future ;
Still in Labour’s Love rejoice ;
Ever in life’s toil and sorrow
Hearing love’s eternal voice.”

Then the mystic chords were wafted
Far across the starry deep,
And my effort still to hear them
Raised the silken lid of sleep.

Now I often sit and wonder
Whence that heavenlike message came,
For my task hath since been lighter,
And more fixed my noblest aim.

THE SISTER'S DOUBT.

Once a brother true and sister
In deep thought stood by the shore,
Listening to the sea's wild music,
To the burden of its roar.

On the maiden's brow a cloud of
Gloom and sadness seemed to lie,
And the brother whispered to her
Words of hope and sympathy.

Now she speaks in tones that mingle
Strangely with the sobbing waves,
As with mystic tread they hasten
Murm'ring homeward to their caves.

"Brother, see'st thou yonder bubble
Floating on the ocean deep?
Look! it nears the rocks and shingle,
Spreading just beneath our feet.

"Now the surging waves leap forward,
Madd'ning in their wild excess,
And the quiv'ring bubble sinks to
Darkness and to nothingness.

“Gone for ever ’neath the waters,
Lost within the boundless sea,
Was, but is not ! hence no future
Dawns upon its destiny.

“Brother, tell me if that bubble
Likens to the human race ;
Tell me, is our fate so hopeless,
Earth our sole abiding place ?”

Then the youth, whom early sorrow
A true child of Faith had made,
Gently took his young companion’s
Hand within his own, and said :—

“No, no, sister, this can never
Be the future of mankind,
Out our bodies, to His glory,
Souls immortal God will find.

“Else why do the highest, purest
Aspirations ever start,
Like the loveliest angels flying
From the temples of the heart ?

“Why do all our best ambitions,
Though they wander far and wide,
Sometimes almost reaching heaven,
Still return unsatisfied ?

“ Why do summer clouds and rainbows,
Each with beauties not of earth,
Pass from us away for ever
Ere we comprehend their birth ?

“ And the wondrous stars of midnight,
Unapproachably sublime,
Ever round the throne of heaven,
Through the mysteries of time,

“ Holding festivals of grandeur
In the home of space above,
Or in silence ling’ring near, with
Sacred messages of love,—

“ Who arrayed all these in glories
That no mortal could devise ?
Who controls them, e’en beyond the
Limit of man’s faculties ?

“ Whence the voice that hovers o’er when
Scarcely heaves the ocean’s breast,
Breathing holy songs of comfort
Sweet as baby sighs of rest ?

“ Whence the visioned angel faces,
Priceless scenes on memory’s train ?
Shall these not return from dreamland,
Shall we ne’er their smiles regain ?

“ Dearest sister, something tells me
 Life is but to prove our worth ;
 There is hence for us a higher
 Destiny than that of earth !

“ There’s a realm where stars so beauteous
 Spread before our sight shall be,
 Like the fairest isles that slumber
 On the bosom of the sea.

“ There the brightest, fondest visions
 From the world that pass away,
 Shall remain for ever near us,
 In a happy, endless day.”

* * * * *

Breaks the sun now from his hiding,
 Smiles the maiden through her tears,
 Whisp’ring as they near their cottage,
 Words that he so gladly hears :—

“ Brother ! all my fears have vanished,
 Doubts no more my soul enshrine ;
 Rays of wondrous light are gleaming.”
 ’Twas the dawn of Faith Divine !

A VIOLET.

Only a violet—a chaste little violet,
Only a flow'r, yet the flow'r of my choice ;
Who can be dead to the lesson thou teachest,
Symbol of purity, modesty's voice ?

Why dost thou ever, in meekness so placid,
Seek to keep hidden thy beauty so rare,
Drooping thy head in the shade of the forest,
Solitude's mysteries seeming to share ?

Ask of the stars when o'erhead gently gleaming,
Shining so softly, yet brighter than gold ;
Ask of the twilight or dawn of the morning,
Why in all these is there grandeur untold ?

Ask of the brooklet whose song ever mingles,
Sweet with the many fair voices of earth,
Why doth its rippling so calmly impress us—
Why midst the thicket its murm'ring mirth ?

Ask of the rocks, and the peak dim and distant,
Why yonder hills, clothed in purple and blue—
Why do they fade from our sight when most lovely,
Why as we near them, pales faintly their hue ?

Is not then beauty more beauteous when hiding,
Modesty lending a charm with her veil ?
Gem of the woodlands, the violet, then give me,—
Flow'ret the sweetest, thy beauty all hail !

EARTH'S MANY VOICES.

How strange the charm of nature's voice
That whispers all around !
How mystical the harmonies
That everywhere abound !

'Tis morn ! The gorgeous sun hath risen
O'er beauteous grove and dell,
And to our souls their wondrous tale
Earth's many voices tell.
The rocks, the trees, the distant peak,
The brooklet passing by—
Suggestive and symbolic each
Of truth and purity.

'Tis noon ! And glorious day calls forth,
From every bud and flower,
A silent joy that seems to speak
Of beauty, love, and power.
The birds, too, through the livelong day
Earth's wonders glorify,
And in the universal choir
Their notes of joy raise high.

'Tis night! The earth now seeks repose,
And sobs the wind and sighs,
While murm'ring ocean waves respond
In sweetest lullabies.

The moon now lends her silv'ry light
Across the starry deep,
And earth, in rest and peace, appears
To smile in silent sleep.

O beauteous earth! O wondrous heav'n,
Majestic in design,
Your eloquence but echoes are
Of God's own voice divine!

A VALENTINE.

Though time may fly and scenes may change,
Though I may roam a world so strange,
Though fate my plans may disarrange,
I'll think of thee !

Doubt not that as through life I press,
My love for thee can e'er grow less,
For mem'ries fond each moment bless,
And all of thee !

Canst thou the glorious orb of day
Persuade to linger on his way ?
'Twere easier this than thoughts to stay,
Of mine for thee !

Whene'er I meditate or sigh,
Or midst life's scenes I laugh or cry,
Or mingle with its gaiety,
I think of thee !

Like streamlet down the mountain side,
Or deer from huntsman runs to hide,
So do my thoughts haste to confide
My love to thee !

Not all the gains of life untold,
Nor power nor fame nor wit nor gold,
Shall e'er that love thus pledged withhold
Or keep from thee !

BROTHERHOOD.

I saw one day two youths upon their way
To school. Each had but seen some five or six
Brief summers fly. And as I neared these boys
Their words informed me of their brotherhood.
Yes, they were brothers; but on that same morn,
Because the younger had his brother called
An unkind name, a quarrel had ensued.
Nor was it over yet. High ran their words
Just as I passed. On reaching, then, the field
Beyond the one the youths traversed, a large
Newfoundland dog sprang by, and, barking, off
He ran towards the boys. On looking round
I saw that both the boys had turned to fly,
And that the dog passed on in answer to
His master's call towards a hill beyond.
But 'twas too late, the younger boy, with fright,
Had run too near the brook that crossed the field.
He fell within, and, sad to say, the dog
Had passed, nor saw nor heard the child within
The plashing stream. I ran to save the boy
From death. I hurried on, but ere I reached

The brink, the brother of th' endangered boy
Sprang to his aid, and pulled him forth and clasped
Him in his little arms; and as I reached
The spot, the elder boy, in sobs that touched
My heart, forgiveness by his brother sought
For having been unkind that morn. The tears
Were in the other's eyes, and each one felt
How deep was now their mutual love.
And 'twas indeed a glorious sight to see—
So pure, so true, so noble and so good—
A reconciliation blest! a grand
And simple picture of true Brotherhood.

* * * * *

Another picture yonder far away
Methinks I see. A king of mighty sway
Has passed from earth. Upon a bier, 'neath wreaths
Of beauteous flowers and sable cloak, he lies,
Nor knows the anguish told by weeping eyes
And sobbing hearts of those around. And what
A sight it is! The many thousands there,
Whose thoughts in grief so great, are all as one!
See! yonder pass the crownèd heads, the heads
Of many a neighbouring State, and following close
Are subjects from each nation of the earth.
All are with one accord with sorrow bow'd;
With silent step and slow they move along,
And deeply mourn the loss of this great king.

And as I see, midst all the solemn throng,
 Those who on battle-ground but yesterday,
 It seems in years, met this same king in arms,
 And fought for life, I ask myself—Can this
 Have been, or is this life a dream, and all
 I see and feel but phantom-like and strange,
 Delusive thought? No, 'tis no dream! It is
 The better part of man that now asserts
 Itself in every breast. It is a grand
 And noble sign of love and Brotherhood.

* * * * *

O God! that man would ever thus remain ;
 Their souls thus knit with heavenlike peace and love!
 Then might indeed the sword and spear be wrought
 For ploughs and pruning hooks. A reign of peace
 And joy and happiness 'twould be in truth!
 And why, oh, why, should we require the sad,
 Perhaps the cruel, or the fatal hand
 Of Fate to strike with mighty force upon
 Our hearts, ere we conceive what should be felt
 By all and at all times?

* * * * *

Upon this picture gaze and then on that!
 Did we not know that deep within the heart

Of each of these two boys whom we have seen
There was a love, though to themselves that love
Seemed for the moment dead? And know we not,
E'en when the cry of war doth rend the air,
And two great pow'rs their strength and lives destroy,
In bloody carnage and in awful strife,
That these now hostile foes may meet in years
To come, as we have seen, in wondrous love
And Brotherhood?

* * * * *

Then may these pictures ever be engraved
Upon our hearts with His Almighty hand
Who knows the inmost thought—by Him
In whom true Brotherhood endures for aye.

MOTHER GONE!

She has gone whom none can equal,
She so gentle, kind, and good ;
She who always wisely, bravely,
'Twixt myself and danger stood !

And I see her carried from me,
From that home she loved so well,
From her own dear children's presence,
Leaving grief too deep to tell.

But I know that in the heavens,
Far away from earth and sky,
In that Home whence none returneth,
Dwells her spirit peacefully.

CHRISTMAS THOUGHTS.

Christmas! How that word awakens
Thoughts of childhood's happy days :—
Thoughts of days now gone for ever,
Thoughts of those we loved always !

Father, mother, sisters, brothers,
Gathered in sweet peace around
The old fireside ! Home and Christmas !
Where can richer joys be found ?

Times have changed, and we've changed with them,
Yet the founts of mem'ry fill
With fond thoughts of our old homestead,
Visions of our childhood still.

Since then one has gone for ever,
Gone where angels sing above ;
And we've mourned a mother's absence,
Sadly missed a mother's love.

Some from home have travelled westward,
And beyond the seas they roam ;
But we know that, near or distant,
All will still remember " Home."

And though, as of old, we may not
Join in earthly meeting more ;
Certain are we of a glorious
Meeting on a golden shore :—

Of a meeting, oh ! so wondrous,
Even happier than the past,
For our bliss shall have no ending,
And our peace no power shall blast.

May each Christmas, then, bring to us,
With its old and wonted cheer,
All that our best thoughts can picture,
Joy throughout each coming year.

TO STONEHOUSE.

(GLOUCESTERSHIRE.)

Time flies away, scenes swiftly change,
Yet as I roam this world so strange,
Though fate my plans may disarrange,
I'll think of thee!

Thy woods, as seen from Doverow Hills;
Thy lanes, canal, and tinkling rills;
Thy oolite tracts and famous mills,
All speak of thee!

Oft as I mused within thy grove,
And visions of the future wove,
My heart would swell with hope and love,
Enhanced by thee!

The glow-worm, with its lambent light,
Thy lanes and fields endear by night,
Whilst throstles sing with all their might
Their songs to me!

And thou, fair Leonard Stanley side,
Thou child of beauty, and the bride
Of Stonehouse, let my theme abide:
List to my lay.

'Thy fruitful orchards, lovely bowers,
 And rustic walls o'erhung with flow'rs ;
 'Thy happy homes, wherein the hours
 Fly fast away.

The grand old church stands nobly there,
 And seems the village thoughts to share,
 Yea, for each troubled heart to care,
 And e'en for me !

'The rich and beauteous woods beyond
 In silent language, too, respond
 And speak of mem'ries—Ah, how fond
 Mem'ries may be !

Farewell, Stonehouse ! God speed thy lot ;
 I leave thee now, thou rural spot ;
 Yes, plucking this forget-me-not,
 Leave silently.

Should years bring gladness in their train,
 And I should visit thee again,
 My thoughts till then shall ere remain
 Unchanged to thee !

THE SWELL.

The stars are bright,
'Tis late at night,
 As, passing through Pall Mall,
In scenes around,
Where signs abound,
 That prove the howling swell.

CHORUS :

Our song then ring,
While thus we sing,
 Of this, the howling swell ;
The " Ah, oh, oh,"
A toff, you know,
 A " mashing," howling swell.

'Tis here I say,
Whilst on our way
 Through streets where nobles dwell,
In road so wide,
We'll step aside,
 And watch the howling swell.
 Our song, &c.

This way, my friend ;
 Thy vision lend,
 And all thy feelings quell ;
 See'st thou that fool,
 The world's weak tool,
 The truly howling swell ?
 Our song, &c.

His gloves are tight,
 His cuffs are white,
 His name—we must not tell ;
 But, night or day,
 He's always " gay,"
 And " does " the howling swell.
 Our song, &c.

See ! now he reels,
 And doubtless feels
 That he is far from well ;
 Yet to retreat
 Would be defeat,
 And shame this howling swell.
 Our song, &c.

So still he drinks
 Of vice, nor thinks,
 Nor does he hear death's knell,
 Till 'tis too late,
 And at hell's gate
 Is found the howling swell.
 Our song, &c.

APPENDIX.

THE LOVER'S LEAP, MIDDLETON DALE.

“ It is not lack of love's assurance,
It is not doubting what thou art ;
’Tis the too, too long endurance
Of absence that afflicts the heart.”

Who has not, on gazing at the precipitous rocks of Middleton Dale, marvelled at the tragic event of the young lovers and the miraculous escape of the maiden, Hannah Baddaley, who leaped from the great cliff in 1762? She had quarrelled with her lover, and in her momentary unhappiness determined to put an end to her life. No sooner, however, did she jump from the cliff than the wind, getting under her gown, converted the latter into a parachute, and the love-sick maiden was thus brought to the ground in safety. It is said that she was soon afterwards reconciled to her lover, and became a most loving wife and mother.

“ O let thy weary heart
Lean upon mine! and it shall faint no more,
Nor thirst, nor hunger, but be comforted
And filled with my affection.”

THE WINNATS TRAGEDY.

“ I had a dream, which was not all a dream.”

Is there anything in the annals of “ deeds of awfulness ” more pathetic than the story of the murder in the Winnats (a strange ravine near Castleton), that happened more than a hundred years ago? Two young lovers of noble birth were on their way through Castleton to Peak Forest (the Gretna Green of the Peak in those days) to get married. Each was mounted on a beautiful steed. It was a runaway match. The story of their murder was some years afterwards graphically given on his death-bed by one of the five ruffians who, with pickaxes, and for the cash secreted in the horses’ saddles, did the dark deed. The lady, who had dreamed of their awful fate, is said to have been very beautiful, and on being confronted in the narrow dale, cried out, “ Allen, my dream, my dream ! ” They were rudely dragged from their horses into a cave that lies a few yards from the road, and here, notwithstanding the fact that each victim prayed fervently to the murderers to spare the life of the other, the five wicked cowards completed their fell designs. But the sense of retribution was soon upon them, for it is said that the blood of the young lovers mingled in streams upon the slanting surface of the white rock forming

the floor of the cavern, running hither and thither until there appeared before them, in letters of scarlet, the word "Hereafter." To those who have ever been in the Winnats on a dark and stormy night, and have listened to the wind as, with seeming ferocity, it pursues its mysterious path up the dale and over the great rocks, little wonder will be experienced at the local belief by many that in the wail of the wind may yet be heard the cry for help and mercy of the ill-fated bride.

"O night,
And storm and darkness, ye are wondrous strong."

"Far along
From peak to peak, the rattling crags among,
Leaps the live thunder! Not from one lone cloud,
But every mountain now hath found a tongue;
And Jura answers through her misty shroud
Back to the Winnats Caves, that call to her aloud."

THE BLACK DOG OF BRADWELL.

“Thrice the brindled cat hath mewed.”

Weird is the story of the Black Dog of Bradwell. Two miners who had been playing cards one Sunday were standing in the town gate discussing their luck. It was getting late, but the night was fine and moonlight. Just as they were about to separate for the night, although invisible to his companion, one of the men was terrified by the sudden appearance of a strange and perfectly black dog of unusual size, that came slowly up to them, but then vanished under their feet. He repeatedly called his friend's attention to the dog and pointed to it, but his companion only laughed and said there was no dog. The other, however, was so assured of the vision being a judgment and an omen of evil, that he refrained himself, and sought in vain to prevent his fellow worker from going down the mine on the following day. The latter, however, went, and, as in this case is well known, perished, the roof of the mine falling upon him. The survivor, it should be added, henceforth led a new and useful life, and was the means of recalling many fellow miners from the error of their ways.

“By a power to thee unknown,
Thou canst never be alone;
There are shades which will not vanish;
There are thoughts thou canst not banish;
And for ever thou shalt dwell
In the spirit of this spell.”

THE HAUNTED HOUSE IN SMALLDALE,
NEAR BRADWELL.

“Untie the winds and let them fight.”

Not many years ago there lived in a cottage a few yards from the roadside in Smalldale a well-known man and his wife. One day the latter was missing. The whole village assisted in a search, but to this day there has not been discovered the slightest trace of the missing woman. Soon after her disappearance, however, the neighbourhood was shocked by the tidings that her husband had hung himself in the house. There are still signs in the house of a terrible tragedy having been enacted, for there are bloodstains on the floor in one room, which, like those that confronted Lady Macbeth, nothing will remove. It is thought by many that the woman was murdered, but nothing is certain. Strange sounds are now said to be heard in the house at night, and a peculiar feature of this story is that any person going into the house with a dog is soon startled to find that the latter, after once entering the room where the man was found dead, at once rushes out again, as if in a wild fright, and cannot be induced to re-enter, no matter what persuasive means are resorted to.

“The raven himself is hoarse
That croaks the fatal news.”

THE "POOR DICKIE" SKULL OF TUNSTED.

"There comes a floating whisper on the hill."

On the brink of the dark waters of the canal at Tunsted, near Chapel-en-le-Frith, stands a square-built cottage known as the Haunted House of Tunsted. Many years ago there lived here two sisters who were the legatees of considerable property in the neighbourhood, including the house in question. For several years the sisters lived very unhappily together; indeed, they quarrelled almost daily on the question of who should be the final heiress of the house in which they lived. However, it is said that on her deathbed one of the sisters muttered continuously the words, "My bones shall remain here for ever." Tradition has it that for many years after her death the cottage was haunted, and owing to strange sounds became untenable until some one, remembering the dying words of the deceased owner, dug up her remains and brought the skull and placed it on a window-sill of the room in which the woman died.

According to the evidence of many local inhabitants, the house is peaceful and quiet while the skull remains there, but

if it be removed the voices recur, and a voice is heard in the wind as the latter, with strange moanings, comes through the keyholes of every door in the house, saying, "Fetch poor Dickie back." Twice has this skull (consisting of two separate bones) during the past few years been removed and buried in the churchyard at Chapel-en-le-Frith, but it is said that the mysterious request to "Fetch poor Dickie back" has prevailed on each occasion, and to this day the weird skull rests in the quiet corner of the window, and in the room a peculiar silence reigns.

"The dead are sleeping in their sepulchres,
And mouldering as they sleep; a thrilling sound,
Half sense, half thought, among the darkness stirs,
Breathed from their wormy beds all living things around,
And mingling with the still night and mute sky,
Its awful hush is felt inaudibly."

PRINCE ARTHUR AND THE TWILIGHT SPECTRE.

Many are there in the quiet villages of the High Peak who cling to the belief of the visitation of spectres that in some way or another give warning of any approaching calamity to the beholder. True it is, too, that this implicit belief has in every corner of the world ever existed in a higher or lower degree. Perhaps an incident that is said to have happened to Prince Arthur (eldest son of King Henry VII.), whilst visiting once at Haddon, has had considerable influence in deepening these superstitious ideas with the inhabitants of that neighbourhood. The Prince, then about twenty, was staying at the Hall, under the temporary guardianship of Sir Henry Vernon, about the year 1501. One evening at twilight he took his favourite walk alone to the "Four Lane Ends," about two miles from Haddon (now the site of Hassop Station), where there then stood a beautiful cross. The shaft of this cross is yet preserved in Bakewell Churchyard. Here the Prince was sitting, rapt in meditation, when there suddenly appeared before him the spectre (the figure of a female clad in white), and, looking straight at the Prince, although no breath escaped her lips, said:—"Soon comes thy smiling bride, but mark—all bliss is

brief on this disordered sphere." The spectre then immediately vanished, and the Prince hurried to Haddon, not without experiencing many fearful imaginings. On arriving there he found an escort from London had been sent for him to return, as his betrothed wife, Catherine, fourth daughter of Ferdinand, King of Aragon, had just arrived from Spain. The tradition runs that they were married very soon afterwards, but Prince Arthur only lived four months, and that after blessing his beloved wife, he died, saying, "Oh, the vision of Haddon." The spectre is believed to be the ghost of one Isabel, a lovely maiden who died broken-hearted at the altar whilst the marriage service was proceeding to unite her (under parental demand) to one she did not love. She had, moreover, unknown to her parents, a secret love for one by whom she was also adored. The latter, it is said, lost his reason on learning the fate of Isabel. Whatever foundation there is for the story about Prince Arthur, one cannot repress a passing thought of the mighty influence for good or evil his living to have had issue might have had upon the events of the succeeding years of change and turmoil that will ever be associated with the consequent successor to the crown, King Henry VIII.

‘ See’st thou the eastern dawn,
Hear’st thou in the red morn,
 The angels’ song?
Oh, lift thy hands and pray
To Him who smooths the way
 Through the dark vale!
Death comes to set thee free!
Oh, meet him cheerily,
 As thy true friend;
And all thy pain shall cease,
And in eternal peace
 Thy penance end.”

THE CURATE'S DREAM.

Ever from the time of the dream of Cæsar's wife has the mystery of dreamland baffled the acutest penetration of intellect. Beyond the confines of the immaterial, all or nearly all is conjecture.

May or may not a dream reveal something that the human intellect is otherwise unable to probe? It is impossible to say. But perhaps one of the most distinct indications of there being something as yet hidden to science is furnished in the following legend of the High Peak.

It is a matter of history that Major John André was adjutant-general in the British Army during the revolutionary war with America. He was employed to negotiate the defection of the American General Arnold at West Point. Just prior to Major André's departure from England, he, having friends in Derbyshire, paid a visit first to the poetess Miss Seward (a native of Eyam), then residing in Lichfield. From Lichfield the Major and Miss Seward arranged a visit to meet some literary friends of the latter at Tideswell, a market town of great antiquity in the High Peak.

The gentleman to whose house they now were repairing,

each mounted, and riding side by side on two beautiful, fleet-footed coursers, was no other than Mr. Newton, a minstrel of the Peak of considerable repute. Newton had that day a visitor, viz., his friend Mr. Cunningham, the curate of Eyam Church; and prior to the arrival of Miss Seward and André, Mr. Cunningham, who was ignorant of André's visit, related to Newton a dream which he had had the previous night, and which had left an indelible impression upon his mind. His dream was as follows:—

That he was in a foreign country, and that there suddenly appeared before him a man on horseback. As the rider approached the spot on which Newton imagined he stood, the scene changed, and a look of agony was depicted on the face of the rider as two horsemen swept down the road (which now appeared to be in a forest), seized him, and forthwith stripped his shoes from his feet and conducted him to a hill some distance away. Here they handed him over to a large concourse of people, by whom he was immediately hanged, the gallows being a huge tree that stood in their midst.

While Newton and his friend were talking over this weird creation of sleep, Miss Seward and the Major drove up to the door. Immediately Cunningham met André face to face, he started back with an ejaculation of dread surprise.

“His is the face of my dream!” he hurriedly whispered to Newton at the earliest possible opportunity.

The end of André is well known. Westminster contains a tablet to his memory. He was arrested in a wood when almost at a point of complete success of his plans, and the secret papers were found in his boots. Condemned as a spy, he was hanged at Tappan, New York, October 2nd, 1758. André was the author of the poem entitled "The Cow Chase."

"I know not how, I know not why,
But round my soul all drearily
There was a silent shroud."

THE MYSTERIOUS TREE AT HASSOP.

“ List! what strange harbinger is here? ”

How thrilling are some of the legends of Eyan, Hassop, and Padley Wood! There is a peculiar story about the old beech tree that overshadows the ground in front of the old mansion (the residence of the late Earl of Newburgh) at Hassop. It should be mentioned that the ownership of these Hassop estates is still in dispute, and the story goes that when the wind is exactly west, the rustling of the tree in question distinctly murmurs, “ All hail, true heir, that stills my voice; All hail, true heir, that stills my voice.” Some say the words are: “ All hail the Eyre that stills my voice.” Local tradition has it that many futile attempts have, during the past twenty or thirty years, been made to hew down this strange messenger of nature by current holders of the estates; that no sooner has axe been taken up than some accident happens to the would-be destroyer, and that within or beneath the tree are buried certain missing documents, which will only be discovered by him at whose hand the tree is fated to fall, and who is now ignorant of, or neglectful to establish, his rights.

“ Would'st thou reach that wished-for goal,
 Stay not, rest not, forward strain,
 Hold not hand and draw not rein!
 Perseverance strikes the mark.
 Expansion clears what'er is dark;
 Truth in the abyss doth dwell,
 My say is said now, Fare-thee-well!”

THE GHOST OF STOKE HALL WOOD.

“Dost thou stand,
Gazing to trace thy disappearing hope
Into some realm of undiscover'd day?
Our business is with night—'tis come.”

There is a ghost story of a peculiar character about the ruins close by the river Derwent, and a few hundred yards from Stoke Hall. This old barn is said to be haunted by the ghost of Old Ned, a carrier, who hanged himself therein many years ago. It is said that he previously made many attempts on the trees around, but that the boughs gave way one after another, and that often at midnight he may now be seen with a rope tearing off the branches from the trees, and finally disappearing over the crumbling walls into the ruins before mentioned.

“This silent spot tradition old
Hath peopled with the spectral dead.”

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