ANCIENT CUSTOMS AND SUPERSTITIONS IN CUMBERLAND.

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(Read 7th January, 1858.)

Of the picturesque province of Cumberland it is difficult to say whether its Scenery, its Geology, its Botany, its Meteorology, its Antiquities, History, Ethnology or Philology presents the most attractive and profitable field for research and observation. Each of these offers ample scope for the powers of the most able investigators, while those of more humble ability may, with the resolution to apply it honestly and earnestly, approach any one of them with fair hope of eliciting something worthy of being recorded. Several of these subjects have been discussed already, in a manner more or less satisfactory; but none have been exhausted, and some scarcely touched. The circumstances, however, under which this paper is prepared, compel me to take up a theme requiring less labour and research than any of those mentioned, and I have selected one for the materials of which I can draw upon personal recollection and observation, and which, if less dignified, has, itself or its kindred, occupied the attention of some who hold high positions in the literature of our country. For these reasons I confine myself to noticing a few of the old customs and superstitions, which, fostered by the primitive habits and secluded position of its people, lingered in Cumberland after they had ceased to exist in other parts of the country.

Even in Cumberland, however, at the present day, we may say with the poet—

> "Many precious rites
> And customs of our rural ancestry
> Are gone or stealing from us;"

and several of those I shall specify in this treatise are either obsolete or rapidly becoming so.

These ancient customs may be arranged conveniently in three classes—Feudal or territorial, Social, and Superstitious. To the first belong the tenures of lands, which, though perhaps not exclusively peculiar to Cumberland, may be noticed briefly as interesting relics of former times.

Many of the old imposts on land, such as cornage, thirlage, soccage, scutage, homage, fealty and military service, once the most important of all, have long been lost sight of, and now most of the lands in Cumberland, whether held on customary or arbitrary tenures, merely pay an almost nominal rent, besides certain fines, to the lord of the manor. Lands of arbitrary tenure pay, with certain deductions, fines of two years' value on the death of lord or tenant, or of both, and on alienation. Some pay dower to the widow, others not. Some lands pay a live heriot, which means the best animal in the tenant's possession; others, a dead heriot, that is, the most valuable implement, or piece of furniture. In Catholic times the Church also, on some manors, claimed as heriot the second-best animal the tenant might die possessed of, and on others the best. There is an old record shewing that the lord of a small manor, for the crime of seizing a heriot before the Church could satisfy her claim, was formally banned by the Bishop of Carlisle, and deprived of Christian privileges till he relieved himself from the anathema, by making restitution and doing penance. In some instances a heriot is only payable when a widow remains in possession of the tenement, and in these cases the original object of the impost has been to recompense the lord of the manor for the loss of a man's military service during the widow's occupancy. In some joint manors where two, or perhaps three, lords have claims for heriots, very discreditable, and, to a dying tenant's family, very distressing scenes are enacted; for, when it becomes known that the holder of a tenement so burthened is on his death-bed, the stewards of the several manors place watchers round the premises, who ascertain what and where the best animal may be, and, as soon as the demise of the tenant is announced, a rush ensues, and an unseemly contest for possession. This, I am glad to say, can only occur in very few localities, and they are confined to the north-east of the county. On arbitrary lands some lords claim all the timber, others only the oak, others the oak and yew, others oak and whitethorn, and so on. In some the tenant is bound to plant two trees of the same kind for every one he fells, but tenants have a right to timber for repairs, rebuilding or implements, though they must not cut down without license. Many lands are bound to carry their grain to the manorial mill to be ground and *multured*, but this custom has fallen into disuse. Most lords retain the minerals and game if they enfranchise the soil, as many have done. Many lands used to pay boons of various kinds, and some of these services are still enforced. By these were demanded so many men or boys, horses, carts, &c., in peat-

cutting time, hay time, harvest, wood-cutting and carting, and so on. In the east of the county, the tenants were obliged to send horses and sacks to St. Bees, for salt for the lord's use: some had to bring their own provisions when engaged in these services: some were entitled to a cake of a stated size for each man, and a smaller for a boy, on assembling in the morning at a fixed hour, under a certain tree, as was the custom at Irton Hall. Breach of punctuality forfeited this cake, but the work was always exacted. Certain farms in some manors were bound to maintain male animals for the use of all the tenants, subject to various conditions and regulations. Formerly many tenants paid a pound of pepper at the lord's court, others only a peppercorn, and some lands are still held by this custom. There were many other peculiar customs connected with the tenure of land which I need not describe.

Curious individual exemptions from certain burthens are to be met with occasionally. In the parish of Renwick a copyholder is relieved from payment of the prescription in lieu of tithe, paid by all his neighbours, because one of his ancestors slew a *crackachrist* (a curious misnomer for cockatrice.) This carries our imaginations back to Moor of Moor-hall and the Dragon of Wantley; but the Cumbrian monster is alleged to have been nothing more formidable than a bat of extraordinary size, which terrified the people in church or vestry one evening, so that all fled save the clerk, who, valiantly giving battle, succeeded in striking it down with his staff. For this exploit he was rewarded with the exemption mentioned, which is still claimed by his successors.

A genuine specimen of feudal observances is preserved in the custom of riding the boundaries of manors, which, in the mountain district, where the line of division is not very distinct, is performed perhaps once during each generation, by the representatives of the lords of the manor, accompanied by an immense straggling procession of all ages,—the old men being made useful in pointing out important or disputed portions of the boundary, and the young in having it impressed on their memories, so that their evidence or recollection may be made available in future perambulations. In older times, when the interests of the lords outweighed farther than in our own day the rights of the peasantry, certain youthful members of the retinue, in order to deepen the impression and make it more enduring, were severely whipped at all those points which the stewards were most anxious to have held in remembrance. These occasions always wind up with a banquet, provided on a most liberal scale by the lord of the manor, and open to all who

take part in the business of the day. A local usage connected with the landed interest, and long observed with notable regularity, was the following. When salmon were plentiful in the Cumberland rivers, and formed a very important element in the ordinary living of the occupants of adjoining lands, the tenants of the manor of Ennerdale and Kinniside claimed "a free stream" in the river Ehen, from Ennerdale lake to the sea, and assembled once a year on horseback to "ride the stream." If obstructions were found, such as weirs or dams, they were at once destroyed. Refreshments were levied or provided at certain places on the river, and as all the members of the cavalcade had to partake largely of these, either by compulsion or choice, rude practical jokes, of a very moist character, were freely indulged in, and none of the journalia ended without many battles; quarrels, commenced in sport, having to be settled in earnest, either there and then or at the next year's riding. This custom has long ceased to be observed; the Ehen is thronged with weirs, and salmon hardly exist in it. Mentioning salmon reminds me of a remarkable method of taking that fish formerly practised in Cumberland, and noticed in the novel of Redgauntlet. This was hunting salmon on horseback, of which unique sport one Richard Graham, who, about seventy years ago, was lessee of the fisheries at the mouth of the Derwent, has left a description preserved in a note to Hutchinson's History.

The Cumbrians had their own habits of conferring territorial dignities. It is still the universal custom to call a holder of a piece of land, however small, and under whatever tenure, "a 'statesman," and formerly, in some localities, a landholder's eldest son had the Scottish title of "laird," his eldest daughter was styled "lady," and the owner of every petty manor was designated "lord," so that, according to an old writer on Cumberland manners, we might see a statesman holding the plough, Lady Bell labouring at the churn, and Lord Ritson attending the market with turnips to sell.

The ancient hostility of the men of Cumberland to the Scots still exhibits itself in various forms; even in the games of the boys it is often to be noticed, as, for instance, in their manner of playing the common game of "prison bars"—the two parties engaged in which call themselves Scotch and English, and when one of the English side passes the boundary, he cries, "here's a leap on thy ground, dry-bellied Scot," conveying a contemptuous allusion to the staple food of the Scotch. In the old moss-trooping times, as is well known, the wardens of the opposite marches, largely attended, occasionally met for the transaction of business. Strict

truce was always observed at these meetings, and, whilst the leaders were arranging the affairs of the borders, their followers, laying their enmity aside, engaged in friendly contests at various games, the principal and favourite being that of foot-ball. A trace of these old contests remains in the annual match of foot-ball still held on Easter-Tuesday at Workington, the sailors with the ship-carpenters playing against the colliers of the district. The victory is generally disputed with extreme bitterness, so that even lives have been lost in the struggle, and the orderly classes there would gladly see this lingering vestige of feudal sports follow those that have disappeared.

In treating of social customs, we must of course give precedence to those appertaining to marriage; and in Cumberland some of the most curious were seen in what were called bride-wains (the second syllable of this word, according to Sullivan, is from the Danish *vane*, a custom.) These festivals resembled, in some respects, the penny-weddings of Scotland, and proceeded thus. A young couple, poor enough in worldly goods, but resolved to encounter the trials of married life, having fixed upon the wedding-day, the whole country, for ten or twelve miles round, was invited to share in the festivities; and to accomplish this very general invitation, various means were adopted. Ten or twelve young men would scour the country on horseback or a-foot to summon distant residents; in the yard of the parish church, after morning service, the clerk, mounted upon a tombstone, gave intimation of the coming event to the congregation; and when newspapers began to circulate in the county, the same comprehensive invitation was sometimes given in their columns by way of advertisement. Some of these, cut from the *Cumberland Pacquet* of 70 or 80 years ago, are in my possession, and one specimen, partly in rhyme, as it appeared in that paper in 1786, illustrates this part of my subject so perfectly, and is so curious in itself, that I should be tempted to give it here, had it not been already republished in *Hone's Every-day Book*, *Chambers's Journal*, and elsewhere. In another of these advertisements, a countryman invites the whole county to a hunt and other sports,—to the wedding of his daughter,—and to the sale of his household furniture,—all combined to form one great festival.

The sports at these bride-wains were racing,—by horses, donkeys and men,—wrestling, fencing, leaping and other athletic games, of which the Cumbrians have always been passionately fond, and in which they still excel. After the ceremony, these, with eating, drinking and, of course, dancing,

filled up the day and night; but the characteristic feature of these meetings was the manner of carrying out the object for which they were drawn together. The bride, seating herself in some conspicuous situation where she would be passed and seen by all the multitude of guests,—say on their way to or from the refreshment tables,—with a large wooden platter or pewter dish in her lap, invited contributions from all and sundry. All contributed according to their means, and many very liberally; so that when the expenses were paid, a sum would remain sufficient to enable the parties interested to make a respectable start in housekeeping. This old custom has died out within the last thirty years, as also has that of having a house built by subsidizing the boon-work of neighbours, in this case chiefly the young men and women, who, always ready to help each other, to say nothing of the anticipated dance and merriment, would assemble about dawn at the appointed spot, and labouring with good will, each at an allotted task, would erect, long ere sunset, the clay walls of a dwelling for some young couple who probably had to rely upon a bride-wain for means to finish and furnish it. The walls reared and the floor laid, of the same material, the volunteer operatives would *hansel* the cottage by a dance on the wet clay floor. Those who have witnessed the energetic dancing of the Cumbrian peasantry will agree that this would be by no means the lightest part of the day's task. Many cottages with clay walls and thatched roofs, built by this method, which was called "a clay-daubing," are still to be seen in the northern parts of the county.

A very ancient wedding custom in Cumberland was that of breaking a cake over the head of the bride and distributing it amongst the guests; generally performed after the ceremony by the bridegroom, standing behind the bride seated on a chair, her head covered with a white napkin. Besides these there were several other bridal usages, of which, as they have happily disappeared, it were scarcely profitable now to revive even the recollection.

After marriages, we legitimately come to the customs connected with births. Of these the only one I have remarked as being confined to Cumberland, is the fashion of making, for the regalement of gossips and callers, a compound called room, or rum, butter; I am not certain which name is correct. It is a concoction of butter, sugar, spirits and spices, and when eaten in the orthodox manner, with crisp oaten cake, is not so disagreeable as might be supposed. The quantity consumed in some country houses, after the arrival of each little stranger, is something quite wonderful,

especially in the more thinly-peopled localities, where, as would scarcely be surmised, the number of congratulatory visitors is always the greatest. The humble dwelling in one of the fell dales, of a worthy clergyman who has reared twenty-one children on an annual income of less than £70, has witnessed the preparation and consumption of forty-two stones of this Cumbrian dainty, or 28lbs. at the birth of each child.

Passing from one extreme of human life to the other, I have noticed in some of the towns of West Cumberland a funeral custom that I have not observed elsewhere. On the day preceding that appointed for an interment, the parish clerk passes through all the streets, carrying a bell of very dolorous tone, and proclaiming at the corners that all friends and neighbours are desired to attend the funeral of their deceased fellow-citizen. The country funerals are chiefly remarkable for the quantities of refreshments disposed of by the guests. An old north-country proverb tells us that "sorrow is dry;" on some of these solemn occasions I have felt tempted to append to it, "and sympathy is hungry." A curious word, now becoming obsolete, was applied to meat and drink given at funerals, namely, *arval*. A recent Philologist, already quoted, says the word is derived from the Danish *arv*, a heritage, or *arvelig*, hereditary, and adds, "there appears to be some superstition connected with the origin of the word, as if of a bequest from the deceased to ward off the danger of evil grudges." The mountain fox-hunters apply the word to the allowance of ale they are entitled to at the expense of the township wherein they kill one of those animals, which are there regarded as destructive vermin, not preserved as a means of sport. Thus they would say, "we killed him on Walna Scar, and drank his arval at Newfield."

Old observances of anniversaries have lingered in Cumberland probably later than in other parts. At Christmas the customs, but faintly observed elsewhere, are still in full force. Village children sing their ancient carols from door to door in the evenings, and the performances and salutations of the adult nocturnal minstrels are very beautifully described by Wordsworth, in the verses dedicating his sonnets on the Duddon to his brother. Bands of juvenile actors, of whose performances Sir W. Scott says—

> "Who lists may in their mumming see
> Traces of ancient mystery,"

still levy contributions in money and Christmas cheer in the rural localities. The antique hospitality of Cumberland glows at Christmas with

all its pristine lustre, and it is considered both unlucky and ungracious either to withhold or to decline the offer of this hospitality.

On New Year's day the only peculiar custom I have seen was what they called "stanging," called elsewhere "lifting." This consisted in seizing unwary individuals in the roads or streets, forcing them into an arm-chair —formerly upon a pole or *stang*—and carrying them off shoulder high to a public house, when they were restored to liberty on payment of a trifling ransom.

Various seasons and days had special viands assigned to them. At Candlemas, the season in some districts for making annual settlements of accounts, ale posset was eaten with great solemnity. The Monday before Lent is called Collop-Monday, this ugly word being Cumbrian for meat cut in slices, whether steaks, chops or rashers, which last are eaten on that day. On the day following, the staple dish is that devoted to the day in most parts of the kingdom. Ash-Wednesday was called *Hash*-Wednesday, and hashes or stews were the proper viands. The remaining days in the week had respectively their own dishes, which it is hardly necessary to specify.

The beginning of Lent was one of the seasons when barrings-out were perpetrated by the school-boys, who garrisoned, provisioned, and barricaded the school against the master, and generally sustained a siege of three days; otherwise they were subjected to severe tasks and punishments. At the end of that period, custom obliged the master to propose terms of capitulation to his refractory subjects, which comprised stipulations for holidays, and permission to proceed immediately to certain sports, the chief of which were foot-ball and cock-fighting. At some places a prize, in the form of a small silver bell, was provided for the latter sport, and the boy who brought the winning bird wore this attached to the button of his hat on three consecutive Sundays. Previous to its suppression by the magistracy and public opinion, cock-fighting was practised at the Cumberland schools to a very disgraceful extent. In some schools an annual offering is still made by the boys to the master, called a cock-penny, originally established for the purpose of promoting that cherished amusement of the "good old times."

The fifth Sunday in Lent was called Carling Sunday, the dish assigned to the day being "carlings," or peas softened by soaking, and then fried in butter. And the young people went about pelting each other with uncooked carlings as they do in the Italian carnivals with sweetmeats.

On Good Friday the Cumbrians regale themselves with a mess called figsue, consisting of bread and figs boiled in ale. At Easter large quan-

tities of eggs are converted into pace-eggs for distribution amongst the children, parties of whom, dressed in character, go round the different neighbourhoods, entering each house, one by one, as they are announced by their leader, in a song for the occasion, each striking in as he enters and taking his place in a march round the apartment. There is a belief prevalent amongst the children, that if they go out on Easter Sunday without some new clothing, they will be subjected to grievous indignity by the crows. Mulled ale or egg-flip is drunk in great quantities in the evening, the men resorting to the village inns for the purpose.

Far into the last century, Beltane fires were lighted all over the country on the eve of May-day. It is a very curious fact that this relic of the old pagan rites of the country should survive so many ages of christianity. Boughs of the mountain ash, still called witch-wood, and supposed to be protective against all evil influences, were carried by the people round these fires; and, within my own remembrance, leaves and twigs of this tree were inserted into keyholes and suspended over doors of houses to prevent witches or other infernal agents from injuring the inmates.

On All Saints' eve the incantations and ceremonies were practised that Burns's poem of Hallow-e'en has rendered so familiar, besides a few not mentioned in it.

On the eve of St. Agnes, young women fasted and went backwards to bed, in order to dream of their future husbands.

This may be classed amongst the superstitious customs, as also may some other rites practised at any season with a similar object, such as placing a four-leaved clover, nine peas in one pod, &c., under the pillow. The peel of an apple or turnip taken off entire, had wonderful virtues of this kind; thrown carelessly on the floor, it would form the initials of the destined partner; and, when hung over the outer doorway, the first man that entered was the man himself, or, if married, the Christian names would be similar. Another favourite conjuration was breaking the first egg laid by a pullet into a glass of water, where it was expected to arrange itself so as to shew the occupation of the future husband, as in the form of a ship for a sailor, a plough for a farmer, and so on. The list of ceremonies of this description might be greatly extended.

Amongst other superstitions, omens, good and bad, are very abundant in Cumberland. It is a bad omen to see the new moon for the first time through glass, or without money in the pocket; but if young girls turn their aprons at first sight of the new moon, and wish, their wishes will be

granted. It is a good omen to see the first foal of the year with its head towards the spectator: a bad one if reversed. It is lucky to find a piece of iron, but very unlucky to pass it—it should be picked up, spit upon, and thrown over the left shoulder. It is unlucky to help any one to salt, and every grain of wasted salt brings a grain of sorrow to the waster. A hare crossing the path is so ominous of evil, that I have known people turn back and defer important errands when it has occurred. Whistling maids are very unlucky, and so are crowing hens. In short, all sorts of incidents are made to bear superstitious fruit; and events the most commonplace are endued with a significance that ordinary people would never dream of attaching to them. I suspect that interchanges of omens have been made across the border, for very many that are common in Cumberland are also current in Scotland.

A curious superstition is cherished with regard to bees. When a member of a household dies, it is considered necessary to make formal announcement of the event to the inmates of the apiary, otherwise they would either die also or desert the hives.

The not uncommon belief that a dying person cannot die on a bed that happens to contain any feathers of the pigeon also prevails in Cumberland; and I have seen more than one instance when on the mere possibility of that being so, patients, sinking slowly, were taken out of bed and laid on the floor to die. As the fatal result is precipitated by the removal, each case strengthens the superstition.

Their faith in the virtues of what they call need-fire as a remedy for, and preventive of, disease in cattle, furnishes another instance of the long existence of a very ancient superstition, Sir Walter Scott, writing in 1828, says, "This charm was used within the memory of living persons in the Hebrides, in cases of murrain amongst cattle." Sir Walter says that need-fire means *forced* fire, in allusion to the means used to procure it. Mr. Sullivan, on the contrary, says it means cattle-fire, and comes from the Danish *nod*, whence also is the northern word nolt or nowte. In 1841, when the cattle-murrain prevailed in Cumberland, I had many opportunities of witnessing the application of this to animals both diseased and sound. To ensure its efficacy it was necessary to observe certain conditions. The fire had to be produced at first by friction, the domestic fires in the neighbourhood being all previously extinguished; then it had to be brought spontaneously to each farm by some neighbour unsolicited; and neither the fire so brought, nor any part of the fuel used, must ever have been under a

roof. These conditions being kept, a great fire was made, and the cattle driven to and fro in the smoke. One honest farmer who had an ailing wife and delicate children passed *them* through this ordeal, as was averred with most beneficial effect. Another, a near neighbour of my own, inadvertantly carried the fire just brought to him into his house to save it from extinction by a sudden shower. It was declared that, in his case, the need-fire would be inoperative, but, as I remember, his stock did as well ultimately as any other.

Charms for physical ailments incident to man, are popular as well as pleasant remedial agents. Different texts of scripture, written on scraps of paper by some one endowed with the requisite powers, will check hæmorrhage, relieve toothache, and cure ague and jaundice, but in the last disease the action of the charm must be expedited by a mysterious pinch of the left ear. Whooping-cough was cured by passing the patient under the belly of a donkey, or taking him into some excavation under ground. An eel's skin loosely fastened round a limb exempts it from all liability to cramp; and a living toad carried about the person in a box is a certain preventive of rheumatism, though some prefer for this purpose a lump of brimstone in the pocket. Charms for the eradication of warts are numerous; but perhaps the most approved, as well as the most elaborate, is to count them carefully, then to put the same number of little stones or knots of oat straw into a linen bag, and throw it over the left shoulder where two roads cross, and the excrescences will speedily depart from the hands of the thrower and settle upon those of the finder. This list might also be greatly extended, for charms and other popular remedies of equal efficacy are so many and so much believed in, that it is difficult to understand how disease happens to exist amongst them at all.

Individual superstitions, or what may be called superstitious whims, are of frequent occurrence; with one striking instance of these, dating from the middle of last century, I became acquainted in my boyhood. In a field in the parish of Harrington there is a low square-pillar of stone, bearing upon its summit the following inscription, still very distinct.

> "Joseph Thompson may be here found,
> Who would not lie in consecrated ground;
> Died May 13th, 1745,
> Aged 63 when he was alive."

Of Joseph Thompson, the story current amongst the old people was this:—Either from disease or injury, he underwent amputation of a thumb, which according to use and wont, was carefully interred in the burial

ground surrounding the parish church. Now, it is well known that after amputations the extremities of the divided nerves in the stump occasionally undergo inflammatory action, causing intense pain which may endure long after the wound is healed, and which appears to the patient to have its seat in the amputated part. Joseph Thompson suffered from this painful affection; and, unable to account for it otherwise, at length persuaded himself that it was attributable to the burial of his thumb in the churchyard; acting on this persuasion, he had it disinterred and buried elsewhere, and the pain ceased either immediately or soon enough to connect, in his mind, the relief with the removal. Inferring then, that since so small a member as the thumb had suffered so terribly in consecrated earth, the whole body, if buried there, would be subjected to tortures proportionably greater, he exacted, before he died, a promise that his friends would inter him in the field where he has rested now for more than a hundred years.

Of the supernatural beings in whose existence they believe, I think we must give precedence to fairies. Although no longer supposed to exist, legends, connected with this branch of popular mythology, are still rife, and of these the following may suffice as a specimen:—The tourist who ascends the noble mountain called the Old Man of Coniston, may notice, from the road approaching the copper mines, a narrow excavation or niche cut obliquely across the face of a rocky precipice, high above the works. This is called by the people there, "Simon's Nick;" and it is related that long ago, when fairies were something more than a traditional myth, a miner named Simon obtained, under their direction, large quantities of rich ore from that niche, to the great mystification of his neighbours, who had not been able to find any trace of copper there. Simon underwent much questioning as to the source of his inscrutable success, but secrecy being one of the articles of his treaty with the fairies, he for a long time resisted all attempts to make him divulge it; being, however, unhappily addicted to beer, under the influence of that great subverter of all discretion, he violated this important condition of the contract, and his good fortune at once ceased. Through self-reproach and vexation he afterwards became reckless in the pursuit of his dangerous employment, and soon paid the penalty of his weakness with his life, leaving his name to the singular looking excavation that remains to attest the truth of his story.

As there were fairies in the land long ago, so also there were giants; and proof of their existence has been found in the gigantic skeletons disinterred at Aspatria, St. Bees, and other places in the county. It is also

believed that the two remarkable pillars in Penrith church yard, standing fifteen feet apart, mark the length of the grave of *Ewan Cæsarius*, an ancient hero, who once amused his leisure by slaying wild boars and other monsters in the adjacent forest of Inglewood. These, however, dwindle to very contemptible proportions when compared with the popular conception of the giants of old. There is, in the Solway Frith, a few miles north of Allonby, a bank consisting of stones, and called Dub-Mill Scar. This Scar was formed by stones that fell short in a pelting-match between a Cumbrian giant, who resided on or in Skiddaw, and one of the same race who inhabited the Scottish mountain Criffel, on the opposite coast. Evidence of the truth of this legend is discovered in the stones forming the bank, which are said to be of the same formation as those upon the two mountains.

Localised superstitions assigning to particular spots their own peculiar, and often appropriate, apparitions, are common enough in most parts of the county. Some of these are attached to streams, as that at Salter-beck near Workington; some to woods, as the spectral horseman in the Devil's gallop, near Hawkshead; some to lanes, as the headless women at Branthwaite Nook; some to hills, as the murdered gardener's ghost on Oxen fell; some to lakes, as the Crier of Claife on Windermere, and the phantom boat on Thirlmere; some to lonely waterfalls, as Airey force and Dungeon-Ghyll; some, of more social tastes, to the streets of populous towns, as Whitehaven; some to ruins; some to inhabited houses, and some even to ships. Many of these, so far from being common-place apparitions, possessed features highly picturesque, either in the story of their origin, or in their modes of exhibiting themselves.

The boggle, for instance, at Salter-beck, a small stream that runs into the sea a little south of the Derwent, was wont to appear in the startling shape of a coffin borne by four drunken sailors, staggering along and vanishing suddenly with a loud cry as they reached the middle of the water-course. This, it was said, originated in the catastrophe that befel the funeral *cortège* of a noted smuggler, who like "Will Watch" in the song, was at the dead of the night being "borne to the earth by the crew that he died with;" and with them was swept into the sea by this little stream, then unusually swollen by rain.

How the fall on Ullswater, called Airey force, came to be a haunted place is familiar to all readers of Wordsworth; and Coleridge, in his beautiful

mystery Christabel, has poeticised the spirits that haunt the vicinity of Dungeon-Ghyll.

At Whitehaven a spectre, in the shape of a huge dog, used to appear in the streets when a fatal shipwreck or colliery accident was about to occur, and to announce the approaching fatality by howling fearfully at the dwellings of those whose relatives were to suffer.

Old fortresses were revisited by prisoners who had been wrongfully detained or put to death in them long ago. I remember being deeply interested when passing through Carlisle to school, by the story of one of the Castle-sentinels, then in Hospital in consequence of a visit he had received while on duty the previous night, from Queen Mary of Scotland. As will be remembered, the Castle of Carlisle was the first prison in which that lady, the most unfortunate of an unfortunate line, was immured when she sought a refuge in England.

If the author of the book, called "The Night-Side of Nature," were inclined to publish a second series of her goblin-tales, there is abundance of material for such a purpose in the accounts of apparitions yet current in Cumberland; but though they are still heard of, they have ceased to appear; and it is by no means so common now as formerly to meet with persons who have really experienced any well-accredited visitation from the invisible world. The breaking-up of old associations and the expansion of ideas consequent upon extended intercourse with the world, have rooted out many of the most cherished delusions of our ancestors; and as the faith in supernatural agencies has waned, the fancies of the superstitious, or possibly of the diseased, have ceased to receive the credit so implicitly accorded to them of old. But there is one article of superstitious faith that I should regret to have expunged from the creed of the Cumbrians, the persuasion, to wit, that those grand monuments of British antiquity, of which their county possesses some of the finest in the kingdom, are guarded by spirits who have the power, more than once manifested, of compelling the elements to rush in to the rescue, whenever impious hands have been raised for their destruction or injury.

Note. One or two localities not strictly in the county treated upon are mentioned, but they are so closely adjoining, and the people so much Cumbrian in manners and habits, that customs there may be classed amongst Cumberland customs.