



Starlight and Moonlight,
Beaming and free,
Sparkling o'er darkling
Earth and sea.

Through quivering branches thy mellow rays fall,
And dance on the floor of our Fairy hall.

We dance to the pipe
In the Moonbeam's light,
Joyous and free,
Gladsome are we.

'Tis the Fairies' carnival.

Moving, the soothing
Summer winds sigh,
Breathing and weaving
Sweet melody.

While night flowers open to shed their perfume,
And gleam on the floor of our Fairy room.

We dance to the pipe, &c.

Then swift through the air
Comes the Fairy throng,
Now everywhere
Is music and song.

In the dell, in the rock and the cave.

The croaking of frogs
From mosses and bogs,
The bittern's boom
From the marshes gloom.
The screech of the owl
On its midnight prow,
The wind's soft sigh
Through the pine trees high.
In dreaming chorus mingle,
With the throbbing voice of the wave,
That breaks on the distant shingle.

Merrily ringing,
Fairy Bells ;
Joyously singing,
Music swells.

We dance to the pipe
In the Moonbeam's light,
Joyous and free,
Gladsome are we.

'Tis the Fairies' carnival.

JOHN YOUNG.

A DISSERTATION ON "THE FAIRIES,"

BY

AN OLD HIGHLAND SEER.

"Sure He who made majestic man,
And framed the world's stupendous plan ;
Who placed on high the steady pole,
And sowed the stars that round it roll,
And made that sky so clear and blue,
Had power to make a Fairy too."—*Hogg*.



LATE in the fall of last year, when autumn had come and painted all nature in colours, "Sae pensive, in yellow and gray," a young literary friend and I took a holiday—a walking holiday—among the far-famed Grampian mountains.

It is my intention some day to print a history of this walking tour, so I will not dwell on the details thereof at present, suffice it to say, that the wild rugged romantic scenery we saw in our travels so excited our minds, that we were transported away far above this work-a-day world into the regions of fancy and

imagination. This being the case, it will not be wondered at that our conversation should be of :—

“ Many a quaint and curious volume
Of forgotten lore,”

the mysterious rites of the ancient Druids, of demonology, of magic and astrology, of divination and oracles, of signs, omens, and warnings, and many other things, “strange, sacred, secret and forgotten.”

We had been a fortnight on our tour, and were thinking of retracing our steps homeward, but a little adventure delayed our getting home for another week. We had been wandering on the hills all day, and there being a little mist abroad, had lost our reckoning. After wandering about for many hours, we came suddenly upon a secluded little glen, some five acres or so in extent, surrounded by very high mountains, with only one approach to it and no outlet. This little glen contained only one cottage, which, though only of one story and thack roof, was of considerable extent, capable of containing four or five fair-sized rooms. It was very singular in shape, having a broad veranda all round it, somewhat resembling an eastern bungalow. As we came a little nearer we saw that in front of the cottage there was a neat, well kept garden, full of old-fashioned herbs and flowers. I observed among them the nightshade, yellow watercress, mountain-parsley, wolves' bane, rosemary, rue, sage, Solomon's seal, meadow-trefoil, wormwood, and many simples whose name I did not know. We could see from where we stood a thin pillar of peat smoke issuing from the big straw lum of the cottage, and a bright ruddy light was shining from the front windows. We were met on the door-step by a tall man, whose age would be beyond the allotted span of three score years and ten. This man had a very striking personality; he was tall and thin—upwards of six feet—and, notwithstanding his age, as straight as an arrow; his snow-white locks hung in ringlets over his shoulders, but the most striking feature of his face were his eyes, which, when he looked at you, seemed to look you through and through. He welcomed us with the air and dignity of a king—a smile lighting up his fine countenance, and in language, courteous and well chosen, he asked us to enter his cottage to get rest and refreshment after our journey. Seeing that we *hinkered* a little, he said, “I want no introduction

or certificate of character, for, from my knowledge of the science of Lavater, I can see from your faces that we are kindred spirits; for does not the poet Shakespeare say:—

‘I do believe thee;
I saw his heart in his face.’”

We were glad to accept of the kind hospitality so freely and so frankly offered, and followed our host into a long, low room, where the only furnishing, except a table and a few chairs, were books. They lined the four walls; they were everywhere, and they mostly had an old, ancient, mouldy look in their black leather bindings. I will reserve till a future time a full description of the habitation of the "SEER OF THE GLEN," for such he was, only stating that we both sojourned for a week in his cottage. During this time he told us many stories of his youthful days, which he had spent mostly in the far East, in India, Turkey, and Arabia, sometimes dwelling in the large cities, but oftener in the wild desolate desert; of the wonderful people he had met, and of the strange things they had taught him; of his return to the home of his forefathers to end his days in peace beneath the shadow of his own, his much-loved native mountains. What interested us most were the "Tales, Legends, and Traditions of the Highlands of Scotland," all of which I hope, in the course of time, to lay before my courteous readers. One night we discussed the subject of the existence of the "little folk," *i.e.*, the Fairies, when he propounded to us this new theory about them, which I give in his own words.—

W. S.

ACROSS all Scotland float tales of a race of beings termed "The Fairies." They are in general represented as a race of diminutive stature, living under-ground, practising some mysterious rites, and as being skilled in metal-working. Two classes of tales are prominent by their frequency and occurrence in different localities. In one, some individual passing by the door of a Fairy habitation—such was invariably located in some mound—sees it open for the time, and a company in the full excitement of dancing to the sound of music of a high-class description. On joining them he only gets out at intervals of one, seven, or nine years, by some acquaintance wiser than himself coming on the anniversary of his

disappearance, and taking him out, the time of disappearance being generally New-Year's Eve.

In the other, newly-born infants of the human race are carried off, and one of their own is substituted in its place. They are represented as having done this in every quarter of Scotland, and to have been actuated in so doing by a desire to establish intimate relationship with the human race, a connection which in some quarters would be termed "Fosterage." This, in ancient times, when established generally, was held as binding the two sides to assist each other in every difficulty.

The following may be taken as specimens of the two classes of tales which exist in connection with these beings :—

In a past generation, two men had gone from the level ground of the Rattray District to Blairgowrie, on a New Year's Eve, to purchase provisions for the New Year's usual festivities. Their purchases had been made, and they were on their return discoursing gaily on the temporal blessings and comforts with which the Omnipotent had favoured them. On a sudden, whilst passing the large mound, which is termed "the Castle Hill of Rattray," the sound of the bagpipes, played by a skilful hand, fell on their ears. On looking round to ascertain, if possible, where the player of such eminence could be, who was discoursing such melody in such a spot at such an hour, they observed a door open on the north side of the mound (the side which they were passing); they could see that the interior was lighted up, and a company was seen as being in the full excitement of dancing. The two gazed at the company, but at last, one losing command of his feelings, exclaiming:—"I maun hae a reel," sprang inside the open door and joined the dance. In his excitement, he carried his purchases along with him, not having taken time to loose the strap, and throw them from off his back. His companion waited outside for a time, but losing patience at last, on his neighbour not making his reappearance, he went home without him. The narrative which he gave, to explain the reason why his neighbour had not returned along with him, was met with incredulity. Hints were freely given, that it was more than likely that some quarrel had arisen, and having murdered his neighbour and secreted his body, he had invented this tale to screen himself from punishment. To lay all these innuendos at rest, and prove his innocence, he agreed to watch the door being opened in the mound on the next New

Year's Eve, and bring his lost neighbour out, or stand to the consequences of failing to produce him alive, as a proof of his innocence, in regard as to having done anything injurious to him. So on the next New Year's Eve, with the Holy Bible secured within his clothes, next his breast, he was standing ready, waiting the door being opened. The sound of a lively pibroch fell on his ear, and the door swung open at the same time, and the company inside appeared to be in the full excitement of dancing as before. He gazed at the assembly so occupied with eagerness, waiting an opportunity to succeed in his enterprise. At last his neighbour appeared opposite the doorway, and leaping in with one swift active bound, he quickly seized him, and dragged him outside. The dancer at once challenged him as being too precipitate in his actions, that he might have been allowed to finish his reel, not having been many minutes in. His companion told him that he was mistaken, and telling him the true facts of the case, insisted that he must go home, in order to let the truth be known. The dancer at last went home along with his neighbour, and it was only from the fact that the child which he had left on its mother's breast could now meet him on its own feet at the door, and the provisions, which he still carried, being pointed out as being in a great manner moulded and useless, that he at last believed that he had been really a year away, engaged as he had been. The prostration of the bodily frame which followed, through carrying the burden which he did through such a lengthened period of excitement, was such that it took some time before he fairly recovered from it.

In a former generation in Glenisla, a worthy woman's child was afflicted shortly after its birth with such a habit of crying, unless the cradle was steadily rocked, that it was a wonder to all what could be wrong with it. The place of residence is said to have been the "Downie." All attempts to find out the secret of what was ailing the infant had failed, and the attention it required, in order to keep it, had been laying a heavy burden on the other inmates of the household. At last, a tailor came to the house one day to make up some clothes for the inmates, as was the general custom in those days. The supply of thread having become exhausted, the mistress said, "That if he would rock the cradle until she returned, that she would go to a neighbouring shop at some little distance for a fresh supply." This was promised, and

the woman departed on her errand. Whilst engaged in the labour of rocking, the tailor was astonished by the child rising up in the cradle, and saying, "An ye'll no tell, I'll gie ye a toon on the pipes." Secrecy was promised as requested, and the child turning round, took out from below his bolster a pair of bagpipes, and commenced playing. The skill which he displayed showed what he really was, and a feeling of sternness filled the tailor's heart. Collecting all the peats he could find in the room, he put them on the fire. The heat at last became intense. The musician accordingly asked what did he intend to do with such a fire? The reply was given at once, "Ye have troubled this house lang, but in the name of the Lord God Almichty, ye sall trouble it nae mair." The musician at once, on receiving this answer, sprung up the chimney and disappeared, playing whilst he did so—"The deil be 'n thae tailors, gin I trust them mair." When he had disappeared, a child's cry was heard at the door—this was the woman's own child seeking admittance, which was quickly given by the tailor. The joy of the mother on her return, when she learned what had taken place, may be imagined, and it may be taken as granted, that when employed there afterwards, that the tailor would be treated to the best which the house could afford to give him.

All these stories may be considered as having sprung from several sources of a very ancient date in the world's history. These sources appear to be historical, mythological, and allegorical, and handed down as they have been by tradition, and repeated in every generation as if they were cases of every-day occurrence, the proper meaning has been in a great measure lost.

In every country flourish traditions of a race of pigmies or dwarfs, as once having existed, who, living in underground habitations or caves, were skilled in metal working. Tradition states that they were the forgers of some of the famed sword blades once so extolled as being the property of Scandinavian heroes. That they practised religious rites of some kind is evident from the fact that their skill in magic is enlarged upon. As a diminutive race is still to be found in some quarters of the globe with the same characteristics which are given or ascribed by tradition to the Fairies, Northern Dwarfs, &c., we may assume it confidently that this race had not died out in Europe at the commencement of authentic history. Of a weak body, unfit to cope with strangers who in comparison with them were of gigantic

stature, they would shun contact as much as possible, until friendliness was assured, and the nature of the country being, as it were, in a great measure an uncultivated one, assisted them in eluding observation. This would account for their sudden appearances and disappearances—scattered communities would exist in various quarters for a long time after the main body had in a manner disappeared—thus perpetuating their memory and practices to those who did not come into contact with them personally. These communities would naturally retreat into the wildest parts of the country. They had some form of religious observances or ritual, in which music and dancing played a conspicuous part. Some under-sized savage races, to the present day, practice the same observances, and by their performances show that they have a knowledge of some of the higher branches of science, of which civilization knows next to nothing at present, and has only been of late years rousing itself up to inquire into them. In some form, mesmerism and all its cognate branches seem to be known and practised to an extent which votaries of it, in civilized lands, are incapable of imitating. Is it too much to assume that this ancient race were thoroughly versed in these practices, and that they were engaged in some of them when the outsider joined them, and fell under their influence. When a person is hypnotized, and put thoroughly under the influence of the hypnotizer, it takes a skilful hand to restore his mental faculties to the same former uncontrolled condition in which they were before he was subjected to such treatment. The tales which circulate, to the present day, of persons having joined assemblies of Fairies and danced with them for such lengthened periods, when stripped of the additions which tradition would give them through the course of centuries, can very reasonably be accounted for as having been narratives of some mesmeric performances in ancient times, handed down by tradition with repeated augmentation of details, as if they were but actions of yesterday. We will the more readily come to this conclusion, when we consider the way in which mesmeric performances affect the uneducated, and the way in which they are commented upon by such portions of the community.

In ancient times, the fact of a child being nursed in any family was held as laying a sacred obligation on every member of that family, and all their relations, to regard the

quarrels of the foster-child as their own, and assist him to the utmost of their ability, and he, on his part, was expected to give the same friendly support to his nurse's relations. This feeling still prevails to a great extent among civilized races, a weak, feeble race being gradually crushed out by a stronger, and open alliance, being shunned, feeling the need of support in their struggles, would naturally strive to obtain assistance, as far as it was possible for them to procure it. This changing of infants, so steadily persisted in, likely arose from the anxiety of the weaker race to obtain the friendly support and protection of the stronger race, under the obligation of the law or custom of fosterage, the obtaining such, in a stealthy manner, being the only opening left them. Looked upon with aversion and hatred by many, each detection of such actions would be handed down by those on whom they had been practised, as fresh arguments to guard against such a race, to all who heard the details, until being amplified, reiterated as they would be by excited imaginations under such circumstances, they would come to be considered by the mass of the population as events of daily occurrence, and this long after the actions which gave rise to such terrors had really ceased, for every change in the young infants would be ascribed at once to Fairy influence. So much for what coming down from early historic times may have given rise in a great measure to these tales. Another side has now to be put—the mythological. Ancient mythologies declare that a race of beings exist of superior powers to man, who have lost the right of access to the Celestial Regions, and are anxious to regain it. Their struggles, in order to do so, are given in Eastern Legends, and the statement as being made to them by the Supreme Being—that as no mediator stands between him and them, the same as stands between him and the human race, he cannot give them a hope of returning to their lost station, the same as has been given to men. Their perplexity at this, and members of this race appearing to celebrated saints, beseeching their favourable supplications, are given. They are detailed as being anxious in every form to be friendly to, and secure a friendly relationship with the human race, and the marvellous rise in the world of heroes and others who entered into friendly correspondence and league with them, is enlarged upon at great length. The same details which these Eastern Legends give us concerning these beings, occur in Western Europe, with regard to the Fairies. The changing of

infants shows an extreme desire to establish a connection with the human race. The Gaels brought their ideas on religion, &c., from the East. These stories of a race bent on establishing, in this stealthy manner, blood relationship ultimately with men, and so pave the way for some great benefit being obtained for themselves, show the Eastern idea of their being a fallen race who were anxious to establish friendly relationship with man, was at one time firmly believed in, in the West. An intense anxiety prevails that the members which they substitute for the abstracted young infants of the human race shall obtain baptism. The whole proceedings seem to be only accountable, on the idea, that when *blood relationship* was established with men, that they would obtain the friendly offices of the mediator between them and the Supreme Being. Details likewise float in Western Europe of the important services rendered by them to individuals who entered into friendly league with them, the same as has been rehearsed in Eastern Legends. The similarity of ideas and occurrences in so widely separated countries is remarkable. Where the after-history of any individual who joined their assemblies has been handed down to us, it is to be remarked that he became more or less noted as having the gift of prophecy; and the predictions of many said to have been in contact with the Fairies having been preserved, and their verification given as being accomplished as matters of fact in history, it may be inquired, "From what source did these men acquire that gift?" They acquired it from being in communication (at some period of their lives) with some parties capable of endowing them with such ability. No account is known of such gift being in the power of common men to bestow it upon others.

These narratives would point to the fact that there is an influence at work in the world of a higher standard of intelligence than that which is recognised by ordinary materialistic minds, and the same ability being recognised as to individuals being still in existence possessing the power to foretell the future, it may be asked, from what source did they derive it, if not from some source higher than that which is ordinarily within the reach of common men? They went through a period of instruction of one, seven, or nine years. If they were not recalled to earthly duties at the end of the nine years, they never returned to their former associates, but were received into complete companionship

with their instructors, and followed the same habits and manners of life. This would partly confirm the supposition that these old stories arose from some fact in the spiritual world, which was well known at the dawn of history, and spread widely over many countries, and at repeated times, circumstances taking place in every country, and every generation, which helped to confirm the popular idea that this fact was a truth, and its influence still at work, would keep the common belief as to the existence of such a race of beings fresh and strong in the minds of men. It may now be asked, is the popular belief in the existence of such a race of beings well founded? Can it produce any stronger foundation than mere human imagination?

If we examine the sacred Scriptures, we may find something in the sacred volume to supply the support which this idea seems to require. The Mediator is said to have commenced his earthly career, or been born, about the New Year, and the holy angels rejoiced at his birth. The assemblies of this race, to which mortals are admitted, are ones of rejoicing, and they begin at the New Year. The periods for which they stay are reckoned as being sacred numbers. A period of instruction or initiation into sacred mysteries is stated as being necessary for qualifying one for being a prophet. "The sons of the prophets," "the schools of the prophets," are terms of frequent occurrence. When under the prophetic feeling, a period of complete oblivion to earthly surroundings takes place before communication is again held with fellow-men. We have here, in another form, the same semi-unconsciousness, or in a great measure the oblivion which takes place as to the flight of time with the mortal who is admitted to the Fairy dance. It seems to be the same truth submitted to the multitude in a form calculated to captivate the popular fancy. The Scriptures likewise state instances of persons called to be prophets who had not got a regular course of instruction. The same thing is mentioned in Fairy tales, as to certain individuals having acquired a high degree of eminence in some special gift or ability through one meeting with some high member of the Fairy race. The Fairies are mentioned as being under a regular organisation in all the tales which go into particulars. We have the same statement as to the angels in the sacred Scriptures, and some of the different ranks are specifically mentioned by name. Two kinds of prophets are

mentioned in Holy Writ, the true and the false—the true as being inspired by the Father of Lights; the false drawing their information from the Prince of Darkness or Error. And the benefits which the one conferred at times, and the miseries and calamities which fell upon those who listened to the other, are occasionally given. All these incidents are rehearsed in another dress, and under other forms in Fairy lore. The similarity of the two is remarkable. Another coincidence may be pointed out. The Fairies were divided into two classes, "good and bad"—both were extremely anxious to establish communication with the human race. The Scriptures declare that the world is the theatre of a conflict between the two opposite kinds of spiritual influence, good and evil constantly striving for the mastery. The Father of all good, and the Father of all evil, have both their angels actively engaged—man is the centre round which the strife principally rages. The gaining of each member of the human race is an object of importance to each side. As soon therefore as a child is born, it is an object of spiritual influence to secure it. Which side shall it be? That each member has an attendant angel may be inferred pretty clearly from the statement of Christ, that the angels of young children always beheld the face of His Father in heaven, and it is stated that the doom of him who should cause any young child to fall into evil ways would be a lamentable one. Early training in the ways of righteousness and its benefits is thus in a manner insisted upon, and pointed communication is not lost, and the sorrow, toil, and anxiety endured, seeking to establish it in full measure with the Supreme Being as one of his sons, has not to be encountered, as has to be done by those who have lapsed into all manner of wickedness. The training up to a righteous life is enlarged upon as being of importance in childhood—for a child so trained, no matter how far he may have departed from it in middle age, will return to it when he is old. The problem is thus:—When a child is born, what shall it become? Another member of the race has come into the world. Shall its influence be for good or evil? If good, the progress through life is marked by actions that assist and help forward the progress of mankind in every respect, and an honourable name is won in every kindred circle which bends its energies to advance the material and spiritual welfare of man. If for evil, crime begins to rear its head as progress through life is made, until at last, when the close comes, the individual's name is

looked upon with aversion and respected by none. Such are the results of the two classes of spiritual influence to the present day; as they operate at the present day, so have they operated in the past. And in these Fairy tales we have before us some idea in what light, by those of ancient days, its influence was regarded, and the measures taken to prevent the influence of evil spirits obtaining the mastery. In the formulæ observed, a good many details are used which are symbolical, and the meaning being in a great measure lost, to many they look now, and are regarded as, no more than a collection of childish nonsense. A higher ground, however, must be claimed for them than this. We find a good many symbolical ceremonies in the Mosaic Rites, which material minds of the present day would scoff at. St. Paul, however, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, affirms them as having a practical meaning, serving their purpose in their day, and paving the road for the race to make progress on the way to perfection. In ancient times, every known specimen of the mineral, botanical, and animal worlds, had some mental attribute, &c., symbolized by its name, and the initiated by the outward ceremony knew the real lesson meant to be given, "How to act in face of such and such difficulties in order to be successful"—although to the common multitude it was only a mere show—a passing spectacle.

We have here carried into practice the same rule which Christ said to his disciples that he observed, when they inquired at him how it came that he spoke to the multitude in parables, which he did not expound after delivering them. He told them that they (the disciples) got the meaning of the parables expounded to them because they were within the Kingdom (were of the chosen number), but as the multitude were without, it was not given to them to know the mysteries (thoroughly understand such things), therefore he spoke to them in parables.

We have thus, in Western Europe, the same practice as to spiritual matters, carried out on a large scale in a form eminently suited to take the popular attention, and impress the common people with respect with what was to them an unknown world. Its coincidence with the observances and practices mentioned in the Sacred Scriptures is remarkable, and although spiritual influence is now looked at from another point of view than that from which it was regarded in ancient days, the effect produced being the same, it is little wonder that these Fairy tales,

coming down, as they have done to us, as the experience of our ancestors in such matters, have such a fascination for many. They are an amusement and a pleasant pastime for the unthinking mind to rehearse them. But to the deep-read student of ancient literature, they convey many a lesson, they tell of difficulties fought and conquered in the past, and convey advice and instruction for guidance in the future.

These practices may serve to explain a few difficult passages in the Epistle to the Romans. In the controversy which St. Paul therein maintains with the Jewish controversialists, the argument seems to be advanced by them that their form of religion was the only one by which man could obtain eternal happiness, and that the heathen outside their influence were in a state of hopeless misery. St. Paul, in his arguments, goes into many particulars to show the error of their idea, and show that, although it was in another form, nevertheless, all the same, the heathen had the same opportunity of obtaining eternal happiness as themselves.

In another form, the idea which the Jews advanced in Rome against St. Paul, in their arguments which they brought forward in the course of the controversy which they held with him, is still maintained by many. Paul reiterates repeatedly that the Mosaic Law was only given for a temporary business, viz., to clear the way for Christ. It executed the purpose over Bible lands for which it was sent, and it has been declining in influence.

Is it too much to say, that in these old Celtic Legends we have the vestiges of the way which St. Paul says that the Gentiles had to themselves, and which, when followed, secured them "salvation?" They would seem to be allegorical traditions of a creed which in its day (suited to the race who believed in it) paved the way for the introduction of Christianity, and having served its purpose, is, like the Mosaic Rites, now passing away.

If St. Paul did not speak the truth, how came many of its rites and precepts to have such a close connection with Christianity? Their correspondence with others, which are known to have been inculcated in Hindostan centuries before Christ was born, is remarkable.

That the East was interested in Christ's birth is proved by the narrative of wise men coming from it to worship him whilst on his mother's knee. They came, they performed the customary acts of obeisance to superiors before Him, delivered the customary

presents given by inferiors to persons of high rank, and went their way, and we know little more about them. Who were they? What country or countries did they really come from? That they came from some quarter outside the circle of the every-day life of the Bible narrative may be assumed as quite certain, else we would have had more information from it about them. From the presents which they bestowed to the Infant Saviour out of the stores of wealth which they had brought along with them, it is quite evident that they were men of importance and high rank in their native country, and their action in taking the journey which they did, in order to salute, worship, and honour the new-born Saviour, showed distinctly that they had a strong faith in Him, and were *watchers* in the progress of the work of redemption for man. Such men would largely influence the religious ideas of their fellow-countrymen, and it may be safely assumed that their country held a strong belief in the same ideas which Christ advanced afterwards in his discoveries to the multitude whilst wandering through Palestine. He himself says that He had other followers independent of the Jewish fold, or races, and that in the Kingdom of Heaven others would sit down the equals of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The whole points to confirm St. Paul's statement, that although the Jews had been favoured by the Almighty by special intercourse with him, yet that outside of their immediate circle, and in a great measure unknown to the body of that nation, there was another system of religion which had done, and would do, excellent work for the Supreme Being—although we have now the wrecks only of it, embodied often on a ludicrous form as it often is in Fairy tales—showing but a faint glimpse of what this system had really been in ancient times. The belief in “the Fairies,” in its day, so far as it went, stimulated to many a glorious enterprise, which contributed largely to the welfare of society at times through the actors, having faith in themselves, and being confident of the Fairies' aid, or supernatural assistance; it likewise checked “many a fearful, savage crime, through the terror of what unearthly vengeance might be inflicted on the wrong-doer,” which the belief in their power and existence inspired.

Under another form spiritual influences still bestows the same benefits on the world to the present day. Is it too much to assume that the two are the same?—the one in ancient dress, the other in modern ideas.



Highland Seer Series.

No. II.

“Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
Stains the white radiance of eternity,
Until death tramples it to atoms.”

—*Shelley.*

AFTER[?] breakfast next morning, the *Seer*, as I will call our host of the curious cottage in the glen, went with us for a long walk over the hills. The day was fine, the sun shining brightly, so we took plenty of time, talking of many things, but chiefly about the plants and flowers growing around us. The *Seer* pointed out some very rare herbs and flowers, and explained to us what planets governed them. The gorse or whin was, he said, governed by Mars, the fox-gloves by Venus, the water-flag was under the dominion of the moon, and so on. He also told us at what time they were to be plucked so as to have the full benefit of the strength and virtue of which they were possessed. He told us of a little book written by a Scotsman in America, entitled “The Mistletoe and its Philosophy,” which was full of information on the virtues and mystical properties of

plants. The author of this book was a very learned man called Peter Davidson, one of the greatest of our living writers on the occult sciences. He said he would read us a few extracts from the book after supper, as he was sure we would enjoy them.

After the evening repast, I reminded the *Seer* of his promise. He smiled and said he was just thinking about it. He then opened a door in the wall behind him, which I had not before noticed, and we all three entered a room I had not yet seen.

This room was evidently devoted to the use and work of a laboratory. A retort was built in one corner, and blow-pipes, glass syphons, measures, large bottles containing various coloured fluids, and all the other curiously-shaped paraphernalia that go to make up the furnishing of a practical chemist's workroom were lying about.

From a small bookcase which stood in a corner he took a thin volume, the work on the mistletoe he had spoken of before, and read :—"That a few magneto-vitalic herbs are alone capable of curing the most inveterate forms of disease to which the human frame is liable, is well known to many people; for how often have we seen the pale, sickworn, trembling patient, who had undergone months of agonising torments in some of our hospitals, and upon whose form death had, as it were indelibly imprinted his image, restored to the bloom of health by the application or use of a few simple herbal remedies furnished by some poor peasant, who chose to take Nature for a guide instead of the ludicrous opinions of sycophants. Such cases must be familiar to many, for even in some country villages the health of the inhabitants depends in a great measure upon similar methods. Was it not the remedial use of herbs that Paracelsus, Blagrave, Culpepper, and many other ancient and *real* physicians were enabled to accomplish cures which, even at the present day, would put to shame many of an academical body—torturers by their courses of mercurial and other poisons? Yes, reader, rest assured there's not a leaf that adorns the majestic monarchs of the forest in their gigantic grandeur, or the tiny plant that is crushed by the foot of the wayfarer, or bends beneath the weight of the pearly dewdrop, but what proclaims in living language the beneficence and power of Him who bestowed upon them their various properties.

"The vital principles of each plant, being separate and independent of itself, explains the reason why two of them—the one a

virulent poison, the other a table vegetable—will grow side by side, and draw their nourishment from the same source. Books have been written on the language of flowers and herbs, the poet from the earliest ages has held the sweetest and most loving converse with them, kings are even glad to obtain their essences at second-hand to perfume themselves; but to the true physician—Nature's high-priest—they speak in a far higher and more exalted strain. There is not a plant or mineral which has disclosed the last of its properties to the scientists. How can they feel confident that for every one of the discovered properties there may not be many powers concealed in the *inner* nature of the plants? Well have flowers been called the 'stars of earth,' and why should they not be beautiful? Have they not, from the time of their birth, smiled in the splendour of the sun by day, and slumbered under the brightness of the stars by night? Have they not come from another and more spiritual world to our earth, seeing that God 'made every plant of the field *before* it was in the earth, and every herb of the field *before it grew*' (Gen. ii. 5). What wonder then that the glorious tints of dawn are reflected in the rose, the whiteness of the fleecy summer clouds in the lily, and the deep cerulean blue of heaven in the anemone and violet."

He read much more of this fascinating book; sometimes he would interpolate his own observations thereon. When he had finished reading, we told him he had afforded us a pleasant treat, highly intellectual and curious, and that we would make it a point to become better acquaint with the writings of this truly learned Scotsman.

Casting my eyes again over the room, I asked if he was a worker at the transmutation of metals, and if he had any belief in the reality of getting what the philosophy of the Rosicrucians taught—the Elixir of Life.

A sad smile lighted up his face. He said, "I will answer you in the words of Paracelsus: If we extract the fire of life from the heart and draw quintessence out of inanimate things and use it for our purpose, we might live for ever in the enjoyment of health and without experiencing any disease. But this is not possible in our present condition; we cannot reverse the laws of nature, and whatever dies a natural death cannot be resuscitated by man. But man may mend that which he himself has broken, and he may break that which he himself has made. All things have a certain

time during which they may exist upon the earth. The saints have a certain time during which they may exist, and likewise the wicked. If a man's time to stay is over, he will have to leave; but many die before their time is over, not by a visitation of providence, but because they are ignorant of the laws controlling their nature. Metals may be preserved from rust, and wood may be protected against the rot, blood may be preserved a long time if the air is excluded. Egyptian mummies have kept their forms for centuries without undergoing putrefaction; animals awoken from their winter sleep, and flies, having become torpid from cold, become nimble again when they are warm; a tree may bear no fruit for twenty years, and then again begin to bloom and have fruit as it did when it was young; and if inanimate objects can be kept from destruction, why should there not be that possibility of preserving the life essence of animate forms?

"But then," continued the *Seer*, "is it worth while to prolong our life? To illustrate this point, I will read you a manuscript that fell into my hands many years ago." We returned to the book room, and seated round a fine peat fire, listened with breathless attention to the following curious story;—

THE ELIXIR OF LIFE;

NARRATED BY PROFESSOR GOLDENSTEIN, WHO DEPARTED THIS
LIFE A.D. 1745.

"In the ages of the dim and distant past, there lived in the heart of the Black Forest a sage, philosopher, and hermit, named Martin Hindlewald. Though many years a hermit, Martin had not always been so. In his earlier years he had attended the universities of Gottingen and Leipzig, for although his father could not be called wealthy, yet his circumstances enabled him to bestow on his son a liberal education. While in Leipzig, Martin had the fortune to become acquainted with a man very learned in what the world calls abstruse subjects. The acquaintance soon ripened into a strong attachment, which ultimately culminated in young Hindlewald abandoning his studies in the university and throwing himself at the feet of the profound professor of alchemy.

"Martin proved a very apt pupil, and in a short period was as deeply read in the mysteries of nature, in some particulars even deeper, than his learned preceptor. The bent of their inclinations

was, however, different. Although conversant with a great many subjects and theories, the old Professor's favourite study was how to transmute the baser metals into gold. Let it not be supposed that the worthy man's intentions were by so doing to enrich himself, although that must inevitably have followed any such discovery. No; with the magnanimity of all great men he sunk self, and sought to alleviate the sufferings and supply the wants of the great bulk of humanity. While he thus sought to lessen the privation which want of the yellow dross entailed upon his fellow beings, Martin's pet scheme was how he might add to their felicity by the discovery of an elixir that would effectually cure all bodily pain and suffering, and prolong human life to an indefinite period. Strange though it may appear, this matter found no great favour with the old Professor, and out of deference and respect to his teacher, Martin never sought to obtrude the subject upon him. As age crept upon the alchemist, and he found his physical faculties failing, he redoubled his efforts to discover what the vulgar have been pleased to call the philosopher's stone. For nights and days he would sit in his laboratory, alike oblivious of the want of sleep and sustenance, mixing and distilling fluids, and performing rare scientific experiments. Poor man! one of these experiments cost him dear, and brought upon him the very fate which he dreaded would befall him ere his life-labour was crowned with success. On entering the laboratory one morning, Martin Hindlewald found his preceptor and friend stretched cold and lifeless on the floor, having succumbed to the fumes of a decoction which he had been engaged in distilling.

"Martin's grief for the death of the old man was sincere and poignant, but his love for solving the mysteries of nature soon banished every other feeling. His whole time and talent were now engaged in seeking to discover the elixir of life. Why the human frame should so soon dissolve was to him a mystery. 'Take an ordinary healthy human being,' he said in one of his treatises, 'he works during the day, and rests at night. Nature—unless he has violated her laws—refreshes him with sleep, and fulfils her part in preparing him for the labour of to-morrow. She also supplies him with foods of innumerable and varied kinds, of which he is at liberty to select for himself. The tear and wear of life—the waste of every member of the human body—is supplied and renewed by the food he eats. Yet, notwithstanding

this, man in a very few years after reaching maturity begins to decline ; his frame wastes, his brain weakens, he sinks into a state of mental and physical wreck, and dies at a comparatively early age. Now one thing is certain : his food cannot be *perfect*. It must lack some substance necessary to replace the complete waste of the human frame. What that substance is must be my endeavour to find out.'

" With unremitting toil Martin devoted himself to his studies. Theory after theory he set up and practically solved, but success smiled not on his endeavours. Latterly, after spending a long time in deep study, he abandoned all his former experiments, and adopted entirely new methods. The first fruits of his new ideas brightened his hopes, and as he renewed and improved on his experiments, he had reason to believe that success was almost within his grasp. His experiments ultimately led him to believe that his elixir only wanted one ingredient to become perfect. To obtain that ingredient he would have to violate the laws of his country. For a moment he hesitated, but only for a moment. What was the violation of his country's laws, or even the sacrifice of life itself, compared with the everlasting benefit to be derived from his discovery. One morning Leipzig was paralyzed with the details of a 'fearful outrage,' as they were ignorantly pleased to term it. The authorities took up the matter ; the rabble demanded blood, and could they have laid hands upon the perpetrator of the 'outrage,' they would have torn him limb from limb. Unfortunately for Martin Hindlewald and the cause of science, a clue was obtained, and he had to fly to save his life. Bearing a large vial of his incomplete elixir along with him—for he had not had time to reap the benefit of the deed for which he had dared so much—he fled to the Black Forest, and there, disgusted with the treatment he had received at the hands of his fellow-men, lived the life of a recluse and hermit.

" In his flight he had to leave all the valuable apparatus of his laboratory, and afraid to again venture near the busy haunts of men, his elixir remained in an imperfect state. Nevertheless, by taking a few drops annually, he so fortified his frame against the inroads of disease and age that he became the wonder of the few charcoal burners and others that knew of his existence. It was whispered among them that the recluse had a fluid of which he drank which would prolong his life for a thousand years, and that

for it he had bartered his soul to a demon. An English adventurer—a fugitive from justice—happening to find his way into that remote district, soon became aware of the hermit's existence, and the ridiculous story connected with him. This ruffian, fired with a desire to obtain the wonderful fluid, sought the hermit's hut, and the life of Martin Hindlewald, which had for so long defied the attacks of disease, succumbed before the keen edge of an English dagger. The body of the hermit was afterwards found stabbed to the heart; the foreigner was never more seen, he having, it was believed, absconded with the vial containing the elixir of life.

“These events happened long years before I was born, but during my studies and conversations with the leading alchemists of the age I became aware of the story of Martin Hindlewald. I must confess it made a deep impression upon me. An elixir that would for ages keep a person in the prime of manhood was certainly a most beneficial discovery. But the secret was lost. No; surely not lost. If Martin Hindlewald had discovered it, why could not the alchemist of the present day? Full of this idea, I broached the subject to my professional brethren. Some said that the concoction of such a fluid was entirely beyond their abilities; others admitted having tried to make such an elixir and failed; but none cast a doubt upon the story of the venerable Martin.

“Thoughts of attempting to make such an elixir myself then crossed my mind. I had studied with the greatest living sages, and was declared by them to be a proficient in every art of alchemy. But study as I might I could not think of any substance, or combination of substances, at all likely to arrest the decay of the human body. Still I could not bring myself to abandon the matter as hopeless. For a protracted period I pondered on the subject, and ultimately formed a plan, wild indeed, but the only one that offered the least likelihood of success.

“Martin Hindlewald was reported to have had a quantity of the elixir in his possession at the time of his death, which it was generally believed the murderer had carried off with him. Now, wherever that elixir was, the family who possessed it would most unquestionably be noted for their extreme longevity. That it would be confined to one family I felt certain, for there being at most a small quantity of it, its possessor would be very chary of giving of it to strangers, though natural affection would lead him

to give to his family, provided he had any. A very small quantity of the elixir served, so it was reported, hence it might not yet be all exhausted. I fervently hoped it might not, and I determined to find out. If I could only obtain a few drops, they might be the means of preserving the manufacture of what was otherwise inevitably lost. If it was, however, exhausted, I could at least gratify my curiosity by learning what effects it had produced; and should I altogether fail in tracing it, which I confessed was not at all improbable, no one would suffer from my endeavours but myself.

“ I communicated my intentions to several friends, but though they agreed with me regarding the value of my discovery if successful, yet they thought such a result very far from probable indeed. Undeterred by the misgivings of my friends, I at once set about making the attempt. But where was I to commence? I had thought out this also. The murderer of Martin Hindlewald was reported to have been an Englishman, hence it was natural that after the committal of the crime he would return to his native country. So at least I reasoned, and resolved to act upon the theory I had thus set up.

“ Full of hopes and fears I bade adieu to my friends, and departed for England. On arriving there I at once commenced my search, which I kept up with unflagging energy. I travelled the country in every direction, but tidings of a family remarkable for extraordinary longevity I could nowhere find. My expectations were several times raised by information of certain individuals whose ages almost amounted to, and in some cases even exceeded, a century. Upon investigation, these, however, turned out to be only solitary exceptions, all other members of the family having died at earlier ages.

“ Disappointed with England, I now turned my attention to the northern part of the island. Recommencing my investigations at the river Tweed, I pushed steadily northwards. For long my endeavours were unsuccessful, and I had begun to think that the theory I had built up was entirely devoid of material foundation, when the first bright ray of hope crossed my path. While prosecuting my search in the Highlands of Scotland, I was one night forced to take shelter in a little wayside inn, in that part of the country known as Aberdeenshire. Shortly after my arrival, a venerable pilgrim entered, also seeking rest and shelter for the

night. I entered into a conversation with the wayfarer, and found him to be a man of much and varied learning, deeply religious withal, and personally acquainted with almost all the countries in the civilized world. Struck with the profound depth of his information, I communicated to him the nature of my quest, eloquently expatiated on the benefits which would accrue to humanity by the discovery of the elixir of life, and humbly implored him to assist in finding it out.

“‘Ah, my son,’ replied the venerable pilgrim, ‘little do ye know the nature of the object which ye seek. Thinkest thou to wrest from Heaven that which Heaven has decreed shall not be. Take warning from the fate that has befallen all those who have sought, with any degree of success, to rob nature of her secrets. Ye already know the untimely end of the two men ye spake of, yet their fate was kindly compared with that of the old man’s murderer, as I have now no doubt he is. Know, my son, that an elixir whereby the life of man may be unduly prolonged in manly vigour can NEVER be produced, and to persist further in your present foolhardy endeavour is only to court your doom. What pleasure can there be in years and years of decrepit old age, worse—infinity worse—than childhood; and yet who ever heard of an old man ruthlessly breaking into the chamber of his own life? I will, however, tell you of the elixir of which ye speak; ye can afterwards prove the truth of my statements if ye will, and should ye then continue in your present frame of mind, ye go to your doom with your eyes open.

“‘In a remote glen in this same shire of Aberdeen, live a family of men noted for the extreme old age to which they have attained. By the few who know them they are regarded as foul wizards and sorcerers. A remarkable peculiarity of their existence is that for generations the eldest son of each family has never tasted death, while all the others have passed away as other mortals. This circumstance was a profound mystery to me until I heard your narrative about the elixir, but now I am convinced that that fluid has only been given to the oldest male member of each generation. The elixir does not, however, retain manhood’s prime for them, as you evidently suppose. On the contrary, they age just as quickly as other men. For a protracted period they remain in a state of what may be termed vigorous old age, then their frame gradually begins to waste, their stature decreases, and they grow

proportionately less, until at last little more than a feeble, flickering, vital spark is left. I have never seen the parties of whom I speak, but I am assured upon reliable authority that their present existence is such as I have described. Ye can, however, prove the truth or falsity of my information for yourself, as I can direct you where to find them. I would urge upon you to lose no time, for common report says that the period for which the oldest member of the family sold himself to the foul fiend has almost expired, by which I take it that the quantity of the accursed elixir, for which he steeped his hands in blood, is almost exhausted, and they may have to pay their long overdue debt at any moment.'

"That night I slept but little. The conversation I had with the pilgrim banished sleep. He had declared that a perfect elixir of life could never be produced, and that Martin Hindlewald's elixir was rather to be depreciated than extolled. This was a severe blow to my favourite schemes and theories, yet I would not abandon my idea until I saw its effects for myself. If these effects were not, in my opinion, beneficial to humanity, I felt that I would have to abandon my pursuit; for I saw no reason why I should incur the wrath of heaven by prying into its forbidden mysteries without some really great end to be gained.

"I was early on my journey next morning, and aided by the pilgrim's directions, I in course of time reached the locality where the aged family resided. It was an isolated glen, lonely and sterile, completely surrounded by high and rocky mountains which shut it out from easy access or communication with the rest of the world. I had seen wild awe-inspiring places in my native Fatherland, but this was the loneliest, dreariest spot that man could ever cast eyes on. No road, no pathway, stretched to the secluded glen, and the stream which drained it disappeared among a vast accumulation of *debris*, at the foot of one of the mountains. Nestling at the base of a high precipice, about equi-distant from both ends of the little valley, stood a small heather-thatched cottage. Upon a nearer approach, I saw an old man busily engaged mending the thatch.

"'Well, my man,' I said, upon reaching him, 'I should have thought no person would have taken up his abode in such a lonely situation.'

"'Ay, it's gey lanely,' he replied, in the vernacular common to that part of the country, 'but we're weel used to it.'

“ ‘ But how do you manage to exist ? ’ I queried.

“ ‘ Our wants are few, and easily supplied,’ he answered ; ‘ wi’ fish out o’ the burn, wild fowl and animals frae the hills, an’ the produce o’ the bit land we labour, we manage to live nae that ill.’

“ ‘ You must be a pretty old man ? ’ I again ventured.

“ ‘ Ay,’ he replied, with a smile, ‘ but I’m no sae auld’s my faither.’

“ ‘ What ! Is your father still alive ? ’

“ ‘ Ay is he.’

“ ‘ Where is he ? ’

“ ‘ Doon bye there, biggin’ a dyke,’ and he pointed down the gentle slope that led to the stream.

“ Without uttering another word, I walked away in the direction indicated, and soon came upon a man building a wall. The person I had just left might have been about eighty years of age, this one seemed even older, his hair as white as snow, and his face very wrinkled.

“ ‘ You are busy,’ I said, upon my approach.

“ ‘ Juist that,’ he replied.

“ ‘ I should have thought that such labour was rather unsuited for one of your years. You must be a very old man.’

“ ‘ Ay,’ he answered, ‘ but I’m no sae auld’s my faither.’

“ ‘ Is your father still alive ? Where is he ? ’ I eagerly asked.

“ ‘ Oh, he’s wast bye there, herdin’ the kye.’

“ I immediately hurried off in the way in which he pointed, and found another and older looking man, standing between a few cows and a patch of waving corn. Round his shoulders hung a grey cloak, and he supported himself on a staff. He was bent with age, his locks thin and scant, and his face furrowed to a degree which I had never previously witnessed. I was now so interested that I had no time to waste on preliminaries.

“ ‘ You must be a very old man,’ I exclaimed, when I reached him.

“ ‘ Ay,’ he solemnly replied, ‘ but I’m no sae auld’s my faither.’

“ ‘ Where is he ? ’ I excitedly asked.

“ ‘ Upbye i’ the hoose there. He’s ——,’ but I had no time to wait ; I set off for the house at what I could run.

“ Reaching the house, I burst in at the open door without knock or ceremony. The first object that met my gaze was what I took for a boy rocking a cradle. A second look, however, convinced

me that he was in reality an old man. He was scarcely four feet high, his frame thin and spare, his hands reduced to skin and bone, and on his face a wierd, unearthly look.

“ ‘ You must be a very, *very* old man,’ I breathlessly exclaimed.

“ ‘ Ay,’ he replied, in a weak, cracked voice, ‘ but I’m no sae auld’s my faither.’

“ ‘ Where is he ?’

“ ‘ This is him i’ the cradle,’ he replied.

“ My attention was now directed towards the occupant of the cradle. He might have been a child for bulk, as far as I could judge from the appearance his body had beneath the blanket with which it was covered. His face was attenuated and thin, and in his eyes was a dull, lack-lustre look.

“ ‘ Can he understand what is said ?’ I asked, turning towards his antiquated son.

“ ‘ Oo, ay, speak to him,’ was the answer.

“ ‘ You must be old, old beyond all conception,’ I said, again turning towards the occupant of the cradle.

“ ‘ Ay,’ he answered, in shrill, squeaky, childish tones, ‘ but I’m no sae auld’s my faither.’

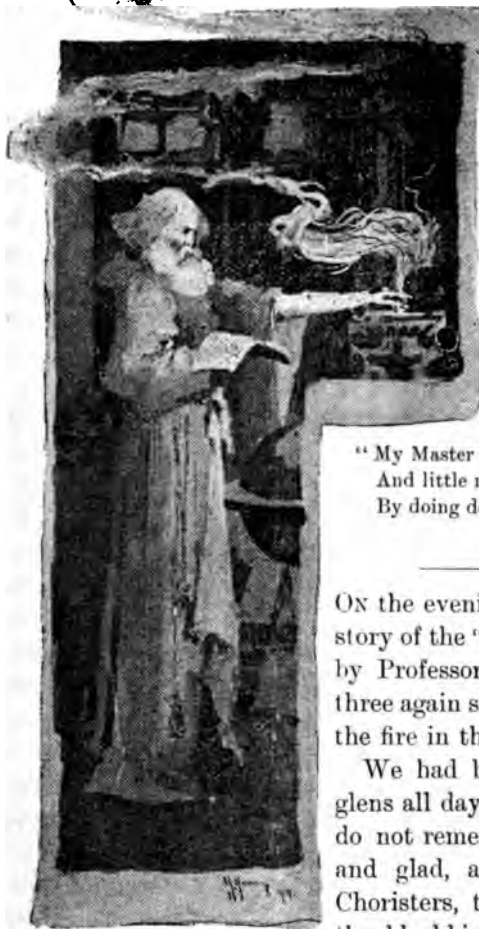
“ ‘ He certainly cannot be alive.’

“ ‘ Ay is he. He’s in a horn among a puckle ’oo’, inbye at the fireside there.’

“ Horror-stricken, I turned my face towards the fire-place. There, sure enough, out of a huge horn, surrounded with wool, I beheld a face no larger than that of a wax-doll, surveying me with wondering gaze.

“ ‘ Good God !’ I exclaimed, ‘ that any human being should live to come to this,’ and rushed from the house like one demented.

“ My favourite dreams had received a rude awakening indeed. Never more did I let my thoughts dwell on an elixir of life, and to all who afterwards broached the subject to me, I replied that the works of the Omnipotent were a long way ahead of man’s supposed improvements.”



Highland Seer Series.

No. III.

“ My Master is of churlish disposition,
And little recks to find the way to heaven,
By doing deeds of hospitality.”

— *Shakespeare.*

ON the evening after the *Seer* read the story of the “Elixir of Life,” as narrated by Professor Goldenstein, we were all three again seated, after supper, around the fire in the bookroom in his cottage.

We had been out on the hills and glens all day—a more beautiful day I do not remember—my heart was light and glad, and no wonder, for God’s Choristers, the linnet, the mavis, and the blackbird, were piping their melodious notes in bush and tree. The air was sweet and balmy, and the whole landscape bathed in bright sunshine. Byron’s lines rose to my lips:—

“ Ah ! there is sweetness in the mountain air,
And life, that bloated ease can never hope to share.”

The principal topic of our conversation that day was the virtue of hospitality.

The *Seer* gave us many curious instances of the manifestations of this virtue among the people of the East, where he had travelled so much in his youth.

I remarked that this virtue of hospitality was a very fine trait of human nature, and spoke of the kindness that our National Bard, Burns, received when on his tour in the Highlands in 1787. He was hospitably received and kindly treated by high and low, rich and poor—so much so, that when he had again crossed the Highland border on his way home, looking back on the land he had left, he cried:—

“ When death’s dark stream I ferry o’er,
A time that surely shall come,
In heaven itself I’ll ask no more
Than just a Highland welcome.”

In reply to my observations, the *Seer* said, “ Yes, among the Celtic race hospitality is looked upon as a sacred duty; they have been taught from the remotest times that kindness to strangers has always brought with it its own reward, and that the reverse is always followed by a curse. To-night after supper I will relate to you a little story, part of which happened to a progenitor of mine, long, long ago, which will to a certain extent illustrate this subject.”

While we smoked the pipe of peace and contentment around the comfortable hearth of the *Seer* of the glen, he proceeded to fulfil his promise in the following words:—

“THE CURSE OF THE STRANGER.”

“ Among the directions which Moses gave to the Children of Israel to observe after they had secured a settlement in the land of Canaan, are some directing them to be hospitable to strangers who might visit and sojourn for a time in their country. They were enjoined to remember that they themselves had been strangers in the land of Egypt, and told to be careful not to vex the heart of a stranger.” In the New Testament the same duty is enjoined on Christians as Moses directed the Israelites to observe, and the advantages which some had gained by kindness to strangers, ‘for unawares they had entertained Angels,’ are stated as an incentive to follow the practice of hospitality. This extreme care for strangers’ feelings is a little puzzling to those who know no more than the ideas of their own times and their own native district.

The word for stranger in some of the old languages of the world likewise means a 'Wanderer.' Saint Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, rehearses a list of actions performed by 'Wanderers' in ancient days, and gives the names of several. Who were these 'Wanderers,' who by the list of deeds given seem to have attained a power bordering on the Divine? and respect to strangers being still enjoined to be observed, would seem to be a class which were to continue on the earth. In ancient times, from a very early date, it was (in every country the Priests and Nobles after receiving what training the colleges, &c. of their own native country was able to give them), a settled custom that they should travel for a stated period in foreign countries in order to perfect their education and fit them the better for bearing rule in their native land, when they returned to it after their period of wandering was over. One who had thus gone through a course of training of this description would be one who would be versed in the arts of many countries, and in an emergency had more resources of knowledge to fall back upon than one who had only received the training which was afforded by his native land. He was thus a man who had attained the highest pitch of learning possible afforded for facing adversity by the schools of his day, and the man of the one training who should irritate and engage in strife with him would likely as not come to ruin.

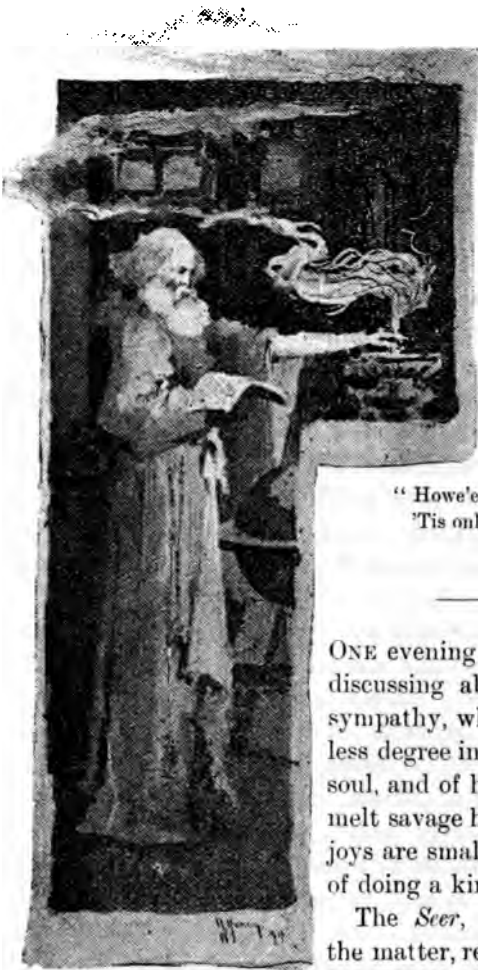
"The Scriptures tell us of the Schools of the Prophets, showing that there was a training required in order to fill the prophetic office, and the 'Wanderers' whom St. Paul mentions as having had command of the unseen forces of nature, show that their education in the line which it took was of a very high standard. These men therefore were not to be lightly irritated, and not knowing who the unknown stranger might be, it was therefore but prudent policy to show him kindness and respect. If but a being of common powers he would therefore go away satisfied with his reception, and and if he should turn out to have been one of these men wandering for the purpose of advancing his intellectual attainments, by treating him courteously his friendship would be gained, which might be very advantageous in after years, and the disastrous effects of a quarrel with such a personage would be avoided. This practice of traveling in foreign countries for advancing their knowledge in various branches of civil and religious matters is still largely followed by many of the wealthy in civilized lands to the present day. The

following tale will show that there is a risk and a dangerous one in ill-usage to, or vexing the hearts of strangers, and would point to the fact that there is probably existing in unsuspected quarters a knowledge of how to command the unseen forces of nature. It illustrates in a striking degree the dangers and disasters of practising malicious conduct.

“In the last quarter of the Eighteenth Century a party of Highlanders, looking for harvest work, asked for shelter one evening at a farm-town in a district which for centuries was the Debateable Ground and the scene of so many fierce conflicts between Highlanders and Lowlanders. Hostile feelings were thus still lurking in the district. Through their spokesman or leader, the only one who could speak English, the farmer made an offer for their services. The terms offered were refused as not satisfactory. Of a malicious disposition the farmer determined that, as he had failed in securing their services, no one else should do so. Therefore, as soon as they had retired for the night to the accommodation provided for them in the barn, he sent off a messenger to the Baron of the district, stating that a party of doubtful character had terrorized him into giving them shelter for the night, and requesting that they should be secured before they had time for committing any mischief. The request was at once attended to, and a strong party of men were sent, and in a short time the unfortunate Highlanders were all tied hand and foot. Their leader was taken to the Baron’s residence for further inquiry. After a short sharp colloquy, he was dispatched by the Baron to carry a letter for him to a gentleman in a neighbouring town, under the promise of receiving a pair of new shoes for his trouble on his return, the ones he was wearing being remarked as being well-worn. Unskilled in the ways of the world at the time, and also unable to read, the Highlander duly delivered the letter, and was pressed into the army. The letter had directed his detention for military service. A powerful Highland nobleman learning of the affair, compelled the release of the others, who had been detained prisoners at the farm-town, until inquiry was made about them, and thus secured their return to their native district; but the season of harvest-work and its gains were in a manner lost to them. Years afterwards, an old soldier presented himself at the Baron’s residence, and reminding him of the affair and his promise, demanded the shoes, as he was the man. After some coarse vulgar expressions had been indulged in by the Baron, he

handed over money sufficient to buy a pair of new shoes. The money, to the Baron's astonishment, was at once flung in the fire, and the ragged coat being thrown off, the uniform of a military officer of high rank met his view. Raising himself to his full height, the officer exclaimed, 'Baron, by assisting thy tenant's hypocrisy I was deprived of wife and family. Domestic happiness is mine no more. It shall likewise, with all its blessings, depart from thy house, and thy farm shall be a vexation to all who occupy it.' So saying, he took his departure. From that day everything with the Baron was downwards; spurned by wife and family, a prey to a loathsome disease, he died a wreck. His successor was shot in a duel which he was goaded on by an unfaithful wife to engage in. Domestic discord and financial troubles have been the rule with his descendants ever since, and the ground owned by them is but a mere fraction of what the family (an ancient one) held in old days. The farmer, who was the means of bringing so much trouble on inoffensive strangers, failed in business, and died dependant on public charity. His successors in the farm have fared but little better. Bankruptcy turned some out of it, and sent them to struggle as labourers for the means of existence. Although some gained wealth in it, and died tenants of it, it was found at the close that through trusting to treacherous friends their wealth had been nearly exhausted. Down to the present day, it has been remarked that no man who has entered upon a lease of that farm ever got the opportunity to run it out—death or bankruptcy has always cut his occupancy short.

"If this kindness to strangers is not a duty still to be observed at the present day, danger lies in its non-observance. What do these facts mean? The Scriptures tell us of fearful punishment being exacted in ancient times for breaches of religious principles, and these facts would seem to be a warning to avoid iniquitous conduct. Punishment is exacted still upon the wrong-doer and his posterity."



Highland Seer Series.

No. IV.

“Howe'er it be, it seems to me,
'Tis only noble to be good.”

—Tennyson.

ONE evening we had been engaged in discussing about the golden chord of sympathy, which is fixed in a more or less degree in the heart of every human soul, and of how kind deeds can alone melt savage hearts, and that all worldly joys are small compared to the one joy of doing a kindness.

The *Seer*, to illustrate his view of the matter, related to us the story of—

THE MYSTERY OF THE BLUE ROCK.

“About two hundred years ago, in a lonely pass in Perthshire, near the Highland border, where stands a craggy knoll termed ‘The Blue Rock,’ a labourer on an estate near by on passing it one morning found a collie dog howling in a pitiful, distressed manner. He did his best to soothe the animal and get it to follow him, but his artifices were of no avail; he had to leave the animal



Highland Seer Series.

No. V.

“For that which is unclean by nature, thou canst entertain no hope! no washing will turn the gipsy white.”—*Firdusi*.

My friend and I had been now five days under the roof of the old Highland Seer, partaking of his generous hospitality, and enjoying a rare intellectual treat in his companionship. I can assure you I have not been able, as yet, to record a tithe of the tales, stories and traditions, that constantly flowed from his lips in conversation.

On this, the morning of the sixth day of our sojourn in the Seer's cottage, we were all three sitting in the book-room. The weather, which had been up to the night before all that could be desired by tourists out for a walking holiday in the Scottish Highlands, had suddenly broken down. A terrific storm of thunder and lightning, accompanied by a heavy down-pour of rain, and furious blasts of wind, had completely changed the aspect of the lovely glen. What before had been beautiful, bright and gay, was now terrible,

fearful and awesome, the little strips of water that ran down the sides of the mountains, like silver threads glittering in the sunbeams, were now gushing and hissing, and springing from cliff to cliff like as many angry demons.

The burn which cut the little glen in two was:—

“ Roaring frae bank to brae ;
And bird and beast in covert rest
Did spend the heartless day.”

We also kept under cover, and to wile away the time we were discussing, in keeping with the war of the elements, gloomy topics:—

“ O Warlocks loupin’ round the wirrikow,
O ghaists that win’ in glen, and kirkyard drear.”

At length our conversation turned on wolves, wild boars, and badgers, and our host told us many a strange tale about these wild animals when they roamed in the mighty forests, which at one time existed in Scotland. He also told us about the “were-wulf,” of the Teutonic nations, signifying, he said, a man-wolf. These were-wolves were said to be Sorcerers who, having anointed their bodies with an ointment which they made by the instinct of the devil, and then, putting on a certain enchanted girdle, they, to use the words of an old writer on the subject, “do not only unto the view of others seem as wolves, but, to their own thinking, both have the shape and nature of wolves, so long as they wear the said girdle, and they do dispose themselves as very wolves in worrying and killing, and waste of human creatures.”

Nor was it wonderful that a raging wolf should be supposed to be possessed with some demon more fearful than its own insatiate appetite, when he went about devouring everything that came in his way—the sheep in the fold, the child in its cottage bed, and even digging up newly-buried bodies from their graves.

It is to the terror also that the wolf inspired that we are to ascribe the fact of kings and rulers, in a barbarous age, feeling proud of bearing the name of this animal as an attribute of courage and ferocity. Brute power was then considered the highest distinction of man, and, alas! this sentiment is not mitigated by the refinements of modern life, which conceal, but do not destroy it. We find among our Anglo-Saxon kings and great men, Ethelwulf, the noble wolf; Berthwulf, the illustrious wolf; Eadwulf, the prosperous wolf; and Ealdwulf, the old wolf.

Hollingshed mentions that, in 1577, wolves were very destructive to the flocks in Scotland, and, it is said, that the last of this ferocious race in Caledonia perished in Lochaber, by the hand of Sir Ewen Cameron of Lochiel, about a century afterwards.

Then the Seer said, to further illustrate the subject, he would relate to us the wild tradition of:—

THE DEMON OF THE ALYTH FOREST.

“In some of the ancient idolatries, the wolf was regarded as a sacred animal. Veneration is still paid to it in some quarters of Hindostan, and, as far as the natives are concerned, it is allowed to roam unmolested as little as possible, for they believe that, where one is slain, misfortune is certain to befall the district. They say, in their figurative style of language, ‘The curse of wolf’s blood clings to the soil,’ and point to, and name quarters, where wolves having been slain in past years, misfortunes afterwards befel the districts where such had taken place, of such a serious nature, that the inhabitants, to avoid starvation, left them in order to escape a miserable death, leaving their homes ruined, desolate, and the land, which they had once cultivated, gradually falling back into the condition of a jungle. Through India, there still occur cases of sucking children, who had been carried off by wolves, being adopted by them, and on coming to any age, consorting with them on their expeditions as one of themselves, and, when observed, recaptured. The difficulty which had to be gone through, is narrated before they could be trained to abandon the savage habits which had been once acquired by companionship with such animals. Cases of this kind are recorded in this country as having taken place in former generations.

“It is possible that some of the traditions of the ravages, committed by unearthly monsters in ancient days, were caused by the actions of these human beings who had been carried off, and adopted by wolves escaping the emergencies of forest life, and reaching mature age, when their appearance, at a distance, seen perhaps only through bushes, &c., would be an uncommon one, not easily explained by every one, and their ravages, in order to satisfy the pangs of hunger, would be of a savage description. Tradition goes that, in ancient times, a part of the Alyth Forest, on the south side, got an unenviable notoriety through the ravages of a monster; the like of which no hunter

had ever seen before. Young persons were carried off and devoured; the number of victims, carried off in a short time, reaching to a good number of lives. All attempts to capture and slay him were tried, but all had proved fruitless. The monster roamed the forest uncontrolled, and seemed likely to do so for years. But at last, having carried the daughter of a neighbouring proprietor away, and devoured her, her lover determined to end the career of a monster like this, although, in doing so, he should perish for the benefit of the district, and thus rid it of what had been as a scourge. In contact with such an active monster, a coat of mail, from its cumbersome weight, was to place him at a disadvantage. He, therefore, procured for himself a thick overcoat, made of plaited hair. Donning this garment, and arming himself with a dagger of the foremost quality of workmanship, he went to the part of the forest in which the monster was known to make his lair, to look for him. The young man had searched nearly the whole day, when at last, with a loud yell, a savage-looking form bounded upon him from a small clump of bushes, and, by the impetus of the spring, felled him to the ground by the mere force of its rush. The hair doublet did its work admirably, and in a manner half-choked him, through its filling his mouth to such an extent. He could have bitten through plate mail as if it had been silk. Although prostrate under the monster, as he had the arm and hand which carried the dagger free, he quickly used it. A few well directed stabs were all that was required. One of them had pierced the heart. With a wild yell, the monster rolled to one side and expired. On examination, that he was really a man was quite evident, although he was covered with a coat of long, thick slaggy hair, a common provision of nature against the vicissitudes of nature when exposed to the inclemency of the weather and winter storms. No explanation was ever got of how he came to be living such a life, so they buried him where he had fallen, and turned to their usual daily pursuits. There is every likelihood that he had been one of those who, carried off by wolves whilst mere infants, are often adopted by them, and all trace of them being lost, grow up among the flock of wolves as savage as themselves. Grown up, and driven by some cause from the district in which he had been reared, it would thus come that, when slain in the Alyth Forest, nothing would be known in the district that would throw light on his antecedents.

“Down to the present day, an eeriness hangs over the spot. A gamekeeper, in the past generation, was passing through the quarter where the tragedy had taken place in ancient times. Seeing something unusual in the bushes at a short distance, he raised his gun and fired. On a sudden, his gun was knocked up, and his right hand lacerated in an unaccountable manner. He was found in a senseless condition, but never gave any particulars as to what he had seen when he fired, or what it was that had assailed him, and inflicted such injuries upon him. Another party crossing through the same quarter one autumn evening in pursuit of game, having a vicious dog along with him, on a sudden, felt that his dog was walking uncomfortably close to him. On looking down to see what was the matter, he saw that his dog was in a manner cringing with terror, for, on his opposite side, was what appeared to be a gigantic hound. He at once walked to the edge of a clearing where the mysterious hound, who had accompanied him to it, suddenly disappeared. He at once went home. Another autumn evening, a ploughman, on his way home, when passing by that quarter, heard cries as if some infant was meeting with a violent death, issuing from the wood. Drawing a clasp-knife, and placing it open between his teeth, he at once rushed to the rescue. The more he searched, the more he was puzzled to find the exact locality of the sounds. At last, convinced that there was something more than common in the sounds, he abandoned the search, and fled with all speed home, the knife still between his teeth, and his hair erect, carrying his bonnet on his arrival. On telling his story, he was laughed at, that the noises had been made by owls. But, to the day of his death, when the subject was mentioned, he always affirmed that the noises which he had heard there that night could not have been made by owls, and that he saw what defied his powers of language to describe. What did he really see? He never gave the least information about what it was. An alteration having taken in the place in the manner of conducting the business of the district, fewer people pass that way now than the number that used to make it a thoroughfare in past generations. But these few at times own that, when doing so, they feel a strange experience; the reason of which they do not understand. Sounds arise on the midnight breeze unlike anything they ever heard before, and, in the dim moonlight, glimpses are got of fleeting

forms to which they can give no name, or an accurate description, and they are glad when they get safely past this mysterious quarter.

“How comes this mysterious influence to be at work still? Is there any reality in the sacred influence of which the wolf was believed to be an emblem, and for which he is still respected in Hindostan? In many heathen countries he was an emblem of the Sun-God, and his name, in some old languages, when translated, shows that opinions were held of him which agreed with attributes of the sun. In the connection with these ideas concerning the wolf, handed down from ancient creeds, what does this reputed haunting of the spot, by a mysterious form, mean? The poor infant, deprived, in some unknown manner, of his parent's care, fell in among savage animals, and grew up to maturity a savage like themselves. He knew no other than what his surroundings had taught him, and he followed it. Attracting attention, he was thus cut off without any attempt being made to ascertain what he really was, and so capture him alive, and bring him back to the same level as mortal men. Some ancient creeds held it as part of their belief that there were those who, from some defect in their earthly life, although at last they were disembodied, did not pass away from this earth, like human beings of a higher scale of intelligence, but became *Earth-walkers*. The being in question never had the opportunity to qualify himself for the duties of mortal man. When cut off, as he was, did he become an *Earth-walker*?”