

**The darker superstitions of Scotland, illustrated from history and practice /
By John Graham Dalyell, F.A.S.E.**

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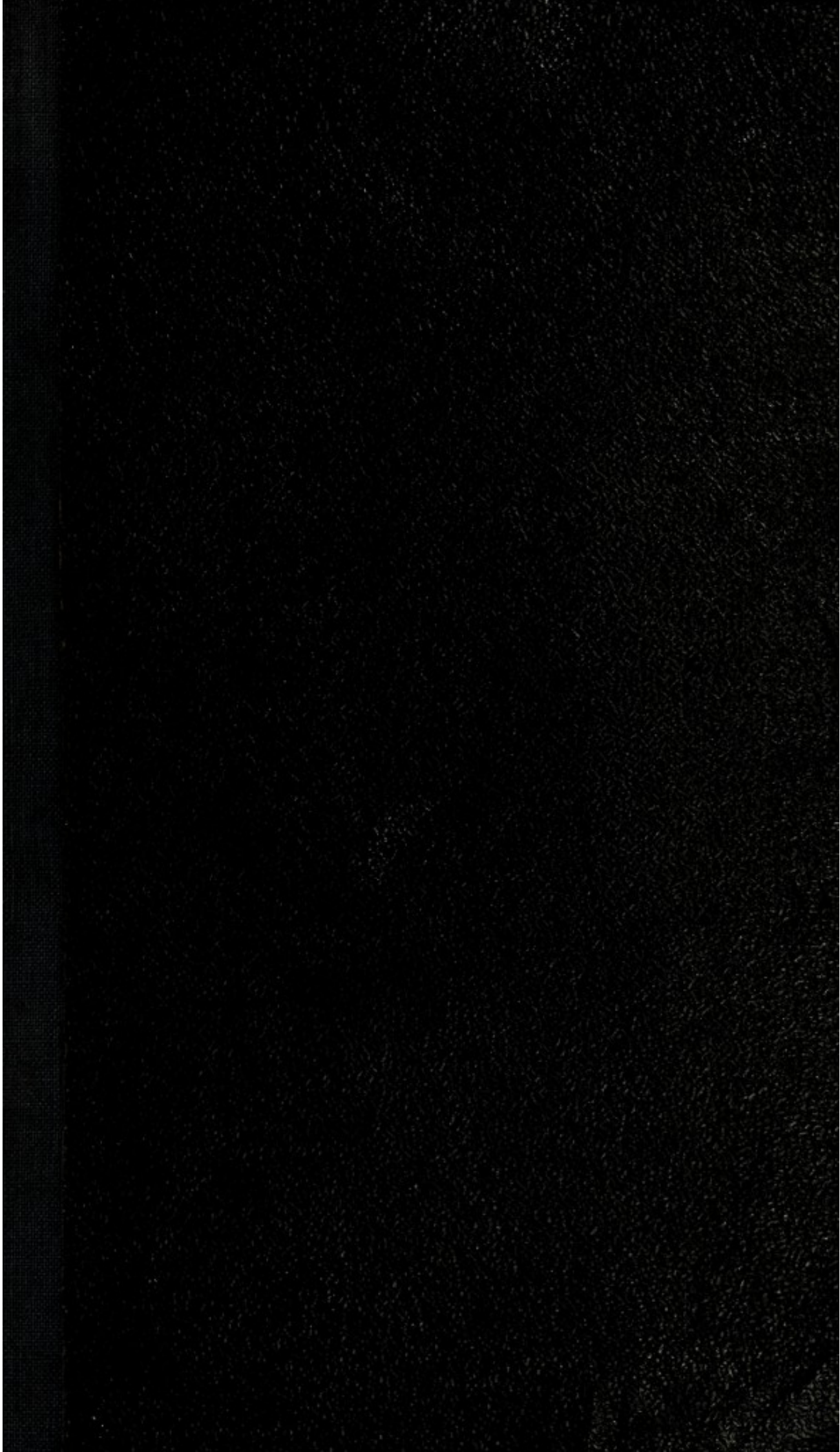
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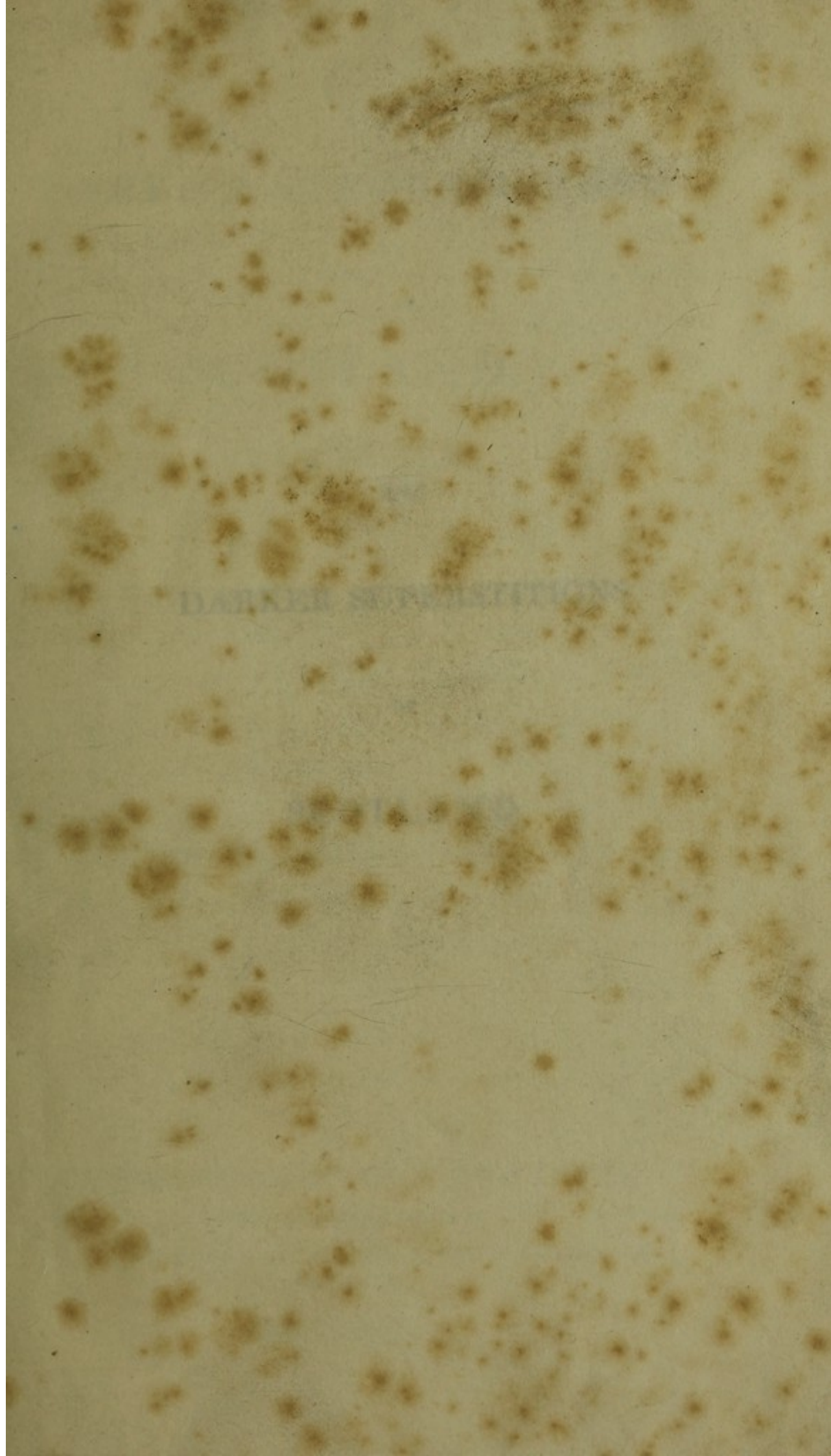


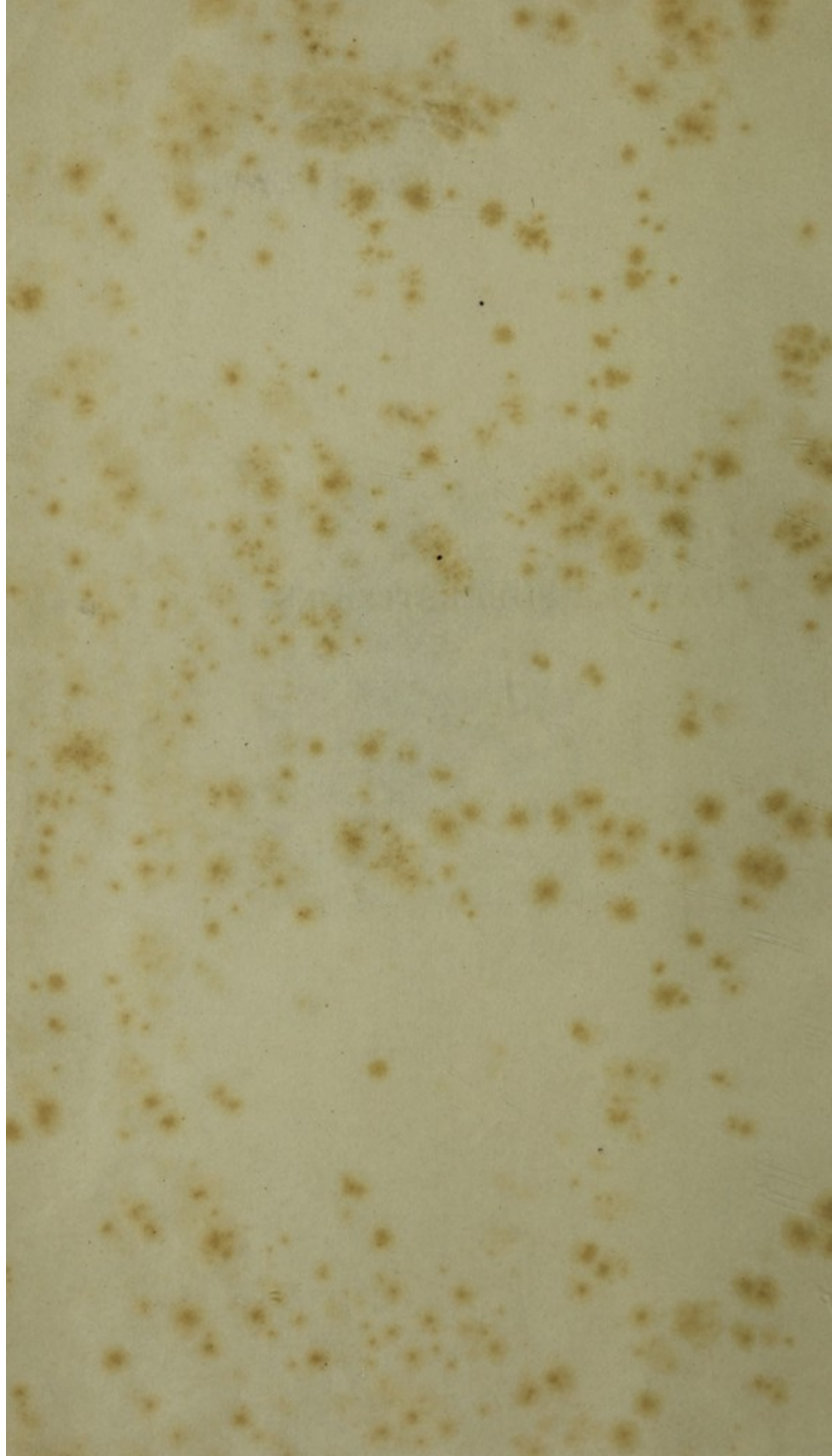
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THE
DARKER SUPERSTITIONS
OF
SCOTLAND,

ILLUSTRATED

THE

HIST DARKER SUPERSTITIONS

OF

SCOTLAND.

EDINBURGH—WAUGH AND INNES,

ROBINSON ROAD, SINGAPORE.

W. & A. CO. DUBLIN, & WHITTAKER & CO.
LONDON.

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JOHN GRAHAM DALYELL,

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P R E F A C E.

AN authentic view of the manners and customs of mankind may rank with the more valuable parts of literature. History, so busy with the mere name and inheritance of individuals, or devoted to the territorial boundaries of tribes and nations, bears little interest in comparison to illustration of their sentiments, habits, and occupations, while enjoying this sublunary sphere.

The credulous abound exceedingly in every age : but the proselytes of sound philosophy are rare. As each succeeding epoch betrays some gross inconsistency of that which has gone before, it seems as if the mind were liable to periodical delirium, varying only in the subject and extent of incoherence. Hence the powerful, though temporary, sway of astrology, physiognomy, chiromancy, and even the ardour of certain pursuits of practical science, which might have benefited learning in wiser hands.

Notwithstanding the rude and disorderly mass, presented at first sight by the aggregate of Scottish superstitions, it will be found, that, as originating partly from astronomy, partly from theology, and partly from medicine, they are susceptible of some systematic arrangement, which might be improved by farther research and observation.

But the subject is too ample and diffuse for the work of an individual, or the restricted limits appropriated for it here.

The simple accumulation of facts is less important than their ulterior application, in illustrating history by principles and practice.

Impatience for publication ought not to preclude the duty of composition. Perhaps the later pursuits of Scottish literature, betray too earnest a propensity to promulgate the writings of others, rather than to undergo the task of composing for ourselves—forgetting that all essential qualities must concentrate in the result of investigation.

Numerous manuscripts are quoted in this volume, and many printed treatises. Had some others proved accessible, the author is sensible how much it would have enlarged his information. Nothing is more desirable than a general catalogue of the various manuscripts, illustrative of Scottish history, wherever deposited.

Much curious matter remains to be withdrawn from the registers of parishes, presbyteries, and other ecclesiastical judicatories: Nor would it be difficult to ascertain such as are extant, through the medium of the General Assembly. The clergymen of the established church of Scotland, are themselves so worthy, respectable, liberal, and intelligent a class of society; several highly distinguished by learning,—some even familiar with the refinement of the arts—that their ready co-operation for such a purpose may be confidently anticipated. This general catalogue should also comprehend the name or description of those manuscripts, pertaining to the different judicial establishments: nor can it be presumed, that public libraries possessing similar stores, will fail to contribute their own proportion.

The field of superstition is very ample. Many branches are reserved, besides the selections engrossing the subsequent pages, which would lead to a farther analysis of history. But it will be always difficult to fix the cessation of practice: and although the author has conceived some to be obsolete, and others extirpated for centuries, their daily observance proves his error.

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 historical authorities: it would be difficult to
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 scripts pertaining to the different judicial establish-
 ments; and it be presumed, that public libraries
 possessing similar stores will feel no scruple to
 own proprietary claims, and yet be anxious to
 place the field of investigation in every angle. Many
 manuscripts preserved, besides the religious engineering
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 ing for centuries, their daily observation proves the
 errors of a general. The manuscript and printed
 authorities will be consulted, and a list of
 printed works will be given, in which the

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SUPERSTITIONS OF SCOTLAND.

Words not explicitly understood.

P. 116. Fadbinding.	P. 470. Reathes.
523. Melefowr.	458. Wane eave.
389. Slaik.	531. Weathmanis.
117. Slewef.	118. Wrest, Resting.
523. Swee.	

E R R A T A.

P. 72. for *Chartalarium* read *Chartularium*.

94. line pen: for *this* read *the*.

150. for *linnet* read *lapwing*.

439. for *XII.* read *XIII.*

466. for *XI.* read *XIV.*

530 read 630.

534. l. pen: for § read ¶

l. ult: for ¶ read §

672. for *Hadington* read *Haddington*.

Words not explicitly understood.

P. 116. Farthing.	P. 470. Kestrel.
522. Mallow.	458. Wane away.
389. Stalk.	531. Westman's.
117. Shovel.	118. Wren's Nesting.
528. Sweet.	

ERRATA

- P. 72. for Chastelium read Chastelium.
P. 104. line 10: for this read the
150. for least read leaving
439. for XII read XVII
486. for XX read XL
530 read 630
584. 1. pen: for 2 read 4
1. 10: for 7 read 2
678. for Washington read Washington.

SUPERSTITIONS OF SCOTLAND.

CHAPTER I.

OF AN EVIL EYE, INVOCATIONS, AND MALEDICTIONS.

IF mankind sickening, wasted and died, while the secret source of corrosion was unseen, the superstition of darker ages ascribed it rather to demoniac agency, than to distempered organization. When the fruits of the earth were blighted; or the works of patient industry perished; if disappointment loured over the morning of life, and its evening set in sorrow; such calamities were charged to the enmity of supernatural beings, with whom credulity associated the more obnoxious of the human race. No account was held of the casualties inseparable from sublunary dispensations: celestial energies were forgot, in the dreaded faculties gratuitously conferred on terrestrial creatures.

The terror of invisible shafts, exaggerated an insane apprehension of danger: hope fostered illusion: nature's immutable ordinances were neither rendered ex-

pletive of remarkable incidents; nor was there any appeal made to reason, though matured by experience. Inconsistency unhinged the mind, which, in its disturbance, invested contemptible products with miraculous virtues; and yielded to the most extravagant ceremonies, in the vain confidence of deriving infallible efficacy from their practice. Dreams and visions originating in a morbid constitution, were accepted as divine inspirations; oracles emanated from ebriety; angelic concerts floated on the moaning of the winds; atmospheric coruscations announced spiritual presence; destiny was read in the stars.

An indiscreet precipitation in forming false conclusions, shook the foundations of truth. Impostors, wilfully arrogating prophetic powers, or a pretended heavenly mission, contributed to the common error; or they were themselves the victims of self-delusion.

Incorporating fanaticism in its train, the blindness of superstition intermixed its baneful influence with the total series of worldly arrangements; it subverted the resolution of the rational, by inculcating belief in things incompatible with the appointed order and the admirable harmonies of the universe.

Yet because weak, ignorant, and prejudiced mortals, knew not the disquieter by its proper name, they bore its banners willingly, and were as eager to fight in its defence as if having sworn unalienable fealty under them.

A frightful chaos followed.—It was not then, as now, that science, courting scrutiny, widened the

sphere of public welfare; or that liberality propounded recompence for adventure in quest of knowledge. Mystery shielded artifice, intolerance frowned on learning; he who would have readily corrected the folly of his fellows, was branded as himself the more foolish. The veil of ignorance thickening around the dawns of intellectual refulgence, preserved superstition in its sway.

§ I.—*An Evil Eye*.—NONE of the fierce transitions which lurking malignity unwittingly discloses, distort the placid lineaments of the benevolent. But secret aversion is betrayed by envenomed glances, and wrathful ebullitions proclaim approaching violence. Can mischief be silently perpetrated by the eye?

Among the numberless superstitions enthralling mankind, no one has been more extensively diffused, throughout all countries and in every age, than implicit credulity in an Evil Eye, or the malevolent injuries inflicted by its effects in fascination. It is only a few years since a domestic in the author's family having died of small pox, then believed to be extirpated from the place, his mother on arriving from the western parts of Scotland, expressed her conviction that he had fallen a victim to an evil eye.

In various quarters ready acquiescence yet attends the importunity of the mendicant, from dreading the consequences of refusal; and should an uncouth demeanour and aspect be conjoined with his vocation,

objects of interest are carefully withdrawn from his gaze. Children have been thought the most susceptible of injury.

Though credulity in the effects of an evil eye must have been alike common, as among nations in a corresponding stage of civilization, the earlier allusions to it here are few, compared with the unceasing anxieties directed towards grosser superstitions. As these were more alarming, so they may have absorbed a greater proportion of public solicitude.

Moresin, a learned author of the sixteenth century, remarks the prevalence of fascinating children throughout the Papacy, while he is silent on the subject in relation to this his native country.* Some time later, Zachary Boyd alludes to the benefit of "four nooked claver," as a preservative or remedy "for juggling of the sight."† But all illustrations of fascination, are derived from its effect on the brute creation. Robert Kirk, minister of Aberfoyle, speaks of the destruction of that animal whereon the eye glances first in the morning; and he names a man in his parish, "who killed his own cow after commending its fatness, and shot a hair

* *Moresinus* Papatus seu depravatæ religionis origo et incrementum. p. 57. Edinburgh, 1594. in 12.

† *Boyd*, Last Battel of the Soule in Death, v.i. p. 68. Edinburgh, 1629. in 12.

Some years previous to the work of Moresin, among the ingredients of sorcery are specified,

"Sanet Iohne's nutt, and the four levit claver."

Legend of the Bishop of St Andrews. Ap. SCOTISH POEMS of the sixteenth century, p. 318.

with his eyes.”* Also, it is gravely recorded, as a woman milked her cow another “lookit in ower the duir, quhairvpoun the calf died presentlie, and the kow fell seik, that schoe wold nether eat nor yeild milk.”† In describing the “Devill’s Rudiments,” which formed no slight subject of apprehension in his era, King James specifies “such kind of charmes, as commonlie dafte wives uses for healing forspoken goodes, for preserving them from *evill eyes*, by knitting roun-trees or sundriest kind of herbes to the haire and tailles of the goodes.”‡ Belief in the existence of an evil eye, was certainly tantamount to credulity in the power or practice of sorcery. One was americiated for having slandered Gilbert Thomasoun, saying, that “the haill thing that he did and *luikitt* on wold never thryfe.”§

* *Kirk*, Secret Commonwealth, 1690. This singular work was edited in 1815, by Mr Robert Jameson, an author well skilled in northern antiquities.

† *Records of the Sheriff Court of Orkney in MS.* fol. 263. v.—6 April 1643: Trial of Cirstian Marwick. The author owes many obligations to Mr Thomas Thomson, deputy-clerk register, for facilitating his access to several volumes of the earlier judicial records of Orkney and Shetland, which have been preserved and transmitted to Edinburgh, as he understands, through the laudable precautions of Mr Alexander Peterkin, lately sheriff-substitute of that county.

‡ *King James*, *Daemonologie*, b. i., chap. iv., p. 11, 12. Edinburgh, 1597, in 4to. *Dafte*, i.e. silly; *forspoken*—bewitched; *goodes*—cattle; *roun-tree*—mountain ash.

§ *Records of the Sheriff Court of Yetland in MS.* fol. 107. v. 26 July 1603. Gilberit Thomas.—Maidlane Williamsdochter.

Whatever were the apprehensions entertained of an evil eye, no example has yet occurred to the author of incorporating it with direct charges of sorcery, such as fell so often under judicial cognizance of old. Amidst the anxious enumeration of the various means of mischief, gestures, maledictions, symbols, and the whole train of wicked devices, judged to be in the nearest approximation to supernatural faculties, it never appears as an ingredient, though matters of minor significance be employed as an aggravation of guilt. Simple inclination became a ground of suspicion: for it was alleged, that a woman “wisheit in her mind,” that her husband’s infirmities might be transferred to a stranger.*

Janet Cock, was indicted thus: “There being an out-cast betwixt you and Jeane Forrest, because shoe had called you a witch, you came to the said Jeane, her landlord’s house, where she was with some nyghboures, desyreing to make aggriement betwixt you. Ye maliciouslie and bitterlie girneing and gnashing your teeth, and beating your hands upon your knees, said, ‘O them that called me a witch! O them that called me a witch!’ And at that tyme, the said Jeane Forrest, her chyld being in good health,—on the morne the chyld by your sorcerie and witchcraft dyed: and the mother, at the chyld’s departour, called out with a loud voyce upone her nighbours, saying, ‘Alace! that

* Trial of Katherine Jonesdochter, 2 Oct. 1616. *Records of Shetland*. fol. 33. v.

ever I had adoe with that witch Janet Cock, for shoe has been at my bed syd all this night standing, and I could not get red of her :—And behold the fruit of it, my child is dead !”*

Supernatural faculties were generally ascribed to the instruction of Satan—as the arch-enemy of mankind, ever ready in finding instruments to wreak his vengeance on them.† Thus he taught Jonet Irving, “if she bure ill-will to onie bodie,” to *look* on them “*with opin eyis*, and pray evill for thame in his name,” “that she sould get her heartis desyre.”‡

The most trivial incidents were treasured carefully in remembrance, to corroborate the sorcerer’s design ; and industriously enrolled in the catalogue of superstitious practices. One reached Henry Janies house, “with a stoup in hir hand, with the boddome formest, and sat down ryght fornent the said Henrie, and gantit thryce on him :—and going furth he followit hir ;

* *Records of the Court of Justiciary in MS.* 10 September, 11 November 1661. Trial of Jonet Cock. It is necessary to observe, that if the original passages be abbreviated, it is only by the omission of mere redundancies, or of passages which are not pertinent to the essence of the argument. By the style of an indictment, a narrative of the offence is addressed to the accused, who, when put on trial, is called the pannel. This record is designated, the *Books of Adjournal*. The author was indebted to the late Mr James Anderson, deputy-clerk of court, for the most liberal access to the whole during thirty years.

Or, i.e. before. Jeane Forrest, *her chyld*—Jeane Forrest’s child.

† *Scribonius de Sagarum Natura*, fol. 43. [A.D. 1585. f. 53.]

‡ Trial of Jonet Irving, 5th March 1616. *Rec. Ork.* f. 60.

and being on the brigstane, scho lukit over her shoulder, and turned up the quhyt of her eye, quhair by hir divilrie, their fell ane great weght upoun him, that he was forcit to set his bak to the wall; and when he came in, he thoucht the hous ran about with him; and theirefter lay seik ane lang time.”* Another, “was verie anxious to know when David Cumlaquoy wold sow; and after shoe had hard, shoe went and stood just to his face all the tyme he was sowing: and that yeir his seid failed him, that he culd not sow the thrid of his land, albeit, for quantitie, he had as much as ever.”†

Beatrix Leslie met a reproof by Agnes, the wife of William Young, for resorting to charms, thus, “mony opens their packs and sells no wares; and you sall not wine a penny of this.” Three days after, she came “in ane great fury and anger, and pluckt away a pock belonging to her, which the said Agnes had in keiping, without speaking ane word to her, bot *giveing her ane terrible look*; and that same verry night, the said William Young awakened out of his sleep, in a great affrightment and sweat, crying out, that she with a number of catts wer devouring him.”‡

* Trial of Katherine Grant, 25 Nov. 1623. *Rec. Ork.* f. 177, 178. *Stoupe*, i.e. water-pail; *fornent*—opposite; *gantit*—yawned.

† Trial of Mareoun Cumlaquoy, in Marwick in Birsay: 1 June 1643. *Rec. Ork.* f. 273. The seed was exhausted preternaturally, before a third of the land was sown.

‡ Trial of Beatrix Leslie, 3 Aug. 1661.—*Rec. Just.*

In like manner as the effects of an evil eye were judged pernicious, so was it believed that benefits might be imparted; that by a glance the infirm might be cured of their infirmities.

Until later times, various expedients have been resorted to for counteracting fascination, besides those specified by the royal demonologist. The remedy which he alludes to, was practised in the county of Kirkcudbright, not many years ago.* A cross, framed of the elder tree, was affixed to stables and byres by the peasantry, in the commencement of the preceding century, for the same purpose.† Branches of the mountain-ash, decorated with heath and flowers which had been carried thrice around the fires kindled at Beltane, were reared above their own dwellings, to remain until displaced by those of the succeeding season;‡ or a portion of it cut and peeled, and wound around with

* *Heron*. Journey through the Western Counties of Scotland, 1792. vol. ii. p. 228.

† *Trial of George and Lauchlan Rattray*, for stealing a charm, 1705, in MS. It escapes the author's recollection whence he obtained a copy of this trial many years ago, from which he has preserved a few quotations. It is alluded to as "Ashintillie's case," in Lord Royston's notes in MS. on Mackenzie's Treatise on Criminal Law, because the charm was levelled against Spalding of Ashintilly. Not being in the principal record of the Court of Justiciary, the trial may have taken place either in some court, of which no records belonging to that period are extant, or in an inferior judicatory.—*Byre*, Lat. Bovarium: Eng. Cowhouse.

‡ *Macpherson*, Introduction to the History of Great Britain and Ireland, p. 164–166.

a thread, was put on the lintel of the byre, also to avert the influence of an evil eye.* Thus it is probable, that mystical motions, mystical plants, and mystical colours, were all combined in determining the effects of this, the lowest exercise of supernatural malevolence, and the antidotes to it in Scotland.

But in other countries, the same superstition assumes a much more definite shape, under the name of *overlooking*, *eye-biting*, and *fascination*. A certain woman tried at Youghall in Ireland, in the year 1661, for bewitching Mary Langdon, denied the fact, though admitting that she might have *overlooked* her. Between these, she said, there was a great difference; for unless by touching her, she could not have done her any harm; whereon Glanvil, the most credulous of men, remarks, "How overlooking and bewitching are distinguished by this hellish fraternity, I know not."† Two or three centuries since, the Irish spoke of their children and cattle as "eye-bitten, when they fell suddenlie sick."‡ The commendation of either was dreaded, unless repelled by an antidote from invoking a blessing, as was done on children in Scotland, or by spitting on it: and if evil followed the praise of a horse, the Lord's prayer was whispered in the animal's

* *Jamieson Dictionary of the Scottish Language*, v. Roun-tree.

† *Glanvil Sadducismus Triumphans*, p. 319—325.

‡ *Scot Reginald, Discouerie of Witchcraft*, b. iii. chap. 15, p. 64. London 1584, in 4to.

right ear. Old women were invited to restore the health of fascinated horses by their prayers.*

Subsequent to the revolution in Britain, extraordinary credulity in an evil eye, subsisted in the American colonies. The gaze of a child inflicted torment; convulsions followed the look of a dog. It was asserted of one woman, that those affected could not endure her gaze: of another, that the "cast of her eye struck the afflicted people to the ground, whether they saw that cast or no:" and of a third, that her look "laid them for dead." The child was arrested, and the dog was shot.†

Credulity in fascination by the eyes of mankind, has been universal. In distant countries the most deadly consequences are ascribed to the same faculty in some animals as irresistible by others, and especially where birds are attracted to the jaws of the serpent. It has been even insinuated, that in Scotland, creatures of the finny tribe are susceptible of fascination; that fishes on approaching the surface of the sea, remain stationary, until birds, here the enemies, hovering aloft, descend to render them a prey.‡

But when modern travellers assert, that a lion or a tiger will crouch on meeting the glance of man, it

* *Camden, Britannia*, by Gough,—vol. iv. p. 470, quoting J. Good, priest and schoolmaster at Limerick, circ. 1566.

† *Mather, Increase, Cases of Conscience*, p. 27. *Mather Cotton, Wonders of the Invisible World*. p. 45, 51, 54. *Hutchinson's Historical Essay*, p. 79.

‡ *Fea, Present State of the Orkney Islands*, p. 36.

can be only inferred, that firmness daunts ferocity.*

Its effects, however, in other respects, are alike believed and dreaded everywhere, as may be illustrated by numerous examples. Formerly infants were considered very sensible of "irradiations of the eyes." They were reluctantly submitted to the gaze of strangers: and in Spain, an invocation of the Deity was employed to avert the consequences.† At present, in the Spanish colonies, the same follows the commendation of a child, or of a young animal: and there a widow is prone to ascribe the loss of her husband to the evil eye of one of her own sex:‡ Nor have many years elapsed since a young woman was burnt for having set evil eyes on a sick person; and a female relative was obliged to fly on the same accusation.|| In Egypt, the livid hue, the yellow skin, and the emaciated frame of sickly children, is ascribed by the mother to an evil eye:§ the Arabs resort to charms against it, unless a blessing, as in Spain, attends commendation.¶ Those of the northern parts of Africa, dread the admiration of a child, or of any thing precious, as tending to induce calamity on the parents.** Near Tri-

* Thomson Travels in Southern Africa, vol. ii. p. 381. App. No. 2.

† Aubrey, Miscellanies, chap. xx. p. 28. London, 1696, in 12mo.

‡ Stevenson Residence in South America, vol. i. p. 293.

|| Caldcleugh Travels, 1819-21. vol. i. p. 73.

§ Volney, Voyage en Syrie et en Egypte, t. i. ch. 17. § 2. p. 223.

¶ Pococke, Description of the East. vol. 1. p. 181.

** Lyon, Travels in Northern Africa, p. 52.

poli, the death of one was charged to the steadfast gaze of a stranger, who departed after admiring its beauty on the preceding day, as it lay in the cradle:*. The nurse will hold it aloof from Christians, as if dreading more than its mother, "the effects of their embracing or looking on it."† The spectator of an extravagant ceremony in Ceylon, ascribed a fatal accident befalling a devotee, to the evil eye of a stander by, whom English officers rescued with difficulty from their fury.‡ A modern physician describes the singular apprehensions of an evil eye, as directed particularly towards children and handsome women, now subsisting among the Greeks, Turks, and Jews of the islands of the Archipelago and the neighbourhood. By common consent, when the goodness or the beauty of any object is commended, "God preserve it," is expressed in one or other language; and the Greeks blow a little of the saliva upon it, as an antidote. Both the priest and the physician are called to relieve the suffering patient; but priority is always given to the attentions of the former.||

All the sentiments prevalent now, regarding the influence of an evil eye, or the effect of fascination, have been derived from the highest antiquity. The voice of the charmer is celebrated in sacred writ. Aristotle

* *Blaquiere* Letters from the Mediterranean, vol. ii. p. 70.

† *Letters from Tripoli*, p. 168.

‡ *Cordiner*, Description of Ceylon, vol. i. p. 142.

|| *Zallony*, Voyage a Tine, p. 155—157.

speaks of a woman of Thessaly who attracted a poisonous serpent within a magical circle drawn around her, where it became lifeless.* The faculties of the modern *Psylli* or charmers are yet in great repute. *Vegetius* describes an animal as fascinated when it is dull, walks heavily, and becomes emaciated.†

Credulity has been always prepared to admit the faculty and the fact of fascination, with little solicitude about the means whereby such a remarkable effect could be operated. *Plutarch* engages in a question "Concerning those who are said to fascinate," and concludes with allowing such a power. "It is known," he says, "that friends and servants have fascinating eyes; and even fathers, to whose protracted gaze mothers will not expose their children."‡ The ancient Pagans, and the early Christians seem to have contemplated it as among the vices of the heart, originating in envy; and thence malevolence, which proved injurious by the look.|| At this day it is affirmed, that passengers in the Levant are invited by the meanest to partake of his fare; nor does any one eat publicly in a certain remote town of Africa, "lest he be observed by a hungry man who envies the morsel."§ Fascination has been usually considered an emanation of the eye, which

* *Aristoteles* De Mirabil., in fine, ap. Opera, t. i. p. 737.

† *Vegetius*, *Artis Veterinariæ*, Lib. iii. c. 74.

‡ *Plutarch*, *Symposiacon*, Quæst. 7. ap. Opera, t. ii. p. 682.

|| *Mark*, chap. vii. ver. 21, 22.

§ *Burckhardt*, *Travels in Nubia* "of Shendy," p. 291.

strikes infection to the heart ; and although originating by the touch, or by the breath, its effects are consummated by the eye.* Some modern superstitions ascribe it to demoniac agency—to a personified though invisible spirit ;† and hence, among the remedies against it, several of those formerly believed the most efficacious for the expulsion of demons, such as exorcism, consecrated water, and fumigation, are still employed.‡

But is there truly any rational foundation for that confidence which has been universally expressed in the subsistence of fascination ? Does the presence of an object unseen, produce an irresistible impression ? or, does it reside in the imagination only ?

This enquiry might lead to interesting disquisitions. Perhaps, if fascination exists, its principle must be sought in some natural cause operating in such a manner on the person, as to occasion disturbance of the mind.—Doubtless, certain sensations originate from the presence of objects which never meet the eye. Our senses are not sufficiently refined to detect, of themselves, the elements, finding an invisible channel of transmission, though they may be discovered and arrested by foreign auxiliaries. Does not infection spread through the medium of a vehicle absolutely invisible, and after a

* *Scot*, *Discouerie*, p. 485. *Aubrey Miscellanies*, ch. xx. p. 147.

Mather, *Cases of Conscience*, p. 232, [from *Baldwin Cases of Conscience*, p. 621.]

† *Hobhouse*, *Journey through Albania*, Letter 31. vol. i. p. 507.

‡ *Zallony*, *ut sup.* p. 155.

mode unknown and imperceptible by the most delicate sense? The sight, the hearing, and the feeling, may be rendered more acute: they may become obtuse; all the faculties may be lulled in languor; and the sleep of death extinguish them for ever, while the agent escapes the keenest search of human scrutiny.

One region is salubrious to the person and exhilarating to the mind; yet the whole system droops and decays in another. The natives of the mountains differ from those of the plains, while those residing amidst woods and marshes resemble neither.

Pestilence is borne on the winds.*

* *Hippocrates* esteemed the north wind the most salubrious, and the south wind the reverse, apparently in regard to his own residence, the island of Cos, or the neighbourhood, towards the northern part of the Mediterranean Sea. *De Morbo Sacro,—de Morbis Vulgaribus*. In the city of Edinburgh, where the author of these pages resides usually, distempers are almost invariably concomitant on a north wind, especially if cold or protracted; as he has remarked for many years; and they seem dependent on the wind more than on the season. This fact was demonstrated very evidently in the spring of 1833, when an universal epidemic prevailed, after the wind had remained unusually steady in the north.

An old English proverb, characterizes

“The wind from north-est,

Neyther good for man nor beast.”

Teonge Diary, 1675, p. 25.

The members of the medical faculty in Edinburgh, consider the east wind the more pernicious, but perhaps they will find the reverse on attending to the effects of the north wind.

At certain seasons, penetrating emanations from the animal and vegetable world occupy the atmosphere, surely for the conservative or destructive designs of nature. The reciprocal influence of living beings on each other, though far asunder, is decided, though the medium of communication be unknown; domesticated animals of prey, and those employed in field sports, illustrate to mankind in society, what is advancing constantly in the natural state. Thus, quadrupeds, birds, even insects, seem to be paralyzed for the moment by some hidden external impression, never to be discovered but by the demonstration of its effects; for the means of detection are not enjoyed by man. Whether it be in stimulating effluvia, whether in a narcotic vapour, or in some other quality indescribable, nothing is established better, than the transmission of impressions through invisible means.

Sympathy and antipathy, so familiar by name, yet so little understood, are alike inexplicable. If the attraction and repulsion of inanimate matter yet elude explanation, it may be safe to conclude, that the combination of physics and ethics have been insufficiently appreciated, in hypotheses on the cause of sympathetic affections.

It is common, in this country, for one to exclaim, when shuddering involuntarily, that a human footstep crosses his grave. On the continent of Europe, a similar impression, whereby mankind are struck with extraordinary perturbation, has been ascribed to the

glance or the vicinity of a murderer. This is defined *perculsio ex homicidæ præsentia aborta*, or *man-slacht*, in the vernacular dialect of Friseland and Westphalia, to which it was more peculiar. Instead of analysing its precise nature, the source of it was sought in the machinations of Satan.* The author has not heard any example of the subsistence of the like in Scotland.

Fascinatorious Illusions.—A magician who perverted the vision of a multitude, assembled to witness an exhibition of his art, in presence of William the Scottish king, was defeated,—simply by a priest reciting a passage from the Evangelists.†

The modern juggler not only draws off a liquor different, according to our choice, from the same reservoir, but it undergoes a permutation of colour; nay, it evaporates from before our view. The substitution of fluids, and the permutation of colours, are no new contrivance. Saint Columba, on arriving in Britain, converted water to wine.‡ Marcus, a magician, who obtained many proselytes, especially of the female sex, filled a larger cup, even to overflowing, from one smaller;|| on preparing certain white cups, he converted one

* *Deusingius*, de Morbo Man-slacht, ap. Fascic. Dissertat. Select. sect. ii. p. 63—103.

† *Fordun*, Scotichronicon [A.D. 1189—1214], lib. viii. c. 79.

‡ *Cuminus*, in vita Columbæ, c. iv. [A.D. 570.] ap. Pinkerton, Vitæ Sanctorum, p. 29.

|| *Irenæus*, contra Hereses, lib. i. c. 89.

to red, and another to a green colour, by means of verses.*

Optical illusions are equally the work of nature and of art; they subsist in a healthy or in a morbid state: the crimson of the rose appears green to the eye, or shadows flit around the couch of the patient.

Spectres are evoked nightly on the stage; the ruddy glow of health is converted to a ghastly hue, by the simplest process. The incredulous are disposed to stigmatize as impostors those who have seemed to overstep the boundaries of the truth in marvellous description. But it is probable that they spoke conscientiously, though deluded by their senses.

Michael Sicydites, of old, could array troops of demons before the beholder; or he could change the true appearance of objects. Descrying a bark laden with pottery, from a lofty station, he warned his comrades that the mariners should destroy the whole as it approached: they did so, for the eyes of the master being fascinated, he believed that the utensils composing his cargo were converted to so many serpents. The emperor Manuel Comnenus punished the sorcerer.† It is related, that some one suspected of supernatural faculties having been condemned, the eager spectators were struck with horror on discovering an ass suspended, instead of the culprit, from the tree.

* *Nicetas, Choniates, Thesaurus Orthodoxei fidei, lib. iv. c. 5.*

† *Nicetas, Choniates, Historia Byzantina, lib. iv. p. 97.*

How many deceptions of jugglers are calculated to delude the senses, even of those on their guard, in exhibiting the innocent “amusements of science and the arts!” Reginald Scot presents a delineation and description, not only of “how to thrust a knife through your arme, and to cut halfe your nose asunder;” but he shews how “to cut off one’s head and to laie it in a platter,” for an illusion.*

History abounds with enactments against the exercise of supernatural faculties. The penitential canons of the Roman Catholic Church imposed certain periods of abstinence on those who fascinated by words.† Fascination was comprehended as a capital offence in the laws of England against sorcery, promulgated from an early date, until the union with the crown of Scotland. But in later statutes its definition is not explicit; probably from the legislators beginning to be more perplexed about it themselves: one sentence includes it with the injuries usually ascribed to sorcery: by another it seems to be held the faculty of divination. Nothing of all this appears in the Scottish code.

§ II.—*Invocation*.—If health and prosperity crown the invocations of the afflicted, can they conceive that their address to the Deity has been vain? Yet, instead of supplicating the favour of Providence only,—man, ever inconsistent—ever credulous in his folly, has not

* Scot, *Discouerie*, b. xiii. ch. 34. p. 352.

† Thiers, *Traité des Superstitions*, t. i. p. 442, 443.

merely sought the meaner aid of his fellows, as if they were endowed with supernatural powers; or he has offered prayers to demons; but with unparalleled weakness, he has confided in the benefit to follow the simple enunciation of his own expressions; nay, whether he could assign any definite sense to them or not.

The influence of these was long and keenly contested,—"ex homine remediorum primum, maximæ quæstionis et semper incertæ est, valeantne aliquid verba et incantamenta carminum."* Afterwards it was received, that fascination might be accomplished either by looks or words;† and, amidst nice and critical disquisitions, the result of general conclusions held, That, whether from the energy of the air inspired for utterance; whether from their arrangement and association,—from the predominance of the stars,—or from the power of the spirit,—their effect proved unquestionable.‡

Both ancients and moderns assumed, that by incantation, or certain words arranged in a metrical form, the sorcerer could evolve and hold converse with spiritual beings; that tempests could be excited, serpents arrested, diseases cured, locks opened, secrets discovered, affection induced, and numberless other inci-

* *Pliny*, Hist. Nat. lib. xxviii. c. 3. "It has been always disputed and doubtful whether words, and the enunciation of verses, are of any avail among human remedies."

† *Boissardus* de Divinatione et Magicis Præstigiis, c. v. p. 50.

‡ *Crespet*, de la hayne de Satan contre l'homme, fol. 159.

dents brought to pass against the regular course of nature.*

Undoubtedly some peculiarities distinguished the practice, as adopted in different countries; for it is not improbable, that in descending from higher sources, corruptions have vitiated what was designed for more pure and perfect composition.

Many of the rhythmical invocations known in Scotland, as well as those in simple prosaic form, have evidently originated from the reputed virtue of verses among the ancients; and all being of an early date, some are intermixed with the formula of the Roman Catholic ritual. Rude examples illustrate the fact: Elspeth Reoch was supernaturally instructed to cure distempers, by resting on her right knee while pulling a certain herb "betuix her mid finger and thombe, and saying of, In Nomine Patris, Filii et Spiritus Sancti."†

A charm for curing cattle, which appears in prosaic form in the record, may be resolved thus:

"I charge thee for arrowschot,
For doorschot, for wombschot,
For eyeschot, for tungschote,
For leverschote, for lungschote,
For hertschote,—all the maist:

In the name of the Father, the Sone, and Haly Gaist.

* *Schottus*, *Magia Universalis*, Part 11. lib. vi. c. 2. p. 206. All etymologists derive incantation from the Latin *cantare*.

† Trial of Elspeth Reoch, 12 March 1616. *Rec. Ork.* 63. v. "The herb callit melefour."

To wend out of flesch and bane,

In to sek and stane :

In the name of the Father, the Sone, and Haly Gaist. Amen."*

This is a conjuration, charging the disease in name of the Trinity, to quit an animate, and to enter an inanimate substance.

A cure is alleged to have been operated by one laying his hand on a distempered horse, and uttering,—

"Thrie bitters hes the bitt

In the tung, the eye, the hart,—that's worst

Other thrie, thy beit mon be

In the name of the Father, Son, and Holie Ghost."†

The discrimination of those, does not seem very acute, who, in definition, say, "a charme is a spell or verse consisting of strange words, used as a signe or watch-word to the devil, to cause him to do wonders."‡ The preceding and the following are intended alike as pious exercises.

Two persons, husband and wife, confessed that they sometimes used "holy words for healing of shotts and sores," as :

* Trial of Bartie Paterson, 18 Dec. 1607. *Rec. Just. Schote*, i.e. distemper; *sek* or *sok*, i.e. earth.

† *Halyrudhous* Kirk Session Register in MS. v. iv. 6 April 1641, William Lason, *beit*—help.

‡ *Perkins* Discourse of Witchcraft, ch. iv. p. 130. Cambridge 1608 in 12.

Thir sairis are risen thro' God's work,
 And must be laid through God's help,
 The mother Mary and her dear Son
 Lay thir sair[is] that are begun.*

Such invocations were designed prayers—a more appropriate name than enchantment. A woman was accused of imposing sickness on a man in Newburgh, and of “taking af the same sieknes, be repeiting thryse of certaine wordis quhilk scho termet prayeris.”†

The invocation interrupted became abortive. Every process indeed wherein the sorcerer embarked, had to be conducted regularly to a close through all its forms, otherwise its efficacy failed. Agnes Sampson was convicted of curing “the auld ladie Hillabertoun, be her develisch prayers;” though she declared to the patient's daughter, that she could not “helpe the ladie, in respect that her prayer stopit,” for which she expressed her regret. If she stopped once, the patient was bewitched; if twice, it was a fatal prognostication,—the distemper would prove mortal.

Two of these rhythmical invocations are preserved.

I trow in Almychtie God, that wrocht
 Baith heavin and erth, and all of nocht;
 In to his deare Sone Chryste Jesus,
 Into that myghtie Lord I trow,
 Wes gottin of the Haly Gaist,

* *Perth Kirk Session Register*, 21 May 1632. *Scott Extracts in MS.*

† *Trial of Grissell Gairdner*, 7 Sept. 1610. *Rec. Just.*

Borne of the Virgin Marie ;
 Stoppit to heavin that all weil than,
 And sittis att his Faderis rycht hand.
 He baid us cum, and therto [dome],
 Bayth quick and deid, as he thoct [quhome].
 I trow als in the Haly Gaist ;
 In haly kirk, my hoip is maist,
 That holy schip quhair hallowaris winnis,
 To ask forgevenes of my sinnis,
 And syne to ryis in flesh and bane
 The lyffe that nevir mair hes gane.
 Trow sayis, Lord lovit mot ye be,
 That formd and maid man kynd of me.
 Thou coft me on the aly croce,
 And hent me body, saull, and voce,
 And ordanit me to heavenis blis ;
 Quhairfoir, I thank ye, Lord, of this ;
 And all your hallowaris lovit be ;
 To pray to thame, to pray to me ;
 And keip me fra that felloun fae,
 And frome the syn that saull wald slay.
 Thou, Lord, for thy bytter passioun,
 To keip me from syn and warldlie schame,
 And endles damnatioun.
 Grant me the ioy newir wilbe gane,
 Sweit Jesus Cristus. Amen.

Probably this preceded some medicinal application,
 which the following verses accompanied :

All kindis of illis that ewir may be,
 In Chrystis name I coniure ye,

I coniure ye baith mair and les
 With all the vertewis of the mes ;
 And rycht sa be the naillis sa,
 That haillit Jesus and na ma ;
 And rycht sa be the samin blude,
 That raikit owir the ruithfull rude ;
 Furth of the flesh and of the bane,
 And in the eird and in the stane,
 I coniure ye in Godis name."*

Cotemporary historians describe Agnes Sampson as a renowned mid-wife, "commonly called the wise wife of Keith ; a woman not of the low or ignorant sort of witches, but matron like, grave and settled in her answers, which were all to some purpose."† Several traditions, though scarcely any sufficiently definite to be cited, are yet preserved regarding her supernatural faculties in the parish of Keith, which is within thirteen or fourteen miles of Edinburgh.

Perhaps the application of such metrical charms was almost totally indiscriminate, as of general efficacy, without the charmer being capable of interpreting them : nor are they explicit at this day, either from original errors or from the imperfections of manu-

* Trial of Agnes Sampson in Nethir Keith, 27 Jan. 1590. *Rec. Just.* It is evident that a copy of this trial, taken from the written record, must have been communicated to *Glanvil*. *Sadducismus Triumphatus*, p. 397. The words within brackets are uncertain.

† *Melville Memoirs*, p. 395. *Spotswood, History of Scotland*, p. 383.

scripts. One, in these words, was employed for relief of the distempered or bewitched.

“ Our Lord to hunting red,

His sooll soot sled ;

Doun he lighted,

His sool sot righted ;

Blod to blod,

Shenew to shenew.

To the other sent in God's name,

In name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.”*

Such were universally disseminated, insomuch that in places very remote, charms of precisely the same import appear under some modification. The minister of Westray's servant, applied to Christian Gow to cure his master's horse, who “ vsit this charme.”

Thrie thinges hath the forspokin,

Heart, tung, and eye, almost ;

Thrie thinges sall the mend agane

Father, Sone, and Holie Ghost.†

The invocation might be of the simplest nature. John Macwilliam merely said of the distempered, “ God restore you to your health ;”‡ and another, “ God

* *St Cuthbert's Kirk Session Register*, 9 Nov. 1643. Margaret Fischar in Weardie, vol. 1595—1643. in MS. *Red*—rode ; *sooll soot*—stirrup ? *sled*—slipped ; *shenew*—sinnew.

† Trial of Christian Gow, 24 Ap. 1624, *Rec. Ork.* f. 68. v.

‡ Trial of John Macwilliam, 5. 8. Feb. 1656, *Abstract of the Books of Adjournal*, in MS. Advocate's Library, M. 5. 14. The original re-

send you your health.”* Perhaps it was seldom unaccompanied by ceremonies.

Medicinal herbs were gathered before sunrise, because certain consequences attended the presence or absence of that luminary; and it is likely that invocations were employed, as by Elspeth Reoch. Aleson Peirsoun saw “the guid nychtbours makand thair sawis with panis and fyres, and gadderit thair herbis befor the sone rysing as scho did.”† Among various remedies prescribed “for the trymblyng feveris,” by Katherine Oswald, one related to plucking up a nettle by the root, three successive mornings, before sunrise.‡ Midsummer was the chosen period of collection, which may be traced to a Pagan superstition, connected with the relative position of the sun in the firmament.

On such occasions, a metrical invocation was employed in the neighbouring country.

cord, 1655–1661, is lost. From an index preserved in the justiciary office, it may have been extant in the year 1785, unless this index be merely the copy of one of an earlier date, if such then existed. Three abstracts of the records of the court of justiciary belong to the advocate's library; two of which correspond. An abstract more copious, in three volumes in folio, with several printed papers interspersed, is among the Collections of the Society of Scottish Antiquaries.

* *Perth K.S.R.* ut sup. 9 July 1618. Bessie Wright.

† Trial of Alesoun Peirsoun, 28 May 1588,—*Rec. Just. Guid nychtbouris*—Good neighbours, i.e. fairies.

‡ Trial of Katherine Oswald, 11 Nov. 1629.—*Rec. Just. Trymblyng feveris*, i.e. ague, *St Cuthbert's K.S.R.* 19 March, 15 April, 1657, Jonet Anderson.

Haile be thou holie hearbe,
 Growing on the ground ;
 All in the mount Caluarie
 First wert thou found.
 Thou art good for manie a sore,
 And healest manie a wound ;
 In the name of sweet Jesus,
 I take thee from the ground.*

Charms were consummated by words. Katherine Oswald defended herself from the deadly charge of witchcraft, on the plea, that no words such as then used, were uttered : that her prescription could not be deemed sorcery, though it might be considered a superstition. That a similar remedy was recommended—"for recepe of the eie called the styen,"—yet being unsuccessful, no one called it witchcraft. It was argued likewise, against an accusation inferring capital punishment, that no "speiches utterit," were alleged.†

But invocations fell under the same denunciations that were levelled against incantation, in imitation of ancient practice. That of Agnes Sampson is designed "her incantation," and "hir devilisch prayer," indiscriminately. It became an injunction to investigate whether the commencement of a work was accompanied with any magical art,—whether throughout a certain foreign district, any woman, in weaving,

* *Scot, Discouerie*, b. xiii. c. 14. p. 245.

† Trial of Isobell Young, 4 Feb. 1629.—*Rec. Just.*

or in knitting, used any expressions, unless in the name of God.* The formula of an intercession with the Deity, through the medium of saints, as sanctioned by the church, is preserved in various instances, though of little interest.† An old woman wont to attempt assuaging fever by verses, was put to death by the emperor Valens, after she had been called to cure his daughter by his own consent:‡ and Leo declared incantation for preserving health, or for averting the injury of agricultural products, a capital offence.¶

But the pious were always confident in the efficacy of an appeal to the Deity. Among the Pagan nations, Lucian introduces one expressing himself thus: "You seem to me, to deny the gods, if you do not believe that cures can be operated by Divine names."§ Yet the enunciation of these names in a foreign language, impaired their efficacy: "therefore," says Origen, "their true virtue consists in the mystical quality of the word itself."¶

* *Pegna, Praxis Inquisitorum*, lib. i. c. ii., quoting *Burchardus*. § xviii. in MS.

† *Proprium Sanctorum*, fol. xlv. v. Thus of St Voloc: Deus qui predicationem beati Voloci confessoris tui atque pontificis populum in tenebris ambulanti cultu idolorum convertisti, presta ut pia ejus intercessione omnium nostrum corda ad cultum vere religionis convertantur,—ap. *Breviarium, Aberdonense*, tom. i. Edinburgi 1510, in 12mo.

‡ *Ammianus Marcellinus*, lib. xxi x.

¶ *Novellæ Leonis*, Imperat. Constit. 65. De Incantatoria pœna.

§ *Lucianus*, Philopseudes, § 10. ap. opera, t. iii. p. 38.

¶ *Origenes*, Contra Celsum, Lib. i. p. 20.

§ III.—*Maledictions*.—As good is expected from invocation, so are imprecations designed for the vehicle of evil. But who can pretend to record the infinite and varied reproach, contrived by the folly, the passions, and the malevolence of mankind? Too evidently is the vicious intent spoken where it cannot be acted. The baseness of the heart is betrayed by the tongue. It is said that the language of a race of north-eastern islanders, is free of terms of vituperation; but such an exuberance of resentment has ever disfigured the speech of the western world, that one era looks in vain for the meaning of those expressions, which another visited even with capital punishment. They have become obsolete or unintelligible.

A pagan priest,—of worthy example,—could not be induced to pronounce a formal execration; his province, he said, being prayer, not malediction.* Yet a regular form of cursing, whereby the Deity is invited to blast his creatures—to consign his own works to perdition, has been incorporated with the ceremonies of the christian church throughout Europe. Is not the arrogant pretension of mankind, thus to influence Heaven merely by an association of words, abominable?

The object of execration pined, from credulity in necromantic powers, without any visible agent:

Mens hausti nulla sanie polluta veneni

Excantata perit. LUCAN *Pharsalia Lib. vi. v. 457.*

* *Plutarch Quæstiones Romanæ. ap. Oper. t. 11. p. 275.*

This was a principle admitted in the Roman law, magical muttering might destroy mankind. “Eadem lege et venifici capite damnantur, qui artibus odiosis tam venenis quam susurris magicis homines occiderunt.”* Nor was it rejected by the credulity of other countries: for it seems to have been commonly admitted, that “some doe never attempt nor enterprize a diabolically execution, but with murmurings, whisperings, and secret sounds and words heard grumbling in their mouths.”†

The English soldiers held the incantations of Joan of Arc in such terror, that, although on their own side of the channel, they deserted from the army, or refused to join it.‡

In Scotland, menaces and imprecations were deemed alike conclusive; whence the death of sheep and cattle was ascribed to one having “prayit evill;”§ thus giving the utmost latitude to accusation. A woman was called the author of the death of some one’s death, who refused lodging at Christmas, said, “it would be weill

* *Institution*: Lib. iv. de Pub. Jud. § 5. referring to the Lex Cornelia.

† *Cotta*, infallible, true and assured witch, p. 112.

‡ 1 *De proclamationibus contra Capitaneos et Soldarios tergiversantes, incantationibus Puellæ terrificatos*, 3 Maii 1430.

2 *De Fugitivis ab exercitu, quos terriculamenta Puellæ exanimaverunt arrestandis*, 12 Dec. 1430. Ap. *Rymer Fœdera*, t. x. p. 459, 472.

§ Trial of William Gude, 13 June 1616. *Rec. Ork.* f. 63. v. Trial of Jonet Thomeson *alias* Grebok, 7 Feb. 1643. *Ibid.* f. 255. r.

if the gudeman of that hous sould make ane other yule banket." He died in fifteen days.*

The artful took advantage of the apprehension of their neighbours, so that an empiric summoned to prescribe for a patient, did not scruple to threaten, "if he war nocht contentit for his curing of him, he suld leif him in als evill estait as he fand him."†

The words of the passionate, more definite if followed by noxious incidents, were deemed the immediate precursors of their deeds. Issobel Grierson being slandered of infecting another, went again to her house, "and spak mony devillisch and horribill wordis, saying to hir—The faggotis of hell lycht on the, and hellis caldrane may thow seith in; and with thais and other the lyke devillisch speiches scho past away."‡ What an uncouth vocabulary would now appear in the numberless oaths and execrations, at length resolving into so many futile interjections. But those designing them as the vehicle of mischief, had to atone even with life for their intemperance.

Elsbeth Cursetter refused access to the house of a man in Birsay "sat down befor the dure, and said, 'ill might they all thryve, and ill might they speid:' and within 14 dayes thairefter, his best horse fell

* Trial of Jonet Rendall, 11 Nov. 1629. *Rec. Ork.* f. 222. v. *Yule banket*—christmas feast.

† *Halyrudhous Kirk Session Register*, v. 11. 28 Nov. 1617: James Adamson.

‡ Trial of Issobell Grierson, 10 March 1607. *Rec. Just.*

in that same place quhair scho sat, and brack all his bones, and his thie bone, gaid throw his bowells to the vther syd of him.”*

Jonka Dyneis, offended with one named Olave, “fell out in most vyle cursingis and blasphemous exclamatiounis, saying, That within few dayis his bones sould be raiking about the bankis; and sa, within ane short space thairefter he perished be sey, be hir witchcraft and devilrie.” Next, addressing his mother,—“gat Geelis ane kneel to hir hairt, quhen hir sone Ola dyit! within few dayis she sall get ane vthir: and so within fourtein dayis thairefter hir vthir sone Mans perished be sey.”†

The ignorant and superstitious, incapable of accounting for unexpected incidents, while earnest to trace them to a definite source, looked no farther than to the presumed malevolence of their neighbours. Hence ensued such preposterous conclusions, enforced by a constrained interpretation of their words, that it is surprising how they could be countenanced by the better informed of the age, and especially by lawyers, whose superior education should have taught them what was consistent with reason.

Mawse Gourlay, spouse of Andrew Wilson, quarrelling with Margaret Robertson, Agnes Finnie’s daughter, called her “ane witche’s get, to the quhilk dis-

* Trial of Elspeth Cursetter, 29 May 1629. *Rec. Ork.* f. 50. v.

† Trial of Jonka Dyneis, 2 Oct. 1616. *Rec. Shet.* f. 33. v. *Bankis*—a portion of the shore.

dainefull word,—Margaret Robertson, in grit furie and raidge, maid this answer—‘ Gif I be ane witche’s get, the devill ryve the saull out of ye befoir I come again :’ according to the quhilk crewall and devillische imprecatione,—Andro Wilsone,—within aucht houris thereftir, be your sorcerie and witchcraft practeizet be yow wpone him, be your dochteris instigatione,—became frenatik, and ran stark mad, his eyis standing out in his head in maist feirfull and terrible maner,—evir uttering thir wordis, as his ordiner and continuall speiches pronuncit in that his madnes, ‘ the devill ryve the saule out of me ! ’ ”*

Malice propense in prescience of evil, was alleged as an aggravation of guilt. A culprit having hurt the face of a woman with a snow ball, she threatened him —“ Yow sall rew that, for I will sie the hanged and make ane shamfull end : conform to the which threatening,” he, “ within the space of 9 yeires therafter, wes hanged at Dalkeith ; and as he was goeing throw the street to the place of executione, yow cryed out, ‘ Is it not treuth that I spoke of him ; their wes nevir any that wronged me, but I got a seing mends of them,’—whairby your sorcerie and witchcraft appeired, ather in procuring, or at leist foirseing and foirtelling” his death.†

* Trial of Agnes Finnie, 11 Dec. 1644. *Rec. Just.* The style of an indictment, as addressed to the accused, and its abbreviation, must be kept in remembrance.

† Trial of Jonet Cock, 10 Sep. *ut sup.*

Christian Porteous "coming over the style, her kitt negligently fell off her heid" on another, who exclaimed, "God let her never gett a good marriage, and lett her hands doe the never a better turne thereafter." The offender was blown over in consequence of these malevolent anticipations, lost the power of her hand, then of her whole body, and died distracted.*

Bleeding at the Touch.—Menaces, as testifying the desire of mischief, were rated as equivalent to imprecations; the proper distinction between divine and human vengeance not being sufficiently understood. Both produced a fatal revulsion on the intemperate. The indictment of Beatrix Leslie states, that one of two damsels, coal-bearers, "letting ane coall fall, killed your catt. Therefter, the tuo damsells having cast away your creill with coalls, yow threatened them that yow wold sie ane ill sight vpon them befoir eight dayes past; and so it fell out, that be your sorcerie and witchcraft, befoir the expiring of eight days, according to your threattening, they were both killed in the coall pitt, and none els hurt bot they: albeit, divers others wer verry neir hand: as also incontinent, after yow came and tuched them, they did both gush out in blood."

By a superstition, dangerous to the innocent, which prevailed long in Scotland, as in all European countries, this was assumed as a test of guilt in occult cases:—Were evidence defective, amidst pregnant presump-

* Trial of Isobell Ramsay, 20 Aug. 1661.—*Rec. Just.*

tions, and doubts still hovering over the truth, if the corpse bled either at the mouth or nose, on the approach of the suspected assassin, it proved his guilt. Accordingly, when in this instance the accused touched the bodies of the deceased, "they both bled, one behind the lug, and the vther at the nose;" and witnesses bore testimony "that they bled not," though others touched them.*

But sometimes the innocent, conscious of their own integrity, underwent the test fearlessly, to be freed of suspicion; for it is they who repose the greatest confidence in the protection of heaven.—If blood issued forth, it was accepted as a divine revelation of guilt. Andrew Smeaton having been brought to trial for the murder of a man found dead in the moss of Belnalow, a certificate by several persons was offered in defence, testifying, that the deceased "being convoyed frome the said moss, with ane gritt frequencie and assemblie of people, to his burieall place, in the kirke yaird of Foullis; according to an ancient custome, he was tuiched and handled be ane and vther, thair present, giff be bleeding as ane infallible signe and taikin, the said murthour myght be cognosced. Amongis the rest, the said Andro Smeatoun, at the desyre of the laird of Aber-cairnie, his maister, nocht only tuiched him simplie, bot lifted him vp and imbraced him in his airmes, and willinglie offerit to remane ane space in grave with him,

* Trial of Beatrix Leslie, 3 Aug. 1661.—*Rec. Just.* *Felled*, killed—*creill*, basket—*lug*, ear.

and to do all thingis possible as he sould be requyrit, for pruiſ and evidence of his innocencie of the ſaid cryme: but we could persive nor find na appearance nor argument of any guiltiness in him thair of.”*

Four men having been drowned during fair weather, a woman suspected of changing herself to a porpoise, that she might overset their boat, was desired to touch their bodies some days subsequently. One “bled at the collir bane,” the other “in the hand and fingers; gushing out bluid thairat, to the great admiratione of the beholders, and revelation of the judgment of the Almychtie.”†

When a suspected parricide took the hand of his deceased father, blood issued from the nose, though none had appeared on the touch of the widow. He acknowledged his crime, and suffered for it. Here the test failed at first, which rendered the fact the more impressive, especially from a subsisting prejudice, that blood did not issue on the touch, within twenty-four hours of death.‡

Though receiving implicit confidence in a credulous age, this was a formidable and precarious test; one which the least discerning can discover, might betray the innocent, and release the guilty. Great reluctance, therefore, was sometimes testified in submit-

* Trial of Andro Smeatoun, 3 June 1636.—*Rec. Just.*

† Trial of Marion Peebles *alias* Pardoun, 1644, ap. *Hibbert*, Description of the Shetland Islands, p. 599.

‡ *Lamont Chronicle of Fife*, p. 189.

ting to it. A man and his sister were at variance : he died suddenly, and his body was found in his own house naked, with a wound on the face, but bloodless. " Althoe many of the nychtbours in the toun came into the hous to sie the dead corps, yett schoe never offered to come ; howbeit hir dwelling was nixt adjacent ther-to : n or had scho soe mutch as any seiming grieff for his death. But the minister and ballifes of the toun taking great suspitione of her, in respect of her cariadge, commanded that schoe sould be brought in. But when schoe come, schoe come trembling all the way to the hous, schoe refused to come nigh to the corps, or to tuitche, saying, that schoe never tuiched a dead corps in hir life. But being earnestlie entreated by the minister and bailliffes, and her brother's friends, who was killed, that scho wold but tuitch the corps softlie, schoe granted to doe it. But befor schoe did it, the sone schyneing in at the hous, schoe exprest herself thus : ' humblie desyring, as the Lord made the sone to schyne and give light into that house, that also he wold give light in discovering that murder : ' and with these woordes, schoe tuitching the wound of the dead man verie softlie, it being whyt and clein, without any spot of blood or the like ; yet, immediatlie while her finger was vpone it, the blood rushed out of it, to the great admiratione of all the beholders, whoe tooke it as ane discoverie of the murther, according to her awne prayer."*

* *Dittay against Christiane Wilsone*, in MS. ap. Bib. Societ. Antiq.

This principle was carried so far, that perhaps Woodrow infers the injustice of a sentence for treason, when observing in his Diary, "Mrs Aikman, Lady Brimlton, tells me, that she was present when Jerriswood's leggs wer taken down to be burryed, after they had hung some time, and they sprang blood."*

In the year 1688, Sir James Standsfield having been found dead in a stream. He was interred precipitately. On exhumation, after resting two days in the grave, his body was partially dissected, and the neck in particular was laid open, in order to ascertain the cause of death. After being well cleansed, blood burst from that side supported by his son Philip, on returning the body to the coffin for a second sepulture—no unlikely consequence of straining the incisions;—and it deeply stained his hand. He was arraigned for parricide; and in the course of the procedure, to obtain conviction, it was argued, that this peculiar incident denoted the disclosure of an occult crime, by the will of Providence.†

The same reasoning is pursued by King James, when attempting to explain a subject alike obscure, "as in a secret murther, if the dead carkasse bee at any time thereafter handled by the murtherer, it will gush out

Scot. This is a precognition or preliminary investigation, regarding an alleged offence, in order to ascertain whether there be sufficient grounds for a criminal trial.

* Woodrow *Analecta*, "Agust 1719," vol. iv. p. 67. in MS.

† *Trial of Philip Standsfield*, 6 Feb. 1688. p. 4, 12, 21, 30.

blood ; as if the blood were crying to the heaven for revenge of the murtherer, God having appointed that secret supernaturall trial of that secret unnaturall crime.”*

The royal author’s sentiments relative to an unlimited interval, are countenanced by an example in the reign of his son, when the minister of the parish testified, that the body of a woman suspected to have been murdered, “being taken up out of the grave, thirty days after the party’s death, and lying on the grass ; and the four defendants being required, each of them touched the dead body, whereupon the brow of the dead, which was before of a livid and carrion colour, began to have a dew or sweat arise on it, which increased by degrees, till the sweat ran down in drops on the face ; the brow turned to a lively and fresh colour : and the deceased opened one of her eyes, and shut it again three several times : she likewise thrust out the ring or marriage finger three times, and pulled it in again, and the finger dropped blood on the grass.”†

The mere presence of the murderer, even without his coming in contact with the deceased, was thought effectual ; nor was it necessary that actual violence should have destroyed life. Janet Rendall was sent for by a man, who suspected she had bewitched him,

* *King James Dæmonologie*, part iii. c. 6. p. 136, ap. Works in folio.

† *Gentleman’s Magazine*, vol. i. for 1731, p. 395. The prosecution was by the child of the deceased, against his father, grandmother, aunt, and her husband—the four defendants. The first three were convicted.

but he expired before her arrival—"haueing laid his death on hir. How shoone as she came in, the cors haueing lyin ane guid space, and not haueing bled any, immediatlie bled mutch bluid, as ane suir takin that sho was the authour of his death."*

It is not improbable that the origin of this superstition may be sought in the application of a passage in scripture,—“the voice of thy brother’s blood crieth unto me from the ground,”—and so vehement were the prejudices of our progenitors, that little further evidence of guilt was demanded. What indeed could equal the interposition of the divine decree in pointing out the offender? Yet the truth of the test was disputed among the continental lawyers, as it must have been rejected by all intelligent men; for those who credit marvels, merely because habituated to narratives of them, or because others credit them, are not to be esteemed intelligent men.

Lawyers recommended that the body of the deceased should be presented before the suspected murderer in chains, to discover whether he should manifest any agitation, or whether blood flowed from it before him.†

Scribonius advances his own testimony in corroboration of the success of the test. A nobleman of Arles whom he names, having been mortally wounded, blood burst from the wound and from the nostrils after de-

* Trial of Jonet Rendall, 11 Nov. 1629. *Rec. Ork.* f. 232.

† *Bouglers Praxis Criminis Persequendi*, lib. iv. tit. xvi. p. 295. Rothomagi, 1624, in 12mo.

cease, immediately on approach of the offender.* Hippolytus de Marsiliis declares his incredulity, until a murder was committed by a person unknown, during his magistracy of a town in Italy. He directed the body to be brought to him, and summoned the attendance of all suspected persons. The wounds began to bleed on approach of the real murderer, who soon after confessed the fact.† Matthæus, however, considers the test so fallacious, as to be an insufficient reason for putting one suspected to torture for eliciting the truth.‡ Carpzovius also, another lawyer of repute, relates, that it was established from proof transmitted to his court, that a corpse had bled before an innocent person, though not a drop of blood escaped before the guilty. Nevertheless he had considered the bleeding of a wound or of the nostrils, enough to warrant the application of torture.||

By the custom of Germany, as explained in a learned treatise, the suspected person put two fingers on the face of the deceased, then on the wound, and afterwards on the navel, in presence of a priest who adjured him to appeal to Heaven.¶

* Scribonius *Physiologia Sagarum*, f. 123.

† Hippolytus de Marsiliis *Practica Rerum Criminalium*: sect. *Diligenter*, § 181.

‡ Matthæus de Criminibus ad, lib. xlviii. Dig. Comment. tit. xvi. c. 3. § 12.

|| Carpzovius *Rerum Criminalium*, part. iii. quæst. 122. § 31, 37.

¶ Feltman de Cadavere Inspiciendo, cap. lix. Groenninge 1673, in 4to.

Murder is, in itself, so horrible and atrocious a crime, that no wonder mankind are willing to believe, on the slightest grounds, the reprobation of it by revelation of the Divinity.

To return :—It was not uncommon for the timorous valetudinarian to ascribe apprehended destiny to maledictions: and if he died, the survivors readily fixed on some suspected or obnoxious individual, as the author of his fate.

When brought under cognisance of the law, their verification was important. Magnus Scottie being questioned regarding his father's necromantic powers, replied, that when "he prayit ill for any that he lovit not, it cam to pas according to his prayir."* A charge against a culprit, concludes, "that by your cursingis and imprecationes, ye wrang and hurt man and beast; quhilk evill is brought to pas by the power and the working of the devill your maister;"† and a jury found that Elspeth Cursetter "gave herself furth to have knowledge to do evill, and quhair ever scho promisit to do evill—evill befell."‡

Invoking Satan was judged equivalent to imprecation. Mary Cunningham, of reputed skill in curing children, when called to one, "satt downe and gaue the barne the pape, and said, 'I give the it in Godis

* Trial of William Scottie, 7 Feb. 1643. *Rec. Ork.* f. 257. v.

† Trial of Katherine Greive *alias* Miller, 29 May 1633. *Rec. Ork.* f. 47. v.

‡ Trial of Elspeth Cursetter or Colsetter, 29 May 1629, *Rec. Ork.* f. 51.

name, bot the devill give the good of it.' A visitor of the child, on taking her departure, said, 'God be with yow!' and the wife 'answering, The devill be with yow!' she soon 'tooke a feare and trembling, and lay downe sicke on the Thursday therafter.'"*

The Irish had one kind of sorcerers called "eye-biters," who could "rime either man or beast to death."† Others more innocent were content, by a metrical charm, to transfer their neighbour's property to their own favourites, as was done by Lady Alice Kettle, murmuring along with a sacrifice,

To the house of William, my sonne,
Hye all the wealth of Kilkenny towne.‡

Among the South Sea Islanders an effectual execration is believed to be conveyed by a long metrical series of maledictions, seriously and malevolently uttered.§

In the east also, incantatory maledictions are heard with terror, from belief of their inevitable consequences.¶

It is this credulity which restrains Bodin from writ-

* *Halyrudhous Kirk Session Register*, 26 Oct. 1647. v. iv. The Rev. Dr Gilchrist has been particularly instrumental in promoting the author's more convenient access to this series of curious records.

† *Scot, Discouerie*, b. iii. ch. 15. p. 64.

‡ *Campion, Historie of Ireland*, ad an. 1321, ch. 5. *Annals of Ireland*, ap. *Camden Britannia*, by Gough, v. iv. p. 488.

§ *Mariner, Account of the Tonga Islands*, v. 11. p. 238.

¶ *Forbes, Oriental Memoirs*, v. 111. p. 368.

ing certain words, as if afraid of their magical operation in unguarded speech. Galen, the ancient physician, says, a certain person engaged to kill a scorpion before him, first, by a malediction and spitting; next, by repeating the same; which, on the third occasion, should prove fatal. But afterwards he saw a scorpion killed by the saliva alone, without incantation. That of a person fasting or thirsting, proved effectual speedily: that of those replete with food was more tardy.*

The doctrine of formal maledictions is illustrated finely by the scriptural history of the early tribes, when Balak invited Balaam to come and curse the Jews, whose invasion he dreaded. Either the influence of superstition must have been unconquerable, or the crafty conjuror must have been in intelligence with the enemy. The Mosaic injunctions appointed a certain place for public invocation, and one for public malediction.† Plutarch and Macrobius have preserved the process which the Romans adopted for the latter, while believing that none against whom it was levelled, could escape its energy.‡

Certain allusions, obscure in history, may have some relation to this subject. Among a modern African

* *Galen de Simplicium Medicamentorum Facultatibus. Lib. x. c. 16.*

† *Deuteronomy, ch. xxvii. v. 12—16.*

‡ *Plutarch in vita M. Crassi* "Atteius the tribune hastening to the gate which Marcus Crassus should pass on an expedition against the Parthians, and there performing rites with fire and libations, imprecated the Divine vengeance on his head." *ap. Opera, t. 11. p. 553.*

tribe, if any one be invoked, by an oath on the king's head, to kill the invoker himself, his refusal is construed as an invocation of the king's death, which infers an imprecation. Desperate characters resort sometimes to this alternative, which too long digression would be required to elucidate.* Keeping the king's head, seems to be employed metaphorically in scripture. Achish, a potentate protecting David, when proposing that he should accompany him to battle, said, "therefore will I make thee keeper of mine head for ever."† In ancient Scythia, the distempers of the monarch were ascribed to the perjury of him who had sworn by the royal throne.‡

Perhaps commentators on that passage of Scripture, "as the word went out of the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face," have not discovered the true meaning, in "criminals not permitted to look on the person of the king," as they interpret it.|| May it not be rather referred to the superstitious dread of an evil

* *Bowdich*, Mission to Ashantee, p. 256, 259, 260, 398, 403, 409. If one commit suicide, declaring it is "on the head of another," the latter must commit suicide in return, otherwise extraordinary calamities would befall his family. The confusion and inaccuracy pervading this narrative, as well as the translation of *Mollien's Travels* by its author, shews the importance of selecting persons for public missions who can express themselves perspicuously.

† 1 *Samuel*, ch. xxviii. v. 2.

‡ *Herodotus*, lib. iv. § 67, 68, 69.

|| *Harmer*, Observations on Scripture, v. 11. p. 390. *Esther*, ch. vii. v. 8.

eye, combined with maledictions, from those whom a capital sentence might reduce to sudden desperation?

In Scotland, a special enactment, in the year 1661, rendered the malediction of parents a capital crime; the offending "son or daughter—above the age of sixteen—shall be put to death without mercie." The synod of Glasgow expressed an anxiety, that on satisfactory evidence of "wicked cursing," offenders in general should be consigned to the hands of justice. It is not explained whether imprecations are to be understood.* However, when combined with other misdemeanours, or perhaps simply, the authors of them were punished by the ecclesiastical judicatories.† The church had long assumed the prerogative of transmitting to the fangs of Satan those excluded from its communion, for a variety of offences, infinitely greater than could be now credited. In the year 1709, "imprecations, cursings, and threatenings" of several persons, were not thought deserving of more than an "arbitrary punishment," that is, they were rated lower

* *Proceedings of the Synod of Glasgow*, 11 Oct. 1699, in MS.

† *Halyrudhous Kirk Session Register*, 21 Feb. 1632. "Compeirit Patrick Glaidstaines in hairclaithe, and on his knyves confessit his fault, in breking the sabbath-day, in abuseing Michael Andersoun, and imprecating maledictionis against him, and vtheris misbehaviouris and offenceis aganis God and his kirk,—ordaines him to be wairdit till he pay foure pund of penaltie; and appointis William Ramsay, Andro Melville, and Henry Inglas, to pas with him to Michael Andersoun, and mak satisfactioun to him for the wrangis committit be the said Patrick against him." v. iv.

than capital crimes.* The gradual refinement of social intercourse has fortunately expelled those oaths and execrations, formerly so much incorporated with common converse, or they are heard very seldom from the temperate.

* *Southern Circuit Book*, 1708-1710, in MS. 3 May 1709: Trial of Elspeth Rule.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE OCCULT INFECTION AND CURE OF
MALADIES.

It has been admitted as general doctrine by the superstitious, that certain persons, either of divine endowment or by diabolical power, enjoyed the supernatural faculty,—1. Of infecting any living creature with disease; 2. Of curing it, by various expedients, without the aid of medicine; 3. Of reserving it inactive in store for injury; 4. Of transferring it from one being to another.

I. *Infection.* Beigis Tod “ cuist ane heavie and unknowin seiknes vpone Alexander Fairlie, quha vanischit away with vehement sueitting and continuall burning at the hairt; quhilk seiknes indurit with him the space of twa monethis, that nane luikit for his lyfe,—and nichtlie the said Beigis appeirit to him in his awin similitude, vpone quhome he cryit continuallie for help; and in the day scho appeirit to him in the schape of a dog, quhilk put him almaist out of his wittis.” However, after she visited him, he “becam better and better, and convalescit.”* Margaret Wal-

* Trial of Beigis Tod in Lang Nydrie, 27 May 1608. *Rec. Just.*

lace was accused of inflicting disease supernaturally, and of relieving it by moving her lips. She denied that she had done more than usually attends the visit of a friend or physician, “to wit, gripping the pulses or chaikill bane, and breist, quhilk is the steiring of the spreittis vitall, and is the ordinair behaviour vset and practiset be the visitouris of ony patient.”*

A distemper was imposed by “Jonet Cranstoune ane witche,” which other three women were accused of curing by sorcery, witchcraft, and charming.† An eruption of the face, alleged to be occasioned supernaturally, was denied to be any thing but the effects of intemperance.‡

A man was charged with striking Jonet Lowrie blind, and of restoring her sight:§ and a woman having threatened an English soldier quartered on her, “with an evill turne,—immediately the man fell seik in her house, and did sweat to deid within a day or twoe.”||

Codronchus, who styles himself a physician and philosopher, denies supernatural distempers can be inflicted through the medium of the touch, for they are the

* Trial of Margaret Wallace, spouse to Johne Dynning, merchand burges of Glasgow ; 20, 21, 22 March 1622. *Rec. Just.*

† Trial of Jonet Barker and Margaret Lauder, 20 Dec. 1643. *Rec. Just.*

‡ Trial of Issobell Young, 4 Feb. 1629. *Rec. Just.*

§ Trial of Patrik Lowrie, 23 July 1605. *Rec. Just.*

|| *Dittay* against Cristiane Wilson, *ut sup.*

work of demons, as the universal agents of mischief.* But the superstitious of this country seem to have accounted it a method the most effectual, though not indispensable. While Margaret Craigie was recovering, Christian Marwik “straikit hir hand ower the said Margaret’s breast, and that same night” she died.† Agnes Scottie, being reprovèd by one for the distempers of his servants,—“after she had tuichit him, and given him mony injurious wordis, he conceivit ane great fear and trembling, contractit seiknes, and within sevin dayis thairefter dyit.”‡

Among the more remarkable evils of this kind, ascribed to sorcerers,—remarkable from being apparently independent of corporeal maladies,—were rendering mankind insane, and making brutes run mad. Either mental alienation was alike common of old as in this age, or the dread inspired by a sorcerer’s malevolence put people beside themselves. A woman calumniated as such, by a man, threw “a wall peit at his face, and bled him thairwith. Immediatlie thairefter he past to and fro, as ane man wanting discretioun and knowledge, and knew not quhat he did.”§ One complained that a woman “came to his nurse and took a grip of her hand, who thairefter became distracted for the

* *Codronchus de Morbis Veneficiis*: Lib. ii. c. 3. p. 74. Ex tactu veneficia fieri non posse: Lib. iii. c. 2. p. 117.

† Trial of Cirstian Marwik, 6 April 1643. *Rec. Ork.* f. 263. v.

‡ Trial of Agnes Scottie, 13 June 1616. *Rec. Ork.* f. 72. r.

§ Trial of Marable Couper, 13 June 1616. *Rec. Ork.* f. 74. v.

space of two hours.”* A woman went mad on a blow from Jonet Cock; and after the minister of Dalkeith had reproved the latter, “he took ane terrible foot of madness, so that the whole houshold could not get him laid in his bed.”† Another patient lay “in ane feirful madnes for the space of ten oulkis togidder.”‡ And John Souter fell into “ane phrenzie and madnes,” from which he recovered only on the seizure of the suspected injurer.§

Sometimes charges were very specific: Jean Craig imposed disease on Beatrix Sandilands, “by causing hir become mad and bereft of hir natural rest: and in end, be occasione of the said madnes sua laid vpon the said Beatrix—she was deprived of hir natural lyfe.”|| Christian Wilson having threatened that a certain man should never cart another stone, he fell immediately “into ane phrainsie and madnes, and took his bed and never rase agane, but died within a few dayes; and in the tyme of his seiknes, he allwayis cryed out, that the said Cristian wes present befor him in the lyknes of ane gray catt.”

Woodrow, a credulous author, says, he was “weel

* *Halyrudhous Kirk Session Register*, 27 March 1655. Edward M'Cure. v. v.

† Trial of Jonet Cock, *ut sup.*

‡ Trial of Issobell Gairdner, 7 Sept. 1610. *Rec. Just.* Oulkis—weeks.

§ Trial of Margaret Hutchesone, 20 Aug. 1661. *Rec. Just.*

|| Trial of Jean Craig, 27 April 1649. *Rec. Just.*

assured that the Earl of Dumfreice Stair's daughter was under a very odd kind of distemper, and did frequently fly from one end of the room to the other, and from the one side of the garden to the other,—whither by the effects of witchcraft vpon her, or some other way, is a secret. The matter of fact is certain.”*

Animals were exposed to corresponding injuries. Elizabeth Bathcat made a horse run mad: Thomas Greave was instrumental in the same regarding a cow: and Katherine Oswald, for vengeance on a man and his wife, “haifing bot two ky, maid thame baith to ryn void and rammisch to deid.” Madness seems to have been more prevalent formerly among the larger animals than now. Is it not Gervase Markham who specifies four different kinds of madness incident to the horse? Helen Gib got “ane inchantit bonnock of meill,” for preserving cattle, which, “falling out of hir hands, brak in twa peices, quhilk was tane vp be twa dogis and swallowit be thame; thai both went mad and deit.”†

All distempers could be inflicted by sorcerers.

II. *Occult Remedies.*—If the superstitious so readily

* *Woodrow Analecta*, in MS. January 1712. v. iii. p. 2.

† Trial of Elizabeth Bathcat, 4 June 1634.—Johnne Brughe, 24 Nov. 1643.—Thomas Greave, 1 Aug. 1623. *Rec. Just.* Similar charges appear from the indictment of Marion Peebles 1644, *Hibbert Shetland*, p. 593. *Rammisch*—rage; *Bonnock*—cake.

ascribed the supernatural power of injury to those around them, the faculty of relief was admitted with equal facility.

Josephus says, Solomon composed incantations which alleviated diseases :* and Pliny finds the origin of magic in medicine :† but Hippocrates reprehends as impious those impostors vaunting their incantative powers and superstitious remedies :‡ and Ulpian, the Roman lawyer, denies the character of physician to him who resorted to incantation or imprecation, or to what, in vernacular speech, was called exorcising. || Vegetius considers incantation the province of old women only, —for animals were not to be healed by empty words, but only by the careful application of the medical art :§ yet Trallian changed a similar opinion from experience :¶ and Galen admits the benefit of charms from their influence on the mind. “ Hope is the source of convalescence.”**

Nothing was contemplated, however, by the ancient empirics, sorcerers, and conjurors, civil or ecclesiastic,

* *Josephus*, Antiquit. Judæor, lib. viii. c. 2. § 5.

† *Pliny*, Hist. Nat. lib. xxx. c. i.—Natum primum e medicina nemo dubitat.

‡ *Hippocrates*, de Sacro Morbo.

|| *Digest*. lib. L. tit. 13. c. 1. § 3.

§ *Vegetius*, Art. Vet. lib. iii. c. 44.

¶ *Trallianus*, lib. ix. c. 4.

** *Galen de Incantatione Adjuratione et Suspensione*. ap. *Hippocratis et Galeni Opera*, t. x. p. 571. Fragmentum, p. 573. Can this be considered truly the work of Galen?

but an occult quality in the process prescribed, wherein the force of sympathy also,—much stronger in them than in the patient,—held an important share.

Soliciting health.—The first and easiest measure was soliciting the restoration of health; for, in ascribing a distemper to sorcery, the sorcerer was thought capable of its cure; and neither sight nor touch being necessary to impart infection, as little were ceremonies indispensable for relief.

Bessie Smyth admitted, “that Christiane Hamilton gaue hir hir health; and socht it for Godis sake; and thereafter scho grew bettir and bettir.”* Robert Pedden did the same from the suspected injurer, and he recovered in twenty-four hours.† Agnes Finnie had imposed on “Katherine Harlaw ane uncouth and feirfull seikness and desease; in the quhilk scho was tormented nicht and day with continuall sueitting and burneing heat, as gif scho had bene roosting before ane fyre, be the space of fyve oulkis or thereby: till at length being in extreame agonie, came with ane of hir sarkis all wrung out of sueit, quhilk schoe shew to yow, and affirmit that ye was the onlie caus of all that seiknes, and that ye had bewitched hir, quhilk ye denied at that tyme; but vpon the morrow thereafter, ye and the said Katherine meitting togidder and drinking,

* *St Cuthbert's Kirk Session Register*, 20 Oct. 1631.

† *Trial of Isobell Greirsoun*, 10 March 1607, *Rec. Just.*

shoe, be your sorcerie and witchcraft, practizeit be yow at that tyme, became presentlie weill, was cured of hir disease, and fred of hir former torment." Another was cured of an eruption of the face, on soliciting her health thrice for God's sake; and Janet Cock having come at the urgent request of one to see her son, who had lost the power of his waist downwards, she "cured him, and made him als whole as evir he was."*

The greatest anxiety was felt, and the utmost importunity practised, for the presence of the evil doer. An object of suspicion complained to the kirk-session of Holyroodhouse, that Christian Ones "comes to my door and sitis down vpon hir kneis, and askis hir geir at me for Godis saik."† About the year 1708, it was usual for invalids to send for Elspeth Rule, that they might be thus relieved of their suffering; and one of them desiring "that she might be dragged if she would not come," she complied, and on her arrival "prayed the Lord to send him his health:" nevertheless he expired that same day, charging his death on her head.‡ Another having sent repeatedly in vain for his sister-in-law, applied personally at last, declaring "he sould

* Trial of Agnes Finnie, 11 Dec. 1644;—of Isobell Young, 1629;—of Janet Cock, 1661, *ut sup.* The words of the charge are of the preceding purport.

† *Halyrudhous K. S. R.*; 25, 29 May 1630: Case of Bessie Moderall, v. iv.

‡ Trial of Elspeth Rule, *ut sup.* *Southern Circuit Book.*

caus burne hir, gif he obtenit not his health. Efter thes wordis he daylie recoverit his health be hir devilrie." A man suffered various injuries; his cows lost their milk, or cast their calves, and his daughter fell sick during half a-year; all through the malevolence of Jonet Thomeson; but on his reproving her, "the las becam whole: and having ane mear lyk to die, he gave hir almis to heale hir, and the mear was presentlie maid whole."*

In France, as lately as the year 1818, an artizan endeavoured to obtain restoration of his health from an old man, and having reduced him to a state of insensibility, by the fumes of sulphur burnt under his nose, to enforce compliance, threw him into a pool where he perished.†

The same course was followed on other parts of the continent. A peasant remaining silent on a similar application, and various persons having suffered from him, as they affirmed, he was tried, condemned, and burnt in presence of Ulric Molitor who records the fact.‡

These superstitions were countenanced by passages in scripture, which narrate, that, in resentment at an offending prophet, Jeroboam "put forth his hand from

* Trial of Jonet Thomeson, 7 Feb. 1643. *Rec. Ork.* f. 255. v. *Mear* —mare.

† *Garinet*, *Histoire de la Magie en France*, p. 289.

‡ *Molitor*, *Tractatus de Lamiis et Pythonicis*, fol. 15. Probably relative to the middle of the fifteenth century.

the altar saying, Lay hold on him : and his hand which he put forth against him dried up, so that he could not pull it in again to him." However, on the prophet's intercession with Heaven, "the king's hand was restored him again, and became as it was before."*

Benefit from the Look.—Our progenitors must have been very credulous in supernatural powers, if cures operated by the look, became the subject of judicial proceedings. After offending and wrangling with Christian Leisk, a man immediately "fell deidlie sick that he could not stir him." When brought by menaces "to the hous quhair he lay, and shoe looking on the said Alexander, he presentlie start to his feit, and went to the foot-ball."† Jonet Thomeson being urged "to goe and look vpon" a man who had contracted a desperate malady after her imprecations ; on her compliance, along with some other remedies, he returned to his work on the same day. Also, having quarrelled with another, "his mear took seikness and was lyk to die ; and shoe cuming to the hous, the bairnis gave hir almis to look vpone the mear, she was immediatlie maid quhole."

§ II.—*Cure by the Touch.*—Anciently, the faculty of marvellous cures seems to have been thought inseparable

* 1 Kings ch. xiii. v. 4—6.

† Trial of Cirstane Leisk, 21 April 1643. *Rec. Ork.* f. 266. v.

from those to whom their disciples ascribed the character of sanctity. It was esteemed the immediate gift of Heaven.—Yet, subsequently, by that vacillation which ever distinguishes opinions resting on the imagination only,—instead of a divine endowment, this remarkable prerogative was judged to be a certain indication of intercourse with Satan. In proof of a heavenly mission, or as redounding to his glory, the biographer of Kentigern, a Scottish saint of the sixth century, affirms, that he restored sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and speech to the dumb, composed the furious, raised the paralytic, dispelled fever, cleansed the leprous, cast demons from the body of the possessed, and healed every imbecility.*—A Scottish empiric of the seventeenth century, professed the cure of those “visseit with frenacies, madness, falling evil: persones distractit in their wittis, and possessit with feirful apparitiones, St Anthonie’s fyre, the seiknes and diseases callit *noli me tangere*; and of canceris, wormes, glengores, and vtheris vncouth diseases;—all done be sorcerie, incantation, devellische charmeing.” Above forty persons are enumerated for whom he had prescribed, of hundreds of the afflicted,—and his practice extended to beasts.—He must have rivalled the saint. But the repute of such qualifications having declined, he was strangled and burnt as too familiar with Satan.†

* *Jocelin in vita Kentigerni*, c. 35. ap. *Pinkerton Vitæ Sanctorum*, p. 270.

† Trial of Alexander Drummond in the Kirktoon of Auchterairdour, 3 July 1629.—*Rec. Just.*

The credulous, instance cures by the touch of the shade of celebrated or sanctified persons, as in a vision of Magnus earl of Orkney, and of St Convallus, during the sleep of the infirm who visited their shrines.*

But those less distinguished were not denied an equal prerogative, on actual contact of the distempered.—A pulmonary complaint, called *glachach*, is also called the *Macdonald's* disease by the highlanders, because the gift of curing it by the touch, accompanied by a formula of words, is ascribed to certain families of this name.†

Distempers are seldom specified. A man sickened while a woman spread her hand over his back. However, when this was repeated, the pain ceased, “and immediately he became whole.”‡ A woman labouring under an extraordinary disease, compelling her to “creip on hands and feit,” recovered presently, and received as good health as ever, from the hand of a visitor laid on her head.¶ Another becoming frantic, the alleged author of the malady came, and “laying hands on hir, she convaleschit and receivit hir sinsis agane.”§ Agnes Yullock under the same suspicion,

* *Vita Magni Comitis Orcadum*, cap. 32, 34. *Proprium Sanctorum*, f. cxvii. v. ap. *Breviarium Aberdonense*, t. ii.

† *Smith*, Parish of Logierait, ap. *Stat. Acct.* v. v. p. 84. No gratuity is to reward the cure. According to those versant in the Gaelic language, *glachach* signifies a wasting disease.

‡ Trial of Christian Leisk, *ut sup.*

¶ Trial of Katherine Miller, 29 May 1633. *Rec. Ork.*

§ Trial of Marable Couper, 13 June 1616. *Rec. Ork.* f. 72.

came to the "guidwyfe of Langskaill—and tuitching hir she recoverit her health."* One "being diseasit of ane byll—Annie Tailyeour came and tuitched the byll, quhairby he was haill in fortie-aucht houris, quhilk, in his oppinioun, could not have bein in ane quarter of ane yeir." Marion Peebles was alike successful in other distempers.†

The virtue of inanimate substances was restored by the same simple means.‡

The remarkable faculty of curing scrofula by the touch, has been reserved chiefly for those of the highest dignity. When King Charles I. began to exercise this prerogative in the early part of his reign, it was exhibited in Scotland amidst that plenitude of splendour to which a happy fortune contributed: but as if inseparable from his race, he continued to operate extraordinary cures, not only of scrofula, but of other maladies, while humbled by calamity, and the prisoner of his rebellious subjects.

Visiting Scotland in the year 1633, he went to the Royal Chapel in Holyrood Abbey, on the 24th of June, being St John's day, "and their solemnlie offred, and after the offringe, heallit 100 persons of the cruelles or kingis eivell, yong and olde."|| But such would

* Trial of Agnes Yullock, 13 June 1616. *Rec. Ork.* f. 74.

† Trial of Annie Tailyeour, 15 July 1624. *Rec. Ork.* f. 184. *Hibbert Shetland, ut sup.*

‡ Trial of William Gude, 13 June 1616. *Rec. Ork.* f. 72.

|| *Balfour.* The Order of K. Charles entring Edinburghe, in MS. p. 23. Advocates' Library, W. 7. 5.

have been deemed sorcery in his subjects, or accounted treasonable, perhaps, if they aspired to the throne. Thus, after the death of the Duke of Monmouth, in the year 1685, during a trial instituted in Scotland, he was accused of having executed monarchical functions; and among them, that he had "touched children of the king's evil;" and witnesses were brought to prove the fact.*

From an ancient date, the cure of scrofula by touch of the royal hand, was ascribed to the sovereigns of France and England; but if any ever exercised this faculty in Scotland anterior to Charles, it has escaped the author's notice. In England the practice is referred to the age of Edward the confessor, and in France, to the fourteenth century.—Apparently it was adopted by Henry VIII.—"nam reges Anglie etiam nunc tactu ac quibusdam hymnis non sine ceremoniis prius recitatis strumosos sanunt."†

When Queen Elizabeth practised so eminent a prerogative, all were allowed to approach her—young and old, rich and poor, indiscriminately. But the surgeons of the household received the names of the patients previously, and determined whether they were truly scro-

* *Case of the Duke of Monmouth*, 15 Feb. 1686. Captain Robert Bruce, deposed, "when he went to Tantoune, he saw him proclaimed king: and he saw him assume the title of king, and receive from the peopell the acclamations of, God save the King: and saw him tutch a boy for the king's evil." *Rec. Just.*

† *Polydore Virgil Anglie Historia*, Lib. viii. p. 143. "The disease struma, is the scrofula of the Italians." This author wrote A. D. 1533.

fulous ; which being communicated to the queen, she appointed a time for the ceremony, without preferring any day in particular. After she had prepared herself for it by religious exercises, the patients were introduced. Then the liturgy having been read, prayers said, and a discourse delivered on the last chapter of Mark, when reaching verse fourteenth, relative to the incredulity of the disciples, she applied her bare hands to the parts diseased. The patients now receded during farther reading, until completing the ceremonies. At these words in the first chapter of John, "that was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," the queen arose, and each patient having been brought back, she made the sign of the cross on the distempered part, with a gold coin attached to a ribbon, and delivered it to be suspended from the neck. Each then receded again, the remainder of the scripture was read, and the queen with her attendants having knelt in prayer, the patients departed, congratulating each other on their cure.

Such was the practical ceremony of healing scrofula, by the touch of the royal hand : and it is affirmed to have operated successfully on thousands, during the course of Elizabeth's reign. The utmost confidence was reposed in her powers : many allowed that they had been relieved. Yet it was admitted also, that the expedient had sometimes failed—not surprising, indeed, among multitudes so willing to be deluded.

But the scrupulous were disquieted by such super-

stitious practices : they were too near akin to the ceremonies of the Roman Catholic church—an object of unceasing abhorrence. Murmurs prevailed : the queen deemed it prudent to abandon her wonted custom : and while disappointing the credulous hopes of one part of her subjects, her defence was offered to the other, by Dr Tooker, one of the royal chaplains. He argued that there was no harm in the sign of the cross : nor was the gold suspended from the neck, an amulet, or more than merely a symbol of incipient health—that its conservation was not indispensable—for indigence having compelled a member of the ancient family of Tuberville to part with this badge of the royal munificence, she remained convalescent still, after the lapse of ten years. The cure was permanent, though the gold was gone.*

It appears that Elizabeth resumed the practice.

Her successor entertained lofty notions of royal prerogative, but he had avowed himself the enemy of superstitious rites and sentiments.† His son, however,

* *Tooker*, Charisma sive donum Sanitatis, c. 2. p. 18.—c. 7. p. 95—97.—c. 8. p. 100—105.—c. 9. p. 121. London 1597, in 4to.

† Commentators find a compliment to King James, as inheriting this royal prerogative, in these lines of *Shakspeare*.

A most miraculous work in this good king,
Which often since my here-remain in England
I have seen him do. How he solicits Heaven
Himself best knows : but strangely visited people,
All swoln and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye,
The mere despair of surgery he cures
Put on with holy prayers. *Macbeth*, Act iv. Scene 3.

was willing to impress on the public, that by the touch of the royal hand, and invoking the Deity, the sovereigns of England had enjoyed so noted a prerogative for many ages, and that he, no less than his predecessors, was endowed with it, which he professed himself as ready to exercise for the benefit of his people, as any king or queen of England.* After the Restoration, the touch of the sovereign was in equal repute. One Arise Evans availed himself of the opportunity of rubbing his fungous nose with the hand of King Charles II. while allowed to kiss it. "The king was disturbed, but the patient was cured."† All faith in auxiliary ceremonies had then ceased.

About this time, however, a visionary arose, whose celebrity and self-confidence surpassed, if possible, all who had preceded him. But it is less the virtue of the gifted than the credulity of the admirer, that encourages impostors and disseminates their fame. As credulity abates, reputation declines along with it,—the deceiver is heard of no more. Valentine Greatraks was born of respectable parentage in Ireland, about the year 1628, and followed the military profession originally. He felt a secret impulse towards the year 1662; an audible internal monitor whispered that

* *Rushworth*, Historical Collections, v. i. part. 2. p. 47. *Proclamation*, 6 April 1630. Easter and Michaelmas were now appointed for the ceremony, instead of Easter and Whitsuntide. There were previous proclamations in 1628 and 1629. p. 43.

† *Aubrey*, Miscellanies, chap. xii. p. 97.

rivalling the royal prerogative he could cure scrofula by the touch. Although his consciousness of this quality was derided by those to whom he confided the fact, he put it to the test, and it proved successful. At first his pretensions went no farther than curing that distemper. But another impulse from the secret monitor bade him try his skill in ague, then epidemical in the country. Laying his hands on a woman, accompanied by an invocation, the ague was dispelled, and she departed in immediate convalescence. Greatraks enlarged the sphere of his practice: innumerable testimonies spread his renown; he was called the anti-christ of physicians: valetudinarians spared no expence to reach him, while he, on his part, content with exercising the duty of benevolence, and with increasing celebrity, refused all ostensible remuneration. Besides curing scrofula, leprosy, and ague, he restored sight and hearing, and renovated the vigour of decayed members. If he laid his hands on the epileptic, their convulsions ceased, fevers were assuaged, sense and action revived, and the malady was banished for ever. This marvellous personage touched above sixty patients in a single day. An eye-witness beheld "divers of them troubled with the falling sickness,—and of them, some being surprised and taken by it, lay in the same room: he being called to their help left other patients and went to them: and while they were foaming at the mouth, and wallowing on the ground, he stroaked their breast with his hand, and immediately their pain

ceased, and they stood up and said they were very well.”*

The curative process of Greatraks was extremely simple. Sometimes he chafed the distempered organ, sometimes he spit upon it : he thrust his fingers into the ears of the deaf, to make them hear ; or he administered the most nauseous of potions for the restoration of health.† But, unlike his superstitious cotemporaries, he avoided charms or “unlawful words,” uttering merely a brief ejaculation before proceeding to the cure, which, having perfected, he enjoined his patient “to give God the praise.”

The warmest admirers of Greatraks ascribed his miraculous endowments to the peculiar temperament of his body, from which they believed a kind of beneficial fragrance emanated. But, chiefly from consciousness of the period when receiving the gift and its subsequent effects, he imputed it himself to a principle residing in his hand. Previous to its enjoyment, while labouring under the severest headache, the application of his hand was unavailing. Afterwards he had only to put his hand to his head—and he was cured. Of other patients he affirms, that their pains “would skip and fly from place to place till they did run out,” according as the position of his hands shifted. Even the

* *Beacher*, Wonders, if not Miracles, p. 6.

† *Stubbe*, Miraculous Conformist, p. 6. “I saw him put his finger into the eares of a man who was very thick of hearing, and immediately he heard me, when I asked him, very softly, severall questions.”

application of his glove was effectual, but not that of other parts of his apparel.—Thence it was in his hand that the virtue lay.—Is it not written that such a quality centered in the great toe of Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, that it remained entire after the rest of his body had been consumed on the funeral pile : likewise, that Vespasian the Roman emperor relieved a patient by touching him with his heel ?*

Amidst innumerable testimonies from patients themselves, of the benefit derived, besides that of various physicians and persons of distinction, some becoming jealous of this visionary's fame, or contemplating calmly the confidence and credulity inspired by enthusiasm, boldly denied the efficacy of his touch. Friction alone, they maintained, was the palliative ; farther, it was very presumptuous to attempt the performance of miracles, after the age of miracles had ceased. The empiric tried to vindicate himself : others in their delusion undertook his defence. Spite of his manifold deeds, his reputation has shared the fate of all about whom the world has been busied beyond their merits : his name is forgot ! Thus is the fame of so many cotemporary with themselves. Posterity, as if alive to the weakness of their predecessors, though after the longest interval, at last refuses its confirmation. Neither the time nor the circumstances of

* *Plutarch*, in vita Pyrrhi, ap. Opera, t. 11. p. 384. *Pliny*, Hist. Nat. lib. vii. c. 2. *Suetonius* in vita Vespasiani, § vii. The virtue lay in the great toe of the right foot.

one, whom multitudes so lately almost worshipped during his life, are known.*

Nevertheless the reputed virtue of the touch has been never obliterated entirely from popular credulity. Towards the close of the seventeenth century, it was ascribed, among other marvellous properties, to the seventh son born in succession, in this kingdom: thus, as then expressed: "In England the king cures the struma, by stroaking; and the seventh son in Scotland."† As the prerogative of the latter, it may subsist still. About twenty years ago, an illiterate person named Innis, in the isle of Iona, enjoyed much reputation for the faculty of healing scrofula by the touch. He did not indulge in any theory, as to how he succeeded in the cure, saying only, "God was pleased to operate it," through his means: and his practice in so far resembled that of earlier date, that it was exercised on certain days; namely, on two Thursdays and two Sundays successively; when he applied his hand to the part affected, in the name of the Trinity; uttering, at the same time, "It is God that cures." He demanded no remuneration, as that would have defeated the charm."‡

More modern visionaries believed themselves gifted

* *Greatraks' Account of his Cures.* *Stubbe, Miraculous Conformist.* *Beacher, Wonders if not Miracles.* *Wonders no Miracles, passim.*

† *Kirk, Secret Commonwealth, p. 38.*

‡ *Campbell, Parish of Kilfinichen and Kilviceuen, ap. Stat. Aut. v. xiv. p. 210.*

alike with the elect of antiquity. The firmest confidence was reposed in the efficacy of the touch, many centuries anterior to the christian æra. "Naaman, captain of the host,"—"turned, and went away in a rage," when Elisha prescribed washing in the Jordan for his leprosy, instead of calling "on the name of the Lord," and striking his hand over the place to recover the leper.* Perhaps the refusal of Elisha then to accept of any reward, has warned his followers not to mar their cures by avarice.

Virtue of Spittle.—The properties of the human saliva have enjoyed singular notice in history, sacred and profane. Among the ancient pagans, Pliny devotes an entire chapter to its efficacy, as an antidote to fascination, as a preservative from contagion, as counteracting poisons—and in pugilistic encounters as aggravating the vehemence of a blow.† With equal confidence, the moderns spit into their hands when they fight—and spit under the humiliation of discomfiture: they spit on money received in traffic:‡ on throwing aside the combings of their hair: on wounds in the flesh, and on the bite of venemous snakes to cure it.||

* 2 Kings ch. v. v. 11, 12.

† Pliny, Hist. Nat. lib. vii. c. 2.—xxviii. c. 1.

‡ Del Rio, Disquisitiones Magicæ, lib. vi. c. ii. § i. q. 1. p. 408. edit. in folio.

|| Blunt Vestiges of ancient manners and customs, p. 164–5. The Giravoli of Sicily who claims this prerogative, still hold a festival under the patronage of St Paul.

They spit as a token of the most sovereign contempt: And in one of the remotest Scottish islets, spitting into the grave forms part of the funeral ceremony.*

When an infant, previously baptised by a layman, was carried to church in Scotland, the priest had to administer a particle of salt, and to moisten the ears with spittle: then to pronounce exorcisms, and to do all things at the font, wont to be done to a child without immersion, and the benediction of water.†

But it might be asked, perhaps, whether in such ceremonies a relic of the antidote to fascination, or to demoniac influence, may not be recognized.

The theory of the canonists for the use of spittle in baptism, is weak and arbitrary. "Let the nostrils and ears be touched with it," say they, "that the nostrils may be opened to receive the odour of God: and the ears to hear his mandates."‡

It is not inconsistent to believe that the earliest baptismal rites might be a partial modification of subsisting ceremonies, which practice had rivetted in public approval. Such will be found the easiest method of gaining proselytes: for vehement changes are always resisted by mankind.—Certain lustrations, whether by water or otherwise, were undergone by the children of the Romans on the eighth or ninth day, when they were

* *Buchan*, Description of the Island of St Kilda.

† *Chartalarium Aberdonense*, fol. 23. In MS.

‡ *Gratian Decretalia*: de Consecratione, distinct 4.

named.* Then, it has been said, the forehead of the child was moistened by spittle, to avert magical arts. The guilt of homicide was expiated by lustration: the font was the medium of initiation into the rites of Isis and Mithra: the temples and the cities of the ancients underwent lustrations as a ceremonial of purification.† Now, the priest of an African tribe spits thrice in the face of a child on bestowing its name.‡ Lucian describes an incantation followed by spitting thrice in the face of one whom he introduces as participating of it.¶ At the present day, as of old, a mother in the Grecian states, as if commemorating the words of Theocritus and Tibullus, spits in her bosom to repel fascinating glances directed towards herself, and dreading the gaze of the sterile on her child, spits in its face. The devotee also who voluntarily pierces his flesh, spits on the wound to effect a speedy cure.§

In Scotland the skilful were requested to spit on distempered animals. Cows fell sick, their milk dried up:—they instantly recovered from so potent a remedy. Nay, when three ears of barley previously spit upon, were thrust into the mouth of one

* *Macrobius Saturnalia*, lib. i. c. 16. Est autem dies lustricus quo infantes lustrantur et nomen accipiunt: Sed is maribus nonus, octavus est feminis.

† *Tertullianus de Baptismo*, c. 5. ap. Opera, p. 226.

‡ *Park, Travels*, v. i. c. 20. p. 269.—Speaking of the Mandingoes.

¶ *Lucianus, Necyomantia*, § 7. ap. Opera, t. i. p. 469.

§ *Jones, Travels*, (1823) v. ii. p. 487.

almost suffocated in the mire, the animal quickly recovered.*

The most noted application of the human saliva by the ancients, was for the restoration of sight.—So many cures are confidently averred and recorded, that it would be a most interesting topic of investigation whether any solvent, sanative, or medicament, lost to modern oculists, was not known of old.† But that facility with which the testimony of any unnatural condition or miraculous event has been always at command, cannot be overlooked by the sagacious. No superiority can be claimed for either ancients or moderns in this respect.‡ Thence it may be presumed, that the cure of blindness, has been too frequently, too easily, and precipitately ascribed to a fallacious source.—Those who pronounce as familiarly on the precise interference of Heaven as if they had shared in the Divine counsels, are not the most pious of men.

The restoration of sight has been accomplished frequently in Scotland. A man who had struck a woman blind by sorcery, enchantment, and devilry, restored her sight. Likewise a child being affected with an incurable distemper, the same sorcerer removed a

* Trial of Jonet Thomson, 1643.—Of Christian Marwick, 1643.—Of Jonet Rendall, 1629. *ut sup.*

† *Tobit*, ch. xi. v. 2—13. ch. xiv. v. 1. The patient had been blind eight years.

‡ *State Trials*, vol. v. col. 501. A witness swore on the trial of an impostor at Surrey assizes, 24 March 1702, though he could both see and speak—that he “saw him blind and dumb.”

cloth from its face, which he hallowed and crossed with his hand, and returning in eight days to cover it again with the cloth, the child slept two days without awakening, when one of the eyes formerly blind, was found to be restored.*

Credulity has ascribed this faculty, as exercised in Scotland, to early antiquity. St Ninian, who flourished in the fifth century, or some of his relics, restored the sight of a girl named Desuit.† It is remarkable that the feats of saints and sorcerers should so often admit of a parallel. St Fillan restored the eye of an attendant which had been pecked out by a tame crane belonging to the monastery where he dwelt. St Servan cured three of the blind by holy water.‡—"The blessed and glorious Triduana led a sanctified life at Roscoby, along with two virgins, Potencia and Emeria. But to shun the amorous importunities of the chief Nectanevis, she repaired to Dumsallad in Athole. The chief sent his emissaries thither.—"What would so great a chief have of me, a poor virgin of God?" said she to them.—"If he does not enjoy the transcendant beauty of your eyes," they answered, "he will perish."—To this she replied, "that which he requires of me he shall receive."—Then retiring, and pulling out her eyes, she reached them, stuck on a spike, to the messengers, saying, "take what your chief desires."—They car-

* Trial of Patrick Lowrie, 23 July 1605. *Rec. Just.*

† *Ailredus*, in *vita Niniani*, c. xi. § 3.

‡ *Proprium Sanctorum*, f. xxvii. ap. *Breviar. Aberdon.* t. 1.

ried them thus to the chief, who was struck motionless with astonishment,—and admired that constancy which was at first his aversion.—Meantime the blessed virgin Triduana, amidst fasting and prayer, migrated to heaven, at Lestalryk in Lothian. A certain woman of a noble family in England, having lost her eye sight, prayed devoutly, but in vain, at the shrine of many saints, for its restoration. At length the holy virgin Triduana, appeared to her in a dream, saying, “go to Lestalryk, the place of my sepulture, in Scotland, where your sight shall be restored.” By obeying this injunction, her deserts were sufficient to recover the use of her eyes. Afterwards a little girl, daughter of the same noble person, falling from a window thirty feet high, had almost all her bones broken; and lost an eye. Her mother, not unmindful of the virtues of the blessed Triduana, prayed fervently for her daughter, whose health was restored immediately, and she recovered the perfect use of her eyes.” Such is the legend.*

Two sanctified missionaries to Britain, Germanus and Lupus, applying a capsula of relics to the eyes of a girl, along with an invocation, restored her sight.† St Jerome gives a circumstantial narrative of a fellow

* *Proprium Sanctorum*, f. cxxiv. ap. *Brev. Aberd.* t. 2. Lestalryk, in vernacular dialect, Lesterrick, is Restalrig, within two miles of Edinburgh.—The anniversary of this virgin is noted as “8 October 532.” *Keith*, Catalogue of the Bishops, p. 233.

† *Bede Historia Ecclesiastica*, lib. i. c. 18.

saint—Hilarion, curing a woman in Egypt by spitting on her eyes.* St Augustine refers to the like effected publicly in Milan.† But St Bernard, as if miraculous faculties grew with time, seems to have excelled all his precursors, for he restored the sight of eleven persons in a single day, besides operating many other wonderful cures. Reverting to the ancient pagans—the fasting-spittle of a woman after her first child, or of one who had borne sons only, cured blood-shot eyes.‡ When Vespasian visited Alexandria, an inhabitant of that city besought him to spit on his eyes for the restoration of sight—which succeeded.§ But there is no reason to conclude with commentators, that it was in imitation of miraculous acts. The remedy cannot have been uncommon. Nor is its repute lost entirely even yet: a British traveller was applied to for it in the year 1814, in Nubia, by an old woman, who departed well satisfied of its efficacy.|| During Captain Cook's voyage to the north-west coast of America, he was solicited first to restrain his breath, and then breathing on the eyes of an old savage to spit on them.¶

Cure by the gaze or by the touch, therefore, and at-

* *Hieronymus* in vita S. Hilarion. Op. t. iv. part 1. col. 78.

† *Augustinus* de Civitate Dei. Lib. xxii. c. 8.

‡ *Pliny* Hist. Nat. lib. xxviii. c. 22. *Marcellus* de Medicamentis, c. 8. col. 269, 278.

§ *Suetonius* in vita Vespasian. *Tacitus* Historia, lib. iv. c. 81.

|| *Light Travels*, p. 83, 84. A priest applied the same remedy for headach.

¶ *Cook*, Third Voyage, [1778] b. iv. ch. 10. v. ii. p. 481.

tempting the restoration of sight by superstitious remedies, have extended far beyond the precincts of these northern regions.

Those miraculous cures, where a lively sensation is excited in the patient without any external cause, are referred by the more skilful to the power of imagination. But the discerning will ever despise the astounding narratives of persons ready to determine without enquiry, and that complaisant credulity, which is prepared to admit absurdities as true, in proportion to the boldness of assertion.

Virtue of Water and of Salt.—The simplest ingredients were converted to superstitious purposes, whether from their intrinsic virtues, whether from those imparted to them by the fertility of fancy. Since time immemorial, medicinal waters, throughout Scotland, of acknowledged efficacy, have been the resort of valetudinarians. The ancients having worshipped divinities of the fountains, and mortals having undergone lustration at their limpid sources; possibly on subversion of the heathen mythology, that veneration which its deities received, was transferred to those whom later generations had elevated to the rank of saints and prophets. As pagan rites were not altogether rejected by the earlier Christians, neither did the Protestants absolutely refuse an admixture of the Roman Catholic ceremonies with their own. Besides, the unavoidable coincidence of the pagan festivals with those of the

sanctified, who were canonized by the apostolic see, conspired to perpetuate the superstitious tribute paid at places consecrated to their memory.

Names are preserved where rites are forgotten.

Fountains beside the chapel of Craikquerrelane on a hill at Lochgrevern, were frequented for various distempers:—"and sundrie and divers multitudes of men and women from all countries, doe conveen and gadder togidder to this chappell in the spring tyme, one day before St Patrick-mess-day: and drinking everie one of them of this spring and fresh water, alleadges, that it shall recover them to their healthes againe—and vses the same yearlie. Once a tyme in the yeare, certaine of them doeth come for pilgrimadges, and certaine others in respect of their sicknes bygone, of the which they have recovered their health: and certaine of them for their sicknes present: and so they are persuaded to be restored to their health, by the helpe and assistance of that holie saint and drinkeing of the waters that is to be hade there, in the high craig and rough place."*

The veneration anciently entertained for fountains has been testified by periodical visits—not entirely abrogated. St Fillan's well, in the parish of Comrie, was visited on the first of May and on the first of August, when valetudinarians encircled it thrice, and

* *Descriptione* of Certaine parts of the Highlands of Scotland [1620—1643] in MS. Adv. Lib. W. 2, 20.

drank the water or bathed in it. This was also applied thrice for distempered eyes. Votive offerings of rags or linen cloth were left at the well, and a stone cast on the saint's cairn.* Formerly patients would pass the night of Saturday beside a well near Drumcassie, that they might be present on the first Sunday of May.† The waters of a well in the cave of Uchtrie Macken, near Portpatrick, and those of the White Loch of Merton, were deemed most salubrious on the first Sunday of May, and on that of each quarter of the year.‡ Sickly children were carried principally on the former to St Anthony's well, near Maybole.§ The well at Huntingtower or Ruthven was resorted to on the first Sunday of May, and one at Trinity Gask on Trinity Sunday, which is the first Sunday in June.|| The like will be found of many others.

Votive offerings were deposited at sanctified fountains, as if to propitiate the tutelar divinity towards

* *Baxter*, Parish of Comrie, ap Stat. Acc. v. xi. p. 181.

† *Robertson*, Parish of Kincardine, O'Neil, ad an. 1725, in MS. ap. *Macfarlane* Geographical Collections, in MS. v. i. p. 117.

‡ *Archibald*, Account Anent Galloway, in MS. ap. *Sibbald* Collections, in MS. p. 233. *Symson*, Description of Galloway, ad an. 1684. This with other works are edited by Mr Thomas Maitland, advocate, who has laudably contributed thus to preserve rarities, and promote the study of antiquities.

§ *Abercrommie*, Description of Carriet in MS. "This is called St Helen's well, or by an Ears pronunciation, St Emus for St Antonie's well." Adv. Lib. W. 2, 20.

|| *Perth K. S. R.* var. loc.

the devotee, or as a natural effusion of gratitude for the benefit reaped from their waters. Any trifling oblation, even a pin was sufficient. Threads, rags, portions of apparel, or of harness, were left at the well of Craiguck, in the parish of Avoch, and at one springing from the moss of Melshach.*

In general, such fountains were visited on the first day or the first sabbath of May: no doubt perpetuating Beltane by the former; and by the latter evincing, perhaps, that in ruder society the precise course of time requires some specific mark. The pilgrims were principally women. Grisel Richardson, when taxed with superstitious practices, confessed "that through hir great seiknes and infirmitie, she send Margaret Tail-your to Christ's well, to feache hir ane pynt of the walter thereof:" and the messenger acknowledged that she went "there on the first sunday of Maij instant, and fetcht to hir ane pynt of walter furth of the said well, and offerit upon ane trie ane piece of the said woman's heid-muche, that send hir: and that she gave ii d. to the puir folk in hir name."†

Various properties were ascribed to the waters of different places. Some had immediate effects; the sanative virtues of others operated slower, and they were administered, either for personal or for mental

* Smith, Parish of Avoch, ap. *Stat. Acct.* v. xv. p. 613. *Donaldson*, Parish of Kenethmont: *ib.* v. xiii. p. 76.

† *Stirling Kirk Session Register* in MS.—15, 22 May, 5 June 1617.
Walter—water; *heid-muche*—head-cap.

disorders. Insanity was cured by a well at Struthill: several persons testified to the presbytery of Stirling in 1668, that having carried a woman thither, "they had stayed two nights at an house hard by the well: that the first night they did bind her twice to a stone at the well, but she came into the house to them, being loosed without any help: the second night they bound her over again to the same stone, and she returned loosed: and they declare also, that she was very mad before they took her to the well, but since that time she is working and sober in her wits."* This well was still celebrated in the year 1723, and votive offerings were left: but no one then surviving, knew that the virtues of the stone were in request. Demolition of the chapel containing it, had been ordered by the presbytery of Auchterarder, about the year 1650, to repress the superstitions practised within.†

Strathfillan became celebrated in more modern times for the cure of that deplorable malady, in the pool dedicated to St Fillan, wherein patients were bathed, and either slept in a bed in the chapel dedicated to him, or were bound to a ladder or a stone; for all these are specified. "The place is on that account yearly frequented by people, to reap the benefit entailed on these waters, from the year 700 to the present: and the vestige of

* Sibbald, Collections in MS. p. 117.

† Macfarlane, Geographical Collections in MS. v. l. p. 154. Description of the parish of Muthill. The well is about a mile S. W. of Muthill.

the old monastery also remains, and is used for the same valuable end with the waters, to the blessed purpose of conferring health on the distressed. According to Dempster, if the patient who has been bound at night is found unbound in the morning, it is reckoned a good omen, and propitious; but if not untied, he is pronounced incurable.* It has been affirmed, that about two hundred insane persons were carried thither annually to benefit by the salutary influence of the water.† Animals were sometimes liberated supernaturally. In the isle of Enhallow a horse tied up at sunset would wander about through the night: and while the kirk-session took cognizance of a suspected witch, who had exercised her faculties on a cow,—the animal, though firmly secured, was found to be free and in their vicinity when the investigation closed.‡ The mysterious solution of the apostle's bonds may have been the source of such superstitions.¶

Immediate dissolution or convalescence was expect-

* *Buchanan*, Rev. John Lanne, *Defence of the Highlanders*, p. 168, 224. London 1794, in 8vo. This reference has not been observed in any of Dempster's works.

† *Heron*, *Journey in 1792*, v. i. p. 282.

‡ *Ben*, *Insularum Orchadiarum Descriptio*, in MS. This work has been lost within four or five years. Trial of Annie Tailyeour, 15 June 1624. *Rec. Ork.* f. 184, 185.

¶ *Acts*, ch. xii. v. 7.; ch. xvi. v. 26, 27.

ed on a draught from a well at Chader, in the island of Lewis.*

Medicinal and prognosticative virtues were ascribed to the waters of the Dow loch in the county of Dumfries. One was enjoined while raising the vessel each time, containing the water, to pronounce these words, "I lift this watter in name of the Father, Sone, and Haly Gaist, to do guid for thair helth, for quhom it is liftit: quhilk wordis sould be repetit thryse nyne times."† Pliny and Varro speak of a charm, probably by some empiric, to cure the gout,—“hoc ter novies cantare jubet.”‡

South Running Water.—By a superstition of uncertain origin, though not peculiar to Scotland, extraordinary qualities were found in south-running water, with which other two precepts, alike singular, were sometimes involved—observing silence and clothing the patient in a wet shirt. The “rippillis” were cured by south-running water, and an unction of hogslard.‖ A sorcerer, instructed by Satan, “in Bynnie Craigis,” cured a woman with south-running water

* *Morisone*, John, Description of the island of Lewis in MS. written perhaps 1680—1690.

† Trial of Bartie Paterson, 18 Dec. 1607. *Rec. Just.* Extreme unction is accompanied by “God heal you in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

‡ *Varro*, de Re Rustica, lib. i. c. 2. *Pliny*, Hist. Nat. lib. xxx. c. 17.

‖ *Perth K.S.R.* 13–26 May 1623.

from “the Schireff-brayis well, and casting a certain quantity of salt and quheit about hir bed :” * another patient was directed to pass “thrie severall nyctis to a south-running water, and to wasche himself nychtlie therein.” † George Wilsone being conducted to a person diseased “said he was witchit,” and along with other remedies prescribed washing “fra the kneis down with south-rynyng wattir.” ‡

The patient drank of the water ; he washed with it ; or his shirt was cast into the place whence it was taken, that in being withdrawn, the virtue imparted might operate his cure. A noted empiric engaged to cure Elspeth the sister of John Thomson, at Corachie, “and for this effect, callit for hir sark, and desyrit tua of hir nerrest freindis to go with him : lykas Johne and William Thomsones, hir brethren, being sent for, past in the nicht sease fra Corachie towardis Burley, be the space of twelff myles, and inioynet the twa brethren nocht to speik ane word all the way, and quhat euir thay hard or saw nawayis to be effrayed : saying, it micht be that thai wald heir grit rumbling and sie vncouth feirfull apparitiones, bot nathing suld annoy thame : and at the furde be-eist Burley, in ane south-rynning watter he thair wusche the sark : dureing the tyme of the quhilk waschine of the sark, thair was ane grit noyse maid be foullis on the hyll,—beistis that arrais

* Trial of James Reid, 21 July 1603. *Rec. Just.*

† Trial of Johne Brughe, 24 Nov. 1643. *Rec. Just.*

‡ *Halvyrudhous* K. S. R. 21 Nov. 1617.

and flichtered in the water: and cuming hame with the sark, pat the samyn vpon hir, and cureit hir of hir seiknes."* John Neill, in Tweedmouth, operated a cure on George Reule in Foulden, "be causing his wyfe to wasche his sark in south-rynnynge watter, and to put the said sark thereftir vpon him."† Jonet Stewart, going to Bessie Inglis, "tuke aff hir sark and hir mutche, and waischit thame in south-rynnand water, and pat the sark wat vpon hir at midnycht, and said thryis over 'In the name of the Fader, the Sone, and Haly Gaist,' and fyret the water and brunt stray at ilk nwke of the bed." The same remedy formed an ingredient of a more complex prescription to Andrew Pennycuick. Christian Levingston, by Christian Saidler's counsel, "bad get a reid cock, quhilk scho slew, and tuke the blude of it, and scho buke a bannock thairof with floure, and gaif the said Andro to eit of it, quhilk he could not preif. Lykewise, she, at Cristiane Saidler's desyre, tuke ane of the said Androi's sarkis, quhilk scho gat hir, and bad hir dip it in the wall at the bak of the hous, quhilk scho did, and brocht it in againe, quhilk Cristiane Saidler pat vpon him, wat as it was,—being verie euill at eis, and gaif him to vnderstand that he wald get his health be this meanis."‡

* Trial of Thomas Greave, 1 Aug. 1623. *Rec. Just.* He operated a similar cure, simply by causing the patient's shirt to be washed in south-running water, and put on him. *Lykas*—therefore.

† Trial of Johne Neill, 26 March 1631. *Rec. Just.*

‡ Trial of Jonet Stewart "in the Canogait;" of Cristian Saidler in Blakhous, 12 Nov. 1597. *Rec. Just.* *Buke a bannock*—baked a cake.

Clothing in a wet shirt may not have been an isolated remedy. Martin names one, who to cure himself of cold, "walks into the sea, up to the middle, with his cloths on: and immediately after goes to bed in his wet cloths: and then laying the bed-cloths over him, procures a sweat which removes the distemper."*

A well in Ireland, by which pilgrims were content to sit during the whole night of May-eve, for the sake of procuring amulets, is described as "a south-running spring of common water."†

A more extensive acquaintance with ancient history only, could sanction conjectures on the source of this superstition. But nothing can be less rational than one conclusion—that washing in south-running water corresponded "to baptisme in the name of Sathan."‡

Resorting to the use of water, and especially for the purpose of ablution, aroused suspicions of unlawful superstition. The presumption of some sinister design, must have influenced the jury in convicting a woman "of washing the inner nuke of hir plaid and aprone."§ Imposing sickness on one at sea, and washing him with salt water for recovery, are coupled as offences alike heinous: || and having carried a patient to be

* *Martin, Western Islands*, p. 40.

† *Richardson, the Folly of Pilgrimages in Ireland*, ch. v. p. 65. Dublin 1727, in 8vo.

‡ Trial of Johne Brughe, 1643, *ut sup.*

§ Trial of Agnes Scottie, 1616, *ut sup.*

|| Trial of Jonet Forsyth, 11 Nov. 1629. *Rec. Ork. f. 233. v.*

washed several times in the sea after sunset, which cured him, was esteemed a capital crime.* In July 1647, the kirk-session of St Cuthberts resolved on intimating publicly, “that non goe to Leith on lambmes-day, nor tak thair horses to be washed that day in the sea.”† In Ireland, the inhabitants held it an inviolable custom to drive their cattle into some pool or river on the first Sunday of August, as essential to the life of the animals during the year.‡

Washing being a sanctified rite, might become conversely, like other sanctified rites, the medium of sorcery. When the Jews were purified, and had washed their clothes, “Aaron offered them as an offering before the Lord.” Previous to ministering the sacrifices, he, the high-priest and his sons “shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not.” The hands were to be washed over a heifer which had never drawn in the yoke, slaughtered in a valley unsown. Both hands and feet were to be washed in purification.§ The latter, as a ceremonial, is now practised extensively in foreign countries.||

* Trial of Katherine Bigland *alias* Greibik, 7 June 1615. *Rec. Ork.* fol. 45. r.

† *St Cuthbert's K. S. R.*, 29 July 1647.—vol. 1598—1648. f. 390.

‡ *Piers' Description of the County of Westmeath*, ad an. 1682. ap. *Collectanea de Rebus Hibernicis*, v. i. p. 121.

§ *Numbers*, ch. viii. v. 20. *Exodus*, ch. xxix. v. 4. ch. xxx. v. 19—21. *Deuteronomy*, ch. xxi. v. 3—7.

|| *Morton, Travels*, p. 232. *Bright, Travels*, p. 38, may be consulted for a particular description of the ceremony, as performed by dignitaries of the church, and by royal personages.

Silence.—The bearer of the curative water of the Dow Loch, to a patient at a distance, was warned against saluting or speaking to any one on the way. Thomas Greave enjoined the brothers of the patient accompanying him, to preserve silence during their whole journey from Corachie towards Burley. Water was taken in silence at the Turret Port of Perth, and carried to a house by Isobel Haldane, who, on her knees, washed a child with it in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and then threw the water, together with the child's shirt, into the burn. Another directed south-running water to be taken from the river Tay, under silence both going and returning, and holding the mouth of the vessel to the north; and she washed a patient.* Sometimes the water was carried in silence at midnight, or employed after sunset.† Injunctions of silence were not coupled with the personal use of water exclusively. Patients walked around St Tredwell's Loch, in the isle of Papa, in silence, as often as was deemed sufficient for convalescence:‡ and one was directed to pass in silence around the "Cros kirk of Westbuster, and the Loch thairof, before sun-rising," for recovery of his health.§

* *Perth K. S. R.* 16 May 1623. Isobell Haldane. 13—26 May 1623. Margaret Hormsleugh.

† Trial of Katherine Bigland, *ut sup.* *Perth K. S. R.* 8 Sept. 1623. Alexander Lockhart.

‡ *Brand*, Description of Orkney, p. 58.

§ Trial of Katherine Craigie, 16 June 1640. *Rec. Ork. f.* 192. r.

Though allusions be found elsewhere, simply to plucking up herbs in silence for the cure of fevers,* it appears more usually in conjunction with water here; and as if the malady were absorbed by the water, precautions were taken that no one should pass over it in that dangerous state, and be infected. Christian, the wife of Thomas Smith "being deidlie seik," was directed to fill a vessel with sea-water between sunset and dayset, and putting three stones in it, carefully to preserve silence. But, meeting her husband, he commanded her to speak, when he was seized immediately with her distemper, and in peril of his life.†

Interruption of silence disturbed the necromantic process, and defeated the efficacy of the charm. The person observing it was in a mystical state. Thence the commentators on Scripture are not fortunate in considering an injunction of silence to a messenger, merely as for the purpose of dispatch, as when the bearer of a prophet's staff, to be laid on the face of a dead child, afterwards brought to life, was warned, "If thou meet any man, salute him not; and if any answer thee, salute him not again." The mystical or sanctified condition of the messenger, was not to be interrupted by breaking silence: and thence mar the purpose in view.‡

* *Thiers*, Liv. v. ch. 4. tom 1. p. 385, 7, 9.

† Trial of Katherine Grant, 25 Nov. 1623. *Rec. Ork.* f. 178.
Case of Margaret Hormsleugh, 1623, *ut sup.*

‡ *Harmer*, Observations, v. 11. p. 321. II *Kings*, ch. iv. v. 29.

Probably the rigid observance of silence had some resemblance to the mystical state of the dumb.

Resort, by the superstitious, to fountains, has been universal at all times. It combines mythology with medicine: the veneration of the sanctified with the relief expected through their mediation. But who would believe that miraculous cures in Britain have been vaunted by the credulous of the nineteenth century,—that because a patient found relief from immersion in St Winefrid's well, “an evident miracle has been wrought among us.”*

Let this be contrasted with the fate of Sir George Peckham, a pupil of Lilly the astrologer, who says, “he unfortunately died at St Winefrid's well in Wales, in which well he continued so long mumbling his *pater nosters* and *sancta Winefreda ora pro me*, the cold struck into his body; and after his coming forth of that well he never spake more.”†

Independently of the veneration of the Pagan deities being transferred along with their fanes and fountains, to christian saints, whereby the resort to both was continued, the celebrity of some may have had other sources. As Moses struck water from a rock, so did sanctified personages obtain it by prayer, the sign of the cross:—or fountains burst from the earth where the heads of martyrs fell. A sanative fountain sprung

* *Milner*, Miraculous Cure of Winefrid White at St Winefrid's well, 28th June 1805, p. 24. London 1806, in 8vo.

† *Lilly*, History of his Life and Times, p. 32.

at Holywood on the intercession of St Vinning, and remained still in repute in the beginning of the sixteenth century. "A most agreeable fountain" rose where St Patrick was prompted by Divine instinct to impress the sign of the cross on the ground: and St Palladius was alike successful, on removing a turf in the name of the Holy Spirit, to obtain water for baptism. The legends of the saints relate, that a certain king of Lothian condemned his daughter Thenew, who had been dishonoured by a young man in female attire, to be put to death. When precipitated in a car from the summit of a rock, the pole piercing the ground, a limpid fountain burst from the spot which flowed for centuries.*

In the north, a fountain sprung from the place bedewed with the blood of "St Eric, the king."† It is said that St Paul was beheaded on a small marble column, formerly, and perhaps yet preserved religiously under an iron grating, for the veneration of the devout, in a church near Rome. His head bounded thrice on falling to the earth, and from the spot struck each time, a fountain sprung. All three were endowed with sanative virtues.‡

* *Proprium Sanctorum*, fol. xxxviii. v.—Flor: A.D. 715. Vynning or Winning, "sprung of a noble family in Scotland."—Of St Patrick, f. lxx. v.—Of St Palladins, f. xxv. v.—Of St Thenew or Thenna, the mother of St Kentigern, f. xxxvi. ap. *Brev. Aberdon.* t. 11.

† *Ihre*, Glossarium in voce, *Kælla*, tom. 1. col. 1042.

‡ *Doubdan Voyage de la Terre Sainte*, ch. 70. p. 605. Paris 1661, in 4to.

From these and similar causes, wells were believed to be guarded by presiding powers. It is thence probably that libations, or even devotions are performed in compliance with ancient practice, by the crowned heads of Denmark, at a spring near Copenhagen, annually, as a propitiation for the year :* and that modern travellers have found the personal ornaments of savages left as votive offerings at fountains in the most remote regions.†

Possibly in later eras, sanctified wells were resorted to as much for amusement and traffic, as for superstitious ends. In the north of Scotland, young men conducted themselves “prophanelie on the Sabboathes in drinking, playing at futte-ball, danceing, and passing fra paroche to paroche—and sum passis to St Phitallis well to the offence of God, and ewill of mony.”‡ Dr Plot observes, that it was usual formerly to adorn with boughs and flowers, such wells as were eminent for curing distempers, on the saint’s day whose name the well bore, the visitors “diverting themselves with cakes and ale, and a little musick and danceing.”||

A public statute of the year 1579, prohibited pilgrimages to wells, among other superstitious practices : and a vehement denunciation issued from the Privy Council in 1629, levelled evidently against the Roman

* *Jones Travels*, 1822, etc. v. i. p. 48.

† *James’ Expedition to the Rocky Mountains*, v. ii. p. 223.

‡ *Presbyterie Buik of Aberdeen*, 19 June 1607, in MS.

|| *Plot*, Staffordshire, ch. viii. § 89, p. 318.

Catholic portion of the community in general, while at the same time proving the revival and permanence of the custom. It seems not to have been enough that congregations were interdicted from the pulpit, preceding the wonted period of resort, or that individuals humbled on their knees, in public acknowledgement of their offence, were rebuked or fined for disobedience. Now it was declared that, for the purpose of restraining the superstitious resort "in pilgrimages to chappellis and wellis, which is so frequent and common in this kingdome, to the great offence of God, scandall of the kirk, and disgrace of his Majesteis government:" that commissioners cause diligent search "at all such pairts and places where this idolatrous superstition is used: and to take and apprehend all suche persons of whatsoever rank and qualitie, whom they sall deprehend going in pilgrimage to chappellis and wellis, or whome they sall know thameselffes to be guiltie of that cryme, and to commit thame to waird," until measures should be adopted for their trial and punishment.*

Nevertheless, this custom seems to have been engrafted on the habits of the people, insomuch, that until a late period, multitudes from the western isles continued their resort so zealously to a well near the chapel of Grace, and distinguished by the same name in

* *Commission against Jesuits, Priests, or Communicants and Papists, going in Pilgrimage*, 25 July 1629. *Records of this Privy Council*, in MS. vol. 1629—1630, fol. 141, 174.

a northern parish, that in the opinion of a clergyman of that district, "nothing short of violence could restrain their superstition."*

The laws of the southern part of the kingdom, from a very early date, prohibited superstitious resort to wells. Those of the Lombards conjoining sacrilege and incantation in the same sentence, forbid the superstitions practised there.†

The waters of the river Choaspis, in Persia, was employed chiefly in magical rites, and for the use of monarchs.‡ The dying are left to perish by the Ganges. In the course of preceding centuries, and especially while the crusaders had subjugated Palestine, even the waters of the river Jordan were brought to Europe for baptising the children of potentates ;—and formerly, as at present, a pilgrimage from distant regions carries thousands of individuals annually, to perform their ablutions in this sanctified stream.||

Salt.—Among the multifarious ingredients of superstitious ceremony, none is more essential than salt. It has been used as a passport to salvation, and as an expulsor of the Satanic host. In the age of Elisha, the Jewish prophet, its virtues were established in one

* *Shaw*, History of the Province of Moray, (1775,) p. 363. Elgin 1827, in 4to.

† *De Ariolis*, Lib. ii. tit. 38. l. l. ap. *Lindenbrog*, p. 635.

‡ *Lucianus*, *Necyomantia*, § 7. vide not. ap. *Opera*, t. i. p. 465.

|| *Turner*, *Tour to the Levant*, v. ii. p. 211.

country, and in the reign of Alexander the heathen monarch, in another. It was deemed an acceptable portion of all oblations, by the Mosaic institutions: nor was it ever deficient in the sacrifices of the Romans. It was an ingredient, alike in pure religious rites, an instrument of sorcery, and a medicinal application.—And under all these different characters, it has been employed in Scotland.

Sugar is put in the mouth of an infant the first time it enters the house of a stranger, in defect of which, a few grains of salt, perhaps used originally, are substituted.—In Northumberland, it receives salt, bread and an egg.*

In the Isle of Man, “no one will go out on any material affairs, without taking some salt in their pockets; much less remove from one house to another: marry put out a child or take one to nurse without salt being interchanged.”—The necessitous, though almost famished in the streets, refuse food, unless salt be conjoined in the benevolence.†

Many of the superstitions regarding it, seem to be derived from remote antiquity. Salt was considered a substance the most acceptable to the gods.‡ Salted

* *Hutchinson, View of Northumberland*, v. ii. Appendix, p. 4, *Gifts to Infants*.

† *Waldron, Description of the Isle of Man*, (1720—1730,) p. 187.

‡ *Plato*, as quoted by *Plutarch*, *Sympos. prob. i. ap. Op. t. 11. p. 684*.

meal entered every sacrifice of the Romans.* It was enjoined to the high priest of the Jews, "with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt."† Nothing could be more sanctified: and fossil salt, to be used in sacrifice by the Egyptians, was procured by the priests of Jupiter Ammon, from deserts around the temple of this divinity, as preferable to that of the sea.‡

The celebration of baptism in Scotland by a layman, was afterwards confirmed by a priest administering a particle of salt. The Decretalia explain, that the use of the consecrated salt in the mouth of one about to be baptized, is for rendering the rite more efficacious. But it is to be rather understood literally, as for averting demoniac influence.|| Many religious ceremonies were devised for the expulsion of malevolent beings, as well as for spiritual protection. Great coincidence may be recognized between the Pagan customs, and those of the early Christians. The time has been when either people were the children of the same parents, and contended for the superiority of those tenets and customs which they fostered individually.—Administering salt in baptism is yet preserved by the ceremonies of the Roman Catholic church.

* *Pliny*, Hist. Nat. Lib. xxxi. c. 41.

† *Leviticus*, ch. ii. v. 13. *Numbers*, ch. xviii. v. 19.

‡ *Arrian*, de Expeditione Alexandri, Lib. iii. c. 1. The Egyptian priests abstained from salt, *Plutarch*, ut sup.

|| *Gratian*, Decretalia, part iii. de Consecratione Distinctio, 3. Aquam sale conspersa. Distinctio 4: De Consecratione—et insidias Diaboli avertit et a phantasmatis versutiis homines defendit."

Salt was the single ingredient employed in compounding holy water, esteemed of such ineffable virtue in expelling demons, and in sanctifying the religious rites of Scotland. Perhaps a corresponding mystical lotion, called "remedie watter forspeking," resembled it in medicine. When a culprit was accused of repairing to the house of Elspeth Sandisone, who was bereft of her senses—and of preparing a water "ye call the remedie watter forspeking: and took watter into ane round cape, and went out into the byre: and took sumthing out of your purse lyk vnto great salt, and did cast thairin, and did spit thrie severall tymes in the samen: and ye confest yourself, when ye had done so, ye *aunchit in bitts*, quhilk is ane Norne terme, quhilk is to say ye blew your braith thairin: and thair-after ye sent it to the said Elspeth with the servand woman of the hous, and bad, that the said Elspeth sould be waschet thairin, hands and feit, and scho sould be als holl as ever scho was."*

Salt was an ingredient in the most compound prescriptions, and administered in its simplest form, in consistency with all mystical expedients. Aliesone Nisbet endeavoured to preserve a woman in labour, by "causeing take ane pan fillit with het watter, with certane salt cassin thairin; and aftir heitting thairof vpone the fyre, quhill it was seithing and bellowing

* Trial of Mareoun Richart, alias Langland, 29 May 1629. Whether the date of some of the trials is 1629, or 1633, is doubtful. Also *Aunchit* may be *auncilit*. *Rec. Ork.* f. 48. v.

hett—wascheing of the seik persone thairwith, hir leggis and feit downwardis : and be the dipping thairefter of her fingeris in the watter, quhairat the said Aliesone past thryse widderschynnis about hir bed, muttering out certaine charmes in vnknawin wordis, and returning bak thryse southwards about the bed ; and thairefter be cuming to the fyre with the said pan and watter thairin, and casting the watter thairvpon, and quhomelling the pan vpone the fyre, with the pronunceing of thir feirful wordis, “ Banes to the fyre, and saull to the devill,”—which accomplished the cure.*

Another patient was cured by south-running water, and “ casting a certane quantitie of salt and quheit about hir bed,” as previously observed. Likewise the remedy which comprehended burning straw at each corner of a patient’s bed, may be recollected.†

This combination of wheat and salt was propitiatory, as exemplified among the Romans. It was included in the Jewish oblations. Formerly in Ireland, the public functionaries and their attendants, were sprinkled with wheat and salt, by women in the streets, and by girls from the windows of their apartments.‡ In other countries, those subject to the Russian dominion, bread and salt are offered as congratulatory to strangers.||

* Trial of Aliesone Nisbet, 25 July 1632. *Rec. Just.*—*Widderschynnis*, against the course of the sun.—*Quhomelling*, inverting.

† Trial of James Reid, 1603.—Of Jonet Stewart, 1597. *ut sup.*

‡ *Camden*, *Britannia*, by *Gough*, v. iv. p. 469.

|| *Ker Porter Travels*, vol. i. p. 37. Presented to the Grand Duke

Wheat was in itself an acceptable offering to the gods. Herodotus witnessed oblations to Diana, by the Thracian and Pæonian women, who did not consider religious rites as sanctified, unless conjoined with wheat straw. The Hyperboreans of his era, transmitted consecrated things in wheat straw, to the temple of that goddess in Delos.*

One of Numa's precepts was, not to sacrifice without grain.†

Therefore salt and wheat were propitiatory offerings among the ancients. Whence under various modifications, both came into repute among the moderns in mystical ceremonies.

Besides their application for soothing human maladies, salt and wheat were used in combination as a charm for animals. Some of each was bound in a cloth to a cow's horn, as a preservative from disease:‡ and salt and wheat bread were put into a cow's ears, with certain ceremonies analogous to propitiatory sacrifice, to render the milk productive.||

Michael at Tcherkask, "on a magnificent gold salver," and to the Russian mission at Kiakhta on returning from China.—*Timkowski, Travels*, v. ii. p. 436.

* *Herodotus*, lib. iv. § 33.

† *Plutarch*, in Numa, ap. *Op. t. l.* p. 70.

‡ *North Berwick Kirk Session Register*, in MS, 16 Oct. 1663. Adam Gillies and his wife.

|| *Humbie Kirk Session Register*, in MS. 16 Sept. 1649. Agnes Gourlay.

Possibly, when put among the milk first drawn from a cow after calving, it may be considered as having been designed originally in propitiation:* and when thrown into the churn, as an expulsor of demons, or an antidote to demoniac influence. Elisha cast salt into a well, which will admit of the same explanation.†

Burying a living animal with a quantity of salt, may be rather viewed as propitiatory of an evil spirit.‡ One tranformation of Hecate was to a cat.—Salt is distributed by a certain tribe in India, in atonement for killing a cat. It is an offering in relation to a divinity of the infernal regions.

Perhaps the same may be said of throwing salt spilled at table, over the left shoulder. It may be in atonement for the evil apprehended from the falling of so precious a substance. If it “falleth towards a man at the table, it portendeth in common consent, some ill news.”|| If falling towards the fire, resentment.§

About the same time that the mistress of a family in Ireland was accustomed to send salt into the field,¶ the celebrated mathematician, Napier of Merchiston, proposed to make the “land mair profitable than it

* *Ure*, Parish of Killearn, Stat. Acct. v. xvi. p. 121.

† *Thiers*, t. i. p. 90. “People are superstitious who throw salt into a churn, lest the production of butter may be prevented.”

‡ Trial of Isobell Young, 1629. *ut sup.*

|| *Perkin's Discourse*, ch. iii. p. 72. Cambridge, 1608, in 12mo.

§ *Ramesey*, ΕΑΜΙΝΘΟΛΟΓΙΑ, p. 271.

¶ *Camden*, Britannia, v. iv. p. 470.

was befoir, be the sawing of salt upone it.”* Superstitious practices may have disclosed its fertilizing qualities.

In both countries it has been customary to put salt on a corpse. In the highlands and lowlands of Scotland, separate portions of salt and earth are so employed: indicating, perhaps, the relics of propitiation.

Salt, or salt and water, was applied anciently for distempered eyes.† But its superstitious uses have been much more extensive than its medicinal application. Indeed, to produce a substance which the ignorant had never seen,—to cause it vanish by the simplest expedient,—and then to restore its integrity by another, would be of itself sufficient to awaken superstition.

In the absence of satisfactory explanations, the superstitious use of salt may be referred generally to some contemplation of demoniac influence. Yet “the devil abhorred salt, as the emblem of immortality,”—thence it “was consecrated by the Papists, as profiting the health of the body, and for the banishment of demons.”‡

Travellers relate that the Arabs of Egypt throw salt into the fire, as an antidote to mischief from an evil

* *Birrel*, Diarey, ad an. 1598. p. 47.

† *Adomnan* in vita *Columbæ*, lib. ii. cap. 7. *Ordricus Vitalis Historia Ecclesiastica*. ap. *Duchesne*, p. 40.

‡ *Moresinus* Papatus, p. 153, 154.

eye :* or before loading their camels on a journey—
 “concluding, as the blue flame arises, that every evil
 genius is banished.”† Is their presence indicated by
 blue? has this sulphureous hue any relation to the in-
 gredients abounding most, according to vulgar preju-
 dice in the ordinary abode of Satan? At a memorable
 convention of sorcerers with him their chief, in North
 Berwick church, in the year 1590, the light of a can-
 dle “apperit blew.”‡ When a patient had passed
 through a skein of yarn twice, “it was burnt in ane
 grit fyre quhilk turnit haillelie blew.”§

III. *Reserving Disease.*—The fables of the ancients
 figure the reservation of those distempers which might
 have afflicted mankind in Pandora’s box, from whence
 they escaped to overwhelm the world.

If the Scottish sorcerers were thought capable of in-
 fection and cure; if the credulous invested them with
 unlimited faculties, they did not deny them the power
 of modifying or controlling the means of mischief.
 Thus they could sicken one at will: they could restore
 him to health: they could hold his malady in suspense,
 or lay it dormant, to be excited and let loose as occasion

* *Pococke*, Description of the East, v. i. p. 181.

† *Burckhardt*, Travels in Nubia, p. 169.

‡ Trial of Johnne Feane *alias* Cwninghame, 26 Dec. 1590. *Rec. Just.* A bluish light of a candle is alluded to in the proceedings re-
 garding Christian Shaw in 1699.

§ Trial of Thomas Greave, 1623, *ut sup.*

should require : or they could transfer it immediately from one animated being to another.

As if water, wherein a patient washed, had become impregnated with the distemper, precautions were taken to cast it out in such a place that none could be infected by passing over it. Thus, it was presumed, that the malady might be disengaged and ready for a new infection. It is said, that in the Highlands a cat is washed in the water which has served for the ablution of an invalid : as if the disease absorbed from one living creature could be received by another, instead of being let free.

Superstition admitted, that a distemper once active might be kept dormant and ready for renewing its ravages. Long ago an attempt was made to save a culprit, by contesting that the indictment contained “ane gros senslessness, that ane seiknes suld be laid beneth ane barn dur : because ane seiknes can nocht be inharent, but in ane leving creatour.”* But these words involve a very profound question in physiology, namely, the site of disease ; and whether the germ of infection can exist independently, or must be always in union with, and operating on an animated subject.

Our progenitors assumed that it might be held in reserve.

Agnes Sampson was convicted of curing Robert Kers, of a disease “laid on him be ane Westland

* Trial of Issobell Young, 1629. *ut sup.*

warloc quhen he was at Dumfreis, quhilk seiknes scho tuik vpone hirsself, and keipit the samen with grit greining and torment quhill the morne, at quhilk tyme thair wes ane grit dyn hard in the hous: quhilk seiknes scho cuist of hirsself in the clois, to the effect ane catt or dog mycht haif gottin the samin: and, notwithstanding, the samin was laid vpone Alexander Douglas in Dalkeyth, quha dwynit and deyit thairwith; and the said umquhill Robert Kers was maid haill.”*

This will afford an illustration of the Highland custom. The sorceress seems to have designed that some animal should receive infection of the distemper then disengaged, which, nevertheless, accidentally contaminated a man, and proved fatal. The principle is not unlike that assumed in another case, where the shirt of a patient being carried to an empiric, who should ascertain his malady or cure it; he exclaimed, “Allace the witchcraft appointit for ane vther hes lichtit vpon him!” but it had not yet reached his heart.†

IV. *Transferring Disease.*—Demonographers instance the transference of disease in illustration of their favourite maxim, that Satan promotes mischief from expecting benefit by the change.‡

It is related, that the Countess of Lothian, “being vexed with a cancer in her breast, implored the help of

* Trial of Agnes Sampson, 1590, *ut sup.* Warloc—wizard.

† Trial of Thomas Greave, 1623. *ut sup.*

‡ Bodinus *Demonomania*, lib. iii. c. 2. p. 249.

a notable warlock, by a bye-name called *Playfair*, who condescended to heal her, but with the condition, that the sore should fall on them she loved best: whereunto she agreeing, did convalesce; but, the Earl her husband found the boil in his throat, of which he died shortly thereafter.”*

The transference of disease could be operated merely by wishes, and grasping the hand of the intended sufferer.† Many charms were employed to relieve a woman of the pain imposed on her by Helen Park, a midwife, on whom they recoiled by such supernatural means, and proved fatal.‡

A woman was cured by different mystical expedients and certain enchanted yarn: but her malady infecting “James Liddell, cordiner in Spote, at his cuming first over the dur, quhair the said inchantit yairn wes laid, quhairby scho convalescit and he deceissit.”§

The distemper might pass through a succession of animated beings before proving mortal, nor was it transferred indispensably to the human species. Katherine Greive pactioned for the cure of Elspeth Tayleour “deadlie diseasit—and immediatlie helped hir and took the seiknes of hir, and cuist it on ane calf,

* *Scot, Staggering State*, p. 109. The sufferer seems to have been William, Earl of Lothian, who died in 1675.

† Trial of Katherine Jonesdochter, 2 Oct. 1616. *Rec. Shet. f. 33. v.*

‡ Trial of Aliesone Nisbet, 1623. *ut sup.*

§ Trial of Isobell Young, *ut sup.*

and immediatlie the calf died.”* A woman was cured by transference of her disorder to a cow, which soon “ran woid and deit.”† In like manner, a mare died as a man recovered; and nothing was found in place of her heart, “bot ane blob of watter.”‡

The mother of a sick child was directed to weigh the child, and taking its weight in barley, to prepare meat for it three successive mornings; then to take the first sup of the meat “and give it to Katherine Sinclairis bairne that was in the hous; quhairvpoun that bairne mendit, and the vther bairne grew seik; and quhen the said Katherine heard it, scho was angrie” and threatened the prescriber, “quha bad hir set the credell on the vther syd of the hous, quher the calff stuid, quhilk the said Katherine did—and sua on the nixt night, the bairne was weill and the calff deit.”§ This corresponds to one infecting Helen Home with a distemper, then “taking the same off the said Helen Home, and laying it vpone Jonet Clerk hir servand-woman” from whom “it was cassin vpone ane lamb.”||

The fact of these supernatural transferences became the subject of legal investigation. A witness summoned to establish the infection of Katherine Wardlaw with

* Trial of Katherine Greive, 1642, *ut sup.*

† Trial of Thomas Greave, 1623, *ut sup.*

‡ Trial of Jonet Forsyth, 11 Nov. 1629. *Rec Ork. f. 223. v. Blob*—bag.

§ Trial of Katherine Grant, 1623. *ut sup.* Or—before.

|| Trial of Johnne Brughe, 1643. *ut sup.*

a strange distemper and frenzy, and transferring it "to the catt of the hous," swore, that she asked her mistress "what aileth your woman:" and leaning on the bed, said, "God sould warrand the said Katherine Wardlaw at this tyme;" but, "within tuo houres thair-after the catt was fund dead." From acquittal of all the other charges, the conviction and execution of the accused must have proceeded on this evidence.*

As the devoted animal sickened or perished, the original patient recovered. Beatie Miller "came to Bessie Jhonsoun, and askit hir helth for Godis saik;" who answered, "that scho had no moir witchcraft nor that cat, qubilk scho took be the lug and cust it by hir." However, Beatie affirmed that her health was restored, and the cat had died. Bessie maintained, on the other hand, and offered to prove, by the testimony of her neighbours, that the cat was still living,—a matter of no mean importance for her safety.†

The like principle extended to cattle. Among those of Caithness a distemper appeared called "the *heastie*, because it putteth them in a rage, and killeth them suddenly." By transporting a portion of the diseased animal from the owner's house to the dwelling of another, the cattle of the latter sickened, while those of the former recovered.‡

* Trial of Margaret Hutchesone, 10 Sept. 1661. *Rec. Just.*

† *North Berwick*, K.S.R. 16 June 1611. *nor*—than.

‡ *Mackaile*, "What is heastie?" ap. *Sibbald*, Collections in MS. p. 11. written 1666—1683.

A cow being drawn out of the byre as dead, William Scottie "straikit the kow along the head, and then drew his hand vpoun the cattis head, and shoe fell dead."*

In certain cases, it seems to have been understood, that the distempers were of the same kind. Marion Moir threatened another that she should cause her be burnt if her cow died; but the animal recovered that night: "and hir neighbouris ox, struckin with the same diseas as the kow had, presentlie died."† It is rarely that the facts are more distinctly specified, than the cure of one animal and the immediate death of another.‡

The purpose of the sorcerer might fail, it might miss his object and strike another, as may be deduced from the patient's shirt. Some evil intent levelled against one "by the providence of God fell vpone his catt, so that she did fight and sueatt till shoe dyed:" and a distemper was cast on "a litle dog going about the house," which would have been the death of "Jonet Bell, if, by the providence of God, it had not falne vpone the dog."§

In England, it was believed that a fit of ague could

* Trial of William Scottie, vagabound, warlache, 7 Feb. 1643. *Rec. Ork. f. 256. v.*

† Trial of Mareoun Cumlaquoy, 1 June 1643. *Rec. Ork. f. 272. v.*

‡ Trial of Helen Hunter, 26 April 1643. *Rec. Ork. f. 262. v.*

§ Trial of Margaret Hutcheson, 1661. *ut sup.*

be transferred to a dog, by breaking a salted cake of bran and giving it to the animal.*

It is easy to discover that these superstitions are derived from Jewish history. A vindictive prophet, who had prescribed a cure for leprosy, punished his own servant by infecting, not only himself, but his whole posterity with it: "and he went out from his presence a leper, as white as snow."†

The transference of sin to a scape-goat, which carried the whole load of iniquity from the people to a desert place, is an earlier illustration of the principle.‡

It may be traced to the execration of a sacrifice by the Egyptians, whereby any evil incident to the people might fall on the head of the victim, which was formerly thrown into the river, but afterwards given to strangers.§ It is not said that the evil was transferred to them; nor in the modern custom, practised in Tripoli, of a widow transferring her misfortunes from herself by delivering four eggs to the first stranger she meets.||

In India, an earthen pot with a lighted lamp is

* *Brand, Popular Antiquities by Ellis*, v.11. p. 507. Vide v.11. p.155. for one person taking the sin of another.

† *II Kings*, ch. v. v. 27.

‡ *Leviticus*, ch. xvi. v. 21.

§ *Herodotus*, lib.11. § 39. *Plutarch*, de Iside et Osiride.

|| *Letters from Tripoli*, v.11. p. 271.

affirmed to be set adrift on a river, to bear away the accumulated sins of those who are conscious of guilt.*

From all the preceding facts, disease seems to have been recognised by the superstitions of Scotland as subsisting under an invisible, yet substantial form, susceptible of controul by sorcerers.

* Wilford, ap. *Asiatic Researches*, v. ix. p. 96, 97.

CHAPTER III.

MISCELLANEOUS REMEDIES, OR ANTIDOTES TO
DISEASE.

SOME uniformity may be discovered in the preceding mystical measures. The following are more miscellaneous and irregular. Many circumstances conspire in establishing, that those superstitions, in places the most widely apart, have had a common source; though, on comparing many expedients adopted by the Scottish empirics and sorcerers, with those in repute elsewhere, little correspondence may be found between them.* The extension of our knowledge might enlarge the parallel.

If the ancients sought the origin of magic in medicine, it is not without reason that later writers find “a world of wonders,—of cures by wordes, by lookes, by signs, by figures, by characters, and ceremonious rites,”†—a confused and ample assemblage, exceeding the faculties of any one individual to reduce to order, even with the most copious store of industry.

* *Deusingius*, de Morborum Superstitiosa Origine et Curatione, ap. Fascic. Dissert. p. 1—62.

† *Cotta*, the Infallible, True, and Assured Witch, p. 68.

Animal, vegetable, and mineral products were used, whether simply or compounded with various ingredients. The benefit from "agrimony, ripple grass, banwort, red nettles, alexander, tansey, borage, anniseed, sage," and other vegetables, when administered in food or lotions, or compounded with salves, is frequently recorded:—nor are some of these even now abandoned.*

Pernicious consequences are alleged to have frequently resulted from drinking infusions of foxtree or foxglove leaves. The kirk session of St Cuthbert's examined Heleine Profeit, whether she had given her child "ane drink of fox trie leaves or not." Another was accused of gathering them to a woman, from which, it was reported, she had died. Elspeth Collier was charged with the death of her children by the same means. But after the minister had consulted both the physician and the judge,—as she had given "the fox-tree leaves out of ignorance, and not of intention to kill,—and found to bewaill the death of hir childring continewallie," her penalty should be only a sharp rebuke. Their death had been immediate.† Janet

* *Perth K. S. R.* 13—26 May 1623: Margaret Hormsleugh.—25 June 1625, Bessie Wright.—*Trial of Bessie Aitken*, 12 Nov. 1597. *Rec. Just.*—*Halyrudhous K. S. R.* George Wilsone. *Ripple grass*—rib grass.

† *St Cuthbert's K. S. R.* 27 July 1614: Helen Scougall, f. 83.—3 Nov. 1636: Heleine Profeit, f. 248.—*Ult. Ap.* 18—25 May 1648. Elspeth Collier, or Issobell Porteous, f. 402, 3.

Shairp, accused of hastening her son's death by such a potion, pleaded that it was his own desire, that she had partaken of it previously : she was ignorant of its evil qualities, she designed it for benefit, and that it was commonly used in the place. The poisonous nature of foxtree was alleged on the other hand, and the illegality of any but physicians and skilful persons preparing potions. A pecuniary mulct was imposed on the offender, and the use of the herb publicly interdicted.* Gerard remarks, "the fox gloves, in that they are bitter, are hot and dry, with a certaine kind of clensing quality, yet are they of no use."†

St John's day was devoted, principally, for the collection of herbs designed for medicinal or occult purposes.‡ Alesoun Piersoun, conceiving it the practice of supernatural beings, gathered them before sunrise for compounding salves.§

Oil and unguents must have been highly appreciated. Among these a mercurial unguent is alluded to in 1597. Jonet Stewart undertook to cure the young laird of Bargeny of leprosy, with "saw maid of quick silver, and rubbit it on the patient: quhilk scho allegeit scho leirnit at hir fader ; albeit scho did the samen

* Perth K. S. R. 27 April 1624 : Janet Shaw.

† Gerard Herball, ch. 277. p. 791.

‡ Martin de Arles de Superstitionibus, § 8, 9. ap. Tractatus Tractatum, tom. xi. A very rare edition, Paris 1517, specifies the work as "nuperrimé in lucem editus."

§ Trial of Alesoun Piersoun, 28 May 1588. Rec. Just.

be vnlesum meanis, scho haifing na sik knowlege as to cure leprosie, quhilk the maist expert men in medicine and chirurgerie are nocht abill to doe.”* A child being stripped, was rubbed with “the oyle of wormes,” and “held over the reik of a fyre.”† Oil extracted from earth worms has been recommended in modern times, as a sanative of peculiar virtue. Agri-mony and black sheep’s grease, were employed in combination: likewise, black wool and butter, apparently for unction, were prescribed for one being “witched,” and for “dint of an ill wind:”‡ also, as a remedy for cold, “black wooll, oyl d’olive, and egges.”§ The virtues of the first are still in vogue, for while the author of these pages was recovering of a dangerous fever in spring 1826, an estimable relative presented him with some black wool to be put into the ears, as a preservative from deafness—too frequently the consequence of such a malady. He availed himself eagerly of the gift—though he shall abstain from declaring its efficacy. Fortunately, perhaps, for his relative, she did not live in an earlier era. Jonet Cock “was thought to be a skilled woman,” yet she was strangled and burnt.

* Trial of Jonet Stewart, *ut sup.* Saw—salve. “* * * rubeam lepram a Mercurio Solis, albam a Mercurio Lunæ sanari.” *Paracelsus de Vita Longa*, c. iii. p. 35. A.D. 1560.

† *Halyrudhous* K. S. R. v. iv. 26 Oct. 1647: Johne Rae, his wife and mother.

‡ *Perth* K. S. R. 13—26 May: Margaret Hormsleugh. 22 May 1623: Janet Wall.

§ Trial of Jonet Cock, 11 Nov. 1661. *Rec. Just.*

“Jonet Gerner” gave “drinkes of black henis aiges and aquavite to sindrie persones that had the hert aikandes.”* In England, the blood obtained by cutting off the tail of a black cat, was employed for curing eruptions :† and at present, that of a black fowl is administered for erisypelas on the South American continent.‡

The blood of a red cock in a flour cake, was prescribed here in 1597, as remarked above.

Mystical words, numbers, or ceremonies, formed, very often, an integral part of the remedy. Invocations or maledictions, expressions and gestures, now unintelligible, entered it also. The sign of the cross, certainly inseparable of old, but viewed by the protestants as the most superstitious of all, Crespet determines to be the only one not superstitious.§ A modern author seems to think it of divine origin !|| To relieve a patient, one “charmes hir, fadbinding hir, laying ane hand to hir head, ane vther to her fute, corslingis, saying, mother’s blissing to the head, mother’s blissing to the feit, and mother’s blissing to the heart.”¶

* *St. Cuthbert’s* K. S. R. 16 Oct. 1628.

† *Turner de Morbis Cutaneis*, p. 80, 81.

‡ *Caldcleugh, Travels*, v. ii. p. 212. The blood is believed to be warmer than that of other birds.

§ *Crespet de la hayne de Satan*, f. 153.

|| *Deane, Worship of the Serpent*, p. 138.

¶ Trial of Anne Tailyeour, 15 July 1624. *Rec. Ork.* f. 184. *Corslingis*—crosswise.

To promote the efficacy of a potion, it had to be taken according to mystical numbers. A draught repeated nine times from the horn of a living ox, was prescribed for hooping cough: together with putting the patient “nyne severall tymes in the happer of ane grinding mill.”* In adopting this remedy for hooping cough, it appears that the hopper was put in motion, and that some other ceremonies were concomitant.† The survivance of the ox was proved.

A portion of grain, against which a child had been weighed, was to be administered, as medicinal, during three successive mornings.‡ Weighing an epileptic patient against a quantity of grain, was practised on the continent.§ In the east, weighing a potentate was an important ceremony, and probably involved superstitious principles.

The nature of another remedy, a resting or wresting thread, is uncertain. As a test whether a patient had fever, she was directed to take “a wolne threid and a slewef, and put the threid about hir bodie and the sleweff,—and to gang anes about, in the name of the Father, Sone, and Halie Ghaist.” Another patient

* *North Berwick* K. S. R. 15 Jan. 1611: Bessie Murgoun. Jhone Hodge. The horn was produced to the Kirk Session, who committed it to the custody of the clerk.

† *Perth* K. S. R. 30 Dec. 1634. 4 March 1635: Robert Thomson.

‡ Trial of Katherine Grant, 1623. *ut sup.*

§ *Thiers*, t. i. p. 377. quotes Denys Chartreux, for “ponderatio hominis ad æqualitatem siliginis contra morbum caducum.”

having died after application of "a threid and ane slewe, and ane hois," her death was ascribed to sorcery.*

An alleged Satanic precept was, to make "a wresting thread, and give it in the name of the Father, Sone, and the Holie Gaist, and say, Bone to bone, synnew to synnew, and flesche to flesche, and bluid to bluid, it wald mak ony wrest of man or beast haill."† A person named Garth, in Yell, one of the Shetland islands, having contracted "ane great fever and lyghtnes in his head, that he could get no rest nor sleip in somer 1613: and Gregorious Thomasone haveing cum to visite him, and informit of the said diseas, he tauld Garth that thair was ane woman in Delting, called Barbara Stovd, quha culd give him ane resting threid." Gregorious repairing to the woman under silence of night, and describing the patient's state, she refused to give him a thread until he should himself apply for it: "quhairof Garth being aduerteisit be the said Gregorious, he come over to hir, and [they] come together to hir in ane somer morneing, earlie befor the sone, about Jonesmes 1614: and at said conference, she tuik ane woll threid, and vsit certane crossis and coniurations upoun it. She gave it to hir dochter to be given to the said Garth, to be woone about his head nyne

* *Aberdein Presbyterie Buik*, 24 July 1607: Isabell Smyth. *Wolne*—woollen? the thread was grey.

† Trial of Katherine Caray, 3 June 1616. *Rec. Ork.*

nyghtis, and then to be burnt: quhairby Garth gat rest." Afterwards, because "at certaine tymes of the moone, he found himself not so weel as he wount to be, he came to hir this somer, and desyrit hir to mak him perfytt haill, quhilk she promiseit to do at hallowmes nixt."*

James Reid cured John Crystie of swelling, by putting "thre silk poyntis in his devillisch manner about his wrist, quhilk remainit ten oulkis with him, and went away fra the said Johnne, quhat way he knew nocht."†

Sorcerers could render sanctified things the medium of mischief, such as drawing a thread through holy oil.‡ Evil was effected by means of a thread in Scotland. Laying an "inchantit threid" before the door, infected the inhabitant of the house. The Lady Ormestoun having dismissed Alexander Hamiltoun from her gate, saying, "Away, custroun carle, ye will get not nothing from me," he evoked Satan, and received from him "the boddome of a blue clue." According to the instructions received along with it, the "blue threid" was laid down "foirnent the said Lady Ormestoun's yett of Woidheid, and within ane schort tyme, scho

* Trial of Barbara Thomasdochter, spous to Johansee Erasmussone in Vnder Stovd, in Delting, 2 Oct. 1616. *Rec. Shet.* f. 33, 34. *Woone*—wound.

† Trial of James Reid, 21 July 1603. *Rec. Just.* The true import of the word wrist, may have been misunderstood at the time.

‡ *Martin de Arles*, § 58.

and her eldest dochter tuik bayth suddane seikness, and was both bereft of thair naturall lyfe thairby.”* A blue clue is alleged to have been used in modern divination regarding a future spouse.† It is not to be ascertained that blue was more a mystical colour than some others in Scotland. The apparel of labourers and husbandmen, was restricted to grey and white on work days, in the year 1457, and light blue, green, and red, on holidays. In the year 1621, grey, white, blue, and black colours were enjoined for ordinary apparel. Blue seems to distinguish Christians from Mahometans in the East; and there also a “mystical thread” is worn among the highest tribes, “flowing loosely from the shoulders, across the body, down the right thigh.”‡

A circle has always borne an important share in occult purposes, which some have ascribed, absurdly enough, to its figure being the most remote from that of the cross. But the properties of the cross are of very recent invention, compared with the mystical circle which Aristotle speaks of in Thessaly.

A circle protected those within its precincts from the invasion of Satan: and transmission through a

* Trial of Alexander Hamiltoun, 22 Jan. 1630. *Rec. Just.*

† *Notes to the Poems* of Robert Burns. One “going alone in the dark to a kiln, a clue of blue yarn is thrown into the pot.” If on a check felt by him who winds it off, he asks “who holds?” he shall hear the name of his future spouse from the kiln.

‡ *Moor Hindu Pantheon*, p. 40. note.

cleft, or through such an opening as could be resolved into a circular form, has been recognized as productive of the most beneficial consequences.

Children under hetic fever, or consumptive patients, were transmitted thrice through a circular wreath of woodbine, cut during the encrease of the March moon, let down over the body, from the head to the feet.* Jonet Stewart healed sundry women by "taking ane garland of grene woodbynd, and causing the patient pas thryis throw it, quhilk thairefter scho cut in nyne pieces, and cast in the fyre." Another transmitted the sick "throw ane girth of woodbind thryis thre times, saying, 'I do this in name of the Father, the Sone, and the Halie Ghaist.'" It appears that twenty-four hours intervened between each transmission.† Another put her patient through a hesp of green yarn, while the house shook, and then cut it in nine pieces, which were buried in the lands of three owners.‡ Thomas Greive directed a patient to pass thrice through a hesp of yarn, which he then burnt. Likewise he cured Michael Glassis wife, by causing her break a hole on the north side of the chimney, "and putting ane hesp of yairne thre severall tymes furth at the said hoill, and taking it bak at the dur, and thairefter causeing the said Michael's wyfe ix. tymes pas throw

* *Shaw*, History of the Province of Moray, p. 282. Elgin, 1827. The former edition was composed in 1775.

† *Trial*, 1597, *ut sup.*

‡ *Perth K. S. R.* 22—26 May 1623.

the said hesp of yairne.”* Was flax a mystical plant? The ancients say it sprung from imperishable earth.† It is not improbable that destruction of the curative substance bore an analogy to throwing out the water impregnated with disease.

Let the preceding expedients be compared with the custom adopted in England, of stripping distempered children, and transmitting them head foremost through the artificial cleaving of a young tree, held forcibly asunder. The wound being then bound up carefully, convalescence is anticipated as the bark heals; but should the cleft not unite, the remedy proves abortive: and the patient relapses or dies, if the tree be cut down.‡

Distempered children were formerly drawn through a perforated stone in Cornwall; and even adults crept through it to cure their own complaints. Other stones with a smaller aperture, admit the intromission of a limb.||

In Persia, transmission through a long fissure in a rock, by crawling on hands and knees, is said to be a test of legitimate birth.§ In the Church of the Holy

* Trial, 1623, *ut sup.*

† Plutarch, de Iside et Osiride.

‡ White, Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne, Part i. Section 28. p. 202. An ash tree which had been split for this purpose, is represented *Gentleman's Magazine*, v. lxxiv. p. 516, 909, for 1804.—*Brand*, v. ii. p. 590.

|| *Borlase Antiquities of Cornwall*, b. ii. ch. 21. p. 143. b. iii. ch. 3. p. 177, 178.

§ *Alexander, Travels*, 1825—6. p. 122.

Sepulchre at Jerusalem, to pass between the pillars supporting an altar and the neighbouring wall, was practised as a similar test, conjoined perhaps with other purposes. Men and women stripped themselves to accomplish it the more easily; they lay down, and were sometimes dragged through by their comrades with great difficulty.*

The import of these various transmissions through a garland, a skein of yarn, a cleft, or an aperture, seems symbolic of regeneration,—a second birth, whereby a living being is ushered into the world free of those impurities and imperfections incorporated with a former life. In the East, there is a sanctified cleft in a rock, whither pilgrims resort “for the purpose of regeneration, by the efficacy of a passage through this sacred type.” The devout also pass through perforated stones, which are not uncommon there, in order to be regenerated; but should the aperture be too small for transmission of the person, a hand or a foot is introduced. Further, regeneration may be effected by forming an image of a sanctified animal, or of a woman, for symbolical introduction of the impure a second time to life.†

Numerous remedies, either isolated, or of the rarest practice, might be named, scarcely to be corroborated by the researches of an individual, but tending to shew

* *Doubdan*, Voyage, 1652. p. 60.

† *Wilford* on Mount Caucasus, ap. *Asiatic Researches*, vol. vi. p. 502, 538. *Moor*, Hindu Pantheon, p. 395—8. By consulting these works for practical illustrations, the subject will prove more intelligible.

that however corrupted, they were not invented for the occasion.

Yawning, breathing, licking, were mystical expedients, all subordinate to the touch for, benefit or injury. —“ William Mylne being deidlie seik, and the winding scheit laid at his heid to be put on him,” Christian Gow, “be ganting and whispering over the said diseased persone, maid him that he instantlie becam wholl and weill.”* A woman suspected of infecting a child, having arrived on a summons, she desired “a cap of water, with ane knyf, and when scho gat it, she movit the knyf in the water, and spat in the cap, and gantit over it, and said,

The dead vpraise,
To the credell scho gat
To mend the bairne
That bitten was,
In name of the Father, the Sone, and the Haillie
Gaist,

and commandit the water to be cassin out.” The child recovered.†

Horses in Ireland, infested by a destructive worm, were cured from a witch breathing on the part affected, two Mondays, and one Thursday, and repeating a

* Trial of Christian Gow, 24 April 1634. *Rec. Ork.* f. 68, v.

† Trial of Katherine Grant, 5 Nov. 1623. *Rec. Ork.* The charm is not in any metrical arrangement in the manuscript.

charm.* A modern traveller observed that some devotees in Turkey, who fainted under the severities of their voluntary discipline, "recovered by the magic breathing or whispering of the president."†

The faculty of curing a scald or burn, by licking the part affected, was acquired by drawing a lizard found in the county of Westmeath, against the scales, thrice over the tongue.‡

The reputed author of a distemper, uncovered her patient's leg, put her "finger thereon, and on the ground, thre severall tymes to and fra."|| Another under similar circumstances, put his hand on the sufferer's "sore syd, and after vpone the hearth stone," which cured her in an hour.§ Touching the earth always involved mystery.—Varro speaks of curing gout by pronouncing a verbal charm, "*terra pestem teneto*;" thrice nine times, spitting and touching the earth while fasting, which corresponds with charging a distemper into "sek and stane."¶ For diseases of the eye, Marcellus prescribes triple repetition of touching the earth thrice with three fingers, spitting, and a verbal charm which is sufficiently intelligible.** But a jargon to be

* Camden, Britannia, v. iv. p. 470: from Good, 1556.

† Jones' Travels, 1823, v. ii. p. 488.

‡ Piers ap. Collectanea de Rebus Hibernicis, v. i. p. 58.

|| Trial of Marion Peebles, *ut sup.* ap. Hibbert.

§ Trial of William Scottie, 7 Feb. 1643. *Rec. Ork.*

¶ Varro, de Re Rustica, lib. i. c. 2.

** Marcellus, de Medicamentis, col. 279.

recited while binding up injured limbs, is inexplicable.* Earth taken from the spot where a man had been slain, was prescribed in Scotland for a hurt, or an ulcer.†

Empirics, ancient and modern, have always had their favourite remedies. One administered the infusions of plants, another preferred worm oil and smoking the patient over a fire: and, perhaps, from the ancient use of dough, *in sacris*, by the Jews,‡ it fell into the hands of sorcerers, who found it essential in curing distempers, in preserving the qualities of milk, and in promoting the fertility of grain.§ On a deficiency of milk, grass from the spot whereon the pail stood, was to be thrown among the milk to avert recurrence of the like.||

“A wisp of bear straw,” put into a cow’s mouth and set on fire, was to be employed as a cure or preservative.¶ The use of fire has been universal, *in sacris*, and thence it has certainly fallen to sorcerers. To cure James Smithe’s horse, one demanded ‘ane pletfull of corne, with an knyfe; efter the recept quhairof scho gaid furth of the house, and efter hir divelish consultation re-entering, scho bad the said James big on ane fire in his killogie, and schut his horse bak and

* *Cato*, de Re Rustica, c. 160.

† Trial of Katherine Caray, 3 June 1616. *Rec. Ork.*

‡ *Numbers*, ch. xv. v. 20, 21.

§ Trial of Katherine Caray, *ut sup.*

|| Trial of Oliver Leask, 19 March 1616. *Rec. Ork.* f. 65. v.

¶ *Perth Presbytery Record*, 9 July 1628. *Ap. Scott, Extracts*, *ut sup.*

foir, to the fyre thryse, and tak ane hedder busome, and kendle the same, and sweip the hors thairwith, and syne put him out, and he sould be weill.”*

Laving a handful of water over each shoulder, is named as an antidote, or for transferring disease to the person first seen.† John Brughe cured a murrain, by “casting a cogfull of water crosewayis vpon ane of the oxin being seik for the tyme, and thairefter bureing of the said ox in a place where no man did repair.”‡

In Orkney, distempered animals were sprinkled with a water made up by the owners, which they called “forespoken water,” doubtless the “remedie water forspeking” described above; also their boats were sprinkled with it, when fishing was unsuccessful.‖ The holy water of the apostolic church is easily recognised here.

Organs on the right and left had their peculiar mystical virtues. In Scotland, salt is thrown over the left shoulder to avert strife. A witch directed a person to give his left hand to his brother in silence, for effecting an evil purpose.§ Pulling a plant, while

* Trial of Katherine Grant, *ut sup.* *Killogie*—kiln; *schut*—push; *hedder*—heath; *busome*—brush.

† Trial of Jonet Irving, 1616, *ut sup.*

‡ Trial 1643, *ut sup.*

‖ *Brand*, Orkney, p. 62.

§ Trial of Hector Munro, 22 July 1590. *Rec. Just.*

resting on the right knee, was an ingredient of divination.*

In Mexico, it is said, a patient will enquire whether medicine is to be taken with the right or the left hand: if with the former, the liver will be benefited, if with the latter, the kidneys.†

A wasp or beetle caught with the left hand, or the heart of a living snake, extracted thus, was employed medicinally by the ancients; in derision of which, perhaps, Lucian adverts to taking a weasel's tooth from the ground with the left hand, to be wrapped in a lion's skin.‡

Among the more singular remedies, is the use of that for the preservation of life, which has been already the instrument of death. Unless from some obscure relation to redemption by propitiatory sacrifice, this is of the most equivocal origin. Yet it has been sufficiently recognised. In Britain, sanative virtues are ascribed by the vulgar, to the halter whereby a criminal has perished. Many examples might be quoted. Pliny observes, that it was used by the magi, and if bound around the head, that it relieved headache. One of the interlocutors introduced by Lucian, confesses his dread of demons, until fortified by a ring fabricated of iron of a gibbet, which he had received from an

* Trial of Elspeth Reoch, 12 March 1616. *Rec. Ork.* f. 63. v.

† *Hardy*, Travels in Mexico, 1825-8, p. 417.

‡ *Pliny*, Hist. Nat. lib. xxx. c. 30. *Lucianus Philopseudes*, § 7.

Arabian.* All the instruments of martyrdom have been profoundly venerated. The sensation previously described as *man-slacht*, could be alleviated by the party affected eating a morsel of bread cut by a weapon which had been the instrument of murder, or by drinking of any liquid stirred with it.† Anciently, immediate relief in difficult parturition was expected from throwing over the patient's house, that stone or missile which had been fatal by a single blow, or a javelin withdrawn from a body without having touched the ground.‡

Killing an animal by a single blow, formed part of some eastern religious rites: and various qualities or results have been connected with interception from the earth.

The violent extinction of life—premature decease, involved mystical consequences. In pursuance of older practice, the scaffold is yet visited to obtain the touch of executed criminals, for scrofula, or for warts and wens.§

Some indistinct notion of the absorption of life by the instrument of death, like the absorption of disease by the medium of restoring health, seems to be involved in these principles.

* *Lucianus*, *Philopseudes*, § 17.

† *Deusingius de Morbo Man-slacht*, *ut sup.*

‡ *Pliny Hist. Nat. lib. xxviii. c. 6, 12.*

§ *Philosophical Transactions*, v. i. p. 208. *Pliny*, lib. xxvii. c. 11. *Immatura morte raptorum manu strumas parotides gutturis tactu sanari affirmant.*

Alleviating the pains of Parturition.—A fierce and intolerant spirit is betrayed by inflicting penalties for endeavouring to relieve the sick. If the weak thought themselves benefited by charms : if the superiority of the mind could condemn personal suffering, and if hope be the harbinger of health, their utmost punishment should have been contempt for credulity. Alleviating the pains of labour, or repelling the dangers of parturition, where life may be purchased with death, could be never unimportant to the more interesting portion of the human race. Yet here also has severity frowned, not only on the afflicted, but on those willing to contribute relief,—interposing a cruel vengeance against what rather merited commendation.

An old author alleges the general sterility of the females of one of the Orkney islands—asserting, that where otherwise, death proved the inevitable consequence of labour, “*mulieres hic steriles sunt et si gravidæ evenerint nunquam cum vita pariunt.*” But those pregnant resorted to a church dedicated to the virgin Mary, which must have been in propitiation.*

Eufame Macalyane, a lady of some rank, was charged thus in seeking the aid of Agnes Sampson—“for relief of your payne at the tyme of the birth of your twa sones, and ressauing fra hir to that effect ane boird stane to be layit vnder the bowstir putt vnder your heid ; inchantit mwildis and powder putt in ane

* *Ben Orchadiarum Insularum Descriptio*, ad an. 1529, in MS. v. *Dairsay*.

peace of paipar, to be vsit and rowit in your hair,—and at the tyme of your drowis your guidmanis sark to be presentlie tane aff him, and laid woumplit vnder your bed-feit :—the quhilk being practesit, your seiknes was cassin of you vnnaturallie in the birth of your fyrst sone, vpone ane dog quhilk ran away and wes newir sene agane : and on the birth of your last sone, the same practeis foirsaid wes vsit, and your naturall and kyndlie payne vnnaturallie cassin vpoun the wantoun catt in the hous, quhilk lykwayis wes nevir sene thaireftir.”*

These are complicated ceremonies. Possibly the boird stane was an amulet—the *ovum anguinum* or adder stone, employed until lately for a similar purpose. It “gave ease to women in child-birth by being tied about the knee.”† Margaret Stewart exhibited “ane quhyt stane of cristall, guid for seik women in thair travell.”‡ A stone kept among others in St Ronan’s chapel, in the isle of Rona, had the virtue of promoting speedy delivery,—perhaps being removed from the altar to the patient.§ “A litle round stone about the biggness of a plumb,” was described to

* Trial of Eufame Macalyane, 9 June 1591. *Rec. Just.* Boird—perforated; bowster—bolster; mwildis—powder; rowit—rolled; woumplit—folded; kyndlie—natural; drowis—throes.

† Pennant, *Tour in Scotland and Voyage to the Hebrides*, 1772, p. 298.

‡ *Halyrudhous* K. S. R. 8 July 1628.

§ *Martin*, *Western Isles*, p. 21.

Woodrow, as "helpfull to severall weemen in child-birth."*

The transference of the patient's suffering to the domesticated animals, illustrates still further the superstitious principle previously explained in respect to diseases.

Even the male sex might be subject to anguish resembling that of parturition, for the sake of relieving a distressed helpmate. About the period that James the Sixth was born, the protestants threw a suspicious eye on the supernatural faculties of a catholic lady of distinguished birth—the Countess of Athole. Hence "it was opinlie affirmet for treuth, that when the quene was lying in ieasing of the king, the ladie Athole lying thair lykwayis, baith within the Castell of Edinburgh—that Andro Lundie cum thair for sum busines and called for the ladie Reirres, whom he fand in hir chalmer lying bed-fast; and he asking hir of hir disease, scho answerit that scho was never so trubled with no barne that ever scho bair, for the ladie Athole had cassin all the payne of hir child-birth vpon hir."† That this narrative is to be understood literally as expressed, receives some corroboration from other sources of superstition. A man who had incurred the resentment of Margaret Hutesone, "that same night took sicknes: and had panes as a woman in chyld-birth."‡

* Woodrow, *Analecta* in MS. v. iii. p. 83.

† Bannatyne, *Journal of Transactions in Scotland*, p. 238.

‡ Trial of Margaret Hutesone, 20 Aug. 1661. *Rec. Just.*

On the borders of Scotland, as lately as the year 1772, there was pointed out to Mr Pennant, the offspring of a woman, whose pains had been transferred to her husband by the midwife.* The legends of the saints relate, that Merinus, a future bishop, having been refused access to the castle of some Irish potentate, whose spouse was then in labour, and treated with contempt, he prayed for the transference of her sufferings to him, which ensued immediately.†

Superstition is careless of anatomical distinctions. Our progenitors troubled themselves as little with the sciences as modern romancers. Any thing, the most preposterous, was believed, equally of saints and sorcerers. Saint Columba ordered a sorcerer to milk a bull ! He complied ; but the bystanders found that he had milked blood !‡

On the American continent, the Indian husband immediately supplants his parturient wife, as if having undergone her pains : and it is evident from what Strabo says of the northern inhabitants of Spain, they must have practised something similar.||

Eufame Macalyane was burnt alive on the Castle-hill of Edinburgh, in the year 1591.

Seventy years afterwards, charges were renewed against another woman, thus, “Ye being midwyf to

* Pennant, Tour, 1772, p. 79.

† *Proprium Sanctorum*, f. cvi. ap. *Breviarium Aberdonense*, t. 11.

‡ *Adomnan in vita Columbæ*, lib. ii. c. 16.

|| *Strabo*, lib. iii. t. 1. p. 250.

Alexander Wilson's wyff, did vse charms, sorcerie, and witchcraft, to facilitat her delyvery, be calling for ane furlott from ane vther hous to sit vpone, and fand yow could do no good thereby, yow bad tacke away that furlott, for nothing wald prevaill till God did it: as also you vsed oftymes, being about that imployment, to stick ane bare knyfe betuixt the bed and the stroe, and to sprinkle salt about the bed within, saying, 'Lord, let never ane worse wight waken the, nor hes laid the doune.'* Fixing a nail in the wall, of which the knife may have been here the type, was esteemed a palliative of suffering.† The practice of fastening measures and buckles to trees as an antidote to toothache for the subsequent year, is reprehended by Martin de Arles.‡

Parturient females were formerly crossed or sanctified with a fir candle. In the year 1705, it is said, "almost all the country people do to this day make use of some fooleries which are under the notion of charms, such as women lying in childbed, their being sained with a fir candle."||

The virgin Mary seems to have been substituted among Christians for the Juno Lucina of the Pagans ;

* Trial of Beatrix Leslie, 3 Aug. 1661. *Rec. Just.*

† Thiers, Liv. v. c. iv. t. l. p. 377. from Denys de Chantreux. *Credulitas quod contra dolores dentium valeat clavus infixus parieti.*

‡ Martin de Arles, § 37. "Figere actus et spintera cuidam arbori."

|| Trial of George and Lauchlan Rattray 1705, *ut sup.* Sained—hallowed.

and she seems to have been invoked precisely in the same manner.* Among the virtues of "Sanct Marie's nutt," used as an amulet by the Hebridian islanders, was that of preserving women from the dangers of parturition.†

Doubdan, an old traveller, enters into a disquisition on the supposed virtue of the rose of Jericho on the continent, and whether, among other things, parturition is facilitated by holding it in the hand.

Sanctified girdles for relieving the pains of labour, or for accelerating parturition, are said to have been kept by many Scottish families, until nearly the middle of the eighteenth century. Were any confidence to be reposed in the authenticity of Ossian's poems, which is extremely doubtful, a passage regarding an hundred girdles to bind "high bosomed women, the friends of the births of heroes," might be quoted.‡ The frequency of girdles in Ireland, as amulets or preservatives from danger, is referred to in the reign of Queen

* *Terent. Andria. Act. iii. scen. 1. l. 15*: "Juno Lucina fer opem serva me obsecro."

† *Morisone Description of the Lews in MS.* In old times women wore about their necks, or set in silver, brass, or tin,—"*Sanct Marie's nutt*,—holding it to have the vertew to preserve women in child-bearing." This is described as a small, whitish, round kind of Molucca bean. In *Martin's* time, "the white nut, called the Virgin Marie's nut," was put into the milk pail, that the milk drawn from the cow might be pure. *Western Islands*, p. 39.

‡ *Macpherson Note on Ossian Battle of Lora, v. i. p. 115. Edit. 1762.*

Elizabeth.* Nurses and children wore girdles of women's hair as preservatives: and bracelets of the same were presented by those enamoured of others.†

Encircling the northern females with girdles, was accompanied by certain ceremonies. Pliny understood parturition to be accelerated by a woman who had children encircling the patient with her own girdle, and then loosening it with these words, "I have bound thee—so do I loose thee."

In Spain, the church-bell was encircled with the girdle of a woman in labour, and struck thrice to promote parturition. Martin de Arles supposed it to be for obtaining the prayers of the devout, for one thus known to be in danger. Possibly Reginald Scot refers to the same custom as subsisting in his time in England, under some modifications.‡ The superstitions formerly connected with bells would merit a separate discussion.

The suspicions so readily falling on persons employed for the aid of the suffering, were constantly awaiting those whose peculiar vocation centered in relieving the parturient. Their mystical or medicinal means were alike deemed sorcery; and they were held themselves as the worst of the initiated.¶ Several unfortunate individuals in Scotland became thus the

* *Harrington*, Note to *Orlando Furioso*, b. xii. This translation is dedicated to Queen Elizabeth.

† *Camden*, v. iv. p. 459. from *Good*.

‡ *Martin de Arles*, § 37. *Scot Discouerie*, b. x. ch. xv. p. 205.

¶ *Sprenger*, *Malleus Maleficarum*, part iii. q. 33. p. 618.

victims of prejudice.—Fashions have undergone a strange revolution.—In modern times, some skilful physician grants a certificate of qualification to those sufficiently skilled to exercise the obstetrical art ;—but formerly the Archbishop of Canterbury conferred that privilege on English midwives ;—at least during a period when credulity more than either learning or liberality guided public opinion.—One on receiving such a licence, bound herself to assist rich and poor equally, and to abstain from all sorcery and incantation during the progress of parturition.*

It would be vain to relate the miraculous cures operated by sanctified persons, whose repute has perhaps, encouraged the occult methods attempted by minor pretenders. It was not even held necessary that the patient should be present, as Woodrow illustrates in a *charmer* expelling an insect from a woman's eye, though at ten miles' distance,—a story “pretty well attested,” and “ane ordinary practice in Athole,” as he had read in manuscripts.†

* *Strype*, Annals, ad an. 1567, v. i. p. 501. By this obligation, the midwife binds herself on oath, not to mutilate an infant, or substitute another : and to administer baptism with pure water only.

† *Woodrow*, Analecta, v. i. p. 145.

CHAPTER IV.

AMULETS.

THE delicate structure of the human frame, the exquisite sensibility of each of its infinite parts, their inevitable exposure to injury, and the intolerable anguish endured, form an irresistible motive for adopting every antidote, and every palliative that invention shall devise.

An interminable catalogue might be prepared, of the natural and visible means of preservation, reduced to substantial form, under the name of amulets, deemed a safeguard from convulsions of the elements, from the corrosions of disease, from the accidents of life, from evil machinations, or to promote health, wealth, and prosperity.

Many were attached to the person, as common at this day in other countries, or they were brought into immediate approximation with individuals on their possessions. Minerals, plants, animals, inscriptions, and the various works of art, were rendered subservient to the peculiar expectations of those who used them.

Our progenitors environed their dwellings, or planted their gardens with trees, and herbs, and flowers,

intolerable to demons. The elder, the laurel, the mountain ash, rue, peony, and many more, now seen principally in their decay, proved so many bulwarks against supernatural invasions.

“The raven tree was good to keip upon both man and beist.”* The “sey nutte” rendered the owner fortunate and secure :† and the possession of some indefinite root promised the attainment of the owner’s wishes.‡

Were history better known, mystical virtues might be found in all. In one there was an antidote to fascination.|| Laurel was a preservative from epilepsy ; thence an antidote to demoniac possession : nor did lightning come near it : and as a vessel of a peculiar horn was believed to split if the contents were poisonous, so did the Sea Nut blacken, if evil were meditated against the wearer.§

The most noted amulets,—though not the best understood in respect to their nature—were designed enchanted stones, or curing stones, in Scotland. They were employed either as antidotes, palliatives, or cures. Some seem to have been such as they came simply from the hands of nature ; others were evidently the

* *North Berwick K. S. R.* 22 Nov. 1663. *Raven-tree*—rown tree—mountain ash.

† *Morisone John*, Description of the Lews. *ut sup.* Trial of Katherine Jonesdochter, 1616. *ut sup.*

‡ Trial of Jean Weir, 9 April 1670. *Rec. Just.*

|| *Aristotle Problemata*, c. xxv. § 34.

§ *Martin*, Western Islands, p. 38.

production of art : and perhaps both underwent a mystical process to impregnate them with virtue.

Various amulets are known specifically by name, others only generally, as one obtained from "the Lady Crawford," hung five nights about a patient's neck, for epilepsy :* the "boird stane," of Eufame Macalyane, for relieving the pains of labour, or the "quhyt stane of cristall" lately referred to.

Certain greenish stones wore as amulets by the Hebridian islanders, are found in the haven of Iona, a consecrated place, where its tutelar saint, Columba, first approached the shore. Contrary to the wonted natural process, they and other stones were believed to darken by exposure.† In Ireland, some kind of transparent or amber coloured stones, were taken from a well at Cranford, by pilgrims the following morning, after cleaning it on May eve.†

Among the amulets named in this country, are the adder stone, toad stone, mole stone, cock knee stone, snail stone, and some others, the precise description of which is uncertain.

The repute of the first was great, as may be collected from previous observations ; for its virtues were universal. Nor is it unlikely that they were connected with the popular credulity of its origin from serpents,

* *Short Description of Iona*, in MS. *Fraser*, bishop of the Western Isles, Answer to Sir Robert Sibbald. in MS. *Adv. Lib.* W. 2. 20.

† *Richardson*, Folly of Pilgrimages, ch. iv. p. 65. Cranfield, parish of Drumaul, county of Antrim.

—those mystical animals holding so noted a place in ancient mythology. That “not only the vulgar, but even gentlemen of good education, throughout all Scotland, were fully persuaded that snakes make them,” is remarked by an English visitor in the year 1699.* The adder stone was suspended from the neck for hooping cough, and other distempers of children. It was esteemed a charm to ensure prosperity, and a repeller of evil spirits. The owner kept it in an iron box as a security from fairies, which were believed to have a peculiar aversion to that metal.† The visitor above named, had seen at least fifty different kinds of these amulets between Wales and the highlands of Scotland, yet he could hear nothing of them in Ireland.—This is known to be an ancient bead.

The same author alleges that the cock knee stone was the shell of an *echinus*, or sea urchin; that it was supposed to be found in the knees of an old cock; and that a fellow in Mull protested to him, not only that he had extracted one out of a cock’s knee, but that he knew others do the like.

The snail stone he says, is a small hollow cylinder of blue glass, composed of five or six rings; and mole stones are rings of blue glass annulated like them. It may be concluded, therefore, that they were ancient ornaments like the adder’s bead. Among other mysterious

* *Llwyd*, Letter from Linlithgow, ap. *Philosophical Transactions*, v. xxviii. No. 9. p. 98.

† *Ure*, History of Rutherglen and Kilbride, p. 131.

virtues, the snail stone cured sore eyes, and according to some, it was beneficial in parturition. Mizaldus ascribes its origin to the head of the animal whose name it bears.*

The origin of the toad stone was equally singular, as shall be seen afterwards. It is described generally by Llwyd, the preceding author, as some pebble remarkable for its shape, and sometimes for the variety of colours. "This is preserved to prevent the burning of a house, and the sinking of a boat: and if a commander in the field has one of them about him, he will either be sure to win the day, or all his men shall fairly dye on the spot." The medicinal virtues ascribed to it by Mizaldus, are numerous.

Every thing relative to sanctity was deemed a preservative. Hence the relics of saints; the touch of their clothes—of their tombs; and even portions of structures consecrated to divine offices, were a safeguard near the person. A white marble altar in the church of Iona, almost entire towards the close of the seventeenth century, had disappeared late in the eighteenth, from its demolition in fragments, to avert shipwreck.† The smallest decaying portion of human

* *Mizaldus Memorabilia*, cent. iii. § 41.

† *Sacheverell, Voyage to I-Columkill*, ap. *Voyage to the Isle of Man*, p. 132. *Johnson, Journey to the Western Islands*, 1773. The amulets before mentioned are remarked by the same author, to be a small sort of greenish pebbles, but without allusion to their reputed virtues.

substance received honours nearly divine, if presumed to have been incorporated with any of the elect. Hence a continued series of imposture on the pious with false relics, so ardently coveted, for the benefit they were expected to confer. Thus Gregory of Tours relates, that on examining a collection of the relics of St Vincent and St Felix, which one affirmed he had brought from Spain, there was found a great bag full of different roots mixed with moles' teeth, and the bones of mice, together with bears' claws and grease; all of which were ordered to be thrown into a river, as the instruments of sorcery.* Much of the celebrity of churches and monasteries depended on the quantum of relics in the treasury. Such veneration, and similar virtues, are not of recent invention; for, perhaps in derision, one of the ancients describes a native of Babylon expelling poison from the body by a certain incantation, and binding to the patient's foot a stone which had been broken off the monument of a deceased virgin.† Rudbeck regrets the loss of numerous sculptures and graven remains of brass, wood, and stone in his country, Sweden, which one of its monarchs had destroyed, to repress the use of fragments from the royal monuments in incantations, and in curing distempers.‡

* *Gregorius Turonensis Hist. Franc. lib. ix.*

† *Lucianus Philopseudes, § 11. ap. t. iii. p. 38.*

‡ *Rudbeckius Atlantica, t. iii. p. 61.*

Amulets were constructed after established rules, combining natural qualities with those imparted by art. The joint production of priests and conjurors, those receiving them were inspired with boundless confidence in their efficacy. No enterprise was too difficult—no danger too imminent, when guarded by such impenetrable armour: every malady could be repelled, the fortune of war ceased to menace, the soldier rushed fearlessly to battle, or presented himself at the cannon's mouth, in the faith of having become invulnerable.* “Truly we can declare, that no one fell on that day who bore the cross in his helmet,” says a credulous spectator of the battle of Belrinnis.† In like manner it is gravely related, that the “Scottish commanders and soldiers have been seen with blew markes only, after they were shot with leaden balls.”‡

Though fatal experience punished the temerity of others by inevitable destruction,§ the confidence of the survivors continued unimpaired.

Charms and a book of astrological figures, received by the Duke of Monmouth in Scotland, were found about his person when taken prisoner in 1685:|| and

* *Sennertus de Impenetrabilitate, ab armis, ap. opera, t. iii. p. 192.*

† *Narratio Victoriæ partæ apud Avinum a Georgio Gordonio et Francisco Haijo Catholicis Principibus, 1594, in MS. vide Abbreviate, ap. Scottish Poems of the sixteenth century, Introd. p. 151.*

‡ *Kirk, Secret Commonwealth, p. 37.*

§ *Moresinus Papatus, p. 9.*

|| *Rose Observations, p. 204.*

the later insurgents of Ireland, became desperate, when bearing amulets, against the perils of war.

It cannot be told where such preservatives had their principal origin, but when suitably fashioned, they were carried from one country to another, that the respective inhabitants might share in so great a benefit.*

Numerous natural properties were believed to be inherent in gems, and these might be powerfully enhanced by inscriptions or mystical figures, superadded according to definite rules. If a metallic seal were cast, or a gem engraven, due observance was paid to the position or predominance of the celestial orbs, and the work was undertaken with invocation of the coveted virtues from the Deity.† The peculiar symbol followed. A ship sculptured on a stone would avert shipwreck: the representation of a standard led to victory in battle. The owner acquired the faculty of curing lunacy, or even of expelling demons, by the figure of a greyhound: and the addition of a hare would prove a protection from their malignity. Certain symbols imparted the power of preserving the fruits of the earth, or of obtaining visions to discover the treasures hid in its bowels. Nay, precise instructions have taught the formation of an amulet which should render the wearer invisible.‡

* *Bodinus Demonomania*, lib. i. c. 3. p. 54.

† *Pet. Constantius Albinus Villanovensis, Clavis Sympathiæ Septem Metallorum ad Planetas*, p. 32.

‡ *Leonardus Speculum Lapidum*, lib. iii. c. 15. p. 153, 155.

Nothing could be more precious than such potent instruments over human destinies. Hubert, Earl of Kent, chief justice of England, was charged with having abstracted from the royal treasury, to be delivered to an hostile prince, a gem endowed with the virtue of rendering its owner invincible in war.*

The ceremonies observed in fabricating idols, and those practised in the construction of amulets, have borne a reciprocal relation. Jamblichus says, in refuting Porphyry, "But you affirm that the course of the heavenly bodies is studied by those forming idols, who declare from their conjunction, whether prognostications shall be fulfilled, and whether those they make shall be vain or significant. Yet, so far from the fabricators producing any effect, no confidence is to be reposed in them."† Talismanic sculptures, or framing amulets according to received astrological principles, belonged to the higher and more difficult exercise of the necromantic art. Some preserved in modern times in Scotland, to secure the health of cattle, are described as "two small pieces of wood curiously wrought."‡ Simple inscriptions, consisting of unintelligible words, of prayers or passages from Scripture, were attained more easily; and, indeed, they have been common among superstitious

* *Mat. Paris Historia Major*, ad an. 1232, p. 318. This author died in 1259.

† *Jamblichus de Mysteriis*, sect. iii. c. 30.

‡ *Heron, Journey*, v. ii. p. 238.

tribes ignorant of literature. In the sixteenth century, the Irish, to avert misfortune, suspended from the neck of children the commencement of the gospel of St John,—the mystical terms of which seem to have excited much partiality for it: and they took also a crooked nail or a bit of a wolf's skin.* At this day the preceding remedy, sanctified by a benediction, is adopted for epilepsy, but not by children only.† The use of Runic characters, which have been recognised in Scotland, was generally applied thus in the north.

Numerous figures and engravings are yet preserved, which seem quite unintelligible, but they may be probably classed with amulets. Others are alluded to in history. Thus, in the course of a criminal trial in the year 1605, there was exhibited to the jury “ane hair belt, in ane of the ends of the quhilk apperit the similitude of four fingeris and ane thombe, nocht far different from the clawis of the devill.” Satan in feminine guise had bestowed it on one of his proselytes, from whom it fell into the hands of another, a woman, and on her conviction or execution it was committed to the flames,—for the instruments of sorcery were sometimes burnt along with the sorcerer.‡ Possibly this was an amulet. The talons of Satan indeed afforded a favourite simile. But so many superstitions have been connected with the human hand, as to identify this resemblance with some of them. It has been

* *Camden*, v. iii. p. 455. from *Good*. V. iv. p. 459.

† *Neligan*, Parish of Kilmactige, ap. *Stat. Aect. of Ireland*, v. ii. p. 370.

‡ Trial of Patrick Lowrie, 1605, *ut sup.*

employed as an emblem of power,—as a token of defiance,—as an amulet for protection. The hand of one slain accidentally is said to be kept, salted and dried, as a safe-guard, by a tribe of North American Indians.* Figures of the hand in miniature, of a black composition, are sold in the Spanish colonies, for averting fascination.† The Arabs suspend the figure of an open hand from the necks of their children for the same purpose.‡ In Tripoli one is painted on the cradle: and elsewhere in eastern countries, it is seen on ships and on houses,§ or it is borne on the national standards. Various mystical effects were anticipated from this emblem in general, and from the particular arrangement of its parts. Evidently in the belief of its serving for a necromantic purpose, that of the Scottish sorceress was destroyed.

Horse shoes and a fox's head are daily nailed on the stable door,—for of old these barred the entrance of witches. A modern author enumerated seventeen of the former nailed on the steps of doors in one of the streets of London, in the year 1813.|| The latter is derived

* *Long, Voyages and Travels*, p. 140. The author says, "hand or foot." Are his observations original?

† *Caldcleugh, Travels*, v. i. p. 73.

‡ *Shaw, Travels or Observations*, p. 305.

§ *Blaquiere Letters*, v. ii. p. 70.

|| *Ellis*, ap. *Brand*, v. ii. p. 379: Notes. "The horse shoe, even at this day, as of old, is frequently seen attached to the threshold of the door, as a security against the entrance of a witch." *James' Expedition*, *ut sup.* v. i. p. 250. Perhaps the author speaks of his own country.

from the Romans—"Veneficiis rostrum lupi resistere inveteratum aiunt ob idque villarum portis præfigunt."* Is the brush coveted so earnestly by sportsmen but for a trophy?

The variety of amulets is as great as the number of countries in the world. Bits of mud are stuck on the forehead, and incense is burnt under the nose of children in the east.† A blue stone mounted in silver is suspended from their caps, or a fragment of blue glass, if the parents be poor;‡ as fragments of mirror were formerly attached to their shoulders in Spain.§ A mineral rouge, lupins swollen in water, and spreading a false report of one's decease, to collect friends at church for his funeral, or to offer prayers for the repose of his soul, are all connected with the formation of a charm for this purpose in the Island of Tiné. Four pieces of horn strung on the neck in one country, numerous bands of red cloth in another, are amulets used in the interior of Africa.||

Coral was esteemed an antidote to epilepsy, therefore to demoniac possession: it was administered to children, previous to their tasting any other substance, immediately on birth. The figure now seen pendant from their clothes, denotes a pagan origin, nor is it

* *Pliny*, Hist. Nat. lib. xxviii. § 44. *Mizaldus*, Cent. vii. § 42.

† *Hobhouse*, Journey, v. i. p. 507. *Light*, Travels, p. 243.

‡ *Zallony*, Voyage a Tiné, p. 155.

§ *Martin de Arles*, § 35.

|| *Burchell* Travels, v. ii. p. 550. *Lander's Expedition*, v. ii. p. 232.

restricted to them alone.* The virtues ascribed to amber may be collected from its universal use in our own remembrance, especially among the more humble.

Carrying moles' feet in a purse, secured the owner against the want of money :† carrying the bones of a bird in his clothes preserved his health :‡ and the possession of fairy pennies, described as orbicular sparry substances, promoted prosperity.§

Squills precluded the access of sorcery. Garlic is fastened to the caps of children, suspended from the stern of vessels, and from new houses, in the Levant : as centuries ago it was hung over the door in the more civilized parts of Europe. But Bodin says this is an idle expedient, for he concludes on the authority of Job, that the devil dreads nothing.||

In Scotland lotions off enchanted stones, or potions

* *Pliny*, Hist. Nat. lib. xxii. § 2. *Leonardus Speculum Lapidum*, p. 61. v. *Corallus*. *Scot*, discouerie, b. xiii. ch. 18. b. xiii. ch. 6. *Blunt*, Vestiges of Ancient Manners in Italy and Sicily—"Many of the poorest women and children still wear coral necklaces. *Mizaldus*, Cent. v. § 89.

† Trial of Johnne Feane *alias* Cwninghame, 26 Dec. 1590. *Rec. Just.*

‡ Trial of Elspeth Cursetter, 29 May 1629. *Rec. Ork.* f. 51. "Get the bones of ane tequhyt, and carry thame in your clothes." *Tequhyt*—linnet.

§ *Perth K. S. R.* 13—26 May 1623. Giving fairie pennies to cause a man thrive and become rich.

|| *Bodinus*, lib. iii. c. 5. p. 276. *Hobhouse*, *Zallony*, *ut sup.*

off sanctified relics, were esteemed the most powerful antidotes or medicines.

One of the more ancient saints of Scotland, Marnan, "was adored almost as a divinity: after having attained a happy old age, when borne down by infirmities, his most sanctified soul ascended to heaven. His mortal remains were interred honourably in the church of Abirkerdoure, which is environed by the beautiful river Duverne, where they continued to repose, and daily afforded health to the distempered." The head of this holy personage was preserved as a relic of the highest value: it was produced in solemn adjurations, and served as a substitute for the sacred volume, when parties appealed to Heaven on oaths for the justice of their cause.* This was not the only use to which his "most glorious head" was converted. Tapers being lighted, "it was washed" every Sunday of the year, amidst the prayers of the clergy and the people, and the water being carried to the weak and diseased, "they derived the utmost benefit from drinking it, and thence recovered their health through his merits.†"

Mankind and animals were supplied with potions off stones, as beneficial for their distempers. Water wherein the adder's stone had been infused was carried an

* *Analysis of the ancient Records of the Bishopric of Moray*, p. 76. ad an 1492.

† *Proprium Sanctorum*, f. xi. ap. *Brev. Aberd.* t. i. St Marnan lived in the seventh century.

hundred miles, to be administered to patients in the Highlands.*

Marioun Macingarath administered "thrie drinkis of walter furth of thrie stanes" to Hector Monro of Foulis, which she produced on her examination before the king, at Aberdeen, and they were deposited with the justice-clerk. They are not described more specifically.† John Brughe gave a patient "ane inchantit stane of the bignes of a dow eg, advyseing him to put the samyn in his drink."‡

"Stones of a finger length and pyramid shape," found among sands receiving the discharge of a well at loch Siant, in the Isle of Sky, were infused for potions to cure horses of intestinal worms.§

Extraordinary benefits could be expected chiefly from those impregnated with mystical virtues. Many infirm persons and cattle also were cured by lotions off a stone, called St Convall's chariot, which had miraculously borne that sanctified personage over the waves, from Ireland to the banks of the Clyde, where it grounded.||

James Knarstoun came to cure a woman in Dairsay

* *Pennant*, Tour in Scotland, 1769, p.101. described as a spheroid set in silver.

† Trial of Hector Monro, 22 July 1590. *Rec. Just.*

‡ Trial of Johnne Brughe, 24 Nov. 1643. *Rec. Just. Dow—*
dove.

§ *Description of Sky* in MS. Adv. Lib. W. 2. 20.

|| *Proprium Sanctorum*, f. cxvii. ap. *Brev. Aberd.* t.11.

of "the bainshaw," bringing "ane litle pig of oyle, maid of mekillwort, as he himself allegit." He took such water as was in the house, "and washit hir feit fra hir kneis doun, and hir airmes, nobody being besyd bot ane litle sone of his awin. The watter being in ane daffok, shoe perceavit that their was twa or thrie stones in the watter, quhilk he took and pat about hir kneis, and vsit some few wordis. Efter as he haid washit her feit and airmes, he dryit them, and rubbed of the oyle againe quhilk he had brocht with him, beffor the fyre : and becaus the oyle was not stark enuch, he gatt some aquavite to mak it starker the nixt time." Repetition of the remedy within fifteen days cured the patient.*

Stones employed for curative infusions are sometimes characterised as enchanted. During the prevalence of a murrain, the same empiric, John Brughe, just referred to, accompanied by an aged sorceress, directing a tub to be filled with water, he put therein "twa inchantit stanes : and thaireftir causit the hail

* Trial of James Knarstoun, ult. Feb. 1633. *Rec. Ork.* f. 88. r. *Bainshaw*, i.e. boneshave, "means Sciatica," *Brand*, v. ii. p. 588. Among other distempers are named,

"—— Bockblood and beanshaw, speven sprung in the spald,"

Montgomery, Poems, Flyting, p. 14.

Daffok—a vessel ; *pig*—pot ; *stark enuch*—strong enough ; *aquavite*, may be understood whiskey. Oil and whiskey therefore composed the medicament.

cattell to pas by, and in thair by-passing, sprinkled ilk ane of them with ane wisp dippid" in it. Also, persuading one, that his horses had been bewitched, he directed him to wash them with water off two enchanted stones. Another charm consisted in taking from the owner "thrie turnouris, rubbing thame vnder the lap of his cot, and putting thame out-throw and in-throw his belt head : and caussing thame to be cassin in a tub full of cleane water, not suffering it to tutche the ground : " and of this a cow being "braine wood for the tyme, should drink." Assuredly this empiric was one of the most celebrated in his vocation. His prescriptions were numerous, and the fee he expected was proportioned, perhaps, as among the modern and more legitimate sons of Æsculapius, according to the importance of the case. But he took goods and money alike, and even provisions, For curing a number of oxen by a pint of "new lettingoe wirt," accompanied with an invocation, "God put thame in their awin place," repeated thrice, he got "ellevin od schillingis, with twa peckis of meill and thrie tailyeis of beiff." He received nine shillings for recovering the mad cow, and a dollar for prescribing a draught from the enchanted stone like a pigeon's egg ; but he was discontented with a fee of forty shillings for clothing his patient in a wet shirt, though the remedy proved abortive. His reputation must have stood very high : yet it was a perilous celebrity, for after numberless successful prescriptions and ample remuneration, the

luckless empiric was accused as a sorcerer, on the very grounds of his success, and condemned to be strangled and burnt.*

The curing stone specially so denominated, seems to have been a portion of spherical chrystal or some analogous substance, generally set in a metallic ring or frame. One of these said to have been preserved for a long period in the family of Campbell of Glenlyon, is believed to be rock-chrystal. It is rather of an ovoidal form, about an inch and a half in diameter, the outside a polished surface: and its whole interior exceedingly pellucid, pure and free of flaws. This amulet is set in a simple silver frame, with a ring above, probably for receiving a retaining cord when dipped. It has been employed within these thirty years, and the water given to cattle. Another amulet much of the same description is preserved in the family of Stewart of Ardvorlich, which is said to have been thus used within these three or four years.

Possibly there was some uniformity, either in the form or substance of this particular charm. Llwyd speaks of "ombriæ pellucidæ, which are crystal balls or hemispheres, or depressed ovals, in great esteem for

* Such empirics pactioned for cures. One offered a groat agreed to take five shillings, for restoring the milk of a cow. *Perth K. S. R.* 13—26 May 1623. Margaret Hormsleuch. George Wilsoun received "for his paines the sowme of aught pundis and tua sarkis." *Halyrudhous K. S. R.* 21 Nov. 1617. *Wisp*—whisp—bunch; *turnouris*—shillings, or a coin corresponding.

curing of cattle : and some on May-day put them into a tub of water, and besprinkle all their cattle with that water to prevent their being elf struck, bewitched, etc.*

Similar features appear in "a large chrystal, somewhat oval, which priests kept to work charms by;" preserved more recently by superstitious persons, that distempered cattle might receive the water wherein it was infused.† In Ireland it was designed the "water-stone," which "the Hibernian sorcerers used to throw into water, to give it a medicinal virtue."‡

About the year 1629, a distemper called the "routting ewill," prevailed ;—"a strange and suddane diseases quhairthrow" an ox "was nevir able to ly down, bot routted continuallie till he deid."|| For this, some persons travelled from East Lothian, "to the laird of Leyis house, and cravett the len" of "his cureing stane—quhilk was refuisit be the lady ; but [she] gave thame ane certaine quantitie of water in flacones quhairin the said stane was dippit, quhilk being gevin as drink to the bestiall haillit thame."—Such was affirmed to be the ordinary practice of "husbandmen of the best soirt," in many parts of the kingdom. But now the parties were subjected to ecclesiastical cen-

* *Llwyd Letter*, 1699, *ut sup.*

† *Shaw*, *Gaelic Dictionary* [1780] v. Leicc, leug.

‡ *Vallancey*, *Collectanea de Rebus Hibernicis*, v. iii. p. 646.

|| *Trial of Elizabeth Bathcat*, 4 June 1634. *Rec. Just.* Routting, —lowing.

sures for resorting to a superstitious expedient, and appointed to undergo penance in the church of Dunbar.*

This amulet, which is still preserved in the family, Mr Norman Lockhart, a member of it, has described to the author, as a yellowish stone, somewhat resembling amber, about half the size of the thumb nail, set in a silver coin of Edward I. of England. It is distinguished as the *Lee penny*. As magnets armed to augment their virtue, are esteemed more powerful, artificial amulets composed of metallic plates, or combined of stones and coins, were of higher value.†

Water wherein the adder's stone had been boiled, or wherein elf arrow heads had been infused, was administered in like manner to cattle.‡ The latter within the present century, was so frequently in the county of Caithness; and in England the former was esteemed a preservative from a poisonous bite.∥

The most extraordinary confidence, let it be repeated, was reposed in amulets: mankind rendered themselves absurd by their credulity.—They have ever done so. Dr Napper framed constellated rings to cure epilepsy:—and very successfully were Lilly credited. A female patient recovered entirely.—But the superstitious remedy was thrown into a well; her fits returned during a long time: the ring being found,

* Trial of Issobell Young, 4 Feb. 1629. *Rec. Just.*

† *Reichelt, de Amuletis*, p. 44.

‡ *Ure, History of Rutherglen, and East Kilbride*, p. 131.

∥ *Borlase, Antiquities of Cornwall*, p. 142.

convalescence ensued ; and her future health, after various similar alternatives, proved dependent on its preservation.* Such opinions were maintained as positively on the continent. A soldier being observed on whom fire arms had no effect, authors gravely relate, that an *agnus Dei* was found suspended from his neck.† Nothing was more common formerly, than for soldiers to fortify themselves with this kind of armour, in the belief of becoming impenetrable by swords and bullets. “ Yet nothing could be more evident,” says Sennertus, “ than that such amulets were unavailing against silver shot,—or that a man should become invulnerable by chewing a leaden bullet, by heating the point of his weapon in the fire, anointing it with lard, and piercing the earth or a loaf with it.” Nevertheless, in the vain confidence of safety, a soldier at Meissen, would persuade himself in his cups that he was invulnerable : and striking his breast violently twice, with a sword, it reached his heart the second time, and he died.‡ Redi also, the celebrated Italian naturalist, relates that a clock-maker residing in his time at Florence, asserted that some of his countrymen among the mountains had become invulnerable from the virtue of amulets :—and he produced a soldier who willingly exposed himself to

* *Lilly*, History of his Life and Times, p. 53. This seems Dr Napier who was “ pastor of Great Lindford in Buckinghamshire.”

† *Thyræus Demoniaci* ; a quotation referring to the year 1568.

‡ *Sennertus, ut sup.* p. 922, 927. This event he places in the month of February 1634, in the same year that he wrote.

fire-arms. The issue might have been foreseen. The marksman was steady ; and the object who had himself solicited the proof, ran off bleeding in quest of a cure. Though the clock-maker felt somewhat abashed, he remained not the less positive, and returned in some weeks with two soldiers ; the first a charmer, the second, one whom he had charmed, ready to be shot at also, shewing five livid spots on his right thigh, the marks he said, of as many pistol bullets, discharged at him from a suitable distance ; and he brought witnesses of the fact. He fared no better than his precursor. The charmer, about to make his escape, was detained, when he confessed that the deception was accomplished from the mode of loading the piece, whereby the ball discharged with a loud report, had little force.* Perhaps this will afford some solution of the blue marks seen on the Scottish soldiers and commanders.

In the year 1760, the rebellious slaves of Jamaica believed that they had been rendered invulnerable. One about to suffer capital punishment, bid defiance to the executioner : and his countrymen were filled with astonishment to see him expire.† Some of the ruder tribes attempt to impart a supernatural virtue to their shields, by a process partly artificial partly mystical, for rendering them impenetrable.‡

* *Redi*, *Experimenta circa varias res naturales*, p. 23.

† *Report to the Privy Council on the Slave Trade, Jamaica*, No. 22. 26. C.

‡ *Lewis and Clarke*, *Travels*, speaking of the Shoshonees in North America, p. 310.

Perhaps amulets were converted to ornaments. But an ardent controversy has subsisted, both as to their lawfulness and their expediency, which seems to have generally terminated in reprobation and punishment.*

Yet the exorcists, whose conflicts with Satan were specially encouraged by ecclesiastical authority, have unwittingly fallen into the errors condemned, for they suspended both characters and compounds from the person, as an antidote to possession, or to cure it.† Some authors refuse to sanction any amulet unless the cross :‡ and some ancient ordinances, regarding all as the insignia of magic, recommend unction with holy oil instead of them. ||

* *Ælius Spartianus*, Antoninus Caracalla, § 5.—*Ammianus Marcellinus*, lib. xix. *Nicolas Responsio ad Bulgariorum Consultationes*, c. 78. ap. *Labbei Concilia Generalia*, t. viii. *Gratian*, *Decretalia causa* xxvi. quest. 5. Can: Si quis—Can: Non oportet. *Vossius* notes in *Mos. Maimonides* c. xi. § 14., considers the Phylacteries of the Jews, Matthew ch. xx. v. 5. to be bracelets.

† *Mengus*, *Flagellum Dæmonum*, p. 207, 8.

‡ *Berberius*, *Aurea Practica*, p. 49.

|| *Capitularia*, *Regum Francorum*, lib. vi. c. 72.

CHAPTER V.

ANALOGIES TO PROPITIATORY SACRIFICE.

MANKIND have endeavoured to purchase favour, or to extenuate guilt, by an offering to superior powers, or to infernal beings.

Assimilating the choice of divinities to their own taste and propensities, their homage has been the produce of the soil, the works of industry, the most precious of their possessions, as the most acceptable. They have given as good, what was most endearing to themselves, or what they coveted earnestly.

Similar principles, the offspring of invention, or adopted by imitation, are discovered among tribes and nations under corresponding circumstances. But the written history of all the countries of the ancient world, being recent, if compared with the settlement of the people, such ceremonies as were once in rigid observance are recorded only in their decay: and can be at length recognised only in a mutilated form, in substitutions or analogies.

To these the antiquary may resort for illustrating obsolete or occult practices, in default of more connected, direct, and satisfactory evidence.

Thus, if something be set apart as sacred, which the

owner will not venture to consume : if he consecrates a special offering to an etherial being by name, of whose precise attributes he will not presume to determine : if he destroys life for the avowed purpose of redemption from evil : these several acts can be scarcely beheld in any other light, or receive any other interpretation, than as pertaining to the relics of oblations, whereby things inanimate were devoted, or living creatures immolated in sanguinary sacrifice, to divinities to be honoured, propitiated, or appeased.

A complex system of mythology, now the more familiar from poetical embellishment and artificial symbols, than from the purer sources, of prosaic narrative, and genuine historical record, was embraced by the Pagans of antiquity. Every where divinities were represented in the human form, and as occupied by inclinations, passions, and pursuits, resembling those of mankind. But they enjoyed transcendent faculties also : and although the victims of displeasure, of pain, and sorrow, they were exempt, by etherial nature, from some of the direst penalties on mortals.

The frigid regions of the north acknowledged many of the divinities venerated in happier climates,—if not by synonymous appellatives, certainly by the juster determination of corresponding attributes. It is these alone, neither name nor figure, which identify the objects of adoration.

If Scotland was peopled from the neighbouring countries, and foreign colonies established their dominion

here : if the christian missionaries, mingling with the rude inhabitants of earlier ages, urged their doctrines in preference to those already entertained, conflicting opinions would ensue. As in modern times the partizans of each, in defending their own, would reciprocally abhor the principles and the practice of their opponents. Some favourite system would rise on the ruins of one preceding it.

But in the course of attaining a perfect change, corruptions are intermixed with the novelty : reasons and recommendations so extravagant accompany its reception, that a confused, disjointed, inexplicable ritual follows, which no ingenuity can refer to any solid source or foundation.

Overpassing a long course of intermediate centuries, dark and doubtful, because the agents in them have told so little of their actions, the mind of our progenitors in later æras is found to be almost wholly occupied by Satan. His image was ever present. They called him the author of all the benefits his proselytes could confer, and the instigator of all the mischief they desired to accomplish. Sublunary destinies were wrested from the rule of Divine Providence, to be administered by the inveterate foe of mankind.

Yet amidst this delusion, they could not disguise from themselves, that the grander works of nature,—that the exercise of that same creative power which bade the universe arise—which preserved its harmonies entire, and regulated the order of its infinite

parts, sprung from the energies of some other, greater being.

The substance of their creed comprised the benevolence of an omnipotent Governor, who, at the same time tolerated the malevolence of an inferior, wicked spirit towards his chosen works.

Part of the most ancient religious ceremonial embraced an incredible enormity,—the sacrifice of human victims in these islands. Its cotemporaries describe the mode of slaughter, the deductions which its concomitants afforded, the purposes contemplated, and the sanctified ministers of the sanguinary oblation.

On surveying the wide extent of the world, accompanied by a copious retrospect of history, oblations of human victims are found as a local rite, and the offering of animals throughout, from the earliest ages. But where the former was abandoned the latter remained permanent as a substitution, or from the greater facility of perfecting it. In its progress and decline also, the former passed through various gradations, from inflicting voluntary wounds, shedding the blood, and offering portions of the living flesh by excision, to acts of suicide in honour of Pagan divinities, or murdering the helpless victim as a horrid propitiation of their favour, and for averting vengeance.

Such was the pagan practice.

But, antecedent to conversion, the earliest Christians were pagans. They worshipped the Pagan divinities, and participated in all their important sacrificial rites.

If so, how could a share in human oblations be omitted. Plausible inferences are not wanting, that some of the most essential solemnities of the Christian religion flow from the sanguinary ritual.

In abstract view, the bloody sacrifice contemplates the redemption of life for one, by its destruction in another. Life is offered for life. Those in acknowledged danger are ransomed from fate inevitable.

The utmost limits of human superstition are bounded by human sacrifice. All other rites or ceremonies fall infinitely inferior to it. However cruel and lavish the destruction of animal life, wantonly estimating importance by number, it bears no approximation to the murder of men, nor can any deed equally atrocious be perpetrated as a sanctified act.

Though the purity of a redeeming sacrifice exacted life for life, more refined and speculative theories taught the atonement of voluntary, nay, of involuntary sin, by sanguinary oblations; while both the nature and the extent of offences varied, the necessity and the rate of expiation were death.

Presumptions may be entertained, that certain innocent ceremonies practised in Scotland, indicate the previous subsistence of human immolations.—Ancient customs degenerate under infinite modifications, until the changes undergone by the social state, scarcely permit their recognition.

Yet, reasoning from analogy is ever precarious. A sentence, a word of genuine authority might overthrow

the most specious of theories supported by the longest chain of ingenious argument; nay, from the same premises different conclusions may be formed.

Thus, all discussion on a subject so obscure, must be offered and accepted with equal reserve.

Learned authors have beheld with horror, the altar of human oblations in the ancient *Cromlech*, dispersed throughout these countries. They have found in the artificial cavities of its surface, a receptacle for the blood, and in its inclination, the most suitable exposure of the victim to view. From the number of these memorials yet subsisting in the British islands, they deduce the frequency of sacrifice. Let us pass such theories without comment; for although they are entertained by those whose opinions are entitled to veneration, they are not supported by direct evidence.*

* *King*, Monumenta Antiqua. v. i. p. 210. *Chalmers'* Caledonia, v. i. p. 73. *Wormins* Monumenta Danica. p. 4. et seq. *Rowland*, Mona Antiqua, var loc.

In the year 1813, the author visited a Cromlech among the hills of Linlithgowshire, in the vicinity of the house of Kipps, which was once the residence of Sir Robert Sibbald. It consists of what has been originally a single stone, though now cleft asunder, about nine feet eight inches long; six feet six inches broad; and three feet thick, in its greatest dimensions. Approaching a triangular figure, it rests at a great inclination, probably not less than sixty degrees, on three very rude stones, the two higher to the south, the third to the north, which is so low as not to be easily recognised, and admits the superincumbent mass almost to touch the ground. The broader end is to the south. Some other stones are in the vicinity, but many have been removed, thus disturbing the uniformity of any figure that may have been formed by the

Some have conjectured that the relics of human sacrifice, are indicated by ceremonies observed in Scotland at Beltein, the festival of a pagan divinity, distinguished by various names and attributes over an extensive portion of the globe.* But whether in relation to that most barbarous of superstitious rites, this be a sound opinion, it is indisputable that analogies to a propitiatory offering for the safety of animals, were practised in later æras, precisely at the period corresponding to the same festival. Then the highland herdsmen prepared an oaten cake with nine square knobs on the surface. Each of these dedicated to a conservative or to a destructive being, was broke off, and thrown over the shoulder, with an invocation for protection of the herds.† Likewise, herdsmen convoked in numbers at Beltein, to a meal of cakes, with lumps like nipples over the surface, made for the occasion.‡ Rudbeck found the relics of sacrificial rites in the particular form of some varieties of bread, baked at a certain period of the year in Sweden.¶ Neither ought the importance attached to bread, by the earlier Jewish tribes, to be forgot; nor the introduction of it when abandon-

whole. One about three feet in diameter, and rising two above the surface of the earth, some yards to the west, was a conspicuous object at the preceding period.

* *Robertson*, Parish of Callender, ap. *Stat. Acct.* v. xi. p. 620.

† *Pennant*, Tour in Scotland, 1769, p. 98.

‡ *Bisset*, Parish of Logierait, ap. *Stat. Acct.* v. v. p. 84.

¶ *Rudbeck*, *Atlantica*, t. ii. p. 212.

ing their original faith, as a symbolic representation, or as commemorative of divinity.

Another ceremony of late observance also at Beltein, is worthy of more special notice: when the highland youths cast a trench in some sequestered spot among the hills. A fire was kindled, and a cake being made and cut in pieces, one of these was blackened and put into a bonnet along with the rest. Each of the youths present, in the next place, drew forth a portion, and he to whose lot the blackened piece chanced to fall, was held as "devoted to Beal-tine, or Baal's fire, as a sacrifice." The victim leaped three times through the fire that had been employed for the ceremony.*

The traditions of antiquity have preserved the fate of Oran, St Columba's companion, willing to be buried alive as a propitiatory offering, in the island of Iona. Modern superstitions record the belief of a septennial sacrifice to Satan, by some other imaginary beings, when children were abstracted, and changelings left in the cradle.† Farther, it is said that during the military excursions of the Scottish clans, to meet an armed man argued favourably for the enterprise; but did a woman barefooted cross their way, they seized her and drew blood from her forehead.‡

By retaining these as real or symbolic illustrations, in recollection, further examples of what may be con-

* *Campbell, Journey from Edinburgh, v. i. p. 143.*

† *Heron, Journey, vol. ii. p. 228.*

‡ *Shaw, Province of Moray, p. 276.*

jectured analogies to the relics of sacrifice, will be more easily applied and understood. It is the deperdition of matter through the lapse of indefinite time, that clouds the progress of history. Thence, although the antiquary cannot expect to discover in detail, those customs belonging to the earliest date, or even their mutilated or corrupted remains, at a period so modern as the first Scottish record, he may enquire amidst the meagre fragments transmitted from his progenitors, whether they did not unconsciously perpetuate indistinct memorials of human and other sacrifices.

Where malevolence or ambition induced the wicked to speculate on the destruction of their nearest relatives, if the nefarious purpose could not be perpetrated by overt acts, they did not hesitate to resort to the clandestine effects of mystical agency.* But indulging in the prejudices, and in the ignorance of their æra, or trusting to infallible success where stratagem was duly devised, they practised many occult

* *Privy Council Records*, 11 Nov. 1629.—“Forsameikle as the Lords of Secreit Counsall are suirlie informed that Margaret Maxwell, spous to Nicoll Thomesone, and Jeane Thomesone her daughter, spous to vmqubill Edward Hamiltoun, in Dumfries, procured the destruction and death of the said vmqubill Edward, be the devilish and detestable practise of witchcraft: lykas, there is many pregnant presumptiouns and suspiciouns, both of thair knowlege and practise of that vnhappie and devilish trade; quhilk being a mater most offensive vnto God, scandalous to religioun, and most dangerous to his Majestie's good subjects”—they are commanded to appear for examination. f. 181. v.—*Vmqubill*, former—late.

ceremonies for its attainment. Each had a definite end: the whole were in joint operation.

According to ordinary genealogies, Robert Monro of Foulis, married twice; first, a daughter of the family of Ogilvy of Finlater; secondly, Catherine, a daughter of the family of Ross of Balnagown. Issue sprung of both marriages, consisting of two sons, Robert and Hector of the former, and a son George of the latter. These three names are engrossed in the written record of the following incidents; but the fact of a first marriage is adopted chiefly from the admitted line of pedigree.

In the year 1577, the destruction of the eldest son, Robert Monro, by means of sorcery, was devised by his step-mother—Catherine, who invited the assistance of some that were thought accomplished in the art. But the plot being discovered, the conspirator fled to a neighbouring county, until the intercession of the Earl of Caithness with her husband, permitted her return.

Meantime, an accomplice, Christian Ross, was brought to trial in November 1577, in the Cathedral church of Ross, before Walter Urquhart, sheriff of Cromarty, and Robert Monro of Foulis, acting under a royal commission; convicted on her own confession, and burnt. This latter, Robert the senior, is said to have died in 1588, and to have been succeeded by his son Robert, already named, whose decease, according to the pedigree, followed that of his father in 1589. Hector, his younger brother, succeeded him. Previous

to this event, however, if the chronology given in the pedigree be correct, he had fallen sick,—and, as at a former period he sought his brother's convalescence through the aid of sorcerers, now he resorted to the same medium for his own preservation.—Marion M'Ingarrath administered three draughts of water, wherein three stones had been infused,—“eftir lang consultatioun had with hir, sche declarit that thair was na remeid,” unless the principal man of his blood should suffer death for him;—who on further discussion was found to be George Monro, eldest son of Catherine Ross, Lady Foulis, consequently half brother of Hector the querent. If this was the fact, the grounds whereon they attained that conclusion are unimportant. In prosecuting their occult treason, the parties arranged that no one should enter the house of Hector the invalid, previous to the arrival of George Monro the devoted victim: that after he came, Hector, presenting his own left hand, should take him by the right, but without uttering a word until the devoted should break silence first.

If the circumstances of the narrative may be relied on, there is little doubt that these preliminaries were strictly observed.

An hour after midnight the sorceress, with an accomplice, quitted Hector her patient, and reaching a certain spot pertaining to two coterminous overlords, near the sea flood, they removed the turf, and dug a grave to receive him. The remainder of the ceremony

is explained sufficiently in an indictment addressed to Hector Monro, whereon he was subsequently tried. "They patt yow in a paire of blanketts, and careit yow furth to the said graif: and they war all commandit to be dum, and nevir to speik ane word vnto the tyme that scho [Marion M'Ingarrath] and your foster-mother sould first speik with your maister the devill:—and being brocht furth wes laid in the said graif, and the grene eird quhilk was cuttit wes laid abone, and haldin doun with stalfis, the said witch being besyd you: and the said Cristiane Neill your foster-mother, wes commandit to ryn the breid of nyne rigis, and in hir hand Neill Younger, Hector Leithis sone,—and how sone the said Cristen had run the breid of nyne rigis, scho come agane to the graif quhair ye wes lyand, and inquiryt at the said witch, quhilk wes hir schois, quha answerit that the said Mr Hector wes hir schois to leif, and your brother George to die for yow: and this forme wes vsit thryis that nycht: and thaireftir ye wes careit hame, all the companie beand dum, and wes put to your bed."

No ceremony alike remarkable is recorded in Scottish history: nor is it obvious from what combination of sources, either in theory or practice, it was derived. Its whole tenor—the solemn hour, so near when night and morning meet: the semblance of funeral rites, the place selected, mystical numbers, mysterious silence,—and above all, the avowed deadly purpose as levelled against another, warrant the strongest

presumptions, that it comprised relics of symbolic sacrifice,—or of something substituted for actual immolation of the human species.

It would not be difficult to illustrate the subsistence of symbolic human sacrifice, during ages subsequent to the suppression of that atrocious religious rite itself, in various climes and æras. The images of mankind were burnt, submerged, or destroyed, when the exaction of life ceased to be indispensable, for gratifying sanguinary deities,—and men themselves as living victims were spared. Symbols are substituted for realities: form is adopted for substance, when those expedients in common usage at certain epochs, cannot be conveniently or consistently observed in the altered condition of society.

The course above detailed accomplished its purpose: for the devoted victim, George Monro, was seized with a mortal distemper in April 1590, of which he died in June.

Several persons were implicated in the charges regarding these proceedings, which were protracted during a considerable time.*

* *Privy Council Records*, 2 June 1589. On an application by “Katherine Ros, relict of vmquhill Robert Monro of Foullis; Margaret Southerland, spouse to Hector Monro, portionar of Killerne; Bessie Innes, spouse to Neill Monro in Swardill; Margaret Ros, spouse to Johnne Keill M'Donnald Roy in Caull; and Margaret Mowat,” shewing that “Mr Hector, now of Foullis, sone-in-law to the said Katherine Ros, seiking—to possess himselff in certane hir terce and conjunct fie landis of the barony of Foullis—purchest ane commisioun—for

At length Hector Monro and his step-mother were acquitted on trial, but other two participators of the conspiracy suffered capital punishment. The fate of Marion M'Ingarrath, who was examined before the king as "ane rank and notorious witch," may be easily conjectured, though it is not specified.†

Some other occult ceremonies relating to this narrative, are reserved for explanation in their proper place.

Sacrifices to the celestial deities, were offered *in excelsis*: altars were reared on hills: but mystical rites were performed *in profundis*—in cavities of the earth—or often amidst desert places, to those presiding over the infernal regions. A pit was dug, and aspersed with the blood of immolated animals;† it received libations of milk and honey.‡ Satan, who reigned below, was accounted the promoter of mischief, and held as worthy of homage.

apprehending of the saidis Margaret Suthirland, Bessie Innes, Margaret Ros, and Margaret Mowatt, and sundrie vtheris, and putting of them to the knowledge of an assize for witchcraft, and vtheris forgeit and fenyeit crymes," an interdict against further procedure for the time was granted, p. 209.

* Trial of Catherine Rois, Lady Foullis, 22 July 1590. Trial of Mr Hector Monro of Fowles, *eodem die*. *Rec. Just.* The persons who suffered were Cristian Rois Malcumsone, "and Thomas M'Kane More M'Allane M'Enoch." Various other parties accused besides all the preceding, are named in the course of the trial. *Leif*—live; *stalfis*—staves; *grene-eird*—green earth: turf; *breid*—breadth; *rigis*—ridges; *schois*—choice.

† *Lucianus* Necyomantia, § 9. ap. op. t. i. p. 467.

‡ *Nicetas Choniates*, *Thesaurus Orthodoxei Fidei* Append. ii. § 2.

The ceremonial of the divine offices appointed by the church, was performed on the decease and sepulture of mankind. But the celebration of such offices for the purpose of inducing evil, was attempted through the medium of sorcery, as sanctified things might be rendered the medium of mischief. Thence the Canon law denounced those priests who should celebrate masses for the dead in name of the living, to bring the latter in peril of their existence.* Probably evil was contemplated by the symbolic occupation of the grave by Hector Monro, for the real occupation designed to be induced by a mortal distemper on his brother. It is said that parents were wont to dig two adjacent graves, beside a lake in the parish of Reay in Caithness, and to lay their distempered children on the interval between them, for ascertaining the probability of their recovery. But the authority narrating the practice, declines disclosing the mode whereby it was to be ascertained. How many links of interesting history are thus broken, from absurd and unfounded prejudices: how many facts which might unravel the clue, and illuminate the darkness of antiquity, while guarding the inquisitive from erroneous speculations! Possibly this, like the former, may have been the relics of some symbolic rite.† It is undoubted that the redemption of one

* *Gratian Decretalia*, p.11. causa xxvi. quest. 5. *Episcoporum et. — Quicumque Sacerdotum.*

† *Brand*, Description of Orkney, Zetland, Pightland Firth, and Caithness, p.154.

was purchased, throughout the world, at the expense of another's life: and that lives innumerable have been offered for that specific purpose. On the same principle, the safety of one devoted by destiny, seems to have been thought incompatible with the preservation of another, as it was essential that either should die. Thence, perhaps, when a woman, suspected of transferring a malady to a man, heard herself charged with it, she replied, "if William Bigland lived, scho wald die, thairfoir, God forbid he leive."*

The relics of symbolic sacrifice, such as that which was actually celebrated among the most ancient nations, were preserved in a different ceremonial, about the same æra as the preceding observation.. After an infant newly baptised, was carried home from church, the midwife, or another, waved it through the flame, repeating thrice, "Let the fire consume thee now if ever."† In the present age, a child put on a cloth spread over a basket containing provisions, has been conveyed thrice around the crook of the chimney, thus preserving the proximity of fire.‡

The recognition of the pagan divinity Baal, or Bel, the Sun, is discovered through innumerable etymological sources. In the records of Scottish history,

* Trial of Katherine Bigland *alias* Greibik, 7 June 1615. She was accused of transferring the sickness of William Bigland to Robert Brown, and again "casting of the same seikness" on the original patient, William Bigland. *Rec. Ork.* f. 45. r.

† *Moresinus* Papatus, p. 72.

‡ *Bisset*, Parish of Logierait, ap. *Stat. Acct.* v. v. p. 83.

down to the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries, multiplied prohibitions were issued from the fountains of ecclesiastical ordinances, against kindling *Bailfires*, of which the origin cannot be mistaken. The festival of this divinity was commemorated in Scotland until the latest date. Should it have been ever truly interrupted, the citizens of the metropolis seem willing to promote its revival in recollection, by ascending a neighbouring hill, Arthur's Seat, in troops, on the first of May, to witness the glorious spectacle of sunrise from the sea.

In Ireland, a country less advanced, thence more tenacious of customs, it was remarked late in the preceding century, that when "fire is at this day kindled in the milking yard, the men, women, and children," pass or leap through it.* Antiquaries cite a canon of one of the ecclesiastical councils, against leaping over fires kindled at new moon.

Although the barbarous practice of human immolation, became repugnant to a juster sense of the Divine attributes, and the warmer feelings of love and mercy towards their fellow-creatures, mankind evidently kept it in the longest retrospect, by leaping over fires, or passing through them, and by other ceremonies wherein this element forms the chief ingredient of superstition. Various passages of scripture specify the sacrifice of children to Moloch, an ancient heathen divinity of the earliest tribes. For any one to cause "his son

* *Vallancey, Enquiry.* Ap. *Collectanea de Rebus Hibernicis*, v. ii. no. v. p. 64, 65.

or his daughter pass through the fire," was interdicted to the Jews.* Moses Maimonides endeavours to shew, that this ceremonial was not actual sacrifice: that the parent consigned his child to an attendant priest, who returned it, to be waved by himself through the flame—or, if of sufficient age, that perhaps the child was directed to pass personally through the fire. Therefore he concludes, that there was no real cremation in the sacrifice to Moloch, though it might subsist in offerings to other divinities; and that the ceremonial was restricted to transmission through the fire, as symbolic of the fact, or as a formality.† Thus an immediate correspondence is discovered between the earliest and the latest ceremony. The identity of Baal, Moloch, and Saturn, is unimportant to this discussion; for it is the facts exhibited in practice, that can prove the attributes assigned, the nature of the worship, and whether it participated of human sacrifice.

As it is seen that the most imperfect relics in the Scottish ceremonies, resemble those of ancient times, the occupation of the grave by Hector Monro, may have been symbolic of the reception of the real victim for whom it was intended.

The influence expected from the concomitant ob-

* Deuteronomy ch. xviii. v. 10.—It is doubtful whether human beings, or symbolic rites, be referred to in the passages of *Leviticus*, ch. xviii. v. 21. xx. v. 2—5.

† *Moses Maimonides de Idololatria*, c. 6. § 4. 5.

servances is very obscure, although they are not solitary examples under other combinations.—Silence was to be preserved: the right and the left hand were to have their respective office: nine ridges had to be passed: and the sepulchral spot was appointed, where the precincts of different owners met. From the importance attached to all or any of these injunctions, their oversight may have impaired the efficacy of the charm.

One refused to speak before passing “the boundis of hir ground, and thair sat down, plaiting her feit betuix the merchis.”* A skein of yarn, through which a patient had been transmitted, was cut into nine parts, and buried in “three lord’s lands.”†—Part of the ceremonial in modern divinations, is dipping the shirt sleeve in a rivulet where “three laird’s lands meet.”

“Vnder silence and clud of nycht, Im. VI^c. ten yeares.” John Sinclair carried his distempered sister along with him: “he horsed her backward from quhair scho lay, to the Kirk of Hoy, quhair he met the kirk sevin faddome; at quhat tyme ane voyce appeirit saying, ‘sevin is ower many for ane syne.’ Thaireftir, he tuik hir, and layed hir at the north syd of * * be direction of the devill: And in the morning, the first thing scho saw, was ane boit with fyve men, quhair of four perischit, and ane was saiff—be the quhilk divellrie the woman becam weill.” The wonted test

* Trial of Agnes Scottie, 13 June 1616. *Rec. Ork.* f. 72.

† *Perth K. S. R.* 23 May 1623. Janet Wall.

which betrayed so many, denoted that the culprit had accomplished this sacrifice to redeem his sister; for, when accused of the foul fact, "after the dead men wer found, and forcit to lay his handis vpoun thame, thay guishit out with bluid and watter at mouth and noise."*

Perhaps, according to the purest principles of the sanguinary ritual, the offering was simply life for life. But partial sacrifice, that is, an oblation of portions of the body, libations of blood, and at last wounds or lacerations, were gradually substituted, and deemed sufficient without destruction of the victim.—Hence that personal mutilation, constituting the distinctive character of the Jews from other nations.—It has been originally a partial sacrifice.—Selfishness is not altogether extirpated by the devotion or the superstition of mankind. In substituting such personal mutilation for life: in offering a fragment for the body, it is neither unnatural nor unwise to part with what can be best spared. Thus among the ruder tribes now occupying various continental and insular territories, mutilation of the fingers of either hand, from different superstitious motives, is yet frequent. A mother having lost all her previous offspring, sought to preserve a son, the next born, by mutilating his little finger of a joint. Therefore a part was evidently offered for redemption of

* Trial of Johne Sinclair, penult, Jan. 1633. *Records of the Bishop of Orkney's Court*, f. 49. v. Met, measured.—Faddome, fathom.—Boit, boat.

the whole.* Anciently, the hair and the nails, were offerings to divinities. Whence, perhaps, has ensued privation of the former, when the devout consecrate their existence to the service of the Deity in Christian countries. They were alike a substitute for redemption from evil. In the course of the mystical proceedings by Hector Monro, he had held consultation with witches, and sought responses for the recovery of his brother Robert's health, in the year 1588. They cut the hair of the patient's head, and pared the nails of his fingers and toes: seeking by their devilish expedients to cure his distemper.—More recently on cutting the finger and toe nails of an invalid, the parings, put into a rag taken from his clothes, were waved thrice around the operator, exclaiming, *deas-soil*, and then thrown to some desert spot.†

In this manner, parts, deemed the least useful to the human frame, were substituted as an offering for those the most essential: or for life itself.

With the love of freedom, and extending civilization,—by encouraging the prosecution of tranquil pursuits, and inculcating an aversion to war, human sacrifice proves of more difficult attainment. The blood of slaves and captives no longer flows at the nod of capricious masters, or stains the altar reared by the cruel victor to the Deity giving him conquest. Oblations of animal life, felt to be less sanguinary and revolting,

* Thompson, Travels, v. i. p. 433.

† Shaw, Province of Moray, p. 290.

and of greater facility, become proportionally more common, as the other is abrogated or becomes rare.

In Scotland it is yet a superstitious principle that the *wraith*—the omen or messenger of death, appears in the resemblance of one in danger, immediately preceding dissolution. This ominous form, purely of a spiritual nature, seems to testify that the exaction of life approaches. It was wont to be exhibited also as “a little rough dog,” when it could be pacified by the death of any other being, “if crossed and conjured in time.”*

Although it was credited that mortal distempers affecting mankind, could be transferred to the brute creation, it is not evident that this can be regarded as tantamount to sacrifice. Life indeed was redeemed by life, but rather as a physical effect operated through necromantic means, than by a propitiatory offering. Adam Lennard was sick: as the cows and oxen of another died he recovered.† A more direct reference to an oblation may have lurked under the facts specified in the accusation of Marioun Ritchart. “Ye cam to Stronsay, and asking almes of Andro Coupar, skipper of ane bark, he said, ‘Away witch, carling; devil ane farthing ye will fall!’ quhairvpoun ye went away verie offendit: and incontinentlie, he going to sea, the bark being vnder sail, he rane wode, and wald have luppen ourboord: and his sone seing him,

* *Kirk Secret Commonwealth*, p. 9.

† Trial of Helene Isbuster, 13 Aug. 1635. *Rec. Ork.* f. 97. v.

gat him in his armes, and held him : quhairvpon the seiknes immediatelie left him, and his sone ran made : and Thomas Paiterson seing him tak his madnes, and the father to turn weill, ane dog being in the bark, took the dog and bladdit him vpon the tua schoulderis, and thairefter flang the said dogg in the sea, quhairby these in the bark were saiffed.”*

As similar narratives ought to be considered generally, as the joint production of the best and of the worst educated of their æra, they must receive such a construction as seems most consistent with reason and the principles whence they may have originally sprung. All the preceding facts were considered by the cotemporaries of the perpetrators merely as the exercise of supernatural powers. The remembrance of human immolation had been lost. Blood was shed after the cessation of destruction, though its origin and purpose were unknown.

As the slaughter of mankind by strangling, or burying, or burning them alive, to propitiate divinities, declined to milder substitutes, so might the destruction of brute animals, by strangling, or burning, or burying them alive, at length degenerate into spilling their blood while preserving life.

The relics of sacrificial offerings are said to subsist among modern sportsmen, by the previous destruction

* Trial of Mareoun Ritchart, 29 May [1629 or 1633.] *Rec. Ork.* f. 49. v. *Luppen*—leaped. *Bladdit*—struck. Dog is presumed to bear the ordinary acceptation.

of some animated being on wastes—the moors of Scotland—in propitiation of their future pursuits.

Here also may be found a solution of that recent expedient so ignorantly practised in the neighbouring kingdom, where one having lost many of his herd by witchcraft, as he concluded, burnt a living calf to break the spell and preserve the remainder.

The lower orders entertain a prejudice against preserving kittens produced in May; and insist that the first brood of all should be utterly destroyed.

But it is in a retrospect of former manners, that the relics of sacrificial rites are to be more distinctly recognised. After losing numerous sheep, the proprietor dwelling in the isle of Birsay, was advised “to take ane beast at Alhallow evin, and sprinkill thrie dropps of the bluid of it ben by the fyre.”*

Possibly a more complex and intricate ceremonial for the relief of human maladies, as adopted by the hardy empirics of the times, is applicable to the same class of oblations. Though specially directed to one patient, an entire family participated in the benefit, and the prescriber was rewarded amply for his success. He ordered “ane grit fyre to be put on, and ane hoill to be maid in the north side of the hous, and ane quik hen to be put furth thairat at thre seuerall tymes, and tane in at the hous dur widderschynes: and thair-

* Trial of Jonet Forsyth, 11 Nov. 1629. *Rec. Ork.* f. 294. v. *But* and *ben* indicate the two opposite extremities, or two opposite apartments of a Scottish cottage.

after taking the hen and puting it vnder the seik woman's okstir or airme: and thaireftir cayreing it to the fyre quhair it was haldin doun and brunt quik thairin."*

If this was a sacrifice, it was for the sake of mankind. But twenty years after a cruel vengeance had been taken on the prescriber for his superstitions, a new charge appeared against another whose charms were among the most celebrated,—involving the destruction of one animal for preserving the rest.

Many cattle having died, John Brughe and Neane Nikclerith, also one of the initiated, conjoined their mutual skill for the safety of the herd. The surviving animals were drove past a tub of water containing two enchanted stones: and each was sprinkled from the liquid contents in its course. One, however, being unable to walk, "was by force drawin out at the byre dure: and the said Johnne with Nikclerith smelling the nois therof said it wald not leive, caused ane hoill to be maid in Maw Greane, quhilk was put quick in the hole and maid all the rest of the cattell theireftir to go over that place: and in that devillische maner, be charmeing," they were cured.†

Evidently this barbarous expedient corresponded with the superstitious oblation of a lesser portion of the herd for conservation of the greater. A dying animal was destroyed prematurely, that some benefit

* Trial of Thomas Greave, 1 Aug. 1623. *Rec. Just.* Okstir—armpit.

† Trial of Johnne Brughe, 1643, *ut sup.*

might be imparted to those believed to be in peril. One was offered for the whole.

The like is specified still more distinctly of an antecedent date, with concomitants still more decisive of the formalities of sacrifice : and from expressing an allusion to earlier observance of similar practice, it shews how many intermediate links of history may be lost from the lapse of time. Thus, by ascending gradually, progressively, and imperceptibly, from epoch to epoch, some precise period might be ultimately attained, when sanguinary offerings were familiar to those whose posterity can only conjecture their subsistence from meagre and imperfect relics.

During the prevalence of a murrain, about the year 1629, certain persons, as related in a former chapter, had proposed resorting to the laird of Lee, to borrow his "cureing stane." But from this they were dissuaded by one who "had sene bestiall curet be taking ane quik seik ox, and making ane deip pitt, and bureing him therin, and be calling the oxin and bestiall over that place." Let it be recollected that the mother of the same individuals had endeavoured to repress the progress of the distemper, by taking "ane quik ox with ane catt, and ane grit quantitie of salt," and proceeding "to burie the ox and catt quik with the salt, in ane deip hoill in the grund, as ane sacrifice to the devill, that the rest of the guidis might be fred of the seiknes or diseases."*

* Trial of Issobell Young, 4 Feb. 1629. *Rec. Just.* Guidis—cattle. Bestiall—animals. Calling—driving.

Probably none of the facts alleged in the course of the trial of the parties implicated are embellished,—a point of no indifferent weight,—considering the tendency to exaggeration in all judicial matters,—where, on the contrary, every precept, moral and divine, should inculcate the most rigid adherence to truth.

Only a palliative defence,—one of feeble import,—opposed so serious a charge.

The practice of these superstitions can be hardly interpreted, the mere application of any remedy prescribed by the veterinary art; nor can it be viewed as the exercise of humanity—too rare a virtue in rude ages—for terminating the agonies of a dying animal; neither was it a desperate remedy of instant contrivance to mitigate sudden evil,—a ready invention to meet the emergency, because some definite relation, purpose, or property, seems to distinguish each of the respective parts, or might be expected from their combination. Our progenitors, less from learning than from prejudice, seem to have designed the whole ceremony nearly by its genuine character—“ane sacrifice to the devill.”

Sacrifices in pits were offered to the infernal deities: libations of blood were there poured forth to honour, or to appease them. Animals have been buried as an oblation. The ox was a frequent victim. In the mythological fables of the north, the car of the divinity, deemed emblematical of the earth, is represented as drawn by cats,—and among the victims to the earth,

cats were conceived to be the most acceptable,—for the brevity of their gestation corresponded with the brevity of the northern summer maturing the crop so speedily.* The Laplanders of the preceding century sacrificed these creatures to a divinity distinguished by the feet of a bird, among other attributes,—thence undoubtedly furnished with talons.† Salt formed an important ingredient in propitiatory oblations to supernatural beings. Therefore, if the whole empirical remedy of burying a living ox, along with a cat and a quantity of salt, in a pit, be appreciated, there cannot be any doubt that it presents the perpetuation of sacrificial rites amidst the confused relics of original practice.

The knowledge of our progenitors was too circumscribed to discover the elements of earlier oblations in the ceremony. Nor were their principles sufficiently refined, perhaps, to contemplate religious offerings to any tutelary divinity. All their views at that special period were bent towards Satan,—all their mysteries are described by themselves or their persecutors, as in honour of him exclusively: nor was any propitiatory purpose admitted in their exercise or celebration. Premeditated mischief was ever presumed to be lurking under them.

Alexander Hamilton, “a warlok,” according to his

* *Rudbeck Atlantica*, t. ii. p. 240. “Sed inter victimas Terræ debitas præcipuo loco feles habebantur propterea quod septentrio, semina recepta brevissimo temporis spatio redderet,” p. 542.

† *Scheffer Lapponia*, cap. x. p. 97, 110.

cotemporaries, enjoyed the prerogative of evoking the fiend,—wont to obey his call sometimes “in the likeness of ane corbie, at other times in the schape of ane dog,”—when he cast some animal, such as a dog or a cat, to him on his departure. Their interviews were frequent and familiar, and on one occasion when “he past to Clarkington burne, besyde the Rottone Raw, haifing ane catt vnder his okstir,”—after raising this treacherous foe of mankind, he “cuist to him the katt.”* Both the cat and the dog are represented to have been employed in some other mysteries in Scotland.

The ancients have said that the dog was consecrated to Pan, likewise that the same animal was offered to Hecate in a spot where three ways met, but that none were sacrificed to any of the Celestial Deities.† Therefore, if Satan be the Pan of the ancients, and Hecate the goddess of the infernal regions, it may be understood why, in the relics of mystical rites, a cat should be buried in the earth, and a dog cast aside as an offering.

Thiers alludes to the superstitious practice of burying a dead horse, ox, cow, or sheep, with the feet upwards, under the threshold of the stable, or in the fold, as the preservative of other animals.‡ The king’s

* Trial of Alexander Hamilton, 22 Jan. 1630. *Rec. Just.* Corbie—raven; cuist—cast; warlok—wizard.

† *Plutarch Quæstiones Romanæ*, ap. op. t. vii. p. 120, 166.

‡ *Thiers*, t. i. p. 271.

advocate assured Bodin, that killing an animal, and hanging it, with the feet upwards, at the stable door, had proved the salutary means of preserving his flocks and herds from the contagion of a destructive distemper.

During the later years of Queen Elizabeth, some vague opinions were entertained of the benefit to ensue from burying or burning one of a herd—that it would save the rest. An owner having lost many of his cattle, threw the carcase of the next that died into a pit, and consumed it with faggots,—“after which all his cattle did well.”* Nothing is more probable than the same absurd prejudice animating the clown, who has just burnt his calf alive. How often is Reason, when about to dwell with mankind, frightened from among them by their follies!

As the means of propitiating Heaven to refresh the arid earth with rain, a living ass was buried in the portal of a church in Italy, after having received the consecrated host. A deluge followed.†

On some extraordinary occasions, especially in a lingering distemper, the Arabs “sacrifice a cock, a sheep, or a goat, by burying the whole carcase underground.‡

In Scotland, a remedy for insanity is described to have been “earding of ane quik cok in the grund, and of pleuche irnes vpone merchis, betwix twa lordis

* *History of Magic*, v. i. p. 148.

† *Bodinus Demonomania* from Pontanus.

‡ *Shaw, Travels*, p. 306.

landis.”* Here also the blood of a red cock was administered as medicinal.†

The Irish were wont to sacrifice a cock on St Martin's eve, or about the festival of All Saints—the same period of sprinkling three drops of an animal's blood in Birsay :‡ and an allegation of sacrificing nine red cocks appears likewise in Irish history.

The cock was consecrated to Apollo, the god of medicine, and the attribute of his son Æsculapius. In Egypt, a red cock was sacrificed to Osiris, whom some identify with the Apollo of the Greeks, or who is supposed to have sprung of the sun. Hence, administering the blood of a red cock as medicinal, or burying a living cock in the earth, may be traced through various corruptions to the relics of a propitiatory offering.

The destruction of life as a redeeming sacrifice, to obtain a greater or a lesser benefit, appears under multiplied aspects. Relief from pain or suffering, the restoration of health, preservation from death, were sought in the remedy.

In England, the paralysis of a limb was ascribed to the crawling of a shrew mouse over it, and a cure was

* Trial of Cristian Lewingstoun, 12 Nov. 1597. *Rec. Just.*

† *Beauford*, ap. *Collectanea de Rebus Hibernicis*, v. iii. p. 413.

‡ *White*, *Natural History of Selborne*, Letter xxviii. p. 203. *Plot*, *Staffordshire*, ch. vi. § 51. p. 222. *Brand*, v. ii. p. 590, 3. A shrew ash stood near the church of Selborne. Trees of different kinds were used. In Staffordshire, one impregnated with the curative virtue, was called “a nursrow tree.”

expected from destroying one of these animals, as the intermediate means of imparting virtue to the medicine. Thus, after allowing the creature to perish in an auger hole, artificially piercing the trunk of a tree, a twig was torn from it to be drawn across the distempered organ. A disease called the *connoch* is known among cattle in Scotland. In Ireland, to avert the injury threatening either cattle or swine feeding where the *connogh worm* had crawled, they drank of, or were sprinkled from an infusion of the leaves and branches of a tree where one of these insects, confined in an auger hole like the shrew mouse, had been left to perish.† People undertook considerable journeys to obtain the preceding remedies. It seems as if some secret virtue was believed to be imparted to the curative matter by the forfeiture of life: that some redeeming principle was acquired through the medium of sacrifice.

Expansion of the mind, together with a juster appreciation of the phenomena of the universe, generates reasonable doubts regarding the powers and the presence of that supernatural host, about which the superstitious have been so sedulously occupied. Balancing

* *Molyneux* of the Connough Worm: ap. *Philosophical Transactions*, ad. an. 1685, v. xv. p. 876. *Piers' Description of Westmeath*, ap. *Collec. de Reb. Hib.* v. i. p. 56. Vide v. iii. No. 12. Pref. This animal is described as a gigantic caterpillar, not poisonous. If a man has bruised it in his hands, where the moisture is allowed to dry, the water wherein they are first washed is administered as a remedy. The hand of a child wherein one has died, cures the distempered cattle by the touch. It is alleged that the Arabs practise some similar expedient.

the profits of retaining their personal possessions, with any sensible advantages derived from their destruction, the selfish owner hesitates on the consequences: he becomes reluctant to part with the wonted oblations: superstition is losing its sway. First, one is substituted as an offering for many,—next, blood is sprinkled,—milk is spilt,*—the hair is cut, or burnt, or cast aside.† Libations are poured forth, the products of industry are devoted, or grateful substances set apart, to propitiate or appease some sanguinary deity, or some tutelary genius.‡

Finally, nothing remains but the innocent symbolic

* *Humbie Kirk Session Register*, 16—23 Sept. 1649. Agnes Gourlay. To augment the quantity of milk from cows, a portion drawn was thrown into the drain by the owner or the milk-maid, saying, "God betuch ws to, they are wnder the yird, that have as much neede of it, as they that are above the yird."

Probably milk was thus devoted, because the same offerings were consecrated to infernal beings as to the superior powers.—The substitution of milk for wine, in the elements of the Communion, which had been introduced in the Christian Church, was declared an error, and prohibited by the Canon law. *Gratian Decretalia*, P. 111: De Consecratione. Dist. 2: Cum omne crimen.

Betuch—preserve; *yird*—earth.

† Trial of Issobell Sinclair, ult. Feb. 1633. To "fyre ane piece of linyng cleath, and sing ane hair of the beast at alhalow even," to preserve cattle. *Rec. Ork.* f. 86. v.

‡ *Martin*, Western Islands. To obtain abundance of sea-ware, a cup of home brewed ale was poured into the sea at hallow even: and a cow's milk was offered every Sunday on Brownie's Stone, in the islands of Braga and Valay respectively, p. 28, 67.

remains of sacrifice, under whatever aspect they shall have assumed.

Though various modes of destruction were practised, that by fire seems to have excited the greatest horror, and to have made the deepest impression on mankind. Whether it was more solemn, whether fire itself was the highest testimony of veneration, or denoted the divine presence, or was an ingredient essential to such sacred rites, more perfect memorials regarding it have been retained.

Kindling fires on certain days, and on certain occasions, was practised in Scotland, where it attracted equal notice and reprehension. The same custom is now common in Ireland, especially on midsummer eve; —nor is it unknown in other countries. A mountain in Ireland, is said to be distinguished by a name significant of the *divine fire*, because fires in honour of Baal were kindled there. According to the opinion of some modern authors, criminals were burnt between two fires consecrated to that divinity. If this be just, perhaps, a real sacrifice once subsisted, from which the later victims were redeemed, in subsequent ages, by passing merely between the fires. Sanguinary sacrifices are often celebrated by selecting victims from the guilty among mankind.

It appears that two periods of the year, the first of May, the festival of Baal, and the summer solstice, besides others in August and November, were principally distinguished by solemnities in honour of su-

perior powers. Those of the former were greatly diversified in importance, number, and variety. The inhabitants carried their children between two fires until more recent times. On midsummer eve, "bon-fires are kindled in all directions, the young people dance around them, and some people drive their cattle through them."* The country appears in a blaze. In certain districts, the meanest cottager worth a cow and a whisp of straw, drove his cattle through the fire, "to preserve them from contagious distempers during the subsequent year."†

It is thus, that as sanguinary deities are superseded by those of milder attributes, a commutation of the barbarous homage once rendered to them ensues. The formalities of the transition are absorbed in the ignorance of earlier ages, or lost amidst the revolutions, wherein written memorials have perished.

Nevertheless, from elaborating the fragments of Scottish history, aided by an acquaintance with the ancient and modern practice of the world, and by appreciating the import of later mysteries, it may be still collected that the relics of pagan oblations have not been long obliterated in this kingdom.

* *Graham*, Parish of Kilrush, ap. *Stat. Acct. of Ireland*, v. ii. p. 459.
Fitzgerald, Parish of Ardstraw : *Ibid*, v. i. p. 124.

† *Vallancey*, *Antiquity of the Irish Language*, ap. *Coll. de Reb. Hib.* v. ii. No. 8. p. 276.—*First Inhabitants of Ireland*, *ibid*, No. 5. p. 64, 65.
Beauford, *Ancient Topography of Ireland*, *ibid*, v. iii : No. xi. p. 286.
 425. 6.

CHAPTER VI.

PROPITIATORY CHARMS.

FROM the greater oblations to propitiate divinities unknown, let us descend to minor charms devised for purchasing human favour. From invocations or ceremonies addressed to the higher powers for appeasing wrath, dispensing benefit, or inflicting evil, a few reflections shall be devoted to those expedients contrived for influencing the sentiments of men, or for alluring the affections of women. Could these be forgot amidst the selfishness and the sensuality of mortals?

If notoriously the wonted practice of other nations, infinitely farther advanced in intellectual progress, how should one, depressed so long and so low as this, escape the contagion of superstitious debasement?

Of later years, perhaps, the reader may have heard of little else than Scottish qualities,—of courage, candour, integrity, learning,—the whole train of virtues and accomplishments,—ascending too from generation to generation,—and which shall be transmitted in *secula seculorum*. Singular to tell, also, as if these attributes were denied to the best, for surely barbarity precedes civilization,—they are freely assigned to that condition, and to those habits, where, adverse to the regular transition distinguishing every other known

tribe of the universe, they should reside the least. If he credits it, he labours under the grossest delusion. Truth, which is the province of history, compels the trusty historian to shelter him from error.—Would not we willingly exalt the reputation of our ancestors, could it be done in consistence with veracity—we, who are so proud of progeniture! Would not we rate them before the most illustrious Greeks or Romans, or the other constellations of antiquity, were it only from the laudable credulity of inheriting some portion of the inherent excellence adorning their name? But our whole genuine records, even long after the populace emerged from their pristine state, teem with the most repulsive pictures of their weakness, bigotry, turbulence—fierce and treacherous cruelty. If it shall be said, that these memorials are not to be held the repositories of humanity or refinement, that they preserve only the description and the deeds of the wicked, a due appreciation of historical narrative, in as far as its meagre remains subsist, will dispell the prejudice. False and corrupt innovations of literature, those hostile to taste and fidelity, a compound of facts and fiction,—intermingling the old and the new in heterogeneous assemblage, would persuade us to think much more of our forefathers than they thought of themselves: somewhat as those devoid of discrimination, are prone to rate their cotemporaries higher than they deserve. An isolated example of virtue—of generosity, hospitality, and integrity, will be found every where. But Scotland,

until the most modern date, as taken under general view, was an utter stranger to civilization, presenting a sterile country with a famished people, wasted by hordes of mendicants, readier to seize than to solicit,—void of ingenious arts and useful manufactures,—possessed of little skill or learning,—plunged in constant war and rapine,—full of insubordination,—disturbing public rule and private peace. Its beautiful scenery, indeed, may be truly depicted—lofty mountains, thickening forests, tranquil lakes, and foaming torrents. But for waving pendants, flowing draperies, brilliant colours, eagles' feathers,—herons' plumes, feasts, or festivals,—so splendid in imagination; let naked limbs, scanty, sombre garments, to elude discovery by the foe, bits of heath stuck in bonnets if they had them, precarious sustenance, abject humility, and all those hardships inseparable from uncultivated tribes and countries, be substituted, as a juster portrait of earlier generations. How infinite, how grateful the change! Can any sufficient tribute be devoted to the honour of those whose patriotic energies have conquered the obstacles opposing it? All that was wanting is found: and now, for the highest qualities distinguishing mankind, Scotland can rival any nation of the globe.

But if such was the condition of the country and its inhabitants, is it not obvious, that all rational means of repelling the insidious invasion of those superstitions generated by ignorance, or fostered in a sickly brain,

under the influence of the religious tenets paramount here, were absent. It seems as if every thing conspiring towards the prostration of human intellect had predominated.

The inaccuracy of earlier compositions, the vague and indefinite specification of the very facts which it is their professed object to illustrate, offer great obstructions to our attempting now to describe the nature and application of propitiatory charms. From the remissness also, too often concomitant on the legal proceedings committed to written record, only a partial detail can be gathered. Nevertheless, with all these defects, the matter thus preserved affords a much more authentic source of information, than any which is known to exist in neighbouring countries.

Compared with malevolent charms, those deemed propitiatory seem to have been few and little varied. Yet, however frequent, they cannot be equally known. The world is up in arms against mischief,—but who complains of benefactions?

Some were designed merely to promote the fortune of the owner generally; some to gain the favour of individuals specially.

Many virtues were believed inherent in that portion of the amnios sometimes accompanying children in birth, named the caul: and in Scotland the *haly* or *sely how*.* Elsewhere it was obtained to render

* *Ruddiman Glossary*, ap. *Gawin Douglas*, *Virgil v. How*. Several examples of its repute are given by *Brand*, v. 2. p. 452-3.

soldiers invulnerable, and advocates eloquent: it was acquired at a high premium, and viewed with such superstitious confidence as to incur the censure of the pious.*

It is specified in Elizabeth Bathcat's indictment, "ye had ane horse schoe in ane darnet and secret pairt of your dur, keiped be yow thairvpoun as ane devillisch meanis and instructioun from the devill, received be yow, to mak your guidis and all vther your affaires quhilk ye tuik in hand, to prosper and succeid weill, speciallie within your hous."† Finding a horse shoe is accounted fortunate by the vulgar.

John Feane was convicted of using by way of witchcraft, moles' feet given to him by Satan, kept in his purse, "for this caus, that sa lang as he had thame vpoun him he suld never want silver." When applied to a child's head, moles' feet were deemed an antidote to fascination.‡

The simple possession of various amulets advanced the prosperity of the owner.

Propitiatory donations during the conveyance of a

* *Athenian Mercury* for 1691, v. iii. No. 25. q. 10. "What are we to think of such as are born with *cawls* about their heads?"

† Trial of Elizabeth Bathcat, spous to Alexander Pae, maltman in Eymouthe, 4 June 1634, *Rec. Just. ut sup.* It is doubtful whether *guidis* be cattle.

‡ *Ross Arcana Microcosmi*, p. 167. "Mendoza sheweth, that it is known by experience how fascination is cured by the foot of a mole or want laid on the childe's forehead."

child to baptism, or on first entering a house, are now common in the county of Northumberland, as they were in former years.* In the Scottish metropolis, the author lately observed the nurse offer bread and cheese to strangers in the streets, on such an occasion.

Sir James Melvil affirms of the earl of Bothwell, that he required the aid of Richard Graham to cause the king's majesty, his master, to "lyke weill of him : and to that effect he gaif the said erle some drog or herb, willing him at some convenient tyme to tuiche his maister's faice therwith." But the expedient was unsuccessful.†

A propitiatory charm, as an unguent, is known to have been applied to the person in other countries. Thus a modern author gives an interesting anecdote of a beautiful female of the East approaching the object of her affection while asleep, to apply an unguent prepared after the most skilful manner, in that spot nearest the region of the heart, for the purpose of ensuring his love.‡ It is doubtful whether the ointment said by the Evangelists to have been poured on the head or

* *Hutchinson View of Northumberland* [1776] v. 2. app. No. 4. The receiver must wish the child health and happiness, and return three different things.

† *Melvil Memoirs*, p. 397. Probably "Rychie Graham ane necromancer," consulted by Barbara Naipar on her son's health, and whether the king should return from Denmark. He was strangled and burnt. *Trial of Barbara Naipar*, 10 May 1591. *Rec. Just.*

‡ *Forbes Oriental Memoirs*, v. iii. p. 235. The author says, this ointment is prepared by an experienced matron: and that its virtues are frequently celebrated in oriental story.

feet of Jesus Christ was merely in veneration : whether it was not conciliatory or to propitiate.*

Euphame Macalyane consulted a woman in Dunfermline, how to obtain her husband's love : otherwise to be avenged of him : and for one or other purpose, or perhaps for both, she sent two shirts over the water—meaning thither—to be enchanted.†

This cannot fail to recall the words of the ancient poets, founding their fables, it may be, on some traditional incident, which represent Deinira receiving the bloody garment of the dying Centaur, as a charm to reclaim her husband's love,

“Prætulit imbutam Nesseo sanguine vestem

Mittere : quæ vires defecto reddat amori.”

OID Met. Lib. ix. c. 3. l. 153.

Agnes Sampson “inchantit be hir sorcerie ane lytill ring with ane stone in it to Barbara Naipar, quhilk ring sche ressavit fra the said Barbara, that sche mycht allure Dame Jeane Lyounis hart, the lady Angus, to love and favour : the quhilk ring sche send agane with hir dochter, within ten dayis thereftir, to the said Barbara, to be usit to the effect foirsaid.” This fact is specified in the subsequent trial of the interested party herself, where the utmost weight was laid on preceding indictments and convictions.‡

* *Matthew*, ch. xxvi. v. 7. *Mark*, ch. xiv. v. 3. *John*, ch. xii. v. 3.

† Trial of Euphame Macalyane, 19 June 1591. *Rec. Just.*

‡ Trial of Agnes Sampson, 27 Jan. 1590–1. Of Barbara Naipar, 8 May 1591. Convicted of consulting “Annie Sampson, for causing of

Occult expedients of which there is preserved only a general notice, were planned with a similar intent by Hubert, earl of Kent, chief-justice of England, who was accused in the thirteenth century of using necromantic means to gain the royal favour.*

But nothing is alike celebrated and interesting in empirical superstition, as the singular and diversified projects which were hazarded for alluring the love, or for subduing the virtue, of the softer sex. In vain might the tender mother anxiously caution her beloved offspring to beware of her most dangerous enemy—man. Of what avail was the warning against the stratagems converting every ingredient of sorcery to fan the latent flame or lull suspected guile?

Hence were animal, vegetable, and mineral products employed,—the use of stimulating food and deleterious potions; both productive of temporary distress or permanent injury, when administered to those on whom the treacherous plot was perpetrated.

Two expedients are known to have been principally practised—framing inscriptions, and giving philtres or amatory potions; which latter are medicaments simple or compound. Several subordinate and less noted ingredients of superstition, though sufficiently remarkable in themselves, were also recognised in Britain.

the said Dame Jeane Lyoun, Lady Angus, to love hir, and to gif hir the geir awin hir agane: and gewing of ane ryng for this purpois to the said Anny, quhill sche had send hir ane courche of lining."

* *Mat. Paris*, ad. an. 1232, p. 318.

Credulity in sympathetic influence taught that an original might be affected, not only by a representative form, but in a representation by name, without the form. Mystical means imparted occult qualities to the representative, and what was experienced by it, was felt by the original.

Philtres might be preferred from the greater facility with which they could be administered, and from their visible effects being exhibited, as in the operation of any potent medicine on the human constitution. Besides, they had another recommendation. Enchantment could be introduced into the corporeal frame in the shape of sustenance, or along with it. This indeed was a favourite theory; nor was conveyance through the medium of sensible or material substance so received, essential, for demons themselves could find a lodgment in the body by entering with the breath, or by penetrating the pores of the skin.

There is some difference, however, between philtres and other propitiatory charms, for their preparation might actually proceed under the most profound rules of the pharmaceutical art, as established on the basis of science; whereas a mystical process, setting science at nought, is regulated only by the imagination. But it was not the learned who were consulted on their use, or who compounded the ingredients. The ignorant empiric, he who, as confident in his own qualifications as in the efficacy of the prescription, never scrupled about their preparation. They became pernicious,

because their effects were immoderate. Thence they fell under the legislative ordinances of the ancients: nor is the Scottish record altogether barren of allusions to their practice.

A remarkable instance, attended by all the nefarious arts of seduction also, occurred sometime preceding the year 1601, or nearly about that precise era, when the wildest speculations prevailed regarding occult expedients, and their practice was in the most vigorous observance. Here a delinquent, standing in no higher rank than cook to "Colene Ewiot of Balhousie," was brought to trial for "abvying Elizabeth Ewiot, his dochter." But the curious antiquary must search the original record for the import of the transactions alleged, wherein many minutiae, unfit to be recapitulated in this place, are specified. Similar embarrassments sometimes interrupt the uniform context of history, founded on meagre materials, leaving doubts and uncertainties, originating in scruples on the expediency of explanation.

Nevertheless, the more prominent features of the case may be illustrated by certain passages of the indictment, as addressed to the delinquent, thus: "haifing consultit with sum divilesche persones, and specially with Walter Lauder, buikbinder, burges of Perth, quhom to, thou reveillit thy devillisch intention, schawing that thou was in love with the said Elizabeth, quhilk thou knew perfytlie vald be thy deid, thairfoir desyring him gif he culd ony wayis help the."

It does not appear how this artizan had acquired the skill which he was solicited to apply in practice,—but as common with those entertaining no diffidence of themselves, his prescription was ready. He answered, that “he vald gif the sum Spanyie fleis, callit cantarides, quhilk, gif thow suld move the said Elizabeth to drynk of, it vald mak hir out of all questione, to grene efter the.” His precept was punctually observed; for the cook being in attendance as the young lady sat at table, he took an opportunity of throwing the pernicious ingredients “in hir drynk, and presented the samyn.”

The violent effects of the philtre, nearly cost the unsuspecting victim her life. They were mitigated, however, by the perpetrator preparing a potion of milk for her relief,—a remedy recommended by the ancients, and by the physicians of the middle ages.* She escaped the peril, and he was enabled to resume his stratagems. The hazard resulting from them again, if the narrative be credible, was little inferior to what had previously menaced the object; for it is said, that he “knewing the said Elizabeth to be barnelie and feirfull, tuik of the ruittis of daffindillies, quhairof he maid ane drynk, and causit the said Elizabeth drynk thair-of, quhilk producit sik ane vomeit to hir, that she was

* *Sextus Platonius*, de Medicina Animalium, c. 5. de Capro et Capra, § 33. “Si quis cantharides biberit, capræ lac bibat, liberabitur.”—*Pliny*, Hist. Nat. lib. xxviii. c. 45, says in general, “lac vero contra catharides remedium est.

in danger of hir lyffe" once more. To prosecute his "vngodlie intention" yet farther, the miscreant, not content with the past, resorted to a reputed sorceress for counsel; and he is alleged to have used violence with the young lady, in the absence of her parents. Next—"vnderstanding that scho was persavit with barne, he preissit her to tak ane drynk to stay the samyn, quhilk the said Elizabeth alluterlie refusit."—Such a protracted series of atrocities, besides others of a more abominable nature, which are now omitted, did not escape discovery and animadversion. On his own confession, the delinquent was brought to trial before the sheriff of Perth, when, either from the informality of procedure, from the offence being of an indefinite character, or from some link of evidence proving defective, he was acquitted. Yet public opinion condemned him; and his case must have been flagrant, for the members composing the jury, themselves challenged for their verdict, were subsequently brought to trial, on a charge of wilful error by his acquittal. This prosecution was quashed, however, on the king decreeing a mulct, which may be considered in the light of a compromise, for it.*

* Trial of "Petir Hay of Kirklandis," and others, 25 May 1601. *Rec. Just.* The fine ranged from 500 to 800 merks. Ewiot or Eviot, —Colene Eviot of Balhoussie—is named 10 April 1582, *Privy Council Record*,—also, 7 Oct. 1594, and Oct. 1604, *Perth K. S. R.* *Grene*, long,—*Spanyie fleis*, Spanish flies,—*daffindillies*, daffodils. "The roots, whether eaten or drunken, do move vomit."—*Gerard Herbal*, ch. 84. p. 132.

Some abominable expedients have subsisted among frantic visionaries, under the pretext of religious rites, for nothing seems to be accounted odious by their disordered brain. They sanctified their grossest sensualities. Certain obscure indications, which are probably illustrative of the preceding case, as detailed in the original, may be sought in a work of the thirteenth century, by *Nicetas Choniates*, on the orthodox faith.*

The violent effect of potions compounded of noxious ingredients, as well as the iniquitous purpose for which they were administered, have rendered those denominated philtres, the subject of the highest reprobation. Whatever may have been their real or occult qualities, they were reputed a dangerous poison, impairing the reason of the partakers, rendering them insensible of their own ignominy, or even proving destructive of life. "I have seen men so deeply enamoured of women," says Massé, "as to fall sick and wander through the fields—I know not how. They thought it came of a potion of wine, mixed with cantbarides, and other things which I shall not specify, lest the evil disposed may take advantage of it."† All statutory ordinances regarding philtres, or amatory potions, are founded on the presumption of their efficacy, which seems to have been undisputed. Thence earlier authors assume as an axiom, "the known power of the magicke cups of

* *Nicetas Choniates Thesaurus Orthodoxei fidei*, lib. iv. c. 1, 2.

† *Massé, l'Imposture et tromperie des Diables*, f. 32. Paris, 1579, in 12mo.

the enchanted filtra, or love draughts.”* But neither the legislators nor those for whom they legislated, drew the essential distinction to be observed between physical and ethical principles; at least it is scarcely to be recognized in their legislation.

It is not improbable, nay, it can be shewn, that expedients of similar tendency have been often adopted to gain the affection of beloved objects, though their innocence or inefficiency has sunk them in oblivion. Nor were they rated as of criminal intent. Our progenitors took a much warmer interest in supernatural incidents, than in the simple process calmly advancing the regular course of nature before them. They were occupied with conjuring the elements, divining futurity, in dealing with spiritual beings, or in charming distempers, infinitely more than with the better principles of the pharmaceutical art familiar to others—rather by report than by practice.

But the passions uncontrolled, are ever ready to disturb the tranquillity of the world.—It is not in one or in another country.—It is not in earlier or in later æras,—in this or in that degree of the social state. Passion is incorporated with being: age and adolescence are only the means of evolution or modification. It lurks, quiescent, unseen, and unknown, until the chord vibrates to awaken its sympathies, and kindle it into unquenchable flame. What have religious awe, moral precept, the whisperings of conscience, or human ordinances,

* *Cotta the infallible witch*, p. 114.

accomplished?—Nothing, unless the feeblest restraint over nature—continually trespassed when inclination urges, and safety encourages infringement.

Sir John Colquhoun of Luss, had married Lady Liliash Graham, eldest daughter of John, fourth Earl of Montrose, and sister of the celebrated marquis bearing that title, previous to the year 1633. Having received Lady Katherine, his sister-in-law, as an inmate of his family at “Roisdew,” he cast the eyes of unlawful affection upon her: and not forgetting the ordinary arts of seduction, which require little tuition, he “in craftie and politique manner, first insinuat himself be subtile and entyseing speiches,” into her favour. But the delusion of these proving ineffectual, the seducer availed himself of the mystical expedients then in vogue, to spread a new snare for her virtue, with necromantic aid. He had a servant, an adept in occult charms, whom, among others, he consulted on his project; and “procureit from him, ane necromancer, certain philtres, or poysones, or poysonable and inchantit toakynes of love: speciallie ane jewell of gold, set with divers pretious diamantis, or rubeis, quhilk was poysonet or intoxicat be the said necromancer, and had the secreit and devillische force, of allureing and forceing the persone ressauer thair of, to expose hir bodie, fame, and credeit, to the will and unlauchfull plesour of the gevar and propyner thair of.” Having obtained this marvellous talisman, the seducer did not neglect to profit by its occult qualities:—nor do these seem to have been

exaggerated, judging at least by the issue,—for after having delivered the “jewell of gold, set with the said rubeis and diamondis, devillischlie intoxicat and inchantit, as said is,—scho was so bewitchit and transpourt, that scho had no power of hirself, to refuse the said Sir John Colquhoun.”

After carrying on their intrigue at home, the parties eloped to London, where they continued to live together: the aggressor was outlawed, for he prudently avoided exposing himself to a criminal trial, his offence being aggravated by the affinity of his paramour. Whatever might have been the consequences in respect to him, the tenor of a charge against the necromancer, his accomplice, renders it probable that sentence would have followed conviction.*

Such expedients were either rare or seldom brought to light. But a brief notice of earlier date, corroborates the certainty of their practice in Scotland. Lord Balmerino, a Scottish statesman, in the reign of James VI. having fallen under the charge of various delinquences, for which a capital sentence against him ensued, was at length enlarged. After retiring to his seat of Balmerino, “being a widower, he got an amatorious potion from a maid in his house,” from the effects of which, he died in the year 1612.†

* *Anent the Criminall Letteris* direct aganis Johnne Colquhoun of Luss, and Thomas Carlipis German, his seruand, 11 Jan. 1633. *Rec. Just.*—*Propyner*, presenter.

† *Scot, Staggering State*, p. 61.

Several passages in the preceding narrative are obscure. Is it inferred, that the jewel becoming "intoxicat," that is, empoisoned, had been impregnated with the coveted mystical virtue, from immersion? Formerly, a certain stone was boiled in milk or wine, to render it an antidote to fascination :* and at present, a very efficacious charm is prepared in a foreign country, by immersing a piece of iron ore, along with the filings, in milk, and then in wine.† Perhaps a generic character only, is signified by the "inchantit toakynes of love."—The Duke of Rothes had an intrigue with Lady Ann Gordon. But cotemporaries say his conscience smote him,—and apprehensive that he was enchained by sorcery, he committed all the "love tokens" she had given him, to the flames.‡

Agnes Christie, and another woman, were punished for attempting to kill a bitch, in expectation of obtaining the means of transferring the natural propensities of the

* *Leonardus Speculum, Lapidum, v. Antipathes, p. 56. Dioscorides, lib. v. c. 140, assigns the qualities of coral to this substance. Pliny, Hist. Nat. lib. xxxvii., alludes to boiling it in milk, as an antidote to fascination. Its precise position in the Systema Naturæ, seems questionable.—Intoxicare, to poison, is a verb of the middle ages.*

† *Caldcleugh, Travels, v. i. p. 266.*

‡ *Kirkton, History of the Church of Scotland, p. 212, 380. This, along with other memorials, have been imparted to the public, by their industrious editor, Mr Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, who illustrates his author's assertion, by the quotation of some verses, as a specimen of the mean poetry originating from party spirit. Never has imagery been disguised in a meaner garb, than by our domestic muse.*

animal, at the time, to the human species. They assumed, that should the delinquent take the “leiver thairof, and drye it, ather in hir purse, or above the fyre, and give it in drynk to any man, quhilk, quhen he ressaived, sould mak him follow hir : and suppois the said Agnes Chrystie the puirest woman’s dochter that can be, it wald caus him fix his love vpon her, so that he wold marie her, and no vther woman.”* It does not appear how far this precious prescription had been administered, but the sexes seem to have been sufficiently alive to some of the mystical means of endeavouring to gain reciprocal affection.

The use of philtres is very ancient. Centuries preceding the Christian æra, a woman was tried at Athens, for the death of a man to whom she had administered such a potion. She was acquitted, not of the fact, but because she had given it without any evil purpose.†

The effects of a philtre administered by one Lucilia, to Lucretius the poet, from excessive affection, are said to have rendered him insane, and a suicide.‡ Also Caligula is reported to have got an amatory potion from his wife Cæsonia, producing temporary distraction.||

* *Stirling Kirk Session Register*, 22 July 1634: Agnes Chrystie.

† *Aristoteles Ethic*, lib. i. c. 17. ap. op. t. iii. p. 207.

‡ *Eusebius Chronicon*. Lib. Poster. p. 150. Some illustrations are given, *Scaliger Animadversiones*, p. 130.

|| *Suetonius in Vita Caligulæ*, c. 50. *Josephus Antiq. Judæor.* Lib. xix. c. 2.

In a later æra, a woman in Germany, who had administered a philtre to her husband, having sworn that it was only for the purpose of stimulating conjugal love, suffered imprisonment, as the penalty judged adequate to her offence.*

As the Earl of Bothwell desired the royal favour by a charm, though inefficient,—so did the freedman of Lucullus, a distinguished Roman, administer a potion to his master.—But it proved fatal.†

History has always dealt largely in the marvellous, as if credulity were so great a virtue, that nothing but what exceeds belief, deserves a place in memory. Thence, it is no slight satisfaction, that singular facts have been the subject of judicial cognizance, whereby the usual tendency of mankind to exaggerate, might be repressed or counteracted.—Yet, let not the confidence of modern generations be too implicit, seeing how often the pannel, prosecutor, judge, and jury, have all conspired in self-delusion, to propagate their common error. Such melancholy proofs of human prejudice, cannot fail to weaken reliance on asseverations, and to abate veneration of antiquity.

The *Pocula Amatoria*, in stricter definition, were not the only potions prepared of old; for other philtres were compounded for a different purpose, namely, to excite enthusiasm,—nay, to inspire aversion. Remark-

* *Carpzovius Practica*, P. i. quest. 1. § 23. ad. an. 1605.

† *Plutarch in vita Luculli*. ap. op. t. i. p. 520. *Pliny, Hist. Nat.* Lib. xxv. c. 7.

able pleadings, real or hypothetical, are preserved by Quintilian, wherein a woman of meretricious character, is described as having administered such a potion, to be relieved of a suitor's importunities,—on account, as he alleged, of his poverty.—“Non quidem ego iudices, ex illis unquam fui, quibus nobiles spes affluentes indulset fortuna divitias, quorum felicitas capere possit in amore luxuriam.”—But the dose proved effectual: his health suffered—he complained that he could not be ever endowed with the strength of affection again.—He had lost that which constituted the relish of life. The culprit, in her defence, denied the resemblance of the draught to poison, to which the accuser had compared it; nor could he have shewn that it was taken, unless by her own confession.*

That such expedients might be practised, continued the belief of more recent times; whence, an investigation regarding the superstitions of a district in Spain, comprehended, “whether any woman affirms, that by witchcraft and incantation, she can alienate the minds of men, so that hatred may be converted to love, and love to hate.”†

The ingredients of philtres to be administered as potions, or those to be consumed as food, appear in some variety. The most effectual operation of a charm,

* *Quintilian Declamationes. Argumentum, Meretrix amatori suo pauperi dedit odii potionem, adolescens desiit amare, accusat eam Veneficii.* Here *veneficium* seems to signify poisoning.

† *Burchardus, § 4. ap: Pegna, Praxis Inquisitorum. Lib. i. c. 2.*

was expected from substances introduced with sustenance. Such was the case with the seducer of Elizabeth Eviot, who employed an apple for his abominable expedient, independently of the potion. In the lower ages of the Roman empire, the emperor Manuel Comnenus, commanded that one Sclerus should be blinded, for inducing a damsel who had rejected his suit, to eat a Persian apple, whereby she was corrupted.* There is no definite distinction drawn, however, between aphrodisiacs or mere stimulants and philtres, which were designed to affect the mind. The virulence of cantharides, was esteemed such, that Mizaldus quotes the words of an Italian physician, for its pernicious effects when applied to the knees.† The Roman law alludes to administering cantharides, though for what precise purpose is not explicit, as meriting the confiscation of goods and banishment.‡

Certain plants and animals are named, both by the ancients and moderns, as employed in amatory charms.

Several years ago, a stranger visited the author somewhat mysteriously, expressing his desire to exhibit a curiosity in private. This proved to be the mandragora or mandrake, of which "it hath been thought, that the root hereof serveth to win love."||

* *Nicetas Choniates Historia Byzantina*, Lib. iv. p. 96.

† *Mizaldus*, *Memorabilia*, cent. ii. § 27.

‡ *Digest*, Lib. xlviii. tit. viii. Lex Cornelia de Sicariis et veneficiis, § 3.

|| *Gerard Herball*, ch. 65. p. 352.

The vegetable itself is believed to bear a remote resemblance to masculine and feminine conformation, which may be easily heightened by a little artifice, as has been often practised. A work is composed by John Baptist Porta, a Neapolitan, specially designed to exhibit the resemblance of plants to living beings in general, and to their peculiar organization. Nor does he fail to discover the head or horns in fruits and flowers, the hands, the feet, or the tail in the roots.*

The repute of the mandrake ascends to the early ages of Jewish history, at least according to the usual interpretation of Scripture:† and its virtues are said to be recognised in the most remote Asiatic countries, which that history is not known to have penetrated. Likewise it is specified in the Roman law already cited.

Whether the ordinary virtues of this vegetable were established in Scotland is uncertain. The specimens shewn to the author were for the purpose of proving their resemblance to human conformation: and he has heard other persons value the possession of such as a curiosity. But he must rather coincide with that zealous physician, who exerted himself so strenuously in endeavouring to dispel vulgar prejudice, that its correspondence with the organization of mankind, “is a conceit not to be made out by ordinary inspection, or any other eyes, than such as, regarding the clouds,

* *Porta Phytognomonica. Francofurti 1608. in 8vo.*

† *Genesis, ch. xxx. v. 14—16.*

behold in them shapes conforme to pre-apprehensions.”*

Some of the learned have denied, however, that *mandrake* is the true interpretation of the amatory substance specified in Scripture. They contend for the greater probability of its being some species of grain than a root. It is said, indeed, that formerly, and even now, a rude but licentious festival, attended by the most singular features, was held in the south of Ireland, at the close of harvest, wherein a stimulating and inebriating preparation from grain was used.

A brief and unsatisfactory notice regarding a festival, here denominated the *Diud feast*, held, perhaps, about the conclusion of harvest, in the reign of Mary, is recorded thus: “On the xix of October 1566, Walter Macwalter beand callit and accusit of halding ane Idoll feist, called the *Diud* feist,” denied the allegation, and engaged to abstain from the like. But “the mater biand sum pairt knawin,” he was admonished by the kirk session of Holyroodhouse, to be careful that he did so.†

Perhaps the similar festival held, during later times, in the neighbouring island, on the eve of the new moon of September, commonly called the harvest moon, resembled it. Then the youth and the maidens of each village assembled with bundles of grain, especially pease and beans. After scorching the straw, and hiding a

* *Brown*, *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*, B. ii. ch. 7. p. 72, 73. B. viii. ch. 7. p. 288, 290. *Ross*, *Arcana Microcosmi*, B. ii. ch. 5. § 2. p. 177.

† *Halyrudhous* K. S. R. 19 Oct. 1566. vol. i.

grain among the embers, the maid whose search first proved successful, was congratulated on her good fortune, and having undergone a rude ceremony, this secured the love of her future spouse.

Diud is interpreted burnt wheat, or any inebriating grain. It is affirmed that the participators, sitting down after the ceremony to devour roasted wheat, are affected by its exhilarating or intoxicating qualities.*

Beans are said to have been accounted an aphrodisiac, for which reason Tiraquellus conjectures they were interdicted to the *Flamen Dialis*, or high priest of Jupiter at Rome. Some commentators also consider a relative passage of Plutarch's Roman Questions, as comprehending pease and vetches.† Carena describes the punishment of an old woman, who was scourged through the city of Cremona, for having endeavoured to conciliate the affections of a young man, through the medium of some beans over which mass had been celebrated.‡

A young woman, on the other hand, was indicted by the judicatories of Leipsic in the year 1623, for administering an amatory charm of bread, compounded with hair and nails, to a man whom it sickened.§

The *poculum amatorium*, to gain affection—the *pocu-*

* Vallancey, ap. Collect : de Reb. Hib. v. iii. p. 598.

† Tiraquellus, Glossæ Primæ P. xv. § 123. Lugduni 1628, in fol. Plutarch, Quæstiones Romanæ, ap. op. t. vii. p. 183. in 8vo.

‡ Carena Annotationes, § 14. p. 499. ap. Pegna Praxis Inquisitorum.

§ Carpzovius, P. i. quæst. 21. § 22.

lum odii for an opposite purpose—and the *philtrum entusiastica*, to elevate the brain, were all dependent on the same principle, as the effects expected from swallowing a charm.

But credulity in such virtue prevails in a singular manner among the less civilized, though far from savage tribes, of modern times. Mungo Park having inscribed a long charm on a board, at the earnest request of a negro, to protect him from the wicked; the credulous African, to be assured of its full force, washed off the writing into a vessel, and drank the water: “after which, lest a single word should escape, he licked the board.”*

On similar principles, the benefit of absorbing a charm is believed, in Africa, to have yet a wider scope. Written sentences from the Koran, as applicable to a patient's peculiar case, being burnt and mixed with water, are swallowed for a cure. To preserve the Tripolitan ambassador's daughter from the effects of an evil eye, a written charm was burnt, and the ashes drank in wine, amidst the recitation of prayers, and perfuming her with incense.† At Koolfa, in the interior, Captain Clapperton observes, that his landlady washed an inscription from thirteen boards, and gave it as a potion to her family: and his attendant Landers relates, that the king of the country recovered from a similar remedy, and advanced the prescriber. Not

* *Park, Travels*, v. i. p. 235.

† *Letters from Tripoli*, v. i. p. 168, 245.

only is it judged medicinal, but even propitiatory of literary acquirements, for at the schools attended by children, who read "their Arabic lessons aloud, and simultaneously, they are required to get their lessons by heart, before the writing is washed off the board on which it is written. The ink, thus diluted, is drank by the scholars."*

Various amatory charms were known in foreign countries, which may not have been recognized in Scotland. Confidence was reposed in the power of inscriptions without the necessity of swallowing them. A young man in France, having sought the aid of a priest for seducing a young lady whom he had proposed to marry, received amatory billets inscribed on virgin parchment, that is, on what was prepared from the skin of a new born child, with instructions to throw them in her bosom. Far from producing the influence expected, they carried the object of attachment almost to the grave. A long prosecution on the part of the parents followed, about the year 1580, when they pleaded, that virgin parchment was alike effectual in disturbing the mind, as amatory potions.† St Jerome writes in the Life of St Hilarion, that a young man, passionately enamoured of a damsel of Gaza, having failed in the

* *Clapperton*, Journal of a Second Expedition, p. 130, 215, 280.

† *Leloyer des Spectres*, t. i. p. 294. The credulity of earlier ages ascribed certain virtues to virgin parchment: but to believe that it had any influence in restraining or expelling demons, was pronounced an error in faith by the Theological Faculty of Paris in 1398: *Determinatio*, § 20.

usual arts of seduction, repaired to the priests of Æsculapius at Memphis, from whom he acquired magical faculties. Returning in a year, he introduced certain mystical words and figures sculptured on Cyprian brass, beneath her door. Then she began to rave on his name, "to wander with uncovered head, and dishevelled hair, for she had become distracted through the vehemence of love." But she was restored by the pious offices of St Hilarion.*

Something similar is recorded in the annals of the northern regions, which, if genuine, as there is little reason to doubt, will confirm the hypothesis of many superstitions emanating from a common source, far distant in time or place from the site and the era of their known practice. In the tenth century, a Norwegian peasant whose suit had been rejected, sought to inspire its object with corresponding affection by mystical means. He carved certain Runic characters on bits of wood or branches. But not being sufficiently skilful in this department of talismanic science, instead of promoting his purpose, they had an opposite tendency, and threw the damsel into a dangerous distemper. Egill, a northern chief, witnessing her sufferings, and learning that Runic characters had been carved, he sculptured those that were more appropriate himself, which being laid beneath her pillow, she awakened in a convalescent state.†

* *Hieronymus* in vita Hilarionis eremitæ, ap. op. t. iv. p. i. col. 80.

† *Egils, Saga* ad an : 944. c. 74, 78. p. 567, 587.

According to the precise description of such characters, they were supposed productive of good or evil. One particular kind was employed for charms.

Runic inscriptions are the study of the learned alone at the present day : for like other characters, once familiar, their use is lost. An ancient monument whereon they appear, was transmitted at great cost and trouble, from Sweden to the society of antiquaries in Edinburgh, by the late Sir Alexander Seton, a worthy friend of the author.

The efficiency of talismanic sculptures and inscriptions, as amulets, was generally admitted : and the Roman historians have thought it sufficiently important to relate, that during the life of Germanicus, leaden plates, conjoining imprecations with the inscription of his name, were dug up in the house he inhabited.† Crespet refers to the accusation and punishment of two persons in France, for having formed certain characters with the view of influencing Charles VII. to act according to their pleasure.‡

Crusius, a Hanoverian lawyer, who treats copiously of criminal matters, says, he knew a studious young man who endeavoured to conciliate the affections of a damsel, by inscribing certain exotic and foreign characters on a blade.§

* *Dio Cassius*, Hist. Rom. lib. lviii. p. 615 : *Hanoviae* 1606, in fol.

† *Crespet de la hayne de Satan*, f. 157.

‡ *Crusius de Indiciis Delictorum*, P. xi. c. 32. § 125.

Under this class may be comprehended the formation of amatory images. The Countess of Essex, who divorced her husband in the reign of James I. of England, is alleged to have cast an amorous eye on the Viscount Rochester. Two persons, Mrs Turner and Dr Forman, combined "to inchant the viscount's affection towards her. Much time is spent, many words of witchcraft: great cost in making pictures of wax, crosses of silver, and little babies for that use, but all to small purpose."*

An example has been quoted in various treatises from a work by Oldradus, as to the precise nature of the offence of one Joannes de Pertinaco, who, infatuated with the love of a young woman, fabricated certain images and invoked demons to awaken her affection.†

The *sortilegia amatoria* are interpreted as the means of conciliating female affection "from hair, roots, vestments, or the ingredients of food."†

Among the varieties of such expedients named, as meriting and visited by reprehension, is the instance of an amorous damsel causing her lover "be brought on a goat;" for which it appears that she was sentenced

* *Sir Foulk Grevill, Lord Brook*, Five years of King James, ap. Harleian Miscellany, vol. vii. p. 392.

† Two judges were deputed by Pope John XII. to determine the case which is referred to, as given by Oldradus in *Consil*, t. xx. p. 2. a work which has escaped the author. *Beyer, Delineatio Juris Criminalis*, ad art., c. ix. § 21. p. 179.

to be scourged.* The Flamen Dialis at Rome neither touched nor named a goat.†

In Roman catholic countries, a charm is said to have consisted in the enamoured person pronouncing indecorous expressions over the consecrated host, swallowing one portion himself, and sending the remainder pulverized, to be put among the food of her whose affection he coveted. The like was to be attained by taking a portion previous to consecration, after having rested on an altar where mass was performed, pulverising the rest, and sending it to the favoured object. Priests practised these charms from the greater facilities they enjoyed.

On the part of the softer sex, the amnios, perhaps from its propitiatory qualities, was hid under the altar whereon several masses were celebrated, baptised with baptismal water in the name of him whose affection the charmer sought, and then sent to be given to him. Or the lips were anointed with consecrated baptismal oil, while indecorous words issued from them in expectation of exciting reciprocal love, after kissing the object.‡ Women being more superstitious, they are considered also as more addicted to amatory charms.

It is surprising how many commentaries have been devoted to this subject. The ministration of the

* *Crusius*, ut sup. l. ii. c. 22. § 7.

† *Plutarch*, *Questiones Romanæ*, ap. *Op.* t. vii. p. 165. in 8vo.

‡ *Grillandus*, de *Sortilegiis Quæst.* iii. § 19, 20, 23. p. 30—34 : quæst. x. § 16. p. 163.

poculum amatorium, conceptionis, et abortionis—odii et furoris, has been recognised since the days of Aristotle, down to the eighteenth century. By the Roman law, whosoever administered a love potion should be condemned to servitude or banishment. But if a man died of what he received from a woman, she should suffer capital punishment.* Part of the code of Justinian is levelled against the corrupters of purity in general:† and the ordinances of Leo seem to have contemplated this offence, in denouncing penalties for incantations, to extinguish modesty and arouse phrenzy.‡ Early in the ninth century, it was assumed by the laws of Charlemagne and his son Ludovicus Pius, as notorious, that the state of some persons from amatory potions, or food, or amulets, resembled insanity: they were insensible of shame.¶

Whether or not the danger of philtres has been exaggerated, lawyers have occupied themselves at some length regarding them.—“ Shall a philtre be considered as a poisonous potion,” is a question suggested by

* *Digest.* lib. xlviii. tit. 8. ad Legem Corneliam de Sicariis et Veneficiis, l. 3. § 2. Tit. 19. de Pœnis, l. 38. § 5.

† *Codicis*, lib. ix. tit. 18. l. 4. “ — qui pudicos animos ad libidinem deflexisse.”

‡ *Leonis*, Imperat. Novellæ, Constit. 65. Vult autem puniri incantationes eo quod modestia animi sublata, stimulis furoreque amatorio rationem ad insaniam adigant.

¶ *Capitularia Regum Francorum*: Additio ii. c. 21. tom. 1. col. 1143.

Quintilian.* The later lawyers of the continent, with heresy ever before their eyes, have entered more zealously into a debate, whether it was heretical or merely superstitious,—a distinction of no slight import to whomsoever might fall under the charge. All unite in reprehending the practice: “administering a philtre is not only guile but guilt:—a mere fault merits a slight penalty. But though ineffectual in conciliating affection towards a certain individual, such potions disorder the mind, kindle fierce amorous passions and fury, and sometimes destroy life itself.”† Ambrose de Vignate determines, after a copious discussion, that it shall be investigated whether or not the party was infatuated by love, for that would render him rather delirious than heretical.‡ Binsfield concludes, that the heresy of the offence depends on the ceremonies concomitant. If the philtre, given with an evil intent, proves mortal, capital punishment is merited. But having been administered without magical practices, nor attended by fatal consequences, some inferior penalty may be inflicted.|| Some lawyers thought it a capital crime, without any relation to heresy, if death ensued.§ The fabrication of images, “ad procurandam amorem

* Quintilian, *Institutiones Oratoriæ*, Lib. viii. c. 5.

† *Reisseissen*, de *Veneficio Doloso*, ap. *Schlegel*, *Collectio Opusculorum*, v. iii. No. 17.

‡ *Ambrose de Vignate*, de *Hæresi*, Quæst. 18.

|| *Binsfeldus*, de *Confessionibus Maleficarum et Sagarum*, p. 472, 477.

§ *Brunus Conradus*, de *Seditiosis*, lib. iv. c. 8. § 5.

mulierum," is not manifest heresy in the opinion of another, because "it is rather superstitious than heretical."* Grillandus thinks the point questionable. Farinacius gives nineteen reasons for mitigating the penalty for administering amatory charms.† Tiraquellus, one of the more learned lawyers, profoundly versed in ancient lore, expresses himself to similar purport. Giurba, a Sicilian, cites a real case, not of a potion, but of punishment, mitigated for the offence of premature return from exile on account of affection.‡

Besides the preceding examples of penalties inflicted on females, Moller quotes a sentence of scourging and perpetual banishment, pronounced at Leipsic against a woman for practising magical arts, apparently by means of characters, to gain affection.||

It is unlucky that natural propensities,—those incorporated necessarily with existence,—should lead to such inconvenience: that the grand design of the creation, with special injunctions of the Divine will, should be embarrassed by the conflicting regulations of mortals. How is it that mankind frame ordinances, and encourage customs, of which nature is always prompting the infraction? It seems as if the laws of

* *Bernardus Comensis*,—*Lucerna Inquisitorum*: ap. *Tractatus Tractatum*, t. xi. p. 338.

† *Farinacius*, *Praxis et Theoria Criminalis*, p. 111. q. 98. causa 13.

‡ *Giurba Consilia, seu Decisiones Criminales*, con. 47. p. 252.

|| *Mollerus*, *Aug. Duc. Saxoniae Constitutiones et Ordinationes*, p. iv. Const. 2. § 6.

the untaught universe, wherein they could have no share, had been adapted to the circumstances of some æra antecedent to the constitution of society.

Certain apprehensions of disorder have apparently disturbed the pious respecting the tranquillity of the world to come. To subdue them, they have concluded, that at the day of resurrection, all the women of our age shall arise, not as they dwelt among us, but arrayed according to the structure of the masculine sex ! Saint Augustin, however, a doctor of great authority in theology, rejects such contemplations of futurity. It is not a reasonable view of the matter, he thinks : because it is not the person, but the nature of the person, that does the mischief,—certainly a very speculative principle. Hence he decides, that women shall not be resurgent after their original conformation, but under some peculiar aspect which shall cease to allure the beholder as before.*

* *Augustinus, de Civitate Dei, lib. xxii. c. 17.*

CHAPTER VII.

FACULTIES ASCRIBED TO SORCERERS.

HISTORY, science, ethics, arts, and other definite subjects of human knowledge, speculative and practical, admit discussion under systematic arrangement. But what kind of order shall be preserved with superstitions,—so many extravagant, disjointed effusions of a disturbed imagination,—engrafted sometimes on religion, sometimes on medicine, often on both, and often on neither? In all different regions they have held an imperious sway, alike over the bold and over the timid: they pervade all the works devoted to conservative literature: they are the root of important laws and ordinances: they influence the government of powerful kingdoms.

Several of the injuries levelled against animated beings, together with their antidotes and remedies, have been already specified: and several beneficial or propitiatory projects enumerated; others, and those of the most serious import, involving still darker superstitions, and higher agency than human powers, are yet in reserve.

But a previous question, one of much interest, naturally arises,—whence did the preceding generations

inhabiting Scotland derive their precepts for the practice of sorcery? Assuredly the fertility of their resources,—their diversified, empirical prescriptions,—their sacrificial relics,—their varied divinations,—their confidence in the existence of imaginary beings,—did not spring from their own simple invention. If they were not placed amidst the circumstances whence such illusions, customs, and opinions should be generated, these must be sought in descent from ancient inheritance, or as acquired from recent tuition.

In the multiplied judicial proceedings occupying the Scottish records, there appears occasionally a transient investigation of the source whence the delinquent attained necromantic faculties. But the purpose of enquiry was either to implicate others, or to obtain confession that they came immediately from Satan: and thus to fix indelible evidence of intercourse with evil spirits. Probably equal conviction was not borne to the auditor in specifying human precepts, as in assigning them a more occult origin. Satan's presence, instruction, and precise demeanour, are frequently alleged: nor are they ever called in question,—no one doubted them.

Whatever guise he assumed in such dealings with mankind, and whatever was their purpose, they were credited, not only by the unhappy objects of self-delusion, but by their merciless persecutors,—even by those whose eyes the love of justice and mercy should have opened.

While the belief of such demoniac intercourse subsisted, and truth and reason were expelled by excessive credulity, it is possible, that some more hardy adventurers, overcoming their apprehensions, actually personated the prince of darkness.

No uniformity is to be collected, in relation to the different instructions received, and the various preceptors giving them. Thus, the tuition of one who practised successfully during fifty years, was derived from “ane familiar spreit attending him, to give him instruction” in all his cures.—Another obtained his skill from Satan, “in the likeness of ane corbie.”* Agnes Sampson acquired her skill and her prayer from her father,—Jonet Stewart, from her father, and an Italian stranger. “Marione Fisher in Weardie,” an “ordinarie charmer,” was taught in her youth by a reaper; and another was instructed by “a going man.” An aged woman of Tiree, obtained a divinatory charm from her father. But others are alleged to have undergone a kind of instruction in the necromantic art. Thus, the indictment of Euphame Macalyane, specifies, that “Catherine Campbell the wiche wyffe duelland in the Canongait—causit ane vther wiche quha duelt in Sanct Ninianis Rave, inaugwrat yow in the said craft, with the girth of ane grit bikar, turnand the same oft owre your heid and nek, and oftymes round about your

* Trial of Alexander Drummond, 3 July 1629,—of Alexander Hamilton, 22 Jan. 1630. *Rec. Just.*

heid.”* Though not exclusively so, females seem to have been the principal agents. Jonet Forsyth in Birsay, was instructed by “ane woman, callit Moniepenney.” John Brughe was alleged to have obtained his knowledge, “from a wedow woman, named Neane Nikclerith, of thriescoir yearis of age, quha wes sister dochter to Nik Neveing, that notorious infamous witche in Monyie, quha for her sorcerie and witchecraft, was brunt foirscoir of yeir since, or thairby.” As the date of this charge is 1643, probably the latter was the “notabill sorceress callit Nicniven—condemnit to the death, and brunt at St Andrews in the year 1569.”† Consanguinity was urged to corroborate presumptions against the accused: for credulity assigned prophetic gifts, and necromantic powers, alike to inheritance.

* Sanct Ninianis Raw is said to have been near the site of the Low Calton of Edinburgh. Its former inhabitants are ascertained from other records, to have been chiefly of the more humble classes.

† *Historie and Life of King James the Sext*, p. 66, in 8vo.—“Nic Neville,” p. 40, in 4to. *Montgomery* seems to recognize this individual in the following passage, probably allusive to the case of “Catherine Rois, Lady Fowles,” and her accomplices:

“Then a cleir companie came soone after closse
Nicniven, with hir nymphes in number anew,
 With charmes from Caitness and Chanrie of Rosse,
 Whose cunning consists in casting a clew.”—

Flyting of Montgomery and Polwart; edition by Dr David Irving, and Mr David Laing, p. 117, Edinburgh 1821, in 12mo. The former of these editors, now librarian to the Faculty of Advocates, is well known, from several reputable original works in biography, and other departments of literature: and the latter, for his investigations into Scottish history.

Nay, some denied the perfection of the art, unless derived thus: "Si enim saga est mater est etiam filia." If the mother be a witch, so is the daughter. As an aggravation of the charges against Katherine Key, it was alleged that "she is of evill brutte and fame, and so was her mother before her."* The arrest of daughters was recommended, with the view of obtaining the facts which their mothers had disclosed to them. Brandt gives a long list of interrogatories, directed specially to ascertain the kindred of persons accused, to reputed sorcerers.† Hence, without much latitude, the same might be expected of those standing in *loco parentis*. For charms, the inhabitants of Orkney were wont to apply "to a smith without premonishing him, who hath had a smith to his father, and a smith to his grandfather."‡ Arrian commemorates a race of hereditary prophets, the *Telmissi*, or *Telmissenti*, whose children, male and female, inherited the gift from their birth.∥ Two families also, at Elis, in Peloponesus, enjoyed the prerogative of divination.§ Burchardt, the late traveller in Africa, names the chief priest of a certain town, whose family was reputed to

* Stuart, Parish of Newburgh, ap. *Stat. Acct.* v. viii. p. 177, from K. S. R.

† Brandt, de Maleficos et Sagas convincendi ratione, p. l. thes. i. § 36.

‡ Brand, Account of Orkney, p. 62.

∥ Arrian, de Expeditione Alexandri, Lib. xi. c. 3.

§ Cicero, de Divinatione, Lib. i. c. 41.

produce “necromancers, and persons endowed with supernatural powers, from whom nothing remains hid, and whom nothing can withstand.* Such hereditary qualities, and education in the art, were admitted by both the ancients and moderns.†

One declared to the presbytery of Perth, that she had a book whence she obtained all her cures, “which was her goodsire’s, her grandsire’s, and as she alleged, was a thousand years old.”—She did not know what book it was, but her son, Adam Bell, read it to her.‡ As this woman put her trust in such authority, in the year 1628, so did the gipsies of England probe futurity, in 1828, by means of tattered volumes, irrelevant to their subject, and probably illegible by themselves.¶

The Egyptians indeed, were undoubtedly the source of some of the Scottish superstitions. Their own vocation they asserted to be, “the geveing of thameselfis furth for sorcerie, givearis of weirdis, declareris of for-townis, and that they can help or hinder the proffeit of the milk of bestiall.”¶ More definitely, Magnus Linay,

* Burchardt, *Travels in Nubia*, p. 265.

† *Ammianus Marcellinus*, Lib. xxvi. *Hutchison Essay*, p. 30.

‡ *Perth Presbytery Records*, 26 April, 10 May 1626; 2 April, 7 May, 10 July 1628. ap. *Scott Extracts*, *ut sup.*

¶ Two gipsey girls were tried at Lindsey sessions, Lincolnshire, for obtaining a sum of money, on pretence of discovering the good fortune of a credulous idiot. The book thus disclosing futurity, was a mutilated copy of a treatise on navigation.

¶ Trial of John Faw, 21 Aug. 1612. *Rec. Ork.* f. 9, 10.—*Givearis of weirdis*, foretelling destiny.

and his wife, were accused of having accompanied the Egyptians, and of having "leirnit to take the proffeit of thair nyghtbouris cornis and ky of the saids Egyptians, as the captane of thame declarit."*

The gipsies seem to have been an idle, thieving, worthless, vagabond race, at length persecuted in Scotland, so much so, that it became criminal even to harbour them.

At one time, the author conceived that it might be possible to connect the modern inhabitants of Scotland, with the ancient tribes of other countries, and to trace their descent, through the medium of superstitions. But in this, his expectations have been altogether disappointed: nor can any conclusion be deduced, excepting that these are, comparatively, recent innovations, or that the ancient links to pristine practice are lost.

The miscellaneous aggregate of superstitious belief and practice, recognized in Scotland, denotes an acquaintance with some of the most celebrated personages, and some of the most noted incidents of Jewish history. But it is void of probability, that they were acquired, as at this day, by means of education, and perusal of the sacred volume itself. For although the latter attainment, namely, the capacity of reading, had been enjoyed, the multitude could not have had scripture to read: and although copies were diffused throughout Scotland, very few of the natives could be qualified to

* Trial of Magnus Linay, and Geillis Sclaitter, 13 June 1616. *Rec. Ork.* f. 74. v.

take advantage of them. In no nation of the world is education so much disseminated, as here. Yet there are still individuals, few in number indeed, who are unable to read. The author has known several subjects of the British empire, those of the three kingdoms, in this predicament.—But he cannot affirm, conscientiously, that their moral principles were in the least, more relaxed, than those of persons in a corresponding sphere of life, farther accomplished in learning.—Perhaps the immediate channel of communication between scripture and the populace, was theological discourse. The better informed might have access to works on antient history, also to some compositions of eastern authors of the middle ages : and subsequently, to those preposterous treatises on demonology, which issued from the press in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The artful, fortified by knowledge, could not fail to profit by their own wisdom, and their neighbour's folly. Some feigned a divine impulse, pictured visions, or personated demons. Simpletons received the imposture as incontrovertible truth. Such sources of credulity are not yet exhausted. Was it wonderful that the rude and ignorant became the victims of deception ? How few are the truly enlightened of any æra—those who entertain liberal sentiments, and can advance sound learning !

Controlling the Elements.—The credulous invested sorcerers with unlimited power over the mechanism of

the universe: they could control the works of nature, but the wise would only smile at their folly. Those," says Hippocrates, "who have boasted that they could control the elements, that they could render the earth sterile, or that they could avert evil, whether by sacred mysteries or by other means, are impious persons, nor do they believe in the gods."* Yet no kind of credulity was more deeply rooted. The Jewish, Greek, and Roman history, contains so many examples of the fact, that on the slightest foundation, many might incline to admit an acquaintance with modern expedients. The descent of lightning was sought as a testimony of divine favour. It was obtained by Porsenna, king of Etruria, and by Numa: but Tullus having attempted the same in a sacrifice, without sufficient skill, he perished from its effects—as we are told of a modern philosophical experimentalist.† The priests of Apollo brought down lightning on the barbarians approaching the temple of Minerva: the Persian fleet was destroyed when the Greeks offered libations to Neptune.‡ Celestial fire descended on the altars of the ancient Jews, and consumed the offerings. Samuel invoked thunder and rain to terrify the people: and on the prayer of Elijah the fire fell twice, to consume a

* *Hippocrates de Morbo Sacro.*

† *Plutarch in Numa, ap. op. t. i. p. 70, 75.—Symposiaca, ap. op. t. ii. p. 730. Pliny, Hist. Nat. lib. ii. c. 54. lib. xxxviii. c. 4. Livy, lib. i. c. 12. Valerius Maximus, lib. ix. c. 12. § 1.*

‡ *Herodotus, lib. vii. § 191, 2. lib. viii. § 37. Justin, lib. ii. c. 12.*

captain and fifty men. But Jesus Christ, more merciful, refused the request of his two disciples, to allow them to "command fire to come down from heaven, and consume the inhabitants of a village, for declining to receive him on his journey to Jerusalem.*

The sanctified celestial fire is implicitly believed to descend still, on a certain day, in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre there, when multitudes crowding to witness it, enthusiastically participate of the gift, by receiving its distribution to tapers, which are then carried home, to be preserved for the most important purposes.†

Although St Patrick obtained fire from heaven to consume "nine wizards, clothed in white vestments, feigning themselves saints,"‡ the objects of the Scottish sorcerers were more humble: but their efforts were neither the less strenuous, nor the less impressive on their neighbours—prepared for belief. If their own supernatural faculties were insufficient, those of the fiend were ready to interpose. Did any singular incidents follow the grossest surmise, this afforded pregnant presumption of some foul compact. "Will

* 1 *Samuel*, ch. xi. v. 18. 2 *Kings*, ch. i. v. 10, 12. *Luke*, ch. ix. v. 54.

† *Turner, Journal*, v. ii. p. 196. *Doubdan*, ch. 43. p. 340, 348.

‡ *Proprium Sanctorum*, f. lxxi. v. ap.: *Brev. Aberdon*, t. i. "St Patrick, the apostle of the Irish, sprung of Colphurnus, of a noble race in Scotland and Conkessa, a sister of bishop Martin of Tours. He was conceived in Kilpatrick, and born in the neighbouring castle of Dunbertane."

not you think it a sport, if the deivill raise a whirrell of wind, and tak her away from among you by the gett?" said Janet Cock, to a man who was to be employed on the morrow in "gardeing of Cristiane Wilsone, a witche, to Nidrie, to be confronted thair by ane vther witche." What happened?—"It fell out that goeing thair, in passing a burne, when they wer nigh Nidrie, thair arose such a sudden tempest of wind, which was lyk to blow the companie off their ffoot: and it did blow the said Christiane Wilsone downe in the water, so that, for a long time, they could not gett her up againe: it being a fair day both befor and after."* The surmise having escaped on the day preceding, this fact was esteemed either a demonstration of Satan's interference, or of the witch's power. Sorcerers and demons were busy during convulsions of the elements. They rode on the storm, and menaced mankind from the clouds. "In the year 1148, a frightful whirlwind arose, overthrowing houses and rooting up woods, when it was asserted, that fiends were beheld fighting, in the shape of vile animals."†

On the night that "the grit storme arraise, comanlie callit the borrowing dayis, in anno 1625 yearis"—Katherine Oswald, a notorious witch, was in company with another "on the Pan braes, vseing and

* *Precognition*, 10 Junij 1661. in MS. ap.: Bib. Soc. Ant. Scot. Seven witnesses, among whom are two women, attest the fact. *Gett—way*.

† *Chronicon Normanniæ*, ap.: *Duchesne*, p. 983.

exerceing hir devillische airt of witchcraft and sorcerie.”* About the same period, Elizabeth Bathcat met Satan and her accomplices on the shore at Eymouth, whence he carried them into George Holdie’s ship, and she “maist cruellie sank and destroyed the schip, and so perished the said George with his schip and guidis, with the haill cumpanie.” A remarkable defence was offered, namely, that the charge was not sufficiently specific, nor alleged any tempest excited; neither had her associates been seen “fleing lyk crawis, ravens, or vther foulis, about the schip as vse is with witches.” She was acquitted. Perhaps there was no evidence to identify her flight in the shape of such ominous birds.†

Coruscations amidst tempests in the atmosphere, the roll of thunder, or spontaneous ignition, at the moment of sacrifice, denoted the divine pleasure, to those by whom it was offered.

But light amidst darkness roused alarms of demoniac excursions from the infernal regions, in weak and superstitious minds. Natural phenomena seem frightful to those who are occupied with supernatural causes. John Feane, riding from a house at night, in company with a man on his way to Tranent, “rasit vp fowre candillis vpoun the horseis twa lugis: and ane vther

* Trial of Katherine Oswald, 11 Nov. 1629. *Rec. Just.* *Pan-brae*—brow over Prestonpans.

† Trial of Elizabeth Bathcat, 4 June 1634. *Rec. Just.* On a recent enquiry, the author finds, that no Kirk Session Register of the parish of Eymouth is extant for that period. *Perished*—destroyed.

candill vpoun the stalff quhilk the man had in his hand, and gaif sik lycht as if it had bene day lycht: lykeas the saidis candillis returnit with the said man quhill his hame cuming, and causit him fall deid at his entres within the hous.”* Lately, when two itinerant preachers were riding in North America, “at a late hour in the evening, one of them requested the other to observe a ball of fire attached to the end of his whip: no sooner was his attention directed to this object, than a similar one began to appear on the other end of the whip. In a moment afterwards, their horses, and all objects near them, were enveloped in wreaths of flame. By this time, the minds of the itinerant preachers were so much confounded, that they were no longer capable of observation.”† Could there be a better commentary on the preceding phenomena. Ready analogies illustrate both: but the true solution of either, is more easily assumed than established.

The woman at Eymouth was charged with the destruction of a ship with the crew. Just about the same time, a man in Kirkaldy was reproached personally by his wife, “mony ill turn have I hindered thee

* Trial of Johnne Feane *alias* Cwninghame duelland in Prestoun, 26 Dec. 1590; only the verdict is preserved. He is distinguished as John Fien, clark—a young man, a schoolmaster in Prestonpans, who was subjected to the most horrid tortures, to obtain confession of what he retracted. Trial of Agnes Sampson, *ut sup.* *Newes from Scotland.*

† James, Expedition, v. ii. p. 100. Luminous appearances are not uncommon about the place of this occurrence.

from doing thir thretty years: mony ships and boats has thou put down, and when I wald have halden the string to have saved one man, thou wald not." Both were burnt.* A woman, through supernatural or Satanic agency, occasioned the loss of a boat with five persons, in Westray firth.† A superstitious author speaks of an imp sinking a ship in England, at human command, about the year 1645.‡ There is also a long and minute account of a series of maritime disasters, experienced by a ship on a voyage from London to Virginia in 1674, from sorcery.§ In Shetland, a cap or wooden bason floating in a tub, was whirled with progressive violence, during incantations, until over-setting, whereby a yawl at sea might suffer a similar calamity.|| Without any ceremonial, however, it appears to have been credited, that if any one having iron about him, landed at a rock called Ness, at the Noup-head of Westray, the rising of the surrounding sea precluded the access of boats, until the mystical substance was consigned to its bosom.¶

The credulous were easily terrified. While James Carfra in Samuelstoun, returned about "Fastings

* Trial of William Coke and Alison Dick, 17 Sep. 1633.: ap. *Stat. Acct.* v. viii. p. 654. from Kirk Session Minutes.

† Trial of Jonet Irwing, 5 March 1616. *Rec. Ork.* f. 61.

‡ *Mather*, Wonders of the Invisible World, p. 20.

§ *Athenian Mercury*, 1691, v. iv. No. 22.

|| *Hibbert*, Shetland Islands, p. 576.

¶ *Wallace*, Account of the Islands of Orkney, p. 60. London 1700, in 12.

even," 1662, and "was casting off his hose and shooes at the foorde, to wyde the water," Agnes Williamsone "raised ane suddent blast of whirle wind, which carried him headlong back to the East Mylne, and over the dame, that ere he was aworse he gripped the hill spout in his airme." Though his fright had not subsided next morning, he summoned courage to call her a witch, and to ask where she had been the preceding night—for he conceived that he had recognised her, along with others, afterwards committed to the flames.*

These superstitions were encouraged by narratives exactly of similar purport on the continent. The ancients speak of sudden and vehement storms, while the heavens were quite serene: and according to Remigius, a peasant was exposed to peril of his life, from a furious blast succeeding a perfect calm, which a sorcerer confessed to be his malevolent work.†

But the most noted and mischievous disturbance of the elements recorded in Scottish history, occurred during the return of King James VI. from completing his matrimonial union with a princess of Denmark, in the year 1590. While all the rest of the fleet had a favouring gale, the course of the royal pair was interrupted by vehement storms. King James' subjects did not dislike the match, but sorcerers, who owe no earthly allegiance, employed themselves adversely, first

* Trial of Agnes Williamsone, 27 June 1662. *Rec. Just.* *Aworse*—aware?

† Remigius *Demonolatreia*, c. 14. p. 291.

in Denmark and then in Scotland, in exciting tempests. Some vessels actually perished in this country, especially a passage boat between Leith and Kinghorn, and the ship conveying the queen sprung a leak. Certain anomalies distinguish the conjurations practised for that purpose.—Some of the initiated, such as “Agnes Sampson, Jonnet Campbell, Johnne Fean, Geilie Duncane, and Meg Dyn, baptesit ane catt in the wobster’s hous, in the maner following: First, twa of thame held ane finger in the ane syde of the chimnay cruik; and ane vther held ane vther finger in the vther syde, the twa nebbis of the fingeris meting togidder. Than they patt the catt thryis throw the linkis of the cruik, and passet it thryis vnder the chimnay. Thaireftir at Beigie Todis hous, thay knitt to the foure feit of the catt foure jountis of men: quhilk being done, the said Jonet fetchit it to Leith; and about midnycht, she, and twa Luikehop, and twa wyfeis callit Stobeis, came to the peir heid, and saying thir wordis, ‘see that thair be na desait amang ws,’ and thay caist the catt in the see, sa far as thay mycht, quhilk swam owre and cam againe: and thay that war in the panis, caist in ane vther catt in the see at xi houris, efter quhilk, be thair sorcerie and enchantmentis, the boit perischit betuix Leith and Kinghorne.”*

* Trial of Agnes Sampson, 27 Jan. 1590. The grate of such dwellings as belonged to these parties, may have stood far from the wall, or in a large recess, as was frequent. People could sit around it. *Twa Luikehop*—two persons of that name; *wobster*—weaver; *nebbis*—extremities.

That such an accident happened at the time specified, is established from other authority.* But it was ascribed to supernatural means exclusively, and Satan as usual had his own share of the blame. He had promised to John Feane to “rais ane mist, and cast the kingis Majestie in England, and for performing thair-of, he tuik ane thing lyke to ane fute ball, quhilk apperit to the said Johnne lyk a wisp, and caist the same in the see, quhilk causit ane vapour and ane reik to ryis.”† Soon after this incident, a thick mist was raised by a sorceress accompanying the Earl of Argyle, who led the royal troops to quell an insurrection in the north: but it was speedily dispelled by some counter agent in the camp of the enemy.‡

Carrying witches in camps, that they might excite tempests and disturb the foe, ascends to the earliest date. One of the captains of the Jewish host, invited “Deborah, a prophetess,” to accompany him against the common enemy. He was urgent for her presence. || Tisamenes, a prophet, accompanied the Grecian army to the battle of Plataea, where Xerxes was defeated.§ Ariovistus declined engaging Cæsar, because the

* *Melville Memoirs*, p. 369.

† Trial of Johnne Feane:—of Eufame Macalyane. *News from Scotland*, *ut sup.*

‡ *Narrative of the Victory at Strathaven*, 1594, ap.: *Scotish Poems of the Sixteenth Century*, Introd. p. 150, 151.

|| *Judges*, ch. iv. v. 4—10.

§ *Herodotus*, lib. ix. § 36.

prophetesses in the German camp, had warned him to abstain from it until the new moon.* A noted necromancer, Libavius, pledged himself at Ravenna, to conquer the barbarians without soldiers, but by means of the empress Placidia, he was put to death when preparing to demonstrate his powers.† At a period nearer to the battle of Belrinnes, four sorceresses attended Henry, king of Sweden, against the Danes in 1563, and promised him victory.‡ In the eastern regions, a similar practice has been prevalent. During the late war of 1825, with the kingdom of Ava, “one of three Burmese witches, who accompanied the enemy’s troops, to second their efforts against the British by spells and enchantments, was killed by a musket shot in the breast.” She was a beautiful damsel, and as well as her two comrades of high rank,—believed to be possessed of supernatural endowments, “particularly the power of turning aside the balls of the English.”|| Marco Polo, the Venetian traveller, speaks of the sorcerers accompanying the army of the Khan of Tartary, in the thirteenth century. He ascribes the faculty of obscuring the atmosphere, for the purpose of favouring predatory excursions, to persons in India, skilful in magical and diabolical

* *Cæsar de Bello Gallico*, lib. i. c. 50. *Dio Cassius*, lib. xxxviii. p. 90. Edit. 1606 in fol.

† *Olympiodorus*, ap. *Excerpta Photii*, p. 13. This incident is ascribed to year 421.

‡ *Bodinus*, c. 51. p. 78.

|| *Alexander*, *Travels from India to England*, 1825, 6, p. 41.

arts ;—and he affirms that he was once involved in artificial darkness, from which he escaped, though some of his companions were captured and sold.* During a battle in Poland about the year 1241, a Tartar standard bearer, apprehending defeat, raised such a smoke and darkness, by incantations, that the opposing army almost suffocated, was rendered unable for the contest.†

Here the tempest was excited by throwing a cat into the sea : nor is superstitious belief of the dangers resulting from such an expedient, yet eradicated ; for sailors are said to dread the consequence of consigning this creature to the watery element.‡ Even if one should fall over board accidentally, it is held an evil prognostication of the voyage.

But in the succeeding century, the tempest was raised by dipping a rag in water, and then beating it on a stone thrice, in the name of Satan.

I knok this rag wpone this stane
To raise the wind in the divellis name,
It sall not lye till I please againe.

Drying the rag, along with another conjuration, appeased the storm.||

* *Marco Polo*, Travels by Marsden, b. i. c. 14. p. 87. b. ii. c. 44. p. 449.

† *Michou*, de Sarmatia Asiana, Lib. i. c. 3. ap. *Grynæus Novus Orbis*, p. 452.

‡ *Andrew's Anecdotes*, p. 331.

|| *Confession of Issobell Gowdie*, 3 May 1662. ap. *Pitcairn Criminal Trials*, v. iii. p. 607.

The inhabitants of the western parts of Scotland, occasionally uncovered a mystical well, from whence water was scattered in the air, with an invocation for obtaining a fair wind either to quit the shore, or to waft those towards it whose presence they desired. After the ceremony, the covering was carefully replaced, to avert dangerous tempests which might otherwise ensue.*

The faculty of exciting tempests has been generally credited throughout the world, as pertaining to sorcerers; and sometimes both the peculiar agitation of the elements, and the means of inducing it, are described. It was assigned by the ancients to the Telchines, a people of Rhodes:† and in the middle ages, to other tribes than the Tartars, such as the natives of Tibet, Kashmire, and the islanders of Socotora in the Eastern seas, as illustrated by Marco Polo in various passages. No doubts were entertained of it in Europe. Agobardus, bishop of Leyden, says of his neighbourhood, “Almost every one in these districts, high and low, citizens, and peasants, old and young, credit that hail and thunder are produced through the means of mankind. For, immediately on hearing the thunder, or beholding the lightning, they say, ‘the storm is raised;’ but when interrogated what they understand by ‘the storm being raised,’ some with little hesitation, as usual with the ignorant, declare, that it is from

* *Frazer*, ap. *Stat. Acct.* v. viii. p 52, note.

† *Diodorus Siculus*, Lib. v. c. 226, t. i. p. 374.

the incantations of those persons called *tempestarii*, and utter execrations against them.”*

The power of doing so is recognised by the legislators of different countries on the European continent, from the prohibitions to exercise it. In France and Italy, and elsewhere, they admit that “the heavens may be disturbed, and hail produced by enchantment:” and by the laws of Charlemagne, people were forbid to become *tempestarii*.†

The preceding observations explain some of the modes whereby the Scottish sorcerers darkened the air, or excited storms.—Higden says of the Isle of Man,—“In that Ilonde is sortilege and witcherafte vsed: for women there, sell to shipmen, wynde, as it were closed vnder thre knotes of threde, so that the more wynde he wold have, the more knotes he must vndo.”‡

Pomponius Mela speaks of an island called Sena, in the British Sea, opposite to the coast of Quimper, celebrated for the oracle of the Gallic divinity, whose priestesses, nine in number, enjoyed the faculty of raising the wind and the sea, by verses:—of predicting futurity: and of changing themselves to animals—as the Telchines of Rhodes could change their shape. But

* *Agobardus contra insulsam vulgi opinionem de grandine et Tonitruis*, § 1, 12, ap. *Bibliothecam Veterum Patrum*. t. xiv. p. 270, 271, 273.

† *Capitularia Caroli et Ludovici Imper.* Lib. i. c. 64. ap. *Capitularia Regum Francorum*. Additio 2. c. 21. t. i. col. 1143.

‡ *Higden Polychronicon*, by *Trevisa*, Lib. i. ch. xliiii. [London, 1482] in fol. This is a very literal translation.

their art was reserved for those mariners only who repaired thither to consult them.*

By the northern nations, the Finns and Laplanders, "three knots were cast on a leathern thong. Moderate breezes attended the loosening of one; stronger gales the next, and vehement tempests, even with thunder, in ancient times, followed the loosening of the third." These knotted thongs were sold to navigators.†

A recent traveller journeying towards China, remarks, that among the Mongols, "those books which contain an account of the miraculous deeds of the divinities, can be read only in spring, or in summer, because at other seasons, the reading of them would produce tempests or snow."‡

To obtain rain, the monks of Iona shook the tunic wherein their patron saint, Columba, had expired, thrice in the air, while reading the books written by his hand.—Abundance fell to refresh the arid earth, and produce a luxuriant harvest.¶ In the Isle of Uist, the inhabitants formerly erected the *water cross*, which was a stone in form of a cross, opposite to St Mary's

* *Pomponius Mela*, de Situ Orbis, Lib. iii. This is the *Isle des Saintes*: the priestesses were called *Barrigenæ*.

† *Olaus Magnus*, Lib. iii. c. 15. *Schefferus*, *Lapponia*, c. ix. p. 144, 145. "Practised by the Norwegian Finlaps."

‡ *Timkowski Travels*, v. ii. p. 348.

¶ *Adomnanus* in *Vita S. Columbæ*, says he witnessed the fact, Lib. ii. c. 45. *Cuminius*, ap. *Pinkerton Vitæ Sanctorum*.

church, for procuring rain : and when enough had fallen, they replaced it flat on the ground. But in Martin's time, the practice had become obsolete.* Some resemblance to a propitiatory offering for obtaining rain, was adopted in Italy, by burying an ass. But in Spain, if invocations of St Peter failed in obtaining this dispensation, his image was ducked, as being more effectual : and it has been said, that in Germany the images of St Paul and St Urban, were dragged to a river, should the day of their festival be foul.† The precise state of the atmosphere was noted on the festival or anniversary of certain sanctified personages ; whence the familiar divinatory adage regarding St Swithin's day.

If controlling the elements were for an evil purpose, ancient superstitions ascribed it to Satan, through the intervention of mankind, as if disdaining to be the agent himself. " The imagination of women persuades them, that they are capable of disturbing the air, of exciting tempests, and of inducing maladies. But Satan's prescience enabling him to discover what shall take place in the heavens, he puts this in their head when they wish to be avenged of their neighbours. Then it is that they hope to succeed by casting flint stones behind their backs, towards the west, by throwing the sand of a torrent in the air, by placing beams across a river, by boiling hog's bristles, and other ab-

* *Martin*, Western Islands, p. 59.

† *Martin de Arles*, § 78. *Brand*, v. i. p. 37, from *Schenckius*, c. 13.

surdities. Commonly, the time of doing so is prescribed by himself; therefore, if the tempests and accidents foreknown to him shall follow, the foolish women believe it all their own work.”*

Martin de Arles, enforcing the same argument, refers all to Satan. “The broom dipped by the witch in water, does not bring rain; but the demon, aware of the fact, having power over the elements, by God’s permission can do so immediately.”†

God seems to have had nothing to do but to watch the devil.

The inhabitants of some countries confine themselves to ceremonious processions and the supplication of heaven for rain, when famine or pestilence is dreaded. La Roque, a French traveller to Mount Lebanon, in the year 1688, witnessed a procession and ceremonial by the Pacha at the head of a multitude of Mahometans, which concluded by his tracing some furrows with a plough outside the gates of Saida. Immediately the air darkened, and “heaven, which rains alike on the just and the infidel,” sent such copious showers that the procession, in great disorder, had difficulty in regaining the city.‡ The priests of other countries throw water from the deepest pits, in the air, and scatter it over the people, as an offering to their deity, in

* *Molitor de Lamiis et Pythonicis*, f. 27, 28.

† *Martin de Arles*, § 27.

‡ *La Roque, Voyage de Syrie et du Mont Liban*, t. i. p. 10. Saida is the ancient Tyre.

the confidence of obtaining rain.* When the natives of Eastern Turkestan desire rain, they fasten a bezoar stone to a willow twig, and place it in water: they have other expedients for obtaining wind and mild weather, with the same charm, conjurations forming always part of the ceremony.†

Alexander Hamilton was tried for meeting the grand enemy, Satan, by appointment, “vpon the hillis be wast the Castell of Duncie:” and in revenge of an injury done by “Mr James Cokburne, proveist of Hadingtoun, the said Alexander was commandit be the devill, his maister, to draw thrie heidis of corne furth of ilk ane of Mr James’ stakis, than standing in his barne yaird, and thaireftir to cayrie thame to Garnetone hillis, thair to be brunt: according to the quhilk command, the said thrie heidis of corne war drawne out be the said Alexander furth of the said stakis, and brunt be him in Garnetoun hillis; at the burneing wherof, the said proveist of Hadingtoun haifing ane kilfull of corne then drying in his kill, the samin, be the said Alexander his devillisch sorcerie, and the assistance of the devill, his maister, was altogidder brunt.”‡

Marable Couper was charged with causing a kiln take fire, and with burning the corn in it.|| Another

* Davy, Account of Ceylon, p. 411.

† Timkowski Travels, v. i. p. 402. This is the same country as Little Bukharia.

‡ Trial of Alexander Hamilton, 1630, *ut sup.* Vide Trial of Cristiane Leisk, 21 Ap. 1643, *Rec. Ork.* f. 266. v.

|| Trial of Marable Couper, 7 July 1624. *Rec. Ork.* f. 183. v.

occasioned the burning of "William Herrote's kill being full of coirnes."* The indictment of a fourth, relative to a similar offence, accomplished by a sudden blast of whirlwind, specifies, that from the testimony of several penitent and confessing witches, the culprit was "the occasion of that fyre, and did invite them to be at the doing of the act." However, the jury by a rare gift of penetration, shewed more sense than to believe it, and on this occasion, the public prosecutor was baulked of his prey.† If the incident occurred during fine weather, this was not to be forgot, as when Christian Wilson, without any ostensible errand, came near a kiln full of oats, "the kill tooke fyre and burned the oats, notwithstanding of all the help that was made; it being also ane verie faire and calme day."‡

Several superstitious expedients for averting the destructive effects of hail storms, were practised by the ancients; some of them denoting an obscure conjecture of electrical principles. Among these were raising bloody axes against the heavens: presenting a mirror to the clouds: anointing horse shoes with bears' grease: environing gardens with a certain plant: placing the head of a horse or an ass within its precincts,—the latter, according to some, stripped of its skin.|| Whirling

* Trial of Katherine Oswald, 11 Nov. 1629. *Rec. Just.*

† Trial of Agnes Williamsone, 27 June 1662. *Rec. Just.*

‡ *Precognition* Christian Wilsone, 1661, in MS. *ut sup.*

|| *Palladius de re Rustica*, lib. i. c. 35. *Columella de cultu horticorum*, lib. x. § 344. *Pliny Hist. Nat.*, lib. xxviii. c. 5. xvii. c. 47.

spindles on the high way, or carrying them exposed, was forbid, lest grain might be injured. Pricking the finger as a bloody sacrifice, for want of something better to offer, is derided by Seneca.*

Possibly some of these may have been practised in Scotland, especially rearing a horse's head in the fields. One was elevated on a pole, by a northern chief, in the course of his execrations against the king and queen of Norway.† Also, it was thus employed, stripped of the skin, to intimidate an enemy, conjoining verses that the troops might be speedily destroyed.‡ Whirling spindles is not explicit, unless it be applicable to the distaff. Spinning a black rock is alluded to in the Orkney Islands as pernicious to cattle.¶

After abolition of the pagan worship, a new project was adopted on the continent,—the clouds were conjured ! The special conjuration *contra grandines seu tempestates a demonibus excitatas*, is preserved for the admiration of the present age. In the course of the ceremony, one perhaps still subsisting, the priest commands the clouds and hail to disperse immediately, without injuring mortals, and to descend dissolved in rain. Next presenting the cross to the four points of the compass, he warns the demoniac disturbers of the

* Seneca Natur. Quæst. Lib. iv c. 67.

† Egill's Saga, ad an. 934. c. 60. p. 389, 390.

‡ Olaus Magnus, lib. iii. c. 15. p. 118.

¶ Trial of Helen Hunter, inswoman in Brugh, 6 April 1643. Rec. Ork. f. 262-5.

atmosphere to fly, and he sprinkles holy water.* Martin de Arles had seen a priest throw stones in the air for the same purpose.† Sprenger thought sorcerers could appease tempests, from adjuring the hail and the wind by the five wounds of Christ, the nails piercing his body, and the four evangelists, to descend in rain.‡ Gaffarel assumes, that after the manner of the easterns, figures and images may be prepared under different constellations, which, without demoniac aid, shall avert tempests; and Leonardus speaks of the fruits of the earth being preserved by similar means. ||

Scotish sorcerers could accomplish many things impracticable to their credulous neighbours,—themselves the authors of their art.

The land was rendered barren: the labours of the husbandman proved abortive: the nutrition of grain was abstracted: animals, even mankind, became sterile: and interrupting the course of nature, they could determine, either that the embryo should not originate, or that it should perish before the age of infancy.

How many examples shew the perversion of intellect among our progenitors! How did they ever go right, when they were so ready, so willing to go wrong? Yet all these may be deemed the lower and less important

* *Mengus Flagellum Dæmonum*, p. 208.

† *Martin de Arles*, § 74.

‡ *Sprenger, Malleus Maleficarum*, p. xi. q. 2. c. 7. p. 431.

|| *Gaffarel, Curiositez Inouyes*, c. 6. p. 106. *Leonardus Speculum Lapidum*, lib. iii. c. 17. p. 173.

superstitions, compared with others plunging them amidst impenetrable darkness. Some may conceive that they were restricted to the humbler classes of society. But had the higher orders been altogether incredulous, would they have been so eager to persecute, to strangle, and to burn their fellows?

Margaret Threipland having desired Katherine Oswald "to tak vp her kaill growand in ane yaird besyd Stratoun Mylne," she not only refused, but hoped in God, "that nathing wald grow in that yaird thereftir: and so inchantit the said yaird, that it nether bure kaill, lynt, hemp, or vther grane, for the space of foure yeiris thereftir, albeit the samyn was double laubouret and sawin."* A person refused Agnes Yullock the loan of an ox, "in respect, it was the first day of his tilth," though promising one on the morrow, "bot she never come agane, and thairfra, and sen syne, the haill strenth of his tilth has decayit."† To deprive growing corn or other crops of their nutritive qualities, three stalks were cut, and apparently three crosses formed besides, from the rest, with a conjuration repeated thrice.‡

The grain being reaped and stacked was still insecure: it might be deprived of its virtue in producing

* Trial of Katherine Oswald, 1629, *ut sup.* *Kaill*—colewort. *Yaird*—garden. *Bure*—bore.

† Trial of Agnes Yullock, 13 June 1616. *Rec. Ork.* f. 74. v.

‡ *Confession of Issobell Gowdie*, 15 May 1622, ap. *Pitcairn Criminal Trials*, v. iii. p. 614.

fermented liquors; or the meal to which it was converted might not afford any nourishment. "Sax yeir syne or thairby in voir," Jonet Forsyth "faddomit ane stack of bear, of sevin faddome, pertaining to Michael Reid, and scho tuik away the substance of the cornes thair of."* The grain could not be converted to malt for successive years.†

Agnes Williamson having received the fourth part of a peck out of ten bolls of meal, which were returned from the mill to the owner, she contrived to take the "fuzioun and strenth from all the rest of the meill, so that he never gott any good therof: and wes never maister of so much money as to make any oats in meill since that time." This extraordinary accusation,—one involving the most profound physiological principles, was rendered the subject of evidence. The injured person himself bore testimony to the general truth of the allegation, but qualifying it thus, "that he did eat bread of that meall and was satisfied therewith: bot only said, that his meall went faster away than it used to doe."‡ Patrick Lowrie was convicted of abstracting "the substance and fissiounne" from Bessie

* Trial of Jonet Forsyth, 11 Nov. 1629. *Rec. Ork.* f. 234, v. Voir—seed time. Bear—barley.

† *Perth K. S. R.* 16–23 May 1623. Trial of Jonet Forsyth,—of Agnes Yullock, *ut sup.*

‡ Trial of Agnes Williamsone, 27 June 1662. *Rec. Just.* *Fuzion, fissiounne*,—nourishment. Etymology will assign *nature* as the true interpretation.

Sawers corn for ten successive years.* Helen Languor having quarrelled with Jonet Thomson, she sickened, and all the meat prepared for her became full of worms: but none were seen either in that prepared for her husband or her household. After a donation to the sorceress, she recovered, and worms were seen no more.†

Dr William Ramsay, physician to King Charles II., in discussing the supernatural origin of worms, expresses his opinion that magicians and witches, as the "imps and instruments" of Satan, "may be instrumental of causing diseases, and particularly of wormes."‡

Possibly the source of such superstitions may be sought in the divine menace, that the people should eat bread "and not be satisfied."|| Or they may originate from the law of the twelve tables against enchanting grain,§—a doctrine held too absurd by Seneca, to merit refutation. The blighted fig tree of scriptural history may have had some influence in confirming them. Later tribes punished the offenders by stripes, and exposure with their heads shaven.¶

* Trial, 1605, *ut sup.*

† Trial of Jonet Thomsons *alias* Greibok, 7 Feb. 1643. *Rec. Ork.* f. 255. v.

‡ Ramesay ΕΑΜΙΝΘΟΛΟΓΙΑ, p. 79. London, 1668, in 12.

|| *Leviticus*, ch. xxvi. v. 26.

§ *Gothofredus* *Fontes juris Civilis*, tab. vii. p. 113. *Pliny*, *Hist. Nat.* lib. xxviii. c. 4.

¶ *Lindenbrogius* *Leges Wisigothorum*, lib. vi. tit. ii. c. 3. p. 124.

Perhaps this abstraction of the nutritious principle bears some analogy to the supernatural consumption of the vital principle called Eating the Life. The New Zealanders falling under a mortal malady, say, the Great Spirit has entered to consume them within.* The Africans ascribe it to the sorcery of their neighbours. Lately, they accused four aged persons "of having eaten the spirits of five individuals."†

The preservation of the products of the earth, the number and fertility of their herds, were indispensable to the earlier inhabitants of these kingdoms, whose skill and resources were so moderate. Some authors have concluded, but perhaps erroneously, that the fertility of Britain stood unrivalled in the time of the Romans;‡ but every thing that can be collected, relative to the state of the country, seems adverse to such a theory.

A charge of impairing the quantity and the wonted products of milk from cows, was not uncommon. Nay, the fountains of nutrition among the human species could be dried up to gratify the malevolent. Cows were rendered abortive of milk during thirteen days by Marioun Peebles. Jean Craig deprived them of their milk, "sua that thai gave nathing bot blood thairefter." Isobell Young made a cow give "reid bluid three days togidder, insteid of milk." Another

* *Earle Residence in New Zealand in 1827*, p. 241.

† *Landers Journal*, v. ii. p. 202, 203.

‡ *Whitaker History of Manchester*, B. i. var. loc.

cow, from the date of a distemper inflicted, "gave na-thing furth of hir palpis bot bluid and worsum, insteid of milk."* The effects of malevolent threats, that a woman should never have milk to suckle her children, were remedied, according to Bodin, only when the injurer was committed to the flames.† From enmity towards George Haldane, writer in Edinburgh, "Jonet Cock comeing to his nurse and mackeing a fashione of looking her breast and milk, immediately thereafter, that same verry day, the nurse her milk went from her." A woman nursing a child, having entered the same house with Bessie Roy, found, on departing, that she had lost her milk.‡ One did so for fourteen days from a vegetable thrown at her.¶ A practical method of effecting the mischief, consisted in a woman who had lost her milk inducing her child to suck another having it, and at the same time pinching or grasping the nurse's apparel. Thus the latter would be deprived of milk and the other would recover it.§

* Trial of Marioun Peebles, 1644, ap. *Hibbert*;—of Jean Craig, 1649;—of Issobell Young, 1629;—of Patrick Lowrie, 1603;—of Jonet Cock, 1661;—of Johnne Brughe, 1643;—of Grissell Gairdner, 1610. *Rec. Just.* ut sup.

† *Bodinus* Demonomania, lib. iv. c. 5. p. 412.

‡ Trial of Bessie Roy, 18 Aug. 1590. *Rec. Just.*

¶ Trial of Katherine Greive, 29 May 1633. *Rec. Ork.* f. 47.

§ *Stirling* K. S. R. 30 April 1633. Margaret Chapman "accused be Agnes Bennie for taking of hir milk from hir out of hir breist, shee having abundance thair of, be unlawfull meanes: Confessed that schee learned of ane Margaret Dundie in Sanct Johnstoune, quhen any woman lost her

Credulity in this malevolence subsisted among the ancient Franks of Europe, as it is still found among modern tribes of Africa. The Foleys or Foulahs refuse to sell milk, because boiling the milk "makes the cow dry."*

As a test of supernatural agency on the cows, a plant supposed to distill blood, was sometimes put into their milk in the Hebrides :† and as a cure, blood, drawn from the cow's ear, was mixed with her food, along with invocations of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in Perthshire.||

The virtue of the milk could be extracted, so that it would render none of its proper products. As lately as the year 1832, a woman at Dingwall was accused of doing so, by means of a charm, said to be called *torradh* in the Gaelic language. Kirk speaks of skillful women conveying "the pith and milk from their neighbour's cows into their own chiese-hold, thorow a hair tedder at a great distance, by art magic, or by drawing a

milk, to caus the woman's bairne that wants the milk, to souck ane wther woman who hes milk in her breist : becaus ane greidie eye or hairt tuik the milk from the woman that wants the milk : and that schee learned be Margaret Downie to nipe the woman's cloithes, who had the breist of milk, and be so doing the milk would returne againe to the woman that wantit it. Accordinglie, schee caused hir bairne souck Agnes Bennie, and nipped Agnes Bennie's aprone." v. iii. The offender having lost her own milk expected to recover it thus.

* Moore Travels in Africa, p. 25.

† Pennant, Tour, 1772, p. 232.

|| Perth K. S. R. 13—26 May 1623. Marg. Hornsclench.

spicket fastened in a post, which will bring milk as far as a bull will roar. The chiese made of the remaining milk of a cow thus strained, will swim in water like a cork.* The rope is said to have been twisted contrary to the wonted direction, in Satan's name, and drawn between the hind and fore feet of the cow. Cutting it asunder restored the milk.† One charged another and her family with the faculty of taking milk "out of hair tederis," alleging their "milk and butter was whyt and blew with rainges."‡ The milk belonging to two persons was said to be so bewitched, that "thai could not get butter af their kirne."§

Barbara Thomasdochter told one who churned in vain, that "the lid of hir kirne wald be weit gif she had the profite of hir milk, and gif it wes dry she wantit it—she wald gif hir sum thing gif she wald heild it, that wald do hir guid: and oppnit hir purs and tuik ane bone furth therof, quhilk wes the bone of ane manes finger, great at the ane end and small at the vther, of twa insh lang or therby, and bad hir steir hir milk with it and she wald get hir profite: and quhilk bone wes sumquhat bread, and sum hoillis in it, but

* *Kirk, Secret Commonwealth*, § 3. p. 5.

† *Confession of Issobell Gowdie, ut sup.*

‡ *Stirling K. S. R.* 21 Feb. 1614. Grissall Gillaspie and others. "And milk of an hairne tedder, though wiues sould be wrackit." *Montgomery Flyting*.

§ Trial of Issobel Young, 1629, *ut sup.* Bodins authority is quoted in support of the charge.

not throw." After explaining that it was not a human but "ane selch bone," the charmer was convicted of superstitious practices.*

The properties of substances, malevolently abstracted, could be withheld permanently, transferred to others, or wholly or partially restored to the owner. "Fructus et lac auferre aliisque dare," was assumed by the law as practised in Europe during the ninth century, and prohibited as belonging to the service of Satan.†

The repute of sorcery kept the worthy and the wicked in equal thralldom: mitigation of the evil was dependent on the will of the injurer, and the charm dissolved in proportion as the injured found his favour. One who had offended in this way, by depriving wort of its virtue, said to the owner, "Giff I have the proffeit of your aill, receive your barme and proffeit of your barme—and immediatlie thairafter she receavit the same proffeit," yet the virtue of both grain and cattle was withheld.‡ Another, on refusal of a sheaf of corn by the wife of William Spens—"tuik the proffeit of his cornes fra him, and gave it to his brother James Spens."§ The necromantic art was exercised very deliberately, for Jonet Forsyth, on challenge for

* Trial of Barbara Thomasdochter *alias* Stovd, 2 Oct. 1616. *Rec. Shetland*, f. 34. v. *Selch*—seal.

† *Capitularia Regum Francorum*: Additio ii. c. 21. tom. 1. col. 1143.

‡ Trial of Agnes Yullock, *ut sup.*

§ Trial of Annie Tailyeour 1624, *ut sup.*

abstracting the substance of the corn in Michael Reid's stack, and giving it to Robert Reid—"scho took twa meallis of it back agane from the said Robert Reid, and gave it him: and being challengit be the said Robert Reid, scho tuik the proffeit of the rest of the stack fra the said Michael, quhairin thair was sevin thrave and a half, quhairof he got nothing but shillingis, and gave it to the said Robert Reid."*

Jonet Thomeson testified much displeasure with Andrew Burwick for refusing her some corn, and departed full of wrath. "Quhen the corne was caryit to the grind, it lap vpoun his wyfis face lyk myttis, and as it war nipit hir face vntill it swallit: and quhen it was maid in meat, he and his wyfe culd not feill the smell of it: and quhen the eattit of it, it went owre lyk preinis, and culd not be quencit for thirst: and the dogis wold not eat of it—and quhen they chaingit the same with their neighbouris, it was fund sufficient, without any evill taist."†

Besides special injuries, such as the preceding, sorcerers could ruin the worldly circumstances of obnoxious individuals. Thus, one caused the whole property of John Kid, "being then worth ane thousand pundis, togidder with his baill malt browin be him in drink, to evanisch and goe from him." Christian

* Trial of Jonet Forsyth, 1629, *ut sup.* *Meallis*—portions; *thrave*—thirty-six sheaves; *shillingis*—husks.

† Trial of Jonet Thomeson *alias* Greibok, 7 Feb. 1643. *Rec. Ork.* f. 255. v. *Nipit*—smarted; *preinis*—pins.

Wilson went to William Mitchell's brew-house, "desyring they would sell her a chopping of woort—and howbeit her desyre was granted, yett they gott no good of the whole brewing but lost it, nevertheless of all the diligence they could vse."* In the course of altercation about the place of a stall at Dalkeith fair, towards the year 1651, Jonet Cock said to a man, "yow sall repent your comeing heir, and I sall gare yow als good as if yow had lattine me alone,"—whereby that same day he lost "of his goods aboue twenty-tuo pond sterling,"—he fell sick also, nor for ten years did he thrive in person or property. This man swore it was all true, and the woman was strangled and burnt.*

Controlling the elements, controlling mankind and animals, were alike within the power of the Scottish sorcerers. When the tongs put into a great fire, for searing a wound, "wold not heat at all, but remained still cold," it was ascribed to the necromantic art.†

Isobell Young was accused of preventing the success of a certain fishing boat, though all the rest belonging to Dunbar had got a full lading, whereby the owner was reduced to indigence. She stopped a mill, and rendered it incapable of grinding for eleven days. Marable Couper having come while Margaret "Cou-

* *Precognition*, Christian Wilsone, 1661. Trial of Johnne Brughe, 1643: of Jonet Cock, 1661, *ut sup.* *Browin*—brewed; *gare*—cause; *lattine*—let.

† Trial of Christian Marwik, 6 April 1643. *Rec. Ork. f.* 263. v.

stane" was grinding ane look of beir on the quernis, though she and "her seruand could gar the querne gang about," the produce resembled dust.*

The first day that one yoked his plough, a woman, "by her witchcraft and devilrie, so distempered the pleuche and gudis, that he culd gett no labour of thame."† After refusing a young ox for his neighbour's plough, Robert Mowat yoked his own, but "his oxin wald nather go forward nor bakward out of the part.—Immediatelie thairefter, the said Robert lent hir the ox, and his oxin did pleu sufficientlie."‡ This superstition remained of late subsistence. In the year 1756, the servant of the minister of a seceding congregation at Orwell, believed himself capable of interrupting the service of a wheel plough, by touching the beam with a rod, and commanding it to stop until he should loosen the spell. His practices being investigated, he was declared to be under ecclesiastical censure, and rebuked publicly from the pulpit.‡ In 1759, a woman in England was accused of bewitching a neighbour's spinning wheel, so that its revolution was impracticable

* Trial of Marable Couper, 7 July 1624. *Rec. Ork.* f. 182. v. *Quernis* or *quern*—a hand mill, consisting of a hollow stone cylinder, which receives a solid cylinder, turned by a handle to grind the corn supplied. One in the Museum of the Society of Scottish Antiquaries, is formed of the capital of an ancient column, from some religious edifice. *Look*—quantity.

† Trial of William Gude, 13 June 1616. *Rec. Ork.* f. 72. v.

‡ *Scots' Magazine*, v. xviii. p. 464. for 1756.

The culprit's husband resolved to put his wife's innocence to the test, by weighing her against the church Bible. Though "stripped of all her cloaths, to her shift and under coat," to the great mortification of the accuser, the sacred volume struck the beam.* Woodrow, the historian of the church of Scotland, relates, that in the time of "Mr Thomas Hogg, minister of Kiltarn, in the north," his parishioners "had many heathenish and superstitious customes among them," about the year 1650. His opponents, amidst the succeeding religious controversies, nevertheless proceeded to depose him with all due solemnity, sending another minister to preach and declare the parish vacant. But when the stranger came to preach, "he sent the beddell to ring the bell:—the bell by noe means would ring; and he saw noe visible stope. There comes a strong sturdy man to the cord and pulls the bell up, and the tongue of the bell in all their veu hung even up almost, and did not fall on the bell: and by noe means it would toll. However, the minister went on to preach, and declare the church vacant."†

Such superstitions are ancient. St Jerome alludes to the interruption of the public games by necromantic powers, which Hilarion proposed to counteract by sprinkling the horses, chariot, and charioteer, with water—and it proved effectual.‡

* *Gentleman's Magazine*, v. xxix. p. 93. for 1759. Susanna Hannokes.

† Woodrow, *Analecta* in MS. v. iii. p. 163.

‡ *Hieronymus in vita S. Hilarionis*, ap. op. t. iv. part 1. col. 80.

Bessie Roy was accused of opening locks, simply by incantment. John Fean, a more notable sorcerer, was convicted in the same year, 1590, of doing so, by "blawing in ane woman's handis, himselff sittand at the fyresyde."* These are not modern expedients.—Among the miraculous faculties ascribed to St Columba in the sixth century, is that of opening locks without a key:—*ecclesiam sibi non apertam salva sera, sine clave, persæpe reseravit, imprimens tantum Dominicæ crucis effigiem.*—He opened the church frequently without a key, by merely imprinting the sign of the cross.†

Controlling Animals.—A serious charge arose against Helene Isbuster, "that in Paba, the glaid having slaine some fowles, ye commandit him to sit downe on the rigging of the house, quha satt till he died." The charge does not seem to have been proved; but the culprit was convicted of charming mice into a stack, where all were found dead: and she confessed having pronounced some words to expel them from their previous haunt.‡ To protect their poultry from kites, the Irish formerly suspended the egg shells whence

* Trial of Bessie Roy, 18 Aug. 1590.—of John Feane, 1590. *Rec. Just.*

† *Cuminus* in vitæ S. Columbæ, c. 25. *Adomnan* speaks more at length, c. 36, 37.

‡ Trial of Helene Isbuster, *Rec. Ork.* f. 97. v.—*Glaid*, kite.—*Rigging*, ridge.

they were hatched, in their houses.* A desperate attack on some one by a bird, from the instigation of sorcery, is specified in a criminal trial of the delinquent.†

The biographers of the Scottish saints relate, that St Kentigern called on a herd of deer to submit to the yoke of those deprived of oxen to labour the land, and that after performing the necessary service, they returned to their wonted pasture. But one of these tractable creatures being devoured by a wolf, the saint stretching forth his hand towards a wood, called on the ferocious brute to come forth—yoked him along with the survivor, and both having ploughed a field of nine acres, he dismissed him.‡ Likewise, when St Fillan having resolved to build a church, “at a place called Siracht, in the upper parts of Glendechoquhy,” a wolf which had devoured an ox yoked in a cart for the work, came first on prayers offered to the Deity, and returned daily to perform the ox’s labour, untill the church was finished,—then resuming its native haunts.|| Wodrow notes, that one John Semple riding along with another to a communion, “thought proper to light off his horse to spend a little time in prayer,” letting loose his own, and insisting on the like by his companion. That of the latter could not be caught

* *Camden*, from *Good*, v. iv. p. 470.

† Trial of Jonet Thomesone, 1643, *ut sup.*

‡ *Jocelin*, in *vita Kentigerni*, c. 20. ap. *Pinkerton*, *Vitæ Sanctorum*, p. 237.

|| *Proprium Sanctorum*, f. xxviii. v. ap. *Brev. Aberdon.* t. i.

again; but John Semple succeeding, reproached him with, "Man, thou hast not so much faith as to take a horse!"* Woodrow thought the animal was to be controlled by faith; others trusted to the power of exorcisms. Foreign authors have been greatly occupied, from all antiquity, with the faculty of charming serpents. Moresin says he witnessed a fruitless attempt to arrest the progress of caterpillars devastating part of Savoy.† Another describes a process against rats over-running a district in France, probably of the same nature.‡ In the catholic countries, the formula employed to arrest the progress of a poisonous animal was this: "adjuro te per eum qui creavit te ut man-eas: quod si nolueris, maledico maledictione qua Dominus Deus te exterminavit."||

Among the ruder modern tribes, those "who possess the power of charming the fiercest serpents, and of readily curing their bite," are called *serpent masters*, and they are believed to become invulnerable from passing through a regular course of poisons.§ Perhaps the remote sources of credulity in the control of animals, originates in the imprecation of Elisha, whereon "there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare forty-two children."

* Woodrow, *Analecta*, v. v. p. 275.

† Moresinus *Papatus*, p. 21.

‡ Marcouville, *Memorables*, f. 32., from Chassanée, *Catalogus Gloriæ Mundi*.

|| Thiers, t. i. p. 477.

§ Thompson, *Travels*, v. i. p. 399.

Is it not Edrisi who alludes to a prevalent opinion, that the inhabitants of the city Melinda, in Africa, could charm animals, so as to injure only those whom they chose? The ancient prophet speaks of venomous creatures which could not be charmed.* To preserve the divers for pearls, near Ceylon, sharks are yet charmed, as of old. The faculty is enjoyed by one family.†

Independently of obeying the control of sorcerers, a certain discriminative faculty is ascribed to animals. Woodrow commemorates the sagacity of a cow pointing out a ford to "Mr Blair, by passing through a river in safety, when he designed to take another dangerous place:" also, when at loss to chuse a right path, his horse did it for him.‡ Further, as if judging of the expediency, the horses of a carriage refused to pass a certain place in Scotland,—and the like seems to be inferred by proof in judgment, in England, when a cart stuck fast in a gateway, without touching either post, until cut down.¶ The sagacity of the heifers of Scripture in bearing the ark,—the palladium of the Jews,—and the refusal of Balaam's ass to advance, when urged by the rider, sanctioned these superstitions.§

* *Jeremiah*, ch. viii. v. 17.

† *Cordiner*, v. ii. p. 56. *Marco Polo*, b. iii. c. 20.

‡ *Woodrow*, *Analecta*, v. v. p. 233.

¶ *Law*, *Memorials*, p. 126. *Tryal* of witches at Bury St Edmonds, 1682, p. 49.

§ 1 *Samuel*, ch. vi. v. 7—16. 2 *Samuel*, ch. vi. v. 2—21. ; ch. vii. v. 2—7.

The mystical solution of Sampson's bonds, and those of Peter the apostle—the spontaneous opening of the gates of his prison, and the command of Joshua, "Sun, stand thou still," were authorities to those sorcerers who desired to imitate sanctified acts, and encouraged the belief of the multitude.*

The supernatural faculties enjoyed by saints, were claimed by sorcerers: whence the similarity of their acts. When any thing surpassing belief is related, the first question that arises naturally, must be, "whether it is true?" But this does not seem to have been a lawful subject of enquiry; and narratives were advanced, marvellous in proportion to the strength of public credulity, and the imbecility of human intellect. To specify a few examples,—fountains sprung at command of St Bridgid and St Patrick;† as Moses struck the rock for water in the wilderness, and as the apostles obtained water in prison for baptism.‡ St Servan converted water to wine, to recover a sick monk;|| St Brigid converted water to milk, to cure a leprous woman; and St Patrick, to gratify the longing of his nurse, converted water to honey. Sorcery, we have seen, converted the milk of cows to blood. The same was alleged to produce husks or chaff like blood, from

* *Judges*, ch. xv. v. 14. *2 Kings*, ch. xi. v. 24. *Joshua*, ch. x. v. 12. *Acts*, ch. xii. v. 10.

† *Proprium Sanctorum*, f. xlv. v.—f. lxx. v. ap. *Brev. Aberdon.* t. i.

‡ *Doubdan*, ch. lxx. p. 617.

|| *Proprium Sanctorum*, f. xv. v. ap. *Brev. Aberdon.* t. ii.

corn.* When St Paul was beheaded, milk is alleged to have flowed from his veins.† St Vynnin, provoked because the river Garnoch yielded none of its finny tenants to a comrade, pronounced a malediction, whereon “it left its bed, and followed another course adverse to nature.”‡ St Baldred, the associate of Kentigern, retired to solitary and desert places, on his decease, “and passed a long time in contemplation, on that islet, the Bass. Kentigern entrusted him with the government of the churches of Aldhame, Tunninghame, and Prestoun, where he instructed the parishioners devoutly, and recovered the sick by interposing only the sign of the cross. A huge rock, dangerous to mariners, stood half way between the islet and the nearest shore. Here St Baldred piously set himself: when the rock rising up at his nod, approached the shore, like a boat wafted by a favouring gale, and remains still to the present day, under the name of St Baldred’s tomb, or St. Baldred’s boat”.||

But a creative and preservative faculty, to an extraordinary extent, was claimed for the sanctified.

The dry wood of an altar, where St Brigid, deceived by an earthly spouse, had offered her vows of celibacy,

* *Humbie K. S. R.* 1—15 May 1659, William Fleck.

† *Doubdan*, p. 605.

‡ *Proprium Sanctorum*, f. xxxviii. v. ap. *Brev. Aberdon.* t. i.

|| *Proprium Sanctorum*, f. lxiii. ap. *Brev. Aberdon.* t. i. St Baldred’s Anniversary, “6 March, A.D. 608.” *Keith*, p. 232.

renewed its verdure on her touch.* St Nathalanus having distributed all his corn during a famine, reserved none for seed in spring : but directing gravel to be scattered over his cultivated ground, it produced a remarkable crop of grain.†

St Gilbert, who was bishop of Caithness in the thirteenth century, touching the tongue of a dumb man, restored him to speech.‡ St Brigid having wounded her own head in falling, anointed two dumb women with the blood, who straightway began to speak.

The faculties of the sanctified extended even to the resurrection of the dead : and if the deceased happened to be maimed during life, he was revived entire. This most wonderful prerogative indeed, has not been considered peculiar to any country exclusively ; and credulity in its certainty, prevails even unto the present date. A modern traveller in the interior of Africa, occupied a dwelling, the owner of which had deceased a few days previously : but it was declared publicly, “ that he had risen from the dead,” and he was carried about, exposed to the view of all who desired to be gratified by the sight. However, says the traveller, “ it is generally supposed that he will die again to-

* *Proprium Sanctorum, ut sup. Dempster, Menologium Scoticum,*
p. 3.

† *Proprium Sanctorum, ut sup. f. xxv. xxvi. ap. Brev. Aberdon. t. i.*
“ He established himself at Tullicht, in the diocese of Aberdeen.”

‡ *Proprium Sanctorum, f. lxxxiii. ap. Brev. Aberdon. t. i.*

morrow.”* The credulous Woodrow, in “April 1729,” was informed that the daughter of a serious good man, having died, “her father fell under great damps and darkness, as to her well-being after her death, and betook himself to prayers, whether by necessity to quicken himself, I know not; but he was wrestling in the room where the corpse was lying, and after prayer, and much at liberty in it, the corpse sat up in the bed, and said audibly to him, ‘Christ is all and all to me,’ and then leaned down in the bed, and was cold and stiff as before. The good man was much astonished with this.”† More anciently, St Blaen, a native of the Isle of Bute, while passing through a town in the north of England, on his return from Rome, “took a deceased youth by the hand, and making the sign of the cross, restored his soul to his body.”—Along with life, he restored an eye, of which he had been deprived previous to his decease.‡ St Servanus revived two dead children, whom their mother, “almost distracted, laid at his feet.”|| Having lost his cook during harvest, he commanded St Kentigern, yet a boy, to recover him to life, or to prepare the mess for his reapers himself,—“*suscitat inde coquum puer*

* *Lander's Journal*, v. iii. p. 113.

† *Woodrow Analecta*, v. vi. p. 154.

‡ *Proprium Sanctorum*, f. lxxviii. ap. *Brev. Aberdon.* t. i. Anniversary of “St Blane, from whom Dumblane is named,” 10 Aug. A.D. 1000. *Keith*, p. 233.

|| *Proprium Sanctorum*, f. xvi. v. ap. *Brev. Aberdon.* t. ii.

almus morte sepultum.—The cook rose from the dead.* Wherefore should examples be multiplied,—St Patrick—revived his own nurse—“he raised forty dead persons to life.”!!

It is not difficult to discover the origin of these superstitious sentiments, or the belief that they could be actually effected, in the imitation of sanctified acts. Aaron and the Egyptian sorcerers were rivals for the creative power;—he struck the dust, and it was converted to loathsome insects. Though nothing can be more explicit than the narrative, the learned deny the conversion: but maintain a new creation at the moment.—“Itaque non fuit hæc productio naturalis sed divina creatio, ut cum homo factus est ex terræ pulvere.”† But the soundest physical principles will not sanction any such theory as new creation. It does not appear that there are any new elements, but only that the concurrence of the necessary circumstances admits the evolution of those elements, which have been derived from the original creation of things. It is from combination, not from creation that the animated world is carried on by constant renovation, and will subsist until the foundations of the universe are shaken.

Subsequent enthusiasts, and their credulous admirers, believed in supernatural powers, and in the faculty of effecting resurgence. They had seen them ascribed to the

* *Proprium Sanctorum*, f. xxviii. ap. *Brev. Aberdon.* t. i.

† *Bochartus*, t. ii. Lib. iv. c. 18, 19. p. 577.

relics of the sanctified, whence they must have had less hesitation in claiming and admitting them for themselves, in their belief of miraculous endowments, or for those whom they almost deified. “And it came to pass as they were burying a man, that behold they spied a band of men, and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha; and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, *he revived and stood upon his feet.*”* History records, that the faculty of bringing the dead to life, was exercised by St Matthew, and by different other sanctified persons: whose prerogative was opposed to the power of magicians.

It was from such examples before them, that the early apostolic missionaries, addressing their discourse more to the imagination than to the judgment of the rude and ignorant people, sought to operate conversion to novel doctrines, and inspire them with veneration. Such also served in this second stage, perhaps, as an encouragement to those who either affected supernatural powers from occult practices, or who promoted and adopted their belief.

* 2 *Kings*, ch. xiii. v. 20.

CHAPTER VIII.

SUPERSTITIONS RELATIVE TO MARRIAGE.

§ I. *Antecedent*.—WHEN the great Creator replenished the earth with animated beings, overspread its surface, stored the air, and filled the waters with the means of their preservation, his grand design would have been still imperfect, without an interminable provision for the reproduction of their race.—The presence of a primitive pair, or even of legions would not have sufficed: generations after generations had to follow.—The structure of the animal frame—so wondrous in contrivance—so admirable in its reciprocal relations, performing such singular functions—confining within it such a marvellous spirit, is ever exposed to accident—is verging hourly towards decay.—Life is short and fleeting.—Perils environ its highest vigour.—United to corporeal substance, permanence seems incompatible with etherial nature.—But while death is rapacious of prey, dissolution is the necessary, the irresistible consequence of having been summoned to existence—while each individual creature passes away in evanescence, a paramount law is governing this sublunary state, whereby the species continues to endure amidst progressive desolation.

Hence the world is always full: and that profound abyss, so greedily engulfing life, seemingly ceases to yawn for more.

The brute creation wander through the globe in temporary union, unsupported by any common bond. Herds collect and disperse with the seasons. Migratory flights are taken from shore to shore. Insects awaken with summer. But man discovers the benefit of a more lasting abode, and social order: the sexes dwell in permanent association—they rear their progeny—they tend their flocks, or cultivate the soil, in seeking the means of sustenance.

Yet great and important modifications must quickly follow. This first foundation of tribes and nations—this early compact unwitnessed, proving irksome to either, may be hastily and indiscreetly sundered. Were those who formed it concerned alone, the inconveniences resulting might be small; but the social state, embracing many members, some appropriate ordinances must ratify the bond, or counteract the disorders consequent on precipitation.

Marriage is esteemed as a divine institution, because a single pair was formed for the enjoyments of paradise. It contemplated the peopling of the earth, to render homage to the Deity: and countless generations were promised to the favourites of Heaven.—Thence the denial of progeny has been ever held a testimony of divine displeasure.

Where is it in the universe that sterility has not

brought calamity with its visitation—that it has not been an endless source of contumely, reproach, and vexation. How many prayers and sacrifices have there not been offered for a dispensation of the tender images of self, to those thus afflicted—or how has the felicity of those been envied, to whom the precious boon was granted. How exhaustless have proved the discord, the mortification—the trouble present and to come—so amply generated by the disappointment.

Let us cease to wonder at the expedients whereby the sorrowing, or the weak, or the credulous, have sought to mitigate their evils.

It would be tedious to recount the innumerable ceremonies, for a religious or a civil purpose, adopted by different tribes, on departing from the simplicity attending the union of the sexes by marriage in its primitive state. Some have originated in superstitions for promoting the harmony of the married pair, many for ensuring that most decisive test of divine approval—the gift of progeny,—some for the maintenance of the household, while the relics of others infer the subsistence of what has been long obliterated from memory among civilized nations.

As the pious consecrated their union by oblations, that they might enjoy a happy state—so did the credulous strive to banish the interference of Satan, of demons, imps, and the mystic train, ever eager to wrest it from them, and invade the sanctified tranquillity enjoined by Heaven. Hostile to the duration

of the human race, their projects were to substitute dissension for love, or to counteract the divine pleasure,—to prevent the spark of life from glowing, or to blight it in the bud.

The Scotch institutions have not escaped reprobation. Many have found it strange and irreverent, that children might disclaim parental counsel in rivetting a bond which involves all the comforts and prospects of futurity—that they might determine on mutual selection, at a period when reason and judgment are altogether immature.*

Of old it was not rare for parents themselves to contract an alliance between their offspring, as yet unborn, especially if death should have disappointed their wishes in respect to others previously betrothed. Also, to take a spouse on trial, was recognised in Scotland—thus forming a kind of temporary union, to be subsequently ratified by indissoluble bonds, if proving grateful to both the parties. Neither was the marriage of a brother's widow unknown here—together with various customs, repugnant to our more refined feelings in the present age.†

* Die Sabitæ penultimo die Augusti 1618. Whilk day the honourable personages of William Master of Sanquhar, Ursulla Swift, and Bernard Swift, appearand, of * * * and dame Mary Crighton, being all four pupils not exceeding twelve years old, ilk one of them accomplished their marriage with others, by the ministration of Mr John Guthrey, minister : whilk God bless." *Perth K. S. R. Extracts, ut sup.*

† *Turgot in vita Margaritæ, c. iv. § 6.*

Many superstitious expedients, chiefly concentrating in divination, have subsisted antecedent to the matrimonial union. Some were practised in solitude, amidst the darkness and silence of the midnight hour; the future spouse was expected to check a thread while unwinding from a clue,—or during ceremonies before a mirror, an apparition of either helpmate should present itself, along with the reflected image of the querent.—Water and fire were resorted to alike: nuts were burnt together or singly: so that, flaming in concert or starting apart, an augury might be formed of the love or aversion of either sex subsisting unseen. In Ireland also, nuts are burnt, and certain means of divination seem to be sought among the ashes, as from the dislike or affection indicated in the fire.* The same has been common in England, especially at Hallow-even:† and similar fashions extend to modern Greece.‡ In certain districts of France, the suitor carries two flasks of wine to the dwelling of his mistress, where he is received by all the members of her family. An omelette is prepared; but should she bring in a plate of nuts at the dessert, this is the symbol of irrevocable rejection—without divination.§

* *Vallancey*, of All Hallow Eve: ap. *Coll. de Reb. Hib.* v. iii. p. 449. *Brand*, v. i. p. 302. Note.

† *Hutchinson*, View of Northumberland, v. ii. append. p. 14.

‡ *Turner*, Tour in the Levant, p. iii. p. 517. "The Greek women will put apple pips into the fire, or candle; if they jump it is a sign their friend or lover remembers them: the contrary if they be quiet."

§ *Decourtilz*, Voyages, t. iii. p. ult. "In the landes of Bordeaux."

In Scotland, two crosses were fabricated for either party, and laid in water. The suitor's left shoe being cast over the house, afforded a propitious omen if falling towards it; if falling from it, he should be disappointed.*

Astrology has ever had an important influence over the affairs of mankind. Their destinies have been believed to be dependent on the celestial deities represented by the orbs of the firmament. The canon law anxiously prohibited observance of the moon as regulating the period of marriage; nor was any regard to be paid to certain days of the year for ceremonies. If the Lucina of the ancients be identified with Diana, it was not unreasonable to court her care of the parturient, by selecting the time deemed most propitious. The strength of the ecclesiastical interdiction does not seem to have prevailed much in Scotland. Friday, which was consecrated to a northern divinity, has been deemed more favourable for the union. In the southern districts of Scotland, and in the Orkney Islands, the inhabitants preferred the encrease of the moon for it.† Auspicious consequences were anticipated, in other parts, from its celebration at full moon. Good fortune depended so much on the

* Trial of Helen a Wallis, 13 June 1616. *Rec. Ork.* f. 74. v. Probably the position of the footstep is meant as advancing to, or receding from the house.

* *Symson* Description of Galloway, 1684, p. 95. *Barry* Parishes of Kirkwall and St Ola, ap. *Stat. Acct.* v. vii. p. 560.

encrease of that luminary, that nothing important was undertaken during its wane.* Benefit even accrued to the stores provided during its encrease: and its effect in preserving them is still credited.† No prejudice has been more firmly rivetted than the influence of the moon over the human frame, originating perhaps in some superstition more ancient than recorded by the earliest history. The frequent intercourse of Scotland with the north, may have conspired to disseminate or renew the veneration of a luminary so highly venerated there, in counteracting the more southern ecclesiastical ordinances. “Non liceat Christianis tenere traditiones Gentilium et observare et colere elementa, aut lunæ aut stellarum cursus aut inanem signorum fallaciam pro domo facienda, vel propter segetes, vel arbores plantandas, vel conjugia socianda.”‡ The observance of times so carefully studied of old for superstitious purposes, is at present the subject of precise calculations in some foreign countries. It formed one of the most decided departments of astrology. Numerous compositions, many of them very absurd, and some containing all the rhetorical argument of logic misapplied, testify the

* *Grant Parish of Kirkmichael, ap. Stat. Acct. v. xii. p. 457.*

† *Ben Insularum Orchadiarum Descriptio, ad an. 1529, in fine.*
 “Men heir keepe the observations of the moon, in sa far that thay sla ther martes at the vaxin therof, affirming thay grow in the barrell.”
Martes—cattle. *Grant, ut sup.*

‡ *Gratian Decretalia, part. ii. causa xxvi. quæst. 5.*

perverted literature of the ages producing them.* Yet times are still respected. How few will commence an undertaking on Saturday ! How seldom are marriages in May ! Plutarch asks, “ Why do not women marry in May ? Is it from being intermediate between April and June—the one sacred to Venus and the latter to Juno ? ”†

No satisfactory elucidation of the origin, signification, or use of the symbols interchanged at marriage, can be gleaned from antiquity. Neither can the sources or the purpose of several concomitant jocular customs, sports and festivities, be discovered. Some hold the ring an earnest others deem it a pledge of fidelity.‡ It was put on the fourth finger, because the older anatomists, or the superficial of the superstitious, affirmed, that a vein communicated immediately from that organ to the heart : and this is recognised by the canon law.§ The same opinion, however, is very ancient ; it is ascribed to the Egyptians and to the earlier Greeks.¶ An amatory charm consisted in drawing a circle with blood from the ring finger, on a wafer

* *Almanack* for the year 1386. *Ramesay Astrologia Restaurata*, var. loc.

† *Plutarch Quæst. Rom. ap. op. t. vii. p. 147.*

‡ *Alexander Geniales Dies*, lib. ii. c. 19.

|| *Gratian Decretalia*, part. ii. causa xxx. quæst. 5. Unde et quarto annulus digito inseritur quia in eo vena quedam ut fertur sanguinis ad cor vsque perveniat.

§ *Aulus Gellius*, lib. x. c. 10. *Macrobius Saturnalia*, lib. vii. c. 13.

which was afterwards consecrated. Other ceremonies having intervened, half of it was taken by the person enamoured, and half pulverized was administered to the object of affection, for the purpose of inspiring mutual love.* It was essential that the marriage ring should be round. Marriage with a diamond ring foreboded evil: because the interruption of the circle augured that the reciprocal regard of the spouses might not be perpetual. Hence a plain and perfect golden circle is now invariably in use: and it is considered ominous in Scotland ever to part with the marriage ring. A scurrilous author of the seventeenth century, denies the use of the ring in Scotland,—a fact scarcely credible, unless it had been abandoned temporarily from the abhorrence entertained of ceremonies and symbols by the rigid presbyterians. “They christen without the cross, *marry without the ring*, receive the sacrament without reverence, and bury without divine service. They keep no holydays, nor acknowledge any saint but Saint Andrew, who, they say, got that honour by presenting Christ with an oaten cake after his forty days’ fast. They think it impossible to lose the way to heaven if they can but leave Rome behind them.”†

The virtues ascribed to a circle may have determined

* *Grillandus de Sortilegiis*, quest. iii. § 19.

† *Perfect Description of the People and Country of Scotland*, ap. *Batavia, or the Hollander Displayed*, p. 62, 67.

some of the superstitions regarding the figure of the marriage ring.*

The ring was symbolical of union. Hence Queen Elizabeth said to Secretary Maitland in the course of a negociation, "I am maryed alreddy to the realme of England, when I wes crownit, with this ring quhilk I beir continewallie in taikin thairof."†

According to Moresin, women previously avoided appearing unveiled for several days after marriage: but in his time they had become bolder, for they shewed themselves immediately.‡ Formerly also, in some districts, when the bride went bareheaded to church, she remained so during the day of her nuptials, and covered herself ever after.¶ Veiling in marriage has perplexed the canonists as much as the use of the ring; nor is the reason assigned for it in the *Decretalia* satisfactory: namely, that it is a token of constant conjugal subjection.§ Tertullian, one of the most authoritative of the fathers of the church, devotes a copious treatise to the use of the veil.¶ The customs of Scotland may have vacillated according to the religion professed by the inhabitants. Covering the head or

* *Fuller* Holy State, b. iii. ch. 22.

† *Privy Council Record*, v. 1559—1567, f. 167.

‡ *Moresinus* Papatus, p. 114, 115.

¶ *Morer* Short Account of Scotland, 1670—1680.

§ *Gratian* *Decretalia*, part ii. causa xxx. quæst. 5: Quare fæminæ velantur dum maritantur. Causa. xxxiii. quæst. 5: Mulier debet velare caput.

¶ *Tertullianus* de Virginibus Velandis.

veiling the countenance, has been always an important part of the rites and ceremonies, civil and religious, of most nations throughout the globe; but sometimes for an opposite purpose.

In Scotland, as is well known, the actual performance of a ceremony is not essential to validate the marriage state. It is enough that the parties, free of deception and constraint, agree mutually to accept of each other as partners for life. All the rest involves a question of evidence whether they have done so. It is a common error to believe, that a magistrate may celebrate the nuptial rites: that he is invested with any authority substituted for clerical functions. He does no more than hear and record the testimony of the parties declaring their precise reciprocal relation.

A clergyman repaired to the more remote islands at rare intervals, for the purpose of celebrating the marriages of the inhabitants. Likewise, itinerant friars resorted to places at a distance from their monasteries, to ratify projected or temporary union, by the intervention of ecclesiastical rites.* The duration of such alliances was indefinite. For, in Shetland, a widow discovered, after a man who had "come to vow hir, and remainit in houshold be the space of ane half yeir or thairby," intended nothing farther.† Festivities

* *Description of the Parish of Ewis* [circ. 1726], in MS. ap. Macfarlane Geog. Coll., v. i. p. 509. *Pennant Tour and Voyage to the Hebrides*, p. 80.

† Trial of Barbara Thomasdochter, 2 Oct. 1616. *Rec. Shet.* f. 34. v.

and formality attended the betrothing of future spouses. John Lord Maxwell who “was contractit in marriage with ane sister of Archibald earl of Angus and Moir-toun, hade provydit for ane bankete to have been made in Dalkeith, for the feasting of sum nobill and gentlemen to that *hand-fasting*.”* From the over-weaning zeal disturbing the rational faculties of many in the seventeenth century, a clergyman described himself as “the wooer come from Christ the bridegroom, to invite the people to be *hand-fast*ed unto Christ by subscribing the covenant, which is Christ’s contract.”†

In the course of time many peculiarities, civil and ecclesiastical, were concomitant on marriage. The latter generally rendered the consent of parents essential: a pledge was deposited for performance of the promise: the ceremony should take place within the parish, and only on certain days: it should be attended with all regularity, though dispensations for performance in private or on unusual days might be allowed on incurring a fine: and promise of “marriage under blanket” was not to be sanctioned by the church.

The bride was lifted over the threshold of her husband’s house, in imitation of the customs of the ancients.

“Turritaque premens frontem matrona corona

Translata vetuit contingere limina planta.”

LUCAN, lib. ii. l. 358.

* *Historie of King James the Sext*, ad an. 1572, p. 160, in 8vo. p. 98 in 4to.

† *Last Speech of Mr John Kidd with annotations*, ap. *Spirit of Popery*, p. 7.

Among the peasantry of Lorraine, it is said by Remigius, that women carried the bride seated on their arms crossed, or in the vernacular phrase of Scotland, on the "king's cushion," from the threshold of her house to the church. Sometimes also she was previously stripped, and clothed in a shift which had been spun, wove, and sewed in the same day. Such expedients were designed to avert the influence of verses or incantations devised for interrupting matrimonial felicity.*

This ceremony of carrying the bride over the threshold, however, seems to involve, that superstition dreading the abstraction of some essential virtue by contact with the earth. The acquisition, retention, or preservation of certain qualities, was ascribed to interception from the earth of the body or substance wherein they were inherent. If reaching it in its fall, they were lost.

It is yet held ominous for any damsel to officiate frequently as bridesmaid at marriage. Superstition assigns perpetual celibacy as her lot.

An auspicious fortune was anticipated from gaining possession of certain parts of the apparel of the wedded pair, a struggle sometimes ensued, even in church, for the bridegroom's gloves :† the evening jocularities regarding what belonged to the bride are too familiar to need repetition.

* *Remigius Demonolatreia*, lib. iii. § 7, 9, 18.

† *St Cuthbert's Kirk Session Register*, Feb. March 1652: John Ramsay, John Thomsone.

Feasting and merriment were the regular concomitants of marriage: and that these might not be disappointed by the condition of the parties, a voluntary contribution was made by the guests to defray the expence of the entertainment. This was not unusual in the lowlands of Scotland in the author's time.

But these festivals were productive of such disorder and licentiousness, as to demand legislative interference. Besides, the ascetic, estimating the value of a gloomy self-denial of the pleasures of life at a higher rate than lightening the heart by rational indulgence, cast an evil eye on mirthful moments. The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland sometimes had sufficient reason to interpose. In the year 1606, a northern presbytery "in respect of the great abuses and intollerable abominationes that falls out at the penny brydellis, speciallie of drunkennes and murder, and that wpon the Lordis day, it is appointit, that no minister within the presbyterie mak ony mariage on the Sabbath, speciallie during the continuance of the plague in the countrey."* Specific ordinances were passed at various times, by the General Assembly, as the supreme ecclesiastical judicatory, relative to all the concomitants of marriage: and among others, one in 1643 was directed to the abuses at "Pennie Bridals." A public statute also, in 1681, enjoining the performance of such ceremonies "in decent and sober

* *Presbyterie Buik of Aberdeen*, in MS. 1 Aug. 1606.

manner," restricted the number of friends on either side to four besides relations: and penalties were denounced against the owners of houses wherein penny weddings were celebrated, for contravention of the law.*

Independently of these public laws, the various ecclesiastical judicatories, from a period not long subsequent to the reformation, passed many specific ordinances, some to enforce celebration of nuptials within the town or parish,—to restrain the numbers present,—and to restrict the expence; some expressly to prohibit mirth and revelling: and as might be reasonably expected from the sudden constraint of wonted habits, repeated penalties were inflicted for transgression.

Probably this legislative interference led to the decay and eradication of several singular ceremonies and superstitions which were practised in contemplation of the nuptials. Being a divine institution, the authority of the church interfered, not only in every minor point regarding it, but in the most important matters: and perhaps to repress the impatience of the female sex, a singular restriction was interposed, thus: "In respect that sundrie wemen desyres the benefeit of mariadg a little space efter thair husband's death, therfor intimatione to be maid the nixt Lord's day, that non have the benefeitt of mariag quhill neir thrie quarteris passe efter thair husbandis deathe."†

* *Acts of the General Assembly*, 13 Feb. 1645. *Statute* 1681, c. 14.

† *St Cuthbert's K.S.R.* 15 Jan. 1646.

§ II. *Subsequent.*—The gift of fertility has been always coveted, especially by the weaker sex, as the most acceptable of celestial dispensations. But sterility has been alike the subject of anxious apprehension, as if conveying a token of the divine displeasure in the penalty.

Besides the new and endearing sensations so evidently awakened by the boon, were a contrast drawn of the dread, the jealousy, the pain, and privation flowing from the denial, and all its consequences duly appreciated, ample reason could be found to encourage the common desire, and to compassionate the feelings of our fellows.

Doubtless numerous clandestine mysteries are in operation at the present day, for the purpose of gaining so high a premium. Many must be ever veiled in secrecy : for the shame of personal weakness attends disappointment. But some have been disclosed, not only here but in other countries, from the enthusiasm, the folly, or the guilt of mankind.

Perhaps those superstitions preceding the nuptial tie are not the most interesting : but those which follow. The object has been attained. The spouses enjoy each others society : they have promised a long and lasting affection. They looked into futurity. But subsequent views contemplate a remedy for the disappointments that might ensue : to rivet love by its pledges : to avert the dissolution of a sanctified union during the life of those united—from that incurable

sterility, on which the laws might interpose to break the bond.

It is seldom, however, that matters are beheld so gravely ; jocular or satirical sports, levity and hilarity, are uppermost every where.

Rude and unseemly customs—some of such a kind as to put delicacy to the blush, are practised in various countries, and by the sanction or the tolerance of their religious tenets. Perhaps their votaries support them by plausible reasons. Gifts by the husband to the wife on the morning succeeding the hymeneal vows, are known on the continent of Europe by a particular denomination. But these are chiefly the province of the wealthy to bestow.

There was pointed out to the author lately, a person in the eastern part of Scotland, who had fallen into a certain degree of discredit only a few years ago, from declining to undergo a ceremony not uncommon in earlier times. On the morning after marriage, the youth of both sexes, or perhaps females were the principal participators, assembled along with the new married pair. A basket was transmitted among them, and gradually filled with stones, until reaching the bridegroom, when it was suspended from his neck. Then receiving some additional load, his affectionate help-mate, to testify her sense of the caresses he had lavished on her, cut the cord and relieved him of this oppressive burden.* Such has been the later practice ;

* *Pennant, Tour in Scotland, 1769, p. 187. Smith, Parish of Galston,*

whence those declining to submit, awaken suspicions that their love has already cooled: that they had insinuated themselves into affections which they did not requite: and so they are held unworthy of public esteem. But it may be ascertained, perhaps, from earlier observers, that this, a ceremony so obscure, so simple in its purposes, truly pertains to the superstitions of the preceding section,—a public testimony that the husband had escaped the stratagems devised against matrimonial felicity, by the malevolent proselytes of Satan.*

The first and most obvious method of obtaining the coveted dispensation among the devout, was undoubtedly prayer and supplication: and resorting to places under the patronage of the sanctified, must have been thence the most common of all expedients. In the parish of Comrie, a well dedicated to St Fillan is frequented, from the reported efficacy of its waters in promoting this evidence of favour from Heaven.† The like was sought in the Isle of Man, by copious draughts of a well dedicated to St Manghold, while the votary sat in the chair of the venerated guardian.”‡

ap. Stat. Acct. v. ii. p. 80. This ceremony, vernacularly called *creeling*, is said, by the latter, to be postponed until the second day after, probably meaning the *second day* of the marriage.

* *Ramsay Poems*, Note to Supplementary Canto, Christ's Kirk on the Green, [1718] v. i. p. 125. Edit. 1721, in 4to.

† *Baxter*, Parish of Comrie, ap.: *Stat. Acct.* v. xi. p. 181.

‡ *Sacheverell*, Account of the Isle of Man, p. 11. *Waldron* is silent on this, though devoting much notice to other superstitions.

In the earliest years of the sixteenth century, it is written, that "in the Isle of May, there was a monastery anciently, constructed of hewn stone, in honour of God and his martyred saints, which the wars of the English destroyed. But there still remains a church, daily frequented by the people on account of its marvellous virtues,—whither women who resort in hopes of obtaining offspring are not disappointed."*

But the encouragement there given to devout pilgrimages, as a token of piety at that æra, was the subject of ridicule and reprehension at another, both here and in the neighbouring kingdom. In illustration of the decaying revenues of the church, it is remarked, that the annual income of one in the reign of Charles I., did not then exceed L.20. Yet "in time of superstition, the said living is said to have been worth about two hundred pound per annum, by reason of a gang of silly women with child, to the image of our Lady of Steining in that church, they did trot with many rich offerings, being persuaded that she could give them easie labours:—other churches had their working saints, that relieved their parsons: as one that could make barren women fruitfull, etc."†

Some striking analogies could be shewn between the attributes of the Juno Lucina of the ancients, and the Virgin Mary, after her celebrity spread from the

* *Proprium Sanctorum*, f. lxii. v. ap.: *Brev. Aberdon*, t. i.

† *Pagitt Heresiagraphy*, p. 84, 85.

Holy Land to the Christian countries of Europe. It is not improbable, that the alleged sterility of the Orcadian females, already alluded to, as productive of dangers, might induce those propitiatory visits to the church of Dairsay, in hopes of progeny, as well as of safety.* Long ago it was observed, that greater honour was paid to the mother of Christ than to the Deity.

The antidotes to sterility in different countries are of the most opposite character,—medical or superstitious. Some speak of unguents, some of potions, some of lotions. Modern travellers tell us of women in one country leaping over a sword laid on the ground:† which is assuredly for averting demoniac influence: and of those in another gliding down certain large stones, after a fashion very inconvenient, and somewhat perilous: yet confidently believed as of sovereign virtue.‡

We are prone to treat such things with levity—to render their credulous votaries the subject of mirth and derision. But could we participate, however slightly, in the feelings of the husband, beholding his possessions about to fall to some distant heir,—perhaps

* *Ben, ut sup.* No. 17. DAIRSAÏ.

† *Light, Travels in Egypt*, p. 40. Practised at a village on the river Nile.

‡ *Bramsen, Letters of a Prussian Traveller*, v. ii. p. 74. *Laurent, Recollections of a Classical Tour*, p. 92. *Hobhouse Journey*, Let. 20. v. i. p. 314. Practised at Athens.

an object of aversion,—for who loves the successor, not his descendant, forced upon him:—or could we witness the distress of the tender spouse, whose sensibilities are wounded by the sundering tie of affection, from disappointment of its pledges—we shall cease to smile on their sorrows.

Has any hour been hailed as more auspicious than that, where progeny was promised to console the parents.

The gay and thoughtless feel little for their fellows. They expose their foibles, not as a beacon to warn others, but to invoke censure, or to render them ridiculous to the world. If the afflicted, in their earnestness for consolation, betray their weakness, by stepping aside from that path which the prosperous tread with firm footstep—should it merit scorn? The speculations of the profound philosopher, contemplate with awe and admiration, the grand design which provides for the perpetuity of animated nature, amidst the transience of perishable life. He views with wonder, that simplicity which, directed to personal indulgence, can operate so vast an object.

The ecclesiastical law sanctions marriage by the female sex, as only for the sake of progeny, “*Partus fœminarum est eis sola causa nubendi:*” and “no wonder,” says the commentary, “if the devil thought the Virgin Mary had been violated, when people saw her progeny without it,—progeny being the premium of marriage.”*

* *Gratian Decretalia*, part ii. causa xxxii. quæst 2.

We read that Vanora, the queen of Arthur, was brought hither a captive, after a bloody encounter between our progenitors and their southern enemies, in the sixth century : and that she remained in Scotland until her decease. Among other sepulchres at Meigle, in the county of Angus, that protecting her remains, was the most distinguished by ornaments, in the beginning of the sixteenth century. But according to the superstitious apprehensions of the females there, those treading on it, should remain ever sterile, like Vanora herself. Hector Boethius offers his own testimony, that it was shunned as a pestilential spot—that none would willingly gaze on it:—and that this was a prejudice instilled in their daughters by the mothers of that æra.*

Marriage being considered a divine institution, all its ceremonies and purposes came under the cognizance of the church.—Were the ecclesiastical authority too feeble to enforce their observance, or repel resistance, the aid of the civil power was summoned.—Necromantic agency, contemplative of marriage, was forbid, under pain of excommunication, by John, bishop of Salisbury, about the year 1217 : and his ordinances,

* *Boethius*, *Scotorum Historia*, Lib. ix. p. 165. The passage is rendered thus by Bellenden : “ In Meigle, a town of Angus, ten mile fra Dundee, ar mony ancient sepulturis, had in grit reverence of pepill, and especiallie the sepulture of Vanora, as the title tharapon schawis.—All women that strampis on this sepulture, sall be ay barrant, but ony frute of thair wambe, as Guanora was.”

which comprehended a denunciation against concealment of impediments to marriage, were ratified by the papal see.*

If sorcerers were disposed to counteract the will of nature, they could employ the simplest, yet most efficient means. They had only to cast one or many knots, on any cord, after a special fashion. Thenceforward, the virtuous, tender, and anxious couple, would be deprived of all hope of progeny. Complaints of this malicious mischief were not likely to divulge it,—however impatiently borne,—while its perpetration might become the subject of wicked exultation.†

Were the instrument of the spell unattainable: should it have been lost, or siezed and abstracted, the case exceeded human remedy.

In the year 1705, two persons in Scotland were sentenced to capital punishment, for stealing such a charm, “consisting of certain knots, cast by a woman,”—as a mischievous device against Spalding of Ashintilly.‡

Lately, it was observed in the parish of Logierait, in Perthshire, that by a precaution evidently derived from apprehension of a similar charm, immediately preceding marriage, “every knot about the bride and bridegroom, garters, shoe strings, strings of petticoats, etc. is care-

* *Labbei*, Concilia, t. xi. part i. col. 263. Part ii. col. 1460. Synod: Baiocceansis, c. 72. A.D. 1300.

† Trial of Helen a Wallis, 13 June 1616. *Rec. Ork.* f. 74. v.

‡ Trial of George and Lachlan Ratray, 1705, *ut sup.*

fully loosened. Then the bridegroom retired with some young men, to tie the loosened knots, while the bride, accompanied by some of her own sex, did the like to adjust the disorder of her dress. Next, the whole company quitting the church, environed it according to the course of the sun.”*

Before illustrating the peculiar theories entertained of the efficacy of such charms, it is necessary to recall to recollection, that contact of the sorcerer was not essential for operating evil. Direful consequences were alleged by one against a sorceress, from a blow “on the back, betwixt the shoulders.”† But the mischief might be as readily cured; for after having been accomplished by actual contact also, when the sufferer complained and accused the aggressor “to the kirk, he was restoiret to his health and strenth of bodie agane.”‡

The same Scottish author, John Ben, who has been recently quoted, speaks of an extraordinary phenomenon,—the temporary obliteration of certain parts of the human organization, and their recovery.—“In Dairsay,” he says, “it is pretended that the eye-brows are abstracted sometimes for half an hour, and then restored.”|| Even at the present day, when a limb is affected by paralysis, it is often suspected in Shetland,

* Bisset, Parish of Logierait, ap. *Stat. Acct.* v. v. p. 83.

† Trial of Katherine Greive, alias Miller, 29 May 1633. *Rec. Ork.*

‡ Trial of Barbara Thomasdochter, 2 Oct. 1616. *Rec. Shet.*

|| Ben, No. 17. *ut. sup.* Dairsay.

to result from the touch of evil spirits; "or that the sound limb has been abstracted, and an insensible mass of matter substituted in its place."*

It will thence appear less extraordinary, that in the year 1590, two female delinquents were sentenced to capital punishment, for actual mutilation of the human frame, by sorcery.† The inquisitive reader may consult the brief and obscure notices of the fact, in the original record, provided he has any curiosity to be satisfied;—not neglecting the works of Sprenger and Remigius.‡ From these he will discover, that the indictment must have been framed on the authority of the former, or perhaps on that of Codronchus.|| But the framer seems to have overlooked, that both, although specifying the evil and its remedy, from facts, deem its subsistence illusive,—not real. The combat between truth and fiction, has been always very ardent.—Their argument is not far different in its scope, from assuming, that if one believing he had lost his ear, could not be sensible of finding it when he put his hand to his head.

When treating of philtres, the *poculum amatorium*, and the *poculum odii*, have come under discussion.

* *Hibbert*, Shetland Islands, p. 431.

† Trial of Jonett Grant, alias Graddock, and Jonett Clark, alias Spalding, 17 Aug. 1590. *Rec. Just.*

‡ *Sprenger*, *Malleus Maleficarum*, part ii. quæst i. c. 7. p. 266, 392. *Remigius* *Demonolatreia*, Lib. ii. c. 5. § 14. *Bodinus*, *Demonomania*, Lib. ii. c. i. p. 113.

|| *Codronchus*, de *Morbis Veneficis*, Lib. iii. c. 5. p. 140.

Independently of these occult ministrations, love could be inspired by sorcerers, and magical arts employed, without ostensible ingredients, to excite aversion for disappointing the sanctified purpose of the hymeneal bond. Helene Isbuster was charged with inducing one to marry her daughter, by "witchcraft and devilrie, against his will, hating hir quben schoe was out of his sight: but how soone he saw her, he was forcit to love hir out of all measure." On the other hand, says a witch to a widow, "Tell me if you have a mynd to have Harie Bellendyne, to be your husband, I will geve you a gras, which being vsit at my directioun, it will cause him to have no other woman but you."* Another was accused of inducing a man by sorcery, to desert the daughter of Mans Mackinning, to whom he had promised marriage, and to marry her own daughter. Aversion was inspired on the part of the female.† To remedy the alternate love and aversion of the first couple, wherein the wife also partook of the latter, the man got a cake to be put under his left arm, betwixt his shirt and his skin, observing silence, until the nuptial couch was sprinkled with water, and the mystical cake withdrawn.‡

It does not appear whether any portion of the cake was to be consumed; but as the evil might be inflicted by means of sustenance, such as an herb, according to

* Trial of Katherein Craigie, 16 June 1640. *Rec. Ork.* f. 92. v.

† Trial of Barbara Thomasdochter, 2 Oct. 1616. *Rec. Shet.* f. 34. v.

‡ Trial of Helene Isbuster, 13 Aug. 1635. *Rec. Ork.* f. 97. v.

Remigius ; and as an inland African tribe abstain from certain food on that account, so might the cure be operated by a similar medium.*

Assuredly, some preference was given to the facility of exercising mystical expedients. Casting knots, being of all others the readiest means of mischief, would be a sufficient recommendation : Nor is there any reason to question its frequent practice in many parts of Europe.—It is not long since the highland sorcerer endeavoured to wreak his malevolence, through the medium of three threads of different colours : and as if the precepts of Virgil had descended in Gaelic, he cast three knots on each, accompanied by as many imprecations.†

Necte tribus nodis, ternos Amarylli colores,

Necte Amarylli modo et Veneris dic vincula necto.

VIRGIL, Buc. Eclog. viii.

Contrary to the more recondite exercise of the magical art, no consummate skill seems to have been indispensable for casting knots efficiently. Yet Bodin, who takes special cognizance of the subject, observes, that while at Pictou, in the year 1567, his hostess “being well skilled in the matter, explained to him that there were above fifty modes of casting the knot, so as to affect either spouse : that it might be devised, so as to

* *Thompson*, *Travels*, v. i. p. 188. The Bechuanas believe, “that none who eat the kidneys of the ox, will have any offspring. On this account, no one except the aged, will taste them.”

† *Pennant*, *Voyage to the Hebrides*, p. 232.

operate for a day, for a year,—for ever.”* The French must have been the most mischievous of mortals. Some one was sentenced by the Parliament of Bordeaux, to be burnt alive in the year 1718, for having spread desolation through a whole family, from the consequences of knotting cords.†

Disease or injury were attempted by means of knots,—health and safety were under their influence. A man was utterly ruined by nine knots cast on a blue thread, and given to his sister, in some of the Orkney Islands.‡ There are allusions to the solicitation of Satan, that a knot might be loosened, whereby one should regain his health.|| A suspected witch, brought to the stake at St Andrew’s, in the year 1572, “was accused of mony horribill thingis, which scho denied: albeit, they wer sufficiently proven.” None are specified; nor is it said that the usual search of inquisitors after the Satanic mark, was successful. But under her clothes, there was discovered “a white claith, like a collore craig, with stringis; whereon was *mony knottis* vpon the stringis of the said collore craig, which was tacken from her, sore against her will, for belyke scho thought, scho suld not have died, that being vpon her—for scho said when it was tacken from her, ‘Now I have no hope of myself.’”§

* Bodinus, Lib. ii. c. i. p. 111.

† Garinet Histoire de la Magie en France, p. 256.

‡ Trial of Helen Isbuster, 13 Aug. 1635. *Rec. Ork.* f. 97. v.

|| Trial of Marioun Peebles, 1644, ap. *Hibbert*, p. 599, *ut sup.*

§ Bannatyne Journal, p. 339.

Casting knots, besides, could controul the elements. The winds could be bound up, or tempests sent forth to rage, on loosening them.—Animals were not exempt from their influence. In the year 1700, a charmer in Shetland, by casting a knot, accompanied with some words, induced an eagle to drop its prey, which was saved by a boat sent out on purpose from Scalloway.*

This practice has extended throughout Europe, to the eastern nations, or it may have been disseminated by an opposite progression. It subsists in Greece, in the islands of the Archipelago, and in other parts of the Turkish empire. In the isle of Tinè, great faith is reposed in the charm.† On the continent, should the marriage of some successful rival follow, the disappointed suitor “ties the locks of his hair, with a certain form of words, while every knot protracts the spell.”—Not long since, a Turk was known to cross the Bosphorus, in quest of a celebrated dervise, from the benefit of whose counsel he expected relief.‡

Superstitious notions have been attached to knots in general, for reasons now inexplicable. On the solution of the Gordian knot in the temple of Jupiter, the destinies of man depended.|| From this, at so ancient

* *Brand*, Description of Orkney, p. 117.

† *Zallony*, Voyage, p. 164.

‡ *Hobhouse*, Journey, Letter xxxii. v. 2. p. 528. *Thornton*, Present State of Turkey, p. 276.

|| *Justin*, Lib. xi. c. 7. *Quintus Curtius*, Lib. iii. c. 1. *Arrian*, Lib. ii. c. 3.

a period of history, cords ornamented by a number of knots, were forbid to be put in the hands of deceased persons, or on the bier, in the seventeenth century.* At present, the divinations of the Persian gipsies, are given by muttering, on the fortune of the querent, over the leaves of some European volume, and "a piece of worsted, knotted more or less," in proportion, as appears, to the obstacles which shall interrupt its course.†

Therefore casting knots has involved various mystical purposes. Some credulous author carries his speculations on this subject to the days of Zoroaster, the reputed cotemporary of Noah. Knowledge of it was familiar to the ancients, and probably it was viewed with as much apprehension by them as by their posterity.‡

Zosimus relates, that the Emperor Honorius having married his empress previous to the age of adolescence, Serena, his mother, obtained from some skilful woman a charm on the spouses, which she was as earnest to dissolve when he married her sister Hermatia.||

The *true love knot* and *marriage knot* have some mysterious etymology, such as hitherto unexplained

* Thiers, t. iv. p. 273, referring to an injunction to the parish officer of Ferrara in 1612. See also t. i. p. 324.

† Sir Robert Ker Porter Travels, v. ii. p. 529.

‡ Pliny Hist. Nat. lib. xxviii. c. 4. "Defigi quidem diris imprecationibus nemo non metuit. Hinc Leonti apud Græcos: Catulli apud nos, proximique Virgilii incantamen forma amatoria imitatio."

|| Zosimus Novæ Historiæ, lib. v. p. 333. Oxon: 1679, in 8vo.

satisfactorily : and probably the distribution of bride's favours in knots is in relation to it. Hickes views the true love knot as a symbol of indissoluble friendship, love, and fidelity : and thence he derives its name from words significant of its purpose. But this etymology is questionable. The same author adds, that it is customary in the north to carry home, from nuptials solemnly celebrated, the head dress presented to the bride, curiously interwoven in circles and knots, as a testimony of the indissoluble fidelity of the spouses.* More probably the formation and distribution or solution, were originally connected with charms which might impair matrimonial felicity. Was their absence inferred with the removal of knots as gifted?

The number of knots does not seem to have been uniform.

But the charms devised for sterility sometimes produced very singular effects, were the credulous to be credited. One of the authors, reposing the greatest confidence in magical powers, expresses his admiration, and not without reason, of a woman covered with as many tumours as should have become children, had it not been for subsistence of the spell!

The medium of perfecting such spells is not specifically described either here or in many other instances. During the sixteenth century frequent disgust, innum-

* *Hickes Thesaurus*, part. iii. *Gram. Island Rud.* p. 4.

erable and serious inconveniences, followed the irregular marriages entered into in Ireland. The wives, dismissed by their husbands, jealous of others supplanting them, resorted to the aid of those skilled in necromantic arts, for depriving the spouses of the hope of posterity.*

§ III. *Remedies*.—To avert this magical influence, tending so cruelly to disturb the felicity of the conjugal state, and to obviate an evil whose subsistence might lead straightway to its dissolution, various counter-agents or antidotes, either religious or superstitious, have been employed. Some, of which the simple description is precluded, are of the most ludicrous nature; others are most serious, and intermingled with true devotion. Indeed, in many views, the calamity was so great, its subsistence led to such disquiet and peril, that the pious cannot be reprehended for solicitude to preserve their peace. Examples are not wanting in all countries, illustrating practically the misfortune concomitant on similar evils, when taken under the cognizance of the laws, and thereby betraying the secrets of mankind.

Torreblanca, a Spanish lawyer, lays down several precise distinctions to ascertain whether the spell originates in nature, or comes of the devil.† Bodin

* *Camden*, v. iv. p. 469. from *Good*.

† *Torreblanca Epitome Delictorum*.

considers the whole purely a contrivance of Satan to which the wicked blindly lend their aid. Grillandus, in treating of the civil consequences, seems to ascribe it to human faculties.* Thomas Aquinas denies it to be within the power of mortals, because sorcery is the work of demons: thence dissolution of marriage ought not to follow, because no spell can be perpetual.† But neither did he nor others, comprehending our own countrymen, entertain any doubt of such a spell subsisting.

“Knotting so manie knots and such like things which men uses to practise in their merrinesse,”‡ as well the subject of malevolent sport as wickedness, was so much dreaded, and its power so great, by framing the charm during celebration of the nuptial rites, that, to elude observation, the priest has been summoned for their performance secretly, or before break of day.||

Evidently the practice of loosening all the knots about the bride and bridegroom, as in the parish of Logierait; or tossing the slipper as an evidence of the absence of incantation; is founded in precautions to defeat the malice of sorcerers. In other parts of Scotland the bridegroom has sought protection by standing with

* *Grillandus de Sortilegiis*, c. vi. § 15.

† *Aquinas Summa Theologica*, p. iii. supp. q. 58. § 1.

‡ *King James Dæmonologie*, p. 12.

|| *Massé l'Imposture et tromperie des Diables, Devius et Sorciers*, f. 40. *Boissardus de Divinatione*, c. iv. p. 44.

the latchet of his shoe loose and a coin under his foot,* probably for interception from the earth. Some dark superstition regarding the permanence and perpetuation of the human race, has lurked under loosening the latchet of the shoe. By the Mosaic institutions, if the brother of one deceased, refused to marry his widowed sister-in-law, she was enjoined to "loose his shoe from off his foot and spit in his face" in public,† part of which formality yet subsists, and then she is free of all obligation to become his wife. Leo of Modena observes, that it was not uncommon among the German Jews, for many fathers to exact an obligation of the husband's brothers, at the date of the marriage, that their daughters should be released on the decease of their husband, without any compensation exacted, as had been frequent. On the refusal of the brother-in-law to marry the widow, she stoops down, loosens and takes off his shoe, and throwing it on the ground, spits before him.‡ The shoe was a symbol of barter or redemption, among the Jews: it formed a principal ingredient of some of their ceremonies.||

Thiers considers it vain to put salt in the pockets, or marked coins in the shoes, before going to church, for celebration of marriage. He speaks of the spouses striking the head or the soles of the feet, during the

* *Pennant Tour in Scotland*, 1769, p. 187. *Voyage to the Hebrides*, 1772, p. 232.

† *Deuteronomy*, ch. xxv. v. 9.

‡ *Leo of Modena, History of the Jews*, p. iv. ch. 7.

|| *Ruth*, ch. iv. v. 7, 8.

nuptial ceremony : and of their interchanging a gold or silver ring, so that the former remains with the wife, and the latter with the husband.*

Marriage was celebrated before the day broke, to elude the observation of the malevolent. Kæmpfer, a Dutch physician, remarks, that when an alliance is about to be formed between two families of distinction at the Russian court, the presence of a sorceress is engaged at their nuptials, to protect the spouses by counter agents. The emperor and the Greek patriarch were alike converts, he says, to the superstition. Similar precautions were taken at Macassar, and in other parts of the East, where the sexes reciprocally cast the spell. Likewise, in the Armenian Church in Ispahan, he saw a man muttering while cutting a long rod in pieces, by order of persons betrothed, that they might escape its influence.† An older traveller in a different eastern quarter, affirms, that in Zante the bridegroom, entering the church, stuck his dagger in the door as an antidote to enchantment, for it was very common to bewitch the betrothed.‡ Galen, the ancient physician, proposes to cure the afflicted, by anointing the body with ravens' gall, mixed with oil of sesamum.§ Sprenger simply advises making friends

* *Thiers*, t. i. liv. x. § 7. p. 504, 518.

† *Kæmpfer Amœnitates Exoticæ*, p. iii : *Relatio* 16. p. 653—5.

‡ *Sandys Relation of a Journey*, 1610, p. 6.

§ *Galen de Incantatione Conjuratone et Curatione*, ap. *Hippocratis et Galeni Opera*, t. x. p. 571.

with the witch, as the safest remedy. Bodin blames a magistrate of Niort, for allowing a culprit to escape on her consenting to dissolve the charm.* But Martin de Arles condemns the custom of resorting to some wicked priests or necromancers, prevalent in his time, and recommends prayer and confession.† Brognoli, a declared exorcist, believing that demons, the origin of the evil, may be easily expelled through prayer and fasting, describes the whole formula necessary.‡ These indeed are the same remedies as prescribed by the canon law, which undoubtedly contemplates the address of the angel Raphael to Tobit and his son, that “prayer is good, with fasting and righteousness.”§ Confession, alms, prayers, fasting, and the exorcisms of the church, are to be employed. But should they prove unavailing, separation of the spouses may follow,—thus recognising, from the disorganization of the social state, the influence ascribed to magical operations.|| These principles, together with the legislative ordinances, were actually reduced to practice.¶ Mengus announces an exorcism *mirabilis efficacæ*, to which, along with observance of the preceding injunctions,

* Bodinus, lib. iv. c. 5. p. 396—8.

† Martin de Arles, § 7.

‡ Brognoli Manuale Exorcistarum, p. 351. § 693.

§ Tobit, ch. xii. v. 8.

|| Gratian Decretalia, p. ii. Casus 33. quæst. 2. “Si quis per Sortiarias.”

¶ Riccius Dec. Cur. Archiep. Neapolitanæ, Dec. 66. p. 93.

shall be added, aspersion of the afflicted with holy water, swallowing holy oil, applying it in unction and humiliation.*

The *poculum abortionis* was well known in Scotland, especially during the seventeenth century, when empirics frequently proposed and administered it. The same reprehension was bestowed on this, as on counteracting the designs of nature, independently of other evils obviously resulting to the partaker of such violent and dangerous potions.†

Extraordinary interest was excited formerly by all these departments of the superstitious creed—some of which formed the subject of the gravest theological and juridical disquisitions, equally singular and absurd. Yet the whole unite in proving, that what should be the happiest condition of life, may be embittered by exacting dispensations which it pleases Heaven to deny.

* *Mengus Flagellum Dæmonum: Exorcismus*, vii. p. 203. *Molitor de Lamiis et Pythonicis*, f. 8.

† Trial of Petir Hay of Kirklandis, and others, 25 May 1601. *Rec. Just.* *Halyrudhous K. S. R.* 29 July 1614. Jonet M'Lellan. *St Cuthbert's K. S. R.* 13 May—Sept. 1602. Bessie Gibsoune. 15—17 May 1606. Jean Clerk.

CHAPTER IX.

DOCTRINE OF SYMPATHY.

WHEN the whole catalogue of deleterious ingredients was exhausted, if their immediate use was unattainable, or doubts entertained of their failure, a project infinitely more treacherous, subtle, and irresistible arose, in operating evil by sympathetic influence.

That this was practicable, necessarily followed from the faculties ascribed to sorcerers.

Even had it been otherwise, how can it be disguised from the discerning, that some mysterious process, in accordance with time, or place, or circumstance, is continually advancing throughout the system of nature's works. The budding foliage bursts in spring, flowers diffuse their summer fragrance, and fruits succeed their fall. Yet all that the wisest can say, concentrates in "now is the season." Who can explain unchallenged the flowing of the tides, or the rolling of the thunder—spontaneous conflagrations, the shock of electricity; permutation of colours, the contagion of disease, and infinite other incidents, all dependent on ultimate causes, which to mankind are occult or inscrutable? If beholding a certain result from a certain

correspondence, they do not hesitate to refer it merely to the effects of sympathy.

It is not singular that among our illiterate progenitors, the doctrine of sympathetic influence was widely diffused and eagerly embraced, when even now it is far from being altogether rejected. The most extravagant principles prevailed—an immediate relation was figured between substances animate and inanimate: between the earth and the heavens: between the planetary orbs and the human race. On these, so many postulates, a complex system was reared, which its professors endeavoured to exalt to the name of a science, so dark and difficult, that only the most accomplished could attempt to unravel it. Yet, certain axioms were ardently nourished and as resolutely defended, while debates ensued rather on the judgment of the doctor, than on the essence of his doctrine. It failed under the test of scrutiny, though nothing could be better adapted to embroil the wavering opinions of men.

§ I. *Sympathetic Influence*.—Actual contact of the sorcerer, or even of the matter subjected to his conjurations, was not essential towards effecting the object of his art. It was enough that his mind should be occupied, glances darted, his lips in motion: that a sentence should escape them: that the semblance of an original should be formed for imparting good or evil, according as it was exposed to external influence.

The Scottish empirics pretended not only to discover

the nature of a malady from inspecting the patient's clothes, but by conjuring them they could operate its cure. This was far from an inconvenient mode of consultation, for neither imbecility nor distance opposed it. Thus, one of the most celebrated was alleged to be "ane continuall ressaver of sarkis, coller bodies, beltis, and vtheris, pertaining als weill to men as women, for cureing thame of their seiknessis, vrgeing thame to bring the samen unto him." Thus also was it discovered by simple inspection, that the witchcraft devised for one had fallen on another, and ceremonies performed to avert the consequences.*

Expelling an insect from the eye of a patient at a distance, and the like, being an ordinary practice in Athole, has been already quoted on the authority of Woodrow, the historian of the Scottish church. Martin affirms, that, in his own time, there were in the Western Islands, "women who have an art of taking a moat out of one's eyes, though at some miles distance from the party grieved." Nay, that several men, out of whose eyes "moats" were then taken, corroborated the fact.† In the Orkney Islands also, an hæmorrhage could be cured by means equally simple. "The name of the patient being sent to the charmer, he saith over some words,—upon which the blood instantly stoppeth." The words were repeated to Brand, the author

* Trial of Johnne Brughe, 1643.—of Thomas Greave 1623, *ut sup.*
—of Janet Wall, 22 May 1623, Perth *K.S.R.*

† *Martin Western Islands*, p. 22.

of this relation : and he understood further, “from the ministers of the country,” that other complaints could be cured though the patient were at a distance.* Although he abstains from quoting those employed there, a metrical charm used in England for the same purpose, nearly about the same time, is preserved, which was judged effectual, though the patient was distant some miles :

In the blood of Adam sin was taken,
In the blood of Christ it was all to shaken :
And by the same blood I do thee charge,
That the blood of [B.A.] run no longer at large.†

Remigius says, he saw people in the territory of Bordeaux who cured fractured limbs and luxations of the joints, merely by touching the girdle of the patient at a distance.‡

The source of such opinions will be probably found in the different passages of Scripture, relative to the staff of Elisha ; the handkerchiefs and aprons of Paul ; persons cured of infirmities by the sanctified, though not in their presence, and the like.

The powder of sympathy and the *unguentum armorum*, were remedies highly esteemed by the credulous of later centuries for the cure of wounds and injuries. The former is described as composed of various

* *Brand Account of Orkney*, p. 61—63.

† *Athenian Mercury*, 10 May 1693, v. vii. No. 13.

‡ *Remigius Dæmonolotreia*, lib. iii. c. 1. § 13.

ingredients, and partly of human fat, blood, and *mumia*: and it is said to have been the invention of Paracelsus.* A more simple kind consisted of a solution of common vitriol in fountain water, with a little gum tragacanth, kept in a temperate place. If a person were wounded as with a sword, his pain was relieved from immersion of a rag, stained with the blood, in this solution, and the wound healed speedily. It was neither essential that the surgeon should see the patient, nor the patient the remedy. But his sufferings returned were the rag removed from the solution and hung up to dry before a fire: and on dipping it again, he was again relieved. An example is recorded of "Mr James Howel the author of *Dendrologia*," who, being severely wounded in the hand by a sword, when endeavouring to separate two combatants in a duel, put himself under the care of Sir Kenelme Digby, and in this manner, obtained a cure. A bloody garter with which the patient had bound up his wound, dipped into a solution of the powder of sympathy, produced immediate abatement of the pain and inflammation: but when removed and hung up before the fire, though absent, he suffered severely: and he was relieved again when it was replaced in the solution. The wound healed quickly.

* *Sorel* De l'unguent des armes ou unguent sympathetique et constellé. "To learn whether it will heal a wound by application to the sword or club inflicting the wound: or to the shirt and doublet of the wounded." 1637, in 12mo.

Similar benefit was supposed to be derived from immersing in the solution a sword stained with blood from the wound it had inflicted.

The theory of the process is attempted to be explained on the impregnation of the air with the healing principle, and communicating from the remedy to the wound. It is illustrated by the injury suffered by a cow if her milk boils over a pan into the fire,—“the good woman or maid doth presently give over whatever she is a-doing, and runs to the pan, which she draws off the fire, and at the same time she takes a handfull of salt, which useth to be commonly in the corner of the chimney, to keep it dry, and throws it upon the cinders where the milk was shed: ask her wherefore she doth so, and she will tell you, that it is to prevent that the cow which gave this milk may not have some hurt upon her udder, for without this remedy it would become hard and ulcerated,” and she would be in danger of dying. Sympathetic injury arises from the fire, but a remedy ensues from the salt, “because he is of a nature cleane contrary to the fire,” and corrects the vapour steaming from the milk which would be disseminated to the cow; whence it was impossible to employ more effectual means to counteract the evil, than “to cast upon her milk being shed over the cinders a sufficient quantity of salt.”*

Animated beings were believed to be affected by

* *Sir Kenelme Digby Discourse*, var. loc. London 1658, in 12mo.

affecting their products, and the products were believed to be sympathetically under the influence of the animals which had afforded them. Thence, says the author above named, among the various modes of ascertaining the quality of a nurse's milk, for the child of a person of rank in France or England, it is sometimes boiled. But the suffering has been such to the nurse, that those "having endured this pain, they would never consent that their milk should be carried away out of their sight and presence, although they willingly submitted to any other experiment than that by fire."

It is on this principle that what is called burning the witch, namely, burning the instrument or ingredient of sorcery, to obtain disclosure, depends. When animals in the Hebrides were supposed to be under fascination, their milk was boiled along with certain herbs, flints, and tempered steel, that the witch, to relieve her own sufferings, might come to touch the vessel.* In the accusation of Janet Cock of "ane devilish hatred and ill will against William Scott, in Dalkeith," it is said, that "having put his horse at night in the stable in good health, and healy lyk, had his hors so bewitched with your sorcerie, that the nixt morneing, at the very opening of the stable doore, he did furiously leap vpone the said Williame, his servant, and vthers that was there present, to their great

* *Pennant Tour*, 1772, p. 231.

astonishment and admiration:—and, in the interim, thair come in ane countrey man, and said to the beholders, if that the said hors had gottin wrang by witchcraft, desired that the said vmquhill William Scott wold cause take off the schoos off the said horse, and putt them in the fyre, and their to remaine vntill they wer reid hott: and the persone who had done wrong to the said horse, sould come into the house befor the samen schoos sould be coald, they being taken out of the fire, and that the horse sould either end or mend,—quhilk instructions being observed and done, presently after the schooes wer taiken furth of the fyre, yow, the said Jonet Cock, who wes suspect, came into the hous without any pretext of bussines, who had never beine in that hous, nether befor nor after that tyme,” which was four years, and while there, the horse died.*

In England, one whose cattle had gone mad and killed themselves against trees, was advised “to cut off the ears of the bewitched beasts, and burn them,” because “the witch should be in misery, and could not rest untill they were plucked out of the fire.” Accordingly, while burning, Julian Cox entered the house angrily, complaining that they had abused her without cause: but she went presently to the fire, and took out the ears, and then was quiet.† Another suspected

* *Precognition* in MS. ap: Bib. Soc. Ant. Scot. Trial of Jonet Cock, 10 Sept. 1661. *Rec. Just.*

† *Glanvil Sadducismus Triumphatus*, p. 337.

person was found at home with her face scorched, though without any fire, which is inferred to have followed the burning of a toad, the supposed instrument of sorcery.* The hair and parings of the nails of one bewitched to death being thrown into the fire, Anne Baker, the suspected delinquent, entered in great pain, unable to speak for half an hour: and, although ignorant of their burning, said "she was so sick she did not know whither she went."†

Such expedients were either to operate by sympathetic influence,—as cutting the hair of Robert Monro, and paring his nails, should thus cure his sickness,—or as a test to detect the sorcerer, and to relieve the sufferer by destruction of the charm. It was "a received notion, that when the thing bewitched is burned, the witch is forced to come in:" and in the year 1712, a bundle of sticks carried home by Jane Wenham, an alleged delinquent, being thrown into the fire to burn the witch, she entered the house while they were in flames.‡

Probably the authority for later European practice, is Sprenger, who recommends burning the entrails of an animal destroyed by witchcraft, for discovering the perpetrator by the sufferings inflicted.|| But something very similar has been adopted in the

* *Trial of Witches at Bury St Edmonds*, p.7.

† *History of Magick*, ad an: 1618. v. i. p. 183.

‡ *Sorcery of Jane Wenham*, p. 4, 20.

|| *Sprenger Malleus Maleficarum*, p. ii. q. 2. p. 370. See also

remote region of Kamtschatka, where, to punish an undetected thief, the sinews of a buck were burnt publicly, amidst conjurations, from the belief "that as these sinews contracted by the fire, so will the thief have all his limbs contracted."*

The doctrine of injury by sympathy, or through the medium of a ceremonial like imprecation, belongs to the Jews. Joash "smote thrice" on the ground "to smite the Syrians in Aphek:" and, with yet greater contrivance, "Zedekiah, the son of Chenaanah, had made him horns of iron, and said, Thus saith the Lord, With these shalt thou push Syria."†

Extraordinary faith was reposed in the doctrine of sympathy. If the caul accompanying an infant in birth, were preserved, certain conclusions regarding the health and the prosperity of the adult, continued to be deduced from the peculiar state of its subsequent humidity, flexibility, dryness, and the like.

On the same principle, all the parts of living matter were believed to be dependant on each other, and that the whole would perish at once: thence, when the poet speaks ironically of an artificial organ decaying, as the person from whom its materials originated deceased, he is only illustrating the credulity of his age.—The restoration of a lost nose from

Mather Cases of Conscience, p. 26. *Aubrey Miscellanies*, ch. xiii. p. 112. *Glanvil*, p. 319. *History of Magick*, v. i. p. 104.

* *Krasheninicoff History of Kamtschatka* by *Grieve*, p. 179.

† *2 Kings*, ch. xiii. v. 17. *2 Chronicles*, ch. xviii. v. 10.

another's body is neither new, nor the opinion solitary, that when the parent flesh

“Was out,

“Off dropt the sympathetic snout.”

BUTLER, *Hudibras*. P. i. Canto 1. l. 285.

In the work already quoted, Sir Kenelme Digby observes, “I will say nothing of artificial noses, that are made of the flesh of other men, for to remedie the deformity of those who, by an extream excess of cold have lost their own, which noses do putrifie so soon as those persons, out of whose substance they were taken, come to die: as if that small parcell of flesh engrafted upon the face, did live by the spirits it drew from its first root and source.”* Sorel relates, that half the nose of a gentleman which had been obtained from the arm of a needy person, dropped off at the moment of the original contributor's decease.† The reader desirous of learning the detail of this curious redintegration of the human countenance, may resort to the numerous figures in the earlier work of *Taliacotius*, besides the more modern compositions of Carpue, Barlow, and others.‡

Attempts were made to explain innumerable natural phenomena, from sympathy and antipathy—terms as

* *Digby*, Discourse, *ut sup.* p. 115.

† *Sorel*, de l'vnguent des armes, Sect. 5. ap. les Secrets Astrologiques, p. 369.

‡ *Taliacotius*, de Curtorum Chirurgia per insitionem. *Venetii* 1597, in folio.

familiar of old, and as little understood, as the real causes of chemical affinities, or attraction and repulsion, are at present.

§ II. *Destruction by Images*.—The most noted expedient for operating sympathy, and thus involving the darkest superstitious mysteries, was fabricating an image, which, pierced by instruments, or wasted by heat, should affect the original proportionally, until, languishing amidst torments, he perished.

Doubtless the power of imagination is so great, as to disturb the mind, and interrupt the vital functions. Protracted beyond the capacity of the human frame to endure it, destruction and death will ensue.

Greater sensibilities, indeed, may be bestowed on some by nature. But the effects of apprehension,—not on the timorous only, are universal.—Those who believe themselves devoted, make feeble endeavours to escape.

Every one knows the familiar anecdote ascribed to the noted Dr Pitcairn, who, from some unfortunate caprice, told a person in the streets of Edinburgh, his conviction that he had only a short time to live. The man went to bed, from whence he never rose again.

A lethal charm composed of various ingredients, but always including the victim's hair, is clandestinely buried by a tribe of distant islanders.—He who sickens under belief of suffering from the spell, seldom

survives the twentieth day.* In the West India Islands, one who conceives a certain destructive charm is hid in his path, resigns himself to despair, as the victim of invisible and irresistible agency: he pines and dies—while the sorcerer, crediting himself invulnerable, triumphs in the efficacy of his stratagem.†

But some are content to perish, merely to induce evil on an enemy.—Is it not affirmed by the celebrated biographer of the ancients, that when Cicero was exiled from *Rome*, he inclined sometimes to go privately into Cæsar's house, and stab himself on the altar of his domestic gods, to bring divine vengeance on his betrayer?‡ In the British oriental territories, a man is said to have decapitated his mother, by her own consent, to induce evil on those who had wounded the honour of her family. Likewise, for the purpose of rendering some individual obnoxious, a human being or an animal is sometimes consumed on a wooden pile.§

In the East, also, where the mind has been ever the most disordered by superstition, and the vehemence of human passions, one charged by another actually perishing as the cause of his death, is believed the victim

* *Langsdorff*, Voyages and Travels, p. 155, 6. *Krusenstern*, Voyage round the World, v. i. p. 173. This charm among the Marquesan or Washington Islanders, is called *maka*.

† Report to Parliament on the Slave Trade, p. 111, var. loc. By the effect of this charm, called *Obi*, or *Obeah*, one planter had lost 100 slaves in 15 years: *vide Koster* Travels in Brazil, p. 317.

‡ *Plutarch* in vita Ciceronis.

§ *Shore*, Customs of the Hindoos, ap. *Asiatic Researches*, v. iv. p. 333.

of irrevocable destiny. Tavernier instances a person ascending a tree to fast, until obtaining a certain donation, at last bestowed, that his death might not lie on the head of the refuser.* One will declare his determination to swallow poison, or will strangle himself, or leap down a precipice, to injure his adversary.† Also, if offended, he takes post at another's door, resolved to fast, or commit suicide, until compliance with his demand, the family within may not eat while he fasts: or if he dies by his own hand, his blood is on their head for ever. Further, if a member of a certain tribe, undertaking the protection of others, be disappointed by irremediable injury to those under his charge, the suicide of himself, or of one of his caste, in presence of the offended, is believed to induce divine vengeance upon them.‡

These preliminary observations prove the credulity prevalent, in the effect of lethal charms, and the apprehension generated by them, likewise, that by some sympathetic influence, as well as by moving divine vengeance, fatal consequences will ensue.

Attempting to operate sympathetic injury, by means of images, is of very ancient practice. Plato alludes to it evidently as subsisting among the Greeks of his æra, several centuries antecedent to the birth of Christ.—While proposing different degrees of punishment for

* *Tavernier, Travels*, p. ii. b. iii. ch. 8. p. 173.

† *Knox, Historical Relation of the Island of Ceylon*, p. 104.

‡ *Forbes, Oriental Memoirs*, v. iii. p. 225.

incantations, because they affect the mind, he inculcates contempt of waxen images, by all beholding them on the monuments of their progenitors, before their doors, or in places where three paths meet. That as no opinions sufficiently precise regarding them, are entertained, it is unnecessary to endeavour to dispel suspicion,—thus inferring, that although for an evil purpose, the means should be despised; nor ought it to excite apprehension.*

The transition is abrupt, passing at once from Greece, the seat of science and the arts, to Scotland, overspread by the clouds of ignorance, the scene of fierce contention and prejudice—descending from one of those profound philosophers, whose existence has illuminated the world, to a monkish chronicler, whom fashion has vilified even more than he deserves.

Were Boethius to be credited, a waxen image was fabricated for destruction of one of the Scottish kings of the tenth century. It would be vain to offer conjectures on the sources, whence either this or many other parts of his history have been deduced. Perhaps he was influenced by vague traditions, or unsubstantial written authority: but in as far as respects his own composition, he shews little difficulty in reconciling contradictory principles, or in solving the darkest enigmas. Though certainly a man of learning and observation, he yields to the dictates of fancy; and his

* *Plato, de Legibus, ap. Opera, t. ii. p. 932, 933.*

æra being prone to embellishment, he resorts to imagination for rendering narratives from meagre materials, of greater interest. Like the story tellers of the present age, he interweaves scraps of authentic history with what appears to be solely of his own invention, which has stamped a corresponding estimation on his work with the indiscriminating. In strict conformity with earlier writers, he reports the deliberations of councils which could not be commemorated; and along with the orations of commanders, he records the utter extermination of all the combatants, whose survivance alone could have preserved them for posterity.—Such blemishes in authors must disturb whatever real confidence they merit. At the same time it is not to be denied, that numerous cotemporary facts and sentiments are recorded by Boethius, which, had they been false, would have met with that ready contradiction, always held in ample store, even for those who speak truth.

According to this author, Odo, Duff or Duffus, the king, fell into an unknown languishing distemper, without any ostensible cause. Sleep forsook him, he was drenched in continual perspiration, and pining rapidly away,—his recovery seemed hopeless. Meantime a rumour spread that this did not ensue from natural infirmity, but from the malevolence of witches practising their art in the town of Forres, for his destruction. The castle there being retained for the interest of the king during a conspiracy, certain messen-

gers sent to Donald its captain, explained the object of their mission. Some suspicions were already entertained by the garrison, for one of their number, whose paramour was the daughter of a sorceress, had spoken of the king's disease and the charms employed by witches, first to his comrades, and then to the captain himself. The latter, in consequence, obtained a disclosure of the facts, and soldiers having been directed to the scene of the suspected incantations, they found one witch roasting an image, fabricated by demoniac art, on a wooden spit, and another bedewing it with a certain liquor while reciting verses. Being seized, and carried along with the image to the fortress, they explained, that Duffus should never cease to perspire while it roasted, that recitation of the verses interrupted his sleep: and as the wax melted he should waste and die. They affirmed that the precepts of their art had come of demons, and that the chief men of the district of Murray had engaged to recompense them for putting it in operation. The image was destroyed, and the offenders expiated their guilt in the flames. Meantime the languor of the king was dissipated: he recovered his nocturnal rest free of perspiration: and on the following day exercised all his faculties. Speedy convalescence ensued: and he soon led an army against the Moravian rebels.

This is a very succinct narrative: and the facts would be sufficiently credible were they transferred to later times. But the practice cannot be verified, as

belonging to the middle ages, in Scotland, without more specific acquaintance with their history than has been yet attained. Fordun, an earlier historian, is silent on the detail, remarking merely, that for tranquillizing the North, then infested by robbers, Duffus repaired to the town of Forres, where he remained after punishing some criminals. Wyntown is scarcely as explicit. Buchanan copies Boethius, and observes, that he finds no example of similar incantations among the ancients.*

If our ancestors came from the East, they brought the knowledge which they had previously or progressively acquired along with them. As the works of the ancients were diffused on the revival of letters, in the middle ages, the mysteries which they revealed could not be lost on those deemed the learned of their æra, nor did they want attractions for the ignorant, to whom marvels are always interesting. But how far these principles were realized in Scotland, nothing remains to prove.

It should be noted *in limine*, that images were fabricated of many materials, and especially of wax and clay. Yet, let it not be conceived, that the elegance and perfection of either ancient or modern models were comprehended in their qualities. Quite the reverse. Some shapeless mass, void of all symmetry and pro-

* *Boethius* Scotorum Historia, lib. xi. f. 221. *Buchanan* Historia Scotorum, lib. vi. c. 21. *Fordun* Scotichronicon, lib. iv. c. 28. *Wyntown* Cronykil, b. vi. c. 10.

portion,—bearing only the faintest semblance to human organization, and passing under the name of the devoted victim, was all that constituted the charm in this most remarkable superstition. One of them had “but 2 stumps for hands : 2 for legs : holes for eyes and mouth.”*

Merely a representative substance sufficed.

Some examples, though few, are found of images constructed for a propitiatory purpose. It has been alleged that they were employed as an amatory charm, or even as a medical charm to cure the cramp. Likewise that the fabrication of a waxen image of an invalid has been recommended, of which that portion corresponding to the diseased organ should be burnt, or the whole consumed in case of an universal affection.† Martin de Arles quotes preceding authors, for a golden lion fashioned in London under certain astrological rules, to cure quartan fever, which must be referred, however, to the miscellaneous ingredients and instruments of sorcery—a different department.‡

Those who practised this particular branch of occult magical science, have almost invariably contemplated evil.

The whole process may be briefly described, as the fabrication of a rude image of any materials, which was baptized by the name of the victim, or characterized

* *Fountainhall Decisions*, No. 573 : 14 June 1677. fol. 285 in MS.

† *Pizzurnus Enchiridion Exorcisticum*, lib. i. p. iii. c. 5. p. 54.

‡ *Martin de Arles*, § 22.

by certain definitions identifying the resemblance: arrows were discharged against it: the various parts were pierced with pins or needles, or the whole was wasted by heat by the sorcerer.

Per tumulos errat, passis discincta capillis,
 Certaue de tepidis colligit ossa rogis,
 Devovit absentes: *simulacraque cerea figit*
 Et miserum tenues in jecur urget acus.

OVID Epist. Heroid. *Hypsipyle Jasoni*.

Such also was nearly the practice of the Scottish sorcerers, from whatever authority derived,—and such the practice of the other proselytes of Satan in the southern parts of Britain. On the continent it may be traced up to the subsistence of the Roman empire.

The image was certainly distinguished by the name of the original. It is said to have been sometimes called the corpse: but the precise meaning of this word is not defined. About the year 1696 or 1697, information was sent to the Privy Council, that a clergyman in the county of Ross had been afflicted with heat, perspiration, and preternatural torment, after a manner unintelligible by the physicians. The imputation of effecting it fell on Donald Moir, a reputed warlock, who, assisted by Satan as a black man with cloven feet, and by three witches, had fabricated an effigy of the patient, under the denomination of the *corpse*. A clue of human hair, and a “dish bored in the side,” which were found in the house of one of the

conspirators, seem to have aroused suspicion, but how they should operate as a charm is not explained.*

Few allusions to the actual fabrication of images appear in Scottish history, between the date of the narrative given by Boethius and the close of the sixteenth century. The public credulity, and that of the reigning monarch, among the rest, seems to have been then more specially awakened to its subsistence.

The work of the Scottish sorcerers was held to proceed under the immediate auspices of Satan. Thus says King James, some "he teacheth how to make pictures in waxe, that by the rostinge thereof, the persones that they beare the name of, may be continuallie dried awaie by continuall sicknesse." While the sorcerer roasts the image, Satan is occupied with the original; the substance of vitality escapes by perspiration, and digestion is impeded, so that "hee at last shall vanish awaie as his picture will doe at the fire." No doubt the royal author spoke feelingly, from the dread he must have entertained of such diabolical stratagems for his own destruction.

The immediate agency of Satan was thought essential towards impregnating the type of sorcery with lethal efficacy. This being the highest exercise of the necromantic art, and what was most rarely practised,

* *Sheriff Depute of Ross*, Representation Anent the Witches in the Parish of Kilrenan, in MS: *Adv. Lib. A.A.A. l. i. 84*. Nothing on this subject is preserved in the cotemporary records of the Privy Council.

more important ceremonies may have been adopted than those attached to the lower magical expedients in frequent operation.

Alarming conspiracies against the safety of the king were disclosed in the course of certain criminal trials, about the year 1591, as others had been previously practised against the lives of some of his subjects, and chiefly by the same agents. The death of Archibald, eighth Earl of Angus, was ascribed to sorcery, wherein Agnes Sampson and Barbara Naipar were alleged to have been instrumental: for a jury found in respect to the former, "that quhen hamelines wes contractit betuix hir and Barbara Naipar in Dalkeyth, the said Barbara lamentit vnto hir, that a man callit Archie had done hir grit wrang, and askit hir counsell to be avengit of him: quhais answer was, that sche sould mak the help sche could: and eftir consultatioun betuix thame, the said Agnes preparit ane bony small pictour of yallow walx, quhilk scho inchantit, and coniurit vnder the name of Archie, at the eist end of the doweatt of Craigmyllar, in the devillis name: and gaif power to the said pictour, that as it sould melt away befor the fyre, swa sould that man, quhais pictour it wes, consume and pyne away, quhill he wer vterlie conswmit: and swa delyverit the said pictour to the said Barbara, quha said vnto hir, 'take guid tent that nathing be wrocht to stay the purpos.'"^{*}

* About this time *image* and *picture* were frequently used synony-

The ceremonies levelled against the king involved darker mysteries, and a multitude of agents plotting his destruction, for which those of the female sex were the more clamorous, and great convocations of unhallowed sorcerers assembled in a hallowed place, to mature the process for perpetrating the deed.

A nocturnal convention was held by the prince of darkness and his proselytes, in North-Berwick church, on Hallow-even 1590, where the servants did homage to their master, while receiving his commands to do all the mischief which they could accomplish, along with the means of effecting it. Satan had previously pledged himself to produce an image of the king, but now having failed in his promise to this numerous assemblage, should any faith be placed in the written record and the testimony of men, he found enough to do in excusing himself on account of his negligence.—“For, Robert Greirsoun and Johnne Fien stuid on his left hand, and the said Robert fand grit falt with the devill, and cryit out, that all quhilk were besyd him mycht heir, because his hienes’ pictour wes nocht gewin thame, as wes promesit :—Effie M’Calyane remembrand and bidand the said Robert Greirson to speir for the pictour, meining his hienes’ pictour, quhilk suld haif bene roistit. Robert Greirsoun said, ‘quhair is the thing he promiseit?’ meining the pictour of walx dewysit for roisting and vndoing of his mously. Various examples are quoted by *Douce*, *Illustrations of Shakspeare*, v. i. p. 48.

hienes' persoun, quhilk Agnes Sampson gaif to him : and Robert cryit to haif the turne done. Yet his hienes' name wes nocht nameit, quhill they that wer wemen nameit him, craifand in playne termes his hienes' pictour. Bot he answerit, it sould be gottin the nixt meitting : and that he wald hald the nixt assembly for that caus the soner—it wes nocht reddie at that tyme. Robert Greirsoun answerit, 'he promiseit twyis and begylyt ws,' and sum honest lyk wemen wer very ernist and instant to haif it: and the said Barbara [Naipar] and Effie Macalyane gat than ane promise of the devill, that his hienes' pictour sould bene gottin thame twa, and that rycht sone:—and this mater of his heines' pictour wes the caus of that assemblee, in taikin quhairof, the dewill commandit the said Barbara and all his company to keip his commandementis, quhilk wes to do all the ewill they could."

Besides the incidents occurring at this notable convocation, some other facts appear from the evidence taken in various judicial investigations, illustrating the special province of Satan on similar occasions. Eufame Macalyane was convicted "of consulting with Annie Sampson, for destroying of Johnne Moscrop hir fadir-in-law: and to that effect sending Jonett Drummond hir servand with ane pictour of walx, send in ane buist, incloisit within ane guis to the said Annie: and ane seruiet with beiff woumplit about the guis; quhilk pictour the said Annie gaif to the dewill to be inchantit be him, and the samen being inchantit

be him, wes send hame agane to hir with the said Jonett Drummond for doing of the turne." It is explained by the previous conviction of Agnes Sampson, that she had made "ane pictour of wax to the similitude of Mr Johnne Moscrop, at the said Eufame's desyre, and past with the said pictour to ane bray abone ane waltir on the lands of Keyth, and rasit the spreit, quha coniurit the pictour to serve for the destruction of the said Mr Johne, and delyverit the samen to Jonett Drummond, seruitour to the said Eufame, and baid hir putt the samen vnder hir guid-fatheris bed heid or bed feit."*

Another sorcerer who flourished in the same delirious age, was led to the stake on the charge of having conspired the death of David Libbertoun, because he, together with "Jonet Chrystie and hir mother, informett and maid ane pictour of walx, quhilk the devill inchantit at ane fyre in Johnne Crystiesoune's house, for the destruction of the said David Libbertone's self."†

The materials of the image do not seem to have

* Trial of Agnes Sampson, 27 Jan. 1590 [1]—of Barbara Naipar, 8 May 1591—of Eufame Macalyane, 9 June 1591. Thus the three trials were in the course of a few months; together with a fourth, of Johnne Mowbray and others, 7 June 1591, accused of wilful error in acquitting Barbara Naipar. *Hamelines*—familiarity; *walx*—wax; *dowcatt*—dovecot; *tent*—heed; *buist*—box; *guis*—goose; *seruiet*—napkin; *woumplit*—wrapped. *Rec. Just.*

† Trial of James Reid, 21 July 1603. *Rec. Just. Informett*—fashioned.

been considered essential. It was only the medium through which an incantation, directed to every separate organ, should operate. Thence they were diversified according to whatever opinion the necromancer might entertain of their efficacy. Wax, clay, flour, and butter, were employed in Scotland: and on the continent, one is described to have been composed of feathers.* Perhaps there might be subordinate accessories to aggravate their power. Eufame Macalyane made “ane pictour of floure and clay, for bewitching of Marie Home,”—sewed in a winding sheet, along “with fyve clewis of sindrie collouris of worsett, as of blak, reid, orange, yallow, and blew.”

In the year 1398, the Theological Faculty of Paris declared it an error in faith, in Natural Philosophy, and in true Astronomy, to admit that images composed of brass, lead, or gold, of white or red wax, or of any other substance, baptized, exorcised, “consecrated, or rather execrated,” on certain days by magical arts, had any of the virtues ascribed to them.†

It is not evident to what extent the practice of fabricating images was continued after the close of the preceding trials. But the knowledge of it, if not subsisting, was easily renewed, and instilled by the views of demonology received from other countries, or by those composed at home—and that which should have been sternly rejected with contempt, was admitted

* *Mengus Fustis Dæmonum, Doctrina Pulcherrima*, c. 14. p. 34.

† *Determinatio*, § 21.

most preposterously as the due foundation of distributive justice.

In the later part of the year 1676, Sir George Maxwell of Pollock was attacked by "a hot and fiery distemper,"—which a dumb girl about fourteen years old, signified to originate from that peculiar species of sorcery already described, and that a certain woman, Janet Mathie, was chiefly instrumental in it. Mankind, propense to the marvellous, encourage imposture, from believing that privation of one sense, is indemnified by a refinement of the rest: or by the substitution of some higher order of perception.—They become the willing dupes of artifice.

The informer conducted those who were interested in the matter, to the house of the alleged delinquent, where, thrusting her hand behind the chimney, she drew forth a *waxen* image wrapped in a cloth, with the right side pierced by two pins, besides one in the shoulder. After these were removed, the patient, who had been affected more severely in the corresponding parts of his body, began to recover.

The woman was put in confinement, and several insensible marks being discovered on her person, forbid any doubt of her compact with Satan.

Nevertheless, Sir George Maxwell sickened in the beginning of the subsequent year: and the same sagacious informer, signifying that another image had been fabricated, a new search ensued, when a figure of *clay*, not altogether dry, was found in the bed straw of John

Stewart, "warlock," Janet Mathie's son. Being apprehended immediately, along with his sister Annabella, and sent to prison, Sir George was again relieved from peril. A third image was now devised against one of his relatives, who had been active in detecting the mother. Other individuals were involved amidst all these discoveries: and confessions were obtained from some of the accused, to become the foundation of their own trial, as well as that of the rest who resolutely denied any participation in the plot.

Annabella Stuart, the youngest of the whole, was the first to acknowledge the truth of the charges, though wavering when confronted with her brother, the warlock. However, he also at length allowed, that Satan having awakened him in the night, introduced four women by a window, and a candle being lighted, his demoniac visitor fashioned the visage of the clay figure, and stuck the pins, but the remainder was executed by himself. Satan then put the image into the hands of each woman, requiring her to say, "I have the portrait of Sir George Maxwell in my hand, and I consent to his death." Next, one of their number consigned it to the place of discovery.—In respect to the waxen image, all had aided its formation: it was pierced with pins by Satan: and, bound to a spit, it was turned before the fire, while the whole party pronounced, "Sir George Maxwell, Sir George Maxwell."

This latter formality, it will be remarked, was strictly consistent with the practice of earlier sorcerers,

for, in an alleged conspiracy against King James VI. by the Earl of Bothwell, an image fabricated by Agnes Sampson, was wrapped in a linen cloth, and delivered to Satan for consecration ; after which, each member of the Satanic convention held at the time, consented expressly to his death, saying, “ This is King James VI. ordered to be consumed at the instance of a nobleman, Francis Earl of Bothwell.”*

Matters less aggravated than the preceding, would have aroused universal indignation against the proselytes of Satan : and would have denied them all hope of mercy.—In the eyes of ignorance, such occult offences were the most heinous, though to prove them was impossible, for mankind are animated by the greatest vehemence, when contending on what cannot be proved. Presumption, therefore, and circumstantial evidence, a doctrine too often pregnant with danger, bore the most ample weight.—Annabella Stuart alone, was reprieved, on account of her youth, though penitent and confessing : But the judges who should have shuddered at the murders they were about to sanction, entertained no scruples in condemning the whole associates.—“ The four witches and warlock, foresaid, were burnt at Paisley, and died obdurate, except the man, who appeared penitent. His mother, Janet Mathie, without confessing her guilt, was hanged, and the effigies both of wax and clay, being put into a napkin, and

* *Melvil, Memoirs, p. 395.*

dashed to pieces, were thrown into the fire along with her. Bessie Weir, who was last hanged up of the four, had been previously taken and condemned for witchcraft in Ireland: and when the hangman there was about to cast her over the gallows, the devil took her away out of sight.—Her accusation was sent over to Scotland, and now when thrown off, there appears a raven, and approaches the hangman within an ell of him, and flies away again.” Such is the narrative of a reverend cotemporary, plainly insinuating the presence of Satan under this disguise, or the soul of the guilty sorceress in flight.*

In spite of these sanguinary proceedings, and of that demonological axiom, that destroying the sorcerer and his charm obliterates its operation, Sir George Maxwell died of his distemper.

But to the great admiration of the deluded multitude, the dumb girl began now to speak—declaring it to be for the first time.—She denied her consciousness of the faculty of detecting witches, which had been so gratuitously assigned to her, or that she had any correspondence with Satan. Whereon it was observed with all the sagacity of the age, that “the best con-

* *Lyndsay*, Sir David, closes the course of *Falsehood* personified, by a sentence of the law, and when the delinquent bemoaning himself, terminates

“Fairweil! for I am to the widdie wend,

For quhy, *Falset* maid never ane better end.

Heir sal he be heisit up, and not his figure: and ane *Craw*, or ane *Kae* sall be castin up, as it were his saull:” *Satyre of the three Estaitis*.

struction that can be put upon her is, that she has the second sight, by a compact of her parents with the devil, and she may be passive in it."

Something shall be afterwards said on this remarkable quality with which mankind might be endowed, unconsciously. Not only so, but if we shall believe their neighbours, they might enjoy the higher necromantic powers, unknown to themselves. A woman was burnt about the year 1704, who, in the opinion of her comrades, had been a witch no longer than a month before her death.* In a work by a French ecclesiastic, laudably levelled against such prejudices, it is related, that one of his brethren having been called to administer spiritual consolation to a convict, when undergoing his cruel punishment—the victim declared he had no fear of death: but what gave him real concern, was discovering himself to be a sorcerer—that his misfortunes had brought him to a strange extremity. "Yet," added he, "perhaps I am actually a sorcerer, though quite ignorant of it."† People were absolutely bewildered amidst superstition.

Besides the preceding effigies, the dumb informer detected others in the West of Scotland, probably before recovering her speech, as this would have undoubtedly impaired the public confidence in her discernment. Six women were accused of fabricating

* *Torryburn Kirk Session Minutes, 1704, ap. Webster Tracts, p. 138.*

† *D'Autun l'Incredulité Sçavante et le Credulité Ignorante, p. 921.*

and roasting an image of Robert Hamilton of Barnes, "who was lying very sick and sorely tormented in the breast." Two escaped an ignominious death by suicide in prison. Their comrades in misfortune were burnt at Dumbarton.

The scene having closed on these repeated tragedies, the informer herself fell under suspicion of imposture, —a sorry testimony of the penetration of the age. Being arrested and sent to Edinburgh, she attracted much notice, and multitudes resorted to her as long as permitted. The Privy Council took cognizance of the matter, and finding her "ane impostor and cheat, at least possest, or having the 2nd sight, or revealed to hir in the air, as was reported of Major Weir, or in hir sleep," she was sentenced to banishment. But no ship-master could be found willing to carry her—terrified, it is likely, to have such a passenger.*

Distempers accompanied by heat and perspiration, excited vehement suspicions of sorcery, as indeed did all those exhibiting unusual symptoms, or which were little understood. "Let it be judged whether it was

* *Fountainhall Decisions*, in MS. No. 551, 553. *A Manuscript Collection Adv. Lib. M. 6, 14: Art. 164. Manuscript Adv. Lib. Robert iii. 3: 10: Art. 33. Manuscript Sufferings, 1660—1678, v. 35. in 4to. Adv. Lib. Law Memorials, p. 110, 111, 124—134. In an earlier part of the same century, Elspeth Reoch "fenyit herself dumb and illudit, and deceavit his Maiesteis subiectis." Trial, 12 March 1616. Rec. Ork. f. 63. v.*

from nature or sorcery," exclaims a credulous priest, "that a young lady in the district of Rethelois, died of languor, dry as wood, lean as a heron, light as a bird, and more withered than parchment on the fire."*

But on the principle already explained, the consuming disease was cured effectually, either by destroying the image or its fabricator,—at least, this was generally credited. About the year 1677, "Mr John Scott," a clergyman, finding two young ladies afflicted by "a disease not natural, at a gentleman's house in the East of Scotland, enquired if any one envied him." Being answered in the affirmative, he accompanied a possé to the house of a woman in the neighbourhood, and "breaking up the door for haste, finds two effigies of wax turning upon a spit, apprehends the woman, and takes the effigies along with him. She was burned, and the gentlewomen recovered their health. This was a natural conclusion which Mr John drew from the premises."† The general principle failed, however, in regard to Sir George Maxwell, for he "at last died of that sweating sicknes."‡

But to the reproach of Scotland, the lapse of twenty years produced a new example of this incredible folly,—of the regenerated hydra of superstition,—and one so much the more remarkable, as the lamp of learning

* *Nodé Declaration contre des Maleficiers*, ch. xv. p. 11.

† *Law Memorials*, p. 124, 125.

‡ *Fountainhall Decisions*, No. 551. in MS.

was then beginning to illuminate the darkness of northern Europe.

Several peculiarities having been alleged regarding Catherine Shaw, a girl not exceeding eleven years of age, the daughter of John Shaw of Bargarran in Renfrewshire, a judicial investigation ascertained, that an image of a clergyman was fabricated, stuck with pins, bound to a spit, and roasted at a fire. No detail of the facts is preserved. But seven alleged delinquents were tried and barbarously executed at Paisley, after a public fast to avert Divine vengeance for such enormities in Scotland, and a sermon to the miserable victims, intended principally for a persuasive to confession as the only means of salvation.*

The prime actor in this tragedy, so well supported by the judicial authorities, Christian Shaw, generally designed the impostor of Bargarran, displayed a share of artifice and sagacity far beyond the years of adolescence. As some atonement for her early depravity, which those entrusted with the administration of justice blindly encouraged, she distinguished herself subsequently by her skill and industry.†

The efficacy of such expedients, however, was not yet obliterated from the belief of the superstitious ; for, in palliation of an atrocious murder, it was alleged, about the year 1705, that one had become subject to

* *History of the Witches of Renfrewshire, var. loc.*

† *Young, Parish of Erskine, ap. Stat. Acct. v. ix.*

convulsions, after the fabrication of a waxen image, and pricking it with needles by the deceased.*

According to common practice, as observed both here and on the continent, the image was subjected to the action of fire. In whatever mode destruction was accomplished, sympathetic influence proved effectual. When the symbol perished, it sealed the fate of the original.

Sagittarii.—Besides the preceding occult expedients to inflict a lethal injury, a certain tribe of sorcerers arose called *Sagittarii* or *Ballistarii*, who discharged missiles or projectiles against an image fabricated as above, instead of wasting it by heat.

Amidst the rare illustrations of Scotch practice, it may be concluded, that the same observations apply to the materials and the construction of the image : that it was alike rude and shapeless : likewise, that it must be considered as much a symbol as a similitude, judging by the artists occupying themselves thus in quest of vengeance.

Resuming the conspiracy of Katherine Ross, lady Foulis, against her husband's relatives, it appears that one of her accomplices, Christian Rois, who was burnt in the course of the year 1577, had sent for John M'Neill in Dingwall, who, journeying next day to Fowlis, delivered to the mistress of that mansion "ane elf-arrow heid," for which he received four shillings,

* Webster Tracts, p. 181.

or what was about equivalent to the price of a sheep at the time.* Provided with this magical weapon, she was enabled to advance her plot as detailed in her indictment.

“In the first, thow art accusit for the making of twa wax pictouris of clay, in the company of the said Cristian Rois Malcomesone, and Mariorie Neyne M'Allester *alias* Laskie Loucart, in the said Cristian western chalmer in Tanorth,—the ane maid for the destruction and consumption of the young laird of Fowles; and the vther for the young ladie Balnagown—to the effect that the one thairoff suld be put at the brigend of Fowles, and the vther at Ardmoir, for the destruction of the said young laird and lady: and this suld haif bene performit at Alhallowmes in the yeir of God 1577 yeiris. Quhilkis twa pictouris being sett on the north syd of the chalmer, the said Leskie Loucart tuik twa elf arrow heidis, and delyuerit ane to the said Katherine, and the vther the said Cristian Rois Malcolm-sone held in her awin hand, and thow schott twa schottis with the said arrow heid at the said Lady Balnagown: and Leskie Loucart schot thrie schottis at the said young laird of Fowles. In the meane tyme, baith the pictouris brak, and thow commandit Leskie Loucart to mak of new vther twa pictouris, thairefter for the said persounes.”

Possibly the images were so imperfectly constructed

* *Analysis of the Records of the Bishopric of Moray*, p. 73, 74.

that they fell to pieces before receiving the violence intended, which rendered new ones necessary, that the conspiracy might not be disappointed. Therefore, the accused, proceeding in conjunction with her colleagues, to fashion "ane vther pictoure of clay of the said Robert Monro, young laird of Fowlis, in the said hous of Tonord, and quhilk wes maid vpoun the morne of the vi day of Julij anno lxxvii yeires, they sat the pictur at the wall of the chalmer of the said hous, and wes schott be the said Cristiane Neyn M'Allester *alias* Leskie Loucart, with the ane elf-arrow twelf tymes, and mist the said pictur: and persauing that thai mist the samen efter everie schott: and maid the said pictur diuers and sundrie tymes, yit the samen tuik not effect to thair purpois."

This purpose, wherein they saw themselves unsuccessful, is sufficiently explicit; because, in the course of the same or of another conspiracy, when Robert Monro was represented by an image of butter, against which was discharged "ane elf-arrow heid be the said Marioun Nevyn M'Allester *alias* Leskie Loucart, aucht tymes, quhilk pictur she mist:" it was understood, "giue the pictur wer hit it wald be for the destructionoun of the young laird of Fowles."

The conspirators confidently anticipated the successful issue of their project. To complete the mystical ceremonies, one of them had provided some linen, probably as a shroud, wherein, if the images had been hit "with the elf-arrow heid," they should have been

“erdit vnder the brigend of the stank of Fowles, for-
nent the yet.”*

This singular narrative would admit of a comment-
ary alike ample as some of the other occult expedients
related here. But there are certain points, such as
the position of the image towards the north, which it
might be difficult to illustrate. Nothing is said of the
means of discharging the elf-arrow heads: In the
later case of Isobell Gowdie, they are described to be
projected from the thumb nail: and, considering the
diminutive size under which these relics of antiquity
generally appear, it may have been sufficiently prac-
ticable. Indeed this kind of archery must have then
attained greater perfection, for Isobell declares, that
she and her comrades actually killed several people.†

A remarkable analogy to the mystical practice of
the former inhabitants of Scotland is discovered among
the modern superstitions of the East. Sometimes a
bow and arrow are fabricated of the levers employed
to press down the carcase of the dead and the body of
the living sacrifice, on the pile consuming the widows
of the Hindoos. Next, the image of an enemy is
fashioned of clay, against which the arrow, after hav-
ing been charmed by incantations, is discharged, and

* Trial of Catherine Ross, lady Fowles, 22 July 1590. *Rec. Just.*
Giue—if. *Erdit*—buried. *Yet*—gate.

† *Confession of Issobell Gowdie*, 3 May 1662. ap. *Pitcairn Criminal*
Trials, v. iii. p. 607, 611.

the obnoxious individual is believed to be afflicted with pain in his breast, immediately when it is pierced.*

According to Olaus Magnus, the Laplanders were wont to discharge magical leaden darts of about a finger length, from sequestered spots, against the objects of animosity, who, attacked by ulcerations, perished in the space of three days. But he does not testify his own knowledge of the fact.† Scheffer advances some arguments to prove him mistaken in supposing the darts leaden. Explaining the word *skott*, he observes, "If a man or other living creature be suddenly struck down by a disease exhausting his strength, or proving almost fatal, the vulgar ascribe it to magic,—calling it *skott*, that is, *a dart*, which is its cause."‡ Perhaps the conservative charm previously alluded to,—"*I charme thee for arrow schot*,"—denotes the same interpretation. In Scotland it was not uncommon to express that animals shot to death when they died suddenly. Shot, in general, means struck down.

The effects and sensations experienced are described more succinctly in regard to the neighbouring island. Persons feel something suddenly, "as if they were really shot through the body, and immediately grow

* *Ward View of the History, Literature and Religion of the Hindoos*, v. ii. p. 100.

† *Olaus Magnus* Gent. Septent. Hist. lib. iii. c. 16.

‡ *Schefferus* Lapponia, c. xi. p. 145-6.

weak and disordered as if indeed *shot*. If shot in the brain, heart, or lungs, they immediately die.”*

Considerable mystery was attached to elf-arrow heads, those ancient weapons for warfare or hunting, whose original use seems to have been unknown at the date of the preceding trials. Long after the rude inhabitants of these kingdoms had recourse to metals for the same purpose, some elementary strife, more than the disturbance of the plough, probably disclosed them amidst the soil where they had lain for ages. Nearly two centuries ago it was remarked, that elf-arrow heads appeared in fields where none had been seen the preceding day; nay, they were believed to fall while the heavens were still and serene. A person worthy of credit relates, that while riding in Banff or Aberdeen he found one in the top of his boot: and that a woman took another from the breast of her apparel.†

It was assumed at a later date, that as for “elf-arrows, it is known they fall from the air.”

The uniformity of their shape attracted observation. It was thought strange that these “elf-stones, whither litle or mickle, hes still the same figure, though certainly known to fall from the air. The commonality superstitiously imagins, that the fairies both makes

* *Athenian Mercury* for 1694, vol. xiii. No. 7. q. 1. It is, however, only in the north of Ireland.

† *Gordon Adnotata ad Descriptionem Aberdoniæ et Banfiæ* in MS. *Adv. Lib. W.* 2-20.

and gives them that shape, and that they doe hurt by them, which we call elf-shot.”*

Such arrow heads were believed to be of supernatural formation: the work of Satan and his imps: and when discharged at the obnoxious objects, by his proselytes, a metrical charm accompanied the fact:—

I shoot yon man in the devillis name,
He sall not win heall hame,
And this sal be alswa trw,
Thair sall not be an bitt of him on lieu.†

These weapons were esteemed of the nature of a thunderbolt, giving a mortal blow to the vitals without inflicting a wound: but the spot struck by them might be discovered, though with difficulty, for no external blemish was visible,‡ which is still credited in Ireland.§

The figure of the elf-arrow heads identifies them with the weapons of the ancient inhabitants of Scotland, or of their invaders.|| They were prized as

* *Fraser (J.)* Answeare to Mr Witherows Queries: April 20, 1702, ap: *Letters upon Literature*, v. ii. No. 2. A.D. 1702—1711. in MS. *Adv. Lib.*

† *Confession* of Issobell Gowdie, 1662, ut. sup. *Yon*—yonder. *Win*—get. *Lieu*—living.

‡ *Kirk Secret Commonwealth*, § 8. p. 39. *Athenian Mercury*, ut sup.

§ *Dobbs* Parishes of Ardclinis and Laid. The people say of cows elf-shot, “You may feel a hole in the flesh, but not in the skin, where the cow has been struck. She gives no milk till relieved.” *Stat. Acct. of Ireland*, v. iii. p. 27.

|| *Blaeu Atlas*, v. x. p. 104. Coloured figures of elf-arrow heads, probably on the authority of Sir Robert Gordon, are represented here.

amulets, sometimes set in silver, both here and in Ireland, and suspended from the neck as a preservative from elf-shot.*

It appears that, on the continent, the *Sagittarii* directed their arrows at a crucifix, or shot them merely at random in the air, for the purpose of injuring those obnoxious to them. Perhaps as the practice of archery declined, that superstition was modified by the vengeful person repairing to a crucifix erected where three roads met, and discharging a musket from behind his back as the means of injury.†

Though examples are so rare in Scottish history, perhaps this kind of malevolent superstition was very prevalent in other countries. In the year 1139, an ecclesiastical canon of Pope Innocent II. denounced an anathema against resorting to such occult expedients for injuring the obnoxious, because they were fatal. “*Artem autem illam mortiferam et Deo odibilem Ballistariorum et Sagittariorum adversus Christianos et Catholicos exercere de cetero sub anathemate prohibemus.*”‡

But the practice so odious to the apostolic see remounts to the most ancient date. Elisha, the Jewish

* *Halyrudhous* K. S. R. 12 March 1633. “Ane elf-arrow set with silver.” *Camden Britannia* by Gough, v. iv. p. 232.

† *Binsfeldus* de Confessionibus Maleficorum et Sagarum, p. 145. *Leloyer des Spectres*, t. i. liv. 11. c. 6. p. 537.

‡ *Innocentius* II. Consilium Lateranense ii. c. 29. de *Ballistariis et Sagittariis* ap. *Harduin Acta Consiliorum et Epistolæ Decretales summorum Pontificum*, t. vi. p. 11. col. 1214.

prophet, instructs Joash, king of Israel, to "take bow and arrows," to open a window, strike the ground thrice, and shoot "the arrow of the Lord's deliverance from Syria, for thou shalt smite the Syrians."*

Catherine Ross, lady Fowles, belongs therefore to the *Ballistarii* or *Sagittarii*, whose superstition, prohibited by apostolic authority of old, may be traced to the occult ceremonies of the ancient Jews, many centuries before the Christian æra.

It is not evident that the fabrication of images for destruction of the original by symbolic injury was equally common in England, as in Scotland and in France. However, neither the same attention may have been paid to the fact, nor the narratives so distinctly preserved.

Two priests, "Roger Bolingbroke, a cunning necromancer, and Margery Jourdeyne, surnamed the witch of Eye," were arrested in England, in the year 1441, "to whose charge it was layde, that they, at the request of the Duchess of Gloucester, had devised an image of waxe, representing the king, which, by their sorcery, a little and little consumed, entending thereby, in conclusion, to waste and destroy the king's person, and so bring him to death; for the which reason they were adiudged to die."† Probably these were renewed conspiracies against personal safety, for

* II *Kings*, ch. xiii. v. 15—18.

† *Rymer Fædera*, v. x. p. 505. 9 May 1432. *De Sortilegis Cancellario Deliberandis*.

in the year 1432, a royal warrant was issued to the constable of Windsor Castle, first for delivery to the Lord Chancellor, and then for the liberation of Margery de Jourdemayn, John Virley clerk, and John Ashewell, a monk, who had been committed for sorcery.* The first of the delinquents was tried and burnt under the king's writ, *de heretico comburendo*.†

Abstract questions regarding alleged sorcery against Queen Elizabeth having been proposed to the lawyers of that æra, they determined that to bring the case of the alleged delinquent within the statute, it would be necessary to enquire whether any fact followed disrespectful words and intended evil, such as "picture, figure set, and such like."§ During the twentieth year of this Queen's reign, it was remarked, that a figure caster having died suddenly, a human effigy of tin, suspected to be for some evil purpose, was found among his implements of sorcery, for he was thought a conjuror.|| Likewise it is said, that after the Earl of Derby died unexpectedly in the year 1594, "there was found in his chamber a little image of wax, with hairs of the colour of his hairs thrust into the belly."

* *Grafton Chronicle of the Affairs of England*, p. 587-8. *Stow Summary of the Chronicles of England*, p. 177-8.

† *Coke Institute*, part iii. ch. 6. referring to an ancient Register for the trial of Margery Gurdeman of Eye.

§ *Strype, Annals of Church and State*, [1589] v. iv. p. 7

|| *Holinshed Chronicles*, ad. an. 1579-80. v. iii. p. 127.

But some alleged that this was a stratagem for exciting suspicions of sorcery.*

In the year 1634, not fewer than seventeen or eighteen persons were condemned to death at Lancaster, chiefly on the evidence of a juvenile miscreant, suborned by his iniquitous father. The absurdities offered to the jury, and certainly credited, rival those which have been heard in any age, or in any country. The young impostor testified, that while in a barn "he saw three women take six pictures, in which pictures were many thorns, or such like things stuck in them."†

According to the disordered imagination of persons confessing their own presence and participation, a convention resembling more narrowly the continental Sabbat, or Saboath, than the Scottish nocturnal assembly, was held in England. There the Satanic proselytes prepared a blackish waxen image of some obnoxious person, which was wounded with thorns after consecration by their master, and in consequence the original died.—Mary Green acknowledged having repaired, along with other confederates, in the night to a certain spot, where meeting the fiend as a little black man in black clothes, all made their obeisance. Baptizing a waxen figure, received from Margaret

* *Baker*, *Chronicles of the Kings of England*, p. 383. It has been concluded, from the minute detail of symptoms, that the Earl died of Cholera. *Gentleman's Magazine*, v. xxi. for 1751. p. 269, 398.

† *Webster*, *Displaying of Supposed Witchcraft*, p. 276. and Appendix.

Agar, he stuck a thorn in the crown, one in the breast, and another in the side; Margaret Agar then threw down the figure saying, "this is Cornish's picture, with a murrain to it." The whole mystery was directed against Elizabeth Cornish, who never enjoyed health afterwards:—and nearly the same ceremony having been performed with the image of a man, he sickened and died. Part of the evidence is very minute: for another witness describes one of these conventions, where "a man in black cloaths, with a little band, whom she supposeth to have been the devil, took a picture of wax in his arms, and having anointed its forehead with a little greenish oil, and using a few words, baptized it by the name of Elizabeth or Bess Hill. Then, the devil, this examinant, Ann Bishop and Elizabeth Style, stuck thorns in the neck, head, hand-wrists, and other parts of the picture, accompanied by an execration."*

Various examples of destruction meditated by images during a long series of years, is preserved in French history. The wife of Enguerrand de Marigny, for the sake of her husband, fabricated a waxen one under the tuition of Paviot a necromancer, which, if melted by a slow fire, should induce the death of the king by a languishing disease.† A similar expedient

* *Glanvil Sadducismus Truimphatus*, p. 209—311 The incidents are ascribed to the year 1664.

† *Paulus Æmilius de Rebus gestis Francorum*, p. 430. "Deprehensa est Engerrani uxor, quæ Pauliâto Mago præceptore, simulacrum cereum

is said to have been devised against Francis I. :* and later in the same æra, that is the sixteenth century, considerable apprehensions of sympathetic influence from waxen images seem to have been renewed. It is even insinuated, that Charles IX. became thus a sacrifice. Many waxen images made at Paris, were kept on altars, and pricked on occasion of forty masses performed in different parishes there, during forty hours, accompanied by incantations. On celebration of the fortieth, the image was punctured in the region of the heart.† In the commencement of the succeeding century, similar malevolence was aimed at Henry IV., the favourite of his people. When the Marshal de Biron was about to suffer the penalty of repeated treasons, he accused another of sorcery—affirming that he had been himself bewitched by means of enchanted waters and speaking images: that a waxen one shewn to him had pronounced in Latin, “Wicked king thou shalt perish!” La Fin, the alleged delinquent, denied all knowledge of the image—“but it is certain,” adds the author of the narrative, “that such a stratagem belongs to Satan.”‡ The subject is far from explaining

fingeret, quod leui igni admoueret, ut eo paulatim liquescente perinde sensim ac lenta tæbe Rex deperiret.” This incident is referred to about the year 1315.

* *Marcouville Recueil Memorable*, fol. 95. Paris 1564 in 12. *Massé l'Imposture des Diables*, fol. 43.

† *Etoile Journal*, p. 155. *Roy de Gomberville Memoires de Duc de Nevers*, t. i. p. 73. *Crespel*, f. 156. *Boissardus*, c. 4. p. 45.

‡ *Matthieu*, *Histoire de la France*, t. i. p. 375. t. ii. p. 526.

more than the popular credulity in the efficacy of such expedients, which is said to have been again demonstrated in the proceedings of the French Parliament, subsequent to the assassination of the Marshal D'Ancre at Paris in 1617.

While Sprenger officiated as an inquisitor, a waxen image, pierced with needles, was found at Issbruck, which being burnt, one who had been sick recovered.*

Crespet saw a place at Avignon, where the knife of a sorcerer, flayed alive for attempting to destroy a Pope by pricking a waxen image, was stuck in the wall. Comparing the date of the transference of the Papal See to that city, with its restoration to Rome, this event must have preceded the fifteenth century.†

Waxen images are said to have been known during the lower Roman Empire, as well as more anciently. The authority of Balsamon is quoted for being apprized personally that such were fabricated and concealed by sorceresses, when the empress of Alexius Comnenus fell sick. They pretended that she had been bewitched, and that her convalescence would follow discovery of the images. Many innocent persons suffered, and the impostors, unable to relieve her, withdrew.

Nicetas Choniates, while treating of divination,

* *Sprenger Malleus Maleficarum*, P. ii. q. i. c. 12. p. 314.

† *Crespet de la hayne de Satan*, f. 157. It is more probable that the instrument of punishment was preserved thus *in terrorem*, than any thing pertaining to the delinquent.

alludes obscurely to piercing little waxen images, in human shape, with nails, accompanied by verses.*

This practice seems to be also known under certain modifications in the East. In the year 1798, the image of an Indian potentate, fashioned of wood, was subjected to incantations, and buried, with some of his hair thrust into its side; when it is said the original became afflicted with a paralytic affection, in the corresponding part of his body.†

Likewise, in stricter conformity with the European mode, precepts subsist there for the formation of a human effigy of meal, barley, or moistened earth; that the forehead shall be stained with red; and the body clothed in red apparel, fastened with cords and girt by a girdle of corresponding hue. Then the head being placed towards the north, it shall be struck off with an axe, as a mystical rhapsody is uttered. Thus shall the enemy be deprived of life.‡

On the principle of offering a sacrifice, or of perpetrating mischief through the medium of a symbol, the essence of rendering the purpose effectual consisted in enchanting the subject. Thus, according to an eastern religious rite, a prince might devote his enemy by substituting a living animal in sacrifice, designed by his name throughout the ceremony.

During the reign of Romanus Lacapenus, in the

* *Nicetas Choniates* Thes. Fidei Orthod: Lib. iv. Append. ii. § 3.

† *Moor*, Hindu Pantheon, p. 402. note.

‡ *Asiatic Researches*: Sanguinary Chapter, v. v. p. 386, 389.

lower ages of the Roman empire, an astronomer advised him to send some one to strike off the head of a column in Constantinople, situated on the arch Xerolophi, looking towards the east, whereby Simeon, Prince of Bulgaria, whose fate depended on it, should perish. He complied: the head was struck from the pillar, and at the same hour, as afterwards ascertained, the prince died in Bulgaria, of a disease of the heart.

During the most flourishing period of the Roman empire, on the other hand, sacrifice by symbol was recognised in the substitution of images, as most expressive of the original. The prevalence of human sacrifice is alleged in the infancy of Rome, which is not unlikely, considering its frequency among nations in their earlier state. But Hercules having promoted the abolition of this cruel rite, he substituted images for the victims who were wont to be cast, bound hand and foot, into the Tiber. Dionysius Halicarnassus, an historian of the Augustan age, observes, that "this is constantly done at half moon, towards the vernal equinox. Thirty images in human form, were thrown into the river, from the consecrated bridge, by the high pontiff, vestals, prætors, and others who should be present at religious ceremonies."*

* *Cedrenus Compendium Historiarum*, t. ii. p. 625. § 311. A column surmounted by a head or bust, as well as by a capital, may be understood from *στηλης*, the significant term employed.

* *Dionysius Halicarnassus*, Lib. i. c. 38. *Macrobius Saturnalia*, Lib. i. c. 7.

A representative, though not an imitative subject, could be rendered the medium of sympathetic influence, which is consistent with the theories entertained of the operation of sorcery. A fable was current in the time of Diodorus Siculus, incorporated by the poets in their reveries, as if it had not been sufficiently extravagant, which ascribes the death of Meleager to the burning of a brand whereon his destiny depended.* Yet is this a greater absurdity than the principles and practice of the exorcists of the Roman Catholic church, who burnt the picture of a demon, to promote expulsion from the possessed! Nor is their doctrine, that “spiritualiter demones crucientur,” altogether unintelligible to those reflecting on the medium of transmitting external impressions.† Among the means of privation of sleep, without personal violence, is described, casting a faggot on the fire with conjurations, after some previous preparation.‡ Campanella, an author of the fourteenth or fifteenth century, devotes a chapter to magic, in his work on the universal distribution of sensation, throughout substances susceptible of motion and volition. The older authors are seldom at a loss for examples.—He maintains the power of words

* *Diodorus, Siculus, Lib. iv. c. 34. Ovid, Metam. Lib. viii. l. 515—522.*

† *Mengus Fustis Dæmonum Doct. Pulch. p. 20. Exorcism ii. p. 88. Flagellum Dæmonum Exor. vi. p. 113—119. Triomphe du Saint Sacrement sur le Demon. t. i. ch. v. p. 39, 72.*

‡ *Thiers, t. i. ch. v. p. 156.*

over things remote; “*verba vim in absentes res habere*,” and illustrates his doctrine by the sufferings of a damsel, whose comrades, for her refusal to join their pastimes, had pierced an orange with needles, and thrown it into a well. The pain she suffered was excruciating until they were extracted.* Reginald Scot explains how a juggler named Brandon, could kill a pigeon in presence of the king, by piercing its picture with a knife, “so hard, and so often, and with so effectual words, as the pigeon fell downe from the top of the house starke dead.”†

Thomas Aquinas concludes, that besides the occult virtues derived by natural substances from the celestial spheres, some may be imparted to artificial substances, through the assistance of demoniac agency.—“*Unde etiam imagines quas astronomicos vocant habent effectum.*”—But whether he refers to statues fabricated under the constellations, symbolic sculpture, or engraving, is uncertain.‡ However, precepts actually taught the formation of images, which should be endowed with specific qualities. They were not always as rude and simple as in Scotland. Gaffarel affects to hold the ordinary process in sovereign contempt, signifying that his discourse shall be confined to the influence of images prepared under certain constellations

* *Campanella de Sensu Rerum et Magia*, Lib. iv. c. 17. p. 198.

† *Scot, Discouerie*, b. xiii. ch. 13. p. 308.

‡ *Aquinas Summa Theologia*, p. ii. q. 96. art. 2. §. 2.

only, excluding all demoniacal agency, and all superstitious virtues.*

Some mortal violence was directed against a vital organ: but lower injuries were levelled against the inferior organs. It seems to have been believed, that pricking any part of an image "with a thorn from a tree bearing leaves," would injure the corresponding organ of the original, as expressed in the celebrated case of divorce of the Earl of Essex. Reginald Scot alludes to the fabrication of a waxen heart, which was pricked "with pins and needles."

But, anciently, the liver was accounted one of the most important organs, if not the fountain of life: and thence, perhaps, was this species of sorcery directed against it.

Sagave Poënicia defixit nomina cera

Et medium tenues in jecur egit acus.

OVID, *de Arte Amandi*, Lib. iii. Eleg. 7.

It was essential in the highest departments of augury: and on subversion of the pagan mythology, to consult its aspect in divination was prohibited by the Roman code.† Probably the older empirics did not ascribe greater importance to the heart, than to the liver: and on the authority of Aristotle and Galen respectively, controversies arose, regarding which of these presented the first indications of animation. Four principal parts of the human body, of which the liver was one, were

* *Gaffarel Curiositez Inouyes*, c. vi. p. 2. 110.

† *Codicis*, Lib. i. tit. xi. l. 2. de Paganis, Sacrificiis et Templis.

considered to be under the dominion of four planets. Thus, a dialogue between *Urania* and *Æsculapius* commences with a question from *Urania*. "There are four principal stars of heaven, the Sun, Moon, Jupiter, and Venus, which are not only more excellent in themselves, but they benefit, temper, and preserve all things. What is there to be compared to these in the human body, on account of which you have engaged me in this debate?" *Æsculapius* specifies four, of which the liver is one, but ranks it after the brain and the heart.* Early authors and physicians, even the better informed, considered some of the viscera as much the site of the passions, as employed in regulating the vital functions. Thus, wrath was supposed to originate in the gall, joy in the spleen, concupiscence in the liver; and instead of courage, cowardice was in the heart!† Therefore, the words of the poet may be understood: the liver was pricked by a needle piercing the side. The ancients believed that not only the heart, but the other important organs disappeared during sacrifice:‡ and a victim sacrificed by Cæsar, a few days preceding his assassination, being found without the heart, they concluded that it had been consumed during the ceremony, though

* *Mizaldus*, *Harmonia Cœlestium Corporum et Humanorum*, p. 419. Written, A.D. 1555.

† *Lactantius*, *Divin. Instit. Lib. vi. c. 15*. "Quod si ut medici affirmant, lætitiæ affectus in splene est, iræ in felle, libidinis in jecore, timoris in corde. *De Opificio dei*, c. 14.

‡ *Jamblichus*, *de Mysteriis*, Sect. iii. c. 16. p. 79.

an unfavourable omen.* Deficiencies of the liver were alike ominous.†

Part of the conspiracy against the “young laird of Fowles,” and “the young ladie Balnagown,” consisted in burying their images in linen, had they been struck by the elf arrow heads. Whether any thing more than enveloping them in a shroud, be indicated by the use of this substance, is uncertain. But the intention evidently pertains to perfecting the semblance of funeral rites, which the canon law contemplated, in prohibiting that masses appointed for the dead should be celebrated in name of the living, as done by the malevolent for the sake of mischief.

Reflecting on the vicious principles, and the natural timidity of mankind,—on the snares which are spread for evil,—and the pusillanimity of the perpetrator screening himself from observation, it may be well understood how the greatest apprehensions were aroused among those believing themselves the aim of sympathetic influence.—The wicked assailant of health, reputation, or prosperity, scruples not on the means of wreaking his malice on the good and benevolent: and as these are the least suspicious, so are they the most exposed to injury.

* *Cicero*, de Divinatione, Lib. i. c. 52. Lib. ii. c. 16.

† *Julius Obsequens* de Prodigis, var loc.

CHAPTER X.

INSTRUMENTS AND INGREDIENTS OF SUPERSTITION
AND SORCERY.

SUBSTANCES are distinguished as the instruments and ingredients of sorcery, less by their natural qualities, than from a mystical virtue imparted by art. But some being unsusceptible of any change, under the exercise of human powers, they were preferred either from occult or manifest properties.

Those who dealt in the mystical art, were designed charmers, necromancers, witches, or warlocks, in Scotland : and their practice as charms, necromancy, witchcraft, sorcery, or enchantment. Though a certain latitude of expression was restrained, the stricter definitions and distinctions specified by Isidorus and others, were scarcely recognised.

Violat Mar was convicted of being a "commoun vsar of sorcerie, libbis, and charmes, and abvsar of the people aganis the lawis of God and man : " likewise of "undertaking to put downe my lord regent's grace with witchcraft and sorcerie."* Elspeth Chalmers found security that "shoe sall not vs neither libbs, charmes,

* Trial of Violat Mar, 24 Oct. 1577. *Rec. Just.*

nor na vther kind of sorcerie.”* But it is doubtful whether the Saxon *Liblacum*, said to signify literally, “fascination or enchantments used by certain ligatures, fasciæ, or bands,” was not more restricted in these derivatives.† Marione Fishar in Weardie, was “ane ordinarie charmer.” John Knox repelled the charge of necromancy which his enemies had alleged against him.‡ The Earl of Bothwell was charged with conspiring the death of the sovereign, by necromancy and witchcraft:§ and several persons were accused of “the crewell slaughteris committit be witchcraft and inchantmentis,” on four individuals.¶ Meg Dow was convicted of “sorcerie and witchcraft, and for the crewell murderssing of twa young infant bairnes,” evidently by such means.¶

Some confused etymological relation subsisted between the crimes of poisoning and witchcraft, as derived from the *Veneficium* of the ancients. Whence it was admitted, that “poysonet walteris, poysonet asches, ruitis, or venemous oyles,” were certainly the ingredients

* *Records of Orkney*, 9 May 1643: John Tailyeour.

† *Tyrrell*, *History of England*, v. i. p. 340. The author refers to a law of Athelstan of about the year 928.

‡ *Knox*, *History of the Reformation*, Lib. iv. p. 289. edit. 1732. in fol.

§ *Records of Justiciary*, 25 June 1591. *Spotswood History*, p. 383. *Historie and Life of King James the Sext*, ad an. 1593. p. 272. “In the meane tyme, Bothwell was tryit by his pearis, and was purgit be thame for the cryme of witchcraft.”

¶ Trial of James Findlaw and others, 10 June 1586. *Rec. Just.*

¶ Trial of Meg Dow, 28 April 1590. *Rec. Just.*

of sorcery.* Perhaps the mere impregnation with evil is to be understood by *poisoning*, rather than an ingredient deleterious in its own nature. But to discover where the distinction lies between poison administered as such, and an enchanted substance, is attended with considerable difficulty. Thus, John Master of Orkney, consulted “Margaret Balfour, ane witch, for the destruction of Patrick, Earl of Orkney, be poysoning.†” For the sake of obtaining an inheritance, Robert Erskine having consulted Jonet Irving, a notorious witch, he received “ane grit quantitie of herbis,” with injunctions regarding their use; and his sisters, by his desire, having taken “the saidis herbis, and steipit thame amangis aill ane lang space,” the potion proved fatal.‡ Eufame Macalyane consulted with “Jonet Cwninghame in the Canongait, alias callit Lady Bothwell,—for poysoning Joseph Douglas of Pumphrastoun, and that be ane potion of composit walter:”—and a culprit afterwards suffered on his own confession, for abusing the people with “charmes, and dyvers soirties of inchantment; and ministring vnder forme of medicine, of poysonable drinkis, and of airt and pairt of the murther of Johnne Myllar, of Taird Mylne, about Martinmas, and of vmquhill Elizabeth Robeson, be the said poysonable drinkis.”||

* Trial of Margaret Wallace, 20 March 1622. *Rec. Just.*

† Trial of Johnne Maister of Orknay, 24 June 1596, for “witchcraft, poysoning and murdering of his brother.” *Rec. Just.*

‡ Trial of Robert Erskine, 1 Dec. 1613. *Rec. Just.*

|| Trial of Bartie Paterson, 18 Dec. 1607. *Rec. Just.*

The facility of administering a mortal potion, has always aroused the jealousy of legislators, and has led to the enactment of laws.

The preparation of poisons is an art practised by the ruder tribes of the world, at this day : and the chief ingredients are said to consist of those venomous creatures, whose bite or sting is fatal ; together with vegetable substances. They are collected in a pot, which is boiled at sunrise, and stirred throughout the day, during the abstinence, incantations, and the rattling of castanets by a hag who superintends the process.* But the Medean kettle of the ancients, containing such a profusion of miscellaneous ingredients for a magical purpose, may have been the authority for the *witches pot* of Olaus Magnus : and this may have been reproduced in a coarser form by Shakspeare, aided by inspecting the various vignettes ornamenting his work.†

§ I. *Miscellaneous Ingredients and Instruments.*—It would be vain to attempt specifying the various ingredients and instruments of superstition and sorcery, in this chapter,—perhaps partly redundant. Some of them, together with their application, are unintelligible. But in general it may be said, that almost every substance was susceptible of impregnation with a

* *Hutchinson, Diary, ap. Bowdich Mission to Ashantee, p. 406. Hardy, Travels in Mexico, 1825—28, p. 298. Thompson, Travels in Africa, v. i. p. 399. Voyage a la Guiane et a Cayenne, p. 177, 179.*

† *Olaus Magnus, Lib. iii. c. 15.*

mystical virtue: that its effect was to operate from external contact: from absorption internally: or from sympathetic influence without either. Some were prepared by the skill of the sorcerer exclusively; others were understood to be derived from Satan.

The peculiar state of a distempered patient, and especially perspiration, excited suspicions of sorcery, from whatever medium it might have been effected. Thence, during the prevalence of febrile diseases, there is reason to believe, that those calumniated were brought into equal danger with the patients themselves. "Alexander Fairlie vanisheit away with vehement sweating and continuall burning at the hairt." Another "lay in horrible dolour and payne, with continuall sweating, the space of seven or aucht weikis, nane expecting his lyfe, and ever be the said sweat [like] to have meltit away." Of Mr Archibald Mure it is said, "he continuall sueiting he deceissit:" and an English soldier sickening in Christian Wilson's house, "did sweat to dead in a day or two." Such cases were understood to result from sorcery, but without the method adopted for drenching the ancient Scotch king in constant perspiration.* The brute creation was not exempt from a similar affection.†

Various ingredients were accumulated, as in the

* Trial of Beigis Tod, 27 May 1607,—of Margaret Wallace, 20 March 1622,—of Agnes Finnie, 11 Dec. 1644,—of Jonet Cock, 11 Nov. 1661. *Rec. Just. Precognition Catherine Wilson 1661. ut sup.*

† Trial of Margaret Hutcheson, 20 Aug. 1661. *Rec. Just.*

witches pot, and frequently laid in the way of the obnoxious person: or in the way of his cattle. Enchanted flesh, for the destruction of one, his wife, and property, was laid under the mill-door and the stable-door by James Reid. Alexander Knarstoun laid dogs' and cats' bones in the earth, in the way of his neighbour's horses, whereby three of them died.* An impostor concealed "ane lytill polk of blak plaiding, quhair was sum pickellis of quheit, sum threidis of wirseit of divers collouris, hairis, and naillis of menis fingeris," under a person's stair as a pernicious charm.† From the celebrated case of the shepherds of Brie in France, wherein many were fatally implicated, the nature of such expedients may be seen in detail.‡

By Satan's special command, James Reid took "a piece of raw flesche, quhairvpone he maid nyne nekkis, and enchantit the samyn for an evil purpose."|| A piece of raw flesh was thrown under a loom "which nather dog nor catt wold taste." To bereave one of life, another, in the month of "Januar I^m.VI^c.VI. yeiris, laid ane feirfull and vncouth seiknes on him, be casting in of an tailyie of raw inchantit flesch, at his door."

* Trial of Alexander Knarstoun in Skaill in Tuskebister, ult. Feb. 1633. *Rec. Ork.* f. 88. v.

† Trial of Cristian Lewingstoun, 12 Nov. 1590. *Rec. Just.* A little black flannel bag.

‡ *Factums et arrest contre les Bergers sorciers.* Paris 1695, in 12mo.

|| Trial of James Reid, 21 July 1603. *Rec. Just.* *Nekkis*—notches.

A man became security that his wife should “vnderly the law for cutting off ane bull taill, confest be hir, and alledgit taiking thairby hir nyghtbouris milk.”*

Powders.—Extraordinary apprehension was entertained of the powerful effect of powders commonly designed *muilts*, or mould, and especially of those prepared from the remains of the dead. For this purpose, nocturnal conventions were held under the auspices of Satan, by his proselytes, who violated sepulchres, dismembered decaying corpses, and pulverized their parts, that the arch-fiend might distribute the product among his accursed crew, to operate mischief on mankind.

At the celebrated convention in North Berwick Church on Halloweven 1590, many were present who “opnit the graves, twa within and ane without the kirk, and tuik of thair fingeris, tais, and neis, and pairtit thame amangis thame: and Agnes Sampson gat for hir pairt ane windene scheit and twa jountis, quhilk sche tint negligentlie. The devill commandit thame to keip the jountis vpone thame quhill thay wer dry, and than to mak ane powlder of thame, to do evill withall.” Here John Feane “poyntit the graves and

* Trial of Margaret Hutcheson, *ut sup.*—of Issobell Greirson, 10 March 1607. Mans Nicolson was accused of stealing “sex tailyeis of muttoun.” *Rec. Shet.* 1 Aug. 1616.—Patrick Petersone, Marjorie Ritchie, *ibid.* 12 Sept. 1616. The ordinary interpretation of *Tailyie* may be *slice* or *cut*.

stwid above thame,” and the women dismembered the bodies “with thair gvlles.”*

Thus says King James, in appropriating the influence of Satan “for letle trifling turnes wemen have adoe with, he causeth them to joynt dead corpses, and to make powders therof, mixing such other thinges ther amongst as he gives them.”†

Such was the wonted practice of sorcerers. Patrick Lowrie and his associates assembled in churches and church-yards, where they “raisit and tuik vp sindrie dead persones furth of thair graves, and dismemberit the said deid corpis, for the practising of witchcraft and sorcerie.” John Brughe met Satan, with others of the initiated, thrice, in the “kirk-yearde of Glendovan, at quhilkis tymes ther was taine vp thrie severall dead corps, ane of thame being of ane seruand man named Johne Chrystiesone; the vther corps tane vp at the kirk of Mukhart: the flesch of the quhilk corps was put abone the byre and stable-dure headis” of certain individuals to destroy their cattle.‡

Fermosinus, a lawyer, asks, “What shall be said of a servant who repairs to the cemetery, by his master’s

* Trial of Agnes Sampson, 27 Jan. 1590.—of Johnne Feane, 26 Dec. 1590.—of Barbara Naipar, 8 March 1591. *Rec. Just.* Joints of fingers, toes, and knees, meaning the rotula, were taken, and the women officiated with clasp knives.

† *King James Dæmonologie*, b. ii. c. 5. p. 43—59.

‡ Trial of Patrick Lowrie, 23 July 1605.—of Johnne Brughe, 24 Nov. 1643. *Rec. Just.* *The vther corps*, i.e. the other two corpses.

order, and there digs up the bones of the dead to be used in sorcery?" But he determines that he is to be punished with lenity.*

Thus the remains of mortals might be either reduced to powder, dismembered into parts, or perhaps preserved entire as the means of mischief. John Neill was convicted of consulting with Satan regarding the destruction of Sir George Home, and first getting "fra the devill of ane inchantit dead foill," to be put in his stable, "vnder the hek or manger therof: and nixt getting of ane deid hand, also inchantit be the devill, to be put in the said Sir George' yaird in Beruik, and for laying of the said foill and deid hand in the seuerall pairtis abone writtin."†

After the powder was prepared, it was strewed and scattered about in such a manner, as to come in contact with some obnoxious individual, his bed, or apparel. Eufame Macalyane, took the assistance of "Catherine Carutheris, alias Erisch Jonett," to lay in the way and passage of Jonet Cockburn, "sic inchantit mwildis and powder, that in schort space thereafter, thair come sic ane swarf owre hir hairt, and sic ane flaffing in hir breist, as itt had bene sum quick thing peching and panting, heaving vp her bodie, quhairwith sche is diseasit halfe ane hour everie tyme sche takes itt, oft in

* *Fermosinus Tractatus Criminalium*, t. ii. p. 245.

† Trial of Johne Neill, 26 March 1631. *Rec. Just.* Foill—foal.
Hek—rack.

the night, and oft in the day.”* On the other hand, Agnes Sampson put “mwildis or powder, maid of menis joyntis and memberis in Seatoun Kirke, vnder Eufame Macalyanes bed, ten dayis befor hir birth, quhilkis mwildis sche conjurit with hir prayeris, for laiking or grinding the tyme of hir birth.”† Was this a charm to facilitate labour? From other authority it seems to have been medicinal, either from admixture with food, or application to the person.—It was to operate as intended.

Were the works of the demonologists credited, this deleterious ingredient might be distinguished from its aspect, like powders prepared by an apothecary. Gilhausen, perhaps on the authority of some of them, observes, “that powder which should kill immediately is dusky and black, that which is made for inducing disease, is partly ashen, partly red.”‡ Remigius affirms, that on the first interview of the initiated with Satan, they receive it from him: that it occasions inevitable death: but it is not essential that it should be taken in food or applied to the naked body: scattering it slightly on the clothes is enough. The person who is only sickened by it, becomes of a reddish colour. But how can its dispersion be so controlled, it may

* Trial of Eufame Macalyane, 9 June 1591. *Sic*—such; *swarf*—faintness; *peching*—panting. *Rec. Just.*

† Trial of Agnes Sampson, 27 Jan. 1690. *Seaton, Natoun, or Newtown.* The MS. is indistinct.

‡ *Gilhausen Arbor Judiciaria Criminalis*, cap. 2. tit. 17. § 8—12.

be asked, that the innocent shall escape? Dealers in the miraculous are at no loss for an answer.—Hence the same author maintains, that “it destroys those alone for whom it is intended.”* Bodin instances the death of two noble persons in Pictou, from this pernicious matter having been strewed in their beds, with a malediction.

It was alike pernicious to cattle. Bodin heard of 300 sheep destroyed by it in a moment.†

Agobardus, bishop of Leyden in the ninth century, speaks of the recent prevalence of such superstition. A mortality among the herds was ascribed to a neighbouring potentate, “who, from enmity to the most Christian emperor Charles, had sent people to scatter powder over the fields, mountains, and meadows, and into the wells, which occasioned the death of cattle. For this we have heard of many who were siezed, and of some slain. But most of them were bound to planks and thrown into the river, where they perished.”‡ The laws of Charlemagne, enacted in the commencement of that century, allude to the fact in the course of the year 810 thus, “de homicidiis factis anno præsentis inter vulgares homines, quæ propter

* *Remigius Demonolatreia*, lib. i. c. 2. p. 5. lib. ii. c. 7. § 12.

† *Bodinus Demonomania*, lib. ii. c. 4. p. 168.—c. 8. p. 217.—lib. iii. c. 5. p. 288.

‡ *Agobardus de Grandine et Tonitruis*, § 15. The delinquents seem to have brought three carts of the deleterious powder from their own territory.

pulverem mortalem acta sunt :” which is understood to refer to the persons who perished as above.*

The effect of enchanted substances was esteemed the most certain, if taken as sustenance or swallowed accidentally, to which there are some previous allusions. An exculpatory oath was exacted of one that she had not sent “witchit milk” to another.† Four pigs having been destroyed by witchcraft in the isle of Birsay, a woman swelled and became decrepid by eating of them. But greater discrimination seems to have been assigned to animals than to the human race, for independently of the piece of raw flesh thrown under the loom, which neither dog nor cat would taste, it is said of dead calves, that “nather corbie or dog wald eat thame,” as they were destroyed by sorcery.‡ The Bachapins, an African tribe, refuse to consume the flesh of oxen bewitched by their enemies.||

Wand, Rod, or Staff.—The miraculous staff of St Ninian was carried off surreptiously by a youth who embarked in a boat, where it caught the wind like a sail, and served him as an anchor. Having stuck it into the ground when he reached the shore, it put forth roots, branches, and leaves, and became a tree of considerable size : and a limpid fountain burst from

* *Capitulare* I : c. 28. ap. : *Capitularia Regum Francorum*, t. i. col. 474. Paris 1780. in folio.

† *Records of Shetland*, 14 July 1603. Mareoun in Howle, f. 93. v.

‡ Trial of Jonet Forsyth, 11 Nov. 1629. *Rec. Ork.* f. 233. v.

|| *Burchell Travels*, v. ii. p. 476, 551

the spot where it stood.* When Alexander Hamilton entered into a compact with Satan, he was commanded to strike the fir staff in his hand thrice on the ground, to evoke him from his subterranean abodes. Being siezed near Newcastle, he cast it into the fire, where its crackling astonished the spectators—as evincing its mystical nature.† It is not difficult to trace these superstitions,—the conjuror’s wand and the *caduceus* of Mercury, to the rod of Moses operating miracles before the ancient Jews, and to the staff of Elisha.

The tunic of Saint Columba was instrumental in obtaining rain in Iona. Such miracles as Moses produced by his rod, were effected by the mantle of Elijah. He struck the river Jordan with it, and divided the waters to pass through them. When carried off by a whirlwind to heaven, his mantle was saved by Elisha, who struck the same river, and divided its waters again.‡

The staff of Alexander Hamilton was cast in the fire. Burning was the most effectual mode of disposing of the instruments and ingredients of sorcery. The “selch bone” with which Barbara Thomasdochter stirred her milk to divine the product, “being thereafter cast in the fyir, it crackit and affrayit the hous.” When the piece of raw flesh thrown under a loom,

* *Ailredus* in *Vita Niniani*, c. 10. ap. : *Pinkerton Vitæ Sanctorum*, p. 6.

† Trial of Alexander Hamiltoun, 22 Jan. 1630. *Rec. Just.*

‡ 1 *Kings*, ch. xix. v. 19. 2 *Kings*, ch. ii. v. 8—14. ch. iv. v. 29—39.

refused by dogs and cats, was burnt, "it craked lyk a pistoll," and immediately the mischief plotted for a man destroyed an animal.* Sir Mathew Hale received testimony at Bury St Edmunds, of a toad, doubtless the instrument of sorcery, "flashing in the fire like gun powder, making a noise like the discharge of a pistol." But, on one occasion, an egg shell, presumed to be a charm for taciturnity—"did melt away after the manner of wax, without any noise, as egg shells use to make when burning."†

Burning the charm terminated its pernicious consequences. From the effects of the enchanted dead foal and hand which John Neill received from Satan, Sir George Home contracted grievous "seiknessis and diseassis, nane expecting his lyfe, and nevir mendit of or recoverit of his seiknessis, quhill the said foill and hand war baith fund out and brunt."

§ II. *Scopelismus*.—Satan, amidst familiar intercourse with James Reid, "inchantit him nyne stanes, quhilk the said James cuist vpone David Libbertoune's landis for destruction of his coirnes."‡ Is not this a relic of the *Scopelismus* of ancient nations,—an example of the Deity's injunction through the mouth of Elisha to the Jews, that they should "mar every good piece of land

* Trial of Barbara Thomasdochter, 2 Oct. 1616. *Rec. Shet.* f. 34:—of Margaret Hutcheson, 1661, *ut sup.*

† *Tryal of Witches*, 1664. p. 6.

‡ Trial of James Reid, 21 July 1603. *Rec. Just.* *Coirnes*—grain.

with stones?*. In the Roman law it is written, that those in the province of Arabia who were hostile to their neighbours, put stones on their land, which might prove their destruction if proceeding to its cultivation. “Plerique inimicorum solent prædium inimici σκοῦν id est lapides ponere indicio futuros, si quis agrum eum coluisset malo letho periturus esset, insidio eorum qui scopulos posuissent.” So great was the terror which this inspired, that no one would venture on cultivating the field.†

The stones cast by the Scottish sorcerer were either to render the land barren, or to injure the crop. But very few illustrations, from foreign or domestic history, throw any light on so obscure a subject. Gothofredus interprets the Roman law as only indicating symbolic menaces of treacherous machinations against the safety of the obnoxious person. But he quotes the work of another author,—Thebesius,—who seems to entertain a more correct view of the offence, by implicating superstition along with it, for he considered something magical connected with the stones, called *stone birds* by the peasants, who were wont to avert the scopelismus of their neighbours yearly, on St Peter's day, by a solemn formula.‡ The latter may be judged to correspond with an exorcism.

* 2 Kings, ch. iii. v. 19, 25.

† Digest. lib. xlvii. tit. xi. de Extraordinariis Criminibus, l. 9.

‡ Gothofredus de Scopelismo, ap. : *Deliciæ Juris Silesiaci*, No. viii. p. 307. The Tract quoted in this prolix Dissertation, is Disputatio Inauguralis Thibesii, anno 1660.

§ III. *Mystical Numbers*.—Those utterly ignorant of the admirable properties of numbers, were the readiest to assign occult qualities to them. But the immediate source of this superstition is inexplicable. It seems neither referible to the human organs, to those of the brute creation, or to the celestial spheres. Unity does not appear to be held as such, and the elementary mystical numbers result as much from addition as from multiplication.

Something sanctified was implied by odd numbers. Pythagoras enjoined oblations in unequal numbers to the celestial, and in equal to the infernal deities.* Whence the poet echoes

* * * Numero Deus impare gaudet.

VIRGIL Eclog. viii. l. 75.

“Balaam said unto Balak, build me here seven altars, and prepare me here seven oxen and seven rams: and God met Balaam, and he said unto him, I have prepared seven altars, and I have offered upon every altar a bullock and a ram.”† Forty recurs frequently in Scripture, perhaps derived from five.

Rejoicing among the European nations is testified by discharging an odd number of guns: and formerly the date of events judged calamitous was recorded by an even number.‡

* *Plutarch* in vit. Numæ, ap. Op. t. i. p. 70.

† *Numbers*, ch. xxiii. v. 1, 4.

‡ *Teonge Diary*, Jan. 30, 1676. “This day being the day of our

In Scotland, three, its square and cube, or nine and nine tripled, were apparently the chief mystical numbers. Seven was considered so more rarely: and of five there are very few examples. However it is hardy to argue on exceptions.

Many numerical observances are already quoted, but alike for opposite purposes. Three portions of ashes were taken from three corners of the chimney: a linen cloth was applied thrice to a diseased part, and cured it. A patient's head was sprinkled thrice from a vessel, which operated an immediate cure.*

Dipping thrice over head and ears in the sea is still enjoined: as washing the patient three different mornings, was formerly, with spring water.† It was recommended to a patient to procure "William Louttitis cheyre, and giff he culd thrys sitt doun and ryse out of it, he suld get his health." The precept succeeded.‡ Margaret Sandieson repairing to Margaret Mure, who was severely diseased, "took out thrie small stones, and twiched her head thrie tymes with everie one of thame," which cured her speedily. Another visiting a sick man, laid her hand "thryse on the point quhair

kings marterdome, wee shew all the signes of morning as possible wee can, viz. our jacks and flags only half-staffe high: and at 5 a clock in the afternoone our ship fired 20 guns." p. 135.

* Trial of Agnes Scottie, 13 June 1616,—of Margaret Sandieson in the Isle of Sanday, 13 Sept. 1635. *Rec. Ork.* f. 72, 99.

† Trial of Issobell Sinclair, 21 Feb. 1633. *Rec. Ork.* f. 86.

‡ Trial of Helene Isbuster, 13 Aug. 1635. *Rec. Ork.* f. 97.

his pane was, and thryse to the eard :” and giving him a “cogfull of slaik” to be ate raw on a cake, he recovered daily.* A cow almost suffocated by falling into the mire, was preserved by three ears of barley spit upon, put into her mouth.† It is alleged in the indictment of Elspeth Cursetter, that to cure a distempered cow “ye teuk ane cog of watter out of the burne befor Williame Andersone’s door—and when ye cam back took thrie straes, ane for William Andersone’s wyff, ane for William Coittis wyff in Warbuster, and ane for Williame Bichen’s wyff, and put thame in the cog with the watter : and put the samin vpon the bak of the kow : quhilk thrie straes dancit in the watter, and the samen watter bullerit as if it had been seithing—and thereafter ye took a little quantitie of the said watter, and put thame in the mouth of the kow, and schut your airme to the elbow in the craige of the kow : and immediately scho rais vp, and is als weill as ever scho was ; and at the same instant scho was maid quholl, Williame Andersone’s ox, fra befor quha’s door the water was takin, his ox being on the hill schot to death.”‡ It was alleged also, that the same delinquent had thrown out water thrice for an evil purpose. Water was poured out thrice by the

* Trial of Katherine Grant, 25 Nov. 1623. *Rec. Ork.* f. 177.

† Trial of Helen a Wallis, 13 June 1616. *Rec. Ork.* f. 74.

‡ Trial of Elspeth Cursetter, 29 May 1629. *Rec. Ork.* f. 50. v.

Straes—straws ; *craige*—throat ; *quholl*—whole ; *quha’s*—whose.

Jews to propitiate.* Another hit a cow thrice “with the skirt of hir coit, and instantly the kow was strukin with a strange seikness.”† Katherine Grant was charged with approaching a house, “knocking thrie severall tymes at the door, and ane houre betuix everie tyme—and scho not getting in, went away murmuring. Thrie days efter the guid-wyff becam mad.”

John Feane proposed to operate an amatory charm by sympathy; but three hairs clipped from the udder of a “a yong heyfer, which had never borne calfe,” being substituted, the exercise of his art, though directed to a different object, became unequivocal. For “the doctor had no sooner doone his intent to them, but presently the heyfer cow, whose haire they were indeede, came unto the church wherein the schoole maister was, into which the heyfer went, and made to the schoole maister, leaping and dancing upon him: and following him furth of the church, and to what place soever he went, to the great admiration of all the townes-men of Salt Pans, and many other who did behold the same.”‡

Elias Ashmole is said to have hung three spiders from his neck, to dispell ague. Some deemed inscribed amulets useless unless written on virgin parchment, suspended towards the sun by three threads, which had been spun by a virgin named Mary.||

* 1 *Kings*, ch. xviii. v. 33, 34.

† Trial of Mareoun Cumlaquoy, 1 June 1643. *Rec. Ork. f.* 272. v.

‡ *Newes from Scotland*.

|| *Martin de Arles*, § 38.

Among the Tartars of Mongolia, a bride is carried thrice around a sacred fire, and then conducted to her husband.*

Three seems to have been a mystical number among the Jews.—Three men announced to Abraham the birth of Isaac. Jonathan agreed to shoot three arrows as a signal to David. Joab pierced Absalom through the heart with three darts. God threatened David with three years' famine, three years' pestilence, or three years' destruction by his enemies. Three men were preserved though cast into a furnace. Jonah remained three days and nights in the whale's belly. Peter denied Jesus Christ thrice: and Balaam's ass said to him, "What have I done unto thee that thou hast smitten me these three times."† Among the ancient heathens of Greece and Rome, this number was alike mystical. There were three Graces, three Furies, three Destinies, and the entrance to the subterranean abodes was guarded by a triple headed centinel. The supreme government of the universe has been vested by some nations in father, mother, and son: by others, in a tripartite divine essence. Innumerable examples might be given.

Nine appears as a mystical number among the Jews much more rarely than the former. Nor

* *Timkowski Travels*, v. ii. p. 308.

† *Genesis*, ch. xviii. v. 2—10.; *1 Samuel*, ch. xx. v. 20.; *2 Samuel*, ch. xviii. v. 14.; *1 Chronicles*, ch. xxi. v. 12.; *Daniel*, ch. iii. v. 23.; *Jonah*, ch. i. v. 17.; *Matthew*, ch. xiv. v. 71.; *Numbers*, ch. xxii. v. 25.

although the nine muses should stamp it with everlasting celebrity, was it alike noted with the Greeks or Romans. But in Scotland nine seems to have been always held a mystical number, from the prescriptions of the empiric to the mystical course of Satan's proselytes, who

"Nyne times withershins about the thorne raid."

MONTGOMERY *Flyting*.

Nine enchanted stones were cast or laid for destruction of the crop: nine ridges were passed over in the course of a mystical ceremony: a cat was drawn nine times through the crook of a chimney: and a woman was drawn nine times back and forward by the leg for a cure.* An Italian author alludes to touching nine stones for assuaging pain from stings: and Pliny speaks of the magi healing diseases by casting nine knots on a thread, naming a widow at each, and then binding it to the groin.†

A horse alleged to be "foirspoken," was "nyne tymes foirbitten," and recovered immediately.‡ Nine pickles of wheat and nine grains of corn, bound in a cloth to a cow's horn, were deemed salutary.||

* Trial of James Reid, 1603.—of Hector Monro, 1590.—of Beigis Tod, 1608.—of Thomas Greave, 1603. *Rec. Just.*

† *Pizzurnus Enchiridion Exorcisticum*, p. iii. c. 5. p. 55. *Pliny*, *Hist. Nat.*, lib. xxviii. § 12.

‡ Trial of Helen Hunter, 1643. *ut sup.* *Foirspoken*—bewitched. *Foirbitten*—charmed.

|| *Northberwick K.S.R.* 25 Oct. 20 Dec. 1663. Adam Gillies and his wife. The charm was preserved for fourteen days.

The process for depriving animal products of their virtue, and transferring it to others, is described as "taiking thrie hairis of the kowis taill, thrie of hir papis," and three elsewhere; to go "thryse widderwardis about the kow, stryk hir on the left syd, and cast the hairis in the kirne, and say thryse, 'cum butter, cum.'" Those observing this should have the produce "of the flock quhair that kow was."*

A distempered cow was to be taken backwards into the sea, until washed by nine surges: three handfulls of each were to be laved over her back; when she should be brushed with a bunch of burnt malt straw.†

The *fluctus decumanus*, so circuitously distinguished by the poet, which some believed heavier and more dangerous than others, was not void of estimation in Scotland. "Go thy wayes to the sea syd," said one woman to another, complaining that her milk was unproductive, "and tell nyne heave of the sea cum in, that is to say, nyne waves of the sea, and let the hindmost go of the nyne back againe, and the nixt thair-after tak thrie looffuls of the watter and put within the stoupe, and quhen thou comes home put it in thy kirne, and thou will get thy proffeit back againe."‡

It has been remarked already, that, at Beltein, an

* Trial of Annie Tailyeour, 15 July 1624. *Rec. Ork.* f. 184. v.

† Trial of Katherine Grant, *ut sup.*

‡ Trial of Mareoun Ritchart *alias* Langland, 29 May [1633.] *Looffuls*—handfulls. *Stoupe*—pail. It is uncertain whether the date is 1629 or 1633.

oaten cake was prepared in the Highlands with nine square knobs, each dedicated to the protector or the destroyer of the flocks.* In the seventeenth century, three cakes were prepared of nine portions of meal, contributed by nine maidens and nine married women: and a hole was made in each for transmitting a child through it thrice, in name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for curing the *cake mark*.†

In the thirteenth century, it was observed, that propitiatory donations among the Tartars consisted of nine different articles:‡ and at a modern religious festival of an Eastern divinity, there is an offering of nine leaves, nine different kinds of flowers, and a lamp with nine burning wicks, to a consecrated substance.||

Leo of Modena describes the close of the ceremonies of the Jewish funerals to be washing the hands, sitting down, and rising up nine times, repeating a psalm.§

Three, nine, and the latter tripled, were all connected in superstitions: but thrice nine occurs rarely. Among the remedies for an unknown disease, the patient was directed to kneel by his bed-side, “thrie seuerall nichtis, and everie nicht, thryse nyne tymes,

* *Pennant Tour*, 1769, p. 97.

† *Perth K.S.R.*, 6 May, 11 Aug. 1623. *ut sup.* It is doubtful whether the child was transmitted forwards.

‡ *Haithon de Tartaris*, cap. 17.

|| *Davy Account of Ceylon*, p. 170.

§ *Leo of Modena, History of the present Jews*, p. v. ch. 8.

to ask his helth at all leving wichtis above and vnder the earth in the name of Jesus :” Farther, he was enjoined “to tak nyne pickellis of quheit, and nyne pickellis of salt, and nyne pieces of rowne trie, and to weir thame continuallie vpone him for his helth.”*

An ancient physician prescribes the repetition of a certain verse thrice nine times, as an effectual remedy :† and here also may be recalled the words of Varro and Pliny, together with some previous illustrations, under different sections.

Seven was one of the chief mystical numbers in Scotland, but it is doubtful whether its repute extended as far as that of the two preceding, though certainly of a more definite and useful application. The seventh child of the same sex born in succession, without the intervention of male or female, respectively enjoyed that celebrated prerogative—the second sight.

Besides so eminent a faculty, which rarely descended to the inhabitants of the lowlands, in later times at least, the seventh son of a family, born without the intervention of daughters, enjoyed the power of curing scrofula. Thus, the person formerly quoted, named Innis, in the island of Iona, so gifted, was the seventh son of his parents. However, as if the virtue of this number, in combination with another alike mystical,

* Trial of Bartie Paterson, 18 Dec. 1607. *Rec. Just.*

† *Marcellus Empiricus de Medicamentis*, § 8. p. 278.

imparted unequivocal faculties, it is asserted, that in Ireland, "one Mr Bacon of Ferns, an one and twentieth son born in wedlock, without a daughter intervening, performed prodigious cures in the king's-evil, and scrophulous cases, by stroking the part with the hand."*

On the continent, some other medical faculties, such as curing tertian or quartan fever, were assigned to the seventh son, if born on Easter eve, and in wedlock. But as religious ceremonies preceded the touch of the royal hand in England, so had the gifted person to prepare himself three or nine days by fasting, and conjoining St Marculf with the deity in his invocations.

However, no virtue was admitted in the person: it was inherent in the number: were it otherwise, "why is it not found in the fifth or sixth son," asks a credulous convert to this opinion, "as well as in the seventh son." Kirk, the clergyman, feels himself at a loss to determine whether or not the endowment of the seventh son is derived along with existence from some remarkable vigour in his parents. Nevertheless, Thiers declares that he knew two seventh sons who never performed any cures, and a third who confessed himself equally unsuccessful, though enjoying the repute of this valuable inheritance.†

* *Gentleman's Magazine*, v. i. for 1731, p. 543.

† *Petrus Constantius Albinus Villanovensis*, p. 53. *Deusingius de Superst. Morb. Curat. ap. Fascic Dissert*, p. 54. *Pizzurnus Enchiridion*, p. iii. lib. 1. c. 6. p. 57. *Thiers*, t. i. p. 509, 511.

A superstitious author suggests, that previous to attempted cures, there should be an investigation whether they may result from nature, or from a paction with the demon.

The excellence of the septenary number pervades Scripture throughout,—from the sanctification of the seventh day at the creation of the world, until the seventh angel poured out his vial in the air, when “the cities of the nations fell.” Seven clean animals of each kind were to be taken into the ark. “A great red dragon” had “seven heads:” and a visionary beheld “a lamb having seven horns and seven eyes.” Seven devils were cast out of Mary Magdalene. Seven women should lay hold of one man: and one woman married seven men. Delilah bound Sampson with seven green withs, and cut off seven locks of his hair. Seven stars, seven candlesticks, seven lamps, seven churches, are all specified, besides an infinity of repetitions of this mystical number, applied to time, place, and quantity.*

Seven is the principal mystical number of the East. Thus the devotee exclaims “Fire! seven are thy fuels: seven thy tongues: seven thy holy sages: seven thy beloved abodes: seven ways do seven sacrificers worship thee: thy sources are seven.”†

* *Genesis*, ch. vii. v. 2. *Judges*, ch. xvi. v. 8, 17. *Isaiah*, ch. iv. v. 1. *Mark*, ch. xvi. v. 2. *Luke*, ch. viii. v. 2. *Revelation*, ch. v. v. 6. ch. xii. v. 3. ch. xvi. v. 17, 19.

† *Moor*, *Hindu Pantheon*. *Colebrook*, ap. *Asiatic Researches*, v. vii. p. 273.

Although some examples of even numbers might be quoted, both in the East and in the West, odd numbers have been chiefly recognized as mystical. Marcellus Empiricus combines the numbers, 3, 5, 7, 9, especially the first and last, with his various prescriptions. Pliny asks, how it is that odd numbers are always credited to belong to what is most vehement; whence may be understood why they are noted in fevers,*—a fact which is not undervalued by modern physicians.

Thirteen is a well known exception to the propitiatory numbers, from denoting calamity—the decease of one of so many of the same company, within a year. Perhaps it originates in the treachery which betrayed Jesus Christ, the company being himself and his twelve disciples.

Numbers merit admiration, indeed, from their utility, their infallibility, and their unexpected results. Yet, those who were ignorant of such essential qualities, like all dealers in the marvellous, found other motives for extravagant praise. “Who can doubt the power of numbers,” says one of them. “Truly they are of the highest efficacy in all natural magic. In these are hid the secrets of the universe: and in these do all the arcana of mathematical philosophy shine.”†

* *Pliny*, Hist. Nat. Lib. xxviii. c. 5.

† *Petrus Arlensis*, *Sympathia Septem Metallorum*, cap. 8. This author concludes with a panegyric on the number 48.

The latter is now presented by the more learned, in a preferable form—while numerical amusements are still sought in the *Manuel des Sorciers*, and similar compositions.

CHAPTER XI.

MYSTICAL PLANTS.

ABOVE a century ago, there stood a row of trees, "all of equall size, thick planted for about the length of a butt," near the chapel of St Ninian, in the parish of Belly, then "looked upon by the superstitious papists, as sacred trees, from which they reckon it sacrilege to take so much as a branch, or any of the fruit."* The same veneration of trees was entertained in the Isle of Sky, where, about two hundred years ago, a sanctified lake is described as being "surrounded by a fair wood, which none presumes to cut:"—and those who ventured to infringe their superstitious protection, either sickened at the moment, or were visited afterwards by "some signal inconvenience," even if sundering the smallest branch.†

It is difficult, however, at this day, to discover the synonyms of the various plants which were esteemed mystical in Scotland. There is no doubt that the elder, thorn, and rowntree came under that denomina-

* *Macfarlane*, Geographical Collections, in MS. v. i. p. 301. They are called *Green Trees*. Was the *Guigne* ever considered mystical?

† *Description of Skye*, in MS. Adv. Lib. W. 2, 20.

tion. The first and the last were antidotes to sorcery, from precluding the access of sorcerers, or defeating their art. Thus, as has been said, the houses or the gardens of our ancestors were protected by the elder: and some peculiar apprehensions appear to be entertained regarding it. In the cemetery of an ancient chapel in the Isle of Sanda, are “the remains of an elder tree—over which, whoever shall walk, is doomed to die before the year expires.”*

The rown tree, or mountain ash, is observed to be frequent in the neighbourhood of those monuments of antiquity, commonly called Druidical circles. One stood in every churchyard in Wales, as the yew did in England: and on a certain day of the year, every person wore a cross of the wood. It averted fascination and evil spirits.† Nor has it been esteemed less beneficial to cattle here; “for the dairy maid will not forget to drive them to the shealing or summer pastures, with a rod of the rowan tree, which she carefully lays up over the door of the sheal-boothy, or summer house, and drives them home again with the same.”‡ In England it was held also a preservative: “upon which account, many are very careful to have a walking staff of it, and will stick the boughs of it

* *Macculloch*, Description of the Western Isles, v. ii. p. 440. This intelligent author combines many useful and scientific observations, together with interesting remarks on antiquities, in his works.

† *Evelyn Silva*, ch. xvi. v. *Quick-beam*.

‡ *Johnston*, Dr George, Flora of Berwick-upon-Tweed, p. 110.

about their beds.”* The learned Rudbeck says this tree, the *Ron*, or *Runebaræra*, derives its name from Runic characters; and is much esteemed on account of a property which it has above all others. Every letter cut on it, forms a prominence, owing to the direction of sap immediately thither, which hardens like a stone: and as the tree enlarges each successive year, so do the letters. Thus Runic clubs and staves were employed in war, like the club of Hercules.† It is not improbable, that the celebrity of the Rown tree, may have been partly derived from the antipathy of serpents to the ash alleged by the ancients.

Of later years it is said, that a quick thorn of antique appearance, in the parish of Monedie, was held in such veneration, that people abstained from lopping any portion of it, and affirmed with awe, that they who had ventured to do so, were punished for their sacrilege.‡ A convention of sorcerers hied with speed for consummation of their mystical rites at “Seaton thorn,” the place of assembly, and christened a cat, which was cast, as an oblation to Satan, in the year 1594.|| In Ireland, thorn trees, as the resort of fairies, remain undisturbed, from apprehended inconvenience to the disturber:§ and the *fairy thorn* is

* Plot, Natural History of Staffordshire, ch. vi. § 52.

† Rudbeckius, *Atlantica*, t. iii. p. 62.

‡ Frazer, Parish of Monedie, ap. *Stat. Acct.* v. iii. app. p. 609.

|| Trial of Beigis Tod, 27 May 1608. *Rec. Just.* f. 222.

§ Dobbs, Parishes of Ardclinis and Laid, ap. *Stat. Acct. of Ireland*, v. iii. p. 27.

anxiously secured against the depredations of mankind or animals.* This may be a superstition of Eastern origin; for the Egyptian Thorn is called the Mother of Satyrs by the Arabians, believing it the haunt of these imaginary woodland beings.†

Plants esteemed an antidote to distempers originating in demoniac possession, might become mystical, such as peony.‡ Laurel leaves crackling in the fire was a favourable omen with the ancients.

At Laurus bona signa dedit gaudete coloni.

TIBULLUS, Lib. ii. *Carm.* 6.

In banishing demons, and averting lightning, it must have been thought a valuable protection. But whether the same credulity extended hither, is doubtful: for although an ancient canon forbids environing dwellings with laurels and evergreens:§ Gerard found none of this tree in the cold countries.

The pine was consecrated to Pluto, and to Pan. One dedicated to a demon, standing beside a temple in France, was assailed by St Martin in the fourth century, in opposition to the priest and the people.¶ After the rape of Proserpine by Pluto, Ceres sought

* Holmes, Parish of Holywood, ap. *Stat. Acct.* of Ireland, v. iii. p. 208.

† D'Herbelot, *Bibliothèque Orientale*. V. GAILAN. t. ii. p. 59.

‡ Paracelsus, de Vita longa, c. iv. p. 39.

§ Gratian *Decretalia*, p. ii. causa. xxvi. q. 7. "Non licet—lauro aut viriditate arborum cingere domos—haec observatio paganorum est."

¶ Sulpitius Severus, de Vita Martini, § 10. ap. *Bib. Patr. Lugd.* t. vi. p. 351.

her daughter by torch light, for which the pine was the principal material among the ancients. Kindling pine lights on Christmas eve, in Sweden; erecting pines at doors and gates, and strewing the floors of houses on important occasions, was practised in the north.* Hallowing the parturient with a fir candle, was known in Scotland in the preceding century.† Thus, the “battoun of fir” may have been considered an instrument of sorcery, as formed of a mystical tree.

Juniper was burnt as propitiatory, before their cattle, by the Highlanders. It is strewed before funerals, in a northern region.‡ Evergreens were in general mystical.

Those narrow botanical distinctions of genera and species, which the moderns seem disposed to carry *ad infinitum*, must not be sought after of old. Thence common descriptions only are to be received. Not far from the period that an illustrious naturalist, to whom system is so much indebted, was born—a scientific question was advanced: “Is there a male and female in trees?” How was it answered—just as ignorance views knowledge, “Ha! Ha! Ha! Differences in soil, cause differences in species, but not in vegetatives.” It was called “a merry conceit, but no more.”|| How many

* *Rudbeckius*, *Atlantica*, t. i. p. 695. t. ii. p. 232, 305, 603.

† *Trial of George and Lauchlan Ratray*, 1705, in MS.

‡ *Pennant*, *Tour*, 1769, p. 186. *Jones*, *Travels*, v. ii. p. 80.—At Moscow.

|| *Athenian Mercury*, 1691, v. iv. No. 9. q. 3. No. 24. q. 6. Impregnation of the palm was known previously.

assaults does science suffer in infancy ! how much ridicule is cast on learning !

Consecrated groves, the scene of mysteries, have been venerated among all nations. Deities have dwelt amidst their flames ; or when the sound was heard in the tops of the mulberry trees, then should the warrior seek his enemy, for God had gone before him.* If a tree were venerated, or an idol stood there, the Jews might not shelter themselves by the shade of the trunk, but they might sit beneath the leaves or branches." The use of the tree was then interdicted.†

The poets have figured the metamorphosis of the human race to trees, or herbs, or flowers. So Atys was transformed to a pine, Syrinx to a reed, and Adonis to an anemone. Neither have some denied sensation to plants, or even an audible testimony of suffering, according to the romantic fictions of imagination. Sanguinary streams have escaped from their wounds.

It was reported of old, that in "Enhallow, or the sanctified isle, if corn were reaped after setting of the sun, blood would speedily flow from the stalks."‡ Nor was this the only example.

* 1 *Chronicles*, ch. xiv. v. 15.

† *Moses Maimonides*, de Idololatria, c. vii. § 16.

‡ *Ben Orchadiarum Insularum Descriptio*, in MS. No. 15. *Enhallow*.

CHAPTER XII.

MYSTICAL ANIMALS.

Toad.—AMONG the portentous animals familiar to sorcerers, and an object of superstitious apprehension, “the tode is the most excellent, whose ouglie deformitie signifieth sweete and amiable fortune:” of all others it was the most acceptable to those who dealt in deeds of darkness.* Its head contained a jewel, according to the credulity of some, and a deleterious ingredient exuded from its body, for the ceremonies of others. Whence an inoffensive creature which shuns the light of day, was persecuted by mankind, as if its existence had been obnoxious to nature. Perhaps it was from the antipathy of the toad to rue, that this plant occupied a place in every garden: and it is still believed, that if cast on the animal, it quickly swells and dies.

If the inhabitants of Scotland entertained any previous aversion to the toad, it could not but be aggravated by the stratagems of Satan and his crew at Lammas 1590. Then some of them were enjoined “to hing, and rost, and drop ane taid, and to lay the

* *Scot Discouerie*, b. ix. c. 14. p. 202.

droppis of the taid, mixt with strang wasch, ane adder's skyn, the thing in the fairheid of ane new foillit foill, in his maiestie's way, when his maiestie wald gang in owre or out owre, or in ony passage, that it myght drop vpoun his hienes' heid, or his body, for his hienes' destruction. Margaret Thomsoun was appointit to dropp the taid." In consequence, it was alleged, that "thair wes ane taid hingand be the helis thre nyghtis, and droppit betuix thre oister schellis, and nine stanis sottin thre nyghtis."* From enmity, credulity, or prejudice, it was affirmed, that witches had been consulted at the birth of the Marquis of Montrose, and that he had ate a toad while a sucking infant.†

The language of poets, and narratives in judicial proceedings, have conspired to astound and to terrify the timid. These animals are said to have been baptised for magical purposes,—kept, fed, and decorated with ribbands.‡ Some were believed to haunt man-

* Trial of Agnes Sampson,—of Barbara Naipar,—of Ewfame Macalyane, *ut sup.* The scene of the conspiracy was "the harbour of the Pans called Achison's Haven." *Sinclair Miscellany Observations*, ap. *Natural Philosophy*, p. 279. *The thing in the fairheid of ane new foillit foill*, i.e. "Hippomanes appellatum, in fronte, caricæ magnitudine colore nigro." *Pliny*, lib. viii. c. 66. xxxviii. c. 49. *Ælian de Natura Animalium*, lib. iii. c. 17. xiv. c. 18. Being employed chiefly as an aphrodisiac or amatory charm, it is not obvious why this substance should be introduced here.

† *Scot Staggering State*, p. 14.

‡ *Bodinus*, lib. ii. c. 8. p. 208, 219, 404.

kind, who could scarcely overpower and destroy them.* To aggravate abhorrence of the noted Vanini, who fell a victim to his infidelity, a toad was alleged to have been kept in his chamber. The author has heard of a student in the medical school of Edinburgh, who carried such a pet in his pocket many years.

A jewel was believed to be contained in the head of the toad, which has been celebrated more by poets than by naturalists. But this seems only a branch of that credulity which found stones in the head of other animals, fishes, or serpents; such as that of an Abyssinian serpent of great efficacy "in repelling all kinds of poison."†

This imaginary jewel was certainly different from the *Bufo* or *Toad-Stone* previously named; now ascertained to be the petrified tooth of a fish. It was of some value, however, and set in gold rings, one of which the parties interested pledged for the performance of marriage here in 1616.‡ The stone might be procured entire by burying the toad in an ant-hill to consume its flesh, and its genuineness was supposed to be ascertained by a toad raising itself and snatching at it when put within reach!||

* *Glanvil Sadducismus Triumphatus*, p. 327, 331.

† *Lobo Voyage to Abyssinia*, p. 32.

‡ *Halyrudhouse K.S.R.*, 19 May. John Nimok and Alisone Paterson "gave up thair names and consignit ane gold ring with ane toadstone thairin."

|| *Mizaldus*, cent. ix. § 14, 21.

As the toad is not mentioned in Scripture, it may be asked whether the same vocable does not signify either frog or toad.

The author is not aware that the frog is considered mystical, or the subject of any prejudice in Scotland: but the commentators on Shakspeare explain the expression "paddock calls," as "a toad calls."* Probably they are right. The *toad-stool* in England is named the *paddock-stool* here. A person in Rothsay offers to send his correspondent "a *podock-stone*, its price being 3 dolors."† Likewise one was alarmed at "ane great *paddock* in the mouth of the stoupe," apparently too large to get down, and on casting it forth another sickened immediately.‡

The opinions entertained regarding the frog in different countries are much at variance. It was certainly considered mystical or noxious by the Jews; both because the visionary "saw three unclean spirits, like frogs, come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet:"§ and because frogs were rendered pestilential by Aaron and the Egyptian magicians.¶

* Shakspeare Macbeth, act i. scene 1. Witches, "Paddock calls, anon."

† Letter James Lee, 22 Oct. 1700. ap: *Letters on Literature*, v. i. No. 103. in MS.

‡ Trial of Elspeth Cursetter, 29 May 1529. *Rec. Ork.* f. 50. *Stoupe*—pail.

§ Revelation, ch. xvi. v. 13.

¶ Exodus, ch. ii. v. 67.

But, on the other hand, it is said, that the frog is an animal which the Mahometans judge it unlawful to destroy, because it praises God by its croaking: and because frogs carried water to Abraham, when, according to their belief, he was cast into the fire by the Chaldeans.* In the kingdom of Nepaul, a small portion of mashed boiled rice is carried by the agriculturist to his fields, and part offered to each frog that he can find, along with an invocation to protect his crop.†

The date of the preceding ceremony is ascribed to the eleventh of August. But in Tavernier's time all the women of the Gaurs or Guebres, that is, the fire worshippers of Persia, assembled from every city and village to kill the whole frogs they could find in the fields, according to the injunctions of a prophet who had suffered some annoyance from them.‡

Snail.—It does not appear that the other lower animals have been reputed mystical in Scotland. On the continent, there is an allusion to demoniac snails: and in this country, some vague opinions are still entertained regarding a prognostication of the season from these creatures. By the Jews they were classed along with the ferret, the chameleon, the lizard, and the mole, as unclean.||

* *Bochartus Hierozoicon*, t. ii. lib. v. c. 5. col. 673.

† *Hamilton Buchanan Account of Nepal*, p. 43.

‡ *Tavernier Travels in Persia*, b. iv. ch. 8.

|| *Leviticus*, ch. xi. v. 30.

A stone was believed to exist in the head of the snail, or in the larger shells, possessed of various medicinal virtues. It was pounded and swallowed in wine for certain distempers, and esteemed beneficial to the parturient also:* and it was much commended for the eyes. But authors do not agree on its precise form—one describing it as having the “exact figure of the snaile:” another calling it “a small hollow cylinder of blue glass, composed of four or five annulets:”† a third, speaking of two, says, the one “is about the bignesse of a nut, of a blew colour, and shaped like a horl, with a hole through it; the other is 4 times as large, of the same shape, but of a more dark colour.” Both were found in the fields.‡

Fishes.—Ascending the animal scale, though nothing can be less congenial than superstition and the arrangements of nature, mystical or sanctified fishes were recognised in a well near the church of Kilmore in Lorn, during the course of the seventeenth century. These are described as having been two, black, never augmenting either in size or number, nor exhibiting any alteration of colour, according to the testimony of the most aged persons. The inhabitants

* *Mixaldus*, cent. iii. § 41.

† *Fraser*, Answer to Mr Witheroe's Queries, Ap. 20., 1702. *ut sup.* Letter, Woodrow to Sir Robert Sibbald, 23 Nov. 1710. “The snail stone was found in the fields:” ap. *Woodrow's Correspondence* in MS. v. 2. in 12mo. *Llwyd*, *ut sup.*

‡ Letter, J. Anderson, “Rossdoe, 27 May 1703,” ap.: *Letters upon Literature*, v. ii. No. 64. in MS.

of the country, "doe call the saids fishes *Easg Seant*, that is to say, *holie fishes*." None were believed to exist elsewhere, nor were others seen in the same spring.*

Sanctified fishes have been recognised in various parts of the world, especially in the East. In a garden at Ghomesha in Persia, are several reservoirs of sacred fish;† probably the same place, where an Armenian Christian venturing to take some of them, is said to have been massacred on the spot. They were ornamented with brass rings, or of silver and gold, like some of those belonging to an ancient temple of Jupiter in Asia Minor, which were ornamented with chains and rings also.‡ It appears that the Persian fishes were consecrated to the Mahometan saints: and if one were killed, some signal calamity would follow the sacrilege. Sanctified fishes are also seen in a well among the ruins of a chapel, said to have been dedicated by Justinian, near the sea of Marmora.¶ On a certain day, the Chinese in Pekin boil and eat fresh fish in honour of a divinity, and in memory of their ancestors. But in Mongolia, on the confines of that country, certain fishes are esteemed sacred, from belief of the metempsychosis.§ In Cochin China, a temple

* *Noats and Observations of the Hiellands* in MS., *ut sup.*

† *Alexander Travels*, p. 146.

‡ *Ælian de Natura Animalium*, lib. xii. c. 30.

¶ *Jones Travels*, v. ii. p. 476.

§ *Timkowski Travels*, v. ii. p. 50. v. i. p. 32.

is dedicated to certain great fishes, as tutelary divinities of the place, and the protectors of the fishermen.*

A lake near the temple of Hierapolis in Syria, contained sanctified fishes,—one with a golden ornament attached to a fin.† The superstitious ascribed direful distempers inflicted by the Syrian goddess, on those who did not abstain from eating certain fishes.‡ In Phœnicia, Lucian saw the image of the mother of Semiramis, as half a woman and half a fish: but at Hierapolis, as a woman entirely. A temple at Ascalon in Syria, near a lake abounding in fishes, was consecrated to a goddess half a fish.|| The fish is considered a metamorphosis of Venus. Eastern mythology teaches the incarnation of a divinity as a fish: with which the Dagon of the Philistines, believed partly a fish, has been therefore identified.§

At Pyrrha, a village in Syria, an augury was deduced from fishes appearing or not, when called by diviners, or from their leaping up, or floating dead on the water.¶ Whence the *Seant Easg* or *Holie*

* *Crawfurd*, Embassy to Siam and Cochin China, 1822, v. i. p. 315.

† *Lucianus* de Dea Syria, § 14, 45—47. ap.: *Op. t. iii.* *Ælian*, lib. xii. c. 2. This author names various places where such fishes were preserved.

‡ *Plutarch* de Superstitione, ap. *Op. t. ii.* p. 170. *Symposiacon*, *ibid.* p. 730. Edit. in folio.

|| *Diodorus Siculus*, lib. ii. c. 5.

§ *Francklin* Researches on the Jeynes and Boodhists, p. 126.

¶ *Ælian* de Natura Animalium, lib. viii. c. 5.

Fishes in the well of Kilmore, may have been sanctified by ancient superstitions.

Mystical Birds.—Raven. Throughout the world this ominous bird forebodes either death or disappointment. In the East it is figured as the soul of the dead:* in the North it is the minister of tidings from the upper world to the deity of the infernal regions.† When Aristeas, a necromancer, disappeared from the earth, the ancients assert his return as a raven. Eastern fables declare it to be banished from heaven to the earth, for disclosing the counsels of the gods.‡

The raven was unclean among the Jews: yet, appointed the divine messenger to feed the hungry prophet, and sent abroad to ascertain the condition of the deluged world.|| Failing to return, the Easterns call it the bird of separation.§

The Greeks and Romans deduced augury from its croaking.¶ It was consecrated to Apollo, the god of vaticination.**

If croaking over a house, the Andalusians expected

* *Barthelemy*, Voyage aux Indes Orientales, t. i. p. 42.

† *Rudbeckins Atlantica*, t. ii. c. 5. p. 352. *Mallet*, Northern Antiquities, v. ii. p. 77. Neither this author, nor his translator Dr Percy, can have seen the preceding work.

‡ *Wilford*, Sacred Isles of the West, ap. : *Asiat. Res.* v. ix. p. 97.

|| *Genesis*, ch. viii. v. 7. *Leviticus*, ch. xiv. v. 15. *I Kings*, ch. xvii. v. 4, 6.

§ *Bochartus Hierozoicon*, lib. i. c. 3. t. 1. col. 19, 20.

¶ *Porphyrius de Abstinencia*, lib. iii. § 4.

** *Ælian de Natura Animalium*, lib. i. c. 48. lib. vii. c. 8.

an unlucky day : * repeated thrice, it was a fatal pre-sage : if perching high, turning, and croaking, a corpse should soon come from a house in that direction : † or perching on a house while it croaks, death is augured within. ‡

Two ravens contending in the air, are an evil omen. ||

When Cicero was proscribed, he was haunted by ravens perching on the vessel that bore him to the shore : and sitting, with portentous croaking, on the window of a chamber wherein he reposed, one alighting on the couch, “drew aside the robe which covered his face,”—a fatal omen. §

Flights of ravens indicated demoniac presence. Persons watching a dying man were so much terrified by their approach and clamours here, that they left him to expire alone. ¶

It was under such a guise that Satan shewed himself to his proselytes. “Thrie corbies cam vnto the well, drank of the water, and cryit most fearfullie,” where a woman sought water, so that, after a third attempt, “the corbies cam in sic maner,” that she failed. **

* Martin de Arles, § 17.

† Ramesay, p. 271. Perkins, ch. iii. p. 72.

‡ Zallony Voyage a Tiné, p. 157.

|| Raffles History of Java, v. i. p. 245.

§ Plutarch in Vita Cicer. ap.: Op. t. i. p. 885.

¶ Woodrow Analecta, ad an: 1701, v. i. p. 317.

** Trial of Cristiane Leisk, 21 Ap: 1643. Rec. Ork. f. 266. v.

If the superstitious dread of ravens has abated in Britain, they are still regarded with awe in other countries. When flocks hovered over the French soldiers, amidst the conflagration of Moscow, their screams were interpreted as the harbingers of death.*

Rudbeck observes, that the flight of a magpie towards a house denotes the sudden arrival of strangers:† which is prognosticated also here by its chattering. It foreboded evil likewise. A magpie having rested on a standard, “the ensign said, ‘What means this in our march? Certainly the prisoner will be taken from us, and some of us killed, and it may be I:’ and soe he was killed.”‡

Is the owl, the bird consecrated to the goddess of wisdom, truly ominous? or is it deemed so, only from being a tenant of the night, amidst silence, solitude, and melancholy? If beheld in the day, or amidst cities, it was of direful portent.|| One caught in the Roman capital was burnt, and its ashes thrown into the Tiber.§ Twice, an owl having crossed the way of a father and son, at the interval of years, and having endeavoured to perch on each, this was held a prognostication of the speedy dissolution of both.¶

* *O'Meara a Voice from St Helena*, v. i. p. 196.

† *Rudbeckius Atlantica*, t. iii. c. 12, § 2. p. 497.

‡ *Woodrow Analecta*, June 1712. v. iii. p. 59.

|| *Pliny Hist. Nat.*, lib. x. c. 12.

§ *Julius Obsequens de Prodigiiis*, c. 85.

¶ *Woodrow Analecta*, January 1731. v. 6. p. 240.

In Scotland the yellow hammer has been considered mystical from three drops of the blood of Satan in its body, but farther explanation is unknown. The presence of the lark, called "our lady's hen," was deemed auspicious in the Orkney Islands.*

Birds are mystical in one country, though not evidently so in another, or synonyms are wanting to identify them.

It is not known, that, in recent times, the dove, an emblem of fidelity and innocence, has been viewed as a mystical bird in Scotland; though, since the days of Noah, when sent forth from the ark, various nations have incorporated the divine essence with its presence, or have given it some share in their ceremonies. At Hierapolis, in Syria, the dove was sacred: to touch it was unlawful, and required atonement. Some affirm, that in this shape Semiramis had migrated from the earth.†

Something spiritual or etherial, is generally figured under this bird, to which, as emblematic of purity, white is the colour generally ascribed also. When the sacred fire of the Gaurs, Guebres, or fire worshippers, was profaned by a stranger, it flew away in the form of a white dove.‡ Probably the dove of Hierapolis was white.

* *Brand*, p. 61.

† *Lucianus* de Dea Syria, § 14, 54. ap.: *Op.* t. iii. *Diodorus Siculus*, lib. ii. § 20. t. 1. p. 134.

‡ *Tavernier Travels*, b. iv. ch. 8. p. 167.

Quid referam ut volitet crebras intacta per urbes
Alba Palestinæ, Sancta *Columba* suo.

TIBULLUS, Lib. i. *Carm.* 8.

When St Quintine was decapitated during the persecution of Domitian against the Christians, "a white dove escaping from his neck ascended to the heavens."* St Benedict beheld the spirit of his sister, St Scolastica, quitting her body in the shape of a dove.† "A snow white dove, with a golden bill, was wont to sit on the head of St Kentigern, while occupied in sacred rites : "‡ and it is related, that a certain damsel, severely distempered, having been carried to the shrine of St Ebba, at Coldingham, she recovered after beholding a white dove on the altar in a vision.§ The Mahometans are said to protect pigeons though not of this colour. But some aversion was entertained by the most ancient Persians,|| which subsisted in the time of Marco Polo,¶ and whether from prejudice or favour, the moderns do not feed on them : they are of cindery blue, white being unknown.** Thus these birds have received a kind of

* *Proprium Sanctorum*, f. cxxxvi. ap. *Brev. Aberd.* t. ii.

† *Proprium Sanctorum*, f. liv. ap. *Brev. Aberd.* t. i.

‡ *Vita S. Kentigerni*, c. iii. § 17. ap. *Bollandus Vitæ Sanctorum*, t. i. p. 817.

§ *Proprium Sanctorum*, f. lxxxviii. ap. *Brev. Aberd.*, t. ii.

|| *Herodotus*, lib. i. § 138.

¶ *Marco Polo* by Marsden, p. 86.

** *Morier Second Journey through Persia*, p. 141.

consideration in various countries, which can have only arose from connecting them with sanctified rites.

Mystical doves appear frequently in the biography of the christian saints. It is not wonderful that a creature so beautiful, so placid, so affectionate, and domestic, has gained the regard of mankind,—that it should have been the attribute of Venus,—the emblem of love and fidelity.

It is not known that the cock was recognized as a mystical bird in Scotland. Resuming the substance of previous observations,—the cock was consecrated to Apollo, the god of day, also the tutelary divinity of medicine: and to Æsculapius, his son by the nymph Coronis. Some of the ancients believed, that the heart of the cock was acceptable in sacrifice,* which is interpreted as relative to predictions, for Apollo was the god of vaticination. During the prevalence of infectious diseases in the East, the cock forms an oblation to a sanguinary divinity: it is sacrificed at the entrance of the temples dedicated to one corresponding to the Hecate of the Greeks: or it is killed over the bed of the invalid, who is sprinkled with its blood.† The same oblation is offered by the women of Malabar.‡ Formerly, and it may be still, a red cock was dedicated by sick persons in Ceylon to a

* *Iamblichus de Mysteriis*, § v. c. 8. p. 123.

† *Barthelemy Voyage aux Indes Orientales*, t. i. p. 418, 420. The goddess Bhagavadi, the spouse of Mithra, or the Sun.

‡ *Moor Hindu Pantheon*, p. 149, 150.

malignant divinity, and afterwards offered as a sacrifice in the event of recovery.* Though reprobated by the priests, it is frequent in certain parts of the island.† At length medicine came to be administered in Europe at the crowing of the cock, which was considered superstitious.‡ In Scotland, it will be recollected, that a cock was buried alive for insanity; that the blood of a red cock was administered in a flour cake to an invalid: and that the female of this bird was burnt alive as the remedy for a distemper.||

As the crowing of the cock announced the approach of Phœbus, or Apollo, the god of day, it became mystical as offensive to sorcerers, who hasten to shun the light:§ for Lucian says, that during certain conjurations, the moon, brought down, flew up to heaven, Hecate sunk into the earth, and the other spirits vanished when the cock began to crow.¶ Cock-crowing at an untimely hour was deemed ominous:** “Peter denied again, and immediately the cock crew;”†† in commemoration of which, it is said, a festival has been

* *Knox Relation of Ceylon*, p. 78.

† *Davy Account of Ceylon*, p. 229.

‡ *Pizzurnus Enchiridion*, p. iii. lib. 1. c. 5. p. 54.

|| Trial of Cristian Lewingstoun, 1597.—of Thomas Greave, 1623.
ut sup.

§ *Remigius*, lib. i. c. 14. p. 108.

¶ *Lucianus Philopseudes*, § 14. ap.: *Op. t. iii. p. 44.*

** *Martin de Arles*, § 26–29.

†† *John*, ch. xviii. v. 29. It is difficult to reconcile the different narratives of this incident.

instituted, wherein the celebrators imitate the crowing of a cock, accompanied by ceremonies "most deafening to the ear, and perfectly ridiculous to the eye."* Thus the cock, consecrated to the divinities of ancient and modern pagans, became mystical among the Jews and Christians: nor has it been neglected as an ingredient of the superstitions of Scotland.

But it is more difficult to find the source of a persecution exercised against an innocent little creature, one among the smallest of the feathered tribe, the *wren*, whereas the *red-breast*, rather a persecutor of its fellows, is an object of interest in Scotland. Perhaps it is from the relics of superstition. Some years ago it was observed, that, in Ireland, "the wren is still hunted and killed by the peasants on Christmas day: and on the following St Stephen's day, he is carried about by the leg in the centre of two hoops crossing each other at right angles; and a procession made in every village, of men, women, and children, singing an Irish catch, importing him to be the king of all birds."† Formerly the wren was hunted in the Isle of Man, on Christmas day also. When one was killed, it was laid on a bier with great solemnity, carried to the parish church, and buried after singing dirges, called its knell, over it, in the Manks language.

* *Cochrane Residence in Columbia*, v. ii. p. 335.

† *Vallancey*, ap. *Coll. de Reb. Hib.*, v. iv. No. 13. St Stephen's day is that after Christmas.

This being concluded, Christmas commenced.* The inhabitants of the town of Ciotat, near Marseilles, armed with sabres and pistols, commence an anniversary hunting of the wren about the same period. When one is captured, it is suspended, as if a heavy burden, from the middle of a long pole, borne on the shoulders of two men, carried in procession through the streets, and weighed on a strong balance: after which there is a convivial entertainment.†

The source of these customs is unknown. In France, an unintelligible resemblance seems to be figured between the wren, the woodcock, and the polecat. In Ireland, the hostility towards it is said to originate in its having been the means of awakening a party of protestants when surprised by their catholic foes at Glinsuly, near Letterkenny, where the last battle was fought between them. "For this reason the wild Irish mortally hate these birds to this day, calling them the devil's servants, and killing them whenever they catch them: and sometimes, on holidays, a whole parish may be seen running from hedg to hedg a wren hunting."‡ Others conceive, that the Hibernian Druids shewed a preference for the wren: that part of their golden ornaments were appropriated for its perch: that the superstitious veneration it received

* *Waldron Description of the Isle of Man*, p. 155.

† *Sonnini Travels*, v. i. p. 16. Trans. in 8vo. This is said to be on the first days of *Nivose*, which commenced on the 23d of December.

‡ *Aubrey Miscellanies*, ch. iv. p. 45.

induced the resentment of the first christian missionaries: and thence the origin of its persecution, in their commands to the peasants. The Irish catch imports that the wren is king of all birds: and this pre-eminence, it is observed, pervades its synonyms in every European language, which generally signify *a king* or *a little king*. All this, however, is a very questionable doctrine. The *Bren*, or king, of the Welsh, seems to be of more immediate analogy indeed: but a distinction infinitely more specific is assigned to the character, sentiments, and ceremonies of the Druids, than is sanctioned by the genuine grounds of history: nor can the late and early aversion towards the object be reconciled by such discordant reasons. Though the wren was still hunted in Ireland in the year 1805,* later authority signifies, that “assembling in the christmas holidays as mummers or *wren-boys*” has become obsolete.† Perhaps the persecution of the wren is almost obliterated in Scotland also.

Birds have become mystical from consecration to deities, from being employed in ancient auguries, and from credulity in divine or demoniac metamorphosis. At this day they are recognised as such in most countries—in the South Sea islands, among the savages of Africa, and on the continent of Europe. By nations of the highest antiquity they were venerated when living,

* *Brand*, Popular Antiquities by Ellis, v. ii. p. 516.

† *Graham* Parish of Kilrush, ap. *Stat. Acct. of Ireland*, v. ii. p. 460.

and reposed in the catacombs appropriated to receive the remains of the dead.

The mystical properties assigned to the quadrupeds of Scotland, afford little scope for observation. A weasel or a hare crossing a road is still thought ominous. Mice frequenting a house is deemed auspicious, as rats deserting it rather betokens evil. The ancients had some singular notions regarding the natural history of the weasel: they commemorate the hare as an object of superstition: and the Armenians now abhor its sight as ominous.* The lands of the Philistines being infested with mice, they consecrated five golden ones to the divinity.† In the temple of Vulcan in Egypt, his statue represented him holding a mouse, because he sent a swarm of mice to gnaw the bowstrings of foreign invaders; and the Bœotians are said to have performed sacred rites to Apollo, whose statue also grasped a mouse, that the province might be preserved from them.‡ Strabo speaks of sacred mice in an ancient temple in the Troad.§ A demoniac rat is alluded to in England. Their numbers and destructiveness seem to have been thought ominous here:§ and during the imprisonment of a suspected witch, after an altercation between her

* *Chandler Travels*, v. i. p. 150.

† *1 Samuel*, ch. vi. v. 5.

‡ *Alexander ab Alexadro Geniales Dies*, lib. i. c. 12. lib. iv. c. 12.

§ *Strabo*, lib. xiii. t. ii. p. 901.

§ *Woodrow Analecta*, v. iv. p. 168.

and John White's wife, "the said Janet came to his house and span on his wife's wheel in her absence: and thereafter there came a *white ratton* at sundrie times and sat on his cow's back, so that thereafter the cow dwined away."*

In the year 1691 a question was put, "Why do Scotchmen hate swine's flesh?" and unsatisfactorily answered, "They might borrow it of the Jews."† The same prejudice, though infinitely abated, still subsists. Yet it is not known that swine have been regarded as mystical animals in Scotland. Earlier in the seventeenth century, the aversion to them by the lower ranks, especially in the North, was so great, and elsewhere, and the flesh was so much undervalued, that, except for those reared at mills, the breed would have been extirpated.‡ Dr Johnson observes, that the commons in the Isle of Sky, "have not only eels, but pork and bacon in abhorrence,"—and that he never saw a hog in the Hebrides but one at Dunvegan.¶ Nevertheless the duty, rent or tribute, called *pannagium*, which is gen-

* *Dysart Kirk Session Minutes*, 5 May 1626, ap.: *Muir*, Notices of the Burgh Church, and Ministers, School, and Teachers of Dysart, 1831, in 12mo. If others who have access would imitate the laudable example of the intelligent editor of this fasciculus, it might be the means of communicating many curious facts now latent in original registers.

† *Athenian Mercury*, v. i. No. 20, q. 13.

‡ *Gordon. Adnotata*, 1620—1643, in MS. *ut sup.*

¶ *Johnson, Journey to the Western Islands*, p. 136.

erally interpreted as due for feeding swine on acorns, is named in ancient writings, such as a grant in the year 1203.* Probably some aversion entertained by certain sectaries of the Jews against swine, has led to the alleged expulsion of the Satanic legion to take possession of these animals.† The Egyptians held swine in abhorrence: and although the Galli of the temple of Hierapolis in Syria beheld them with equal disgust, sometimes they were esteemed sanctified in Egypt, sacrificed occasionally in their religious rites, and the flesh ate.‡ In the North of Europe a boar was sacrificed to the superior deities. Heidrek selecting one of the largest size, it was kept so carefully that every bristle resembled gold. On yule eve it was brought into the hall to the king, who ratified solemn pledges, and promised justice to the people, by putting one hand on the head and another on the bristles. To obtain a plentiful harvest, it was sacrificed in the beginning of February to the goddess Freya, whom he worshipped.|| Rudbeck says, that bread in Sweden was often baked in the form of a sow,

* *Analysis of the Records of the Bishopric of Moray*, p. 69.

† *Macrae*, a late translator, assigns as the reason, that "Jesus had thus punished them for dealing in swine contrary to the law." *Interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures of the New Testament*: London 1798, in 8vo.

‡ *Lucianus de Dea Syria*, § 54.

|| *Hervarar Saga*, c. 14. p. 126.

which is inferred to bear some relation to sacrifice.*

In certain countries a hog is always part of a ceremonious gift.† Superstition forms a strange medley.—“The Jews are no more sanctified,” says Celsus, “because they abstain from swine’s flesh, than the Egyptians, who, as is known, never destroyed goats, sheep, oxen, and fishes. Nor on that account is it to be believed they deserve greater praise, or are dearer to the gods than others.”‡

Cat.—If the mystical quadrupeds of Scotland were few or of little note, the cat forms a remarkable exception. Trusting to the older records of history, it held a most important place in occult ceremonies.

Necromancers are familiar with the tenants of the infernal abodes. Of these the chief was personified by the Jews as Satan, whose name and imaginary presence have inspired such unspeakable affright among Christian nations. But the other people of antiquity established two divinities presiding over the regions of darkness, as Pluto and Proserpine, the latter known besides, as the sister of Apollo and the patroness of sorcerers. As the gigantic Typhon, sprung of the earth, arose to war against the gods, they fled into Egypt, adopting metamorphoses to conceal themselves

* *Rudbeckius Atlantica*, t. ii. p. 212. fig. i. p. 230.

† *Crawford Embassy*.—Of Cochin China, v. i. p. 322.

‡ *Origen cont. Celsum*, lib. v. p. 259.

from so formidable a foe—when Hecate transformed herself to a cat.

Fele soror Phœbi * *

* * * latuit.

OID Met. lib. v. l. 330.

Likewise, when the Fates retarded Alcmena's labour by a charm to gratify Juno, Galinthias, her comrade, declaring to them and Lucina, that her delivery was the will of Jupiter, they dissolved the charm, and Hercules was born; but resenting the deception, transformed her to a cat. Then Hecate, commiserating the change, chose her as a consecrated attendant.*

If the cat was valued by the goddess of the shades, it is not remarkable that it should be held the favourite of Satan.

In Scotland, its tenacity of life, its sucking the breath of infants, and falling on its feet, have been ever the subject of popular credulity, as on the continent. It was hated of the Gaurs, because the evil spirit bestowed on it such strength as mankind could scarcely destroy.† Here, the water wherein a fisherman kept his bait, was used to wash a cat's head, cast into the sea, or about his boat, to propitiate the fishery.‡ A cat was drawn thrice or nine times through

* *Lucianus*, de Sacrificiis, § 14. ap.: *Op. t. i. p. 588.* *Pausanias*, Lib. ix. c. 15. *Antoninus Liberalis*, Transformationum Congeries, c. 28, 29.

† *Tavernier*, Travels, b. iv. ch. 8. p. 168.

‡ Trial of Mareoun Ritchart, 29 May 1629. *Rec. Ork. f. 49. r.*

the crook of a chimney, and through an iron gate; it was baptized by the proselytes of Satan, and thrown to their master, or by his injunctions committed to the deep, with the joints of a skeleton bound to its feet.* These creatures were also selected in an especial manner, for their own mysterious metamorphoses: though under this conformation, sometimes they received wounds, contusions, or fractures, either lacerating, or effectually disabling the corresponding members, when restored to their pristine shape. Yet, such a faculty was restricted to the mystical number nine.† But it was in this form that they were believed to frequent the sabbat, or nocturnal convention of sorcerers: and it is said that Fontenelle acknowledged his education in the belief of all the cats deserting their dwellings on the eve of St John, to repair thither.‡

The structure and habits of no animal could be better adapted for inspiring credulity of its mystical nature. Its varying pupil: its watchfulness amidst night: the convocations of its kind,—all peculiarities unknown to other domestic creatures; besides, that prejudice which assigned the gradual progress of its propagation, as at first by one, two, three, four, always augmenting the number, until seven were pro-

* Trial of Agnes Sampson—Eufame Macalyane—Johne Feane—Beigis Tod, 1590, 1594, 1608, *ut sup.*

† *Steevens*, Notes on Shakespeare, quotes a tract entitled, "Beware the Cat, 1584," for a witch being empowered "to take on her a cattles body nine times."

‡ *Moncrif Œuvres*, t. ii. p. 377.

duced at a birth, and the aggregate amounted to twenty-eight, or the days composing a lunation.* This, together with the opinion of the pupil of its eye dilating at full moon, and diminishing with the wane, were sufficient to consecrate it to Hecate.

The caprices and prejudices of mankind have never shone more prominently, than in their treatment of these most useful domestic creatures—in one place, the idol of veneration, in another, the object of persecution, dread, and abhorrence, as if devoted to Satan. Some inhabitants of Egypt shaved their eye-brows, on losing their cats by a natural death.† They were embalmed and deposited in sepulchres. In Rhadata, a town on the confines of the neighbouring country, a golden cat was worshipped as a divinity:‡ and Diodorus represents the imminent danger of the Roman soldiers in Alexandria, from one of them having killed a cat.|| To avert Divine vengeance for the like, the offenders, among the ruder natives of an Indian tribe, distribute salt in atonement.§ Hanway, the English traveller, found cats in high estimation in Persia.¶ A race of people inhabiting the Caucasian mountains, if not deifying this animal, consider it entitled to the

* *Plutarch*, de Iside et Osiride, ap. Op. t. vii. p. 482.

† *Herodotus*, Lib. ii. c. 66, 67.

‡ *Pliny*, Hist. Nat. Lib. vi. c. 35.

|| *Diodorus Siculus*, Lib. i. c. 8. t. i. p. 94.

§ *Asiatic Researches*, v. vi. p. 82.

¶ *Hanway*, Travels, v. i. p. 161.

greatest respect.* Nor is it unlikely, that the Turkish emperor, said to have provided a public endowment for the sustenance of a multitude of cats in the capital, deemed himself honoured in paying such a testimony of veneration for a creature, the special favourite of his prophet.†

Animals became mystical from colour, particularly white, red, or black. A prejudice against white cows has subsisted among the peasantry of Scotland, on account of the alleged inferiority of the milk. But its true source may be in some remote superstition, regarding the lawfulness of consuming the product of a consecrated animal. The veneration of white cattle in the East, at this day, is almost equal to sanctification. A late English missionary was indulged with “a sight of the sacred cattle, bulls, or cows,” large white animals kept by the Rajah of Mysore.‡ In Ceylon, the king’s herd of white cattle, brought from the continent of India, and much valued on account of their colour, was entrusted to the care of a certain officer.|| A white ox is a gift of special favour in Africa.§ A sacred white ox was kept anciently at Aphroditopolis, a town on the confines of Arabia.¶

* *Reinegg’s Mount Caucasus*, v. i. p. 205.

† *Hobhouse, Journey, Let. 50.* v. ii. p. 792.

‡ *Hoole, Mission to the South of India*, [1822] p. 86.

|| *Davy, Account of Ceylon*, p. 150.

§ *Park, Travels*, v. i. p. 86. v. ii. p. 151.

¶ *Strabo, Lib. xvii. t. ii. p. 1147.* Edit. 1807; in fol.

A single white hair disqualified cattle for a sacrifice to the God Isis, in Egypt.* Was destruction thence unlawful?

White chickens are offered in Africa, to propitiate woodland spirits, supposed white, with long flowing hair.† The sanctified doves of Syria were white. Auspicious prognostications were connected with visions of white horses, by the Jews.‡ The arrival of an Eastern divinity, mounted on a white horse, in an age of purity, for renovation of the world, is predicted.|| Cyrus, provoked at losing a sacred white horse, in the stream of the Gyndes, drew off the river by three hundred and sixty channels, declaring that it should not wet a woman to the knee.§

Many in Britain undervalue a white horse, as less hardy. In China, that colour is esteemed the most. A tribute of eight white horses is exacted yearly, from each of three distinguished individuals of a neighbouring Tartar tribe, from which four are retained.¶ Modern African potentates present a stranger with a white horse, as well as a white bullock, in token of regard.**

* *Herodotus*, Lib. i. § 189.

† *Park*, Travels, v. i. p. 71.

‡ *Revelation*, ch. vi. v. 2—5.

|| *Moor*, Hindu Pantheon, p. 188.

§ *Herodotus*, Lib. ii. § 38.

¶ *Timkowski*, Travels, v. ii. p. 58, 331.

** *Park*, Travels, *ut sup.*

Presages were deduced by the ancient Germans, from white horses preserved in groves.*

Animals unknown as natives of these kingdoms, though prized from colour elsewhere, are less interesting: such as a white camel, also a tribute from each of the preceding Tartar chiefs—or the white elephants of Siam, each of six, highly decorated with golden rings and chains, being distinguished by a name expressive of dignity, and having ten keepers.†

Possibly, a prejudice in Scotland for red cows, from the superiority of the milk, originates in superstition likewise. The modern Guebres, Gaurs, or Parsees of Persia, venerate a red heifer.‡ The Jews were enjoined to sacrifice “a red heifer without spot;”|| and according to some of their authors, nine such were offered by Moses. A tenth, they say, is to be sacrificed by the Messiah, whose advent is expected impatiently. A modern writer considers the red heifer a type of Jesus Christ.§ Red oxen were offered at the sepulchre of Osiris, by the ancient Egyptians:¶ whence, perhaps, has arose an opinion, that those disqualified by a single white hair, for sacrifice to Apis, were red.

A certain tribe in Java, claiming descent from the

* Tacitus, de Moribus Germanorum, c. 10.

† Crawford, Embassy, v. i. p. 148.

‡ Hanway, Travels, v. i. p. 263.

|| Numbers, ch. xix. v. 2.

§ Burder, Oriental Customs, v. i. p. 127.

¶ Diodorus Siculus, Lib. i. § 88. t. i. p. 99.

aborigines, entertain a high veneration for a red dog, one of which is generally kept, and preserved from ill usage, by each family. Previous to the equipment of the bride and bridegroom for an entertainment, forming part of their nuptial ceremonies, "it is essential that their bodies be rubbed over with the ashes of a red dog's bones."* According to the belief of the Aleutan islanders, of the Northern Pacific Ocean, "the human race proceeded from a dog which fell from heaven, on the island of Oonalashka, and there first produced people."†

The superstitious opinions entertained in Scotland, and elsewhere, regarding a red cock, may be recalled to remembrance.

If black is a mystical colour in Scotland, it has been always in combination with the metamorphoses of Satan, or his imps, as a black dog, a black cat, or a black cock. Should the narrative of maritime disasters, experienced by an English vessel, in a voyage to Virginia, be genuine, it may be quoted for black dogs and cats affrighting the passengers by their appearance.‡

Black victims were offered to demons.|| A black victim is now a propitiatory oblation in Africa.§ In

* *Raffles*, History of Java, v. i. p. 328.

† *Kotzebue*, Voyage of Discovery, v. ii. p. 165.

‡ *Athenian Mercury*, 1691, v. iv. No. 22.

|| *Remigius*, Lib. i. c. xi. p. 98.

§ *Park*, Travels, v. ii. p. 19, 143.

a province on the east of the Niger, the inhabitants offer an annual sacrifice of a black bull, a black sheep, and a black dog, on a high hill.* A black goat in another region, is named also :† but it is not explained, whether the deities thus propitiated, are benevolent or malevolent. A bullock presented to Mungo Park, "being of a jet black colour," his guide would not allow it to be slaughtered. In Abyssinia, a black cow was sacrificed to a demon guarding treasure in a mountain.‡

In Tartary, sheep with black heads, were granted by the Khan for sacrifice.¶ The sacrifice of a black ox with a white head, is figured among the northerns. "Black was devoted to the earth, to darkness, and to the manes of the dead; as white was devoted to the sun and stars."§

In sacrificing rein deer to the sun, the Laplanders drew a white thread through the right ear; and in an oblation to a prefect of the supreme deity, appointed to preside over all wild and domestic animals, a red one. In sacrifices to the *Dii Manes*, the souls of the departed, a black thread was drawn through the right ear, or wound around the horns of the victim.¶

* Clapperton, Journal of a Second Expedition, p. 142.

† Landers, Expedition, v. ii. p. 126.

‡ Lobo, Voyage, p. 135.

¶ Marco Polo, Travels, b. i. c. 56. These animals are described to be entirely white, with black heads.

§ Rudbeckius Atlantica, t. ii. p. 318.

¶ Scheffer, Lapponia, c. x. p. 97, 112, 116, 117.

Power, war, and victory, were augured from white and red horses, by the Jews. "He that sat on a black one, had a pair of balances in his hands."* In the more northern parts of Europe, a favourable omen was obtained, from a spirited black horse passing a range of nine spears, a cubit asunder, untouched, when led by a priest his keeper.†

In general, it is to be assumed, that white, emblematical of innocence, is consecrated to the celestial divinities,—black to those of the infernal abodes: and thence, that a black dog or a black cat in Scotland was allied to Satan. Blackness is darkness, the place or picture of sorrow—the absence of joy and pleasure. The Jews have filled the infernal regions with fire and brimstone, yet neither they nor other tribes allow them to be illuminated by a blaze of light. Ross, a British author, maintains indeed, that the same materials destroying the ancient cities of Scripture, fire and brimstone, "punish the wicked in hell, where shall be instead of light, blackness and darkness:‡" while Sir Thomas Browne, one more learned, thinks, that "to admit general blackness in hell, and yet therein the pure and refined flames of sulphur, is no philosophical conception, nor will it consist with the effects of nature."|| Rudbeck finds the "Gloomy Tartarus" of

* *Revelation*, ch. vi. v. 2—5. vide *Zechariah*, ch. i. v. 8.; vi. v. 2—6.

† *Saxo Grammaticus Historia Danica*, Lib. xiv. p. 320, 321. Not: p. 245.

‡ *Ross Arcana Microcosmi*, b. ii. ch. 14. § 8.

|| *Browne Pseudodoxia Epidemica*, b. vi. ch. 12. p. 273.

Hesiod in the north, besides one in the noted Maelstrom, which he considers the Acheron of Plato, Aristotle, and the rest of the ancients.* If black victims were sacrificed to the infernal deities, let it be remembered that the spirits of mankind fell under the controul of these beings on the dissolution of the corporeal frame,—that darkness is emblematical of death—for “the sun became black:” and mankind go whence they “shall not return—to the land of darkness, and the shadow of death.”† “Credebant enim antiqui omnes, animas ad inferas descendere, ibique cum Plutone in caligine perpetua remanere.”‡

The mystical colour of some animals may have originated from the belief either of metempsychosis, or of a divine incarnation, as in the white elephant of Siam, which is supposed “the temporary habitation of the soul of some mighty personage, in its progress to perfection:” and of the red dog of the Javanese, who deduce their origin from a princess of that country, and a chief who had been transformed to a dog.

Unless where the dog was figured in relation to sorcerers or Satan, as above, it is not known to have

* *Rudbeckius Atlantica*, t. iii. c. 10. § 4. It is said by one of the latest writers, that the savages of New Holland dread an evil spirit carrying them “to a very cold place, where they would never see the sun, and be detained in a state of hunger and cold, from whence there would be no release.” *Breton*, *Excursions in New South Wales*, 1830—1833, p. 206.

† *Revelation*, ch. vi. v. 12. *Job*, ch. x. v. 21.

‡ *Albricus Philosophus*, de Deorum imaginibus. De *Plutone*.

been considered mystical in Scotland. The Jews depreciated this useful animal in associating it with the mystical, "for without are dogs and sorcerers."* But sorcerers were the proselytes of Satan, and Satan dwelt in a fiery abode. Cerberus watched the entrance of the subterraneous regions: dogs kept the temple of Vulcan, whose name etymologists find in a Phœnician root, signifying "one who works by, or in the fire."† Pan was the god of shepherds, who have never dispensed with the service of dogs. If Pan be Satan, and Satan the chief of the infernal regions,—and if a dog was sacrificed by the ancients to that divinity,‡ it may have become mystical in Scotland, in as far as being considered a Satanic metamorphosis, or in having been cast in oblation to Satan.

From the belief of divine incarnation, or some mystical principle, extravagant veneration has been paid to the tooth of an ape or an elephant in the East. These have been preserved in caskets of gold, enriched with jewels, and the subject of public missions between sovereign princes. To recover such a sanctified relic, the mediation of the Governor General of India was lately required.||

* *Revelation*, ch. xxii. v. 15.

† *Banier*, *Mythology and Fables explained from History*, b. i. ch. 13. transl.

‡ *Alexander ab Alexandro*, lib. iv. c. 12. t. 1. p. 1023. Said to be sacrificed also to Proserpine and Diana, *ibid.* t. 1. p. 703. *Plutarch Quæstiones Romanæ*, ap. : *Op.* t. vii. p. 131.

|| *Purchas Pilgrimage*, v. v. b. 5. ch. xi. § 3. p. 561. *Crawford Embassy*, v. i. p. 188. *Davy*, *ut sup.* p. 367—369.

CHAPTER XII.

MYSTICAL MANKIND.

WHILE some men have satisfied themselves with the promotion of industry, benevolence, and virtue, others would be the vain founders of sects, institutions, or theories, to gain repute or to attract admiration. Their undiscerning fellows have given them both. They have sanctioned imposture: they have assigned to them certain mystical properties, or have even bent the knee in adoration, though to those of an order infinitely inferior to themselves.

It is needless here to recapitulate the repeated pretensions to a divine origin finding favour with the world in the different æras of history, for certain works are devoted to that subject exclusively. This of itself was the best calculated to render men mystical. But there were certain peculiarities of aspect, gesture, and the like,—some organic conformation, some habitual custom or accomplishment which excited the belief of individuals standing apart from the multitude. Nor was it essential to involve quality or perfection alone in the character, for even imperfection gained it.

The only personal peculiarity exciting prejudice in Scotland, seems to have been red hair; which is the more singular, this having been a characteristic feature of the ancient Caledonians, and indicating their foreign origin. “*Namque rutilæ Caledoniam habitantium comæ, magni artus Germanicam originem adseverant.*”*

No reason is assigned for it. But the same prejudice prevails among the islanders of the Mediterranean,† and with the most remote of the Asiatic nations.‡

Some allege that the hair and the beard of Jesus Christ were red.||

Osiris and Isis were numbered with the Egyptian deities. Typho slew Osiris, and in his turn suffered by the vengeance of Isis. By Typho was understood the sun, or that great divinity adored by every primitive nation.§ Red men, or red haired men, of whom few, unless foreigners, were seen among the Egyptians, became their victims at the sepulchre of Osiris.¶ Some tribes venerated Typho by sacrifice, but the Copts are said to have cast an ass from a precipice, in supposed contumely of its reddish colour resembling

* *Tacitus Agricola*, c. xi.

† *Blaquiere Letters*, v. ii. p. 374.

‡ *Duhalde*, *History of China*, v. ii. p. 138. The Chinese have an aversion to red or yellow hair.

|| ΠΕΡΙΑΜΜΑ ΕΠΙΔΗΜΙΟΝ, or *Vulgar Errors in Practice Censured*, ch. i. London 1659, in 12mo.

§ *Vossius de Idololatria Gentili*, lib. ii. cap. 24. ap. : *Op. t. v.* p. 156.

¶ *Diodorus Siculus*, lib. i. c. 55. t. l. p. 99.

that divinity;* though much more probably as an oblation.

A certain refulgence of the hair, the subject of vague description, has distinguished several of the human race. Herodian characterizes the person of Commodus, the Roman emperor, as dignified, beautiful, and symmetrical, his hair crisp and yellow, so that it shone like flame in the sun, and the beholder believed it to be powdered with golden matter. Some thinking it a radiation around the crown, considered this a testimony of divinity.† A similar appearance, from whatever source it may originate, is usually designed a glory, as indicative of divine essence. Nor is it probable that history has trespassed on truth, by admitting the representation of such in the portraits of Jesus Christ. After the incarnation of an Eastern divinity, beams of six different colours were disseminated from his person as he rose in the air.‡

Melanippus was enamoured of Comætho,§ whose name etymologists ascribe to the golden colour of her hair, as refulgent as fire.¶ While Servius Tullius, yet in childhood, slept in the presence of many, his hair appeared in flames, and a domestic hastening with water to extinguish them, was restrained

* *Plutarch de Iside et Osiride*, ap. : *Op. t. ii. p. 362.*

† *Herodian*, lib. i. c. 18.

‡ *Davy*, *Account of Ceylon*, p. 349. treating of Boodhoo.

§ *Pausanius*, lib. vii. c. 19.

¶ *Junius de Coma*, c. 9. p. 571.

by the queen, who thence augured his future greatness. Flame encircled the head of Lucius Martius, the Roman commander, on defeating the Carthaginians, to the great terror of his comrades in arms, without his proving sensible of the fact.* Probably Virgil, availing himself of these peculiarities, embellishes his description of Ascanius, with a similar irradiation from the refulgence of his hair.†

Whether the refulgence of the hair, rendering men mystical, or whether the prejudice regarding red hair is derived from solar worship, merits investigation.

The presence of lightning, or of light, was a divine or mystical attribute. Columba beheld a column of light, and a golden crown on the head of St Kentigern: also a luminous cloud, and a snow white dove rested on it during mass. While St Feolan wrote in the dark, "his left hand afforded a clear light to his right hand." Likewise, St Blaen, to escape reproach for allowing the extinction of a lamp, "struck fire from the tips of his fingers, as if they had been struck with flint and steel!!"‡

Personal imperfections being declared his own work, by the Deity, those labouring under them may have become mystical. Thence perhaps that magical

* *Livy*, lib. i. c. 16. *Julius Obsequens*, c. 36. *Valerius Maximus*, lib. i. c. 6. § 2.

† *Virgil Æneid*, lib. ii. l. 682—686.

‡ *Proprium Sanctorum*, f. xxvi. xxix. ap. : *Brev. Aberdon*, t. i. f. lxxvii. *ib.* t. ii.

muttering or whispering, so often allied to necromancy.

In this country the faculty of prediction has been associated with the dumb: and as of old, it originated from a vision.

The devout connected some communion with the Deity, or with an etherial world, during suspension of human faculties. Thence Daniel in a vision “became dumb:” and Zacharias a priest was speechless for nine months, from having seen a vision in the temple.*

Jonka Dyneis being questioned after a vision, “could not give answer, bot stude as if bereft of hir senssis:” and after a vision, or some spectral illusion also, Elspeth Reoch “had na power of hir toung, nor could not speik.” But the character of the dumb does not seem to have been improved by their calamity, nor were they rare. Elspeth Reoch went about “deceaving the people:”† and abusing them was alleged of another. Penance was imposed on several persons for consulting a dumb woman regarding a theft. A man was fined for hiring “of an hous to Margaret Rannald, and twa dumb women her doghteris.”‡ Two persons acquainted with the signs “of the dumb woman in the water of Leith,” were cited by the Kirk Session of St Cuthberts in 1596.

* *Exodus*, ch. iv. v. 11. *Daniel*, ch. x. v. 15. *Luke*, ch. i. v. 5, 9, 22, 64.

† Trial of Elspeth Reoch, 12 March 1616. *Rec. Ork.* f. 63.—of Jonka Dyneis, 2 Oct. 1616. *Rec. Shet.* f. 34.

‡ *Stirling K. S. R.* 31 Aug. 22 Dec. 1598. Cathrein Johnstoun—Thomas Adame.

Magical mutterings, or that low and indistinct expression thought mystical, may originate either in the qualities ascribed to the dumb, or to the peculiarities of demoniac voice. Hence also that infringement of silence interrupting the efficiency of a charm.*

About 30 years ago, a person of rustic habits, named Sullivan, in the South of Ireland, generally designated the *whisperer*, was celebrated for the remarkable controul which he could exercise immediately over vicious horses. After entering the stable, where he remained some time alone and unwitnessed, he led forth the most untractable animal in perfect subjection, or on opening the door he was seen lying beside it in tranquillity. Sometimes on mounting a fiery, restive, or vicious steed, such as others durst hardly approach, in the shortest period, while the perspiration hailed from it in terror, it shewed an absolute obedience to the rein. He never testified dread of any; all became alike subdued, and thenceforth useful for their respective service. Above twenty years have elapsed since the whisperer died, and the real secret, whereby he accomplished his art, never having been disclosed, has perished with him. Some have alleged that it consisted in the use of oil, of smoke, or other things, but it is generally ascribed to *whispering*

* *Churnside Kirk Session Register*, in MS., 31 Aug. 7 Sept. 1701. Margaret Sanderson rebuked for laying a key under the pillow of an invalid to prevent the recurrence of fever, muttering some words, and saying the virtue of the remedy would be lost if any one spoke.

in the horse's ear. Thence Sullivan was known every where, simply as the *whisperer*.* The exercise of a similar faculty is not altogether unprecedented: and from the practice of muttering or whispering in necromantic ceremonies, it was likely to obtain the greater credit. While Casaubon lived in Sussex in the year 1648, one John Young, "a horse courser," had the art of attracting the notice of animals, and this was said to be by some sound, which subdued them. He could tame the fiercest bull, or the wildest horse, by *whispering in its ear*.† Several authors speak of a Greek at Rome, about the year 1532, who, by cutting off part of one horn, and whispering in the ear of a buffalo or wild bull, could lead the animal with the utmost facility by a cord fastened to the other horn. On this subject Grillandus is precise. "I have seen," says he, "an excellent Greek magician at Rome, in the time of Adrian VI., who, by words only, could subdue the strength of the fiercest bull from a herd in the country. Seizing the bull by the horns when thus tamed, he led him four or five miles at pleasure by a slender cord magically fabricated, as was witnessed by above 200 people. I saw him afterwards in prison, where he confessed the whole, and things more

* *Townsend Survey of the County of Cork*, v. i. p. 436. Besides others who knew this individual, and have described to the author his practice, he has been lately indebted to Mr Edward Bullen of Cork, for more recent information collected in Ireland.

† *Casaubon, Treatise Proving Spirits*, p. 107.

important to be accomplished by the efficacy of words."*

Persons in the more humble sphere of life, are not always disposed to consider an idiot child as the most calamitous dispensation. They rather deem it as some peculiar, though inexplicable token of the divine protection extended to their family: nay, in Ireland, "sanctity is generally ascribed to fatuity."† A recent traveller observed, that the "Arabs have a profound respect for idiots, whom they consider as people beloved of Heaven, and totally unable to think of the things of this world."‡ A festival in honour of fools was instituted in France, the description and ceremonies of which are commemorated in different literary compositions.|| An unfortunate family, comprehending four children, all born in idiocy, was once pointed out to the author in Scotland.

The use of organs on the right or the left, the various postures and motions of the body, whether in action or quiescence, and the different kinds of progression, together with retrogression, formed a portion of the superstitious ceremonial also.

Some of these may have originated from sanctified

* *Grillandus*, Quæst. viii. § 3. p. 143.

† *Chichester Parish of Culdaff*, ap. *Stat. Acct. of Ireland*, v. ii. p. 161.

‡ *Lyon Travels*, p. 42.

|| *Menestrier des Représentations en Musique*, Paris 1681, in 12mo.
Tilliot Fêtes des Fous, Lausanne, 1751, in 12mo.

rites. How great is the variety of supplicating the divine favour and protection ! Even in this country, half the people stand and half kneel during prayer, in their respective churches, according to the tenets professed. Formerly all the congregation seems to have stood during discourses from the pulpit ; the concession of seats was first granted to some females, and if one deceased, there was a competition for a privileged place by the survivors. The churches offered no general means of accommodation, an inconvenience said to subsist still on the continent. One of Numa's precepts was, " Walk about while adoring the gods : " and another, " Sit down when you have worshipped them. " *

Martin de Arles ascribes superstitious notions to holding the chin with the right hand during divine service, which he had witnessed : as well as raising the right and left foot alternately. † St Augustine alludes to certain similar practices. ‡ Taking the left thumb in the right hand as a remedy is accounted superstitious by the canon law. || Some years ago children in Northumberland were taught to double the thumb within the hand as a preservative from danger, and especially to repell sorcery. Likewise the thumbs

* *Plutarch* in Numa, ap. : *Op. t. i. p. 70.*

† *Martin de Arles*, § 28.

‡ *Augustinus de Doctrina Christiana*, § 30.

|| *Gratian Decretalia*, causa xxvi. quæst. 2. " Cum tibi dicitur singultienti, ut dextera manu sinistram pollicem teneas. "

of deceased persons were folded within their hands to resist the power of evil spirits.*

On occasion of difficult labour, Beatrix Leslie “being midwyff to Alexander Wilson’s wyff, did vse charmes, sorcerie, and witchcraft, to facilitat her delivery, by calling for ane furlott from ane vther hous to sit vpone;” but finding no benefit accrue, she “bad tacke away that furlott, for nothing wald prevaill till God did it.”† Few illustrations of this superstitious expedient can be either obtained or expected. However it seems to belong to the same class as specified by Plutarch in comparing the restrictive edicts of Numa with the Pythagorean precepts. One of the latter “is a prohibition to sit down on a measure.”‡

Amidst various suspicious proceedings, wherein washing herself and her clothes were included, Agnes Scottie “past the boundis of hir ground, and thair sat doun plaiting hir feit betuix the merchis.”§

The ancients recognised crossing the legs and intertwining the fingers, as malevolent charms. They are commonly classed together, and seem to be prohibited by authority. To retard the labour of Alcmena, the Fates or sorcerers, sent by Juno, sat down crossing

* *Hutchinson View of Northumberland*, 1776, v. ii. : App. p. 4.

† Trial of Beatrix Leslie, 3 Aug. 1661. *Rec. Just.*

‡ *Plutarch in Numa*, *ut sup.*

§ Trial of Agnes Scottie, 13 June 1616. *Rec. Ork.* f. 27. v.

their fingers; but deluded by Galinthias, her attendant, they opened their hands and Hercules was born. The substance of the relative history is given by Antoninus Liberalis :* and Pausanias says, he saw decayed sculptures of Pharmacidæ, sent by Juno to retard Alcmena's labour.† From such narratives, the embellishment of the poets is deduced : and Alcmena thus describes her sufferings during an entire week :

Septem ego per noctes, totidem cruciata diebus
 Fessa malis tendensque ad cœlum brachia, magno
 Lucinam Nixosque pares clamore vocabam :
 Illa quidem venit, sed præcorrupta, meumque
 Quæ donare caput Junoni vellet iniquæ.
 Utque meos audit gemitus, subsedit in illa
 Ante foras ara : *dextroque a poplite lævum*
Pressa genu, digitis inter se pectine junctis
 Sustinuit partus : tacita quoque carmina voce
 Dixit : et inceptos tenuere carmina partus.

OVID, Met. lib. ix. l. 292—301.

Here the various combined ceremonial of sorcery, sitting down opposite to the door, or to an altar ; crossing the legs, intertwining the fingers, and muttering, or whispering, are all figured in successful operation. But the charm being interrupted, Hercules was born. These gained confidence, and were actually in practice ; for, under the character of sor-

* Antoninus Liberalis, c. 29.

† Pausanias, lib. ix. c. 11.

cery, Pliny specifies, not only in such a case, but in others requiring alleviation.—“*Adsidere gravidis, vel quum remedium alicui adhibeatur digitis pectinatim inter se implexis veneficium est: idque compertum tradunt Alcmena pariente. Pejus si circa unum ambone gnum, item poplites alternis genibus imponi. Ideo hæc in consiliis ducum potestatumve fieri vetuere majores, velut omnem actum impredientia.*”*

Thus the mystical attitude of Agnes Scottie is explained. Possibly our injunctions in forming the manners of the youthful, are merely a relic of superstitious apprehension, generated by such postures.

The priestesses or prophetesses of old, and probably, also the priests, animated by divine inspiration, were distinguished by frantic gestures, incoherent words, and dishevelled hair.

* * * * Ait Deus, ecce Deus, mi talia fanti

Ante fores subito non vultus non color unus

Non comptæ mansere comæ. * * *

VIRGIL, *Æneid*, lib. vi. l. 46.

It became ominous to meet a woman with her head uncovered.†

* *Pliny Hist. Nat. lib. xxviii. § 17.* “To sit beside the parturient or those who received aid, with the fingers entwined, is sorcery: as is said to have occurred to Alcmena in labour: and still worse, if one or both knees be employed, or the thighs crossed over the knees. Thence such postures were forbid of old, as counteracting nature.”

† *Joannes Sarisberiensis de Nugis Curialium, lib. i. c. 13. ap.: Bib. Vet. Pat. t. xxiii. p. 255.*

This, or “shaking the hair loose,” as expressed in Scotland, was among the sinister proceedings of those alarming their timid neighbours.

Bessie Skebister was accused of acting thus towards Margaret Mudie, whose cow trespassed among her corn. “Ye sat doun, and taking of your curtch, *sheuk* your hair lous, and ever since shoe hes bein so vehementlie pained, that shoe dwins and becoms wors and wors: and hes nevir bein weill since ye curst hir, or sheuk your hair lous.” The jury convicted the delinquent of “taking of hir curtch, shaking of hir hair [lous], and Margaret Mudie’s diseases.” Isobell Young was convicted also “of taking of her courche,” as one cause of many mischances befalling William Meslet: and it seems to be insinuated from “Jonet Sinclair in the Nowp of Westray,—with her hair about hir lugis, carying a stoupe of water,—the good man of the Noup being deidlie seik,” that she had inflicted his distemper.*

An intimate correspondence with the superstitions of the Augustan age has appeared in the most remote parts of Scotland. Helene a Wallis approaching William Holland, whose cattle pastured on a contested field, “raif the curtch aff hir heid, and put it vnder hir belt: shuik hir hair about hir luidgis: ran to the

* Trial of Bessie Skebister, 21 March 1633. *Rec. Ork.* f. 90. v.—of Issobell Young, 4 Feb. 1629. *Rec. Just.*—of Jonet Sinclair, 6 Ap. 1643. *Rec. Ork.* f. 264. *Curtch*, *courche*—cap. *Sheuk*—shook. *Dwins*—dwines.

Ladie chappell hard by, and went thryse about it vpoun hir bare kneis, prayand cursingis and maledictiones [to] lyght vpoun the said William: and thairefter cam to his hous, and yeid sa about his fyir syd, and did the lyk: and thairefter cuming furth qubair his gudis was pasturing, said thir wordis following:

Gleib wind luik in the air of the lift
And never have power to eat meat."

Thus the sorceress letting loose her hair, hurried to a sanctified place, encircled it on her knees, and repeating the same in his domestic asylum, invoked the divine vengeance on the offender and his possessions.*——

* * * * * Passis Medea capillis
Bacchantum ritu flagrantes circuit aras.

OVID, Met. lib. vii. l. 257.

Progression on the knees was practised at the church of Wisdale in Shetland in propitiation or humiliation, for genuflexion, has always indicated reverence. Under disease or difficulty they "light candles therein, drop money in and about it: go on their knees round it." In the parish of Cannisby, in Caithness, also, passing around on their bare knees, devotees, proceeding to a water, cast some handfulls of it over their heads.†

* Trial of Helene a Wallis, 13 June 1616. *Rec. Ork.* *Raif*—tore. *Luidgis*—ears. *Gudis*—cattle. *Yeid*—went. *Lift*—sky.

† *Brand Description of Orkney*, p. 92: of Caithness, p. 154.

Formerly the image of a tutelar saint was exposed on the ruinous walls of a church in the parish of Ballyvourney in Ireland, which the devout encircled thrice on their knees, invoking protection from maladies.*

The same superstitious mode of progression was known to the ancients, and especially the Romans, but whence it was introduced by our progenitors, or whether it may not have been a common mode of veneration, exceeds present researches. A Roman matron is brought forward by the satirist, as ready to perform the most superstitious ceremonies, of which this is one :

* * * * * Superbi

Totum regis agrum nuda ac tremebunda cruentis
Erepet genibus.

JUVENAL, Sat. vi.

On the day decreed for the triumph of Julius Cæsar, after his expedition against Scipio, the axle of the triumphal car broke before the temple of Fortune.—“When Cæsar, having entered the capitol, ascended the steps on his knees.” Likewise, after partial subjugation of Britain, the emperor Claudius observed corresponding ceremonies.†

Habits the least rational seem the most inveterate.

* *Richardson* Folly of Pilgrimages, p. 70, 71.

† *Dio Cassius* Hist. Rom., lib. xliii. p. 224. lib. lx. p. 680. Edit. *Hanovix* 1606, in folio.

This ceremony is still practised, as the author learns from those witnessing it: at present, persons are seen every day, and all day long, climbing the Holy Stairs at Rome on their knees: and more rarely “a steep flight of steps of *Ara Cæli*, a building which occupies the site of the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus.”* Yet, on reflecting that these are believed to be the identical steps once in the house of Pilate, in Jerusalem, it is not wonderful that they should be held in veneration, because Jesus Christ “had sanctified them by his sacred touch as he ascended and descended them three or four times, and shed there some drops of his precious blood.”†

The coincidence of pagan superstitions when Cæsar lived, with those of the modern Roman Catholic church, is somewhat remarkable. Encircling churches or sanctified shrines in the British islands of old, resembled the same in the Holy Chapel of Loretto in Italy in the centre of the church,—where the spectator “looks down with some interest at the marble pavement which girds it, in order to trace the groove, hollowed simply by the knees of pious pilgrims.”‡

As a courtly ceremonial, those holding an honour-

* *Blunt Vestiges of Ancient Manners and Customs*, p. 177.

† *Doubdan*, ch. lxvii. p. 595., describes the steps as twenty-eight in number, between six and seven feet long, wore into hollows by continual ascent. He travelled in 1652.

‡ *Mementoes of a Tour* in 1821-2, v. ii. p. 270. “But such excess of devotion is no more.”

able situation at Kandy, "approached the king moving on their knees."*

Retrogression, as inverting the course of nature, was allied to sorcery.

One was reprehended for "going backward in a harrow to see quhat wyff he suld haue, and how mony childrein," as savouring of superstition and idolatry.† Another was accused of "the abominable and detestable cryme of witchcraft," in taking his distempered sister during night in January 1610, and horsing her "backward from quhair scho lay to the kirk of Hoy."‡

Among the divinations practised on Halloween in Ireland, the diviner is to "repeat the *pater noster* backwards."||

Widderschynnes.—The sun was the grand object of pagan adoration. That a glorious luminary, so obviously the source of life and nutrition, so replete with benefits to mankind, should have received veneration, is far from reproachful to the earlier generations. Systems originating in the imagination,—founded on imposture, or cherished by weakness or prejudice alone, are doomed to alternate obliteration.—Fate decrees their fall.—The vapour of words gave them birth—trusting for credence to the excess of credulity. But

* *Davy Account of Ceylon*, p. 132, 177.

† *Records of Orkney*, 4 March 1640: Magnus Greive, f. 184. v.

‡ Trial of John Sinclair, 30 Jan. 1623. *Rec. Ork.* f. 49. v.

|| *Vallancey*, ap. *Coll. de Reb. Hib.*, v. iii. p. 460.

the golden orb of day, arises before mankind, to endure for ever. His presence awakens nature; he is welcomed by the living tenants of the earth—the vegetable world unfolds, to receive colour and fragrance from his beams,—his absence overshadows the creation with melancholy.

Motion or progression, in correspondence with the sun's apparent course, is accounted natural,—perhaps involving a religious act in following it with the gaze from below. But to move in an opposite direction, or against the course of the sun, inferred respect for Satan, as inferred by Christians, and became an attribute of necromancers.

This mystical motion is denominated *widderschynnes*.

The inhabitants of Colonsay, before any enterprise, passed “sunways around the church,”—and rowed their boats about sunways, as is still done in the Orkney Islands: nor do the Shetland fishermen consider it safe to turn their boat, unless with the sun;* as is remarked alike of the Icelanders.

A procession in this direction, attended baptism and marriage, in the county of Elgin: thus was the bride of a highlander led to her future spouse, and the waters of a consecrated fountain approached in observance of the sun's diurnal course.† The herdsmen

* *Martin*, Western Islands, p. 16, 20, 100, 118, 120, 140, 242, 248, 277, 278. *Barry*, Parishes of Kirkwall and St Ola, ap. *Stat. Acct.* v. vii. p. 360.

† *Robertson*, Parish of Callander, ap. *Stat. Acct.* *ut sup.*

danced three times “southways” around a fire at Beltane: and in this direction did the bearers at Dipple church-yard, encircle the walls of a chapel with a corpse.* In Iceland, a funeral procession passes round the north side of a church, to the place of sepulture, if on the south: and communicants rising from their knees at the altar, carefully turn in direction of the sun’s course.†

Descending to ordinary sports and pastimes, even to the fashions of convivial entertainment, the like has become habitual.

But the reverse, or moving *widderschynnes*, as if withdrawing from the deified orb of day, the original object of human adoration, inferred a guilty retreat, and was associated with the premeditated evil of sorcery.

An animal, afterwards burnt alive, by Thomas Grieve, perhaps for sacrifice, to cure a family, was put out at the window thrice, and taken in at the door thrice “widderschynnes” or carried round by the north, against the course of the sun, as previously quoted.‡ The Mosaic law enjoined the slaughter of certain animals in sacrifice, on the north side of the altar.§ John Sinclair, after carrying his distempered sister backward, to the Kirk of Hoy, laid her to the

* Shaw, Province of Moray, p. 373.—Of Elgin, ap.: *Pennant Tour*, 1769, app. No. ii. p. 294.

† Henderson, Iceland, t. ii. p. 73, 107.

‡ Trial of Thomas Grieve, 1 Aug. 1623. *Rec. Just.*

§ Leviticus, ch. i. v. 10, 11.

north. Jonet Forsyth, on refusal of corn, "went to the barne, and faddomit ane of the best stakis in the yarde about, contrair to the sunis cours," which injured the grain.* Evil followed another "taking of hir courche, and passing about widderschynnes, thryse thereftir," to effect it.† While Elizabeth Bathcat was alone, grinding malt in the mill of Eyemouth, she was seen "rynnyng widderschynnes about ane wane eave." This was denied to be sorcery, or productive of harm, nor admitted any inference, "bot onlie, that schoe was playing hirsellf, and thocht schame quhen schoe saw the myller—quhome quhan scho saw, scho left hir former postoure, quhilk schoe had reason to doe, to sie hir stuff, then grinding in the mylne." The public prosecutor, however, was not to be baulked by such a flimsy argument: he resumed the debate, insisting that the special charge was well founded: because it was confessed "be the pannell, that schoe was danceing about the wane eave: and it is the custome of witches to haif their meittings and danceings within mylnes: lykas the dittay beiris, that the pannell was danceing and going widderschynness about within the said mylne of Eymouth: and quhen schoe saw the myller, schoe stuid still, feiring that he sould reveill the same—it being ane commoun posture and custome of witches to doe."‡

* Trial of Jonet Forsyth, 11 Nov. 1629. *Rec. Ork. f.* 234. v.

† Trial of Issobell Young, 4 Feb. 1629. *Rec. Just.—Courche*, cap.

‡ Trial of Elizabeth Bathcat, 4 June 1634. *Rec. Just.—Stuff*, grain.

Dittay, indictment.

The pernicious effects of this mystical motion, are minutely specified.—Marion Cumlaquoy “cam down to Robert Carstair’s hous be sunrysing, with milk to his goodmother, shoe nevir vsing to cum thair befoir nor eftir : and as shoe went furth, shoe turnit hirself thrie severall tymes round *witherwys*, about the fyre : and that year his bear is blew and rottin ; and his aittis gives no meall, but sic as mak all that eit it, hairt seik : albeit, both war fresh and good, quhan he put thame in the yaird.”*

Every act and movement of the sorcerer was anxiously watched. William Scottie, reaching William Okilsetter’s, “yeid about his hous twys or thrys *witherwardis* : and again, he being in Patrick Gareochis hous, yeid and cum *witherwardis* about the said William’s hous back againe :—that same night, befoir day sett, the said William Ockilsetteris wyf fell deadlie seik, and tint hir milk that shoe had in abundance befoir, and continewit seik quhill he laid his hand vpoun hir : and incontinentlie shoe gat hir health, and the young mear foill, that was standing vpoun the hous floore, took seikness, and did byt the stones vntill shoe died presentlie.”†

A boy under twelve years of age, was arrested on suspicion of sorcery, especially from having sometimes stopped a plough, and caused the horse break the yoke, “by pronouncing some words, and turning himself

* Trial of Mareoun Cumlaquoy, 1 June 1643. *Rec. Ork.* f. 272. v.

† Trial of William Scottie, 7 Feb. 1643. *Rec. Ork.* f. 256. v.

widershin, that is, turning himself round from the right hand to the left, contrary to the natural course of the sun."*

Perhaps in derision, similar movements are enjoined for obtaining the presence of an astral spirit,—one of a nature superior to mankind: Observing likewise to repeat some psalm backward, when a very beautiful female astral shall enter.†

From such superstitions, perhaps, have been derived many of the ordinary habits of civilization, because others were accounted unlawful. So strict an observance is paid to right and left, that some of the Jews take care, "on their dressing in the morning, to put on the left stocking and right shoe first, without tying it: then afterward to put on the left, and so to return to the right, that they may begin and end with the right side, which they account to be the most fortunate."‡

Walking on Water.—Loud rumours, reporting that certain women in Perth had been observed ducking, nay, walking on the water at midnight, the elders of the church received strict injunctions to discover the delinquents practising this anomalous kind of sorcery. It does not appear that they were successful.|| But

* *History of the Witches of Renfrewshire*, p. 94. The orthography and synonyms are *widdershynnes*, *widdersone*, *witherwys*, *witherwardis*, *wodlerwardis*.

† *Athenian Mercury* for 1691. v. ii. No. xii. q. 3.

‡ *Leo of Modena*, *History of the Present Jews*, p. iv. ch. 5. § xi.

|| *Perth K. S. R.* 25 April 1631. *Extracts ut sup.* The vicinity of the river Tay, might favour this superstition.

some precise opinions may have subsisted at the time, regarding this faculty. Whence did they originate?

Walking on water, and flying in the air, being properties altogether inconsistent with the principles regulating the order of the universe, they have been ascribed to those alone, endowed with supernatural powers, by the favour of Heaven: or alleged against suspected sorcerers, as imitating sanctified acts.

According to the ancients, Orion enjoyed the faculty of walking on water as on land.* He fell into the sea. Yet he floated shoulder high—"humero supereminet undas."†

The Gaurs or Guebres of Persia, venerate the name of a prophet named Ibrahim, who walked on water.‡ Nor must a sanctified visitor of St Columba in Iona, be overlooked, Caynicus, who walked on the sea.||

Considering the singular address which may be attained in every art; and that men practise that dexterity amidst danger which is terrific to the timid, even in tranquillity, it is far from a mean or uninteresting topic of enquiry, whether some particular faculty, analogous to walking on water, or the semblance of it, be not actually within the compass of human powers?

* *Eratosthenis Cyreneus Catasterismi*, § 36.

† *Lactantius Divin. Instit. lib. iv.*—De vera Sapientia et religione, § 15.

‡ *Tavernier, Travels*, b. iv. c. 8. p. 164. This prophet's father was an European. His wife dreamed of a divine annunciation of progeny, imparted by an angel from paradise.

|| *Proprium Sanctorum*, f. cxxvi. ap. *Brev. Aberd.* t. ii.

Kolben says of the Hottentots, "they look when they are swimming, as if they were walking upon firm ground," and advance speedily. "They swim erect, their necks quite out of the water, as are likewise their arms;" and he represents their expertness as equaling, if not surpassing, that of any nation in the world.* A later traveller to a remote Asiatic territory, affirms that he understood men were there, who could pass the deepest streams, in an erect posture, and in such a manner, as to preserve their arms out of the water. They sink no lower than the waist, and can use their arms if necessary.† Further, some years ago, a devotee appeared at a sanctified place in Hindostan, highly venerated by the people, and of whom they related many marvellous prerogatives, specifying among others, walking on water, without wetting his feet.‡

The peculiar faculty called *treading the water*, is not to be classed with the artificial expedients recently exhibited in Britain for the same purpose, whereby people, secured by a buoyant apparatus, may walk into the sea without apprehending danger.§ Nor is it to be associated with the exhibitions promised to the credulous by some rash pretenders, sure to evade performance when brought to the test.

On the whole it may be fairly concluded, that with

* Kolben, *Present State of the Cape of Good Hope*, ch. 30. *in fine*.

† Turner, *Journey to Tibet*, p. 432.

‡ Forbes, *Oriental Memoirs*, v. iv. p. 52.

§ *Annual Register Chronicle*, 18 May 1821, p. 83. Kent's Apparatus.

all their industry, the Kirk Session of Perth, would have more probably found the suspected women of their parish practising their art after the fashion of the Hottentots, than exercising a supernatural faculty from the favour of Satan.

Those impenetrable, by what could readily make an impression on their fellows, might be considered as enjoying a certain mystical prerogative. A person fire proof or water proof,—one who could be neither burnt nor drowned, might be justly denominated as *sui generis*. Woodrow, who entertained remarkable veneration for certain Scottish clergymen, relates, that Mr Bruce and another riding about three miles amidst heavy rain, the latter on alighting found himself “wett to the skin,” but on looking “to Mr Bruce, he sau as it wer but a deu upon him, and he was stunned and said, Sir, how can this be? You seem not at all wett.” He looks, and seemed to wonder himself, and says, “Treuly brother I know not weel: it seems my God has cast a cloak over me.” One of the same clergyman’s congregation having been drowned, on learning the accident, he said, “see if his cloaths and body be dry about the heart. If it be so, I have noe doubt of his salvation,”—on examination, the clothes proved “remarkably dry about his heart, tho all the rest wer exceeding wett.”* Such superstitions belong to an earlier date, for the biographer of saint Kenti-

* Woodrow Analecta, v. iii. p. 152, 148.

gern seems to consider it a testimony of his sanctity, that his clothes were never wet by rain, or hail, or snow.*

“Duthac, the chosen priest of God, was born of a noble race in Scotland. His preceptor sent him to a smith for fire: but the smith, instigated by Satan to deride infantile innocence, threw a quantity of live coals from the forge into his bosom. The child received them patiently, and carried them to his preceptor, while his clothes remained unburnt.”† St Kentigern also carried live coals with impunity in his vestments.

Another narrative still more singular, embellishes the biography of those sanctified personages who were natives of Scotland. “Fimberrus was born of a respectable family on the coast of Ross-shire. His mother having been seduced by a knight of the king’s household, the king commanded that she should be burnt with fire and brimstone. The executioners committed her bound, hand and foot, to the flames. But contrary to nature, the fire refused, through divine influence, to consume her; and while amidst it, the infant Fimberrus was heard to cry from his mother’s womb: ‘Iniquitous king, if it be lawful to call thee king—yea, impious and tyrannical king—

* *Jocelinus* in *Vita Kentigerni*, c. 35, 25.

† *Proprium Sanctorum*, f. lxxv. v. ap.: *Brev. Aberd.* t. i. “Bishop of Tain, in the County of Ross.” *Dempster Menologium Scoticum*, p. 6. Anniversary, “8 March 1249.” *Keith*, p. 110, 232.

thou deliverest over to death the innocent, along with one whom thou deemest guilty !' The terrified king ordered the mother to be freed of her chains.—Fimberrus was born, he became a priest under the renowned Columba, and performed many miracles.”*

The source of these superstitions, and those resembling them, such as an incombustible family of the early converts to Christianity, cannot be mistaken,—for “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire—these men upon whose bodies the fire had no power.”†

Remaining proof against the effect of the elements, was a testimony of excellence reserved for the elect.

Human imbecility has too readily admitted divine incarnation. Many tribes record it among their traditions: and as altars were erected anciently for the worship of human beings, and sacrifices offered upon them:‡ so do mankind still continue their search after some corporeal frame, to determine that it is occupied by a divinity.

* *Proprium Sanctorum*, f. cxv. ap. : *Brev. Aberd.* t. ii.

† *Daniel*, ch. iii. v. 26, 27.

‡ *Porphyrius de Abstinencia*, lib. iv. § 9. p. 325.

CHAPTER XI.

PROGNOSTICATION—DIVINATION.

Too impatient to await the fulfilment of events by the natural lapse of time, mankind eagerly attempt to probe the depths of futurity through the medium of numberless superstitious expedients. Ever since the book of antiquity was opened,—ever since the rising of the sun, or the cloud of night was expected to shade the morrow, all people,—tribes and nations, savage and refined,—have indulged an anxiety for premature disclosure of what they should bring along with them. Contrivances for its attainment have prevailed inveterately, from fervid adolescence ripening their propensities, until age and decrepitude impair the means of observation. Thence so much has been seen, and said, and written, such various theories have been entertained, such diversified practice adopted, such confidence and presumption, such wavering and weakness displayed, that entire libraries might be occupied with the result, to the utter exclusion of more profitable learning. Let only the shortest consideration be bestowed on the attention devoted to reveries, dreams, and visions, to foresight and prediction, to omens and augury:—as originating

from nocturnal impressions,—as derived from the aspect or influence of the celestial orbs,—the appearance, the motions, the colours, or the parts of animals:—the lines on the hand, the moles on the skin, the arrangement and proportions of the body: together with accidents and occurrences interminable, and some faint knowledge will be gained of the mass which disordered imagination has accumulated.

The slightest sketch of but a few leading topics can be presented here.

Is it not a humiliating example of human imbecility, that the mind, instead of reposing on the grand phenomena of nature, shall try to sift the government of the universe, out of a beast, a bird, a worm,—from air, fire, or water,—each appointed already by the Creator to its proper place. Yet shall their own interference terrify the credulous with vain alarms, and render their existence miserable.

§ I. *Second Sight*.—An intus-susception of transient events, at a distance from the seer, not unlike a reverie occupying the mind in a moment of abstraction, is denominated the *second sight*. In the stricter acceptation of this faculty, cotemporary objects and incidents are beheld at the time, however remote their locality, but neither those which have passed, nor those which have yet to come. If extending to futurity, the subject of the vision is about to be realized. Therefore the second sight only borders on prognostication.

It is affirmed to be more peculiar to Scotland, for very faint analogy to such a property has been claimed for other countries: and that the highlanders chiefly, together with the inhabitants of the insular districts, or that portion of the kingdom less advanced, have enjoyed it in the highest perfection. Marvellous to be told, they have said that their cattle are gifted with it as well as themselves.

But all to be gathered regarding this faculty, must be ascribed to past rather than to present times, because although not entirely extinct, the same credulity which fostered its subsistence has been long on the wane. Yet antiquity can be scarcely alleged to have enrolled it with the earlier records of Scottish history, for almost our whole knowledge of it is confined to the disclosures of the two preceding centuries.

The second sight was enjoyed by either sex, by young or old, and like the hereditary seers of the ancients, the faculty might be received even previous to birth, or before the baptismal rites were celebrated. Likewise it might be acquired, and as the unhappy convict deplored his discovering himself to be a sorcerer, one found that he was in possession of it, void of all consciousness of the time, or mode of acquisition.

Sometimes, however, it was derived by inheritance: it was transmitted from father to son,* and thus acquired involuntarily, without the need of tuition.†

* *Sacheverell*, Account of the Isle of Man, p. 14.

† *Kirk*, Secret Commonwealth, § 12. p. 16.

But it might be imparted by a gifted person, as augury and necromantic powers have been the subject of education. So strong was the influence of imagination, that a vision beheld by one individual only, might be exhibited to a neighbouring visionary, thus converted to the belief of his new prerogative—and that by nothing more than pressure of the seer's right foot on the left foot of the novice, holding one hand on his head, while he was admonished to look over the preceptor's right shoulder.* It appears also, that a transient view of the vision might be imparted to a bystander, from pressure on his foot by that of the beholder: somewhat in the same way, perhaps, that the inspector of chrysalis discovered the airy forms it should display, by planting his foot against that of the diviner.† The novice was invested, besides, by ceremonies more appalling:—a hair rope which had bound a corpse to a bier, was coiled like a screw around his body: he had then to gaze through a hole left by the removal of a fir knot: and on stooping, he was enjoined to look back between his legs, until the company of a funeral advancing should cross the march of two coterminous

* *Aubrey Miscellanies*, p. 154, 159, 173, 174.

† *Lilly*, History of his Life and Times. "John Scott desired William Hodges, an astrologer in Staffordshire, to shew him the person and features of the woman he should marry. Hodges carries him into a field not far from his house, pulls out his crystal, bids Scott set his foot to his, and after a while wishes him to inspect the crystal, and observe what he saw there." The person of the woman appeared, and the divination after many improbabilities was verified, p. 50.

owners. However, all this was not only inconvenient, but it might be perilous, for did the wind change while the mystical cord begirt the novice, his life fell in jeopardy.*

These were not the only means of acquisition; for this faculty, like other occult prerogatives, came also from supernatural beings,—not so often indeed, in so far as may be collected, because those investigating its later subsistence, seldom advert to such a mode of reception. They are engaged chiefly in describing its extent and consequences. On a question involving life and death, it was alleged against Isobel Sinclair, that during seven years, “sex times at the reathes of the year, shoe hath bein controlled with the Phairie; and that be thame, shoe hath the *second sight*: quhairby shoe will know giff thair be any fey bodie in the hous.”† It is to something of this kind that King James alludes, through one of his interlocutors, who asks, on discovering the abode of fairies, “But what say ye to their foretelling the death of sundrie persones, whome they alleadge to have seen in these places,—that is a *sooth dreame*, as they say, since they see it walking.”‡

* Kirk, § 12. p. 14, 15.

† Trial of Issobell Sinclair, ult Feb. 1633. The same delinquent's skill in the “secund sight,” is referred to after her execution, in the trial of Bessie Skebister, whose conviction followed in three weeks. *Rec. Ork.* f. 86.—*Fey*, devoted.

‡ King James Dæmonologie, b. iii. c. 5. p. 75.—*Sooth dreame*, not illusive.—*Walking*, awake.

As this extraordinary faculty may be inherited from parentage, acquired unconsciously, or received by tuition, so may it be lost by a decided change of circumstances in the condition of the seer. Long ago, it was remarked of many who had the second sight, while in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, and afterwards transferred their residence to the West Indies, they "did see no visions there."* Merely resorting to the capital, however, was not enough; for the provost of Glasgow standing one day with a highland gentleman, at the cross of Edinburgh, while another passed by, the highlander acquainted his companion, that the passenger would "very soon be a dead corpse." In a few minutes he was killed accidentally, by a carriage, and carried off in their presence.†

But the seer could not divest himself of it voluntarily, which many would have done, for it was considered no enviable property.

In whatever manner acquired, it was accompanied by a troublesome and painful sensation. It subjected those gifted, to some kind of invisible violence: they shrieked, trembled, and perspired under its impressions. Also, they held it a sinful endowment—believing it came of Satan, not of the divinity. Therefore, many would have renounced it willingly, glad to be relieved of a prerogative so distressing. For this purpose, on application to the presbytery of their

* *Lord Tarbett*, Relations to the Hon. Robert Boyle, ap. *Kirk*. p. 29.

† *Woodrow*, *Analecta*, May 1726. v. 5. p. 208.

bounds, some have obtained public prayers in several churches: or a sermon has been delivered purposely in the parish church of the seer, who, kneeling before the pulpit, confessed his sin with deep contrition, and renouncing the painful privilege which he possessed "to God's dishonour," earnestly desired the supplications of the minister. They who did so, it is affirmed, "were never troubled with such a sight any more."*

The second sight commonly embraced sad and dismal objects: but joyful and prosperous occurrences were not beyond its sphere. Those realities most impressive on mankind, or the phantoms of imagination, subsist, both while the mental and personal faculties are active and quiescent. Great convulsions, sorrow and apprehension—the uncertainties of life, unhinge the haunted mind.

Elsbeth Reoch, "be the secund sicht—saw Robert Stewart, sone naturall to vmquhill Patrik, sumtyme Earle of Orknay, with Patrik Traill, to quhom she was with bairne, and certane vtheris with towis about thair craigis, in Edmond Callendares hous, at the eftirnoones drink, befor the Earle of Cathnes' cuming to the cuntrey."†

The object was generally represented under some dismal aspect, either in a shroud, in a condition incom-

* *Aubrey Miscellanies*, p. 155, 165.

† Trial of Elspeth Reoch, 12 March, 1616. *Rec. Ork.* f. 63. v. *Vmquhill*, late—*sumtyme*, formerly—*towis*, ropes—*craigis*, necks.

patible with life, or as menaced by destruction. Before the Marquis of Argyle went to London in 1660, while "playing at the bullets with some gentlemen of this country, one of them, when the Marquis stouped down to lift the bullet, fell pale, and said to them about him, 'blesse me, what is that I see, my Lord with his head off, and all [his] shoulder full of blood.'"* In the county of Angus, a gentleman joined a company, "when they wer all of them very frank and chearfull. But on his coming, one in the room before, who knew him not that came in, turned very dampish and dull. In a litle, the last gentleman, without taking any nottice of it, went away. When gone out, the other gentleman appeared much concerned about him, and wished he would stay: for he sau him with a shroud, as they call it, up to his neck, which never happened to him but that person dyed. In vain some dealt with the gentleman to stay. He had a few miles to ride, and in the way his horse and he fell, and he broke his neck, and dyed."*

In the strictest exercise of the second sight, the vision was of something cotemporary; it was not retrospective. No one already dead, was represented by it. Yet it might border on futurity. The obsequies of a living person might be seen; for it exposed imminent danger, or a fatal destiny.

The husband of Jonka Dyneis being in a fishing

* *Woodrow*, *Analecta*, v. i. p. 115. v. 5. p. 154, 237. This last incident is dated two or three years antecedent to 1726. The author adds, "instances of this second sight are very numerous."

boat at Walls, six miles from her residence at Aith, and in peril, she was “fund and sein standing at hir awin hous wall, in ane trans, that same hour he was in danger; and being trappit, she could not give answer, bot stude as bereft of hir senssis: and quhen she was speirit at quhy she wes so movit, she answerit, gif our boit be not tynt, she is in great hazard—and wes tryit so to be.”* Likewise at Sowlis Skerrie, on a day certain, it was alleged thus, against another woman:—“James Chalmers came to yow, and finding yow weiping for the boittis, he said to yow, all is not weill iff ye be weiping: ye answerit, ye weipit for the truble they wer in, but not for their death, for they wold come home. It was replyit to yow, be the said James, they culd not be saife vnles they went be north the cuntrey: ye answerit, that ye suld warrand they suld not goe about the cuntrey; but that they suld come home that same way they yeid, quhilk cam to pas as ye spak.” Another boat being driven out to sea, and one of the oars cast ashore on the Isle of Wais, “the gudwyff of the Bow, having hir eldest sone vpoun the boat, send on of hir servands to speir at yow giff the boat was weill.” She answered, “goe your way home, for they ar all weill, and will be home or they sleep: and so it was that they came home that same nicht.”†

* Trial of Jonka Dyneis, 2 Oct. 1616. *Rec. Shet.* f. 34. r.—*Trappit*, questioned—*tryit*, proved.

† Trial of Bessie Skebister, 21 March 1633. *Rec. Ork.* f. 89. v.—*Yeid*, went.

A precise knowledge of subsisting events, though remote, is inferred: those in danger escaped.

An officer was quartered, in the middle of the preceding century, in the north of Scotland, near the castle of a gentleman supposed to enjoy the second sight. One stormy night, the latter, while confined to bed, expressed much anxiety for the safety of his fishing boat, then at sea; and at last he exclaimed, "My boat is lost!" "How do you know it," said the stranger? "I see two of the boatmen," he replied, "bringing in the third drowned, and all dripping wet, and laying him down close by your chair." In the course of the night, the fishermen returned with the corpse of a comrade.*

In the strictest acceptation, the second sight is the discovery of subsisting incidents.—On the morning of the battle of Bothwell Bridge, "Mr John Cameron, minister at Lochend, in Kintyre," became very melancholy, when Mr Morison, one of his elders, observing him "throu his chamber dore, sore weeping, and wringing his hands—continued knocking, till at lenth he opned to him: and he asked what was the matter: if his wife and bairns wer weel? 'Little matter for them,' says he, 'our freinds at Bothweel are gone.' When Mr Morison told him it might be a mistake, and a fitt of melancholy, 'noe, noe,' sayes he, 'I see them flying as clearly as I see the wall:' and as near

* *Ferriar on Apparitions*, p. 63—67.

as they could calculate by after accompts, it was at the very minute they fled, that this hapned at the Loch-head of Kintyre.”*

It appears, that in the first years of the commonwealth, while Mackenzie of Tarbat, afterwards the Earl of Cromarty, was riding in a field among his tenants, who were manuring barley, a stranger “called that way on his foot, and stoped likewise, and said to the countrymen, ‘You need not be so busy about that barley, for I see the Englishmen’s horses teathered among it; and other parts mowed down for them.’ Tarbet asked him how he knew them to be Englishmen, and if he had ever seen any of them? He said ‘No; but he saw them strangers, and heard the English were in Scotland, and guessed it could be no other than they.’ In the month of July, the thing hapned directly as the man said he saw it.”† This is both a cotemporary and prognosticative vision. The instances of the second sight in purity—that whereby an event strictly cotemporary, is represented—seem to be rare.

But something must be allowed for the organic functions of the seer; for the vision in its transience, is only of such duration as he can keep his eyes steadily open. Should he be timid or trembling, he beholds it by glances, from the unsteadiness of his eyes. Thence

* *Woodrow Analecta*, May 19, 1703. v. i. p. 85.

† *Woodrow, Analecta*, v. iv. p. 156.

it is not likely that this faculty can be ever enjoyed by the nyctaloptic, in any perfection.*

Though the Scottish seer might sometimes lose such an interesting prerogative, as by deserting his own country, he might still retain what was not much inferior to it, in "a predictive dream, and a true" one, when repairing to another: and on those occasions too when the human perceptions should be most acute, and the senses least liable to slumber. Nothing can resemble the "sooth dreame" of the royal demonologist more narrowly. To amuse his lieutenant-colonel at the storming of Stralsund, in the year 1628, Monro told him "of a vision that was seene by a souldier of the colonell's company that morning, before the enemy did storme, being a *predictive dreame*, and a true. One Murdo Mac-claude, borne in Assen, a souldier of tall stature and valiant courage, being sleeping on his watch, awakened by the break of day, and jogges two of his comrades lying by him, who did find much fault with him for sturring of them. He replied, 'Before long, you shall be otherwise sturred.' A souldier called Allen Tough, a Loghabar man, recommending his soul to God, asked him what he had seene, who answered, 'You shall never see your country againe.' The other replied, the loss was but small, if the rest

* Persons denominated Albinos, have weak and quivering eyes. The author once saw a handsome young woman in London, with tremulous reddish eyes, which could scarcely bear the light. She had fine flaxen hair, and a snowy skin.

of the company were well. He answered, 'No, for there was great hurt and dearth of many very neare.' The other asked againe, whom he had seen more that would die besides him. Sundry of his comrades he tould by name that should be killed. The other asked what would become of himself. He answered, he would be killed with the rest. In effect, he describeth the whole officers, by their cloathes, that should be hurt. A pretty quicke boy near by, asked him, 'what would become of the major,' meaning me. He answered, 'he would be shot, but not deadly,' and that the boy should be next to me when I were hurt, as he was."*

A narrative of incidents, though less calamitous, recorded by Woodrow, is somewhat similar, namely, that a "popish lady," living near Boroughbridge, dreamed, that "she saw a coach, and a lady in it, almost lost" in the river. She directed her servants to watch during two nights, to guard against an accident, when nothing happened. "But the third night, pretty late, the lady Shaufield came, and of a sudden the coach was overturned, and filled with watter. The coachman got upon one of the horses, to save his life. The good and religious lady Shaufield was for some time under watter: and, upon the cry rising, the popish

* *Monro Expedition with Mackayes Regiment*, P. i. p.75. It does not appear that military uniform was at that time adopted in Britain, therefore the clothes indicated individuals. Murdo Macleod in Assint.

lady's servants came to their assistance: with much difficulty, the coach and lady in it were got out of the watter:" She was laid on a declivity till she recovered her senses.

This credulous author seems desirous of investing some of his fellow clergymen with the gift of pre-science, or perhaps with the second sight: and he instances an allusion in a sermon at Irvine to the relief of Londonderry, which was found to take place within a few minutes of the time. "The spirit that influences prayer, noe doubt knoues the things of God."*

Such examples are given usually as illustrations of the second sight. The distinction among them is obvious.

Although the knowledge of cotemporary incidents was frequently alleged by the public prosecutor against delinquents, it is not explained to be by means of the second sight. A woman who laughed at one suspecting his money had been stolen,—“I most laugh,” said she, “to heir your father say that the silver is stollen: it is lying in the neuk of his kist,”—which proved true. Another urged a person to sell “ane litill laidill,” of which she desired the possession, though there “was nane that knew shoe had it, na, not sa much as ane of hir awin servandis:” yet it lay in the bottom of “ane mekill kist.” On allegations

* *Woodrow Analecta*, September 1730, v. vi. p. 208.—January 1712, v. iii. p. 2.

of such occult knowledge was the life of the lieges so often put in peril.*

The vision occurred at any time of the day, but more frequently in the morning: and in the evening by candle-light.† But no particular period was exempted. It might appear in any medium: sometimes in one, sometimes in another: and it is exceedingly probable, when the atmosphere was in such a state as to heighten optical illusions. "A very honest man, and of right blameless conversation, used ordinarily, by looking into the fire, to foretell what strangers would come to his house the next day, by their habit and arms."‡ This, though given as an example of the faculty may be somewhat of the nature of the *Ignispicium* which is alluded to by the ancients.∥ Many have thought to read futurity in the fire.

In general the second sight has been ascribed to the inhabitants of Scotland, as a peculiar faculty. But examples of something analogous seem to be known elsewhere, though not recognised under the same specific name. It is essence alone that constitutes identity. For much confidence is reposed in the mere arrangement of words. Perhaps the various nurseries of superstition

* Trial of Elspeth Cursetter, 29 May 1629. *Rec. Ork.* f. 50. v.
Trial of Bessie Skebister, 21 March 1633. *Rec. Ork.* f. 90. v.

† *Fraser Deuteroscopia*. This author was born in 1647.

‡ *Aubrey*, p. 174.

∥ *Pliny Hist. Nat.*, lib. vii. § 57., ascribes this to the invention of Amphiaraus.

encourage delusions, which have a certain correspondence: and even the physical condition of each country may generate peculiarities, which few men have been sufficiently enlightened to discover. It is probably true, as an old author asserts,—“*neque nulla est natio aut populus, qui non habeat peculiare aliquid unde futurorum prædictiones eliciat.*”*

Illusions depend partly on the mental, partly on the personal constitution. Their force becomes proportioned to the imbecility of both.

Dr Sacheverell visited the Western Isles of Scotland, and the Isle of Man, in the year 1688, when literary enquiries were certainly directed towards the subsistence of the second sight; but no examples of it among the inhabitants of the former are given. Several centuries ago, however, it was the reputed prerogative of those in the latter, and the vision was not only exhibited, as according to its later appearance in Scotland, but it might be also imparted from one to another. “There oft by daye tyme, men of that islonde seen men that bey dede to fore honde, byheded or hole, and what dethe they deyde. Alyens setten theyr feet vpon feet of the men of that londe, for to see such syghtes as the men of that londe doon.”† Thus implanting the feet of the seer on those of another, communicated the vision. This vision seems to have been somewhat such as one by Adam Lennard in

* *Boissardus de Divinatione*, c. 5. p. 23.

† *Higden Polychronicon* by Trevisa, lib. i. c. lxiii.

Orkney, who, "at twelff houris in the day, saw ane companie of people, and William Lowtit in Bigswallis wyff with thame, quha was dead lang befoir."*

Though Sacheverell seems disposed to treat marvellous narratives lightly, saying, it is not for him to determine "whether these fancies proceed from ignorance, superstition, or prejudice of education, or from any traditional or heritable magic, which, is the opinion of the Scotch diviners, concerning their second sight" he confirms it unconsciously thus. A boy, in the Isle of Man, the seer, eight years old, beheld two persons sitting under a hedge within an hundred yards, who were imperceptible by his comrades,—and on a certain day "told Captain Stevenson, that one of them came with his hand bloody, and said he had been in a battle in Ireland. The captain marked the day, and though they had no news in near a month after it, it agreed exactly with the time Colonel Wolsley had given the Irish a considerable defeat." The boy's youth and ignorance precluded suspicions of deceit, and the author affirms, that he could give an hundred instances similar to this and other narratives.† Waldron, a later writer, who resided permanently in this island, treats more specifically of the prevalent superstitions. On visiting a friend he has found "the table spread," and every thing in order to receive him: and, after an absence from home, he has found his servants preter-

* Trial of Helene Isbuster, 13 Aug. 1635. *Rec. Ork.* f. 97. v.

† *Sacheverell Account of the Isle of Man*, p. 14—17.

naturally warned of his return, and expecting him at the hour of his arrival. But such information was derived from a race of benevolent demoniac, or spiritual intelligences. In strict conformity with the visions of the Scottish seers, however, previous to the decease of some individual "the procession of the funeral is acted by a sort of beings, which, for that end, render themselves visible." But "both coffin and procession vanish at the church door."*

It is exceedingly difficult to ascertain the precise notions entertained of occult facts and qualities from the ambiguous expressions employed. Colour and sound can be very imperfectly described. Perceptions quite clear by the beholder and the auditor, require to be imparted through terms alike intelligible. The second sight is said to have been known in Holland; nay, that it was "as common in North Holland, if not more than in our Highlands of Scotland." Likewise Crespet, a cotemporary of the event itself, asserts that on the day when Gaspar de Coligny was slain at Paris in 1572, a maniac in Gascony exclaimed that the Admiral had fallen.† In Holland, on the authority of Dr Nieuentyt, the author of the Religious Philosopher, while he was walking the streets, with a young lady reported to be endowed with this faculty, she "stopped, and looked to a particular house in town, and in a litle fell into a laughter." She had

* *Waldron* Description of the Isle of Man, p. 39, 140.

† *Crespet de la Hayne de Diable*, p. 242.

discovered the preparations for a funeral, and among the company "a little man of very low stature, with a peculiar habit, extremely antick." A few days subsequently, a stranger arrived, sickened, and died in the house, after being attended by Nieuentyt himself, who was at his funeral, and beheld there the identical person, "the little odd man," whose image had excited his companion's risibility. Another instance of this same doctor's participation is related, where his own wife was the subject. "A gentlewoman who had the second sight," suddenly fainted on a visit to them; and afterwards declared it was from beholding the latter "all in white," for her husband would not enjoy her society long: and accordingly she died within a few weeks.*

Reverting to the example of the admiral of France, rumours subsequently verified are undoubtedly sometimes in circulation, without any obvious means of accounting for them. The author recollects very well that the result of the battle of Trafalgar, or of Corunna, was currently reported in the city of Edinburgh, previous to any certain intelligence known to have been received of the fact through what was esteemed the speediest channel: nor, on subsequently computing the intervals, could satisfactory conjectures be formed how it had arrived. But this must happen frequently. Those interested in the issue of such

* *Woodrow Analecta*, Feb. 1726. v. 5. p. 152—154.

serious incidents in the history of nations, and more so in the fate of individuals, mistake their wishes and anxieties for the truth : or the story-tellers of the day, always a numerous herd, and always entertaining opposite theories, unconsciously anticipate what comes to be realized. The issue is considered a prediction prematurely proved.

On the day of the battle of Pharsalia, Cornelius, a priest and noble of Padua, venerated for his morals and sanctity, moved by a sudden impulse of the mind, declared that he beheld a desperate encounter, the fall and flight of the combatants,—at length exclaiming, “Cæsar has conquered !” His words were derided at the moment ; but they were afterwards verified by finding, that not only the day, but the circumstances, and the result of the battle fought in Thessaly, were announced by them.* No less succinct is the narrative of the slaughter of Domitian at Rome, by his own freedman, Stephanus, in abhorrence of his barbarities. “It is to be admired,” says the historian, “that, as accurately proved by persons in either place, Apollonius Thyanæus ascending an eminence at Ephesus, or elsewhere, exclaimed before the multitude, ‘Well done, Stephanus,—well done ! Strike the murderer,—thou hast struck him, thou hast wounded him,—he is slain !’ ”†

Some authors conceive that the vestiges of the

* *Aulus Gellius Noctes Atticæ*, Lib. xv. ch. 18.

† *Dio Cassius*, Hist. Rom. Lib. lxxvii. *in fine*. p. 768.

second sight may be recognised in Scripture; but although the sensations of mankind are testified in a corresponding manner, the precise nature and distinction of the Jewish superstitions are not sufficiently known, to admit of decisive conclusions on the subject. The second sight is the consciousness or perception of something by one, whereof others present are not conscious:—partly, if the parallel may be admitted, as the voice heard by the Apostle Paul falling to the ground, of which the bystanders were unconscious, though both he and they saw a great light which dazzled him.*

It is remarkable that so little of the second sight occupies the earlier history of Scotland, considering later credulity in its subsistence: because such a superstition could not spring up, and be disseminated suddenly among any race of people. Probably the lower the state of rude society, the slower the dissemination of novelties. Thence it may have been credited anciently. It was recognised throughout the seventeenth century, by judicial proceedings, as a special faculty, but of uncertain origin.† In the reign of Charles II. it became the subject of regular literary investigation and discussion, and remained so for an hundred years. Some conceived, as above quoted, that the dumb girl, Janet Douglas, who made such a conspicuous figure about the year 1677, enjoyed the second

* *Acts*, ch. xxii. v. 6—11, 17.

† *Fountainhall Decisions*, ad an. 1677. No. 551. fol. 277, 278. in MS.

sight, "by a compact of her parents with the devil;" but a later enquirer was desired to assure himself, "that severall persones has it, that is free of paction; yea, and has abundance of sense."* About Martin's time, or the close of the seventeenth century, the frequency of this faculty had perceptibly declined with the twenty years antecedent. But the writings of the superstitious enforced belief in its subsistence. When Dr Johnson visited the Hebrides in the year 1773, he affirms, that the islanders of all degrees, whether of rank or understanding, universally admit it, though it was denied by the clergy.† Nearly twenty years later, credulity in it prevailed still in some of the more remote districts.‡ Some, as an author of 1816, maintain that the second sight is too well authenticated to be rejected: and perhaps, as the means of supporting his opinion, he proceeds, "ominous dreams, and those unaccountable forebodings and depressions, very common in persons of a nervous, weak, or irritable frame, prior to unforeseen calamities, prove that every thing in nature operates upon the rest."||

The author is informed, that the subsistence of this

* *Frazer*, "Mr J. Episc. minr. Highlands, who writes on the 2d sight:" Answer to Woodrow's Queries, in MS. ap. *Letters upon Literature*, v. ii. No. 2.

† *Johnson*, *Journey*, p. 252. This author insinuates that although it was essential that the clergy should disclaim the fact, they were actually credulous in the second sight.

‡ *Macqueen*, Parish of Applecross, *Stat. Acct.* v. iii. p. 380.

|| *Wilson*, *Dictionary of Astrology*, Introd. p. 10.

faculty is yet acknowledged in the Isle of Skye; and intelligent persons have expressed to him their conviction of the fact, not from having themselves witnessed its exercise, but from the testimony of others who were known to them, they could not entertain any doubts of it.

Though Fraser denies "that it is propagated from father to son," at present one family in Shetland claims the prerogative of the second sight, and that by inheritance. But it reposes in the head or representative of the family alone. Hereditary prophets, necromancers and seers, seem therefore to exist in more countries than might have been otherwise credited.

§ II. *Prediction, Prognostication, Divination.*—It would be an unprofitable task, attempting to specify the nicer distinctions of these three qualities, which are generally classed as synonymous. The first may be said to consist in some intus-susceptive faculty like the second sight, which finds utterance in words: the next is its exercise from observation of external objects; and the last is directed to experimental enquiries after futurity. But so rude and indefinite a subject does not merit such delicate discrimination:—nor is it essential.

Mankind have ever deluded themselves with the belief of prophetic powers, from an intuitive principle only. Altogether delirious in their imaginary prerogative, they have raved of futurity. The gift of foresight

is no mean endowment : it argues a superiority to be permitted to behold the incidents of futurity, previous to their generation by the arrival of time :—to be apprized of that, which, darkened from vulgar eyes, can be known solely to the Divinity. But whether from the disposition of those endowed, or from the uncertainty of human destinies, a far greater portion of evil than of good, is anticipated.

Like the oracles emanating from the Pythian priestesses of old, predictive faculties have shone conspicuous, chiefly among the females of the north.

A woman foretold the tragical fate of King James I. falling by the hands of assassins in the year 1436. In the outset of a journey, when between Edinburgh and Leith, “ Yn the myddis of the way there arose a woman of Yreland, that clepid herselfe as a suthsayeir, the which anone as she saw the king, she cried with lowde voise, saying thus, ‘ My lord kyng and ye pase this water ye shall never turne agane on lyve.’ The kyng heryng this, was astonyed of her wordis, for bot a litill to fore he had red yn a prophesie, that yn the selfe same yere the kyng of Scottes should be slayne : and therwithall the kyng as he rode, clepid to him oone of his knyghtis, and gave him yn comaundment to torne agane to speke with that woman, and ask of here what sheo wold, and what thyng sheo ment with her lowd crying : and sheo began and told him, as ye hafe hard of the kynge of Scottes, yf he passed that water. As now the kynge asked her how sheo knew

that : and sheo said that Huthart told her so. ‘Sire,’ quod he, ‘men may calant y talk, nor hede of yond woman’s wordes, for sheo nys bot a drunkine fule, and wot not what sheo saith :’ and so with his folk passed the water, clepid the Scottishe see toward Saynt Johnne’s town, bot iiij myles from the cuntreth of the wyld Scottes, where yn a close of Blakfriars, without the said towne, the kyng held a gret fest.” In the course of the merriment there came “the said woman of Yreland, that clepid herself a dyvenourese,” and made several fruitless attempts to gain access to the king : meantime the conspirators matured their plot, and he was slain. Although the sybil is described here as a woman of Ireland, she was probably a highlander ; because the highlanders and western islanders, are known as “Irish, Iris, or Earse,” down to the eighteenth century. In the course of imparting, transcribing, or transmitting the narrative, the transition from an “Irish woman” to “a woman of Yreland,” was simple, easy, and natural.* Such is the account preserved in English history. Bower, the cotemporary Scottish historian, alludes to another prediction, also by a sorceress, relative to the same event, encouraging the hopes of the Earl of Athole, the chief conspirator, thus to reach the throne. “Quia ut communiter dicitur, habebat auctoritatem per magna

* Cronycle of the Dethe of James Stewarde, last kynge of Scottes, written in 1440, ap. : *Pinkerton, History of Scotland*, v. i. p. 462. app. : No. xiii.

tempora, ex instructione cujusdem mulieris sortilegæ, ipsum cum magna solemnitate debere diademate spectabili coronari.”*

The reputation of some of the Scottish prophetesses seems to have been very great: they were firmly believed to be gifted with supernatural insight into futurity. “Wally fall that quhyt head of thine, but the pox will tack the away from thy mother,” exclaimed one of them to a child. In some weeks small-pox became endemial, and the child died: no doubts were entertained of the sybil’s prescience. “Thow can tell eneugh if thow lyk,” said the mother to her, “that could tell that my bairne wold die so long befoir the tyme.” “I can tell eneugh if I durst,” she returned in mysterious reply.† It was alleged on the trial of Bessie Skebister, “that all the honest men of the Yle declarit, that it was ane usuall thing quhen thay thought boatis war in danger, to come or send” to enquire “how thay war, and if thay wold come home weill? quhairvpoun ane common proverb is, vsit ‘Giff Bessie say it is weill, all is weill:’” and the currency of this proverb was found by her jury.—Bessie was strangled and burnt.‡

An ample field for sinister prediction is opened by the casualties of human life. Those who have watched the progress of the world, may form reasonable

* *Fordun Scotichronicon*, lib. xvi. c. 36. t. ii. p. 513.

† Trial of Elspeth Cursetter, *ut sup.*

‡ Trial of Bessie Skebister, *ut sup.*

anticipations of futurity. Troubles, wars, pestilence, or conflagrations, are never of long cessation: faithless friends and disappointed expectations are not to be rated with the rarest subjects of experience. Is it not the philosophic Antoninus who concentrates the recurrence of all parallel incidents within an epoch of forty years? Many things are novelties to those who have not lived long enough to witness their repetition.

But who hears of abortive prophecies? It is only after some notorious event that the truth is quoted. When Sir Archibald Johnston of Warriston suffered for treason, at Edinburgh, in 1663, it was reported that the midwife had exclaimed on his birth,

Full moon, full sea,
Great man shalt thou be,
But ill dead shalt thou die.*

As credulity allowed an equal latitude in the prediction and in its accomplishment, the boldest prophet was probably the most successful. An Orkney warlock, full of displeasure with James Paplay, predictively "brust furth in thes speiches, 'thow art now the highest man that ever thow salt be! Thow ar going to shear thy corne, but it sall never doe yow good! Thow art going to sett hous with thy wyff—ye sall have no joy on of on vther: Yle sall not keip yow and hir, ye sall have such ane meit-will and sall have nothing to eat, but be fain to eat grass vnder the stanes

* *Lamont Chronicle of Fife*, p. 206.

and wair vnder the bankis !” His neighbours not only confirmed the utterance of these predictions, but that they came to pass.*

That kind of prescience in a Scottish clergyman, Mr Michael Bruce, very nearly approaching the second sight, is described thus. On the day of the battle of Killicranky, he preached “in Anworth, and in his preface before his prayer, according to his usuall way of homely expressing himself, he began to this purpose—‘Some of you will say, what neuse minister? What neuse about Clavers, who has done so much mischief in this country? That man setts up to be a young Montrose; but as the Lord liveth he shall be cutt short this day. Be not affrayed,’ added he, ‘I see them scattered and flying: and as the Lord liveth, and sends this message by me, Claverhouse [shall] no longer be a terrour to God’s people. This day I see him killed—lying a corps:’” or words to that purpose; but that very day, about the same time, he was actually killed.† Apollonius Thyanaeus could not have said more.

Early in the eighteenth century, some wild enthusiasts menaced the Scottish capital with the divine judgments. They prophesied in the streets, until the magistrates imprisoned them. But they published “their prophesies under the title of *The Warnings of*

* Trial of Thomas Cors, warlock, 6 April 1643. *Rec. Ork.* f. 261.
Meit-will—craving; bankis—rocks.

† *Woodrow Analecta*, v. iii. p. 57. v. 5. p. 224.

the Eternal Spirit to Edinburgh: and Barns positively asserts, that judgements will, within forty days, fall on this town." The raving of enthusiasts is not easily quieted. Though released, they continued their warnings and agitations of the people for several years.*

New generations of prophets are constantly arising. The world is never altogether free of them.

Seeking Responses.—To dip into futurity, in any shape, was held unlawful, or those escaped who were beyond the reach of the law. But equal latitude was admitted in the interpretation of responses as of predictions. The lady of the Earl of Arran, Chancellor to King James VI. "got a response from witches, that she should be the greatest woman in Scotland, and her husband should have the highest head in the kingdom." How was it verified? She died of dropsy it may be, "very ill swelled in an extraordinary manner:" and he having been slain on the borders, his head was borne on the point of a spear!† Seeking responses is of ancient and universal practice; and in Scotland, according to Boethius, one of the earlier kings sent a confidential attendant to consult a sorceress in Icolmkill, on futurity. She foretold that the king should fall by the hands of his messenger.‡

* *Letter, James Webster, 20 Sept. 1710, in MS. ap.: Letters upon Literature, v. ii. No. 114. Woodrow Analecta, 10 Nov. 1710. Oct. 1715. v. ii. p. 163. v. iv. p. 33.*

† *Scot, Staggering State, p. 9.*

‡ *Boethius, lib. vi. The king Natholocus who is said to have been killed A. D. 252.*

Taghairm.—The ceremonies employed to seek responses, and the utterance employed to impart them, are alike obscure. Among those peculiar to this country, one the least known or illustrated, is denominated *Taghairm*, which is said to signify an *Echo*, as literally interpreted from the Gaelic language. Here the querent was wrapped in a cow's hide, his head alone remaining free, and carried by assistants to a solitary spot, or left under the arch formed by the projected waters of a cataract: where he continued during night, while other beings seeming to flit around him, he derived that inspiration from them, which he delivered as an oracular response to his comrades, on the following day.*

This is an abstruse subject of history: yet the aid of various sources admit conjectures, that it belongs to some sanctified relic of a religious ritual known in other climes.

Philosophers have considered animal existence as two-fold: that where all the faculties are alive in sensation, and that where the mind is insensible of external perceptions. According to some of the ancients, mankind are susceptible of the strongest and most beneficial impressions during the latter. The most certain divinations were obtained in sleep:† distempers were cured by divine dreams in the temple of

* *Martin*, Western Islands, p. 111, 112. *Pennant Tour* 1772, v. i. p. 311.

† *Jamblichus de Mysteriis*, sect. iii. c. 3. p. 63.

Æsculapius, whither valetudinarians continued still to resort in the age of St Jerome.* Thence sleeping in temples was practised both for health and instruction.†

In Ireland, divine dreams, or the sources of divination, were sought by sleeping on tumuli or cairns:‡ and on sacrificing a sheep for the recovery of health, the invalid was clothed in its skin.§

The Jewish ritual assigned to the priest the skin of the animal offered in sacrifice, whether a bullock or a ram.|| Some superstitious purpose might be contemplated. When the Thebans killed a ram on the festival of Jupiter Ammon, his image was clothed with the skin; all present in the temple then struck its carcase, which was buried in a consecrated place.¶

A temple in honour of Amphiaraus, a celebrated soothsayer, the reputed son of Apollo, stood in the territory of Oropus in Attica. Those who resorted thither for the purpose of divination, underwent lustrations, sacrificed a ram, and slept on its skin in expectation of visions.** Hence Virgil in embellishing

* *Hieronymus*, in cap 65. *Jesaiaë*, ap.: *Op. t. iii. col. 482.*

† *Cicero de Divinatione*, lib. i. c. 43.

‡ *Beauford*, *Ancient Topography*, ap.: *Coll. de Reb. Hib. v. iii. p. 304, 5.*

§ *Richardson*, *Folly of Pilgrimages*, p. 70, 71.

|| *Leviticus*, ch. vii. p. 8.

¶ *Herodotus*, lib. ii. § 42.

** *Pausanias*, lib. i. c. 34. p. 84. Edit. 1696. The temple stood three miles from the town of Oropus, on the coast. There was a

the scenes of the *Æneid*, figures such an oblation at a consecrated fountain, where the priest, to prepare himself for giving responses, slept on the skin.

* * * et cæsarum ovium sub nocte silenti
Pellibus incubuit stratis, somnosque petivit
Multa modis simulacra videt volitantia miris
Et varias audit voces.

VIRGIL *Æneid*, lib. vii. v. 85.

Neither incubation on the skin of the sacrifice,* nor such frightful visions were restricted to the Grecian or Italian temples, for one of the Hebrides passing the night in a hide, declared, that "he felt and heard such terrible things that he could not describe them."†

Clothing in the skin of the sacrifice formed also part of the pagan ritual.

Jamque sacerdotes * * *
Pellibus in morem cincti.

VIRGIL *Æneid*, lib. viii. v. 281.

It may be collected from the ceremonies witnessed by Lucian in the temple of Hierapolis, that a novice shaved his head and eye-brows on arrival: that a sheep being sacrificed, he knelt on the skin, and covering his fountain here dedicated to Amphiaraus, but the water might not be used either for lustration or other purposes.

* *Servius*, Notes on *Ænotria Tellus*. "Incubare dicuntur proprie, hi qui dormiunt ad accipienda responsa."

† *Martin*, *Western Islands*, p. 112.: Said by a native of the Isle of Lewis to the minister of North Uist.

own head with the head and feet of the animal, he prayed that his offering might be accepted, while promising another more worthy.*

Among the sanguinary rites disclosed to European nations, by discovery of the South American continent, was the oblation of innumerable human victims to monstrous idols : and one of the sacrifices was designed “the flaying of men.” This savage ceremony originated in the kingdom of Mexico ; for the people having demanded the daughter of some neighbouring potentate as their queen, she was flayed on the night of her arrival by command of their deity, and a young man, clothed in her skin. Thence followed the institution of sacred rites, wherein a captive slave, distinguished by the name, the honours, and the ornaments of the divinity, was sacrificed after a certain time ; and another in like manner, clothed with his skin, exacted contributions for the service of the gods, which none presumed to refuse.†

Festivities accompanied sacrifice : the priests rejoiced : the multitude feasted on the slaughtered victims, —“Solomon held a feast, and all Israel with him,” at the dedication of the temple. He offered “two-and-twenty thousand oxen, and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep.”‡ Oblations by humbler votaries, corresponded with their condition : but the sustenance

* *Lucianus de Dea Syria*, § 59.

† *Acosta*, lib. v. c. 6, 9, 21.

‡ *1 Kings*, ch. viii. v. 63, 65.

of the household was not forgot amidst the performance of religious duties.

Festivities prevailed, we say, with sacrifice. Even now, certain analogies subsist in foreign countries. On the morning after the most important fast has ended, men traverse Tripoli, dressed in a singular garb, calling themselves by the names of lions, camels, and the like, dancing with reeds, and other music.* At the festivals of the Indians of the Island of Tiburow, in the Gulf of California, they wear on the head, that of a deer with the horns.† Greater combination is seen in Brass Town, on the river Niger, where the priests in a hideous disguise, are seen with a bullock's tail appended to them, and a human skull over the face, surmounted by two bullock's horns.‡

In the northern regions, festivals were held towards the later season of the year. Thence, perhaps, has arose the custom of clothing a Northumbrian rustic, the chief actor in the festivities, with the hide of an ox slaughtered for winter provision.¶ On new year's day, rustics on the continent, clothed themselves in the skins of cattle: "some assumed the heads of animals, exulting that they had so transformed themselves, that they could not be recognised for men."§

* *Letters from Tripoli*, v. i. p. 35.

† *Hardy*, *Travels in Mexico*, p. 298.

‡ *Landers*, v. iii. p. 326.

¶ *Hutchinson*, *View of Northumberland*, 1776, v. ii. app. p. 45.

§ *Faustinus*, *Sermo in Kalendas Januarii*, ap.: *Acta Sanctorum*, t. i. p. 2, 3. Flor. A.D. 866.

Northern youths were wont to clothe themselves in the skin of a ram, and assuming its habits, they putted their fellows.* But Polydore Virgil affirms, that England was the only country which had not hitherto seen the personation of wild beasts,† leaving it doubtful whether the Northumbrian fashion was known to him. A canon of the ecclesiastical councils of 614, is quoted as denouncing the practice.

All this seems to have prevailed near the periods of sacrificial offering:—the introduction of the year, or the sun having begun to ascend after the winter solstice, became a festival. The relics of sacrifice may be also denoted by the custom of the Hebrides, where an attendant clothing himself in a cow's hide, on new year's eve, was exposed to an assault, from which he redeemed himself by reciting a verse.‡

As votaries slept on skins in the temples of Amphiarus and of Æsculapius, the reputed offspring of Apollo, the god of divination; and as clothing in the skin of the victim, formed part of sanctified rites, it may be presumed, that the *Taghairm*, whereby the Scotch seer, wrapping himself in a hide, sought nocturnal responses, is some relic of ancient religious ceremonial, obliterated from the page of history.

Giving and seeking responses, was esteemed a guilty intercourse with Satan. It was perilous to dream;

* *Ihre Glossarium*, col. 1008. voce *Jul*.

† *Polydore Virgil*, de Invent. lib. v. c. 2. p. 334.

‡ *Johnson*, Tour to the Hebrides, p. 309.

for although in the days of superstition, all the world were dreamers ; and even brutes were allowed to dream, no one might thus take a glimpse of futurity, —he might not describe what others could not see. A woman convicted as a “dreamer of dreamis,” expiated the offence with her life.* Neither was any pre-science from human sagacity or experience sanctioned. An eminent English lawyer, Sir Edward Coke, determines on statutory authority, that predictions regarding the end of the world, are unlawful.†

Ignorance brought the querent in peril. The kirk session of St Cuthbert’s punished Margaret Laing, “for consulting with the devill, in seiking ane dumb man to get her geir agane, stall be Bessie Loch.” This was the ordinary subject of enquiry : and the dumb were the diviners.‡ “John Davie, and his woman,” did penance also, “for taking response from an Englishman at Newbottell,” regarding stolen money.‡ John Small, in Angus, a prescriber “of potions of physie, to persons of meaner qualitie,” was accused of divining, and undertaking to disclose the perpetrators of theft.|| It was declared “sinfull to goe to aske for divination or sooth sayers ;” parties should be punished, as those “who have to doe with

* Trial of Bessie Skebister, *ut sup.*

† Coke, Institute. P. iii. ch. 55.—Of prophecies.

‡ Coldingham Kirk Session Register, 6 Nov. 1698. in MS.

‡ St Cuthbert’s K. S. R. 11, 25 Feb. 25 March, 1630.

|| Lamont, Chronicles of Fife, p. 236.

chanters and charmers:" and one was rebuked for going to Berwick "to enquire who had stolne a ring."* An Englishman in Leith, professing such skill in discovering clothes, desired four querents to return when "he oppened ane book, and told them the clothes were taken from ane watter syd, besyd ane myln, and wer resett in ane hous [that] stood east and west, having on door on the north."† The penalties of such offences were arbitrary. For inducing people to believe that "he culd tell of thingis tynt, and taking money for the sam," the magistrates of Edinburgh condemned "David Schang wricht to be had throw the town with ane paper on his heid, *leing* his cryme, convoyit with the hangman, and to be banist the fredome therof, during the townes will."‡ The presbytery, in aid of the kirk session of Perth, ordained Janet Barry to stand in white sheets under the bell ropes, for dealing with Satan and his instruments, because she had consulted witches on the health of her child.§ The gifted did not always deny their skill—pretending it came

* *Churnside K.S.R.*, 19, 24 Nov. 1667. vol. i.

† *St Cuthberts K.S.R.* Aug. 3. Sept. 23, 1660. Oct. ult. 17 Nov. 1661.

‡ *Town Council Records*, 3 Feb. 1580. The word *leing*, may be *bering*, or *telling*. The author has to acknowledge his obligations to the magistrates of the city, for free access to these manuscripts, ever since the year 1800, and to Mr John Sinclair, their present keeper.

§ *Perth K.S.R.*, 24, 31 July 1623, *ut sup.*

of supernatural revelation.* Whether or not the indulgence of curiosity was palliated, "James Cathcart set out a paper in print, [1685] shewing he could tell men and women their fortunes, give account of things stolen, etc."†

An old author, in the same spirit that seems to have animated his successors, exclaims, "read books, think of histories, search every corner of writings, you shall scarcely ever find divination for a good purpose."‡

Matters the most trivial—those numbered among accidents—never thought of more—are to some the most important prognostications. The howling of dogs, the hooting of owls in the night, the croaking of ravens in the day, the rustling of leaves in the breeze, even the sight of a rain-bow, though the divine pledge that the world should not be drowned again, fill the credulous with alarm.§

Tingling in the ears, tremor of the eyelids, numbness of the limbs, every organic affection, and chiefly sneezing, were presages. Nothing is more auspicious than this with the Persians: among the modern Greeks, it denotes remembrance by a favoured person.|| Though Tiberius, "the most morose of men,"

* *Dunse Presbytery Records*, 22 Feb. 1669. Harie Wilsone. *Excerpts* communicated by Mr James Watson, session-clerk, Dunse.

† *Fountainhall Chronological Notes*, p. 43.

‡ *Joannes Sarisberiensis de Nugis Curialium*, lib. ii. c. 27.

§ *Waddington and Hanbury, Visit to Ethiopia*, p. 53: Howling of dogs ominous in Dongola.

|| *Hanway, Travels*, v. i. p. 161. *Turner, Journal*, v. iii. p. 516.

exacted a salutation on sneezing,* it is deemed a signal of health. Contrary to wonted practice, sneezing, among a North American tribe, brought an imprecation from the bystander.†

To fold the thumb in the hand, while speaking, was of sinister prognostication, as proved by the violent death of the Earl of Argyle.‡

Did females first cross a river in Lewis, on the first of May, or pass to a neighbouring shore from the Isle of Sky, the success of the fishery would prove hopeless.||

A branch falling from an oak, the "*edgewell tree*," standing near Dalhousie Castle, portended mortality in the family :§ and the like of the family of Sinclair of Roslin, if the chapel "appeared to be all on fire."¶ Flame arising from the spot where one had been betrayed by an inhabitant of Carnwath, "creeping over land, covered the murtherer's house."***

Water flowing from Ullisford Hill, in the Island of Pomona, prognosticated war.†† A well near the church of Kilbarray, in Barra, indicated war, when "certain drops of blood appeared," as reported to be true,

* *Pliny*, Hist. Nat. lib. xxviii. § 5.

† *Sagard*, Voyage aux pays des Hurons, p. 107.

‡ *Woodrow Analecta*, v. iv. p. 41, 85.

|| *Martin*, p. 6. *Johnson*, Tour, p. 157.

§ *Ramsay*, Poems, v. i. p. 276.

¶ *Sleazer*, Theatrum Scotiæ, p. 9.

** *Kirkton*, ad an. 1670, p. 364.

†† *Ben*, Ins. Orch. Des. *ut sup.*

by "Rorie M'Neill, an verie ancient man of sex scoire of yeares, or therby," but peace when "litle bitts of peitts wold be sein."*

Here, as admitted partly in North Wales, if a representative stone were displaced next morning, from a circle formed of the ashes of bonfires at Halloweven, it prognosticated the death of the original within a year :† and the decease of that member of a family should follow, whose foot seemed imprinted next morning, among the ashes of the burnt bed straw of any one who had died.‡

Those hearing the sound of a bell in the church yard of a ruinous chapel, in the parish of Old Deer, declared it a prognostication of death :|| and if a spade and shovel were left in St Ronan's chapel, in the Isle of Rona, next morning the place of a grave was marked.§

§ III. *Divination*.—Infinite artificial expedients have been employed, for diving into futurity. From the grandeur of the celestial spheres, mankind have

* *Gordon*, Noats and Observations on the Hielands and Isles, 1620—1643. *ut sup.*

† *Robertson*, Parish of Callander, ap. *Stat. Acct.* v. xi. p. 621. *Brand*, v. i. p. 308.; from *Pennant MS.* vide *Borlase*, Cornwall, B. iii. ch. iii. p. 173.

‡ *Shaw*, Province of Moray, p. 294.

|| *Willox*, Old Deer Parish, ad an. 1723, in *MS.* ap. *Macfarlane Geog. Coll.* v. i. p. 175 : Chapel of Fether Angus.

§ *Monro*, Western Isles of Scotland, called Hybrydes, ad an. 1549. in *MS.* No. 208. *Ronay*.

descended to seek an augury in the humblest of nature's products—a worm.

A female diviner accompanying others to a field, was accused thus: "Ye, in presens of thame, made ane compas in the end, and ane hoill in the middis thairoff: and thaireftir, be thy coniurationes, thou causit ane grit worme cum first out of the said hoill, and crap owre the compas: and nixt ane litill worme cum furth, quhilk crap owre the [compas] also—and last causit ane grit worme cum furth, quhilk culd not pas owre the compas, nor cum out of the hoill, bot fell doun and deit:—quhilk inchantment and witchcraft, thou interpret in this forme:—that the first grit worme that crap owre the compas, was the gudeman, William King, quha suld leve: and the lytill worme was ane barne in the gudewyffe's wambe, quhilk was vnknawin to ony man, that sche wes with, and that the barne suld leve: and thrydlie, the last grit worme, thou interpret to be the guidwyffe, quha suld die—quhilk cam to pas efter thy speiking, quhow sone sche was delyuer of the said barne."*

If a certain worm in a medicinal spring, on the top of a hill in the parish Strathdon, were found alive, it augured the survivance of a patient:† and in a well of

* Trial of Bessie Roy, servant to William King in Barra, twelve years previously, 18 Aug. 1596. *Rec. Just.* *Compas*—circle. *Crap*—crept. *Quhow*—how.

† Gordon and Robertson, Notes on Garioch, ad an. 1724. in MS. ap. Macfarlane Geog. Coll. v. i. p. 126.

Ardnacloich, in Appin, the patient, "if he bee to dye, shall find a dead worme therein, or a quick one, if health bee to follow."*

Many of the lighter divinations hitherto ascribed to Scotland are common to England and Ireland.† Conjectures regarding the aspect of a future spouse, are indulged in the district of Lorn, from the figures assumed by an egg dropped amidst water. Also, one of four vessels being filled with pure, and another with muddy water; the third with milk, and the fourth with meal and water; if the diviner blindfold dips his hand in the first, it augurs that his spouse shall be led to the nuptial couch in all her pristine purity: but otherwise if dipping in the second. If finding his way to the milk, a widow shall fall to his lot: and an old woman awaits him from the meal and water. Three vessels are used in the South of Scotland; one of them empty: and should fate direct the diviner hither, it augurs perpetual celibacy. These are the ceremonies of Hallow-even.

Hydromancy.—Porphyry ascribes all divination to the intervention of demons, which were not distinguished as good and bad, or angels and devils anciently.‡ He who entered the pool of Bethsaida first, after it had been disturbed by an angel, was cured of his distem-

* Gordon, Noats and Observations, 1620—1643. *ut sup.*

† Vallancey, of All Hallow Eve, ap. : Coll. de Reb. Heb. v. iii. p. 449.

‡ Porphyrius de Abstinencia, lib. ii. § 37—39.

per.* A fountain on the continent, rendered turbid by a worm unknown at other times, was accounted a fatal prognostication.†

The waters were considered the natural abode of divinities, from whence, as from other places, they might be elicited by the potency of charms, and induced to give responses.

Demons introduced by conjurations into four vessels, filled by a virgin in a tempestuous night, remote from sanctified edifices and the view of mankind, were the source of divinations. Odoriferous substances, sometimes human blood, were added, for that virgin or another was slain. Common water, poured into a vessel, was believed to be adapted by conjurations, so that a demon of earthly form gave responses. After entering the water, an obscure sound issued from it; or on moving it, words faintly heard afforded the divination.‡

Traces of similar hydromancy subsisted here.—Stones were heated or boiled, and set apart for a period: then, from the sound emitted on immersion in water, it could be divined what was the nature of a spirit inflicting disease. Thus a diviner took “ane stone for the *Ebb*, another for the *Hill*, and the thrid for the *Kirk-yaird*: and thaireftir be seithing of thame fyre hott in water, and laying of thame above the

* *John*, ch. v. v. 3—7.

† *Camerarius Opera Horarum Subcisivarum*, c. 73. p. 335.

‡ *Nicetas Choniates Thes. Fid. Orthod.*, lib. iv. app. ii. § 2.:—accounted criminal expedients, and practised in the dens of wild beasts.

lintell of the doore for the space of ane nicht and more : and then taking and puting of thame in ane tub full of cold water, vsing some wordis knowen vnto himselff —thairby to understand be quhat stone that suld mak the bullering and noise, as is maist fairfull to be sein, [be] quhat spirit it is that the person diseasit hes the disease : and so to call thame home againe.”* By the latter may be interpreted the reverse of evocation—dismissal to their abodes.

One apparently in a dying state, was accosted thus by a reputed witch. “What now Robbie—ye are going to die ! I grant that I prayed ill for yow ; and now I sie that prayer hath taken effect. Jonet, if I durst trust in yow,” said she to his wife, “I sould know quhat lyeth on your guidman and holdis him downe.—I sould tell whether it was *ane hill spirit*, a *kirk spirit*, or a *water spirit* that so troubleth him.” On assurance of secrecy, the diviner carried three stones to the patient’s house next morning before day, and put them into the fire, where they remained until after sun-set. During night they were deposited under the threshold of the door, and all committed successively to a vessel of water. in the morning. Then the patient’s wife hearing one of them “chirme and chirle into the water,” the diviner pronounced it *a kirk spirit*, which troubled her “guidman Robbie,” and he was washed with the water. Next, other three stones

* Trial of James Knarstoun, ult. Feb. 1633. *Rec. Ork.* f. 87, 88.

were put into the fire, where they remained until sunset as before, when they were laid under the threshold during night, and removed before sun-rise to water. There the patient's wife "hard thame the second tyme chirme and churle into the water," and he underwent a second ablution. The ceremony was repeated a third time, when "one of the stones chirmed and churled in the water as twyse of before;" and now the diviner, instead of another, herself washed the patient with the water.* In the former case, the malady seems to have been ascribed to the *spirit of the hill*; and in a third, which is shorter and less explicit, where three stones were taken, "ane for the *spirit of the hill*, ane for the *kirk-yeard*, and ane for the *sey*;" the diviner concluded "the seik persone to be trublit be the *sey*,"—that is, by the *spirit of the sea*.†

The credulous personified diseases, and invested them with some definite form or existence. In Ireland a necromantic formula seems to have been used by a sorceress attending a patient under a certain disease called *Esane*, ascribed to fairies,—“I call thee P. from the east, west, south, and north, fairies red, white, and black.” Then whispering a short prayer in his ear, she put some burning coals in a cup of clean water whence to divine the distemper.‡

* Trial of Katharein Craigie, 16 July 1640. *Rec. Ork.* f. 191.
The stones were not the same throughout.

† Trial of Katherine Caray, 3 July 1617. *Rec. Ork.* f. 94.

‡ *Camden*, v. iv. p. 470. from *Good*.

In this country stones were boiled, the first water poured off, which was indispensable, and the water wherein they were boiled a second time was deemed a sovereign remedy.* The mystical number was probably three, and the second boiling was at some interval from the first.†

Water was taken at midnight from St Mary's well at Kirkbuster, and the patient washed between dawn and sunrise, wherein the diviner, probably, cast melted lead "throw the bowle of ane pair of cheiris thrie sundrie tymes, at ilk tyme saying thir wordis, 'in the name of the Father, Sone, and Holie Ghost,' for cuiring of dyvers and sundrie persounes." The issue of distempers was divined from liquified substances, such as lead or wax, congealing in water. Patrick Hobie's daughter being sick, he had promised "to cast her heart caik of lead, quhen shoe suld come to him."‡ Brand says, they have, in Orkney, a charm to ascertain "whether persons be in a decay or not, and if they will die thereof, which they call casting of the heart:" and he refers to a remarkable example in the kirk-session records of Stronsay and Eday.¶

* Woodrow, *Letter to Sir Robert Sibbald*, 23 Nov. 1710. ap. *Woodrow Letters*, v. ii. in MS.

† *Dunse Presbytery Records*, 7 Dec. 1704. Christian Wilkie: *Excerpts*, *ut sup.*

‡ Trial of James Knarstoun, *ut sup.* The water was to be drawn "betuixt midnight and cock craw."

¶ Brand, *ut sup.* p. 62. The author learns from the Rev. John Simpson, minister of the parish, that none of the Register preceding the year 1790 is extant.

Codronchus affirms, that a peasant, by casting lead in the water washing his diseased limb, ascertained that the cause was witchcraft.*

Among the Samagitæ were diviners called Burty, who invoking Potrympus an aquatic divinity, determined futurity from the figures of melted wax poured into water. Meletius says, he knew a woman who consulted a diviner on the return of her son, expected long from Prussia: when the melted wax assuming the form of a vessel with a man floating supine beside it, indicated that he had perished by shipwreck.†

The particular side of a coin dropped into water, proved the health of an absent friend. If "the cross of the sexpence be vp, then they are weill; gif not, they are not weill."‡ Also, if a wooden dish used in Lewis to carry water to an invalid from St Andrew's well, floated around *sunways*, when laid gently on the surface, a divination of recovery was obtained, and of decease if floating otherwise.¶

Such expedients are the source of divinations, not long since in vogue, from the dregs of our ordinary beverage.

Convalescence was anticipated from a well near

* *Codronchus de Morbis Veneficiis*, lib. iv. c. 2. p. 204.

† *Meletius de Diis Samagitarum*, ad an. 1580, ap: *Gaguin Rerum Polonicarum*, t. ii. p. 241.

‡ Trial of Bessie Skebister, *ut sup.*

¶ *Martin Western Isles*, p. 7.

the chapel of Killemorie, in the parish of Kirkholme, if the water rose suddenly on the messenger drawing it for an invalid: if the well of Muntluck, in the parish of Kirkmaiden, was found almost dry upon a similar mission, it argued that the distemper was mortal.* On patients drinking of a certain well in Dumfries-shire, "if they vomit they must dy."†

If the apparel of an invalid floated in the Dow Loch, convalescence should follow; if otherwise, his decease.‡ Similar divination is said to have been obtained from a well in England, dedicated to St Oswald.

Aristotle speaks of the fountain Palica in Sicily, wherein billets floated if inscribed with truth; but they were absorbed, and the perjured perished by fire, if bearing false affirmations.|| Theft was betrayed by the sinking of that billet inscribed with the name of the suspected thief, thrown with others among holy water.§

In Scotland it appears that billets thus inscribed were put in water, and a nail being taken by each of the suspected, a search was made with it, when the

* *Symson* Description of Galloway, p. 62, 67.

† *Archibald* Account of Dumfries-shire, in MS. ap. *Sibbald* Collections, p. 230.

‡ *Black* Description of the Presbytery of Penpont in MS. ap. *Sibbald* Collections, p. 244.

|| *Aristoteles* de Mirabilibus, ap. Op. t. i. p. 705.

§ *Massé* L'Imposture et Tromperie des Diabes, f. 32.

nail would adhere to the fingers of the delinquent: the billet bearing his name would be wet, while all the rest were dry.*

The names of querents into futurity, inscribed upon billets, dropped from the mouth of a well in Abraham's sepulchre at Hebron, obtain a favourable omen, if falling smoothly down and without undulation.†

Other species of hydromancy are less explicit. To ascertain whether the properties of milk were abstracted by one deceased or surviving, if the owner milked the cow over an inverted cup, in the pail, the rise of a bubble or removing the cup indicated a delinquent deceased,—thence precluding remedy.‡

The conclusions from acceptance or rejection of substances cast into water, as if grateful or not to divinities, founded the principles of divination. Ponderous articles, even gold and silver, floated in a lake beside the temple of Venus at Aphaca, if the offering were rejected. All the offerings of the inhabitants of Palmyra, sunk that year preceding capture of the city, but on the subsequent festival, similar offerings were

* *Halyrudhous* K.S.R. 20 March 1655. John Trumbill and four women implicated here, vol. v. p.167. An allusion to divination by hydromancy for a lost piece of gold: *St Cuthbert's* K.S.R., 15 March 1621.

† *Lagh Journal*, ap. *Macmichael Journey from Moscow to Constantinople*.

‡ Trial of Helen Hunter, 5 Ap: 1643. *Rec. Ork.* f. 262.

cast up again, thus denoting that the goddess warned them of its overthrow.*

Shoulder Blade, or Reading the Spale Bone.—It is uncertain whether the humbler class of Scottish seers did more than free the shoulder blade of a sheep of its flesh, and turning towards the east divined futurity from the lines, shades, or transparence disclosed by its inequalities.

This species of divination corresponds with the *Spatulantia* of demonographers, as derived from the *Spatula* of anatomy: and in a synopsis comprehending diviners and divination, the *Spatulamantes* naturally enough follow the *Chiromantes*.†

Somewhat, as in the second sight, disclosure of passing events at a distance seems to have been obtained by the seer. Thus, when the Earl of Loudon was obliged to retreat to the Isle of Sky by the Scottish rebels, a common soldier there proclaimed the victory of Culloden in 1746, at the very moment of success, “by looking through the bone.”‡ But it is to be considered for the most part as pure divination. Accordingly Macleod, who treats professedly of the second sight, distinguishes it as “another kind of divination,—whereby on looking into the shoulder blade of a sheep, goat, etc. as in a book,—some skilful in that occult science, pretend to read future events:”

* Zosimus, lib i. Speaking of Aurelian.

† Erastus de Astrologia Divinatrice, p. 90, 91.

‡ Pennant Tour in Scotland, 1769, p. 179.

and he declares that he had several instances vouched to conviction.* Among others, "Molly Macleane" must have been very accomplished in the art, as from a shoulder blade she discovered that five graves should be opened, "one for a grown person, the other four for children, one of which was to be of her own kindred, and so it fell out." Whether or not, as a preparative for divination "Marione Fishar in Wear-die brak ane spuill" over a sick child.†

Besides being perhaps recognised in England, this superstition was familiar in Wales, and in Ireland. John of Salisbury, in the twelfth century, expresses the greatest abhorrence of those necromancers,—*"qui in humerulis arietum vel quorumcunque ossibus animalium vaticinantur."*‡ Giraldu Cambrensis, who wrote in 1204 or 1205, alludes to cotemporary practice in Wales, observing, that inspection of the right shoulder bone of rams, boiled, not roasted to free it of the flesh, discovered past and future events. By means of cracks and marks, the skilful of either sex could divine, with the utmost certainty, peace and war, slaughters and conflagrations, domestic infidelities, and the condition of the king. Thus, he says, were the devastation of the country on decease of Henry I.,

* *Macleod* (Theophilus Insulanus) on the Second Sight, p. 77.

† *St Cuthbert's K.S.R.*, 9 Nov. 1643, fol. 345.

‡ *Joannes Sarisberiensis de Nugis Curialium*, lib. ii. cap. 27. ap. *Bib : Vet : Pat : t. xxiii. p. 274.*

and William Mangunel's detection of his wife's infidelity disclosed.*

In Ireland, the diviner "looking through the bare blade of a sheep," discovered the decease of some one of the family, from a darker spot than ordinary.†

The Gipsies of Persia now resort to this practice.‡ In 1558 an English traveller found it under a modified form in Bukharia, a country nearly estranged to modern geographers. The shoulder blade was boiled, burnt, pulverised, and mixed with the blood of the sheep. On one occasion, to divine whether the caravan he accompanied should escape, many characters were written with blood, amidst other ceremonies. The augury was sinister. "It foretold," says he, "that wee shoud meete with enemies and theeues to our great trouble, but should overcome them." This he discredited, yet, within three hours, the caravan was attacked, and several fell on both sides.||

In the year 1253, when William de Rubruquis visited the court of Manghu Khan of Tartary, he found him constantly resorting to similar superstition previous to every undertaking. After inspecting three

* *Giraldus Cambrensis*, *Itinerarium Cambriæ*, p. 81: A dull versification of this passage, translated also by *Caxton*, and mistaken by some as original, appears in *Drayton Polyolbion*, Song v.

† *Camden Britannia*, v. iv. p. 469. from *Good*.

‡ *Ker Porter Travels*, p. 529, 532.

|| *Jenkinson Voyage from Mosco to the Citie of Boghar*: ap: *Purchas Pilgrims*, v. iii. p. 258.

blade bones of rams, and musing on the subject of divination, he delivered them to an attendant to be burnt in a neighbouring apartment. If finding them cleft when returned, he advanced with his enterprise; if cracked transversely, or if round pieces had started out, it was abandoned. The fissure of a single bone was alone sufficiently favourable.*

Nicetas Choniates also, who died in the year 1206, speaks of the practice as prevalent in his time, probably in Asia Minor, where he dwelt. The bone was freed of the flesh, and, without any incantations, the diviner dipped into futurity by inspecting it.†

The Romans charged the Jews with innovations on the belief of all other nations, by introducing a new religious ritual, which consisted partly in slaughtering a ram, as if in contempt of Jupiter Ammon.‡ By their institutions, the shoulder blade “heaved up” should belong to the priest offering a ram in sacrifice. This was a portion reserved for divine acceptance; and every heave-offering should be of the best. Certain portions of animals are set apart for eminent persons. By the Hurons of North America, the entire head of each animal caught in hunting, was presented to some chief or valiant person. A stranger among them was thus offered the head of a dog.¶ The chief

* *De Rubruquis Journal*, ap. *Purchas*, v. iii. p. 31.

† *Nicetas Choniates Thes. Orth. Fid.*, lib. iv. c. 42. app. 2.

‡ *Tacitus Histor.* lib. v. c. 4. *cæso ariete velut in contumeliam Hammonis.*

¶ *Sagard Voyage du Pays des Hurons*, p. 148, 360.

of some African tribes is now entitled to the breast of every ox killed by his people, and of the best of the antelopes caught in hunting.*

The breast and the fat of an animal sacrificed were consecrated: the fat was burnt, but the breast was assigned to the high priest and his sons. In a solemn sacrifice the shoulder and breast of a bullock were reserved by them, and they were enjoined to eat it in a clean, that is, in a purified place. The shoulder, the cheeks, and the belly of the sacrifice were reserved for the priest of the Samaritans long afterwards, as anciently.† The right shoulder of the beast was the priest's portion of the offering: and, having obtained it thus, Samuel was enabled to set before Saul "the shoulder and that which was upon it." It follows naturally that the priest having gained possession of this part he could employ the shoulder blade for the purposes of divination.‡

Miscellaneous Divination.—Expedients little known here were practised elsewhere: and some of those adopted are so indefinitely explained as to be scarcely intelligible.

* *Burchell Travels*, v. ii. p. 303, 348, 545. *Lichtenstein Travels*, v. i. p. 287.

† *Morin Appendix to Leo of Modena*, ch. ii. § 3. The Samaritans of Naplous in Palestine, 1590. Rams' horns are employed for carrying charms in Africa: *Park Travels*.

‡ *Exodus*, ch. xxix. v. 26—29. *Leviticus*, ch. vii. v. 30—34.; ix. 21.; x. 14, 15. *Deuteronomy*, ch. xviii. v. 3. *Numbers*, ch. xviii. v. 18—30. *1 Samuel*, ch. ix. v. 24.

A shirt dipped in a well which "brides and burials passed over," was hung before the fire, perhaps that some form should appear and turn it.* Distempers were ascertained from the aspect of apparel, and anticipations of the issue. Thus an elf-shot or witchcraft were declared the source of the evil: One affirmed, if she had got the shirt of a deceased person in time, he should not have died:† and that of another being carried to "Jonet Murrioth, in Dunblane," with a query, whether he should die,—“Not this year,” she answered, cast a knot on the sleeve and desired it to be put on the patient.‡ If the left foot shoe cast over the house, fell with the mouth upwards, a divination of recovery was obtained: a distemper was mortal if falling downwards.§

Catoptromancy was practised with a mirror, or by a phial and candle, and other means of reflection. On the continent, to divine theft, a damsel approached a phial of holy water, with a taper of sanctified wax, saying, “Angelo bianco, angelo santo, per la tua santita et per la mia virginita mostra mi, che ha tolto tal cosa.” The querent beheld a diminutive figure of the offender in the phial.||

* *M'Gill* Parish of Eastwood: ap. *Stat. Acct.*, v. xviii. p. 209.

† *St Cuthbert's* K.S.R., 9 Nov. 1643.

‡ *Stirling* K.S.R., xi. May 1615.

§ Trial of Helen a Wallis, 13 June 1616. *Rec. Ork.*

|| *Rimualdus* Consilia in causis gravissimis, cons. 414. t. iv. p. 254.

“White angel, holy angel, by thy sanctity and my virginity, shew me the thief.”

Turning the Riddle.—"Sticke a paire of sheeres in the rind of a siue, and let two persons set the top of each of their forefingers upon the upper part of the sheers, as holding it with the siue up from the ground stedelie, and aske Peter and Paul whether A. B. or C. hath stole the thing lost, and at the nomination of the guilty person the siue will turne round."* Peucerus speaks to the same purport.† Here one was ordained "to satisfie the kirk for turneing of the ridle," and to abstain from repetition "vnder the paine of death."‡ Denial "of the turneing of the siwe, and scheiris, and that by the saxter aithe," was exacted of one: and another confessed his using "the sife and the scheir, the time of the stowth of Walter Macritchie's corne."|| A burgess of Perth expressed much indignation against the minister, for insinuating the subsistence of this practice in his family.§ Bodin considers it infallible. The riddle began to move before him on the mere enunciation of some words in French: also at the approach of one accused of sorcery, whereon he was condemned.¶

Among the ancients, "a silly herd of people con-

* *Scot Discouerie*, B. xii. c. 17. p. 262.

† *Peucerus Divinationum*, p. 321. written about 1591.

‡ *Records of Orkney*, 2 July 1641. f. 214. v.

|| *Records of Shetland*, 7 Aug. 1603. Nicole in Culyeasetter, f. 62, 67.—15 July 1604: Andrew Duncane, f. 137.

§ *Perth K.S.R.* 3 Aug. 14 Sept. 1619. *Extracts, ut sup.*

¶ *Bodinus*, lib. iii. c. 5. p. 280. lib. iv. c. 4. p. 271.

sidered a piper, a drummer, players on cymbals, or a diviner, by the riddle, as a divinity.”*

Turning the Key and Bible.—“Turneing the key, ane hich poynt of witchcraft,” by Jonet Schort, for detecting theft, is probably illustrated thus:† “A gentle woman called for the suspected person, and holding a key upon her finger, being put in a bible, she repeated the following words,—which are not fit to be printed here, least the same ill use might be made of them by others,—naming the persons christian name and sirname, whereupon the bible immediately turned round, which makes the lady believe the suspected person guilty.”‡

Sortes Evangelicæ.—The first passage of Scripture opened at random, was held a disclosure of the will of Providence, and encouraged the wavering to enterprise. One of the murderers of Archbishop Sharp in 1679, said, that while at “his uncle’s house, intending towards the Highlands, because of the violent rage in Fife, he was pressed in spirit to return: and he, inquiring the Lord’s mind anent it, got this word borne in upon him, ‘Go on and prosper.’ So returning from prayer wondering what this could mean, went again and got it confirmed—‘Go, have not I sent you;’ whereupon he durst no more question:”|| and he imbrued his hands in blood.

* *Lucianus Pseudomantis*, § 9. ap. : *Op. t. ii. p. 217.*

† *Halyrudhous K.S.R.* 13 May 1617.

‡ *Athenian Mercury*, v. iv. No. 22. v. xv. No. 13. q. 3.

|| *Russel, Murder of Archbishop Sharp*; ap. : *Kirkton*, p. 413.

Moses Maimonides specifies divination by stones,* which is believed by some the *purim* of Scripture: and is also conjectured the origin of jacks or *chucks* in Scotland, as played with stones,—perhaps derived from the barbarous Latinity *jotticos*.† But this is alike uncertain, as the purpose of taking a hot stone from the fire by Mareoun Cromertie, while forbidding her name meantime to be uttered.‡

The purpose of putting fire in a well is equally obscure.§ The Jews hid the sacred fire of the altar in a dry well, regarding which a long narrative is preserved in that part of Scripture now called Apocryphal.||

Plucking “ane herb called *melefowr*, quhilk causis the nose bleed,”—sitting on the right knee, and pulling it “betuix the midfinger and thombe, and saying of *in nomine Patris, Filii et Spiritus Sancti*,” was to impart the faculty of prediction. Further, one should take “an eg and rost it, and take the swee of it thrie sondayes, and with onwashen handis wash hir eyes, quhairby she sould sie and know ony thing she desyrit.”¶ Washing the hands was mystical. Cures were operated by repairing to a church with unwashed

* *Moses Maimondes*, c. x. § 7.

† *Vallancey Purim*, ap.: *Coll. de Reb. Hib.* No. 13. v. iv. p. 646.

‡ *Records of Shetland*, 7 July 1604. f. 155: Ordained to exculpate herself by the “larycht aithe.”

§ *Records of Orkney*, 5 March 1616. Jonet Irving, f. 60.

|| *Maccabees*, ch. i. v. 18—36. ch. ii. v. 1. *Doubdan*, ch. xv. p. 118.

¶ Trial of Elspeth Reoch, 12 March 1616. *Rec. Ork.* f. 63.

hands, without speaking, eating, or drinking, and without prayer previous to entrance.*

One in Fogo Mill, accused of revealing secrets, and making disclosures regarding stolen goods, to persons daily resorting to him, declared his knowledge was imparted by a woman who appeared to him in the night.† This faculty seems to have been ascribed to a spiritual monitor anciently, for a damsel of the city of Philippi, “possessed with a spirit of divination,” brought much gain to her master.‡

Professed diviners, under various imposing names, have formed part of the religious and political establishment of different countries. In Scotland, the art was practised principally by the Egyptians, who were punished for professing themselves “sorcereris, givearis of weirdis, declareris of fortownes:”§ and “sic vther fantastical imaginations.”||

In England two females were tried in the year 1828, for pretending to divine the discovery of treasure in a cellar.¶

* *Thiers*, t. i. p. 385.

† *Dunse Presbytery Records*, 22 Feb. 21 April 1669: Harie Wilson. *Excerpts, ut sup.*

‡ *Acts*, ch. xvi. v. 16—19.

§ Trial of Katherine Faw for murdering her husband—sentenced “to be taken to the Bulwark, and cassin over the same in the sey, to be drownit,” 21 Aug. 1612. *Rec. Ork.* f. 116.

|| *Privy Council Record*, 5 March 1574. 18 July 1576.

¶ *Trial of Lydia Hart and Isabella Paine*, at Lindsey Sessions, Lincolnshire, Nov. 1828.

CHAPTER XV.

IMAGINARY BEINGS.

WHILE man can preserve an empire over himself: while he can verify the impressions on his senses by an appeal to reason, he may resist the delusions imposing upon them. But there is a season when, by the provisions of munificent nature, his active faculties are paralyzed, and the whole sensorium sleeps, that personal and mental exhaustion shall be repaired by the cessation of labour, and the system invigorated anew.

When thus unconscious of sublunary existence, the gates of another world open to present the endless shades of ærial forms, amidst uncreated space, to slumbering imagination.

Mankind have peopled the boundless regions traversed by the celestial orbs, with beings resembling themselves, yet invested with a superior nature, an invisible, etherial, definite figure, which, losing its tenuity, may sink to the earth, and become susceptible to mortal view.

But the fancy of our progenitors has been less luxuriant in rearing up so marvellous an host as has

sprung from the invention of other nations :—nor are the qualities of such illusive visions alike defined.

Besides the Deity, the Jews enumerated angels and archangels as belonging to the celestial abodes. Their other spiritual beings are few. The supernatural inhabitants of the heavens, the earth, the waters, and the infernal abodes of the Pagans, are accounted as about 150 in number.*

Though Scotch history presents some allusions to other portions of the demoniac host, the adjuncts of Satan, that wicked spirit recognized from the Jews, none of those battalions seem to have been arrayed in fancy which terrified the weak, and rendered men ridiculous in attempting to wage substantial warfare against them.

Credulity in the actual evocation of demons, of spirits, and of obtaining the apparition of existing individuals, has been derived from various sources, but chiefly from the Scriptural narrative of the witch of Endor, raising Samuel as an old man in a mantle, at the solicitation of Saul. Herodotus relates the evocation of Melissa, the wife of Periander, whom he had previously slain, in quest of treasure :† and Lucian describes the ceremonies of one to evoke his father, and to bring the shade of his mistress, who remained

* *Beyer ad Johan : Selden de Diis Syriis : Syntagmata additamenta, c. 5—20.*

† *Herodotus, lib. iii. § 50. Plutarch, Op. : t. ii. p. 1104.*

with him until cock crowing.* Nero sought the evocation of his mother to appease her spirit.† In modern times, a student named Weber, at Jena, perished miserably on attempting the evocation of spirits, as if “the just judgments of God punished his wickedness.”‡

During the middle ages, and afterwards, diviners, called *Specularii*, and magicians, consultants of the dead, or *necromantici*, were employed for evocation. Troops of demons, with their different occupations, their signs or nods in responses, could be discovered in a vessel of water, whereon a drop of oil was poured :§ and visions were obtained in “a berill or chrystal.”

In Scotland, an apparition was sought in a mirror : and, as in Ireland, that of a future spouse, by sowing hempseed, or the semblance of winnowing grain in a barn : also, by a maiden dipping the sleeve of her shift in south running water, where the lands of three owners meet, and hanging it before the fire, when the future spouse would turn it.||

The portending fate of the Earl of Argyle, was augured from the representation of “a little Highland

* *Lucianus Philopseudes*, § 14. ap. *Op.* : t. iii. p. 41.

† *Suetonius*, in *Vita Neronis*, § 34.

‡ *Floerckius*, de *Crimine Conjuratōnis Spirituum*, Præf. p. 2—4.

§ *Joannes Sarisberiensis*, *Polieraticus*, lib. i. c. 12. lib. ii. cap. 37. ap. *Bib. Vet. Patr.* t. xxiii. p. 254, 278. *Raguseius* de *Divinatione*, lib. ii. Epist. 8. p. 451, 452. *Leo Africanus*, lib. iii. f. 130. *Aubrey Miscellanies*, ch. 15. p. 128, 131.

|| *Vallancey* of All-Hallow Eve, ap. *Coll. de Reb. Hib.* v. iii. p. 449.

man, as the habit shewed, brandishing his sword over a field of dead bodies.”*

One was charged with engaging to shew a man “a vision of his mother, who had been three years dead.”†

Some of the initiated enjoyed the faculty of evoking Satan; as Agnes Sampson, and Alexander Hamilton, who brought him up by striking thrice on the ground. John Knox obtained a sight of him with horns: and a woman, fortified with the bible, and protecting herself within a circle, raised him thrice in a cellar—the third time, with a long tail.‡ But when Sir Lewis Ballantyne prevailed on Richard Graham the warlock, to evoke him “in his own yard in the Canongate, he was thereby so terrified, that he took sickness and died.”§

The means of evocation are not specified. According to Agnes Sampson, it was attended with some expence, which the husband of a woman declined, though the only means of curing his wife’s malady. The conjuror in the cellar, turned a riddle twice from right to left, or against the sun, on the rim: holding nine feathers pulled from the tail of a black cock.

Familiar Spirits.—Perhaps the demon of Socrates was represented here by the *familiar spirit*, also the

* *Home*, Sir Patrick, Expedition of the Earl of Argyle, 1685. ap. *Rose*, Observations.

† *Witches of Renfrewshire*, p. 139.

‡ *Law Memorials*, p. 219, 220.

§ *Scot*, Staggering State, p. 130.

imp of English superstitions. In presence of the king, and Sir James Melvil, Richard Graham acknowledged that "he had a familiar spirit, which shewed him many things."* Agnes Sampson allowed that she had a familiar spirit, which, upon her call, did appear in a visible form, and resolve her of any doubtful matter.† Dr Richard Napier was alleged to have conference with the archangel Raphael, and on great occasions, with Michael, who gave responses, like Agnes Sampson's familiar, whether sick persons were incurable.‡ His more celebrated relative, the inventor of the logarithmic system of calculation, was believed to have a familiar spirit, represented by a black cock. The vulgar cannot conceive how men of superlative genius can gain superiority by the mere exercise of their natural energies.

It is not obvious that popular credulity here comprehended red, white, and black spirits, adopted, not invented by poets, perhaps in the last instance, if not in the first, from Leo Africanus, who wrote in the year 1526:§ nor is there any notice of Puckle, probably the *Pocclus* of the Samagitæ,|| Stadlin, Tiffin, and

* *Melvil Memoirs*, p. 396. *Trial of Barbara Naipar*, Verdict, art. 6.

† *Spotswood History*, p. 383.

‡ *Aubrey Miscellanies*, ch. vi. p. 135. *Lilly, Life and Times*, p. 54.

§ *Leo Africanus*, de Africæ descriptione, lib. iii. p. 130. " * * demones, autem aut rubros aut albos aut nigros appellitant."

|| *Lasicius de Diis Samagitarum*, p. 54. "Pocclum inferni ac tenebrarum: Pocollum aerorum spiritum." * * *Puic* a fairy, *Irish*.

Liard, best known from the writings of the continental demonographers.*

Brownie in Scotland, seems to have corresponded with *Robin Goodfellow*, and the *Terrei Virunculi* of the continent. King James considered *Brownie* as a rough man, Martin as a tall man. Brand looked on this being as an evil spirit: King James, and perhaps the physician Ramesey, as a Satanic metamorphosis; and Kirk thinks *Brownie* peculiar to his native country, and belonging to the class of fairies. A similar office, in rocking cradles, domestic services, taking care of horses and cattle, was also deemed the province of these beings, in all countries: and it was discharged in the night. In the Orkney Islands, stacks of corn, called *Brownie's* stacks, were always safe. A portion of food was set apart in houses for *Brownie*; and a libation of milk or wort, poured into a cavity of a stone, called *Brownie's* stone, to ensure favour and protection. Credulity in the existence of such supernatural beings, abated in the end of the seventeenth century. They were said to have been chained up by the event of the reformation, but again let loose on introduction of the English liturgy here, as expressed with controversial asperity.† The nature of *Brownie*

Vallancey, ap. *Coll. de Reb. Hib.* t. iii. Pref. p. 135. *Vide Brand*, by Ellis, v. ii. p. 359.

* Bodinus, lib. ii. c. 8. p. 184, 215. *Sprenger*, P. ii. q. 1. p. 200. *Scot on Devils and Spirits*, ch. 33. p. 542.

† *Citizen of Aberdeen*, Letter to Mr Francis Melvil, p. i. London 1718. in 8vo.

was pacific and munificent—but spite of his unwearied services, when offended once he appeared no more.*

On a charge before the presbytery of Aberdeen, Walter Ronaldson, of pious repute, confessed that 27 years previously, a spirit came to his door; and that he was visited ever since by it, twice yearly. In 1601 it awakened him from his sleep, calling “Wattie! Wattie!” when he observed sitting on a chest near his bed, “lyk ane litill bodie, haifing a scheavin berd, cled in quhyt being lyk a sark; and it said, Thou art vnder wraik; gang to the Weathmanis hous in Stanivoid, and thair thou sall find baith silver and gold, and weschell.” In compliance with the admonition, he resorted to the spot along with three men, who dug: but for his part, he “wes povstaes—he culd do na-thing.” Although the search proved fruitless, he expressed his conviction that gold was there, “gif it wer weill socht.”† A vision to two women dwelling apart, about the year 1676, warned them to search the *sith bruaich*, or *fayrie hill*, where they met at the same moment, and more fortunate than Wattie, “joyntly digging, found a vessel as large as a Scottish peck, full of small pieces of good money, of ancient coyn.”‡

The attributes and description of *Greogach*, or

* *Heron, Journey*, v. ii. p. 227. “If old clothes were laid out for him, he took them in great distress, and never more returned.”

† *Presbyterie Buik* of Aberdeen, 4 Dec. 1601. *Weschell*—goods; property. *Povstaes*—powerless.

‡ *Kirk, Secret Commonwealth*, § 10. p. 12.

Gruagich, the "Old man with the long beard," in the Western Islands, are obscure and contradictory.* Nor is "ane litle creature—the bowman's bairne," better understood.†

In that district of the country where the author was born, the vulgar, even in his earlier years, ascribed the origin of Linlithgow Palace, to an ancient diminutive race, the *Paichs*, endowed with extraordinary strength, and capable of the greatest efforts in the shortest time, as evinced by the erection of that structure. On the estate also, which has descended in his family, there is a spot near the summit of a commanding hill, called *Paichs Hole*, the reputed site of a battle: and a farm house on the lower ground adjacent, preserves the name of *Scotstown*. The preceding appellative may be derived from an unsuccessful encounter of the Pechts, Picts, or Piks, with their enemies; but whether these were the Scots of Scotstown, is open to conjecture. Close to the latter, a cemetery of high antiquity, was discovered some years ago, wherein each body, contained in its own distinct sepulchre, scarcely covered by the mould, had been evidently deposited otherwise than in that direction enjoined by the Christian ritual.

Katherine Jonesdochter saw the "Trowis ryse out of the kirkyeard of Hildiswick, and Holiecross kirk of

* *Johnson*, Journey, p. 247. *Pennant*, Tour and Voyage, 1772. p. 311.

† Trial of Barbara Thomasdochter, 2 Oct. 1616. *Rec. Shet.* f. 34.

Eschenes, and on the hill called Greinfaill." They came to any house where there was "feasting, or great mirrines and specialle at Yule."* Camerarius seems to identify the Trowis, Trollis, or Trollen of the north, with the character of Brownie: affirming, that persons worthy of credit informed him, that demons called *Drullos*, discharging the office of domestics, and taking care of the horses and cattle, were recognized there.† The same character seems to be ascribed, as of old, to the Trows of Shetland, which Dr Hibbert judges the malevolent beings of northern mythology.‡ It is doubtful whether authors are right in identifying the Fauns and Trollen. Cassianus, a Mar-selloise priest of the fifth century, denies the malevolence of the Fauns.—Attributes not dissimilar, were bestowed on Pan, the Fauns, and Satyrs. They dwelt in the woods: they were sportive and dissolute. The prophet Isaiah predicted that Satyrs, or Hairy Beings, should dance on the site of Babylon.||

The *Portunes* of England, and *Neptunes* of France, diminutive, old, and wrinkled beings, clothed in patches, resembled the Brownie of Scotland.§ Like-

* Trial of Katherine Jonesdochter, 2 Oct. 1616. *Rec. Shet.* f. 33.
Yule—Christmas.

† *Camerarius*, *Opera Horarum Subcisivarum*, t. i. c. 73. p. 338.

‡ *Hibbert*, *Shetland Islands*, p. 444—452.

|| *Cassianus*, *Collatio vii. de Mobilitate Animæ*, c. 32. *Op.* p. 331.
Sprenger, P. ii. q. 1. c. 3. p. 237. *Isaiah*, ch. xiii. v. 21. xxxiv. v. 14.

§ *Ducange*, *Glossarium* in v. *Neptunus*.

wise the Barstuccæ, and Kaukies of Samagitia, the latter, little bearded beings, a span high, sometimes becoming visible. They were propitiated also.*

Six different kinds of supernatural inhabitants occupied the mines of the north, inducing their desertion by the miners:† and some were assigned to the coal mines at Whitehaven.‡

Subterraneous beings dwelt in the mountains of the Fœroe Islands:§ and a libation is offered to appease those on the Tripolitan coast of Africa.¶ In the most remote region of North America, travellers have visited “the mountain of Little Spirits,” understood by neighbouring tribes, as diminutive devils, eighteen inches high, with large heads; and armed with arrows, which proved mortal when discharged against those approaching their abode.¶

Fairies.—Some consider the various appellatives of diminutive beings, merely so many synonyms, indicating an elvine race: others view the whole as Satanic metamorphoses. The most distinct account of popular belief in fairies, as now subsisting, is given by Dr Edmonstone, and Dr Hibbert, under the name of “Trowis,” in

* *Lasicius*, de Diis Samagitarum, p. 42, 51, 55. This country is part of Poland, *Meletius*, ap. *Gaguin*, t. ii. p. 419.

† *Olaus Magnus*, lib. vi. c. 29.

‡ *Pennant*, Tour in Scotland, 1769, p. 49.

§ *Debes*, Islands of Fœroe, ch. 8. p. 370.

¶ *Lewis and Clarke*, Travels, 1804, p. 39.

¶ *Beechey*, Expedition, p. 99. *Blaquiere*, v. ii. p. 70.

Shetland ; and by Dr Graham, under a Gaelic character, signifying in Perthshire, " the men or people of peace." They partake of human and spiritual nature : their size is diminutive : they perpetuate their race : and offspring descends also of their intercourse with mortals. They can become invisible, when they do not scruple to mix with mankind, and abstract the goods of the upper world to their subterraneous abodes. Thither also, they convey the parturient for nurses, and new born babes. They are addicted to merriment : they have been seen dancing, and dressed in green. Animals from the flocks or herds, shot with elf arrows, serve for their banquets. The influence of fairies is greatest on Friday ; at noon, and at midnight : and from certain jealousies which they entertain of mankind, their name is avoided by the populace, or treated with respect : thence, perhaps, they are called good wights, or good neighbours.*

Kirk, the minister of Aberfoyl, who died in 1688, comprises several other peculiarities of the " people at peace." Their substance is denser than air ; too subtle to be pierced, and reuniting when divided, or attempted to be cleft asunder. Their voice resembles whistling. They change their abodes every quarter of the year, floating near the surface of the earth, when persons endowed with the second sight have very ter-

* *Graham*, Sketches of Perthshire, p. 260—275. *Edmonstone* Zetland Islands, v. ii. p. 75, 78. *Hibbert*, Shetland Islands, p. 444—452. *Brand*, p. 63.

rifying encounters with them. The Highlanders, to preserve themselves, and their cattle against them, went regularly to church the first Sunday of every quarter, though they never returned during the interval. The *Siths* vanished at the name of God or Jesus.* They were of both sexes, and like mankind, they were mortal.

The description of fairies is somewhat indefinite in history. Other authority seems to confirm the preceding opinion. When Katherine Caray wandered among the hills of Caithness, "at the doun going of the sun, ane great number of fairie men mett her," together with "a maister man." A black man came to another at Lochaber, calling himself "ane fairie man." But he is described as one "Johnne Stewart, quha wes slane be M'Key at the doun going of the sun, and thairfoir nather deid nor leiving, bot wold ever go betuix the heaven and the earth."†

Some meagre allusions appear to the Queen of the Fairies, and especially by King James, whose immediate knowledge may have been derived from the vignettes in Olaus Magnus, and the words of his own unhappy subjects, who perished on account of their credulity. Alesoun Peirsoun was convicted on her confession, of repairing to the "quene of Elfame," with whom she was familiar. Jean Weir declared, that while she taught a school at Dalkeith, a woman desir-

* *Kirk*, Secret Commonwealth. var. loc.

† Trial of Katherine Caray 1616,—of Elspeth Reoch 1617. *Rec. Ork.* f. 94. f. 63.

ed to be employed "to speik to the Queen of Fairie, and strik ane battell in hir behalf with the said queen."* The name of this imaginary potentate is sufficiently frequent in English literature. One in the reign of Charles I. pretended he had a call, "O Micol, Micol regina Pigmeorum veni," which would evoke the queen of the fairies. When practised at Hurst wood, a gentle murmuring wind came first, then a whirlwind, and last a hurricane, when the queen appeared in most illustrious glory.†

Perhaps a passage of the canon law illustrates the source of this, as allied to grosser superstitions. "Some wicked women, resigning themselves to Satan and to the illusion of demons, believe and declare that they ride forth on certain animals in the night, along with Diana the goddess of the Pagans, or with Herodias, accompanied by a numberless multitude of women : and summoned to serve on particular nights by the orders of her whom they obey as their mistress, they pass silently over many regions during a tempestuous season."‡

Here the sovereignty is recognized. Hecate of the subterranean regions was Diana, Luna, or the Moon, among the celestial spheres.

* Trial of Jean Weir, daughter to Thomas Weir of Kirkcoun, 9 April 1670. *Rec. Just.*—Of Bessie Dunlop, 1576, ap. : *Pitcairn*, v. i. p. 57. *Elfame*—fairy-land.

† *Lilly*, Life and Times, p. 102. Here Queen Mab is distinguished from the Queen of the Fairies.

‡ *Gratian Decretalia*, P. ii. causa xxvi. q. 5.

Credulity in this practice is alluded to in these lines :

Ane carling of the *Quene of Phareis*,
That ewill win geir to *Elphyne* careis,
Through all Braidabane scho hes bene,
On horsbak on Hallow ewin.*

Fairies dwelt in subterraneous abodes, in separate hillocks on plains, which emitted gleams of light and melodious sounds:† or the side of a hill opened to expose them to view. They were believed to be skilful in the medical art, which they sometimes imparted to mortals. Their abstraction of children, and the substitution of some other being for them, was firmly credited. One, after attempting to cure a child, said, “the bairne was tane away, and was ane elfe.” The cure of another was refused, “becaus he was takin away be the guid wichtis in the cradle.” The visitor of a third, pronounced it a *shargie* that is taken away.‡ Children and adults were left during night at a certain well in the county of Ross, as a remedy for decline, ascribed

* *Legend of the Bischop of St Andrews Lyfe*, ap. : *Scotish Poems of the Sixteenth Century*, p. 321. *Elphyne*—fairy-land. The enchantress Circe was recognized as Titania by Ovid, which latter some identify with Diana.

† *Stewart, Parishes of Strachur and Stralachan*, ap. : *Stat. Acct.* v. iv. p. 560, 561. *Shaw, Province of Moray*, p. 344.

‡ *Halyrudhous K. S. R.* 26 Oct. 1647.—Trial of Margaret Sandiesone, 13 Ap. 1635 : *Rec. Ork.* f. 99. *Perth K. S. R.* Isabell Haldane. *Extracts, ut sup.* Mr Scott interprets *shargie*—ill thriving.

to fairies abstracting their substance.* Striking one dumb, or depriving a limb of its vigour, was referred, as now, to "the phairie:"† and even real abstraction of vitality of the person. A culprit, who had murdered a child, his grandson, told the mother that "the fairie had tane him away."‡ The credulity of the Orkney Islanders, that persons dying suddenly had been abstracted by fairies, was discouraged by Ben. There the Napeas or "the fairie" were respected by the people of Schapinschaw, then in extreme ignorance.§ But the nature of these beings rather resembles that of the Dryades of classical authors; nor is it malevolent.

* * * Tu munera supplex

Tende petens pacem et faciles venerare Napeas.

VIRGIL Georg. lib. iv. l. 334.

Of the persons abstracted in different countries, some were afterwards found asleep, but others dead.||

If fairies and elves be identified, *elf shot* was the mischief from *elf arrow heads*, their weapons.¶ Various

* Grant, Parish of Suddie, ad. an. 1732, in MS. ap.: Macfarlane, Geog. Coll. v. i. p. 257.

† Trial of Thomas Cors, 6 Ap. 1643. Rec. Ork. f. 261.

‡ Trial of James Houston, 22 Jan. 1624. Rec. Ork. f. 57. v.

§ Ben Insul. Orchard. Descrip., 1529. No. 3. Stronsay. No. 6. Schapinschaw.

|| Debes Foeroe Islands, ch. 8. p. 354.

¶ Gordon adnotata ad Descriptionem Aberdoniæ et Banfiæ in MS. p. 4. The confession of Isobell Gowdie, in conformity with this author, ascribes their discharge to witches also. Llwyd restricts their use

remarkable appearances or consequences were so denominated from elves.

Fairy, fairy folks, good neighbours, good wights, and our company, were all synonymous here. The vocable of the Irish language, pronounced *fairy*, signifies Sylvan deities, of which the chief was anciently named, Mogh, Magh, or Mabh.* It is to be interpreted also, Satyrs or Amorous, and Goiline, Satan or the black.† Likewise, familiar spirits had the name “Alborum Dæmonum in Africa: in Græcia, Sybillarum: et *Fearum* seu *Fatiferarum* in Gallia.”‡ *Fey* signifies devoted: those neglecting to hallow themselves are exposed to the shafts of siths—though not mortal.§ The *Fada* of the middle ages, a demoniac being, originating from the name of a nymph, was interpreted *Faie* or *Fée* in French.||

Some seek the origin of such credulity in women, or beautiful young girls clad in green, with dishevelled hair, frequenting the woods and valleys, from the priestesses or druidesses of the ancients:¶ or endeavour

as amulets to within 30 or 40 years of his own æra, 1699. *Philos. Trans. ut sup.*

* Beauford, Topography of Ireland, ap.: *Coll. de Reb. Hib.* v. iii. p. 350.

† Vallancey Vindication, *ib.* v. iv. p. 515. He derives “*sith*, a demon, a fairy, from the Chaldee; *shid*—spiritus malignus.”

‡ Bodinus, lib. ii. c. i. p. 99.

§ Kirk, Secret Commonwealth.

|| Ducange Glossarium, v. *Fadus*.

¶ Shaw, Province of Moray, p. 287.

to trace them from the dwarfs of northern mythology.*

The invocation of the Fairy Queen, according to Lilly, was, "O Regina Pigmeorum." Fairies are always pictured as diminutive. Monro names the "Pigmies Isle" in the Hebrides, where the bones of a diminutive race were dug up in a church about the year 1549, or earlier.

The attributes of several other imaginary beings in human form, are scarcely distinct enough for recognition.

In the seventeenth century, was known "a spirit called *Ly Erg*, that frequents the Glen More. He appears with a red hand, in the habit of a souldier, and challenges men to fight with : as lately as [1669], he fought with three men, who immediately dyed thereafter."†

Meg Mullach seems to have been of diminutive size: something of the brownny tribe. She was "a little hary creatur, in shape of a famel child," serving in the family of Grant of Tullochgorum, "till, by the blessing of God the Lord, reformation from popery, and more pure preaching of the gospel, she is almost invisible."‡ *Mag Moulach* is said to signify, one with the left hand hairy. The enquiries of a northern presbytery regard-

* Croker, Fairy Mythology, v. i. p.17—20.

† Sibbald Collections in MS., p. 288.

‡ Root, Rise, and Offspring of the name of Grant, in MS. circ. 1707, p. 15. penes Mr John Archibald Campbell, W.S.

ing the reality of her appearance had no satisfactory result.*

A gigantic female, *Cailleach vear*, who sent destructive tempests, is interpreted, a personification of thunder. A very large stone among the hills of Argyleshire, passes by the same appellation.† Likewise a gigantic masculine or feminine form called *Glaslich* once haunted the hilly coast of Inverness-shire.‡ Such beings are as indefinite as those of the continent, which Cassianus describes as proud and consequential, willing to overtop every thing and exact adoration, called *Bacuceos* by the vulgar.||

Spirits of the Waters.—Divinities dwell in the deep. Lakes, rivers, fountains, the abyss of the ocean have received the homage of mankind.§ The most precious substances, living animals, even the human race were frequent oblations to their spiritual tenants or to the divinities presiding over them.¶ A beautiful virgin richly attired was cast into an African river.** Several persons are offered annually at the mouth of the Benin:†† or a single victim has been reserved as a

* *Pennant Tour, Shaw, Moray*, p. 344.

† *Stewart Parishes of Strachur and Stralachan*, ap. *Stat. Acct.* v. iv. p. 560, 561.

‡ *Pennant Tour and Voyage 1772.* p. 344.

|| *Cassianus*, Collatio vii. de Mobilitate Animæ, c. 32. ap. *Op.* p. 331.

§ *Seneca*, Epistola 41.

¶ *Arrian*, lib. vi. c. 3, 19.

** *Lyon Travels in Northern Africa*, p. 125.

†† *Adams Remarks on Cape Palmas*, p. 115.

sacrifice to the sea.* At Upsal, in the north, a human being was immersed in a well, during a solemn festival, and deemed an acceptable oblation to the gods, if expiring easily.† Even where mankind are spared, a divine nature, without personation, is ascribed to the sea, wherein all things are thrown to appease its rage.‡

Nothing either satisfactory or sufficiently definite characterises the water kelpie, the water horse, or the water bull, some of them judged to be of a malevolent nature : and still less appears regarding another named shelly-coat. A monster of the Scottish seas, is assimilated by Ben with the Trowis, which, like the incubi of old, seems to have occupied the visions of the female sex. He compares it to a foal, as hairy with some definite resemblance to the horse, and totally covered with sea weeds. Describing Lochlomond, Alexander Graham of Duchray, says, "its reported by the countrymen living thereabout, that they sometimes see the hippotam or water horse, where the river Endrie falls into it, a mile west of the church of Buchanan."|| A river, the *Auld Gramdt, or Ugly Burn*, in the county of Ross, springing from Loch

* *Snelgrave Account of Guinea*, p. 97—106.

† *Johannes Magnus Gothorum Suenonumque Historia*, c. 12.

‡ *Bosman Coast of Guinea*, p. 383. *Lichtenstein Southern Africa*, v. i. p. 255. *Thompson Travels*, v. ii. p. 352.

|| *Graham Description of Kippen, etc. ad an : 1724 in MS. ap: Macfarlane*, v. i. p. 437.

Glaish, was regarded with awe, as the abode of the water horse, and other spiritual beings.* Less confidence can be reposed in the allusions to the horse of the water, and the bull of the water, as in the "lake of spirits" in Kirkmichael, from the peculiar style of the writer, than greater simplicity would invite.† The water horse of Shetland is represented as handsome, but when mounted, carries his rider into the sea.‡ Some indistinct tradition on this subject subsisted lately in the Isle of Sky. A recent traveller in Persia found the existence of a water horse ascribed to a fountain there.||

The water bull is still believed to reside in Loch Awe and Loch Rannoch, nor are witnesses wanting to give testimony to the fact. But, although no one is known to have proved it, he is said to be vulnerable only with silver shot.§ In the Isle of Man, those who saw the water bull in a field, "have not distinguished him from one of the more natural species, nor have the cows any instinct to avoid him." But his progeny always proved only a rude lump of flesh and skin, without bones.¶

* *Fraser* Parish of Alness, ad an: 1727, in MS. ap: *Macfarlane*, v. i. p. 263.

† *Grant* Parish of Kirkmichael: *Stat. Acct.* v. xii. p. 464.

‡ *Croker*, v. i. p. 272.

|| *Alexander*, p. 166.

§ *Macculloch* Description of the Western Islands, v. ii. p. 185.

¶ *Waldron* Description of the Isle of Man, p. 147.

The remains of an animal called the "bull of the lakes," are now found in Siberia; but the original itself is extinct.*

The spirit of the sea was recognised here as inflicting injury. Sea trowis, meermen, mermaids, and "a number of little creatures coming from the sea" to give a response, are all referred to. Likewise the libations to aquatic divinities should not be forgot. Sixty or seventy years ago, it is said, that in Crawford Muir, when a tenant was dispossessed and another substituted, he cut the throat of a black lamb and threw it into a stream, with an execration on both.

The Egyptians venerated the waters from the benefits imparted by them.† They nurtured the crocodile, but not the hippopotamus: Bulls were sacrificed to Neptune, a marine deity bearing a trident. Siva, an eastern deity, also carries a trident, and rides a bull. Triton, the son of Neptune, was partly formed as a horse, like the Hippocampi, drawing Neptune's chariot. The crocodile is greedy of human flesh: and Andromeda was delivered from the jaws of an aquatic monster. Later authors have not scrupled to depict marine beings, not only partially in the human form, but in various monstrous shapes:‡ and fishermen still assert the resemblance of the organic structure of some to

* *Dobell Travels*, v. ii. p. 19.

† *Julius Firmicus de Errone Profanorum Religionum*, ap: *Commelinus Mythologici Latini*, p. 45.

‡ *Gesner Icones Animalium*, A.D. 1560.

that of women. From the whole of these, in confused assemblage, the water horse, and the water bull of Scotland, seem to have originated.*

Satan.—Of all the imaginary beings conjured up in the visions of mankind, the most celebrated is Satan,—the Prince of darkness,—that evil principle personified along with the earliest conceptions of its existence, and elevated by the Jews to supremacy among demons. Other nations indeed have pictured a mischievous spirit of the shades, the occupant of subterraneous abodes, and thence emerging to visit the lighter regions of human dwelling: but the *Pluto* of the Greeks and Romans, and every other divinity of the pagan nations, is so different in description and attributes from Satan, that no parallel can be admitted between them.

To ascertain the identity of Satan when manifesting himself or his deeds to observation, was a problem of the most difficult solution: So varied were his shapes, his costume, and character: so numerous and ingenious his wiles and stratagems: that this arch-enemy of the human race, assuming the guise of virtue, or decked in the fairest form, could spread his snares for innocence, and was received with open arms. Nay, it is even insinuated that exemplary Scottish matrons were betrayed into infidelities with him in the semblance of their own husbands.†

* *Herodotus*, lib. ii. § 69. *Hyginus Fabulæ*, No. 64. *Andromeda*.

† Trial of Bessie Wilsone, 7 Aug. 1660.—of Issobell Ramsay 20 Aug. 1661. *Rec. Just.*

Prudence and perception were alike unavailing to distinguish Satan from his imps, where the whole fiend was converted to angelic presence.—A young man complained to the bishop of Aberdeen, that for many months he had been haunted by a beautiful female demon,—that although the doors were shut, she found her way to his arms in the night, and silently withdrew as morning dawned.* In later æras, Satan appeared on Lowdon Hill “as ane devillische spreit in likenes of ane woman,—Helen M‘Brune:”† and confiding in Sinclair’s narrative, a warlock had an intrigue with him as “a young gentlewoman,—as to appearance, beautiful and comely.”‡ During the period of his frequent metamorphosis, he appeared also to Isobel Ferguson, as one of her own sex.‖ Nor was this thought an illusion or deception of the senses, but the assumption to himself of a true body.§ Some time later the kirk-session of Torryburn viewing such a charge against Bessie Meiklejohn more liberally, determined that “the devil appearing in her likenes, it was no proof against her, and they judged it unnecessary to proceed farther in that matter.”¶

* *Bæthius* Scot. Hist. lib. viii. f. 149.—Before 1486.

† Trial of Patrick Lowrie, 23 July 1605. *Rec. Just.*

‡ *Sinclair* Satan’s Invisible World, No. 25. Touching one William Barton.

‖ Trial of Isobell Fergusone, 3 Aug. 1661. *Rec. Just.*

§ *Perkins* Discourse, ch. i. p. 30.

¶ *Webster* Tracts, p. 144.

What did our progenitors believe of his true and original conformation? How could he be known on first disclosure?

Amidst such perplexity, judicial solemnities of old have preserved a precise description of this fallen spirit, at the notable convention in North Berwick church on Halloweven 1590. It was especially on that day consecrated to all the saints composing the heavenly host, that the ministers of evil became most active in their vocations. Religion was insulted, the elements disturbed, and mischief devised to be perpetrated on the world. The hellish legion now assembled in deliberative council, and amidst their plots, did "the dewill stert up in the pulpett, lyk ane mekle blak man, with ane blak baird stikand out lyk ane gettis baird, and ane hie ribbit nois, lyk the beik of ane halk, with ane lang rumpill."* There cannot be a more lively, distinct, or expressive picture: the features described by its outline, are beyond all error and misapprehension. Yet, in regard to the last personal attribute,—*ane lang rumpill*,—it is neither of Jewish nor of Christian origin, but derived from Pagan mythology only: and perhaps it may be traced most accurately in the "Dialogues of the Gods." Thus, when Pan introduced himself with "Save you! Mercury, my father!" this divinity, deriding his appearance, and evidently reluctant to confess paternity, returns his salutation,

* Trial of Barbara Naipar, etc.: 8-10 May, 7 June 1591. *Rec. Just.* *Gettis*—goat's, *Rumpill*—rump: tail.

“How can you be my son? You with these horns,—and such a nose! a rough beard, cloven goat’s feet! and a tail appended to you! Yet come hither,—embrace me,—only observe, don’t call me father,—at least before any one.”*

Those investigating the subject conclude, and perhaps justly, that apes and monkeys, creatures narrowly approaching human conformation, were the original type of such beings as Pan and the satyrs.† Eastern mythology abounds in divinities resembling monkeys, which are venerated themselves, with their kindred genera, at this day.‡ In ancient fable, Sylenus, king of Nysa, had a long tail, which was inherited by his progeny. But of that period when it was first ascribed to Satan there is no memorial; neither, in as far as commonly known, is any notice preserved from antiquity of that conspicuous distinction so terrifying on discovery,—cloven feet, of which he was unable to divest himself by any metamorphosis. Nor does the author retain in recollection an authenticated example previous to the year 1655 or 1656, when Satan appeared “cloven-footed like an ox,” at a convention held at the “new bridge, near Ingliston, on the Cliftone Hall side

* *Lucianus* Deor. Dial., c. 22. § 1, 4. It is explained in the course of this amusing dialogue, that under the form of a goat, Mercury persecuted an amour with Pan’s mother Penelope.

† *Hedelin des Satyres*, p. 202.

‡ *Moor Hindu Pantheon*, p. 190, 320.

of the water.”* But this characteristic was already familiar on the continent. While Satan was seen in Saxony as an amorous youth, or as of maturer age, his paramours unite in specifying the hoofs by which he was distinguished.† Probably the claws ascribed to him were on his hands, though earlier delineations do not fail to furnish his feet with them also. Likewise the hair belt produced on Patrick Lowrie’s trial exhibited something “nocht far different from the clawis of the devill.” It is alike singular, that no allusion is common to another remarkable feature of Satanic structure—horns. If the testimony of those visionaries occupying so ample a portion of the written record does so, it has escaped the author. Nevertheless, during the residence of John Knox at St Andrews, whither he had retreated during the civil contentions of his later years, it is said, that John Law of that city, being in Edinburgh Castle, in January 1572, “the ladie Home wald neidis thraip in his face that he was banist the said tovne becaus that, in the yarde, he had reasit sum sanctis, among whome cam vp the devill, *with hornis*, which, when his servant Ritchart saw, rane wode, and so deit.”‡

Such as above, seems to have been Satan in *propria*

* Trial of Jonet Millar, 20 Aug. 1661. *Rec. Just.* Demons in human form retained this peculiarity. *Remigius*, lib. i. c. 7. p. 50. c. 14. p. 98.

† *Carpzovius*, P.i. q. 49. § 68, 69, 70. *Mollerus*, P.iv. constit.iii. §19.

‡ *Bannatyne*, *Richard*, Journal, p. 309. The author was secretary or amanuensis to John Knox.

persona, when conjured into existence, by our superstitious progenitors. But their notions, both in reference to conformation and qualities, plainly result from a confused tissue of Jewish and Grecian mythology, degenerating latterly, into his identification with Pan, the son of Mercury. Satan, like Pan, had horns: a rough beard, cloven feet, and a tail: he was exceedingly amorous, presided at dances, and sometimes officiated as the musician:—and as Pan dwelt in a cave, so had Satan a subterraneous abode. “How do ye, Pan, the most skillful musician, and dancer of all the satyrs?” said Justice to him, when brought to the tribunal.—Full of complaints at the tumult he there witnessed, he left it, replying, “I retire to my cave, that I may sing some amorous ditty, with which I am wont to amuse Echo.”*

For these and other reasons alike satisfactory, Pan, the Sylvan deity of the ancients, seems to have been the type of that fallen angel, Satan, figured by others.

The continental demonographers are lavish in praise of Satan’s qualities—he is most skillful in theology, the best mathematician, and grammarian; and an excellent physician: he is acquainted with all things doing, done, past, or to come, though absolutely occult to mankind:† and this results from an experience of 6000 years.‡ But on the other hand, according to

* *Lucianus Bis Accusatus*, § 10, 12.

† *Grillandus de Sortilegiis*, Q. vi. § 7, 10, 11. p. 65, 69.

‡ *Perkins*, ch. i. p. 19.

one, "most certain it is, that the devil cannot know all things: yea, he knows very little, at least in comparison to what the world think he knows:"* and Sir Edward Coke denies him the gift of prediction.† His spiritual nature, evinced by innate levity, as if partaking more of air,‡ was not distinctly recognised in Scotland. On the contrary, about the time that his cloven feet attracted notice, unequivocal testimony establishes both his weight and corporeal substance: and the public prosecutor even accused a person coming down stairs, of tumbling over him.|| But in reply to the minister of Ormiston, anxious to know whether Major Weir had ever seen the devil, he answered, that "any feeling ever he had of him, was in the dark."§

Satan's voice is thick and hollow—"rough and goustie."¶ Remigius compares the voice of demons with speaking into an empty cask. But theologians deny the speech of demons: nor can philosophers admit sound without substance: some say it is not the sound of the voice, but a resemblance to the voice.** Lilly

* *De Lude* ΔΑΙΜΟΝΟΛΟΓΙΑ, p. 119.

† *Coke Institute*, p. iii. c. 55. *Of Prophecies*.

‡ *Kartnerus de Hydromantia*, § 12.

|| Trial of Jonet Barker, 28 Dec. 1643. Of Margaret Brysone, and others, 7 Aug. 1661. Of Christiane Patersone, 3 Aug. 1661. *Rec. Just.*

§ Trial of Thomas Weir, commonly designed Major Weir, indweller in Edinburgh, 9 April 1670. *Rec. Just.*

¶ It is thus expressed in the proceedings regarding Sir George Maxwell.

** *Ambrose de Vignate de Hæresi*, No. 123.

thinks angels speak Earse. "When they so speak, it's like the Irish, much in the throat."* But Sprenger, perplexed on the subject, conceives that an angel occupied the body of Balaam's ass: that demons without either lungs or a tongue, are incapable of actual speech, yet become intelligible by certain sounds resembling words, though not words, from wanting respiration—just as what is heard of a herring when taken out of the sea.† Balaam's ass and a herring to illustrate the nature of the devil!!!

Opinions regarding demoniac voice, may have originated from those passages of Scripture, specifying the conversational intercourse of the serpent with Eve, and the "still small voice" consequent on a storm, earthquake, and fire.‡

Satanic Metamorphosis.—Satan could not only metamorphose himself to any shape, but he could adroitly sustain its peculiar character—sometimes he appeared in white raiment, sometimes in a black gown. He became a black man—a black boy: or adopted the female sex. In North Berwick church, he narrowly resembled Pan, the Pagan divinity. He could assume the likeness of a horse, a foal, and mingle "with the kyne," as a bull. He resembled a lion, a dog, a cat, or a raven, in Scotland. But invited by the presence of female society, from a bull he was quickly restored to human

* Lilly, Life and Times, p. 88.

† Sprenger Malleus Maleficarum, P. ii. q. i. c. 4. p. 244, 247.

‡ 1 Kings, ch. xviii. v. 19—40. ch. 19. v. 1, 12.

shape : and while representing a woman, on hearing Christ's name, he ran "out at the holl of the door, lyk a black catt."*

In human form, his demeanour was always consistent. He was affable, polite, sometimes even officious,—occasionally violent, crafty, under a plausible exterior, and very amorous. Such repeated and invarying evidence establishes this, that, had the youthful and attractive borne witness to the fact, instead of the repulsive, old, and haggard part of the sex, asseverations of such Satanic disguise, could have been only thought a veil for their levities. Female testimony here, is more than minute. But alleged amours with Satan, became a cruel and common vehicle for slander.† On one occasion, he introduced himself as "a pleasant young man," saying, "where do you live, goodwyf—and how does the minister?" Jonet Ker, reaching Tweedside, he arose at the water, helped her over, and enquired whether she intended to return, as he should help her back again : another represents him sitting at table as a gentleman, "who drank to her, and she drank to him.‡ Likewise, he appeared to Jonet Barker, Margaret Lauder, and Jonet Cranstoun, "in

* Trial of Jonet Irwing, 5 March 1616. *Rec. Ork.* Of Isobell Fergusson, 31 Aug. 1661. *Rec. Just.*

† *Halyrudhous* K.S.R. 19, 26 Aug. 2 Nov. 1630. "Thomas Lawrie, and Bessie Pursell, his spous, contrair Agnes Robesoun."

‡ Trial of Isobell Ramsay, and Jonet Ker, 20 Aug. 1661. *Rec. Just.*

lyknes of ane tryme gentillman, and drank with thame all three, and imbracit Margaret Lauder in his airmes.”* Meeting one on the hills between Harray and Rendall, “he gart hir milk the kyne, quhill he suppit as fast as she milkit.”† Because Margaret Sonnes, who had engaged in his service, “was not speedie in following the devill, he did drag her be the coat, and brak the band thereof.”‡ For infringing an appointment, Alexander Hamilton was “maist rigorouslie strukin with ane battoun,” by him thereafter. He was equally resentful in other countries.||

The very topics of conversation with Satan, were the basis of judicial procedure. Thus, in August 1594, Beigis Tod, her sister Christian, “John Graymeill, Margaret Dwne, and Ersche Marioun,” assembled “at the Deane fute of Lang Nydrie, quhair the devill aperit to thame, and reprovit Beigis Tod verrie scherp-lie, for hir lang tareying, to whom shoe maid this answer: ‘Sir, I could not wyn na soner:’—and immediatlie thaireftir, they past altogidder to the said Beigis, in Lang Nyddrie, quhair, eftir thay had drukkin togidder ane certain space, thay, in thair devillisch maner, tuik ane catt, and drew the samyn nyne tymes throw the said Beigis’ cruik: and thairefter, comes with all thair speid to Seatoun Thorne, be north the

* Trial of Margaret Smaill, 13 Sept. 1678. *Rec. Just.*

† Trial of Jonet Irwing, *ut sup.* Gart—caused.

‡ Trial of Margaret Sonnes, 4 Nov. 1678. *Rec. Just.*

|| Horneck, ap. Glanvil, p. 484. et seq. Treating of Blockula.

yet; quhair the devill callit for the said Cristiane Tod, and past to Robert Smartis hous, and brocht hir out: and as shoe was cumand with him, shoe tuik ane grit fray, and said to the devill, ‘Sir, qubat will ye with me,’ quha answerit hir, ‘tak na feir, for ye sall gang to your sister Beigis, and to the rest of hir companie, quha are stayand vpone your coming, at the thorne:’ and thay thaireftir past altogidder with the devill to the irne yet of Seatoun, quhair of new thay tuik ane catt, and drew the samyn nyne tymes throw the said irne yet: and immediatlie thairefter come to the burne foirnent George Sendaris dur, quhair they cristenitt the said cat, and callit hir Margaret:—and come all bak agane to the Dean fute, quhair thay first convenit, and cuist the kat to the devill.”*

It is remarkable that no perplexity embarrassed judicial procedure, regarding either the voice or the dialect of Satan under his varied metamorphoses—whether it was Scottish in the lowlands, or Gaelic in the Highlands.

Some maintain that all the preceding spiritual beings are only so many Satanic metamorphoses. The chief of the Sylvan divinities of the East is denominated *Ghul*, *Ghuljan*,—thence *Gailan*, while the Irish *Goiline* signifies Satan.† Nor would this be inconsistent with

* Trial of Beigis Tod, 27 May 1608. *Rec. Just.*

† *Vallancey Vindication, ut sup.*

the Persian *Goule*, a terrestrial mermaid susceptible of transformations.*

Pana, Fan, or Fanin designates Satan as well as the heroes of the north.† But the source of mythology is found by the learned in the history of illustrious persons. “During the voyage of Æmilian, the Grecian orator, to Italy, a voice from the isle of Paxos, suddenly called for one Thamus on board of the vessel. This was an Egyptian pilot, a passenger, whose name was known to few. He listened to the summons twice in silence, but the third time he acknowledged it. All were terrified on hearing a loud injunction—“Announce on gaining Palodes, that *the Great Pan is dead!*” There he found the winds and the seas were lulled: and on beholding the place he proclaimed, “*the Great Pan is dead!*” Scarcely had he spoke, when the lamentations, not of one, but of many were heard. Rumours quickly reaching Tiberius Cæsar, he called Thamus before him to enquire regarding Pan. The learned then conjectured that this was the same as he who had sprung of Mercury and Penelope.—Many desert islands, the reputed abode of demons and heroes, are dispersed about Britain. Demetrius, an emissary of the emperor, arriving at an island next to them, found it thinly peopled, but all of reputed sanctity. Much confusion in the air portents,

* Morier, Second Journey through Persia, p. 168.

† Rudbeckius Atlantica, t. ii. p. 377.

storms and thunders prevailed. The islanders declared that one of superior excellence to human nature had deceased among them.”*

If the Christian religion supplanted Pagan idolatry by imperceptible changes, and the sanctity of one of the Hebrides subsequently so noted, preceded it, the scene of so remarkable an incident might be appropriately fixed within its limits.

A recent and bold attempt, by an English clergyman, endeavours to shew, through the medium of much ingenious reasoning, that no such being as Satan is to be understood, far less personified, from any thing contained in Scripture. That as no reference is there contemplated to any such place of punishment as hell, “there can be no occasion whatever for a devil: he could be of no kind of use in the divine government.”† But on considering the superstitious ignorance of the Jews, the artlessness and simplicity of their narratives, and the opinions inherited from them, the personification of spiritual beings seems to have been one of the principles most readily adopted, and successfully transmitted.

It is not surprising that the origin and existence of supernatural beings should give birth to controversy:

* *Plutarch de Oraculorum defectu*, ap.: Op. t. i. p. 419. The singular theory of *Vossius* may be consulted: *Idololatria*, lib. vi. c. 3. ap.: Op. t. v. p. 722.

† *Scot*, Analytical Investigation of the Scriptural Claims of the Devil. London 1822, in 8vo.

that one author should treat copiously of the "*Portrait of Satan as drawn by himself*:"* that another should elaborately detail his evil arts, and endeavour to baffle them by a chapter of acknowledged utility, *de armis quibus cum Diabolo pugnandum*:—meantime maintaining that the existence of the demoniac host is not to be assumed from reason or tradition, but solely from revelation.†

Human Metamorphosis.—As if the mind were incapable of conceiving celestial purity unmixed with terrestrial matter, deities must resemble human form, and share of mortal frailty,—whence a large proportion of mythology comprehends the transformation of divinities and mankind to animals: a species of credulity sanctioned by the history of the Assyrian monarch.

Here also the imagination of our progenitors was less fervid. No systematic superstition, like the Lycanthropy of the continent, admitted accusation of individuals, for changing themselves to wolves, that they might devour their harmless neighbours, and thence consigning them mercilessly to the flames.‡ Yet other metamorphoses were readily allowed, nay, the magical formula to be repeated thrice for effecting them, is preserved.¶ Mystical animals, the cat or the raven, were chosen:—in the present century, one

* *De Plancy* Le Diable peint par lui meme. Paris 1817, in 8vo.

† *Meyer* Historia Diaboli. Tubingen 1780, in 8vo.

‡ *Nynauld* de la Lycanthropie. Paris 1618, in 12mo.

¶ *Pitcairn*, Criminal Trials, v. iii. App. No. vii.

prosecuted a woman in Shetland for assuming this disguise to destroy his cattle.*

To be avenged of Adam Clark, Isobell Greirson, “in the liknes of hir awin catt, accompanied with ane grit number of vther cattis, in ane devillishe maner enterit within the hous, quhair thay maid ane grit and feirful noyis and truble, quhairby the said Adam, than lying in his bed, with his wyfe and seruand, apprehendit sic ane grit feir that thay wer liklie to gang mad,”—another sorceress elsewhere was observed escaping by “ane hole in the ruife, in the liknes of ane catt,”—and a person alleged to a woman that she was among “the cattis that onbesett him.”†

Witnesses in England swore not only that the face of a certain cat resembled that of Jane Wenham at the bar, but that they knew the cat to be this woman. A witness on a trial in North America, swore that the semblance of a cat entered by a window and siezed him by the throat,—when recalling the menaces of Susanna Martin, the prisoner, he exclaimed, “Avoid—thou she devil! In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, avoid! The cat leaped on the floor, and flew out at the window.”‡

Isobell Young and Isobell Gowdie changed them-

* *Edmonstone, Zetland Islands*, v. ii. p. 74.

† Trial of Isobell Greirsoun, 1607 :—of Isobell Young, 1629 :—of Annie Tailyeour, 1624, *ut sup.*

‡ *Mather, Wonders of the Invisible World*, p. 47.

selves to hares. In Ireland, a day was set apart for destroying those found among cattle as metamorphosed witches.*

Such superstition is modified by the site of its subsistence. An African traveller was restrained from shooting monkies, as men transformed for their sins.† The Abyssinians think their miners can change themselves to hyænas.‡

In Europe, the beast converted from man never had a tail!||

These transformations were not void of hazard: the hare might be hunted down, and if the cats were maimed, the corresponding organ had suffered on resumption of the human form.§ Neither was a permanent metamorphosis optional, for effusion of blood restored the pristine shape.¶

The Canon law denounces those believing transformation, unless by the Creator's will, as worse than Pagans.** But Pagan physicians, in shewing the diagnosis of a distempered mind, more prudently prescribed

* *Camden*, v. iv. p. 469.

† *Mollien*, *Travels in Africa*, 1819, p. 222.

‡ *Salt*, *Travels*, p. 427.

|| *Nynauld*, ch. v. p. 52, 53.

§ *Gervasius Tilberiensis*, P. iii. § 93.

¶ *Remigius*, lib. ii. c. 2. p. 228. *Woodrow* alludes to such wounds, *Analecta*, v. iv. p. 69. Other metamorphoses are described, *Webster Tracts*, p. 107.

** *Gratian Decretalia*, causa xxvi. q. 5. *Episcopi eorum*.

for the relief of patients, as meriting pity, not accusation.*

Demoniac Fly, Wasp, Bee.—The ancients recognized a deity called Beelzebub, or the lord of flies, worshipped under the form of a fly. During a festival in honour of Apollo, held in Greece, an ox was sacrificed to flies, which retreated after being saturated with the blood :† and a divinity was invoked for relief from their pestilential visitations.‡ A rude but modern tribe, the Hottentots, consecrated a fly as a superior being, and began to venerate him on whom it alighted.|| In Scotland, a tutelary fly, believed immortal, presided over a fountain in the county of Banff:§ and here also a large blue fly, resting on the bark of trees, was distinguished as a witch.

Some have denied that flies were concomitant on the slaughter of victims in the temple of Jerusalem : nor were they found in the temple of Hercules at Rome, from the sanctity of the place.

The learned conclude that Satan, or an evil spirit, was also worshipped anciently under the form of a fly.¶ Demonographers admit the spiritual occupation of any

* *Marcellus*, ap. : *Hippoc* : et *Galen* : *Op.* t. x. p. 502.

† *Ælian* de *Natura Animalium*, lib. v. c. 17. xi. c. 8.

‡ *Pliny* *Hist. Nat.* lib. x. c. 40. *Invocant Elei Myiagron Deum Muscarum.*

|| *Kolben*, *Cape of Good Hope*, ch. 8. § 4.

§ *Grant*, *Parish of Kirkmichael*, ap. : *Stat. Acct.* v. xii. p. 464.

¶ *Beyer* *Additamenta*, c. 6. syntag. 2. *Selden* de *Diis Syriis*.

living body, however minute.* A demoniac fly disclosed the royal councils of the Lombards.†

Musca est meus pater, nihil potest illum clam haberi

Nec sacrum, nec tam profanum quicquam est quia

Ibi ilico adsit.

PLAUTUS *Mercator*, Act. ii. Scena 3.

Loke, the deceiver of the Gods, is fabled in northern history, to have metamorphosed himself to a fly: and demons, in the shape of flies, were kept imprisoned by the Finlanders, to be let loose on men and beasts.‡ Swarms of flies brought pestilence on Egypt: the pagan Greeks expelled them from the sacrifice, by an offering to a divinity, the *abactor muscarum*.||

When the Archbishop of St Andrews was cruelly murdered in 1679, “upon the opening of his tobacco box a living humming bee flew out,” explained to be a familiar or devil.§ A woman declared that a child was poisoned by its grandmother, who, together with herself, were “in the shape of bume-bees,”—that the former carried the poison “in her cleuchs, wings, and mouth.”¶ A great bee constantly resorted to another

* *Thyræus Demoniaci*, P. i. c. 3. *Pizzurnus Enchiridion Exorcisticum*, p. 25.

† *Paulus Diaconus de Gestis Langobardorum*, lib. vi. c. 3.

‡ *Schæffer Lapponia*, c. xi. p. 146, 147.

|| *Pausanias*, lib. v. c. 10. viii. c. 26.

§ *Death of Mr J. Sharp*, ap.: *Kirkton*, p. 421.

¶ Trial of Isobell Elliot, Marion Veitch, and others, 13 Sept. 1678. *Rec. Just.* Cleuchs—claws.

after receiving the Satanic mark, and rested on it.* Alexander Smaill offended Jonet Cock, who threatened him, “deare sall yow rewe it! and within half ane howre therafter, going to the pleugh,—befoir he had gone one about, their come ane great *wasp* or *bee*, so that the foir horses did runne away with the pleugh, and wer liklie to have killed themselves, and the said Alexander and the boy that was with them, narrowlie escaped with their lyves.” Possibly the incident is not exaggerated, as a single gad fly will turn the oxen of a whole herd, and render them furious.†

Like the fly of Plautus overseeing every thing, one narrating “everie particular disch, and quhat was spoken” at a banquet, declared, as her *causa scientiæ*, that she was “on the buird in liknes of a bie.”‡

Some large unsightly black beetles, crawling in our cellars, or fluttering about our ears with the approach of night, were perhaps considered metamorphosed devils, as the ancients associated the nocturnal moths, fluttering around their lamps, with evil presence.|| While James Knarstoun led peats, darkness overspread the sun, “and thairwith a monstrous cloak cam fleing

* *Precognition*, Jonet Watstone, 1661, in MS. ap.: *Bib. Soc. Antiq. Scot.*

† *Clark Genus Oestrus*, ap.: *Trans. Linnæan Soc.* v. iii. p. 296.

‡ Trial of Elspeth Cursetter, 29 May 1629. *Rec. Ork.* f. 51. r.

|| *Pliny Hist. Nat.* lib. xxviii. § 5. “*Papilio inter mala medicamenta.*” Such were demoniac metamorphoses: *Glanvil*, p. 296. *Tryal of Witches*, 1664, p. 26. *Remigius*, lib. i. c. 23. p. 140.

and buzzing about, and entrit in at his mouth, and he fell to the ground on his face, and grew blew—it was als great as ane of the little birds that fleis in the yaird.”*

Perhaps more modern superstitions regarding demoniac insects, are derived from the narratives of Jewish history, as received in their literal acceptance.†

Satanic Communion with Mankind.—If the whole etherial host could assume any transformation, and the human race adopt any shape for their own, it must have been very difficult to determine their intercourse under this respective disguise, or its purpose.

Throughout Europe it was admitted that the motives influencing Satan were the indulgence of pride, as a fallen angel: the love of mischief as incorporated with his nature, and the desire of throwing obloquy on religion, either by his own irreverence or through the medium of his proselytes. Mankind, on the other hand, to promote their worldly profits, were ready to renounce their baptism, receiving a new name, to enter his service, and acknowledge his supremacy: they expected a provision for their wants, and they sought endowment with preternatural faculties. But from

* Trial of James Knarstoun, ult. Feb. 1633. *Rec. Ork.* f. 88. v. A demoniac crow entered the mouth: *Psellus de operatione Dæmonum*, p. 62. *Cloak*—beetle.

† *Exodus*, ch. xxiii. v. 28. *Deuteronomy*, ch. vii. v. 20. *Joshua*, ch. xxiv. v. 12. *Wisdom of Solomon*, ch. xv. v. 8. *Bochart* considers *Myagrus* a hero.

these were generated multifarious subordinate matters, all most diligently commemorated by those individuals maintaining their own participation.

Synagogue, Sabbat, or Satanic Convention.—The master met his proselytes singly, or in general convocation, at some appointed time and place; for many were always prepared to obey his call. Thither the members were transported by unction with a certain composition: they mounted on staves, or carried on animals, like Herodias and her company, they traversed the air. Feasting, mirth, and licentious revelry, now prevailed among this infernal assemblage. Satan presided in the form of a goat: all offered him homage, and devout submission: an unknown jargon, or wild ejaculations, constituted their speech; but if any sanctified name were heard, the whole convention instantly vanished, leaving the active scene an empty void behind.

Sorcery is imitative of sanctified acts; whence, say demonographers, the sabbat is to be assimilated with the religious rites appropriated for the Sabbath. But this analogy is questionable. The sabbat, indeed, frequently appears under the name of sabboath; and the orthography, saboth, or sabboath, often expresses the Sabbath in manuscripts on Scotch history.* Some of the ancient fathers of the church, allude to credulity in a divinity named Taboath, or Saboath, presiding over the

* *Stirling* K.S.R. 1 June 1646. "Transgressing the Sabboath."—*Teonge*, Diary, 2 May 1676: "It was the Jews Saboath day," p. 164.

seventh heaven : conceiving that Satan was the son of Saboath, and of an evil principle. Origen affirms, that saboath was an expression common in incantations—that it is not intelligible, as interpreted the Omnipotent : nor are Jove and saboath the same.*

The animated scenes of the continental sabbat, seem never to have predominated in Scottish superstitions. Though testified by the same delirious imagination, the extravagance of demoniac communion was more restrained.

The ruins of North Berwick church occupy a naked, dark, and rocky promontory, overhanging the sea. A thin sandy covering, moistened by the spray, or shifting with the vehemence of the winds, now exposes numerous remains of mortality in their precincts : or sometimes, vast congeries of human bones, promiscuously huddled together, are found in the course of excavations among the walls. In this, a bleak and desolate spot, before the hand of improvement had sheltered the shores, the most celebrated of all the Satanic conventions was held on halloweven, 1590.

In obedience to an injunction of Satan, on the preceding day, Agnes Sampson then passed thither on horseback, “and lychtit att the kirk yaird, or a litill befor she come to itt, about allewin houris at ewin. They danceit alangis the kirk-yaird : Geilie Duncan playit to thame on a trumpe : John Fiene, missellit, led all the rest : the said Agnes, and hir dochter, followit nixt—

* *Origen, Contra Celsum, Lib. v. p. 262.*

with the rest of thair complices, abone ane hundreth persones, whairof thair wes sax men, and all the rest wemen. The wemen maid fyrst thair homage, and nixt the men : the men wer turnit nyne tymes widder-shynnes about, and the wemen sax tymes. John Fien blew vp the duris, and blew in the lychtis, quhilkis wer lyk mekill blak candillis stiking round about the pulpett. The devill stert vp himselff in the pulpett, lyk ane mekill blak man, and callit everie man be his name, and everie ane answerit him ‘heir, Master,’”* Now the lights burnt blue. Satan then made “a sermond of dewtsam speiches, saying, ‘mony cumis to the fair, and buyis nocht all wairis;’ and desyrit Johne Fien ‘nocht to feir, thocht he wes grym, for he had mony servandis quha sould neuer want, and sould aill nathing, sa lang as thair hair wes on.’”†

The homage paid to Satan, either in contempt of the divinity, or as a genuine rite, imitative of divine worship, was accompanied by the mystical motion, “widdershynnes.” Malevolent beings are still worshipped, as from the earliest antiquity, in different parts of the globe.

As nothing but mischief was plotted in this convocation, so at *Madies Loupe*, at the Doun Hill of Spot, the death of George Clarksons was “voittit and concludit,” by a minor assemblage. But Satan refused

* Trial of Agnes Sampson, *ut sup.* Trump—Jews’ harp. Missellit—masked.

† Trial of John Fien, *ut sup.* Grym—dark.

Alexander Hamilton's request, of power to injure the laird of Colstoun, having previously devolved it to another.*

Dancing, together with instruments and music, were among the meagre concomitants of the Scottish conventions. But the nature of the dance is not farther explained, than "Gelie Duncan playit on ane trump, and Johnne Fiene, missellit, *led the ring*."† Such mystical dances were circular: "Porro circulares esse omnes choros."‡ Further, that the parties might not recognise each other's faces, they were arranged, so that their backs formed the inner circumference; and they moved from right to left, that is, widdershyns,— "retrogrado contra morem, naturam et ordinem chor-earum quibus nos utimur."|| Perhaps the dance led by John Fien, was of this description; for according to the reported confession of one of the infernal assemblage, sailing in a sieve to the church, they "tooke hands on the land, and daunced this reill, or short daunce, singing all with one voice,

Commer goe ye before,

Commer goe ye;

Giff ye will not goe before,

Commer let me."§

* Trial of Issobell Young, 1629. Of Alexander Hamiltoun 1630.
ut sup.

† Trial of Johnne Mowbray, and others, 7 June 1591. *Rec. Just.*

‡ *Remigius Demonolatreia*, Lib. i. c. 17. p. 119.

|| *Grillandus de Sortilegiis*.

§ *Newes from Scotland*.

A delinquent confessed her presence at a meeting "at the Westwood Head, where there was danceing and mirth."* Another met Satan as a little black man, and other witches, when "they danced together, and along the braes:"* and on a similar occasion at the Mill Green of Dalkeith, while all danced together, Satan was in human shape, "with black clothes, and a black hatt vpone his head."† Jonet Ker "danced with the devill, and with Margaret Hutcheson, Agnes Partill, Marjorie Fairweill, Issobell Ramsay, Issobell Robiesone, Johne Scott, Margaret Hart, and vther notorious witches," some of whose names are among the convicts of that æra.‡ It must have been at a festivity of this kind, that the minister of Crichton,—one deposed for irregularities—was entrusted with the charge of standing "in the rear of all their dances," and beating up those that were slow.|| A woman confessed her presence at such meetings, at "Templehall burne, or the Murrais burne," where they had a piper; and all danced except herself, who could not dance.§ Satan designated one of his

* Trial of Helen Forrester in Crichton, 13 June 1678. *Rec. Just.*

† Trial of Issobell Fergusone, and Marjorie Wilsone, 3 Aug. 1661. *Rec. Just.* At Blockula, in Sweden, he appeared in a high crowned hat, grey coat, red and blue stockings, and long garters, A.D. 1669, 1678. *Horneck*, ap. *Glanvil.* p. 484.

‡ Trial of Jonet Ker, 20 Aug. 1661. *Rec. Just.*

|| *Fountainhall Decisions*, v. i. p. 14.

§ Trial of Margaret Dods, 13 Sep. 1678. *Rec. Just.*

proselytes by a new name, expressive of her accomplishment in the art.*

Sinclair learned from the reverend contemporary of some one who was the "devil's piper," that, on a similar occasion, Satan had taught him to sing and play an obscene tune, which, within two days after, was heard from all the youths and damsels on the streets.† Dancing with Satan, is comprehended among the charges against John Douglas, and nine women of Tranent, when Douglas was piper. Two of the tunes are specified, as *Kilt thy coat, Magie, and come this way with me*; and *Hulie the bed will fa.*‡ Probably these were the popular airs of the day. *Kilt thy coat Magge*, appears in a very singular musical manuscript of the same century, somewhat earlier, where all the tunes are expressed by letters of the alphabet, on the stave, not in musical notation. But the author shall not attempt to identify it with that specified to Sinclair, by his reverend informer.§ Satan is alleged to have himself officiated as piper, in semblance of a rough tawny dog, at a dance on the

* *Precognition*, Jonet Watstone, 1661: in *MS. ut sup.* "Weill dancing Jonet."

† *Sinclair*, No. 34. Anent some prayers.

‡ *Abstract of the Records of Justiciary*, p. 466.: in *MS. Adv. Lib. M. 5. 14.* The original record of this period is not extant.

§ *Collection of Tunes*, Part vi. No. 9.: in *MS.* This consists of about 106 airs, written for the Lute, or Mandora. Many are named here early in the seventeenth century, which have been hitherto ascribed to a period nearer its close.

Pentland Hills : nor is the theme of his performance omitted.*

At the festive dances of the present day, especially with an intermixture of Highlanders, unintelligible exclamations, such as, *how ! how !* are heard, not dissimilar from *har ! har !* resounding at those of the Satanic convocation on the continent. Bodin affirms that there is no convocation without dancing : and De Lancre specifies several of the dances, few of which were known here.†

In Ireland, the circular dance was named *rinke teampuill*, i.e. *chorea templi*. "These religious ceremonies concluded with a dance to the right hand : but when unpropitious, the priests blew a horn for a curse, and then the dance was to the left."‡ During a pestilence which visited the town of Kilkenny, the deceased, bound by withs on a bier, were carried to St Maula's churchyard, whither women and maidens repaired to dance after its cessation. But having taken the same withs, "instead of napkins and handkerchiefs, to keep them together in their round," infection was communicated, and the whole inhabitants were swept away.||

* *Sinclair*, No. 24. "The silly bit kitchen, gar cast it in pickle, and it will grow mickle."

† *Bodinus*, Lib. ii. c. 4. p. 169, 170. *De Lancre*, Lib. iii. ch. iv. p. 205. *Remigius*, *ut sup.*

‡ *Vallancey*, *Vindication*, ap. *Coll. de Reb. Hib.* v. iv. p. 475—8.

|| *Ledwich*, *Irishtown and Kilkenny*, *ibid.* v. ii. p. 451.

A chapter by Olaus Magnus "on nocturnal dancing of elves," is embellished by figures of demons, back to back, in circular arrangement, one leading a proselyte by the hand, and Satan, as indicated by his horns, tail, and cloven feet, officiating as piper, while there is another performer on the guitar.*

If dancing was a sanctified rite of old, as it is still in some countries,† no one must conceive its exhibition in those light and graceful movements embellishing youth, or adding elegance to beauty. Contortion of the body, stamping with the feet, and clapping the hands, accompanied by loud discordant screams, or a slow and measured pace, accelerated to rapid gyrations, disturbing the senses of the actors and spectators alike, probably distinguished the veneration of divinities.

The canon law did not prohibit dancing for personal recreation, but for mystical purposes.‡ Yet, as lately as the year 1723, an assembly of gentry, for such public amusement, instituted at Edinburgh, was denounced as a violation of reverence due to the divinity.¶ Previously, and since that time, even down to the year 1834, its practice has been associated with profanity.

* *Olaus Magnus*, lib. iii. c. xi. p. 112. *Romæ*, 1555. In England he played on the Pipe and Cittern : in Sweden on the Harp. *Glanvil* and *Horneck*, ut sup.

† *Lyon Residence in Mexico* 1826. A devotee danced to propitiate a saint for the cure of his distemper, v. ii. p. 25, 27.

‡ *Gratian Decretalia*, P. ii. causa xxvi. q. 2. Illud quod.

¶ *Assembly*, 1723, in 12mo.

Nocturnal dancing in a circular figure, at Satanic conventions, indicated the contempt of sanctified ceremonies.

The picture of the Scottish Satanic convention is dull, compared with the lively representation of the continental synagogue, or even in England, where Satan welcomed the guests and presided at the entertainment.*

The proselytes were transported to the convocation : and tradition still preserves an account of the visible flight of Agnes Sampson through the air on some nondescript animal. Christian Stewart made a serious complaint of persons alleging that "they had seen her fleing abone thair headis cuming from Leyth."† But the efficient power of transportation from an unguent prepared from the fat of children, is scarcely, if at all, acknowledged : and very rarely the equitations on broom-sticks, straws or staves, as elsewhere.

The various sources of such superstition have been derived perhaps from scriptural narratives, which specify many transportations, and generally by an invisible power : from the history of Abaris, the northern philosopher, who traversed the air by means of an arrow or a dart : from the *Tempestarii*, who were believed to arrive from an unknown country called Mangonia : and especially from the Herodias of the canon law. Herodias is identified with Diana : the enchant-

* *Glanvil*, p. 297, 298. *Horneck*, p. 491.

† *Halyrudhous* K.S.R., 4-11 March 1628.

ments and attributes of Hecate are ascribed to the Disa or Isis of the north, the inventor of magical arts, who, mounted on Runic Staves, could traverse the air.* Hecate, Diana, or Disa, was the sister of Apollo. Hecate was the goddess of the infernal regions: Satan conveyed Jesus Christ to a high mountain, and the pinnacle of the temple. Pan is the type of Satan: and to Pan the goat was consecrated. The proselytes of Satan were transported on a goat to the synagogue: and there he presided under that form. Thence the connection of this superstition with pagan mythology.

Satanic Mark.—At the synagogue, which an infinite preponderance of the female sex always attended, pactions followed between the fiend and his proselytes in public, or they were made privately. “In presence of the Lords’ Commissioners of Justiciary, sittand in judgment, compeared Margaret Douglas: declares, That she renounced her baptism, and gave herself over to the devill, soul and body, putting one hand to the crown of her head, and the other to the sole of her foot.”† Satan then imprinted his own mark on the proselyte, and bestowed a new name, of which many are preserved, but no philological illustrations are afforded, either by those of Scotland or those of the European continent. These ceremonies concluded,

* *Agobardus de Grandine et Tonitruis*, § 2. *Rudbeckius Atlantica*, t. ii. p. 506, 507. t. iii. p. 34—36.

† Trial of Margaret Douglas, 13 Sept. 1678. *Rec. Just.*

“the name of the proselyte is erased from the book of life, and inscribed in the blackest book of death.”*

The Satanic mark on the continent, was a spot simply : or it resembled a hare's foot, a black whelp, a toad, or a lizard : it was imprinted on all parts of the body,—under the eye-brows, between the lips, and elsewhere.† But in Scotland nothing so precise and distinctive appears. However, a professed critic, employed by the public tribunals to ascertain this demoniac seal, discriminated three, as “the horne mark,—very hard : the breist mark,—litle : and the feeling mark,” with “sence and pain.” Two were very small, bluish but not protuberant.‡ Several innocent persons lost their lives, on allegation of a mark in their eyes, which clearly originates from the *Thibii* of antiquity.

Of these meetings with Satan, one suspected declared, that she renounced her baptism at the first : the second was devoted to mirth : and his mark was imprinted at the last. Various means of doing so are specified.§

Tertullian describes Satan as bestowing baptism on his own in imitation of sanctity : “Mithra marks his

* *Torreblanca* Epitome Delictorum, lib. ii. c. 7. § 10, 12.

† *D'Autun*, p. 143, 540. *Remigius*, lib. i. c. 5. p. 18. *Bodinus*, lib. ii. p. 153.

‡ *Fountainhall* Decisions in MS. No. 551. ad an. 1677, f. 278.

§ *Precognition* Janet Paistone, 16–24 June 1661. in MS., ap. *Bib. Soc. Ant. Scot.* Trial of David Johnston,—of Agnes Loch, 29 July, —of Agnes Pogavie, 7 Aug. 1661. *Rec. Just.*

soldiers in the forehead.”* Mithra and Satan seem identified here: for the objects of Pagan worship were then regarded as demons. But the true origin of the whole is found in “the mark” received from the beast of the apocalypse, and the “new name which no man knoweth save he that receiveth it.”

Satanic Paction.—“Will ye be my seruand, and adore me and my seruandis,” said Satan to John Feane, “and ye sall neuir want?” Homage was pledged on promised protection. Alexander Hamilton “vpone conditione that the devill sould nocht let” him “want naither meat, claithing, nor money, promeisit to be his seruand.” Satan desiring Jonet Barker to be his servant, engaged that “scho sould be as trymelie clad as the best seruand in Edinburgh.”†

Pactions with females were commonly followed by sensual demonstrations, which cannot but corroborate the parallel between Pan and Satan. Pan was partly formed like a goat. The same word expressed Pan or a goat, in Egypt, where this animal was venerated and protected. Women were borne to the synagogue on goats, and Satan sometimes presided there under that form. Satan is represented as of an amorous disposition: the goat is the most salacious of animals. Were such a parallel prosecuted by an illustration of Satanic amours with the human race, the identity of

* *Tertullianus de Pres. Her: de Baptismo, ap: Op.: p. 216, 226.*

† Trial of Jonet Barker, 28 Dec. 1643. *Rec. Just.*

Pan and Satan might be farther confirmed from the classical authors.*

Though earnest in money was given by the master to the servant, it proved to be only stone.

One of the author's progenitors, a military officer of rank, in the service of Charles I. and his sons, was reputed of sagacity adequate to baffle Satan. A woman, deluded into a paction with this arch-enemy, had accepted earnest to enter on her duties, or to deliver herself up to him, when a candle, lighted at a certain time, should have burnt to the end. No sooner had the fiend departed, than the money converted to stone, at once betrayed the cheat and the traitor. Hastening, in this dilemma, for counsel to the veteran, he advised the dupe to light her candle at both ends, whereby an equivocal expedient, defeating literal fulfilment, should render the paction nugatory. The remedy proved successful: Satan was disappointed of his prey: but, in revenge, he deprived the counsellor of his shadow. No satisfactory explanation of the process, how that which eludes the grasp of matter was seized, has been preserved in history, though traditions tell of a necromantic circle impenetrable by the fiend, protecting his opponents. But while both retreated precipitately within, he pressed so closely in pursuit, that notwithstanding the person of the coun-

* *Herodotus*, lib. ii. c. 46. *Diodorus Siculus*, lib. i. c. 88. *Strabo*, lib. xvii. t. ii. p. 1137. *Plutarch* *Bruta Animalia ratione uti.*, ap.: *Op*: t. ii. p. 989.

seller was secured, his shadow yet remaining beyond its precincts, fell under demoniac power. Cotemporaries relate, that "the whigs maintained that the General had not a shadow: this was believed by the phanatics, and when they saw him upon the streets in a sunshine, they would not believe he had a shadow, though they saw it with their eyes."* A portion of mount Lycæus consecrated to Jupiter, was interdicted to men: those venturing thither died within the year. "Neither man nor beast transgressing its precincts cast any shadow: nor did the huntsman violate them in pursuit of his game; but standing without, he saw that no shadow fell within."†

Satan gave Jonet Lyle, as she thought, a "piece of silver, which thereafter shoe found to be butt a stone:" and the like occurred to others.‡ The same delusion subsisted on the continent.

The truth of Satanic presence and paction were credited so firmly in Scotland, that a lady was debarred the communion table, "for having fellowship with the devill," and commanded by the minister to rise:|| and an indictment charged Jonet Ker, that "you engaged to be his servant, albeit ye knew it was the

* *Anti-counterquerist Counterqueried*, No. 13. p. 54.

† *Pausanias Arcadica*, lib. iii. c. 38.

‡ Trial of Jonet Lyle, 29 July 1661,—of Agnes Pogavie, 7 Aug. 1661. *Rec. Just.*

|| *Woodrow Analecta*, v. ii. p. 223. iv. p. 52. Alluding to Mr John M'Lellan of Kirkcudbright, who died about 1650.

devill." At St Baume in France, a woman was led to the confessional in church, to save her from being carried off in pursuance of her covenant with Satan.*

There is infinite reason to conjecture, that credulity in Satanic intercourse resulted from artful imposture, as well as from visions or spectral illusions. Some may have ventured to personate the fiend: nor was this a character so difficult to be sustained, considering the eagerness of the day to credit supernatural visitations. Occasionally his association with females is referred to earlier adolescence, but generally to that period when losing their attractions for men. What shall be thought of their confessions—of disclosures too precise to admit of repetition here? Was it a delirious recollection of fleeting pleasures to be revived no more?

* *La Possession de Magdalene de Demandouls*, 1610. p. 1-2.

CHAPTER XVI.

SPECTRAL ILLUSIONS.

It is impossible to question the sincerity of those averring that they had beheld certain aerial images, —who submitted even to a cruel death, while invoking Heaven to confirm the truth of their asseverations. If they were the victims of self-delusion many hastened to strengthen their error: assuming so many postulates inconsistent with every philosophical maxim, as arguments incontrovertible, they defended it warmly if contested: they tried to persuade the wiser world that shadows were substantial.

Of later years, however, as science has found an asylum, and apprehensions have ceased of being strangled or burnt for dissenting from the ancient prophets, the learned indulge in theories sufficient to solve the mystery. Those flitting forms whose appearance was so deeply imprinted on the mind, were spectral images, —visions originating in that morbid state of the brain often concomitant on human maladies.*

* *Alderson* Essay on Apparitions. *Ferriar* Theory of Apparitions
The priority of this theory is claimed by the former.

Thence, though many superstitions be eradicated with the change of times, and marvels gain no credit now, the source of spectral illusions from morbid affections, must remain as entire as in the days of darkest prejudice.

If phantoms of the imagination were described of old by the pious, credulity accepted them as real. From finding every ancient record teem with predictions, visions, and supernatural intercourse with heaven, posterity complain of so great a privilege having been withdrawn: and conclude, that a more immediate connection was then preserved with the earth, for purposes subsisting no longer.

The spectral illusions, of which so many are commemorated, to the reproach of mankind, from their consequences, seem to have originated, 1. From a morbid state of the mind: 2. From suspension of the active faculties during natural repose: and, 3. During the transitions of recovery from a swoon.

Physicians are well aware, that under the delirium concomitant on many distempers, the patient is prepared to argue the existence of what is pictured by imagination only. He believes himself every where but on the couch which debility precludes him from quitting.

Spectral illusions were as familiar to the ancients as to later generations. Hippocrates speaks of those who thought themselves infested by demons: and he assigns reasons why—this being more incident to females

—many of them, in his time, devoted offerings, even their richest apparel, to Diana, for relief.* Plato observes, that it was common for women especially, and those imbecile, terrified by spectres, when awake, and recollecting the visions of their dreams, to vow statues and sacrifices, and to fill up the pure places of the houses and streets with altars and temples to be freed of them.†

Phantoms dwell only in the mind—"Natura enim non gignit spectra nisi in animo quæ sunt ipsa phantasmata: sed gignit corpora vera non autem apparentia tantum." Thence the visible existence of spirits or demons must be denied.‡

Profound metaphysical questions may originate on the site and faculties of the soul, as combined or free of living matter. Thus says Claudianus Mamercus, one of the orthodox ecclesiastics: "It is the soul of man alone which has been created in semblance of the Deity. God is incorporeal: the human soul made after God's image cannot be corporeal. The soul is not confined within the body, were it so, the first objects presented would be the intestinal organs. Intellect is the vision of the soul.—The incorporeal soul sees of itself: corporeal substances are seen by the body,—but spiritual things are not visible to corporeal

* *Hippocrates de Virginibus.*

† *Plato de Legibus, lib. x. in fine.*

‡ *Zanchius de Divinatione, p. 78: Hanovix 1610, in 12mo.*

eyes: and although every thing incorporeal be invisible, every corporeal substance may not be visible.”*

The spectral illusions, most distinctly described, are proved to be concomitant on vehement mental emotions: and if these can be subjected to any rule, the image may relate to previous impressions, for it does not follow that the distempered shall behold only demons.

Thus it may vary to infinity. Evidence was received from a woman, that while in bed with her child, Jonet Cock “and many vtheris came in and lay above her, and they all drew at her chyld: and shoe having said, ‘the Spirit of Grace be in this house,’ they went all out of the glasse window with a noise.” Further, when a mother in Dundas lay “in chyld birth with her young chyld besyd her, in the night-tyme, the doore being locked,” Jonet Millar, “with vther notorious witches, who are since brunt—blew vp the doore, and came in vpone her, essayed to tacke the young chyld from her, bot not having the power, went to the doore in a confusione.”†

Agnes Finnie was exposed to a serious charge, that there having been a quarrel between her daughter and John Cockburn, “quhairin grit flyting and outrageous wordis, na doubt, was vtterit be ayther of thame

* *Claudianus Mamercus* de Statu Animæ, lib. i. c. 5, 6, 14, 23, 27. lib. iii. c. 3, 9, 12, 14. Flor. circ. an. 460. *Bib. Vet. Pat.* t. vi. p. 1040, 1073.

† Trial of Jonet Cock, 10 Sept.—of Jonet Millar, 10 Aug. 1661. *Rec. Just.*

to vtheris, sua that they pairtit vnfreindis:—the said John Cockburn going that nycht to his bed to tak the nychtis rest, litle rest gat he.—Bot having gottin his first sleip, and awaiking furth thairof, being strukin in great feir and amaisement, he saw and evidentlie perseaved,—all the durris and windowis of his hous being fast cloised,—yow, Agnes Finnie, with your dochter, —bothe sitting on his bed syd fearcelie ruging at his breist, and being in excessive feir with that thair violent ruging and vexing of him in maner foirsaid, he cryed out all that tyme, ‘God be in this hous ! I ken ye weill aneughe ! God be in this hous !’”* Further, it was alleged of Margaret Hutcheson, that “vpone the first day of January last, about twelve a clock at night, ye came vnto Johne Clerk, his hous, and set down their at the fyre syd, and komed your hair, to the great affrightment of his wyff, the doors and windows being all fast locked and closed : and that yow did be the space of seavne or eight nights.”

The preceding examples confirm the words of Hippocrates, which are illustrated indeed by other authors.† The sorceress being introduced through barriers, rendered her presence the more alarming. But such an entrance is not inconsistent with the opinions entertained of spiritual nature, or of supernatural faculties. Divine and demoniac properties underwent little

* Trial of Agnes Finnie, 11 Dec. 1644. *Flyting*—scolding ; *ruging*—tearing. *Rec. Just.*

† *Psellus de Operatione Dæmonum*, p. 78, 85.

discrimination of old, from the etherial elements ascribed to either. In the time of Hospinian, some believed that Jesus Christ penetrated houses on Christmas eve, by the roof or through shut windows: others thought he paid a solemn visit to each, attended by a train of angels. It was inculcated also, that on the vigils of St Nicholas, that sanctified personage traversed towns and villages with his attendants, distributing those donations privately to the youthful, which their parents themselves conveyed secretly.* Some mischievous intent was evidently dreaded by Margaret Hutcheson combing her hair. Many superstitions have been attached to the hair in general: that relatives at sea would be the sport of tempests by combing it at night, or during candle light, was credited. Dreaming of shaving the hair portended shipwreck.† Petronius Arbiter questions the lawfulness of cutting the hair or paring the nails in a ship, unless during stormy weather, as if apprehensive of disturbing the elements.‡

Spectral illusions were pregnant with danger to individuals. There was a quarrel between Janet Cock and John Richardsons: and “immediatlie the said Johne did take seiknes, so that he died, and all the two last dayes befoir he dyed, he said that Jennet Cok was their in his sight, howbeit the folkis in the house could not see her.” Surely the dread of this unfortunate

* *Hospinianus de Origine Festorum Christianorum*, f. 105, 111.

† *Kirchmannus de Funeribus Romanorum*, lib. ii. c. 14.

‡ *Petronius Arbiter*, p. 177, 180: *Roterd.* 1693, in 12mo.

woman was very great. James Douglas's horse fell with him. On recovering himself, though "not much the worse, he sieth lyvelie to his apearance, Jennet Coke sitting by him,—he recomended himself to God and went on his journey: that night he tooke a high and sudden brashe of seiknes, which continewed till his death,—and about allewin houris at night the great fitt allwayis came vpone him:—and the said James being werie tractable, said befoir his death, that the said Jonet was often standing at the bed foot,—the Lord forgive my friends if they doe not gar burne Jennet Coke, for she is the cause of my death."

In the same way, "Susanna Bailyie, a penitent and confessing witch," confronting another, exclaimed, "thow fiery Lucifer confess thy falt, for thow art worthy of death: because upon ane night about sextine yeares since, yow having a pick at mee, come into my house att midnight, the doores and windowes being shutt—quhill I was a sleipe in bed with my husband and chyld, and yow putt your hands in my throat, and thoct to have worried me."*

Dogs and cats were sometimes the subject of such illusions, as may be seen in the trial of Agnes Sampson: and the Papal legate at the Council of Trent, terrified by the appearance of a large black dog with flashing eyes, fainted, and raved incessantly till he died.†

* *Precognition*, 8, 10 June 1661: Christian Wilson—Janet Cock, in MS. ap.: *Bib. Soc. Ant. Scot.*

† *Marcouville Recueil Memorable*, p. 80.

Thomas Low “fell deidlie seik,”—and he was “sore trublit with ane number of cattis about him.”* One becoming delirious, believed that a certain woman was “present befoir him in the lyknes of ane gray catt:” and the grounds of accusation against another, specified of a diseased person, that “ever quhen he sleiped, dreamit that ye was vpon him, either in the liknes of ane catt or of ane dog.”

Every image arises before the delirious. A learned, wealthy, and respectable citizen of Cologne, acquainted Nider, that during a dangerous malady “he conceived, on viewing himself on all sides, that he was two men.”† In Skye, a woman repeatedly beheld another resembling herself, walking solitarily, at no great distance, and in changes of apparel like her own. This she believed, as it proved, a presage of her dissolution.‡ A young woman in Lewis constantly beheld the back of her own image before her, on going into the open air.|| Aubrey speaks of a daughter of the Earl of Holland meeting her apparition in Kensington Gardens: and of another who saw herself for a quarter of an hour at a time; but she was not the only spectator of the phantom.§

* Trial of Jonet Sinclair, 16 Ap. 1643,—of Elspeth Cursetter, 29 May 1629. *Rec. Ork.* f. 264, 50.

† *Nider de Visionibus*, p. 665.

‡ *Macleod* (Theophilus Insulanus) on the Second Sight, § 27, p. 21.

|| *Lord Tarbet*, Relation to the Hon. R. Boyle.

§ *Aubrey Miscellanies*, p. 76.

These illusions seem to be somewhat akin to the nature of the wraith, or the visible image of one about to perish. The soul is conceived to be a representative of the body. The ghosts of the dying are spoke of as in a separate state; and others were believed, not only to echo the moans of the sick, preceding dissolution, but after it, to prove an audible guide to the place of sepulture.* Nor is this remote from that credulity in Ireland, which admitted the departure of the soul, on the eve of St John's day, to visit the spot which should receive its corporeal tenement, when their union was finally dissolved.† Persons here have affirmed, that in the course of their experience many wraiths were seen by them.‡ Camerarius observes, that it was not uncommon for headless monks and nuns to occupy their seats in church, on impending death.||

The companies of angels, and troops of demons, so often described, spiritual revelations to mankind while asleep, and the dreams of men awake, are all of the same order. To the last, indeed, there is one common world, where comparison by the senses can detect fallacy: but sleep creates a world to every slumberer, of which he is himself the only actual tenant. Although the wise may doubt whether this be the true season of substantial knowledge, men presume to ex-

* *Macqueen*, Parish of Applecross, ap. *Stat. Acct.* v. iii. p. 380.

† *Brand*, v. i. p. 245. ; from *Pilgrim's Pilgrimage into Ireland*, 1725.

‡ *Heron*, *Journey*, v. ii. p. 227.

|| *Camerarius Opera Subcesiva*, cent. i. c. 73. p. 337.

plain why the Deity then discloses mysteries, why these are perplexed or obscure, and why the mean and illiterate are thus favoured, in preference to the noble and the learned.*

The invariable narrative given by those recovering from a swoon, proves the indelible impressions received: and perhaps it is here that the most satisfactory solution of supernatural visions is afforded. John Feane "was strukin in sic extaseis and transis, lyand be the space of twa or thrie houris deid, and sufferit himself to be careit and transportit to mony montanes, as thocht throw all the warld." One declared that "she left her bodie in Pencaitland, and went in the shape of a corbie, to Laswade, to see a child she had nursed."† An old woman of Tiree, accustomed to give responses, averred she had been in heaven, and was permitted to return to revisit the earth for a season. The clergyman of her parish found it impossible to reason her out of her belief; but he discovered that she sometimes lay a whole day in a swoon.‡ Tertullian relates an example, not dissimilar, of a woman falling into an ecstasy, during a religious solemnity; who related on her recovery, among other things, having had visions of the soul, as thin, light, of aerial colour, and human form.|| In England, a

* *Pererius adversus fallaces et superstitiosas artes*, Quest. iv. v. vi. p. 143—150.

† Trial of Isobell Elliot, 13 Sept. 1678. *Rec. Just.*

‡ *Frazer*, *Deuteroscopia*.

|| *Tertullianus de Anima*, c. 9. ap. *Op.* p. 270.

woman, also—for most of such visionaries seem to have been women—affirmed she could go to any place invisibly, “and yet her body will be lying in her bed.” But this temerity cost her life.*

It was alleged against Bessie Skebister, that James Sandieson, under a severe distemper, affirmed, “that in his sleip, and oftymes waking, he was tormented with yow, Bessie, and vther twa with yow, quhom he knew not, cairying him to the sea, and to the fyre, to Norroway, Yetland, and to the south—that ye had ridden all thes wayes with ane brydle in his mouth.”†

Besides such fertile sources of self-delusion, some, from a strange perversion of the senses, describe the aerial transportation of their neighbours, as explained in the complaint to the kirk session of Holyroodhouse. In the year 1671, persons survived who had seen one “carried in the air,” several times, in the view of his fellow soldiers. “Major Henton hath seen him carried away from the guard in Scotland, a mile or two.”‡ In chasing a cat, John Feane “was careit above the ground.” Christian Shaw was carried away by a swift and unaccountable motion, “her feet not touching the ground, so far as the beholders could discern.”

Various aerial voyagers are alluded to—such as the transportation of one in Braidalbine, which excited some uneasiness about the time of Mr Pennant’s visit.

* *History of Magick*, v. i. p. 249: Susanna Edwards.

† Trial of Bessie Skebister, 21 March 1633. *Rec. Ork.*

‡ *Aubrey Miscellanies*, ch. xiv. p. 121, 127.

But whether, like that of a clergyman in Banff, taken up, carried aloft, and let down at his own house, is not explained.* Neither must Aubrey's account of the fairy's cup be forgot, found in the hands of a progenitor of the family of Lord Duffus, transported through the air, from the county of Elgin, to a cellar of the king of France: with which, the transportation of a "poore pedlar traveller" from Tranent, to a merchant's cellar at Bordeaux, at midnight, in the time of John Feane, may be compared.† There seems to have been greater peril on arrival, than in the passage, if it be true that one was burnt in 1655, in Portugal, by the inquisition, for, "being brought thither from Goa, in East India, in the air." These aerial travellers were not always invisible. It can have been admitted only on the evidence of the beholders, that while St Kentigern "chaunted to heaven, his body was elevated in the air from the earth."‡ The testimony of different persons in other countries, proved that they had been transported on broom staves.|| Julian Cox was convicted in England in 1663, on confession that three persons, borne upon broom staves, about a yard from the ground, two of them her acquaintances, previously executed for sorcery, rode towards her of an evening.§

* *Pennant Tour*, 1769, p. 96. *Grant*, Parish of Kirkmichael, ap. *Stat. Acct.* v. xii. p. 463.

† *Newes from Scotland*.

‡ *Proprium Sanctorum*, f. xxix. *ut sup.*

|| *Remigius*, Lib. i. c. 12. p. 83.

§ *Glanvil*, p. 327, 328.

Before recurring to the more ancient sources of such superstitions, it may be proper to speak of the transportation of inanimate substances, as originating partly from spectral illusion. This was embraced by the charge, that Isobell Young had seen "the firlote rynning about with the stuff popling," on the floor of a barn; and where "the sive and the wecht dancit throw the hous."* A clasped knife opened in the pocket of Christian Shaw; and her glove falling, it was lifted by a hand invisible to several persons present. Inanimate substances moving, even selecting their own site, stones leaping, statues walking, are all presented by the credulous, for the assent of the wise. During some part of the curative process, a bell was placed on the head of the patient, at St Fillan's pool, which would return supernaturally, sounding all the way, if surreptitiously removed.†

St Irchard *in extremis*, enjoined the deposition of his body in that spot, where a litter bearing it should rest. He died: "the litter advanced of itself, beyond the river Dee, to the place where Kincardin church is built, and remained immoveable."‡

It is well known, that statues in temples, and images

* Trial of Isobell Young, 1629. *Rec. Just.* Of Jonet Thomson, 7 Feb. 1643. *Rec. Ork.*

† *Stuart*, Parish of Killin, ap. *Stat. Acct.* v. xvii. p. 378. *Giraldus Cambrensis* Top. Hib. Lib. ii. c. 33: *De Campana Fugitiva.*

‡ *Proprium Sanctorum*, f. lxxxix. ap. *Brev. Aberd.* t. ii: Anniversary, 24 Aug. A. D. 933: *Keith*, p. 233.

in churches, nodded assent: that the eyes, or the other organs moved, to the great astonishment of devotees, though effected by easy contrivances. Some of the most celebrated fathers of the church, do not scruple to affirm, that the statues of Hermopolis prostrated themselves before the infant Jesus, when his reputed father Joseph fled with him into Egypt—finding here the verification of words, which do not seem susceptible of any such construction.* Lucian, either for embellishment of the arts, or in derision of marvels, figures the activity of “a brazen Hippocrates, about a cubit high.”†

The reality of transportation to the Satanic convention, has been warmly debated: and authors support it on the indisputable transference of the chamber which was the scene of the miraculous conception of Christ, from Nazareth to Loretto.‡ A locomotive wall is said to be preserved with great veneration, somewhere in India.¶ The credulous never think of referring credulity to organic illusions. The defender of Isobell Young, pleaded, that as to the firloft, and seeing the wheat therein “going about,” the distemper was “in the persone’s brayne that saw the sight—

* *Isaiah*, ch. xi. v. i. “Jehovah shall come into Egypt, and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence.”

† *Lucianus Philopseudes*, § 21. This is of about the same dimensions as a walking statue, actually constructed by the late distinguished mechanic, *Maillardet*, as many have seen, with admiration.

‡ *Crespet*, Lib. i. disc. 15. § 2. f. 238.

¶ *Moor*, Hindu Pantheon, p. 426.

for he was mad." The same might be said of many seers.

Mankind become delirious : they are distempered : they swoon, or they dream, and their visions are rivetted in the mind. One of the Scottish historians relates, that, "Ralph, abbot of Kinloss, accompanied several other dignitaries, to a chapter of the Cistercian order, held in 1214. At the appointed place of convocation, the cook, unable to serve up the usual meal of fish, he, with greater zeal than prudence, substituted a quantity of flesh, from which, collecting the boiling fat as it rose, resolved, in case of enquiry, to call it butter ; and he mixed it with the abbot's porridge. All having ate heartily and unsuspectingly, retired to rest. But the abbot of Kinloss, ruminating on what psalms and prayers I know not, beheld the blackest Ethiopian, with a horrible visage, enter by a shut window, and survey the bed of every guest, with evident satisfaction, though chiefly interested in the cook, whom he seemed desirous of embracing. The abbot, however, on his approach, fortified himself with the sign of the cross, awaiting the issue in silence. Viewing him sternly, but daring to come no nearer, the visitor vanished like smoke, through the shut window."*

Spectral illusions originate alike from excitement and from debility. Hence, those numerous visions

* *Fordun, Scotichronicon, Lib. ix. c. 35.*

beheld by the inmates of religious houses, who accounted self-denial, and especially abstinence, the greatest merit. Supernatural light and sounds, demons and angels, imaginary forms, are presented to the mind, according to predominant impressions.* Protracted abstinence, even fasting forty days and forty nights, preceded the most noted visions, if they were visions, recorded in Scriptural history. At the evocation of Samuel, by the witch of Endor, Saul "had no strength in him: he had eaten no bread all the day, nor all the night."†

Is it here that credulity in the Satanic convocation should be sought? that vision of such deadly consequences to those beheld there by the visionary.‡

But independently of the weakness of nature producing such illusions, science has been often invited to aid imposture. There is some reason to conclude, that representations analogous to the phantasmagoria of the moderns, might be known to the ancients, and probably employed for divination. Thus, Jamblichus says, in the words of Porphyry, "some obtain a phantom through the means of water, some *on the wall*, some in the open air, by the sun, and by

* *Cuminius* in vita *Columbæ*, c. 3, 9. *Adomnan*, Lib. iii. c. 8, 9, 10, 13, 14.

† 1 *Samuel*, ch. xxviii. v. 20. *Exodus*, ch. xxxiv. v. 28. *Matthew*, ch. iv. v. 2.

‡ *Monstrelet* Chronique, t. iii. p. 483, 484. The artful endeavoured thus to sacrifice those obnoxious to them, as at a convention of 1459, at Artois.

other luminaries :” and he remarks how well the pellucidity of water is adapted for the transmission of light.*

Numerous miraculous transportations are recorded in Scripture, which the latest visionaries applied, without scruple, to their own peculiar case. They did not think themselves entitled to dispute their truth or probability.

To delude the credulous, acoustics, optics, chemistry, were all brought into co-operation, under the hands of the artful ; and so skilfully managed, that the wisest yielded to the imposture. No wonder, then, that the ignorant concluded that nature had gone astray :—and thus have fables passed to posterity, with all the venerable aspect of truth.

Transportation to the synagogue, presence at the Satanic convention, which so many unfortunate individuals have affirmed, and who have sealed their affirmation with the forfeiture of life, must be ascribed exclusively to spectral illusion from a peculiar state.

* *Jamblichus de Mysteriis*, § iii. c. 15. p. 77, 78.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE TONGUES.

LEGIONS of those etherial beings illuding the fancy of our progenitors, were flitting about the earth; and Satan their leader, ever restless, roamed over its surface to beguile mankind, the chosen work of the Creator.

Some wicked spirit sought a lodgement in the human frame, filling it with distraction, torturing it with pain or terror.

Demons were invested by the credulous, with numerous properties, certainly nothing inferior to those distinguishing angelic nature; but differing in this, that they also harboured evil.*

It does not appear, however, from any evidence preserved, that such superstition was carried to so great an extent in this, as in many other countries. Possession was admitted, indeed, as well as the introduction of demons into the person of individuals, by the sorcerer's art; but whether the precise ceremonies, as practised in all their extravagance elsewhere, under

* *Augustinus de Agone Christiano*, § 3, 4.—*De Divinatione Dæmonum*, § 7, 9, 10. ap. Op. t. vi. col. 246, 248, 507, 510.

the sanction of the Catholic church, were recognized in Scotland, is doubtful.

The Privy Council declared it expedient, in 1630, "that Margaret Lumsdaine, the possest woman in Dunc, together with her mother and father-in-law, should be brought to Edinburgh, that directions might be given, corresponding to "the importance and nature of such a great cause."* Possibly this is the same person of whom the Duke of Lauderdale has preserved some brief notices; and especially, that although ignorant of any language but her own, she spoke Latin through demoniac influence.†

The accurate distinctions of the continent between infestation, haunting, and possession by demons, are inexplicit here: and examples of occupation are more vague and indefinite.

The presence of the *incubi* and *succubi* denotes amorous illusions only.—Among the incidents of the fifteenth century, Boethius relates, that the kindred of a damsel of illustrious birth who had refused several noble alliances, taxing her with incontinence, she admitted that a youth, wonderfully handsome, repaired sometimes to her chamber in the night: but whence he came, or whither he went, she knew not. Provided with torches they entered the apartment, where she was seen in the arms of a monster, so horrid as to exceed human imagination. Many flocked to behold

* *Privy Council Records*, 13 July 1630. fol. 240.

† *Earl of Lauderdale*, Letter in 1657.

the disgusting spectacle, and with them a priest of sanctified character, who began to recite the gospel of St John, as the others retreated timorously, or stood speechless. When reaching the passage, *verbum caro factum est*, the demon fled with a terrible outcry, unroofing the chamber and setting its furniture on fire in his exit. In the course of three days a monster was born, and burnt to preserve the credit of the family.*

Alms, together with prayers and fasting, long protracted, relieved a beauty of the Orkney islands from the embraces of a marine monster. But they required a year's observance.†

These, with the previous instance of prayer and fasting, recommended by the pious Bishop of Aberdeen, to a young man, for relief from the presence of a beautiful female, may serve as examples of the *incubus* and *succubus*, not an uncommon species of credulity. As such it subsisted until recent date—"for in our highlands there be many fair ladies of this aerial order, which do often tryst with amorous youths, in the quality of succubi, or lightsome paramours and strumpets, called *Lean-nain-sith*, or familiar spirits."‡ Thus also the *Daoine-shi*, or men of peace, "sometimes held intercourse with mistresses of mortal race."||

* *Boethius*, Scot. Hist. lib. viii. f. 149.

† *Ben Insul. Orchad. Descrip.* : No. 3. *Stronsay*.

‡ *Kirk*, p. 35.

|| *Graham*, Sketches of Perthshire, p. 275. This author remarks, that his predecessor *Kirk*, also minister of Aberfoyle, died in 1688, aged 42.

Nothing has perplexed the credulous more than the result of demoniac amours.—Were the legions recognized in after times, a part of the original creation? Did demons propagate their kind? Without embarking in so dark a mystery, it is probable that the destruction of monstrous births, certainly prevalent in Scotland, nor pertaining to ancient date, originated in the belief that such unnatural forms could descend of demons only. But from them also some of the most noted of mankind sprung.

Though modern examples of possession resolve into suspected witchcraft, barbarous intonations, grimacing, hysterics, and convulsions,* it was certainly recognized of old, both because there is an invocation of the litany—*ab infestatione Demonum libera nos domine*,† and because it is exemplified by expulsion. Likewise there are receipts for compounding some ingredients deemed most effectual for this purpose, preserved in the fragment of a manuscript belonging to an hospital not far from Edinburgh, in the fifteenth century.‡ Besides, it must be presumed, that principles similar to those of the continent were received in Scotland.

Indeed, the *Vitæ Sanctorum* give specific examples. “When the devil occupied a cave at Dysert, he tempt-

* *Woodrow Analecta*, v. ii. p. 113: Of the Earl of Kincardine, v. iii. p. 82, 83. v. iv. p. 186. v. 5. p. 202.

† *Breviarium Aberdonense*, t. ii. f. lxix.

‡ *Rentale Buik* of Sanct Anthonie at Newhaven, in MS. f. 2. *Analysis* of the same, p. 88. Edinburgh 1828, in 8vo.

ed the blessed Servanus with various perplexities, and departed quite confounded by his divine virtue.—Nor from that day did he ever appear again in the cave, which is still consecrated to the saint. Therefore, finding his inability to overcome him, the devil, prosecuting mischief, entered a certain wretched man, in whom he excited so ravenous an appetite, that nothing could satisfy it. But Servanus thrusting his thumb into the man's mouth, the devil terrified left him free, with a horrible outcry.*

St Kentigern ejected demons from the bodies of the possessed:† and they were expelled with frightful howlings from a woman brought in chains, to St Monan, to repress her fury.‡

In later ages, Agnes Sampson was judged instrumental in the sufferings of one “heavilie vexit with terrible visiounes and apparitiones, and hir bodie tormentit with ane ewill spreit, quhairwith sche hes bene possest maist pitefullie.” Johne Feane was convicted of “wiching and possessing of Williame Hutsoun with ane evill spreit:” and an invalid awaking during night “in grit feir, and feilling a thing like a ruche scheip above him,” was warned of its being the departure of the evil spirit that troubled him.||

* *Proprium Sanctorum*, f. xv. ap.: *Brev. Aberd.* t. ii.

† *Jocelinus in vita Kentigerni*, c. 34.

‡ *Proprium Sanctorum*, f. x. ap.: *Brev. Aberd.* t. i.

|| Trial of John Feane,—of Agnes Sampson, 1590, 1591,—of Katherine Bigland, 1615, *ut sup.*

Neither age nor sex was exempt from possession : and an individual might be occupied by an infinite number of demons at a time. But female demoniacs were infinitely more frequent than those of the other sex. At present the youthful females of the East are still subject to possession :* and an European resident there has remarked, that “women chiefly, if not exclusively, were possessed ;”† facts corresponding with the opinions entertained in the age of Hippocrates.

Were it not a painful reflection, that those subjected to practice were only the victims of a cruel malady, ecclesiastical ceremonies could merit nothing but derision. For, as physicians pronounce the character of disease from various diagnostics, so did the ministers and exorcists of the church declare a maniac possessed, prescribe and administer the remedy.

Thus demons might be introduced, either voluntarily, from magical powers, or through the medium of sustenance.‡ A professed exorcist was consulted on the possession of a damsel by a demon, introduced along with an apple.¶ They might enter by the mouth, the ears, or the nostrils, like a breath of air : and they would penetrate, nor that seldom, by the most minute pores of the body, though it might be some-

* *Moor*, Hindu Pantheon, p. 149, 150.

† *Marini Histoire de Tunkin et Lao*, p. 349.

‡ *De Borre Apologia pro Exorcistis*, p. 164.

¶ *Brognolo Manuale Exorcistarum*, P. i. c. 2. § 78. p. 37.

times lacerated by their entrance. Like the point of mathematicians which has neither parts nor magnitude, space does not seem essential, for they can lurk among the hair, or conceal themselves under a nail.* Their entrance is sometimes denoted by a sensation resembling the coldest water running down the back of the demoniac.

Actually distinguishing the possessed has been no easy matter. But six general symptoms evinced it. 1. Barbarous and discordant screams. 2. A fierce and horrid visage. 3. Numbness of the limbs. 4. Restlessness. 5. Unnatural strength. 6. Personal suffering. Further it was presumed, from the demoniac feeling the demons creeping like ants between his flesh and the skin, or as the prickling of needles: or if he felt his head cold as ice under the priest's hand during exorcism.† But his trembling with abhorrence at approximation of the cross and of sanctified relics, or becoming enraged at the sacred words employed for expulsion, were derided by King James, as to be held of no account in Scotland.‡

Speaking an untaught language was the most infallible proof of demoniac presence. Demons are alleged to be universal linguists, though, to avoid detection, they adopt the vernacular tongue. Yet they

* *Thyrcæus Demoniaci*, P. i. c. 9. p. 39, 41.

† *Mengus Fustis Dæmonum*, Doct: Pulch: c. xi. p. 27, 28. xiii p. 32.

‡ *King James Dæmonologie*, B. iii. c. 4. p. 70, 71.

have no proper language of their own: they pass silently from place to place: they have no sonorous voice: "and of what use would language be to them," asks Psellus, "who hold communication without speech? They use the dialect of every nation. The demons frequenting Greece gave forth oracles in heroic verse: among the Chaldeans they employed the Chaldean tongue: in Egypt the Egyptian: and those in Armenia, that of the country."*

John, afterwards Duke of Lauderdale, Sir James Forbes, and a clergyman in the neighbourhood of Thirlestane Castle, visited the possessed woman at Dunse. They found her a poor ignorant creature who had never been taught to read. But, after passing some time in conversation, without seeing any thing of what they expected, for she shewed nothing extraordinary, the minister, "almost out of patience, says to the knight in Latin, '*Nondum audivimus spiritum loquentem*: we have not yet heard the spirit speaking:' and, on this, immediately there issued out of the woman's mouth a voice in these words, '*Audis loquentem, audis loquentem*: Thou now hearest him speaking, thou now hearest him speaking.' This, from a poor creature, who, they were sensible, knew no tongue but her own, nor in truth the half of that, put the minister into such an amaze-

* *Psellus de Operatione Dæmonum*, p. 85, 86. *Crespet*, p. 210. *Mengus*, c. 7. p. 14. c. 9. p. 22. *Traité sur la Magie le Sortilege et Obsessions et Malefices*, Paris 1732, in 12mo.

ment, that, I think, he did not mind his Latin: for he immediately took off his hat, and lifting up his eyes to heaven, crying out, '*Misereatur Deus peccatoris*: The Lord have mercy on this sinner!' on which the spirit, to shew his skill in the language, answered, '*Dic peccatricis, dic peccatricis*: say on this female sinner, say on this female sinner.' The spirit here corrects the minister's false Latin."*

The christian church acknowledged five different methods of expelling demons. 1. By invocation of the name of Christ. 2. By the use of relics. 3. By impressing the cross on the demoniac. 4. By consecrated things. 5. By exorcisms adjuring the demon.

Expulsion was accounted a great and arduous task. It was undertaken with much solemnity, and exclusively by the exorcists of the Roman Catholic Church, deriving from their bishops the privilege of dislodging Satan:† or in special cases, only the bishop himself officiated. As those alone of the orthodox faith could succeed,‡ this prerogative was denied to protestants.

Holy water, consecrated wax, and the *clangor campanarum*, were deemed most effectual. But without exorcisms, which Torreblanca defines simply as "prayers

* *Letter, up. Sup.* 1657. As the letter concludes, "We all returned with great amazement to my father's house at Thirlestane Castle;" this visit must have preceded the year 1645, when the former Earl of Lauderdale deceased. *Mind*—recollect.

† *Gratian Decretalia*, P. i. Dist. 23, 25.

‡ *Brognolo*, P. i. c. 3. q. 9. § 2. p. 104. *De Borre*, P. ii. c. 7 p. 197.

to God, and imprecations on the devil,"* doctors rejected the virtue of any substance as instrumental in banishing demons. The Roman legislators more wisely held exorcism in contempt, and exorcists as impostors.†

Smoke and holy water were the grand specifics. Though Satan's abode be reputed a smokey dwelling: though clouds of fire, and brimstone seas, pervade the dark abyss of hell, smoking his imps out of the unhappy demoniac, by fumes of burning sulphur, remained of inveterate practice: as if the devil should "smell it and flee away and never come any more." Unable to endure fumigation, an incubus fled from Ecbatana to Egypt.‡ Perhaps the virtue of sulphuric exhalations was allowed by the Greeks: and had they represented an evil principle, together with an infernal train, under a serpentine form, such later remedies would ascend to high antiquity.||

As a demon can occupy any portion of the human frame, and usually withdraws for concealment to parts lower than the neck, the exorcist, in the progress of exorcism, endeavours to retain him above, and especially *to fix him in the tongue*. After prayer, he is solemnly adjured to come there, and sternly warned to abide and answer questions without equivocation.

* *Torreblanca* Epitome Delictorum, lib. ii. c. 53. § 19.

† *Digest*, lib. l. tit. 13. l. l. § 3. de Extraordinariis Criminibus.

‡ *Tobit*, ch. vi. v. 17. ch. viii. v. 3.

|| *Lucianus* Philopsendes, § 12. *Vegetius*, Art: Vet., lib. iii. c. 74.

Yet demons being wily, the exorcist shall distrust their replies: nor shall he credit any of them feigning himself a good angel, or the soul of a departed saint. Demons seldom speak Latin, lest that should betray them: nor will the devil possessing an Italian answer in French, for the tongue accustomed to a certain language, is more easily managed.*

During the progress of exorcism, rue or relics are applied to the demoniac's nose for accelerating expulsion. Also, the demon is to be provoked by every opprobrious epithet, of which an admirable superstitious vocabulary remains. His name pricked in large characters is trampled; or his picture distinguished in the same way, or by painted letters, shall be cast, with an imprecation, into the fire. Amidst all this, the demon must be driven out by beating the demoniac; but as he shall not be fumigated to absolute suffocation, neither shall the exorcist go too far with his blows.

By a desperate remedy to preclude the demon from lurking in the hair, the demoniac was plunged over head and ears in a bath of Gregorian water, and held down as long as possible without drowning him.†

Among the gentler, though most efficacious, remedies

* *Mengus Flagellum*, c. 2. p. 3. c. 12. p. 23, 97, 13. *De Borre*, P. iii. c. 2. *Instructio* x. xi. p. 211, 212. ix. xiii. p. 210, 214.

† *Discours Admirable d'une Religieuse possédée*, p. 38. *Mengus Fustis Doct. Pulch.*, c. 15. p. 37. *Ex. ii. vi.* p. 60, 194. *De Borre*, P. i. c. I. p. 45. c. 19. p. 121—131.

for expulsion, both from the person and the dwelling of the faithful, was aspersion with holy water.* This could put Satan to flight when personifying a husband to delude the wife.† But against the *Folleti*, certain spiritual beings, holy water and exorcism were either avoided, or they proved ineffectual.‡

Should the exertions of the exorcist fail of dispossessing the demoniac, he must command the spirits obdurately remaining, to recede from the head and the heart to the lower organs, and he is instructed to fix them in the toes.

The controul of demons was arrogated by the earlier fathers of the church. They boast, without scruple, that they could drive them from their posts, they could expel them from mankind, they could keep them trembling under their hands.||

If the exorcist was master of his art, he might send the demon to close confinement after expulsion. It was common, in the time of Crespet, to traffic for a demon in a ring: nor was any subject of discourse more familiar than the special nature and aspect of the spirit. Bodin knew a nobleman who purchased such a ring, with a familiar spirit, from a Spaniard, for a

* *Durandus Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*, f. 51. edit. 1473.

† *Ordricus Vitalis Hist: Eccles: lib. xii. ad an: 1118. ap: Duchesne*, p. 842. *Stephanus Cadomensis Annal: ibid. p. 116.*

‡ *Gervasius Tilberiensis*, lib. i. c. 18.

|| *Tertullian Apologeticus* (circ: A.D. 200.) c. 22, 37. ad Scapulam, c. 2.

high price.* Pietro de Apono, a celebrated Paduan, was believed to have acquired the seven liberal sciences from as many spirits kept in a piece of chrystal; and there are precepts even preserved in detail of "how to enclose a spirit in a crystall stone."† Thence it might gain easier credit, when on an alleged expulsion by English exorcists in 1574, the demon affirmed, he had been previously kept in a bottle,—something like that gigantic form of Eastern fable, escaping as a cloud of smoke, to spread itself over the sea.

But a Papal rescript of the year 1326, deploras the error, and denounces the practice of seeking responses, or demanding aid, of demons confined in a mirror, a phial, or a ring:‡ and the Theological Faculty of Paris pronounced the magical arts employed for confining demons to obtain their influence, an error in faith, and that it was blasphemous to believe that good angels could be enclosed in stones.¶

Treating of offences falling under cognizance of the tribunal of the Inquisition, Riccius determines the penalty of a woman keeping a spirit in a flask, for her amours, to be quassation, unless she disclosed the truth.§

* *Crespet*, f. 192. *Bodinus*, lib. ii. c. 3 p. 149.

† *Scot Discouerie*, b. vii. ch. 1. p. 126—131. *Discourse*, ch. 12. p. 411.

‡ *Joannes* xxi. dict. xxii. contra immolantes dæmonibus: ap: *Cocquelines Bullarum Collectio*, t. iii. P. ii. p. 194.

¶ *Determinatio*, art. 4, 19.

§ *Riccius Praxis aurea*, Res: 434. v. i. p. 197.

The exorcist being successful, demons sometimes depart quietly "like congelation of the breath." They issue as a drop of blood from the mouth or the nose: some escape in the shape of bees or ants, others amidst smoke and a cloud of flies, vanishing with a confused noise and hissing in the air,—as those expelled by St Lewin, from a demoniac bound in chains.* Their exit is also accompanied with great disturbance,—breaking the windows, extinguishing lights, and other violence. Lipsius relates, in his narrative of an expulsion, that two of the demons consenting previously to give a testimony of departure, broke a glass accordingly: that a third flew aloft, praising a pious virgin, through whose virtues he had been dislodged, and at the same time cast down a nail from the wall at a glass, but missed it.† How absurdly may those express themselves with the most ample learning!

The signal of expulsion seems to be derived from the ancients. Eleazar, a Jewish exorcist, applying a ring containing a certain root, as prescribed by Solomon, to the nose of a demoniac, in presence of Vespasian and the Roman army, warned the demon to give a signal of departure, by overturning a glass of water, and extracted him through the nostrils!**. One

* *Proprium Sanctorum*, f. lvii. lviii. ap. *Brev. Aberd.* t. ii.

† *Lipsius* *Diva Virgo Aspricollis*, Catherina Busia, ap: *Op:* t. iii. p. 1331.

** *Josephus* *Ant: Jud:* lib. viii. c. 2. § 5. *De Bello Judaico*, lib. iii. c. 6. § 3.

expelled by Apollo Thyanæus, cast down a neighbouring statue.* A mystical root, *Baaras*, conjectured to be a species of Peony, a noted expulsor, grew near Jerusalem, whence perhaps the repute of peony,† and its suspension from the neck of epileptic children.‡

Disturbing demons, by uproar, has been recognised throughout the universe. Hence the yells of exorcists, the rolling of drums, the clashing of cymbals, the *clangor campanarum*, in frightful discordance, to deter their approach and repress celestial warfare. But are the demons borne on the clouds, and travelling amidst tempests, those which occupy the human frame? During a sacrilegious violation of the sepulchres of the dead, in Westminster Abbey, with the aid of divining rods, to discover the site of treasure at midnight, in 1634, a vehement storm arose. The rods became stationary; the torches were wholly extinguished, except one, betraying the pallid hue of the adventurers. The fall of that ancient edifice was apprehended, had not the ringleader given "command to dismiss the demons, when all was quiet again."||

On demons quitting their natural abode, which is hitherto undiscovered, they resort chiefly to six others. 1. The human body. 2. The body of animals. 3. Cultivated places. 4. Deserts. 5. The higher regions

* *Philostratus* de Vita Apollonii Thyanensis, lib. iv. § 20.

† *Stubbe* Miraculous Conformist, "Peony gathered in due time," p. 13.

‡ *Galen* de Incantatione, ap. Op. t. x. p. 572.

|| *Lilly* Life and Times, p. 32, 34.

of the atmosphere. 6. Hell. Whither shall they go when expelled from mankind by the resistless power of the exorcist? No where,—were demonographers credited,—are they so apprehensive of being sent to,—as hell!

But the exorcist, regardless of this, authoritatively commands their departure, “consigning them to the power of hell, there to be tormented 3000 years beyond the day of judgment.”*

Volumes have been occupied with such discussions—far too copious for these restricted limits. Those who desire more ample information of the opinions entertained of demoniac nature, may resort to the works of the ancients repeatedly quoted, as of Origen, Porphyry, and Jamblichus, and to the compositions of De Borre, Thyraeus, Mengus, Brognolo, and others among the moderns, together with special narratives of expulsion. From all this will appear, in the most glaring colours, the absurdity of reasoning on the properties of invisible beings.†

Such superstitions adopted by the Roman Catholic Church, chiefly from Jewish History, had nearly made an inroad on the Protestant faith. The demoniacs of

* *Histoire touchant Denise de la Caille*, p. 247.

† *Moryson Ten Years' Travel*, P. iii. b. i. ch. 3. p. 46. *Bosman Guinea*, Lett. xx. p. 159. *Corry Coast of Africa*, p. 60, 97. *Landers*, v. ii. p. 231. *Heude Travels*, p. 225. *M'Donald Kinneir Asia Minor*, p. 414, 434. *Davy Ceylon*, p. 199—229. *Cochrane Siberia*, v. i. p. 292, 345.

Scripture, who evidently laboured under the same distemper, resembled the unhappy maniacs of present times. Nothing but prejudice can allow a different conclusion. Wild and discordant yells issue from the mouth of maniacs: convulsive throes distort their bodies, frightful to be heard or seen.

Some of the devout have deemed the deities of the ancients demons only.

The demon spoke through the medium of the possessed. "All know Syrus from Palestine, who, for a high price, raises and cures those prostrate lunatics, with foaming mouths and distorted eyes, and his questions how the demons entered, whereat the distempered is silent, but the demon tells in Greek, or some foreign language, whence he came, and how he took possession. Syrus then employs adjuration, and this proving ineffectual, expells him by menaces, when he is seen black and smoky in his exit."*

A language, consisting of barbarous ejaculations, words, and names, unintelligible, was ascribed to the conventions constituted of Satan and his proselytes.

But the modern inhabitants of these kingdoms have witnessed the revival of all the extravagance of antiquity, little creditable to an æra of sense and civilization.—Wild enthusiasts start up amidst assemblages collected for divine worship, incoherently screaming an uncouth jargon, with frantic gesticulations, under the blasphemous pretext, and preposterous belief, of a holy

* *Lucianus Philopseudes*, § 16.

inspiration,—that they “speak with other tongues.”* The ancient Greeks assumed that epilepsy was a *divine*, but the Jews affirmed it to be a *diabolic* possession. Hippocrates describes the solitary temper—the convulsions and frenzy whereby the Jews distinguished their demoniacs, precisely as the diagnostics of epilepsy. But instead of profanely charging them, like modern exorcists, to the auxiliaries of Satan, as if Heaven had forsaken the afflicted, the Greeks determined the occupying deity, from the symptoms which the patient exhibited. If he shrieked, it was Cybele,—if foaming at the mouth, it was Neptune: Nor does their celebrated physician overlook the palliatives then recommended by sorcerers, of avoiding black apparel, and wearing or reposing on a goat’s skin. After a learned discussion, he concludes, that the subsistence of a disease, not the presence of a divinity, is clearly recognized in the patient from his symptoms.†

Let no one wonder, therefore, if confirmed lunacy—the demoniac possession of old—shall follow its development, by modern *demonstration of the tongues*, under an arrogant pretension to divine inspiration.

* Acts, ch. xi. v. iv.

† Hippocrates de Morbo Sacro.

CHAPTER XVIII.

TESTS, TRIAL, CONVICTION, AND PUNISHMENT
OF SORCERY.

THE preceding subjects have amply shewn, how suspicions of sorcery were generated by phantoms of the brain ; or by a perverted view of the passing incidents of life—that simple events, and remarkable occurrences, were ascribed alike to supernatural interference. He who believed that casualties fell heavier on himself than on his neighbours, cast an eye of inquisitive jealousy around him, for detecting the author of the evil. Occult expedients, or preposterous ceremonies, were practised to disturb the ordinary course of nature. Visions of the night represented convocations of Satan and his proselytes : the fumes of inebriation, the quality of sustenance, even protracted abstinence, or the delirium of distempers, excited spectral illusions of spiritual beings, or of those obnoxious among the human race. Neither virtue nor humility could shelter the innocent. The most ignorant, tyrannical, and prejudiced of mortals, arrogated the privilege of vindicating Heaven from earthly insult.

Nothing could be devised more effectually, for mental debasement, for bridling truth, and encouraging rancour.

Informers, whose presence indignation should have spurned, were eagerly heard, and warmly applauded. The guiltless were dragged from the sanctuary of their private abodes, to undergo tests of criminality, so absurd, so cruel, and so wicked, as covered justice with opprobrium, and converted the name of law to ridicule. All the rules of decency were unblushingly violated, in searching after those indelible signs imprinted by the hand of Satan. Sleep, that welcome suspension of sorrow, was denied to the suspected in bondage. They were galled with fetters, pierced with weapons: their skin was scorched; children were racked before their wretched parents, to aggravate torment: and by this more intolerable pang, to extort confession of offences impracticable.

The retrospect is terrific—language can scarcely describe, or imagination figure those scenes incessantly renewing, while bigotry kindled the torch of persecution.

Yet no one can tell how this cruel innovation on reason was introduced into Scotland. Nothing forms so brief a subject of regular historical record, as superstition. But this is evident, that whence soever they were derived, the elements of religious rites appeared ultimately in its relics.

The Roman historians afford the least intelligence here: nothing is owing to the continental authors of the middle ages. Superstitions rarely occupy any portion of Fordun's *Scotichronicon*: nor previous to the reign of William, commencing in 1165, is there

an instance equally notorious, as that where a multitude having assembled to witness the fascinations of a magician, his art was defeated, and he departed in confusion, on a priest among the spectators exclaiming, *in principio erat verbum*. Statutory prohibitions ensued.* Major intersperses his own sentiments regarding demoniac paternity, while relating the birth of Merlin: and he derides the prophecies of Thomas the Rhymer.† Superstitions are unnoticed in the earliest record of criminal trials, comprehending the years 1493, and 1504:‡ nor is it evident, that any special enactment enjoined judicial interference, previous to a statute of 1563. It is affirmed, also, that one particular portion of the law, relative to consultation “with sorcerers, witches, or soothsayers,” was not in operation until the year 1590.|| The manuscript records of the ancient ecclesiastical establishments, of little interest in the mass, though valuable in the abstract, preserve few allusions to superstitious practices. Slander of witchcraft, and censure of a festival, are alone

* *Fordun*, Lib. viii. c. 79. This work terminates with 1447.

† *Major de Gestis Scotorum*, Lib. ii. c. 4, 5. iv. c. 12.: wrote 1518: Lib. v. *in fine*.

‡ These are proceedings at the circuit courts, but not in regular series. Besides this, the author found another volume previously unknown, during a general research among the manuscripts of the Advocates' Library, between 1800 and 1803, which has been recently mislaid. It commenced 1506, or 1508, and has been partly printed by Mr Pitcairn.

|| *Historie and Life of King James the Sext*, p. 241.

contained in the earliest of those of the reformed church, occurring to the author—the parish Register of Holyroodhouse, 1564—1566.* Whatever may be seen in some others of greater notoriety, belonging to preceding periods, are comprised in references to relics, pilgrimages, and processions; where to join the train, or to bear a rotten bone, was accounted a post of honour.

But considering the deperdition of ancient muni-ments once certainly existing, it would be precipitate to judge from scanty remains, or even to deny superstitious practices, because they are not specified in history.

Previous to the age of Fordun, the prodigies exhibited by the relics of Queen Margaret, induced our progenitors of the thirteenth century to claim her canonization, as an act of justice from the head of the Apostolic see. At first the Pope was scrupulous; but having enjoined a rigid investigation of her life and merits, the glorious title of *saint*, not undeserved, if Turgot be impartial, at length embellished her memory.†

The writings of Wyntown, nearly a cotemporary of Fordun, exhibit superstitions as gross as any of those occupying the works of the most credulous authors. A dialogue between Satan and St Serf, the patron of his Priory, might serve as a specimen. Here also are

* The series is interrupted by an immense hiatus, comprehending 1569—1612.

† *Monastic Antiquities*. Edinburgh 1809, in 8vo. *Cartularium de Dunfermlyn* in MS., ad. an.: 1245, f. 108, 109.

seen the elements of those fabulous Satanic and human metamorphoses, together with the gifts of vaticination, afterwards so highly exaggerated by poetical license; nor are allusions to the demoniac paternity of Macbeth omitted. Thus,

A nycht he thowcht in his dremyng,
 That sittand he was besyd the kyng,
 At a sete in hwntng swa,
 In-till his leisch had grewhwn dis twa :
 He thowcht quhill he was swa syttand,
 He saw thre wemen by gangand ;
 And thai wemen, than thowcht he,
 Thre werd systrys mast lyk to be :
 The fyrst he hard say gangand by,
 "Lo ! yhondyr the Thayne of Crwmbawchty."
 The tothir woman sayde agane,
 "Of Morave yhondyre I se the Thane."
 The thryd than sayd, "I se the kyng."
 All this he herd in hys dremyng.*

The work of Hector Boyce is too well known to require commentary. Though much interesting and curious matter be contained both there and in that of Buchanan, they have had greater currency than falls to the lot of the more meritorious compositions of those who are better qualified for the task of history.

From the numerous quotations purposely given

* *Wyntown Cronykyl*, B. v. c. 12. vi. c. 12, 13. The witches stone is still shewn on a moor where Macbeth was addressed: *Campbell Tour*, v. i. p. 357.

here, the ample store of superstition provided by the *Breviary of Aberdeen*, had the people understood the learned languages, will be evident. But this defect was probably supplied by discourses on the virtues and miraculous faculties of sanctified persons, preserved by tradition or the *Vitæ Sanctorum*, occasionally delivered from the pulpit. Something similar, of different purport, was practised long after the Reformation, by special injunctions of the Presbytery to individual ministers, to discourse of equivocal points of doctrine. To exalt the merits of the patron, and to gain the liberality of votaries to his shrine by temporal endowments, were important considerations.*

In the course of the sixteenth century, vernacular translations of Scripture, together with uncommon exertions for promoting education, rendered its detail more familiar to the public. Yet it is doubtful how far the refinement of the sacred writers could be understood, and whether parts devoted to the superstitious tenets and practices of the various tribes there described, did not excite greater interest with those who must have been so rude themselves.

The reformation of religion between 1558 and 1560, produced a fierce and animated contest: whence little was spared by either party to criminate their opponents. Legislative enactments may originate in private

* *Breviarium ad usum et Consuetudinem percelebris ecclesie Cathedralis Aberdonense in Scotia.* Edinburgh 1510. This rare work seems scarcely known to the modern writers on Ecclesiastical history.

animosity, or in public intolerance: they may abound in the imperfections of human nature. Thence it is questionable how far the practice of the people exacted the statute, 1563, to punish their superstitions.—Whether the guilt of “charmers and consulters with witches and sorcerers” should have had the precedence of twenty-one different classes of offenders half a century later :* whether the English people entertained, fed, employed, or rewarded evil spirits, though sternly prohibited by Parliament; and whether the deceased subjects of King James might not have reposed undisturbed in their tombs, without warning the survivors against using “the skin, bone, or any part of the body” in sorcery.

Yet nothing of all this apprehension was novelty, if historians be right in adjudging the earliest conviction to the year 1479, for consuming a waxen image of the king.†

Many subsequent memorials prove the acrimonious warfare waged with superstition.—Vengeance was not reserved for evil only: even the good and the successful were involved in danger, for men would deny success as coming of earthly means.‡

Some again who laboured under the perilous repute

* *Privy Council Records*, ad. an. 1629, f. 152.

† *Pinkerton*, v. i. p. 291, 295.

‡ *Records of Shetland*, pen: July 1602. “Peile Watsoun and his wyffe.” Trial of Jean Weir, 9 April 1670. *Rec. Just. Scot Dis-couerie*, B. iii. ch. 15. p. 65. *Pliny Hist. Nat. lib. xviii. c. 8.*

of sorcery, yielding to solicitations for a boon transcending human powers, gave that to which a fond credulity alone imparted virtue.—Imbecillity fosters fraud. Who would have ventured to sell the winds, had not folly prompted their purchase?

Innumerable grounds of suspicion arose. But suspicion was the harbinger of death: the innocent fled in affright as it approached their dwellings: their life became miserable, they were forsaken by the world, or beheld with nameless abhorrence. Margaret Smaill “declares she desyres not to live, because nobody will converse with her, seeing she is under the reputation of a witch.”* Another, on seizure, implored permission to escape, otherwise she would run into the sea and drown herself:† nor is it unlikely that suicide from desperation sometimes disappointed the persecutor’s prospects of bringing his victim to the public tribunals.‡

Clandestine information, it is said, was sought, “by placing an empty box in church, to receive a billet with the sorcerer’s name, and the date and description of his deeds.”|| Too many readily assented, and a secret enquiry on the truth or probability of the accusation, before some of the ecclesiastical judicatories,

* Trial of Margaret Smaill, 13 Sept. 1678. *Rec. Just.*

† Trial of Annie Tailyeour, 13 June 1624. *Rec. Ork.*

‡ *Lamont*, Chronicle of Fife, ad. an. 1649, p. 14.

|| *Bodinus*, lib. iv. c. l. p. 321. illustrates the custom of Milan from Scottish practice.

such as the kirk session, followed. But besides the operation of private calumnies, a general discovery of offenders was occasionally contemplated by the zealous, and conducted on a scale of unexampled magnitude, like huntsmen beating up extensive coverts for dislodging beasts of prey. A whole presbytery was up in arms. Thus, "at the College of auld Abirdene, the sext of Januar 1603," it was ordained that every minister should make "ane subtill and privie inquisition, heirin: videlicet, the minister with tua of his elderis, that feris God and ar maist zealous for his glorie, at ilk particular kirk *respectivè*, tak the aithis of the inhabitants within thair charge, quhat thay knaw of wiches and consultaris with thame: and wreitt thair depositions, and retorne the same to the presbyterie, with the names of sic as ar metest to be assysouris to thame, that the same may be sent to the Marques with all hastie expeditioun, conforme to the desyre of his Lordschip's letter."* Meantime the conduct of individuals underwent a secret scrutiny: anxious injunctions warned the brethren to watch the sayings and doings of "Alshinder Drummond," suspected of unlawful cures, charmes, and abuses of the people.† Public accusation was invited, as by the kirk session directing their officer to intimate, that those who had any thing to say against "Jonet

* *Presbyterie Buik of Aberdein*:—Marquis of Huntly.

† *Perth K. S. R.* 20 Aug. 1628. *Extracts, ut sup.* Alexander Drummond was convicted in the subsequent year.

Gardiner," to come on a day certain, when several appeared: and in the same way, recommending "that the minister, next Lord's day, intimat from the pulpit, that if thair be any within the paroche, quho knowes any witchcraft against Margret Bell, quho is taken in Corstorphine, and thocht to be ane wiche, that they come to the ministeris and declair the same."*

Safety could not be found in flight. Fugitives were hotly pursued from place to place,—they were publicly denounced by name in the churches:† an asylum was denied them by their fellow-creatures,—who, if yielding to the yearnings of humanity, rendered themselves obnoxious to the rigour of the laws.‡ This was not the vice of Scotland only. A foreign lawyer says, an honest woman quitted home to take his counsel. She was earnest to return as he advised, from not conceiving her within the scope of the law. What distressed her most, was fearing she might sink under the severity of torture, and criminate herself. Being speedily siezed, torments overpowered her resolution, and she prepared for death. The inquisitor told the priest, a learned and religious man, that she should have escaped condemnation, but for having travelled two or three

* *St Cuthbert's* K.S.R. 28 Dec. 1628. vol. 1618—1629, f. 240. 29 June 1649, vol. 1648—1667. p. 20.

† *Humbie* K.S.R. 7 July 1661: several named as fugitives "for witchcraft," from Haddington and St Bothans.

‡ *Halvudhous* K.S.R. 20 Sept. 1616. 9 May 1617.

leagues for counsel, which, as evident flight, proved the most pregnant indication of guilt.*

No course of procedure could be alike hostile to candour, integrity, and virtue. Already was the public mind debased by superstitions incredible in daily practice. That horrid malevolence so deeply incorporated with human nature, found gratification in exhaustless topics of censure, bad when indulged in lighter charges, but of awful iniquity when threatening the life of the innocent. As if literally receiving the injunction, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live," zealots comforted themselves in the assurance of glorifying God, by destroying his creatures.

Yet amidst all this thirst of persecution, a solicitude for the protection of honest reputation is testified, which would honour the best of times, and may serve as a salutary example to this slanderous æra.

What could be more perilous than slander of sorcery amidst superstition. Insult accompanied detraction: the stain was too often expunged with blood: nay, the barbarous prejudice of an infuriated multitude sometimes anticipated the regular sacrifice by conviction.† Though few were endowed with self-possession to

* *Cautio Criminalis* sen de Processibus contra Sagas; Dubium, xxviii. p. 208.

† *R. Maxwell* Letter from Edinburgh, 10 Feb. 1705. "Att Pittenweem about 2 weeks ago, there was a mob rose on a poor creature that was deemed for a witch and killed her outright." *Letters* ut sup. v. iv. No: 9. *Webster Tracts*. p. 69—74.

rebut so terrible a charge, some did venture to call the libeller to account, and successfully. Whether the clergy have been truly or falsely reproached with lending themselves too easily to this species of persecution, it is gratifying to find examples of impartiality and respect for justice, which would embellish the name of any country. Besides a fine for slandering Christian Rowse of witchcraft, the offender was enjoined, after sermon "to ask God and the said Christian forgiveness, and say he knowis na thing of the said Christian, bot guid and honestie."* Another was fined and sentenced to ask pardon, on her knees, of the persons aggrieved, whereby they might be restored to their "gude fame."†

People were so sensitive of imputations, that one called *carling* by a woman, and desired to "go home and run nine times about the gray stone withershins," answered, "how can you call me carling, for I have borne mae sons than you," and complained of the slander.‡ For such lower offences, parties were enjoined to take each other by the hand, and dwell in peace.¶ But various higher penalties were frequent, nor unmerited, for one, thus reviled, proved to have wrought honestly for her living, without which her

* *Presbyterie Buik of Aberdeen*, 5 July 1605.

† *Stirling K.S.R.* 21 Feb. 1611.

‡ *Coldingham K.S.R.* 25 Sept : 2 Oct. 1698.

¶ *Hutton K.S.R.* 23 Oct. 1670. The oldest portion preserved commences in 1649.

aged husband would have died. Exposure in the jogs or pillory, together with a fine, and asking pardon of the injured on the High Street of Edinburgh, punished some offenders.* Opprobrious epithets,—as of a man and his mother called “witches gett,” incurred censure: and of a woman called a witch, her children “witches gettis,” or “witches whelpis.”† The “witch of Monyie” possibly distinguished the maternity of certain individuals. Even posthumous fame was regarded, by enjoining ample reparation for calling the deceased mother of one a witch, and alleging she had rode about the Craig of Craiginforth on a cow.‡

Besides personal aversion, selfish motives might encourage slanders leading to conviction. The goods of all those who should be “lawfullie convict be assyses, as notorious and common witches, haunting and resorting with devillis and witches,” were granted to William Johnston, baron, bailie “of the regalitie and barronie of Broughton.” Within a week this grantee gave information, that “wmquhill Jonet Allan, who is condemned and brunt for witchcraft, did delate Barbara Mylne, as one whom the said Jonet did once sie come in at the Wattergate in lykness of a catt, and did

* *Perth K.S.R.* 2 Nov. 1589. *ut sup.* *St Cuthbert's K.S.R.* 14 June 1632. *Humbie K.S.R.* 15 Sept. 1643.

† *Coldingham K.S.R.* Ap. 7, 1695. p. 41, 85, 86. *St Cuthbert's K.S.R.* 17 Oct. 1644: Elspeth Hodge. *Halyrudhous K.S.R.* 20 Dec. 1641: William Cuthbertson.

‡ *Stirling K.S.R.* 27 July 1619, 21 May 1633, 11 Nov. 1644. Trial of Johnne Brughe, 24 Nov. 1643. *Rec. Just.*

change her garment vnder her awin staire." His views were disappointed, for the magistrates directed the liberation of the party thus slandered.*

On seizure of the delinquent, much contrivance was practised to ratify the information by confession. Were this obtained, either by persuasion or compulsion, it removed all embarrassment, for he could be afterwards consigned to destruction, at any time, with perfect ease and convenience.

Sometimes the precognition or preliminary investigation into the probability of the facts alleged, was conducted with sufficient formality, before ministers and magistrates, or even in presence of the king and privy council. Progressive interrogatories gradually deluded the visionary into the credulity of that guilty practice, whereof he was previously quite unconscious. The whole substance of disclosure, was carefully treasured up for future use: and so did the persecuted prepare engines for their own ruin.

But who were they falling thus under suspicion and brought unwittingly into peril of life? "Poor ignorant creatures, and often times women who understand not the nature of what they are accused of—who, when they are defamed, become so confounded with the fear, and the close prison in which they are kept, and so starved for want of meat and sleep, either of

* *Edinburgh Town Council Records*, 17 July 1661, v. xx. f. 278. The grant recorded seems a mere formula: blanks remain to be occupied by the name of subsequent victims.

which wants is strong enough to disorder reason the strongest, that hardly wiser and more serious people than they, would escape distraction.”*

Yet persons of elevated rank, some occupying the highest stations, and others too learned for their æra, were also endangered by such charges.

The longest retrospect of life and manners ensued, for conviction was facilitated by fame having blackened reputation. Being habit and repute a witch; that is, general credulity in her supernatural powers, was enough without any evil deed in confirmation.†

Ordeal.—Certain tests of guilt or innocence, were likewise the foundation of public trial, and the simplest, merely competing skill. Geelis, the overseer of Cult-malyndie’s wife, failed to obtain the products of milk, after a quarrel with Jonka Dyneis. Therefore, “the haill wemen of Hildiswick wer desyrit, as the forme wes, to kirne, quha come and kirnet, and wes no butter. The said Jonka being desyrit, and having absentit hirself sundrie tymes, and fleing half a myll fra hir hous; and being followit and fund be the said Geelis, sche fanyeit hir self seik, and wes bluiding at mouth and nois—quha broucht hir back agane, and compellit hir to kirne—at qubilk tyme wes gottin sextein merkis butter, quhair befor wes gottin bot sevin.” Also, having got more butter from one cow, than a neighbour obtained from fifteen, he “urged hir to kirne

* *Mackenzie*, Laws of Scotland in Criminal Matters, Tit. x. § 2, 22.

† Trial of Janet Hairstains, 3 May 1709, *Southern Circuit Book*.

with him, eftir mony boisting wordis, quha thaireftir gat his butter." The suspected testified the utmost repugnance at competition. But the supernatural powers, betrayed by success, seem to have been defeated from detection.*

Little is recorded here of other presumptions and minor tests, comprehending inability to shed tears, and to repeat the Lord's prayer, farther than as confirming the odious repute of sorcery.†

Personal violence to the offender, or destruction of the charm, dissolved it, or made the evil recoil.

In England, bleeding the witch any where, by the bewitched, effected his cure; but in Scotland it was probably essential that blood should be drawn above the breath. The "Ladie Beill" being consulted by a woman who suspected William Wheit had bewitched her child, pronounced, that "till shoe should get blood of the pairtie, above the braith," recovery was hopeless: "wherevpon, suddenlie shee came vpon him, and with ane neidle, several tymes about the nose shee bled him: and then three several tymes fell doun, and asked her chyld's lyfe of him." The person thus outraged, was entirely overlooked; but for pricking his

* Trial of Jonka Dyneis, 2 Oct. 1616: *Rec. Shet.* f. 34:—of Geillis Schlaitter, 13 June 1610:—of Katherine Grant, 25 Nov. 1623: *Rec. Ork.* f. 3, 177:—of Mareoun Peebles, 1644. *Hibbert, ut sup.* p. 597. *Kirne*—churn. *Boisting*—threatening. *Merkis*—a certain weight.

† *Fountainhall Decisions*, in MS. No. 551. Trial of Johnne Feane, *ut sup.* *Witches of Renfrewshire*, p. 150, 158.

nose, and the grievous sin of "seiking hir child's health from the devill," the credulous mother was condemned to penance in church, in sackcloth, before the congregation, from which, "counterfitting hirselle to suerfe, in tyme of divine service," could not exempt her.* Other examples are less explicit.† But the custom subsisted recently here:‡ and in England, "scratching the witch" has been always most barbarously practised. Blood, like tears, denoted guilt.

Watery Ordeal.—Although "their fleeting on the water" is deemed by King James a satisfactory test of the initiation of witches, the author has not hitherto observed any authentic account of its practice in Scotland. To others who have done so, illustrations of it elsewhere may prove acceptable.

The watery ordeal, however, was not unknown here. By an ancient law of William, a thief, convicted by three witnesses, "sall na waies be sufferit to fecht or to *suffer water* or irn, bot incontinent he sal be hanged." Nothing is said of sorcery. A previous statute enumerates witches among infamous persons, and one succeeding of Alexander II. in regulating the form of trial for theft and robbery, abolishes ordeal by

* *North Berwick K. S. R.* 2 May, 7 Nov. 1669. Bessie Clarke. *Suerfe*—swoon.

† Trial of William Coke, and Alison Dick, 1633. *Stat. Acct.* v. xviii. p. 661. Of Mareoun Peebles, *ut sup.*

‡ *Watson*, S. Ronaldshay and Burray. *Stat. Acct.* v. xiv. p. 311.

water or iron.* The thumb of the right hand was bound to the great toe of the left foot, and the thumb of the left hand to the great toe of the right foot :† and retained by a cord, the victim was thus cast “crosse wayes into the water : if shee sincke she is counted innocent : if she fleet and sincke not, she is taken for a witch.”‡

Scribonius saw three persons treated so : and recently before his work in 1585, he says, about 140 underwent the same ordeal.||

The validity of this test has given birth to an earnest controversy, affording the best demonstration of its practice. The same author, Scribonius, expresses his conviction that witches do not sink,—that Satan being very light sustains them,—which gratuitous theory had its influence in Britain. It is defended as an unequivocal test, by dissertations expressly devoted to the subject, and supported by the most preposterous arguments. Thus, a woman previously tried and banished, being again siezed and condemned to be drowned, she rose repeatedly to the shoulders, and with such buoyancy that had she not been forcibly held down by the executioner’s pole, she would have survived.§ On the other hand, while Godelmann travelled from

* *Stat. Will.* ch. xi. § 5. xv. § 2. *Alexand.* II. ch. vii. § 3.

† *Brandt de Maleficos et Sagas convincendi Ratione*, Thesis. ii. § 32.

‡ *Perkins*, ch. vii. p. 206.

|| *Scribonius de Natura Sagarum*, f. 112, 129.

§ *Rickius Defensio probæ aquæ frigidæ*, p. 12, 34, 70.

Prussia to Livonia in 1588, a nobleman who had condemned a witch to the flames on the following day, invited him to his castle. As she had not undergone the watery ordeal, he consented, on request of his visitor, to expose her to it. She sunk immediately. This nobleman acquainted him that he had dealt with other six according to the same fashion,—all were drowned : whence he concluded the test to be precipitate and fallacious.* Another author was present when some suspected women were thrown into the water, and all having floated, one of the spectators, against whom was no charge, consented, at the request of certain persons of distinction, to be treated in like manner. He swam just as they had done, nor could the executioner sink him.†

Nevertheless many deemed the test infallible. In France a woman having been cast three times from a station eight feet above the water, she rose as often to the surface. This was a sufficient warrant for condemnation. But death, from treatment so rude, having anticipated the office of the executioner, the gibbet first, and afterwards the flames, received her remains.‡

Much solemnity and many sanctified rites anciently attended this appeal for divine disclosure of the innocence or guilt of the calumniated. Exorcisms, prayers, and adjurations preceded the test, and its perilous

* *Godelmannus de Magis, Veneficis et Lamiis, lib. iii. c. 5. § 35.*

† *Oldenkops Observationes Criminales, Tit. iv. obs. 12. p. 216.*

‡ *De Haen de Magia, p. 101.*

issue determined his fate.* From the formulæ employed, it appears that the theory entertained resembled that assumed by our royal demonologist, of sanctified water refusing to receive the guilty in its bosom.

The watery ordeal seems to have been common in England about the year 1691, when several lives were lost by its consequences. But the situation of the accused was so desperate, that although protesting their innocence, some have signified themselves ready to submit to it :† or, appalled by the preparatives of a boat, and other means of putting it in practice, have acknowledged their guilt.‡ In the earlier part of the seventeenth century, a miscreant pretended skill in this mode of detecting sorcery. He is described by an inscription on an engraving of his person, as “Matthew Hopkins, the famous witch-finder of Maningtree in Essex, who, in only one year, during the reign of James I. hanged 60 reputed witches, and was himself at last executed for a wizard.” If a later author could remark, that notwithstanding many had been destroyed “by swimming,” to the reproach of the nation, yet the country people were as fond of it as of baiting a bear or a bull—no wonder Hopkins gained their confidence. Falling under similar

* *Formulæ Veteres Exorcismorum et Excommunicationum*, ap. : Capitularia Regum Francorum, t. ii. col. 639.

† *Account of Jane Wenham*, p. 12. “Declares herself ready to submit to the water experiment.” A.D. 1712.

‡ *Glanvil*, ad. an. 1661, p. 322.

suspicion, however, some resolutely put him to the same ordeal:—he floated, and was condemned on the validity of his own test, which he had maintained to be infallible.

The like brutal experiment, of throwing suspected persons into water, has actually disgraced the English rabble—if a rabble can be disgraced—both of the present and the preceding generation. Fatal consequences have ensued.*

Several places south of the Tweed, are believed to derive their name from this cruel expedient. There is a *witch pool* in the parish of Kirriemuir, county of Forfar. The *witch lake*, a rocky bay of the sea at St Andrews, is said to be so denominated from the ashes of the victims having been thrown into it. But tradition and etymology are treacherous authorities.

The source of this superstition is very obscure. Perhaps in essence, it is allied to hydromancy: or some analogy may have been presumed between the spiritual levity of demons, and the proselytes of Satan, which might receive countenance from the practice of weighing sorcerers against the Bible, to corroborate guilt by their levity.†

Various tests by substances, or even by persons floating, were recognized among the ancients, from whom

* *Gentleman's Magazine*, v. i. for 1731. p. 29. xxi. for 1751. p. 186. 198, 375, 377.

† *Gentleman's Magazine*, v. i. p. 29. An example in Pennsylvania. v. xxiv. for 1759. p. 93.

the practice may have been transmitted and modified in the middle ages. But although preserved until later times, it was reprehended both by the earlier civil and ecclesiastical authority.* Learned authors, in tracing its history, have shewn how such a test is adverse to reason, nature, and humanity.†

The watery ordeal seems to have been resorted to, for ascertaining whether the indications of guilt warranted torture.

Pricking—Shaving.—During judicial investigation, it became important, to ascertain whether the special mark of Satan had not been imprinted on his proselyte. Considerable skill and discrimination were requisite, however, to distinguish its peculiar aspect from other blemishes affixed by the hand of nature. But as the seal of diabolic paction, and proof of selection for a nefarious service, a search after it was eagerly pursued, though under utter dereliction of humanity and decorum. It was often sufficiently patent indeed. Yet credulity as readily ascribed its site to places where least liable to be detected—such as amidst those bushy eye-brows, sometimes so amply decorating the visage. If not immediately conspicuous, universal depilation sought to expose this critical token.

Satan, from the pulpit of North Berwick church, warned his numerous servants, that they should ail

* Interdicted by the *Canon law*, P. ii. Causa 2. q. 4. *Mennam*; and by a law of Ludovicus Pius, A.D. 829; *Capit. Reg. Franc.* t. i. col. 668

† *Heigius Quæstiones Juris*, q. 39.

nothing, "sa lang as their hair wes on, and sould newir latt ane teir fall fra thair ene." Agnes Sampson "had all her haire shaven of each part of her body, and her head thrawane with a rope—being a payne most grievous—continued almost an hower, during which time shee would not confess anie thing, untill the devil's mark was found—when shee immediately confessed whatever was demanded of her."* One in the north complained, that his enemies had bribed a cheating fellow, John Dick, to fix perpetual infamy on him, "by shaving all the parts of his body, and thereafter pricking him to the great effusion of his blood."†

Independently of betraying the mystical seal, and dissolving the charm for taciturnity, it was a preparative for torture on the continent, which excited the indignant question of a humane author, *an ante torturam mulieres per lictores tonderi conveniat?*‡

Millæus witnessed the torture of some persons at Tholouse, from whom nothing could be obtained until stripped, and completely shaven, when they readily confessed their guilt. A woman, also, apparently leading a pious life, was put to the torture, on suspected sorcery, and bore it with incredible constancy, denying all, until complete depilation produced confession.|| Sprenger, a noted inquisitor, says, he was

* Trial of Johnne Feane, 1590. *ut sup.* *Newes from Scotland.* The original may be consulted.

† *Privy Council Record*, 9 May, 8 Aug. 1662; *Decreta*, p. 202, 207.

‡ *Cautio Criminalis*, Dublinm xxi. p. 241.

|| *Damhouderius Rerum Criminalium Praxis*, c. 37. § 21.

content with shaving the hair of the head, and administering a drop of consecrated wax, to counteract the charm of taciturnity. But his colleague, Cumanus, less scrupulous, after treating forty-one women according to the practice of others, mercilessly committed the whole to the flames.—Has the earth been made for such monsters !*

Ancient history presents analogies to this superstition. The powers of Sampson were invincible, so long as he preserved his hair. The hair and the beard of Apollonius Thyanæus, were shaven by command of Domitian, and he was brought before him, free of any amulet, probably for counteraction of a charm, though insinuated by Philostratus, as only in contempt of those philosophers assuming distinction from the profusion of their hair.†

Insensibility, or the absence of blood, on piercing the Satanic mark, betrayed its author. But this being a test, rather of a surgical nature, than pertaining to the office of the executioner, it was committed to certain persons, technically designed *prickers*, who carried formidable instruments of their art along with them. “James Scobie, indueller in Mussilburgh, being sent for, and brocht in before Jonet Barker, as he that had knowledge in finding out, and trying the devillis mark, he fand out the said mark betuix her schoulderis, in the quhilk he did thrust ane lang preane,

* Sprenger, P. iii. q. 15. p. 520.

† Philostratus de Vita Apollonii, Lib. vii. c. 34. viii. c. 3, 6, 7.

the quhilk preane abaid stiking thrie quarteris of ane hour ; and yet the said preane was nawayis felt sensible be the said Jonet ; and at the drawing thairof, schoe confessit, that nocht onlie schoe hirsself, but also vmquhile Jonet Cranstoun, had resavit the devillis mark, about the same pairt quhair schoe was markit.”*

Doubtless from conscious innocence, a cobbler's wife in Edinburgh, desired the pricker to be brought from Tranent “to try her,” and she would pay his charges.†

The suspected were reduced to the dire necessity of submitting to this expedient, for confirmation of guilt. Thus did “the magistrat and minister of Dalkeith,” cause “John Kincaid in Tranent, the comon pricker, to prick” Jonet Paiston, “and found two marks upon hir, which he called the deivill his marks—which appeared indeid to be so, for shoe did nather find the prein when it was put into any of the said marks, nor did they blood when they were taken out again : and quhen shoe was asked quhair shoe thocht the preins were put in, shoe pointed at a pairt of hir body, distant from the place quhair the preins were put in, they being *lang preins of thrie inches*, or thairabout, in lenth,—quhilk John Kinkaid declares wpon his oath, and verifies by his subscription to the same.”

Janet Cock being implicated by this culprit, the minister and magistrate next day, “charged the said

* Trial of Jonet Barker, 28 Dec. 1643. *Rec. Just.* Preane—pin.

† *Halyrudhous* K. S. R. 25 June 1661 ; Jonet Allane. Probably the person “condemned and brunt” before July 1662.

Johne, vpon his great oath, to goe about his office faithfullie, and to do nothing theirin but what sould be of trueth—and the said Jennet being tryed, their was tuo marks fund vpone hir, and pricked without any sense or feilling therof, or any of the leist appearance of any blood: the preins being taken out, the holles remained vnclosed, as if the samine had bein put into whytt peaper.”*

Such certificates seem to have been regularly given, and a fee paid to the pricker; as among the expences for burning Margaret Denham, in 1649, is stated, “to Johne Kinked for *brodding* of her, vi lib Scotts.”†

On the trial of Katherine Oswald, two witnesses, who, along with the judge then presiding, having been in the prison, testified that they “saw ane prene put to the heid, be Mr John Aird, minister, in the pannellis schoulder, being the deivillis mark, and na bluid following, nor scho nowayis shrinking thairat.” Speaking of a woman under suspicion, Sinclair says, “one Alexander Bogs came—and finds the mark on the middle of her back, wherein he thrust a great brass pin, of which she was not sensible, nor did any blood follow when the pin was drawn out.”‡

Although Lord Fountainhall considered a pricker “a drunken foolish rogue,” incapable of explaining the

* *Precognition*, 17–18 June 1661. *ut sup.*

† *Pitcairn Criminal Trials*, v. iii. p. 599. *Webster Tracts*, p. 111. *Arnot Criminal Trials*, App: No. vi.

‡ *Sinclair*, No. 14.

principles of his vocation, he saw him pierce a man with pins, "the length of one's finger, and one of them was thrust in to the head," without drawing blood.

The presence of the pricker was so essential for detection, that the Synod of Glasgow deliberated on the expediency of having "those in readinesse at the Justiciar Court, that hes skill to try the insensible mark."*

Scotland was the great nursery of adepts in this barbarous test: one of whom was invited to Newcastle in 1649, by the magistrates, promising him twenty shillings for each conviction: and the bellman was sent through the town, calling for informers. Of thirty women carried to the town hall, and treated in the most brutal manner, he denounced twenty-seven.†

Increase Mather may allude to this person, thus, "an honest man now living in New England, assureth me that he saw the man thrust a great brass pin two inches into the body of others, in Berwick-upon-Tweed, who testifying no sensibility, were in danger of merited punishment, had not Colonel Fenwick, afterwards in New England, then military governor of the town, warned the magistrates that an enchanted pin might be used."‡

Piercing the flesh without pain, by an instrument

* *Excerpt*, 6 July 1699, in MS. *Adv. Lib. Rob.* iii. 4, 14.

† *Gardiner England's Grievance Discovered*, p. 114, 116. *Brand History of Newcastle*, v. ii. p. 478. *Brand Popular Antiquities*, v. ii. p. 386.

‡ *Mather, Increase, Cases of Conscience*.

“rubbed on some kind of loadstone,” is alluded to by Casaubon: and a foreign lawyer asks, what shall prevent the executioner from drawing blood or not, by using deceptive, magical, or enchanted needles, so fabricated as to slip up into a sheath like the knives of jugglers: or why he could not check the blood by enchantment?*

When a little serum escaped from Jane Wenham’s arm, pricked by one who was no proficient, an author exclaims, “This is truly an enchanting pin.”†

The nature of such a test rendered it the means of revolting oppression.‡ It was too probably a pretext for extortion: for many were content to pay bribes to escape being searched or stripped naked.||

John Kincaid, the celebrated pricker, was imprisoned for taking upon him, of his own authority, “to prick and try these persons who are suspect” of witchcraft, “whereby in all probabilitie, many innocents have suffered:” and although liberated on condition of abstaining from similar offences,§ another is said to have been condemned “for such like villanie exercised in Scotland: and upon the gallows he confessed, he had been the death of above an hundred and twenty women in England and Scotland.”¶

* *Oldenkops Observationes*, tit. iv. obs. 12. p. 213.

† *Confutation of Witchcraft, in a Letter to a Physician*, 1712, p. 35.

‡ *Fountainhall Decisions*, ad. an. 1678. v. i. p. 15.

|| *Webster Displaying of Witchcraft*, p. 81.

§ *Privy Council Record*, 9 Jan: 1 Ap: 12 June 1662.

¶ *Gardiner, ut sup.*

After the doctrine of insensible marks had been fatally illustrated, it was repressed in France by a royal commission to visit fourteen persons condemned for being so distinguished, when all were found more the subjects for medical aid, than for a cruel punishment.*

The practice of the test was no less singular, than the superstition prompting it : and something unknown still remains for elucidation. It is not enough that the operator in modern surgery conceives his patient suffers little from the penetration of needles for relief of certain maladies. The extraordinary dimensions of the older probe of the pricker, must have required remarkable dexterity in using it.

Watching.—Though privation of sleep be described as “the choicest means they use in Scotland for discovery of witches,”† it was not restricted to them only ; for, after other expedients for detecting a conspiracy, had failed to obtain confession, the commander of the forces was enjoined to employ the most trusty officers or soldiers to watch “Master William Spence be turnes, and not to suffer him to sleep by night or by day, and, for that end, to use all effectual meanes for keeping him still awake.”‡ Another was “with-haldin from sleep to the great perturbation of his brayne.”§ By means of tortures, pricking, watching,

* *Le Normant de tribus Energumenis, var. loc. Histoire d'une Penitente*, p. 410. *Garinet, ut. sup.*

† *Ramesey* ΕΑΜΙΝΘΟΛΟΓΙΑ, ch. 6. p. 74.

‡ *Privy Council Record*, 26 July 1684, p. 426, 427.

§ *Historie and Life of King James the Sext*, ad. an. 1615, p. 387.

and keeping several women from sleep, James Gillespie, minister of Rind, and some coadjutors, were charged with having obtained false confessions, whereon the innocent had suffered death.* Several also, under a guard of drunken fellows at Pittenweem, were kept days and nights awake, which "cruel usage made some of them to be so wise as to acknowledge every question that was asked of them, whereby they found the minister and baillies well pleased, and themselves better treated." One was kept five days and nights awake by continual pricking, to the great effusion of her blood :† and this kind of torture is alleged to have been protracted even to nine nights.‡

Suspected sorcerers were treated thus in England.§ Conjoined with other torture it was common on the continent, and esteemed singly as the most effectual inducement to confess.|| Keeping the suspected awake for the same purpose, is still practised in the Turkish dominions :¶ and it may be traced to ancient date, in Proto Sebastus having been kept awake three days and nights, by his guards pricking him.

Humanity and justice were outraged in the combinations of torture, inflicted on the miserable objects

* *Privy Council Record*, 4 March 1662, p. 178.

† *Webster Tracts*, p. 69—74. *Scots Magazine*, for October 1817.

‡ *Shields a Hind let loose*, p. 198.

§ *Fuller Profane State*, B. v. ch. 18. p. 455.

|| *Carpzovius*, P. iii. q. 17. § 36. *Damhouderius*, c. 37. § 24. *Farinacius Consilia*, t. 1. p. 356.

¶ *Turner Journal*, v. iii. p. 356.

of suspicion. Alesoun Balfour, in Orkney, confessed certain allegations of witchcraft, but only "be vehement tortour of the *Caschielawes*, quhairin sche was kepit be the space of fourtie aucht houris:" nor did it come of her own sufferings only, for her aged husband, her eldest son, and daughter, were all in her presence "put in tortour, at the same instant tyme, the fader beand in the *lang irnes* of fiftie stane wecht: the sone callit in the *buitis*, with fiftie-sewin straikis: and the dochter, being sewin yeir auld, put in the *pinny winkis*, to the effect that, being swa tormentit besyd hir, mycht move hir to mak ony confession for thair relief." When condemned and led to execution, "vpoun the heiding-hill" of Kirkwall in 1594, this unhappy person declared herself "als innocent, and wald die als innocent of ony poynt of witchcraft as ane barne vnborne." Yet this was not enough to the tormentors, for on the parson of Orphir asking whether she would abide by her first confession, she returned the following impressive explanation: that she was then "tortourit diuers and seuerall tymes in the *cashielawis*: and sindrie tymes takin out of thame deid, and out of all remembrance ayther of guid or eivill: as lykwayis hir guidman being in the *stokis*, hir sone tortourit in the *buitis*, and hir dochter put in the *pilliewinkis*, quhairwith sche and they wer swa vexit and tormentit, that pairtlie to eschew ane grittar torment and pwnieschment, and vpoun promeis of hir lyfe and guid deidis be the said persoun, falslie, aganis

hir saull and conscience sche maid that confessioun, and na vther wayis; for the quhilk sche askit the Lord mercy and forgevenes,”—and then submitted patiently to her fate. Can a scene of greater atrocity be pictured? the torture of those most dear to the spouse and the mother before her: a clergyman violating all sanctity and morality, endeavouring, under treacherous pledges, to elicit the confession of impossibilities!*

The structure of some of these horrible instruments is not clearly understood; especially that of the first, which is often erroneously written *caspieclaws*. Plainly its violence might suspend animation: but whether operating like the rack by extension,—whether by compression, or resembling the *press* or aggravated weights used in England, for compelling culprits standing mute, to plead to their indictment, is unknown. As an act of humanity, the spectators, by accumulating the weights, terminated the protracted sufferings of a certain person gradually sinking under them. Thomas Paplay, also, implicated with Alesoun Balfour, was kept eleven days and eleven nights “in the cashielawis,” to extort confession, which he retracted immediately when free.

Perhaps the stocks and “lang irnes” were modifications of the same instrument, as of wood or metal. An act of Privy Council, in 1574, is entitled, “Anent

* Trial of Jhonne Maister of Orkney, 24 June 1596. *Rec. Just. Callit*—driven: *Straikis*—strokes: *Heiding-hill*—beheading-hill: *Per-soun*—parson.

the making of irnis and stokkis for pvnishment of offenderis." Agnes Williamson was put in the stocks "for keiping, bot not for torture." A desperado, who had contrived to burn the stocks securing him, was accused of "treassoune, in reasing of fyre!" But some must have been fabricated of large dimensions, or of ponderous materials, when too heavy to be carried six yards by two of the strongest men.*

Probably the *pilliewinks* in Scotland was adopted from the *pyrewinkes* of England, and both may be identified with the *thumbscrew* or *thumbkin*. About the year 1402, it is recorded that "two wicked persons having siezed and bound Robert Smyth of Bury, applied an instrument called *pyrewinkes* so powerfully and severely to his thumbs, that blood sprung from their extremities.†"

The "pilliewinks upone the fingers" is described as a grievous torture, inflicted on Geilles Duncan about 1590.‡ The child of Aleson Balfour suffered by the *pinnywinkis* soon afterwards; and Johne Toscheoch was put to "the tortour of the *pilliewinkis* in 1632."||

Finger stocks in England seem to have consisted of two parallel pieces of wood, connected by a hinge,

* *Privy Council Records*, 5 March 1574, p. 299. Trial of James Daill, 29 May 1635: *Rec. Ork.* f. 88:—of Agnes Williamsone, 27 June 1662: *Rec. Just. Witches of Renfrewshire*, ad. an. 1677.

† *Cowel Law Dictionary* ex Cartul: abbat: S. Edmundi, f. 341.

‡ *Newes from Scotland*.

|| Trial of Johne Toscheoch, 3-4 Aug. 1632. *Rec. Just.*

wherein cavities received the fingers:* and this may have been modified in the *bacilli lignei* of the continent, introduced between the fingers, which were bound tightly to them.† Before resorting to the *press* in England, the torture from tightening a noose on the prisoner's thumbs, was used to compel him to plead to his indictment.‡

Diminutive proportions, and the facility of applying so powerful an instrument, will readily account for the preference of the thumbscrew shewn in various countries: nor could these be overlooked here, where the prisoner, the executioner, and the engines of torture, were carried from place to place for examinations. It came either into more frequent use about the reign of Charles II. or was the subject of greater attention from controversial writings. After the insurgents were defeated at Pentland hills in 1666, some of the prisoners were barbarously tortured by thumbkins.|| Of two, Kirkton says, one was favoured by the executioner, but the other was cruelly tormented, and "screight for pain in a terrible manner," while the Lord High Chancellor Rothes "called frequently for the other touch." Carpzovius recommends exposure of the

* Plot, Nat. Hist. of Staffordshire, ch. ix. § 99. p. 390. Tab. xxxii. fig. 2.

† Damhouderius, c. 37. § 18.

‡ Trial of Francis Williams, ap.: *Old Bailey Trials*, v. iv. p. 132. in 12mo.

|| Shields, *Hind Let Loose*, p. 198.

instruments for intimidation to avoid real infliction; the executioner is to place them before the prisoner, to fix the thumbstock or thumbpincers, and compress his thumbs.* These must have been nearly the same as the thumbkins or thumblocks here. In 1678 the royal troops carried “good store of iron shackles—and thumblocks, as they call them.”† William Carstairs, afterwards principal of one of the universities, having evaded disclosing his participation with the Earl of Argyle, was brought a second time before the Privy Council, when “the Lords finding there was no other way left to expiscate the truth from him but by torture, did thereupon call for one of the bailyeis of Edinburgh, and the executioner with the engynes of torture being present; and agane desired the said Master William Carstairs to depose, before he should be put to the torture; and he haveing still obstinately refused, the Lord Chancellor commanded the bailyie to cause the executioner put him in the torture, by applying the thumbscrew to him, which being accordingly done, and he haveing, for near the space of ane hour, continued in the agonie of torture, the screw being by space and space streatched and forced, untill he appeared near to faint: and he being still obstinat and refractory to depone, the Lords thought fit to ease him of the said torture for that tyme, but certified him

* *Carpzovius Rerum Criminalium Synopsis*, P. iii. q. 117. § 52, 54. p. 361: *Lipsiæ* 1669, in 12mo.

† *Woodrow, Sufferings of the Church of Scotland*, v. i. p. 407.

that to-morrow by nyne a clock in the foirnoon he would be tortured by the boots, if he should be still obstinate.”*

So little truth was spoke at that time, that it was alleged by a cotemporary, that “upon the first application of the thumbscrew—even the first touch of it, he confessed all.”† However it is said, that having obtained the thumbkins from his tormentors in better times, and applying them to King William by his own desire, the king was glad to arrest the screw on its outset, rather than prove that the Privy Council had exaggerated the narrative of its severity.‡

Henry Nevil Payne, another suspected plotter of the restoration of King James and the introduction of Popery, was tortured two days successively by the thumbkins, in 1690, which is said to have been its last application in Scotland.∥ Both these persons must have been injured considerably, as they were permitted to have the attendance of physicians and surgeons for their cure.

Immediately preceding the torture of Carstairs, an ordinance was framed by the Privy Council, proceeding on the narrative of the boots having been previously the only instrument of torture for political offences; but considering “that ther is now a new invention

* *Privy Council Record*, 5, 6, 13, 30 Sept. 1684, p. 483, 486, 492.

† *Letter to a Malicious Libeller*: Mr George Ridpath, p. 66.

‡ *Reid*, Parish of Greenock, ap.: *Stat. Acct.* v. 5. p. 583.

∥ *Privy Council Record*, 4, 10, 11 Dec. 1690,—April 10, 1696.

and ingyne called the *thumbekins*, which will be very effectually to the purpose forsaide, doe therefore ordaine, that when any person shall be by ther order put to torture, that the said thumbekins or bootes, or both be applyed, as it shall be found fitt and convenient.”* Yet it is probable that the alleged invention was no more than a readier contrivance for application, as explained by Carstairs. After examination by the Privy Council, “the king’s smith was called in to bring a new instrument to torture by the thumbkins, that had never been used before: for whereas the former was only to screw on two pieces of iron above and below, with finger and thumb, these are made *to turn about the screw with the whole hand.*”† Thus it seems void of foundation, that the instrument was an invention of the prelacy in the reign of Charles II.‡ None of those preserved in Scotland are of uniform structure, nor do they correspond entirely with the engine of torture known by the same name on the continent. Under a medical view of the effects of torture, a copious treatise of the law and application of the *thumbkins* or *polletra* by various European nations, is given by one author:§ and a minute description and representation of the different kinds employed, by

* *Privy Council Record*, 23 July 1684, p. 421.

† *Woodrow*, *Sufferings of the Church*, v. ii. p. 389.

‡ *Answer to Scotch Presbyterian Eloquence*, p. 17.

§ *Hartmann Dissertatio Sistens Medicam tormentorum*, ap. : *Schlegel Coll. Opusc. Select.* t. i. num. xiii.

another.* The accused was stripped, clothed in an appropriate vestment, and seated with his hands bound behind his back, when the thumbkins were applied generally for a quarter of an hour, or for an hour at longest.

The thumbkins have not been long forgot in England and the colonies. They were sent thither as instruments of punishment, and for constraining the slaves to eat! If a witness regarding the slave trade shall be credited, he saw girls at needle-work in Jamaica, with a thumb-screw on the left hand.† Subsequent to the year 1778, Mr Howard found a number which the magistrates of Lavenham, in Suffolk, had sent to the keeper of bridewell, for the purpose of securing the prisoners.‡ Among the engines of torture, lately discovered in the dark repositories of the inquisition at Lima, on its abolition, were “a great many finger-screws,” consisting of “small semicircular pieces of iron, in form of crescents, having a screw at one end.”||

Probably from oral tradition of its practice, vernacular dialect still retains presumptions of the efficacy of *screwing*: nor is this lost sight of elsewhere: for payment of the revenue in India, is still enforced by screwing the defaulter's ear.§

* *Engau Elementa Juris Criminalis*, tit. xix. § 239.

† *Abstract of Evidence on the Slave Trade*, B. iii. p. 74, 100, 149, 361.

‡ *Howard on Prisons*, p. 304.

|| *Stevenson, Residence in South America*, v. i. p. 272.

§ *Heyne, Tracts on India*, p. 120.

On the whole, it may be concluded, that the pillie-winkis and thumbkins, are modifications of the same engine, and belonging to the more ancient contrivances of mankind, for tormenting each other.

Boot.—From the barbarity endured by the unlucky necromancer, John Feane, whereof the bare recital makes nature shudder, none has been more formidable, or has obtained greater notoriety, than the boot.

An English visitor of Scotland, in 1679, describes the boot, as “four pieces of narrow boards nailed together, of a competent length for the leg, not unlike the short cases we use, to guard young trees from the rabbits, which they wedge so tightly on all sides, that not being able to bear the pain, they promise confession to get rid of it.”* However, a clergyman taken at Pentland hills, for the very suspicious appendage of “a sword, though not present at the fight, was first cruelly tortured with iron boots,”† which is confirmed by another, describing him as a “much honoured young minister,” who patiently endured the torture of the boots—a cruel engine of iron.‡

The delineations of torture, and especially those in the rare and singular work of *Millæus*, shew that the wedges were driven in by a mallet from above, after the boot was adapted to the leg of the prisoner,|| which

* *Morer* Short Account of Scotland, p. 33, 34. Edition in 8vo. *Alexander* Medulla Scotiæ, refers in the title page to the boot.

† *Sufferings of the Cameronians*, p. 8.

‡ *Shields*, *ut sup.* p. 186.

|| *Millæus Praxis Criminis*, f. 61. v.

explains how one was “callit in the buitis with fiftie-sewin straikis ;” and how another accused of being at Pentland, “was tortured and cawed in the boots.”* If the representation be correct in the *Hind let loose*, the wedges were forced also from below.

The *Spanish boots* of the continent, consisted of an iron plate, adapted for compressing the calf of the leg by screws, with a wooden sole.†

Even women were exposed to this rude trial, as the Privy Council, consisting of seventeen members, for discovering the offenders burning the tower of Fendraught, ordained “Margaret Wod to be putt to the tortour of the bootes, the morne, at ten of the clocke, in the Laich Counsell Hous of Edinburgh; and that the whole counsell be present when the tortour is givin.”‡ On a subsequent occasion, Mrs Duncan, a clergyman’s widow, “hade indeed endured the tortour that day, hade it not been Rothés, his courtesy, who told the counsell, it was not proper for gentlwomen to wear boots.”||

This judicatory, however, was sufficiently provident; for the members were warned to convene at nine in the morning, to examine John Toscheoch, “when the counsall sall have leasure to caus putt him to the tortour of the bootes;” resolving, also, if nothing were

* *Fountainhall Decisions*, in MS. f. 237.

† *Engau*, § 223, fig 3. *Hartmann*, § xi.

‡ *Privy Council Record*, 1 Feb. 1631. f. 40. v.

|| *Kirkton*, p. 283.

obtained from him, to put John Meldrum to the same torture. Both were suspected of burning the tower of Frendraught.* Toscheoch probably suffered severely, as he pleaded exemption from trial, from having been put "first to the tortour of the buitiss, on the first day of Apryle 1631—nixt to the tortour of the pilliewinkis, vpon the twelff day of July last," yet, declaring his innocence under these tortures, he had freed himself from suspicion.† Nevil Payne being ordained to be put to torture on the same night of examination, a question arose, whether he might be again tortured on the morrow, and carried in the affirmative by a vote; whereupon he was brought to the bar, and put "to the torture of the thumbiekins;" and next day again, put "to the torture of the thumbkins, and of the boott upon one legg, befor the thumbkens were taken off."

The most direful consequences attended such violence: the sufferer was cruelly bruised, or maimed by the boot: the bones of his leg were broken: he was lamed for life, if he did not actually perish from its severity. John Kid, a presbyterian minister, in his last speech, alludes to his confinement to bed, ever after coming "out of the torture" of the boot.‡

* *Privy Council Record*, 3 Feb. 1–4. Ap. 29 Nov. 1631, f. 41, 56, 58, 105.

† Trial of Johnne Toscheoch, 3–4 Aug. 1632. *Rec. Just.* A bailie of Edinburgh had to attend with the executioner and the boots: *Privy Council Record*, 14 July 1684.

‡ *Last Speech of Mr John Kid*, ap. *Spirit of Popery*, p. 1.

Probably by the same means, a gentleman, Affleck of Cumlachie, “wes maid impotent of baith his leggis, and deit theireftir within few dayis, of extreme payne.”*

The narrow escapes of a fanatical tailor, Arthur Tacket, who, from greater zeal than prudence, had adventured with the insurgents to Bothwell Bridge, did not cure his turbulence. Taken in arms again, application of the torture was ordered, from which, nevertheless, not only present exemption, but future indemnity were promised, on condition of ingenuous confession. Having rejected these terms, the surgeon told the Lord Advocate, that from the slenderness of his leg, “a few strokes would crush it in pieces.” Therefore the thumbkins were applied: but the culprit proved obdurate.†

Though “escaping the boot” might be accounted providential,‡ the falsehood of the Earl of Lauderdale having brought it “into fashion,”|| is proved by the preceding observations. Few instruments of punishment can be traced to their origin.

The boot is said to have been applied to the slaves destined for the British colonies.

In 1722, a reputed witch was burnt in the soles of the feet, and executed. Fire matches were frequently used to extort confession. Kindling straw under the

* *Historie and Life of King James the Sext*, p. 284.

† *Wodrow* refers this to 24–25 July 1684. v. ii. p. 375.

‡ *The Scots Episcopal Innocence*, by Will. Laick, p. 55.

|| *Sydney Letters*, p. 121.

feet of suspected sorcerers was practised in France.* In Scotland, two Highland savages avenged themselves, by binding another's servant to a log of wood, "and thereftir, halding of hir feit to ane great fyre within ane kill."† Some miscreants tortured strangers, "by putting a kindled lunt betwix their toes and fingers."‡ For a similar offence, two seamen of a British ship of war, were punished in 1731.¶ If true, Archbishop Sharp incurred odium from "burning with matches, servants, to cause them reveal their masters."§ Also, women were forced "by fire matches," to discover their husbands and relatives. An engraving in the *Hind let loose*, represents candles as employed for this cruel purpose.¶ The Dutch were the most accomplished in such barbarities.** Zanger enumerates the application of lighted candles among the tortures of Saxony:†† and various methods of employing fire, are specified by Damhouder, Crusius, and Julius Clarus.

The head of Agnes Sampson was "thrawane with a rope." The brother of the dumb Elspeth Reoch,

* *D'Autun l'Incredulité Sçavante*, p. 591.

† *Justiciary Records*, 28 June 1637: Allane M'Intosche.

‡ *Privy Council Records*, 23 Feb. 1630. f. 215. *Lunt*—match.

¶ *Gentleman's Magazine*, v. i. p. 172.

§ *Russel*, ap. Kirkton, p. 404.

¶ *Sufferings of the Presbyterians*, p. 16. *Shields*, p. 186. *Woodrow*, v. ii. p. 77.

** *Hall*, *Cruelties of the Dutch*.

†† *Zangerus de Quæstionibus*, c. 3. § 10.

“pat ane bowstring about hir heid, to gar hir speik.” This torture was ready to the multitude. Under Graham of Claverhouse, the military adopting it with a young man, “a small cord was tied round his head, and both ends of it were wreathed about the butt end of one of their pistols, after other severities,” when it was twisted.* French pirates at the Foeroe Islands, torturing “Mr Erasmus, curate of Suderoe, with a rope about his head, for his money’s sake—he was afterwards unfit for his calling.”† Carpzovius and Damhouder speak of such torture inflicted in presence of the judge.

As torture was employed for disclosure of occult offences, parties deeming themselves interested, impatient of delay, have applied for its infliction.‡

The facility of subsequent conviction from confession, accounts for the energy extorting it. Sometimes that before the lowest judicatory, was ratified in presence of the highest tribunal. Interposing a verdict, then, became a mere formality to warrant the prisoner’s doom.

Lawyers know well, that in matters of evidence, artful examination may elicit answers, less consistent with the truth, than with the object of the querent. People may be rendered testimony against themselves.

* *Woodrow*, v. ii. p. 76.

† *Debes*, ch. 4. p. 249.

‡ *Privy Council Records*, 4 ap. 1631: *Protestatioun, Laird of Fren-draught*.

An unaccountable correspondence pervades the confessions of sorcery throughout Europe. If those now preserved, do not betray actual insanity, they manifest such a congeries of absurd credulity, as should have exempted the enthusiast from punishment. But in the words of one striving to stem the torrent of persecution: "It is melancholy to record the confession of follies, expiated by the most barbarous penalties."*

Cotemporaries heard in them nothing but truth and reason: they became indisputable authority for strangling and burning, not only the visionary himself, but all others whom his delirious imagination associated along with him.

To attempt retracting such errors, was vain. On trial, Bessie Moffat acknowledged having uttered an ample confession, but declared in the same breath, "that shoe lyed." Margaret Anderson, indicted on her previous confession, retracted it on trial, denying the facts, and pleading distraction at the moment she had admitted them. The judges determined that she was in sound mind, and not distracted.†

A commission for trial prohibited torture, and enjoined observance, that the parties at the time of

* *Ewich de Sagarum Natura: Pudet autem quam fatuæ quarundem confessiones quæ tamen atrocissimas pœnas luerunt.*

† *Trial of Margaret Anderson, 2 Feb. 1658: Abstract, in MS. p. 461. Adv. Lib. MS. 5. 14.*

confession, "were of right judgement, nowayes distracted, or under any earnest desyre to dy."*

But our progenitors were not too scrupulous about evidence: whence, perhaps, one was convicted "upon litle or no probatione, but fame and bruit of the country,"—or pretended private knowledge of the jury, "ane assiser being halfe a witnesse, and halfe a judge."†

An eagerness for detection and conviction of endowment with supernatural faculties prevailed: and herein it has been alleged, that the clergy, as if the best qualified to defeat the stratagems of Satan, were the most active. A commission to seize and try certain persons in 1607, was refused by the Privy Council, "considering the greit and maney inconvenientis and the exceeding greit slander quhilk had rissin vpon the bypast tryell of witches, be ministeris, who careid professed sorcereris with thame to the parochie kirkis, and mead thame jugeis of the honestie or dishonestie, or guyltines of men and wemen, vndefamed of befoir, and they brocht in questione of their honestie, lyf, and geire, and maid to be dewelie convict and pwneist to the deathe."‡ Through the credulity of the minister of Glasgow, "divers innocent women"

* *Commission for Judging in Dyk Paroch*, 7 May 1662. *Privy Council Record; Acta*, p. 148.

† *Fountainhall Decisions*, in MS. ad an. 1677. No. 573. f. 285. *Bruit*—report. *Assiser*—juryman.

‡ *Collections* in MS. ascribed to Thomas, first *Earl of Haddington*, f. 318. *Adv. Lib. A. 1. 22.*

suffered, from one venturing to affirm, that all the proselytes of Satan had a certain mark in the eye, whereby she could discover "whether they were witches or not."* Though alike infected by superstition, the clergy were neither better nor worse than their neighbours. Imbecillity of judgment, listening to imposture,† and the love of dominion, promoted persecution. The kirk session, tyrannical in arrogance, employed spies to ferret out the history, life, and manners, of each individual. Some of their number designed *searchers*, made an inroad into private dwellings, on Sundays: or without any warning, broke open any door, under cloud of night, during the week. They fined and they exiled: the prisons were filled with delinquents; and the places of public repentance crowded, until they could receive no more penitents. They even threatened to drown the alleged parent of illegitimate offspring, were she ever found again within their precincts.‡

Trial was often preceded by long and severe im-

* *Spotswood, History*, ad an. 1597, p. 448. The Thibii, remarkable for the conformation of the eye, could be neither sunk by their own weight, nor drowned: *Pliny, Hist. Nat. Lib. vii. c. 2.*

† *Records of Justiciary*, 17 April 1662. James Welsh, a juvenile impostor.

‡ "Tuysday the 8 of Marche 1631.—Bessie Schaw posit gif scho had borne ane bairne—declairit as scho sould answer to God, that scho bure nane. The session finding hir to be nane of thaires, takis her inactit that shoe never be fund within their boundis, in tyme cuming, wnder the paine of drowning." *Halyrudhous K. S. R. v. iv.*

prisonment: as of John Neill, Elie Nisbet, and three women in Stirling, during one, two, and three years respectively.*

The Earl of Haddington applied for the trial of one kept in prison, eight months, "on his charges." But the whole property of Jonet Cock having been siezed, she had no means of subsistence; and although previously acquitted, the minister and kirk session of Dalkeith opposed her petition for liberation.† A poor woman tendered her cow, probably her all, as an indemnification to a person contributing towards her maintenance.‡ Jonet Wood "was incarcerit in ane vyle and uglie dungeon, where she hath remained in great extremities, these 22 weeks, and upwards." Others complain of being confined above 42 weeks; that some had died of cold and hunger, and that the survivors were in a lamentable condition. Much later, such prisoners were kept "in a starving state."||

Trials ensued before the court of justiciary, or in the numerous petty tribunals, originating from feudal tenures; and on commissions from the Privy Council, to individuals of certain districts. The number of these is incredible, either from superstition or credulity.

* *Privy Council Record*, 7 Nov. 1661: *Acta*, p. 58.

† *Privy Council Record*, 7 Nov. 1661: *Acta*, p. 61. 18 Sept. 1661. *Decreta*, p. 58.

‡ *Perth K. S. R.* 1623. Margaret Hornsleuch, *ut sup.*

|| *Privy Council Record*, 10 April 1662. Dec. 4. p. 199. pen Jan. 1662 *ib.* p. 136. 4 Oct. 1698. 12 Jan. 1699.

No fewer than fifty, each with the name of from one to ten delinquents, were issued within eight months from January 1662, to all parts of the country.* Reports before sentence were sometimes enjoined: but to burn on conviction was also sanctioned.†

There was seldom any penury of witnesses. Agnes Finnie was restricted to interviews with her counsel, in presence of the kirk session, though many were privileged, not only with the assistance of lawyers, but of their nearest relatives to defend them. The counsel for Margaret Wallace, and Isobel Young, spared no ingenuity which talent or resolution could practise, for their preservation. Margaret Laird “did make harangues in her own defence, which neither divine nor lawyer could reasonably mend.” All proved unavailing: they fell under the relentless rigour of their times.

What were the hopes of safety, when parties—witnesses—jury—judges, and people, had become one common race of visionaries?

But the previous sufferings of some rendered them regardless of life in peril—“sic miserable bodeyis as thay war—wereit of the worldis faschereis: and brocht to sic miserie be thair imprisonment, was willing to die.”

To escape the stake was next to miraculous. Amidst the rare examples of acquittal, several are on a pledge

* Twenty-four names included in one commission: *Privy Council Record*, 19 Jan. 9 March 1697.

† *Privy Council Record*, 3 March 1696: Janet Widdrow.

to abstain from sorcery—as if a promise never again to fly through the air, to take the shape of a cat, or to join in festivities with Satan, were a rational exaction. Generally the conditions embrace the practice of lower gradations.—Christian Wilson pledged herself on release, “that if ever schoe should be found thereafter giltie of any kind of presumptione or public scandal, schoe sould be oblidge to be burned without any of the leist oppositione in the contrare.” During the former century, all persons in a certain district, above twelve years of age, were “solemnly sworn four times in the year, that they would practise no witchcraft, charms, spells.”* No one having appeared to accuse “Marione Fisher, *charmer* in Weardie,” the kirk session appointed her to sit in sackloth, in the middle of the church, before the congregation, “to confesse hir charming: and lykways, *suo consensu*, it is inacted, that if ever schoe be fund to wse any such lyk in tym cuming, to suffer death as ane reall witche.”†

Sir Edward Coke speaks of an oath exacted to abstain from sorcery, while enjoining a human head and a book to be burnt as its instruments.‡

Though numerous subordinate penalties, pecuniary and personal, were familiar for other offences by Scottish practice, scarcely any lower punishment than

* Shaw, *Province of Moray*, p. 345.

† *St Cuthbert's K. S. R.* 15, ult. Feb. 1644 A similar pledge given by Katheren Flint, 2 March 1606.

‡ *Coke Institute*, P. iii. ch. 6.

death was contemplated on trial, especially by the supreme court, for aggravated superstitions. This excessive rigour, giving birth to statutory law, originated in the heretical nature of the offence, and an anxiety to fulfil the precise injunctions of Scripture. Foreign authorities testify the most capricious distinctions of heresy in superstition.

The sanguinary laws of all nations,—reproachful to humanity, and offensive to justice, denote a cruel and vindictive temper. Yet so little is the true science of legislation understood, that at this day every frivolous legislator, ignorant of the reciprocity of law and manners, intermeddles with the penal code only to contrive the magnitude of penalties. A wise legislator studies manners, he arouses vigilance, combines vigour with humanity, rates the due proportion between crime and punishment. He can justify homicide. Still, they must be fettered, who, forgetful of that depravity prohibiting the safety of person and of property, without exterminating the incorrigible, would indiscriminately abolish capital pains in the exuberance of their indiscretion. Some of the inferior courts seem to have been the more temperate of old. It appears in the course of pleading exemption from a new trial, that only the lower penalty of fine and public exposure had been suffered for superstitious practices.—Also for aggravated superstitions, Katherine Grieve was to be taken “to the mercat crose, and brunt in the cheick, in example of others;” but if in future she should

haunt "suspect places, or vse charmes, scho sould be brunt in asches to the death, without dome or law, and that willinglie of hir owin consent."* Three women had been sentenced to banishment: but instead of granting their petition for liberation, the Privy Council directed a new trial.†

To be strangled and burnt was the usual doom for sorcery: which, in utterly deleting all remembrance of the offender, by scattering his ashes to the winds, could originate only from the heresy of his offence.

Even were he stained with guilt, he had little time for atonement by repentance,—for the day which opened with arraignment, has closed with the infliction of punishment.‡ This was not peculiar to convictions for sorcery. Others indicate the speedy transference of the culprit from the presence of the judge, to the hand of the executioner.—He was hurried into eternity.

The nature of the offence, and of the evidence, are illustrated by the infinite examples occupying these

* Trial of Johne Sinclair, 1626:—of Katherine Grieve, 1633. *Rec. Ork.* f. 47—49.

† *Privy Council Record*, 2 Aug. 1661, *acta* p. 23.

‡ *Trials at the Cruik of Dovan*, 1662, in MS. Between April and October, eleven persons, among whom was only one man, were tried on the wonted charges of the time for sorcery, and sent to the executioner on the same, or on the subsequent day, at a place called the *Lamblaire*. The author was indebted to Mr John Schank More, advocate, for perusal of this manuscript, which he understood then belonged to Mr Ellis, writer to the signet.

pages : but it is impossible at this day to compute the number, whose lives have atoned for the cruel prejudices of their country—unquestionably it was very great, considering how many judicatories were preparing for these legal massacres. If information was solicited and approved from the ignorant and malicious, the office of the executioner depended chiefly on the activity of the public prosecutor, and the precipitation of his court.* A humane commentator alludes to numerous convictions on no other proof than confessions, not in court, but “before a minister and some elders, which confessions are so ridiculous, that it is a reproach to the justice of the nation that so many innocent persons should be put to death. But how much greater is the reproach, that so many innocently suffered by the sentence of our own justice court.”†

The same contempt of human obligations pervaded Scotland. While the Court of Justiciary sanctioned reiterated slaughters in the vicinity of its own proper site, the City of Edinburgh, Commissioners of the Privy Council, Sheriffs, and Bailies of Regalities, were readily promoting extermination in the country.

Sanguinary epochs stain the annals of every nation. Even now an eagerness for conviction sometimes

* Almost all the Scottish courts have a public prosecutor of offences, which precludes the necessity of private parties interfering.

† *Lord Royston*—Sir James Mackenzie : *Notes* in MS. on Mackenzie's Criminal Law, alluding to trials before the Bailie of the Regality of Dalkeith. *Justice Court*—Justiciary Court.

threatens to overpower humanity and justice. If originating in constrained anxiety that none truly criminal shall escape, administration of the law requires the more to be tempered by excessive coolness and deliberation. Wrathful ebullitions are disgusting in a judge. In him the *warmth* of other men is *passion*. It is painful to reflect, that of later years, as of old, some of the innocent may have suffered. How shall we be estimated by posterity, should a retrospect discover that the testimony of children, nay, that of persons who could not but be inebriated at the moment to which they refer, has been accepted on charges implicating life?

Hutchison computes, that in the course of two centuries above 149 persons had been put to death in England, where the latest conviction was in 1712. It is probable that a greater number perished in Scotland during a single year, 1662, especially considering that above 150 of those then accused are known. On the 13th of September 1678, ten women were brought to the bar of the Court of Justiciary, nine of whom were condemned to be strangled and burnt: and on the very day that this bloody tribunal sanctioned their slaughter, other nine were outlawed. But immediately afterwards, as if the sense of the nation had been awakened to such an outrage on reason and mercy, persecution seems to have slumbered for a season.

The great preponderance of the female sex thus brought to a cruel and ignominious death, must im-

press the least observing. It was alike throughout the rest of Europe. Persecutions rose on persecutions against women, while those harassing men, though as deadly in the issue, were comparatively few,—not a twelfth of the whole. Among the ancient Greeks and Romans, females were more addicted to occult practices.* But the reputed credulity of the mother of mankind may have encouraged more modern belief of guilt, and that greater susceptibility ascribed to feminine nature by the most celebrated of physicians, is more readily productive of a morbid state.

Besides the numerous trials and punishments for sorcery occupying the records of judicatories, and historical compositions, general allusions are found to “the last burning of witches,” regarding which no other memorials are preserved. “I remember,” says a stranger visiting Scotland, that “in 1644, I saw nine burnt at one time in Leith Links.”* Only a single capital conviction, in the course of that year, appears in the records of the supreme court. Therefore the numbers perishing must have been very great. Procedure against one elicited charges against many. Thus did Alexander Hamilton, when imprisoned, represent no less than nine women as participators in guilt: also, while a number of miserable looking women were brought to trial in 1678, they were ready to implicate “sundry gentlewomen and others of

* *Pliny* Hist. Nat. lib. xxv. c. 5.

* *Ramesay* ΕΑΜΙΝΘΟΛΟΓΙΑ, ch. 6. p. 71.

fashion," had not the court restrained it. Yet this considerate bench sent nine of these innocent creatures to the stake.*

But the most fatal charge was that which escaped in the dying moments of those suffering under similar accusations. That John Brughe had been with "the devill at the Rumbling Brigs" and elsewhere, was affirmed by Katherine Mitchell "to be of veritie, at the tyme of hir criminall tryell at Culrose and immediatelie befor hir executione, the said Johnne Brughe being confronted with hir at the tyme,—with the quhilk confessione and affirmatioun the said Katherine Mitchell went to death." After two women had suffered at Dunbar, on the trial of a third, whom they implicated, "George Purves, clerk of Dunbar, depones, that he was present at thair executioun, and hard quhat was spoken be them: and, quhen thay war confrontit with the pannell, hard thair declaratiounes set down in thair depositiounes concerning hir: and that thay, being at the staik, and the fyre biggit about thame, thay nevir vareit fra thair former confessioun and affirmatioun: and that thay baith deceissit penitent persones."†

The sentence generally specified, to be strangled and

* *Fountainhall Decisions*, v. i. p. 14. *Justiciary Records*, 13 Sept: 1678.

† Trial of Johnne Brughe, 1643,—of Katherine Oswall, 1629,—of Issobell Young, 1629,—Precognition and Trial of Cristian Wilsone: *ut sup.*

burnt. But, besides the noted doom of Eufame Macalyane to be burnt alive, the frequent marginal notices of *convicta et combusta*, in the original records, afford too definite evidence how often this cruel fate awaited others. Heresies are expiated by the flames.

Perhaps the faggots were regularly piled around the miserable victims, dragged forth amidst the execrations of a ferocious multitude, exulting in this visible defeat of Satan, while more combustible ingredients promoted fiercer conflagration.

Several unhappy women, inhumanly committed to the stake, though persevering in asseverations of their innocence to the last, “were burnet *quick* after sic ane crewell maner, that sum of thame deit in dispair, renunceand and blasphemand: and vtheris half brunt brak out of the fyre, and wes cassin *quick* into it agane, quhill thay war brunt to the deid.”*

We shudder at such narratives—a savage picture of savage times.—Who can sufficiently deplore the fate of those innocent, wretched, helpless victims of barbarous prejudice, without execrating their persecutors,—without shrinking in abhorrence of their tenets and their deeds!

Let us ask once and again, had not a resolute arm

* *Haddington Collections*, ad. 1 Dec. 1608. As this is stated to have been a communication by the Earl of Mar to the Privy Council, the author is disappointed at not finding any relative notice of it in the Records. “*Renunceand* and *blasphemand*” perhaps means denying the divine justice, amidst imprecations on the persecutors.

laid the axe to the root of bigotry,—were it not from progressive civilization softening the manners, and the radiation of science illuminating the soul,—would the flame of persecution have ceased? Is it now extinguished for ever in Britain—or only smothered—ready to break forth and blaze anew? Is there not a lurking desire in the human breast that all shall think, and speak, and act precisely in that same channel, which we as individuals prefer for ourselves? Are we not earnest to appeal to obsolete rules for compulsion,—to imitate the worst oppression of oppressive æras in practical prejudice? Should any one be so ignorant and illiterate that he cannot discern the hand of Omnipotence in those marvellous works incessantly arising to his view,—if his obtuse perceptions, or the obduracy of his nature, prompt him to rail at narratives as fabulous, just because the constitution of his intellect precludes their reception as truth, is it not a horrid persecution to rifle his property by fines, and to injure his person by imprisonment?

Men were content of old, themselves to bear the slavish fetters, and earnest to enthrall their fellows. Superstition, nourished by imposture, fed on gloomy contemplation of hidden subjects mysteriously unfolded, imperfectly understood, and practically confounded by preposterous ceremonies, designed for their illustration. The dark abyss of futurity was fathomed: forebodings of celestial wrath disguised the sense of divine benevolence: vain apprehension awakened terrors:

the pleasures of life remained no longer for enjoyment: and at last the very animal frame, unhinged by the struggle between nature and imagination, yielded under the delirium of amalgamating facts with fallacy.

But that enthusiastic spirit of investigation so eminently distinctive of modern generations, the progress of sound philosophy, the sedulous adherence to logical deduction, the discovery of delusion, and the praise of veracity, have gradually contributed to lighten the yoke.

Besides the advance of learning, other causes have operated emancipation. Educated exclusively for a course of ambition, absorbed by the deepest fervour of selfishness, aroused by an ardent thirst for adventure, we embark in pursuits, so varied and animating, that incessant novelties open channels for reflection, widely different from those wherein the more monotonous thoughts of our progenitors were wont to flow.

The theatre of the world has enlarged.

Nevertheless, superstition seems an innate germ of the human mind. Latent, but ever prepared for evolution, it is only intellectual culture that determines whether it shall be blighted in the bud or shall flourish.

Though the enlightened of mankind contemptuously reject those gross delusions overwhelming former æras, many lower substitutes still distract the multitude.

While the great and glorious, proud of their

ascendant star, haughtily tread the earth, as if they could never fall:—the meeker children of sorrow, humbled by sad experience, tremble with the dread of untoward destiny.

A D D E N D A.

P. 26.—*Agnes Sampson*. Faint traditions of this person, whose trial is distinguished among superstitions, are preserved in the united parishes of Upper Keith and Humbie. Some passages of *Montgomery's Poems* seem to be founded on it; as,

In the hinder end of harvest on a hallow-euen,
When our good nighbours do ryd, gif I read right.

* * * * *

To saill sure in a sieffe.

* * *

Syne backward on horsebacke bravely they bended.

No parish register of earlier date than that which is quoted here is preserved: and, for the perusal of this, the author has been indebted to Mr James Maidment, advocate, the sedulous editor of many materials of much utility in illustrating Scottish history.

P. 27.—*St Cuthbert's Kirk Session Register*. As the city of Edinburgh comprehended only two parishes, St Cuthberts and Holyroodhouse, the author cannot learn that there are more than two registers containing the Minutes of the

kirk session. There is a register of births and burials of later date than the earlier part of either, in the session-clerk's office. For the perusal of several volumes of the Register of St Cuthberts, he has been indebted to the Rev. Dr Dickson, always ready to promote literary pursuits, and the obliging acquiescence of Mr John Adams, session-clerk.

P. 40.—*Woodrow*, Robert, minister of Eastwood, was a most industrious collector of manuscripts and tracts on Scottish history.—“My collections of papers relative to our Scots affairs, which, I am so vain as to say, are perhaps as numerous as in any private person's hand here,—my press of *manuscripts*, consisting of 40 folios, about 100 4tos., and about 30 8vos., mostly relative to the history of our own nation and church.” *Woodrow* Letter to James Frazer, Esq. London, 24 July 1722.

“Your *pamphlets* are very entertaining, and the most part of the six volumes are what I want in my large collection, which consists of near 400 volumes folio, 4to. and 8vo.” *Letter to the same*, 11 Nov. 1723.

The principal collectors of manuscripts preceding Woodrow, were Sir James Balfour and Sir Robert Sibbald. A great portion of the labour of the whole is now concentrated in the *Advocates' Library*.

P. 66.—*Cessation of Touching for Scrofula*. 1691. “What is the reason that his present majesty, King William, has never yet toucht for the evil: and why is that divine gift neglected which has been so many ages inherent in all the lawful kings of England.”—*Athenian Mercury*, v. 5. No. 15. q. 1.

P. 91.—*St. Winefrid's Well.*

In the welmes ofter than ones,
Ben founde reed spercle stones,
In token of the blood reed,
That the mayd Wenefrede
Shad at that pytte,
Whan hyr throte was kytte.

Caxton Cronycle, Descrypcion of Walys.

P. 110.—*Transferring Disease.* "Thou shalt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea," *Micah*, ch. vii. v. 19. It is alleged, that the modern Jews of Germany shake their clothes over a pond, after a meal, that their iniquity may be cast on the fishes.—*Burder Oriental Customs.* No. 884. v. ii. p. 159.

P. 122.—*Transmission through a cleft.* "I have heard it affirmed with great confidence, and upon experience, that the rupture, to which many children are obnoxious, is healed by passing the infant through a wide cleft made in the bole or stem of a growing ash tree. It is then carried a second time round the ash, and caused to repass the same aperture as before. The rupture of the child being bound up, it is supposed to heal as the cleft of the tree closes and coalesces."—*Evelyn Silva*, ch. vii. v. *Ash*. The first edition was published in 1664.

P. 134.—*Fir candle.* "A piece of torch fir carried about the person, and a knife made of iron, which has never been applied to any purpose, are both excellent preservatives."—*Stewart Popular Superstitions of the Highlanders*, p. 136.

P. 140.—*Cock-knee Stone*. “Londonderry, Ap. 2, 1700.”
 “Fossils—the *echini pileati* and *galeati*, which the vulgar in the highlands believe to be generated in cocks’-knees.” *Llwyd*, Edw., Letter to Robert Woodrow, ap. *Letters upon Literature in MS.*, v. i. No. 87.

P. 143.—*Rudbeckius Atlantica*. This is a work of great erudition, and very rare. The author maintains, that Sweden was the country of Boreas or Saturn, that he made an expedition from thence about A.M. 2000: that Jove, Jofur, Thor, or Taurus, his son, made an expedition also, about A.M. 2100: and that there was a second Jove who lived nine generations later. The work consists of three volumes in folio, with engravings interspersed with the text, besides a fasciculus of forty-three plates and two chronological tables, printed 1679, 1689, 1698. The third volume was purchased some years ago, by the Faculty of Advocates, for L.56.

P. 147.—*Hand*. *Chiromancy* was carried to a great extent in superstitions. A work devoted to the subject is illustrated by no less than 1237 representations of the hand with the peculiar personal character derived from the configuration annexed to each.—*La Science Curieuse*. Paris 1667, in 4to.

The rudiments of phrenology may be recognized in the qualities anciently ascribed by the ruder tribes to the shape of the head: also the number of the teeth indicated longevity.—*Hippocrates de Morbis Vulgaribus*, lib. ii. sect. 7. § 6.

P. 156.—“*Leig*. Being a great pice of the clearest of cristall, in forme ane halfe ovall, near to the bigness of a littel hen eage: but I find it being of great use for peple that hes

coues, being good for many diseases, they sik great monies for it, as forty pundis Scots. But if ye please, I can procure ye a sight of one for eight dayes, and it will cost you naught.”—*Lee*, Letter to Robert Woodrow, *ut sup.* No. 103.

P. 157.—*Lee Penny*. “As to its metall, it is silver of the largeness and likeness of an English shilling, with some extinct characters, and illegible. It hath a cutt stone in the middle, in the shape of a hart, as big as a herring scale, of a blew color, changeing to red eminent above the silver, into which it is set. As to its original, it is uncertain how it came there. It hath been frequently lost, sometimes in Clyd, sometimes in the fields, and alwayes found. It being taken and put into the end of a cloven stick, and washen in a tub full of water, and given to cattell to drink, infallibly cures almost all manner of deseases. The people come from all airts of the kingdom with their deseased beasts.”—*Hunter*, Account of the Penny in the Lee, 1702, *ibid.* v. ii. No. 5.

P. 193.—*Spilling Milk*. Fairies, “All liquids spilled on the ground, are supposed to go to their use.”—*Stewart*, *ut sup.* p. 124.

P. 240.—*Demons in the Storm*. In Kamtschatka there is a volcanic mountain. “The natives and inhabitants believe, that evil spirits ride on the winds, and direct the tempests, which in winter, beat with loud uproar against this enormous volcano.”—*Dobell*, Travels, v. i. p. 43.

P. 290.—*Spouse on Trial*. “Among the Indians of some of the Mexican States, it is the custom for the man to take

his intended wife on trial; and if after an indefinite time, he likes her, they are then married by a priest or friar, who once a year goes round to perform this ceremony, and to christen perhaps, the offspring of half the newly married couples."—*Lyon, Residence in Mexico*, v. i. p. 297.

P. 296.—*Marriage Ceremonies*. "Ubicunque in Scriptura occurrunt vocabula in communi usu minus honesta, Hæbræorum Magistri, honestati consulentes, ea voluerunt aliter legi, quam scripta sunt: adeoque pro verbo quod in textu habetur, honestius aliud in margine substituunt, quod pro eo in Synagogis legere moris hodieque est."—*Bochartus Hierozoicon*, t. ii. Lib. 1. c. 7. § 5. col. 41.

P. 401.—*Rown Tree*. Speaking of a child: "A red thread tied about its neck, or a *rowan* cross, are said to be equally efficacious in preventing the influence of evil spirits, evil eyes, and other calamities of the same description."—*Stewart, ut sup.* p. 114, 210.

P. 538.—*Fairies Abstracting Children*. "Let the stock," [or substitute] "be carried to the junction of three shires, or the confluence of three rivers, where it is to be left for the night; and it is a certain fact, that if the child has been stolen by the fairies, they must in the course of the night, return the genuine offspring, and take away the spurious one."—*Stewart, ut sup.* p. 115.

P. 541.—*Meg Mullach*. "It was her custom to wear a superabundance of hair, in consequence of which, she was

commonly called *Maug Vuluchd*, or Hairy Mag."—*Stewart, ut sup.* p. 144.

P. 543.—*Water Kelpie*. The water horse seems to be identified with the water kelpie.—*Stewart, ut sup.* p. 147.

P. 544.—*Water Bull*. This imaginary being is still believed to inhabit a small lake, named Mikely, or Mechely, about seven miles from Lochness. The owner of a calf produced in the neighbourhood in 1832, assures the author, that owing to some peculiarity of conformation, it was firmly credited to be the progeny of the water bull.

P. 599.—*Incubus* and *Succubus* are distinguished thus, in *Caxton's Cronycle*:

That fende that goth a nyght,
Wymmen full oft to gyle,
Incubus is named by ryght:
And gyleth men other whyle,
Succubus is that wyght.

Descrypcion of Walys.

P. 620.—*Competition in Churning*. "It is well known, that wherever any supernatural agency is challenged, the spell is instantly broken."—*Stewart, ut sup.* p. 127.

P. 622.—*Punishment*. Statute 1563, chap. 9. "Forsamekill as the Quenis Maiestie, and thre estatis in this present parliament, being informit, that the havy and abominabill superstitioun vsit be diuers of the liegis of this realme, be vsing of witchcraftis, sorsarie, and necromancie, and cre-

dence geuin thairto in tymes bygan, aganis the law of God : And for auoyding of all sic vane superstitioun in tymes to cum, it is statute and ordanit be the Quenis Maiestie, and thre estatis foirsaidis, that na maner of persoun nor persounis of quhatsumeuer estate, degre, or conditioun thay be of, tak vppone hand, in ony tymes heirefter, to vse ony maner of witchcraftis, sorsarie, or of necromancie, nor gif thame selfis furth to have ony sic craft or knowlege thairof, thairthrow abusand the pepill; nor that na persoun seik ony help, response, or consultatioun at ony sic vsaris or abvsaris foirsaidis, of witchcraftis, sorsaries, or necromancie, vnder the pane of deid, alsweill to be execute aganis the vsar, abvsar, as the seikar of the response or consultatioun : and this to be put to executioun be the justice, shireffis, stewartis, baillies, lords of regaliteis and rialteis, thair deputis, and vthers ordinar jugeis, competent within this realme, with all rigour, hauing powar to execute the samin."

Sorcery.—Under *Sortilegium*, or *Sorcery*, most authors comprehend the various distinctions of occult ceremonies, credulity in demoniac intercourse, supernatural metamorphoses, and the like, specified in the nomenclature of different countries : and the same is observed here. In the words of a foreign lawyer—"Hoc tamen pie lector velim intelligas me hoc vocabulum Sortilegium non stricte sed largius accipere, nempe, pro omni specie susperstitiosa, sive ea malefica, sive amatoria, sive divinatoria fuerit." This latitude was recognized in England in 1432, when persons were in custody *pro sorcerye*.—*Rymer Fœdera*, t. x. p. 505.

P. 627.—*Slander*. "Die xxiiij mensis Februarij 1564.

Sederunt consules, Prepositus, balliui Jacobus Ka, Jacobus Robertoun, Archibaldus Wilsoun, Willielmus Bell, David Rait, Valterus Hamyltoun, Willielmus Eistoun, Johannes Gibbesoun, Alexander Roust, Thomas Duncane. The quhilk day it is statute and ordanit, that gif ony of the burtht iniuire or mispersignyis the provest, ballies, counsalouris, or publict officiaris within burtht, that thai be extremelie pvnist: and also, that James Gardiner, for iniuring of the provest publick-lie, be sett on the *goukstulis* four houris on the merkat day: and on sonday the xxv day of this instant, that he cum in tyme of preching or prayeris, and ask God forgifnes and the provest: and gif euer he committis sic offence in tyme cuming, that he be banest of the towne, and tyne his fredome."

Gouk—Cuckoo; *Goukstulis*—Cuckstool. The precise etymology of this word has hitherto perplexed antiquaries.—*Linlithgow Burgh Record*, v. i. For the perusal of this manuscript the author is indebted to Mr James A. Maconochie, advocate.

P. 646.—*Torture*. The cruel method of torturing children in presence of the parents, seems to have been sanctioned by the practice of the continent. Thus, "If father and son are to be put to the torture, let the son suffer first, either in presence or absence of the parent, but known to him: for it is natural that the parent should dread his child's sufferings more than his own. Likewise in the case of a husband and wife, let the judge direct the torments of the wife first, as the weaker of the two, and the less able to sustain them, the husband being more robust and resolute, is longer of confession: the wife is brought sooner to it."—*Damhouderius Praxis*, c. 37. § 15.

P. 669.—*Number suffering for Sorcery.* Though many persons were put to death in Scotland, there seems no foundation for alleging the “confession of 600 Scotch witches, executed in Scotland at Bartholomew tide, was twelvemonth: that in Yarmouth road they were altogether in a plump on Christmas eve was two years, when the great flood was, and there stirred up such ternados, in envy, as I collect, that the staple of herring from them was translated to Yarmouth, as will be spoken of there whilst any winds, or storms, and tempests chafe and puffe on the lower region.” *Nashe Lenten Stuffe*, 1599, ap.: *Harleian Miscellany*, v. vi. p. 129.

In virtue of a commission granted in 1609 by the French Parliament, to the *Sieur de Lancre*, distinguished as “a very learned and worthy person,” he laboured so diligently in a district containing 30,000 persons, that he committed 600 of them to the flames.

About 20 or 30 years earlier, another says, “while I discharged the functions of a judge during 16 years in Lorraine, not fewer than 800 persons were condemned for sorcery by myself, besides whom almost as many escaped death by enduring the torture, and by flight.” He also is distinguished as learned and “pious” by *Casaubon*.

P. 671.—*Execution.* The victims are believed to have been fastened to the stake by a collar called the *Witches' Bridle*. One of these is alluded to in the *Statistical Account of the Parish of Forfar*, 1793.—“A few trials of those unhappy women called witches, together with the *bridle* with which they were led to execution, are still preserved as monuments of the superstition of our fathers; and the field in which they suffered is pointed out to strangers as a curiosity.”

There is in the possession of Alexander Deuchar, a skilful seal engraver and genealogist, Edinburgh, an implement of this kind, consisting of an iron ring about eight inches in diameter, opening on a hinge, with a chain of a few links attached to it; a spike directed inward, crossed by another perpendicular and at right angles, is in front, supposed, but perhaps erroneously, to be a gag. The date 1661, is punched on the circle, along with what seems Angus. S.

A person named Miller is said to have obtained the collar from the jailor of Forfar.

P. 672.—*Burning alive.* “Primo Decemb. 1608. Wemen convict of witchcraft in Breichin, albeit they neuer confessed, war brunt quick.”—*Haddington Collections*, f. 487. v.

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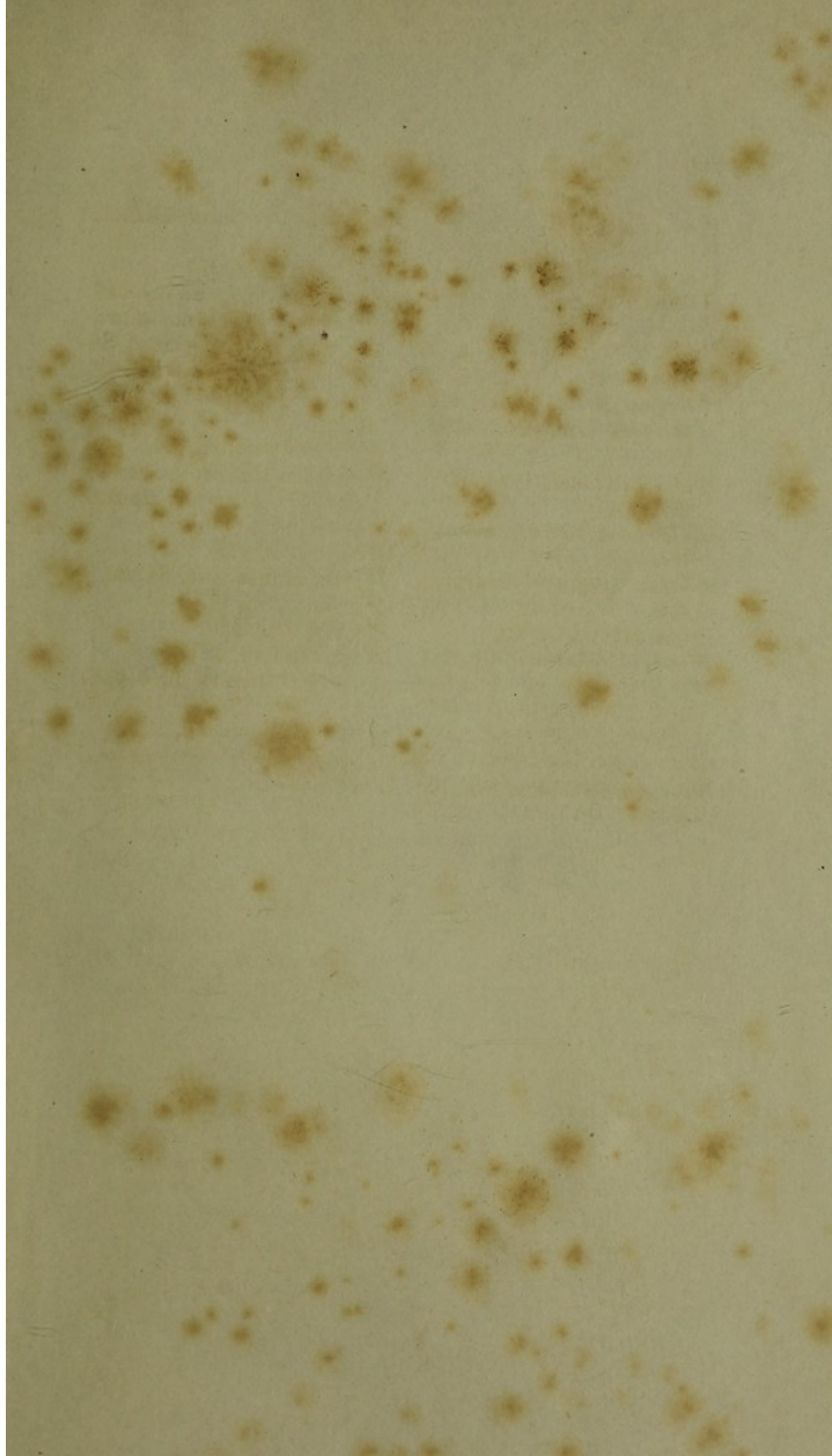
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