

nance ever distorted by a malignant scowl. It is the water-wraith, not the kelpie, whom Sir Walter should have quoted ; and yet I could tell you curious stories of the kelpie too."

"We must have them all," said my friend, "ere we part. Meanwhile, I should like to hear some of your stories of the Conon.

"As related by me," I replied, "you will find them rather meagre in their details. In my evening walks along the river, I have passed the ford a hundred times out of which, only a twelvemonth before, as a traveller was entering it on a moonlight night, the water-wraith started up, not four yards in front of him, and pointed at him with her long skinny fingers, as if in mockery. I have leaned against the identical tree to which a poor Highlander clung when, on fording the river by night, he was seized by the goblin. A lad who accompanied him, and who had succeeded in gaining the bank, strove to assist him, but in vain. The poor man was dragged from his hold into the current, where he perished. The spot has been pointed out to me, too, in the opening of the river, where one of our Cromarty fishermen, who had anchored his yawl for the night, was laid hold of by the spectre when lying asleep on the beams, and almost dragged over the gunwale into the water. Our seafaring men still avoid dropping anchor, if they possibly can, after the sun has set, in what they term the *fresh* ; that is, in those upper parts of the frith where the waters of the river predominate over those of the sea. "

"The scene of what is deemed one of the best authenticated stories of the water-wraith lies a few miles higher up the river. It is a deep, broad ford, through which horsemen coming from the south pass to Brahan Castle. A thick wood hangs over it on the one side ; on the other it