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Original Correspondence.

To the Editor of the *North Devon Journal*.

THE GUDE OLD TIMES IN WELCOMBE
GHOSTS.

Zur,—I zed in wan ov my letters that I hintended tu rite wan abowt Hobgoblins, but thit man way the furrin sowdin name jist like *no man's son* hath a vaurstiled me as us yused tu zay, ov tuke the wind owt ov my sayls, an as I zee by the long words he riteth he must be a heddicated man, I shant go auver the grownd arter he, as I'm afeerd if I did I shude luke small, but thares wan thing he didden titch, an that is the way thay yused tu put mun away, or, as it was termed in thayse pairts, "Layin a ghost." I shude like yer rayders tu raymimber that in the olden times, zay 200 yurs ago, this plase was shet owt vrom neerly awl the rest ov the world, an awltho this parrish is in Devonshire, it shude I think be in Cornwall, an how the cauder nawd as Hartland an Welcombe was sipperated vrom Cornwall I doant naw, unless it is that wen thay was markin owt the bowndary thay vollowed the Tamar, an wen thay got tu the hed of it thay stopped an then turned strite owt tu the say. This is jist how it wud strike a stranger. Sartin is it,

howiver, that the peepel be ov wan rase, an thare is the same family or klannish feelin amangst mun, the same homliness in thare salutations, neerly ivery elderly man an humman is haddressed as honkel an hant. The Cornish vokes be considered tu excel in tellin storys (not lies), an way a drollery an merry twinkle ov the hies that yu want vind in inny other pairt, thay will hentertein a company, an wile away minny a weary hower. Thaym supposed tu be neerly related tu the Welsh, an this is clayr enuf vrom the similarity ov names in Wales an Cornwall. Beezides the Welsh language yused to be spankin thare, an that within the mimory ov zom now livin.

It shude be raymimbered that in the olden times this remote pairt was cut hoff vrom the rest ov the world, awin tu the bad rawds wich was nort but the ruffest paths across the moors and morasses, wile access tu Wales was aisy by water, an the Cornish was moastly like the Welsh hot was kald "hundergrownd men," or miners. The old legend zeth that in the ninth century, Ethulwulf, wan ov the kings of England, zend auver to Breachen, king ov Wales, an axed he vor vend auver wan ov his darters as a companion vor his awn darters, and that he did zend Morwenna, hew playseed King Ethulwulf zo much that he hofferred vor giv hur hotiver hur wud ax, an tis zed that hur axed vor Hinnacliff, or the Raven's Crag, that hur had hoften loked upon vrom hur native plase in Wales. Havin got the grant of this land, hur setteld thare an becom'd its patron saint, an vrom hur it tuke the name ov Moowenna, or Morwenstow. Hur brither, St. Nectan, was the patron saint ov Hartland an Welcombe, an boath the churches bare his name. It is zed that he lived neer Hartland Point, an that he had a cell at Welcombe. Ware that was in connection way the church or no I doant naw, but thare was in former times 11 or 12 chapelries in Hartland, an wan ov mun was at Sowthole, an the owld tale awlways rinnith in this nayburhude that this was the plase ware the Lord's prare was fust rapayted in England. The site ov the chapel is nawd an is kald Chapel Garden tu this day. Thayse small chapels awl went tu rewin arter the time ov Henry the Eighth, hew zold the Abbey ov Harland an I spose the gurt tithes. The Cornish vokes, or "Cousin Jackys" as thay yused tu be kald, was naturally gurt lovers ov dramattick pervormances, an pon holidays, zitch as Gude Vriday, thowsands wud meet together in zitch plases as old quarries, wich was turn'd into vast hampytheatures way natural sayts awl rownd, an thare wud be merrey-makin ov awl kinds ov zitch things as was kard awn up to the time wen John Wesley visited Cornwall, an hinsted ov the vormer merry-makin he prayched in

Gwennap pit to two or three thousand vokes pon Gude Vriday, an the Methodys hev had a religious festeval thare, I beleeve, ivery yer zinse. As the Cornish be zitch an emotional peepel wan riter haz zed thay was zune indused tu alter thare sins.

It may be aisely imagined thet in the olden times wen the vokes was shet out vrom the world, an a journey tu London wud hev bin thort moar ov than would be thort of gwain tu Amerrieky now a day, wen inny wan thet had bin zo var as Exetir wud be loked upon as an awthority pon moast things, it may be supposed thet thare would be evils ov ivery kind abowndin; an, amongst other things, Ghosts wud be those tu hev a plase, an thare is hardly a howse but hath a hawnted rume, nor a vower krass way ware som time or anether zom hobgoblin or sperrit hathen bin zeen. An Ive yerd so minny tales vrom hiewitnesses or vrom others thet hev yerd it fust hand vrom relyabel witnesses thet 'twud be yuseless vor me tu attempt tu deny thet zitch things hev bin zeed.

Wen inny wan is fase tu fase way a heevil the best thing is tu try an vend owt a remedy, an, as in the anshent times, the passon was hoften the onny wan thet hunderstud much ov the ways ov the world, tis but natural thet the vokes wud resort tu be in the time ov inny trubbel, zo wen inny plase was "trubbeld" thay wud go tu the passon vor git the Ghost a layd—wich he cudden do aaur he had got a fackulty vrom the Bishop.

In them times, zur, the passons was jolly fellahs, an wassen above muvin abowt amangst the vokes, an wud go intu the pore vokes's howses an ayt a hot tetty way a bit ov zalt, or taste the farmer's cider, an I've yerd it towld thet wen Passon Badcock was curate ov Mustow an Welcombe, he wud call tu Mr. Lukey's tu Marsland an take zom refreshments pon his way tu Welcombe vor the arternoon sarvice an as they was hingaged in the smugglin trade, it wud zomtimes happen thet a fresh cargo had jist arrived, an if he shude take a drap ov the cratur nate, he wud arrive tu Welcombe a bit muved by the sperrit. But then 'twas verry excusabel in them times, vor he was onny a curate, an the vicar was non-risedent, an the curate hissell lived 12 or 14 miles away, an pon a hempty stummack a littel wud take effect. An beezides thet in them times the Passons wassen zo strite lased as shay be now, but was as I yerd a man zay be wan ov mun fit vor inny kompany, I thort thet wassen much ov a kompliment though he spauk it in his prayse. Thay wud zom ov mun patronize the boxin ring, war, the vokes practised hot thay kal the manly art of self-deefense, or hold the lantern at a landin in

the smugglin times. They wud share the vokes's joys an sorrows, an wile thay was a prayse tu thay hot did well thay wis a terror tu thay that did ill, vor in old days if inny wan did innything rong the ginerall hexklamashuns wud be, "I'll tell the passon vor thee" an his power vor heevil wud be verry grayt, accordin tu the judgment ov wan man thet I yerd zay in hanser tu a question "Hot wud the Passon zay if he nawd a sartin thing," Wy, zed he, "He'd zend a fellah tu Hell."

Well, as the passon was the frend an hadviser ov all, it was quite natural that in the ghostly days thay wud be konsulted as tu the mayns ov gittin rid ov mun, an minny is the storey I've yerd as tu how thay was layd or put away, but I shall onny give wan, an I've no dowt but that the demand created the supply jist like tis way wite witches—if thare was no boddy witched thay wud git no trade.

As I zed, aiven the passon had got tu git awthority vrom the Bishop avaur he cude banish a ghost, but I nawd a man yurs ago, without awthority vrom inny boddy, put wan away. He had zeed wan minny times in a feeld ware he had tu pass pon his way hoam ov a nite, an wan nite he had a rayphook in his hand, an he went up tu the ghost, an zed, "If yu muve vrum thicky plase, I'll kut yu rite down," an he niver trubbel en agen, but the wan I'm gwain tu tell abowt is verry different vrom that. A rayl ghost had appeared tu a yong man day arter day, an it seems tu be the rule that the ghosts niver spayk fust, an he had niver spauk, but vrom this kontinual comin ov the apparishen he was got terribly alarmed, an konsulted the passon abowt it, an he an the lad proceeded tu the spot at the ushal time, an zeed the ghost, an a spaneel dog that went way mun zeed en tew, but naythur spauk as it seemth the sperrits niver du fust. Tu kut it short, the passon hastened tu Exeter tu git the Bishop's lisenze tu allay this honairthly vissiter, vor it yused tu be a rule of the church, as is now vor hot I naw, that "no minister shall, unless he hath a lisenze ov the Bishop, essay tu exorcise a sperit good or bad." Owr passon went tu Exeter an konsulted the Bishop, hew gied instructions tu his seckretary tu rite owt direckshuns an awthority vor the passon tu proceed. Armed way thayse he returned hoam an prepared vor the next day, an armed hissels as directed. In the airly mornin an all aloan he went tu the plase an zed he veeld thare was danger vrom the demons, he maysured owt a circle pon the grass, and tuke his stand tu the sowth ov it, an then wayted an watched. At laest thare was trubbel in the air, then a ripplin sownd, then a shape appeared an proceeded tuwards him slowly. He then haupened his

parchment an rayd alowd, an arter a littel hesitashun on the pairt ov the sperrit, it entered the ring as commanded. When questioned, why not at rest? Because ov sartin sin ov som wan pon airth. They held long converse, an the passon broke the ring vor the sperrit tu escape till next day. Conference between the passon an transgressor; full repentance an satisfaction. Next day another meeting ov the passon and the ghost; the promise ov amendment made known, when the passon performed sartin rites wich wud not be rite vor me tu tell tu banish the ghost, wen he left niver moar tu return. In zom cases (zo the storeys go) it yused tu take as minny as twelve ov mun tu bind a very hobstinet ghost, an I've yerd that zom hev bin banished owt hunder the cliffs, tu bind the zand, an niver tu return till thay hev finished it. I wonder how tis, Zur, that the passons be niver wanted vor put mun away now-a-days, an tis verry sildom that yu yer ov wan been zeed, an a gude thing tew, so thinks

Yer obaygent sarvint,

ROGER GILES.

Welcombe, March 20th, 1886.

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