

John Brown's death, one of the miners returned unexpectedly from his work in the forenoon, and to the surprise of his wife appeared in front of their cottage. She was in the habit, unknown to him, of solacing herself in the early part of the day with a bottle of porter. On the occasion in question the bottle stood toasting pleasantly before the fire when the form of the "gudeman" came in sight. In a moment she had driven in the cork and thrust the bottle underneath the blankets of the box-bed, when he entered, and, seating himself by the fire, began to light his pipe. In a little while the warmed porter managed to expel the cork, and to escape in a series of very ominous guggles from underneath the clothes. The poor fellow was outside in an instant, crying, "Anither warning, Meg! Rin, rin, the house is fa'ing." But Meg "kenn'd what was what fu' brawly," and made for the bed in time to save only the last dregs of her intended potation.

Most of the actors in the sad story have passed away, and now rest beneath the same green sod which covers the remains of John Brown. With the last generation, too, has died out much of the hereditary superstition. For a railway now runs through the coal-field. Strangers come and settle in the district. An increasing Irish element appears in the population, and thus the old manners and customs are rapidly becoming mere traditions in the place. Even grandsons and great-grandsons of the old women who "kept the country-side in fear," affect to hold lightly the powers and doings of their progenitors, though there are still a few who, while seemingly half-ashamed to claim supernatural power for their "grannies," gravely assert that the latter had means of finding things out, and, though bedridden, of getting their wishes fulfilled, which, to say the least, were very inexplicable.