



TRUE IRISH GHOST STORIES

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COMPILED BY
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contained world which had, and could have, no connection with anything external to itself. But the very essence of our existence here is that the material and spiritual worlds interpenetrate, or rather that our little planet forms part of a boundless universe teeming with life and intelligence, yet lying in the hollow of God's hand. He alone is "Supernatural," and therefore Transcendent and Unknowable; all things in the universe are "natural," though very often they are beyond our normal experience, and as such are legitimate objects for man's research. Surely the potential energy in the human intellect will not allow it to remain at its present stage, but will continually urge it onwards and upwards. What limits God in His Providence has seen fit to put upon us we cannot tell, for every moment the horizon is receding, and our outlook becoming larger, though some still find it difficult to bring their eyesight to the focus consequently required. The marvellous of to-day is the commonplace of to-morrow: "our notion of what is natural grows with our greater knowledge."

Throughout the pages of this book we have, in general, avoided offering explanations of; or theories to account for, the different stories. Here something may be said on this point. As we have already pointed out, the expression "ghost stories" covers a multitude of different phenomena. Many of these may be explained as "hallucinations," which does not imply that they are simply the effect of imagination and nothing more. "The mind receives the hallucination as if it came through the channels of sense, and accordingly externalises the impression, seeking its source in the world outside itself, whereas in all hallucinations the source is within the mind, and is not derived from an impression received through the recognised organ of sense." [2]

Many of these hallucinations are termed *veridical*, or truth-telling, because they coincide with real events occurring to another person. Illustrations of this will be found in Chapter VI, from which it would appear that a dying person (though the power is not necessarily confined to such) occasionally has the faculty of telepathically communicating with another; the latter receives the impression, and externalises it, and so sees a ghost," to use the popular expression. Some hallucinations are *auditory*, *i.e.* sounds are heard which apparently do not correspond

² Prof. Sir W. Barrett, *Psychical Research*, p. iii.

