

The Hand upon the Door

By A. Le Braz

It happened at Pont Labbé nearly seventy years ago. My grandmother was very ill, was indeed at the point of death. My mother was sitting up by her bedside together with her three sisters. Towards the middle of the night my mother said to her sisters, who were still young, and were overcome with fatigue: "Go and rest, my dears; half the night is over. I will watch alone until the morning."

The three girls went up to the room they shared. As the one who came last was closing the door she cried out, "Only look!"

Upon the wooden door a hand was outstretched, the five fingers open—a thin, bony, wrinkled band, with large prominent veins, a hand exactly like that of the old dying woman.

The girls knelt down, terror-stricken, to say their usual prayers by their bedside, but it was in vain that they buried their heads in their mattresses and endeavoured to attend to what they were saying. They could not help thinking of the hand, and could not restrain themselves from casting a glance sideways to see if it was still visible.

The hand remained stationary where it was.

Suddenly my mother came upstairs.

"Come," she said; "I think the end is near."

They went down, all four together, and were just in time to hear the last sigh of the old woman.

(Related by Madame Riolay, Quimper. June 1891.)