

A Ghost Seen in Borrowdale, Cumberland

By Jessie Middleton

Dr. Haswell, of Leamington, had the following strange experience in the North of England, which he has thus described to me:

“Some few years ago, in the month of November, my friend B— and I were staying at Rosthwaite, in Borrowdale. At the time we were keen on photography, and we found many excellent opportunities of practising our hobby amongst the hills and valleys of this charming place.

“One day we went to the lonely hamlet of Watendlath, and after a fairly successful time with our cameras, were returning to Rosthwaite as the mournful autumn sun was nearing the high nountains in the south-west.

“From Watendlath to Rosthwaite the steep hill track passes a plantation of larch on the left. When we reached this place we decided to go round the other side of the plantation in the hope of finding some fresh subject. My friend lingered a few minutes behind, whilst I went forward and found myself on the wrong side of a stone wall. To regain the usual track I had to climb this wall. This I did, climbing to the top and leaving my camera ‘and bag there whilst I jumped down on to the turf. Having secured my apparatus, I waited near the wall till B— could join me. I then looked towards the west and saw, close to the wall, scarcely fifty yards ahead, the figure of a lady (I use the word ‘lady’ as distinguished from ‘countrywoman’) bending over, looking towards the wall as if searching for something on the ground. The lady was dressed in black, or a very dark-coloured material; there was nothing antique or remarkable about her appearance, and I concluded that she must be a tourist. Wondering what she might be looking for, I watched her for a minute or so. It then occurred to me that she might be startled if I went forward, so I remained where I was, waiting for my friend.

“He soon came up and scaled the wall. We then moved on for a yard or two, and it struck me at that moment that I might get a picture looking back in the direction we had come from. To my great astonishment, on turning again towards Rosthwaite *I found the lady had vanished*. I immediately said to B—, ‘Where is that lady gone?’

“He replied, ‘What lady?’

“I answered, ‘Didn’t you see a lady there looking at the ground?’

B— replied that he had seen nobody.

“I then told him that I was sure he must have seen the lady, which was my reason for not having drawn his attention to her sooner. Feeling curious, we both examined the whole place round, but could find no trace of any lady. In fact, there was nobody in sight in any direction. It would have been very difficult for a lady to climb over the wall about there, for it was rather high and the stones loose; and even if it had been done she could not possibly have concealed herself on the other side, where the open fell lay, with pools of water in the foreground.

Nor could any person have escaped our observation on the track we followed to Rosthwaite. It was impossible.

“The face of the apparition—for such I concluded the ‘lady’ must have been—was peculiarly dusky; it may have been partly averted. No solution was ever found, and though I watched carefully for some days to see if any person at all like what I had seen

were really living about Rosthwaite, I failed to find any. There was some movement in the figure I saw, though not much; and in point of time it remained visible to me for several minutes.”