

BYWAYS OF GHOST-LAND

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649092314

Byways of ghost-land by Elliott O'Donnell

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

ELLIOTT O'DONNELL

**BYWAYS OF
GHOST-LAND**

BYWAYS OF GHOST-LAND

BYWAYS OF GHOST-LAND

BY

ELLIOTT O'DONNELL

AUTHOR OF

"SOME HAUNTED HOUSES OF ENGLAND AND WALES,"
"HAUNTED HOUSES OF LONDON," "GHOSTLY PHENOMENA,"
"DREAMS AND THEIR MEANINGS," "SCOTTISH GHOST TALES,"
"TRUE GHOST TALES," ETC., ETC.

WILLIAM RIDER AND SON, LIMITED

164 ALDERSGATE ST., LONDON, E.C.

1911

1461
5368

CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE
1. THE UNKNOWN BRAIN	1
2. THE OCCULT IN SHADOWS	21
3. OBSESSION, POSSESSION	28
4. OCCULT HOOLIGANS	47
5. SYLVAN HORRORS	56
6. COMPLEX HAUNTINGS AND OCCULT BESTIALITIES	80
7. VAMPIRES, WERE-WOLVES, FOX-WOMEN, ETC.	110
8. DEATH-WARNINGS AND FAMILY GHOSTS	132
9. SUPERSTITIONS AND FORTUNES	153
10. THE HAND OF GLORY; THE BLOODY HAND OF ULSTER; THE SEVENTH SON; BIRTH-MARKS; NATURE'S DEVIL SIGNALS; PRE-EXISTENCE; THE FUTURE; PROJECTION; TELEPATHY; ETC.	176
11. OCCULT INHABITANTS OF THE SEA AND RIVERS	198
12. BUDDHAS AND BOGGLE CHAIRS	210
INDEX	244

468773
LIB SETS

BYWAYS OF GHOST-LAND

CHAPTER I

THE UNKNOWN BRAIN

WHETHER all that constitutes man's spiritual nature, that is to say, ALL his mind, is inseparably amalgamated with the whitish mass of soft matter enclosed in his cranium and called his brain, is a question that must, one supposes, be ever open to debate.

One knows that this whitish substance is the centre of the nervous system and the seat of consciousness and volition, and, from the constant study of character by type or by phrenology, one may even go on to deduce with reason that in this protoplasmic substance—in each of the numerous cells into which it is divided and subdivided—are located the human faculties. Hence, it would seem that one may rationally conclude, that all man's vital force, all that comprises his mind—*i.e.* the power in him that conceives, remembers, reasons, wills—is so wrapped up in the actual matter of his cerebrum as to be incapable of existing apart from it; and that as a natural sequence thereto, on the dissolution of the brain, the mind

and everything pertaining to the mind dies with it —there is no future life because there is nothing left to survive.

Such a condition, if complete annihilation can be so named, is the one and only conclusion to the doctrine that mind—crude, undiagnosed mind—is dependent on matter, a doctrine confirmed by the apparent facts that injury to the cranium is accompanied by unconsciousness and protracted loss of memory, and that the sanity of the individual is entirely contingent upon the state of his cerebral matter—a clot of blood in one of the cerebral veins, or the unhealthy condition of a cell, being in itself sufficient to bring about a complete mental metamorphose, and, in common parlance, to produce madness.

In the deepest of sleeps, too, when there is less blood in the cerebral veins, and the muscles are generally relaxed, and the pulse is slower, and the respiratory movements are fewer in number, consciousness departs, and man apparently lapses into a state of absolute nothingness which materialists, not unreasonably, presume must be akin to death. It would appear, then, that our mental faculties are entirely regulated by, and consequently, entirely dependent on, the material within our brain cells, and that, granted certain conditions of that material, we have consciousness, and that, without those conditions, we have no consciousness—in other words, “our minds cease to exist.” Hence, there is no such thing as separate spiritual existence; mind is merely an eventuality of matter, and, when the latter perishes, the former perishes too. There

is nothing, absolutely nothing, that can exist apart from the physical.

This is an assertion—unquestionably dogmatic—that exponents of materialism hold to be logically unassailable. To disprove it may not be an easy task at present; but I am, nevertheless, convinced there is a world apart from matter—a superphysical plane with which part of us, at least, is in some way connected, and I discredit the materialist's dogma, partly because something in my nature compels me to an opposite conclusion, and partly because certain phenomena I have experienced, cannot, I am certain, have been produced by any physical agency.

In support of my theory that we are not solely material, but partly physical and partly superphysical, I maintain that consciousness is never wholly lost; that even in swoons and dreams, when all sensations would seem to be swallowed up in the blackness of darkness, there is SOME consciousness left—the consciousness of existence, of impression. We recover from a faint, or awake from the most profound of slumbers, and remember not that we have dreamed. Yet, if we think with sufficient concentration, our memory suddenly returns to us, and we recollect that, during the swoon or sleep, ALL thought was not obliterated, but, that we were conscious of being somewhere and of experiencing SOMETHING.

It is only in our lighter sleeps, when the spirit traverses superphysical planes more closely connected with the material, that we remember ALL that occurred. Most of us will agree that there are two distinct forms of mental existence—the

one in which we are conscious of the purely superphysical, and the one wherein we are only cognisant of the physical. In the first-named of these two mental existences—*i.e.* in swoons, sleep, and even death, consciousness is never entirely lost; we still think—we think with our spiritual or unknown brain; and when in the last-named state, *i.e.* in our physical wakefulness and life, we think with our material or known brain.

Unknown brains exist on all sides of us. Many of them are the earth-bound spirits of those whose spiritual or unknown brains, when on the earth, were starved to feed their material or known brains; or, in other words, the earth-bound spirits of those whose cravings, when in carnal form, were entirely animal. It is they, together with a variety of elementary forms of superphysical life (*i.e.* phantasms that have never inhabited any kind of earthly body), that constantly surround us, and, with their occult brains, suggest to our known brains every kind of base and impure thought.

Something, it is difficult to say what, usually warns me of the presence of these occult brains, and at certain times (and in certain places) I can feel, with my superphysical mind, their subtle hypnotic influences.

It is the unknown brain that produces those manifestations usually attributed to ghosts, and it is, more often than not, the possessors of the unknown brain in constant activity, *i.e.* the denizens of the superphysical world, who convey to our organs of hearing, either by suggestion or actual presentation, the sensations of uncanny knocks,