

**SPIRITUALISM AND MEDICINE IN
THE FIN DE SIÈCLE VAMPIRE FICTION
OF FLORENCE MARRYAT AND
ARABELLA KENEALY**

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Abstract

This thesis discusses the fin de siècle vampire fiction of Arabella Kenealy and Florence Marryat, and focuses on their representation of spiritualism and medicine. The research is part of the field focussing on fin de siècle and/or vampire fiction, and covers works that have relatively little scholarly attention, and incorporates relevant secondary work of the authors. The works that will be used to explain the spiritual and medical aspects in the authors' vampire fiction are Kenealy's essay *The Failure of Vivisection and Future of Medical Research*, and Marryat's spiritual works *There Is No Death* and *The Spirit World*. The question this thesis answers is: How are Arabella Kenealy and Florence Marryat's stances on spiritualism and medicine reflected in their analytical works and vampire narratives, and in turn, in their ideal doctor and spiritualist? By comparing the authors' stances on scientific experimentalism, the interchange of 'Vital Force', and vampirism, this thesis argues that Kenealy and Marryat adhere to a similar vision concerning the promising possibilities of spiritual interchange in the science of their respective fields of expertise. The interchange of vital force is influenced by two opposing figures that embody the topic of investigation in this thesis: the vampire that draws force from others, and the doctor that aims to restore it. Kenealy and Marryat's ideal physician adheres to certain theories concerning morality, heredity, the plan of Nature, and scientific enquiry which are evident in their analytical works, and which will be traced in the stories *A Beautiful Vampire* and *The Blood of the Vampire*.

Key words: Arabella Kenealy, Florence Marryat, *A Beautiful Vampire*, *The Blood of the Vampire*, medicine, spiritualism, fin de siècle, vampire fiction

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1. Introduction

Arabella Kenealy's *The Beautiful Vampire* ends with Doctor Andrew commenting on the preceding events that "[i]f I were to write that story in the *Lancet*, [...] I should be the laughing stock of the profession. Yet it is the very key-note of human health and human disease, this interchange of vital force which goes on continually between individuals" (24). Arabella Kenealy herself, and Florence Marryat, too, believed in a theory that was not broadly accepted by (scientific) society. Additionally, Kenealy and Marryat were both authors of fin de siècle vampire fiction. In 1897, the same year in which the illustrious *Dracula* was published, Marryat published *The Blood of the Vampire*. Arabella Kenealy had published her short story *A Beautiful Vampire* a year earlier. Both stories contain elements of medicine and spiritualism, a subject that was regarded as science at the end of the nineteenth century too, since Victorians were very interested in the "naturalization of the supernatural" (Noakes 1). Opinions about the validity of spiritualism – especially as a science – varied, however, with scientists who expressed an interest in the practice of spiritualism being sneered at by magazines such as the aforementioned *Lancet*, for their "quasi-scientific" attempts to prove the validity of phenomena that could have no interest for "educated and intelligent people" (Owen 142). Moreover, the authors' expressions of their take on medicine and spiritualism are not confined to their vampire fictions, since Kenealy and Marryat both wrote scientific texts in defence of their view on the practice of medicine (and medical science) and spiritualism respectively in addition to their fictional works.

The professions and interests of the two authors provide an interesting cultural context for their vampire fiction. Florence Marryat was not only an author, journalist, and actress, but foremost an outspoken spiritualist who published many works on the explanation and defence of spiritualism (Neisus). *There Is No Death* and *The Spirit World* are two of those works that will be linked to vampire fiction in this thesis. Similarly, Kenealy's statements in her essay *The Failure of Vivisection and the Future of Medical Research* will be applied to the two vampire stories.

Kenealy was a physician and campaigned for the abolishment of vivisection and “the perpetual contest in which Medical Science wages against Nature”, and her medical literature offers insight into the medical theories that underlie the idea of vampirism (Vivisection 17). Her essay on vivisection details what Kenealy considers the mistakes made in current medicine, and simultaneously promotes certain characteristics in physicians, which will be used in this essay to pinpoint the ideal doctor. When it comes to medicine and spiritualism, Kenealy writes that she has “obtained ‘cures’ apparently miraculous by merely removing sufferers from associating with some relative who was so draining their powers”, and Marryat claims to have been told by a medium that she herself “draw[s] so much on others, you empty them, and they have nothing more to give you. This is not fancy. It is because your nature has exhausted all it can draw from its surroundings” (Vivisection 39, No Death 174). These statements cement the authors’ literary vampirism in a theoretical frame; Kenealy accounts for vampirism through medicine and Marryat through spiritualism. Moreover, Marryat describes the ideal spiritualist: a character who adheres to rules very similar to those of Kenealy’s ideal doctor. The antagonist this doctor and spiritualist/medium both face is the vampire, and it turns out that a spiritual approach to medicine is a possible solution.

Marryat building a theory around spiritualism is not out of the ordinary; the end of the nineteenth century saw the rise of a scientific approach to spiritualism, with many essays being written about the possibilities of subject, while it simultaneously gained “a reputation for fraudulence” (Butler 152). The scientific approach to spiritualism was thus both beneficial and injurious, with one side trying to ground spiritualism in a scientifically proven framework, but doing so while facing an opposition from medical scientists that were hostile to any theory of causation which disregarded the basic principles of scientific naturalism (Owen 141). Spiritualism could even be seen as a disease that ought to be researched; with a doctor claiming

that “[s]cience should engage with spiritualism [...] to prove once and for all it was a dangerous delusion, [...] a probably factor in the total of insanity” (Owen 143).

Arabella Kenealy was not a doctor likely to declare spiritualists insane. She can be found dabbling in spiritualism in her memoir of her spiritualist father Edward Kenealy, in which she writes that his “spirit has pre-existed for millions of years, and that in palpable being it has played many parts, I am as well assured as I can be of anything” (Memoirs 82). Whether Arabella Kenealy was a spiritualist herself cannot be said without a doubt, but her father whom she greatly admired was. Edward Kenealy writes in his diary, which his daughter published, that he “ha[s] felt sometimes a strange spiritual power within me which foresees”, and recalls that he has had a conversation with a “vision” of an old man who appeared beside his bed. Edward Kenealy also says that

the pages of history and biography are full of supernatural admonitions, of dreams, voices, and presentiments, for purposes sometimes clearly seen, at others not so evident, and I have no reason to disbelieve that this was also not one. If these things occurred in the olden days, why should they not now? (Memoirs 109-110)

Furthermore, Arabella Kenealy is religious and believes in “the absolute existence of the soul”, and therefore does not adhere to the rigid branch of science that emerged during the 1850s, and with a sense of superiority “sought to destroy retrogressive myths and illusions”, representing “the ascendancy of science over faith” (Memoirs 299, Owen 140). Kenealy’s faith in Christian religion is not mutually exclusive with her scientific career. Spiritualism was popular because it “seemed to combine the empirical methods and discoveries of science [...] with the religious idea of the afterlife (“History of Modern Spiritualism”).

While (medical) science and spiritualism are very visible factors in *The Blood of the Vampire* and *A Beautiful Vampire*, they are not often specifically researched in the academic field. There is relatively few scholarship on *A Beautiful Vampire* in general, and that which does

exist is primarily centred on gender. Yet this does relate to this thesis when it comes to its focus on heredity, Heilmann and Sanders for example discuss the relationship between female neuters and reproduction, and Swenson too, relates vampirism to menopause and the continuation of life. The research concerning Marryat does discuss spiritualism, and focuses on gender and heredity too, with for example Owen discussing female spiritualists, and Willburn discussing the (racial) occult body.

Additionally, the aforementioned ideas of spiritualism and medicine do not exist in a literary vacuum, because similarities between *A Beautiful Vampire* and *The Blood of the Vampire* and other vampire novels in fin de siècle Britain can be found. Bram Stoker's Count Dracula attacks people who cannot be saved through modern medicine; Lucy's symptoms, for example, are not understood by a regular physician, and it is only when Dr. Van Helsing applies his knowledge of the occult that the vampire can be defeated. Richard Marsh also paints the picture of a foreign vampire-like figure who steals energy in his 1897 novel *The Beetle*, explicitly focussing on the occult rites of the antagonist. Published in 1896, M. E. Braddon's *Good Lady Ducayne* stars a vampire that is extremely similar to Kenealy's in its manifestation as an old, upper-class woman who remains alive by drawing upon the life-force of her servants. Depictions of this kind make up a body of narratives published in the same span of time, that display the same tropes of an occult, spiritual vampire that steals life force, whose actions and implications physicians can neither understand nor cure. However, these works do not have the added benefit of authors with backgrounds in spiritualism or medicine that can be used to understand these general trends. Kenealy and Marryat's professional opinions as a physician or spiritualist supply an extremely relevant and rare insight in the position of the two topics in late Victorian society and the academic field. Aside from focussing on the contextual works, this thesis will contribute to the study of vampire fiction and fin de siècle literature by focussing on novels that have received relatively little scholarly attention.

An investigation of the authors' additional work prompts the question: How are Arabella Kenealy and Florence Marryat's stances on spiritualism and medicine reflected in their analytical works and vampire narratives, and in turn, in their ideal doctor and spiritualist? In Chapter 2 Arabella Kenealy's view on medicine and the future of medical research will be explained and linked to her short story *A Beautiful Vampire* and general theories about the future of medicine. Chapter 3 will cover Florence Marryat's works on spiritualism and their implications in her vampire fiction. This will be linked to the science behind spiritualism and Kenealy's medical theories on the force of life. No matter what one's views on the reason for the life-drawing forces of the vampire are, the (spiritual) vampire is fundamentally different from the medical healer in the sense that one is drawing life from its victim, while the other attempts to restore it. This thesis shows that spiritualism and Kenealy's take on the future of medicine are similar; since established medicine fails to understand the symptoms of vampirism and modern medicine's approach to the force of life disregards its spiritual aspect. Kenealy's theory on the proper investigation of the Healing Art, however, might prove a course of investigation that allows vampirism to be explained, and can be supported by Marryat's investigation of mediumship and spirituality. Furthermore, the social implications of the movements promoting scientific spiritualism and the abolishment of experimental vivisection and vaccination can be shown to be extremely similar in nature too.

2. *The practice of Medicine*

It is hard to find a vampire novel that does not include a doctor being called in to examine the victim. Often, these doctors are unable to cure their patient with traditional knowledge and methods. Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, for example, illustrates the shortcomings of accepted medical theory when compared to knowledge of the occult, and similarly Le Fanu's *Carmilla* stars two doctors, of which only one understands vampirism. The medical aspect in vampire fiction can be analysed in a multitude of aspects. How are the doctors represented? Do they adhere to a certain strand of medical enquiry, basing themselves on traditional or on experimental knowledge, for example? This chapter will first examine the medical profession and medical science in the United Kingdom at the end of the nineteenth century. Then Arabella Kenealy's vision on medical science as published in *The Failure of Vivisection and the Future of Medical Research* will be discussed, along with some of her medical theories on heredity and race improvement as explained in works such as *Feminism and Sex-Extinction*. The implications of these ideas will be traced in *A Beautiful Vampire*, and the way the characters of the novel adhere to Kenealy's ideas about the ideal Art of Healing will also be examined.

This chapter will outline the changes that took place in the field of science in the late Victorian age, such as the new technological possibilities and attitudes towards research, the emergence and friction of empirical and experimental practices such as vivisection, the position of peripheral groups in opposing established science, the rise of neurology, and in turn the exploration of the mind and Vital Force as the future of medicine. It will be argued that these circumstances are evident in Kenealy's essays because she involved herself in the debate and wrote about experimental science, race improvement, an approach to medicine based on the plan of Nature and the way vampirism violates this, and she advocates for a moral and spiritual physician to lead the way. These ideas are traced in the (doctors of) *A Beautiful Vampire* and evident in the faith in natural race improvement, morality, and the 'Nervous Influence'.

§ 2.1 Medicine in fin de siècle Britain

The end of the nineteenth century was a period in which medicine in Britain had undergone great changes both in its technological possibilities and attitude towards research. A factor in this process might be that Victorians were experiencing one of the highest incidences of disease and death in England's history: "[i]n Dickens's lifetime alone, four epidemics of cholera hit England killing 62,000 people in 1848, while in the preceding year 50,000 Londoners died of influenza" (Engelhardt 135). Diseases began to be identified, but also widespread, with outbreaks of typhus, typhoid, scarlet fever, measles, and the most deadly tuberculosis, commonly referred to as 'the white plague' (Engelhardt 135). Arabella Kenealy advocated morality and (Biblical) cleanliness to prevent disease, and such attitudes were reflected in measures such as The English sanitation reform movement which "stressed the eradication of disease through cleansing and scouring of both body and home (Engelhardt 139). Moreover, to secure cleanliness meant to remove filth, both moral and material, which made health care not strictly a business of providing a correct material environment, but also morally exemplary situations (Engelhardt 150). A more research-based and interdisciplinary approach to medicine was supported through a collaboration between nations and disciplines to collate data and work together toward a doctrine of medicine that embraced the 'whole spirit of humanity' rather than medical teams concentrating their efforts on local, individual cases" (Engelhardt 137). Medical science professionalized, and the 'Scientific Revolution' of the mid-to-late nineteenth century "instituted an epistemological shift away from the personal subjectivity that was the special province of the domestic novel, and embraced, or at the very least confronted, a newly rational and empirical consciousness" (Sparks 7).

Empirical and experimental practices such as vivisection advanced medical knowledge, but caused friction concerning their morality; and "[f]rom this debate emerged two opposing

images of the laboratory: on the one hand, as a scene of battle, a place of steely nerves and iron discipline, pitted against the forces of disorder, disease and degeneration; and on the other, as a place of senseless slaughter, of sympathies erased” (White 102-103). Inventions such as the sphygmograph, first developed in 1860, could register facts and replace human impressions with recorded and self-analysed facts, and forged the link between physiology and more institutionally established ‘hard’ sciences such as physics (White 104). Regarding human beings as science rather than patients caused some medical men to start to make a – sometimes disapproving – distinction between “men whose ‘profession is to discover’, rather than [...] ‘medical men [working] ... for the purpose of doing immediate good to mankind’” (White 117). Arabella Kenealy is a strong supporter of the latter type of physician. She, like many Victorians, opposed vivisection because of its cruelty, and vaccination too, for they considered it “blood contamination” or even “a state-imposed poison” (Behlmer 232).

The scientific discussion did not only concern medicine itself but also brought about social changes, with medical theories concerning class emerging, and the anti-vivisection movement being led by mostly peripheral groups. An enormous debate and many protestations revealed a significant opposition towards certain medical practices – vivisection and compulsory vaccination being the most infamous – that were driving a moral wedge “between the pursuit of science and the humane role that the governing classes were supposed to uphold” (White 107). The emphasis on the ‘governing classes’ reveals a wide social influence, evident, for example, in anti-vivisectionists targeting “the lower orders of society, the more typical targets of animal protectionists” (White 107). Additionally, theories such as “the sedentary and gluttonous habits of the wealthy” being responsible for nervous temperaments, and gender ideologies designating women the physically, mentally, and emotionally weaker sex demonstrate the influences medical theories could have upon day-to-day life (Engelhardt 147, 148). Public health reform from the 1830s to the 1870s had “focused on sanitizing domestic space in order to ‘moralize’ it with

middle-class values” and gave women the authority of keepers of the domestic space and morality (Engelhardt 150). The anti-vivisection camping “has often been regarded a women’s movement”, and was one of the few activities in which women could play a public role and occupy positions of leadership (White 114).

Aside from gender and class theory emerging in medicine, neurological theories rose too, and were able to classify and explain mental issues, for example by relating diseases to the nervous system (Engelhardt 147). The mind took up an important position in the art of healing, for a solution to many physical issues was said to be emotional stability in order to lessen the risk of disease (Engelhardt 147). A “healthy mind was required to direct the will in its operations” and mental practices like spiritual mediumship were explained by claiming that “all Media and clairvoyants [are] more or less cataleptic” (Engelhardt 150, Behlmer 220). Mediums in trance were pricked with pins, and patients under the influence of hypnosis tested in experiments that ought to prove their unconscious mental condition, and whether this was proved or not, “[c]onventional medicine tended to view both states as manifestations of severe mental defect” and established that “the entranced risked real physical harm” (Behlmer 221). The possibility of the mind as a recipient to spiritual forces remained heavily disputed, but the position of the will as a seat of government, presiding over the contest among the lower drives of animal nature was generally accepted (White 103). A possible relationship between neurology, psychology and (spiritual) psychical research cannot be disregarded either, for “psychical researchers, being among the first to discuss seriously the implications of hypnosis and double consciousness for thinking about the psychology of selfhood, were an important vector for the advance of Continental psychology into England” (Ledger 269). Kenealy, too, will place great trust in the healing powers of the mind.

But Kenealy believed the mind could drain life force too – and other theories concerning the boundaries of life and death caused public unease (Behlmer 213). A century before the

vivisection debate ‘dextrous management’ emerged as a new theory, according to which electricity might alternatively suspend and restore animation in certain animals (Behlmer 213). If electricity could indeed restore a dead person to life, the idea of a vampire suddenly seems less far-fetched. Kenealy’s vampire that uses the powers of the mind to extract life force thus overlaps with some of the newly emerging theories in a changing medical field. Yet her fictional doctor does not think he could publish about the vampiric theory without becoming “the laughing stock of the profession” (Beautiful Vampire 24). The scientific revolution has not brought about societal changes that would make such a publication possible. Regardless, the fact that experimental science is immoral is the biggest bone Kenealy has to pick with the scientists, as we shall see in the following subchapter.

§ 2.2 Arabella Kenealy’s ‘*The Failure of Vivisection and the Future of Medical Research*’

Arabella Kenealy was a physician herself, and involved in the debate concerning the future of medical research. Her essay *The Failure of Vivisection and the Future of Medical Research*, published in 1909, condemns vivisection, vaccination, and experimental science in general. This does however not mean that she was against the furthering of scientific knowledge altogether, she laments that compared to other sciences “Medical Science has been left far behind, outpaced and powerless before the alarming inroads of a Disease and Degeneracy which have been ever increasing in ratio, ever intensifying in degree” (Vivisection 3) and improvement is necessary. Yet the accepted methods of research have been “hindering and misleading Medical Science” resulting in a signal “deplorable inadequacy of the healing art” (Vivisection 4). This incorrect approach to the restoration of health is what according to her allows for “an almost universal Degeneracy, as shown by our spectacled, and adenoid-afflicted, mentally and otherwise

deficient children; by our anæmic, neurotic, and precocious girls and boys; and by our valetudinarian adults” (Vivisection 4).

This focus on degeneracy is a recurring theme in her essay, and a major focus point in her works on race improvement. Kenealy explains the occurrence of cancer as “lower tissue”, as a “mere reversion to an earlier period of his evolution” (Vivisection 5). She refers to cancerous cells as “a little group of disaffected aliens” - which is an apt description for her vampire Lady Deverish too, because she poisons the system without being affected by her own degeneracy (Vivisection 5). Similarly, she also refers to the practice of vivisection itself as a “survival from barbaric times” (Vivisection 3). Vaccination as well, is condemned because of its unnatural effects that are not transmitted through offspring (Vivisection 33). According to Kenealy evolution should be gradual and imperceptible, not a morbid and violent process (Vivisection 33). Instead of vaccination and vivisection Kenealy promotes careful procreation resulting in the best results in offspring being from persons of highly specialized and opposite types (Vivisection 37). And should a child born under these ideal circumstances fall ill, the method of healing should be to study “the racial, social, family, and personal causes at the back of this cell-degeneration, [...] the *causa causans*” (Vivisection 6). She goes on to conclude that a “most valuable field of inquiry lies in the Effects upon Offspring of the Prenatal Conditions of the Parents - and more especially of the Mother” (Vivisection 37). Kenealy is thus a firm believer in degeneration and heredity, and believes that the Art of Healing can only battle already widespread problems through evolutionary planning, not through vivisection and vaccination.

So she advocates an approach to medicine that is based on the forces of Nature, observation and common sense, and that does not include the observations based on the intestines of animals, for she claims “fallacious and misleading results [...] must inevitably come from the application to man of conclusions based on phenomena in lower creatures” (Vivisection 4). Instead, she suggests physicians should rely upon “mere commonsense principles derived from

everyday and clinical experiences” (Vivisection 5). Instructions regarding diet, personal hygiene, habits of rest and sleep, fresh air and exercise, medicated baths and mineral waters to wash out waste materials from the system are what should account for the restoration of health instead (Vivisection 5). This ties in with her rather fatalistic philosophy that the medical practice should (merely) provide the best conditions for [a patient’s] system to work out its own cure (Vivisection 33). Current medical scientists do nothing but “disregard the bigger truth” with their “fetish faith” in vivisection and other practices in the “perpetual contest which Medical Science wages against Nature” in which “Nature has once again, as ever, been shown to be right” (Vivisection 5, 4, 17). Furthermore, we are dealing dangerously when we attempt to divert the plan of nature, and we should not be immune to deleterious factors, for that is the parent of Degeneracy (Vivisection 25). And so Kenealy chastises medical science that finds error with nature, instead arguing that “sick babies are healthy babies”, and “Disease may be a mere symptom of Development” (Vivisection 32). Tying in with her efforts for race improvement, her ideas can be summed up in the idea that “Nature’s aim is not only the preservation of the individual, but also the preservation and evolution of the type. And having in her mind a definite idea of the perfectly evolved man, she has been compelled (unless she would make him superhuman) to restrict the limits within which his health can be maintained and his evolution can proceed” (Vivisection 6-7). Mankind’s approach to science should be that of offering support to the plan of Nature, whilst providing ideal conditions for optimal evolution.

Kenealy’s vampire Lady Deverish *does* overstep that restricted limit within which health can be obtained, because vampires use an unnatural practice to live on energy that is not theirs. Many characteristics of the vampire relate back to Kenealy’s vision on medicine. First of all, she heavily opposes vaccination, and other unnatural methods of blood/fluids transfusion. She thinks that “the far-reaching results of substances introduced directly into the blood are not understood, and the mental effect upon the patient is a morbid one” (Vivisection 38). That Lady Deverish

“would drink blood out of living bodies rather than [...] die”, exemplifies the error of this practice (Beautiful Vampire 20). Secondly, Lady Deverish infects those around her, by making them ill through simply being in her presence. Deverish is reminiscent of “a typhoid-carrier” Kenealy describes, who was “herself apparently in perfect health” and in the course of five years “occasioned typhoid epidemics in seven different households”. Deverish is in perfect health herself, and the only one immune to the sickness she spreads. That immunity is an additional thing Kenealy deplors, for “these are persons who appear to be in health, despite the facts that they manufacture [...] poisons [...]; they are degenerate to so striking a degree, have so far deteriorated from the healthy normal, that their systems generate and tolerate without attempting to eliminate [...] poisons” (Vivisection 24). The vampire’s system has mutated so far from that of a normal person’s that it does not even fight illness in a natural manner, but simply lives on the vital force of others. Lady Deverish has killed many people in that manner, in the “battle between the general system and the local enemy, to end usually, alas! in the defeat and death of the general system” (Vivisection 6). Yet at least the victims die a natural death, for the “defeat and death [...] are nevertheless an attestation of health, the body succumbing in its strenuous war upon, instead of tolerating further existence side by side with, its degenerate invaders” (Vivisection 6). To die as the victim of a vampire is therefore better than to continue to live being one, and continuing the immunity and infection of vampirism.

So instead of using vivisection and vaccination that create immunity, the doctor must use remedies that have demonstrated their value, and most of all employ the “suggestive power of the physician, doubtless also with the presence [...] of that healing magnetism which some persons undoubtedly possess (Vivisection 39). Some people possess a *healing power*, while others *draw* life from others. Kenealy calls this ‘the Nervous Influence’, and exemplifies it by mentioning a case in which she removed the children from a sick mother who was drawing upon their force. She illustrates the backbone of her take on medical science as:

the Nervous Influence, benign or injurious, which persons exert upon one another, and the degree to which those whose nervous forces are exhausted by starvation, by ill-health or by over-activity draw upon the forces of others. In this field lies a whole new Science. Constitutional exhaustion of another by a “consumptive” living in the same house by means of this absorption of vital force plays, I am convinced, a far more important part [...]. In my own practice I have obtained “cures” apparently miraculous by merely removing sufferers from associating with some relative who was so draining their powers. (Vivisection 39)

Consumptive living or the Nervous Influence is simply another term for vampirism, and a theory that Kenealy believed would actually explain diseases, and most importantly, be pivotal in curing them.

It is significant that, according to Kenealy, this vampirism is not always conscious, and not every vampire is purposely using immoral practices – yet her medical theories are all accompanied by a philosophy concerning their morality. First, Kenealy’s opposition to the practice of vivisection originates in “moral and humane ideas” that will develop in a new and enlightened, “truly noble” Medical Science (Vivisection 12). Secondly, morality is a significant factor in her theories on race-improvement as well. The concept of a physical degeneration has been mentioned before, but Kenealy attributed as much value to the moral behaviour of parents upon the health of their children. So does she blame “Employment of the mother in the Labour market” for possible exhaustion of her powers that “only dregs of her resources for the development of her child”. Again, Kenealy believes in the possibility of (selfishly) draining the force of life that belongs to another person. Additionally, Kenealy urges doctors to not be “locked up in laboratories” when the time comes to actually save people, and names her theory on individuals drawing on the life force of others “an excellent reason [...] for improving the life-conditions of our poorer brothers, lest their starved and devitalised bodies prove a perpetual drain

upon the nerve-forces of better-nurtured systems (Vivisection 15, 40). Similarly, she mentions the abolishment of child labour, saying that “the Agitation against Child-Labour, so disastrous to racial health and development, has not emanated from Medical Science, but took source in the public senses of justice and of pity” (Vivisection 11). Finally, the medical science she opposes also proves a liability towards the morality of the race because “who shall say but that in these morbid and unnatural comminglings of human blood with calf- and horse-serums we do not also seal the treaty of a terrible moral devolution?” (Vivisection 26). Thus Kenealy feared the impact the neglect of parental morality and the immoral qualities of vaccination and vivisection would have upon society.

The moral influence therefore contributes to the physical heredity of personal traits, and combined with her faith in degeneration it is no wonder that Kenealy claims that “we [...] monstrously delude ourselves as to believe that, if we take a *clean-blooded, healthy* human infant, the child of clean-blooded, *cultured parents*, and inoculate it from [...] artificially produced sores [...] we increase for a number of years the vital tone and resisting power of its blood and tissues (Vivisection 24). The blood and culture of the parents are concepts that determine the health of the child, not the medical application of inoculation or practices based on vivisection. All methods which aim at stifling the warnings of disease and at suppressing symptoms are harmful and unscientific. Instead, consumptive living should be the focus of the future of medical research, and “hypnotism and allied agencies” are a pivotal point of investigation (Vivisection 39). Her theory of Nervous Influence and ‘Vital Force’ is that it is “Nature’s method of preserving a great level of average health and development, and of preventing the individual from outstripping the race” (Vivisection 40). Again, the morally right thing to do is to adhere to nature’s plan.

§ 2.3 Medicine in '*A Beautiful Vampire*'¹

Publishing *A Beautiful Vampire* in 1897, Kenealy is quick to make Dr Andrew, the story's main physician and supporter of the protagonist Marian, a puppet through which to voice her opinions. The doctor is described as an intelligent man whom everybody likes, and his sole fault is that of his "mistaken kindness" by which he allows a poor family to have its ninth child (*Beautiful Vampire* 4). The father of the family was unable to provide properly and drank, and therefore Kenealy would disapprove of procreation because of the moral and physical degeneracy that the children would undoubtedly acquire. Other than his support of the unfit parents, he is mistaken in the way he attempts to solve the problem of the vampire; he wants to poison the vampire Lady Deverish, but nurse Marian proposes the "safer and more justifiable plan" of letting nature run its course, since "poison is uncalled for" (*Beautiful Vampire* 17). This ties in with Kenealy's disapproval of unnatural remedies such as vaccination, and the wish to not disturb natural processes. Marian proposes to remove sources of life from the vicinity of Lady Deverish, and to convince the vampire that her powers are draining. Marian is still not assured that vampirism is possible, and explains that "[w]hether Dr Andrew and I were justified in that we did I sometimes wonder now. [...] In face of the horrible facts I had no room to question it. If that [Lady Deverish] believed were true, we were assuredly justified; if not, that we did could not alter results" (*Beautiful Vampire* 22). And so Marian's plan is not only letting nature run its course, but also the most morally correct. Together, the nurse and doctor - in line with Kenealy's vision - provide the best possible circumstances for Lady Deverish to recover in her own right. They are providing care and sending for "[e]verything science afforded in the way of food and stimulant", with Dr Andrews now saying that they must give her every justifiable chance (*Beautiful Vampire* 23). Unfortunately, the victims of the vampire were not granted this opportunity and could "neither eat nor rest" (*Beautiful Vampire* 13). Dr Andrews is now

¹ A summary of *A Beautiful Vampire* is given in the appendix, on page 50.

practicing the way Marian suggested, and also observes the way a good doctor should according to Kenealy; “For some years I have studied [Lady Deverish] closely. She is the arch-type of a class of persons I have long had under observation” (Beautiful Vampire 19).

In detailing this class of person, Dr Andrews describes Kenealy’s theory of the Nervous Influence and vital force, which is made out to be the core of vampirism in *The Beautiful Vampire*;

‘The law of life,’ he said, ‘makes creatures inter-dependent. Physical vitality is subject to physical laws of diffusion and equalisation. One person below par absorbs the nerve and life sources of healthier with them. [...] Wives and husbands, sisters and brothers, friends and acquaintances: there is a constant interchange of vital force. Lady Deverish has to my knowledge been the actual cause of death of a dozen persons. Besides these she has drained the health of everybody associated with her. And in her case - a rare and extreme one - the faculty is conscious and voluntary. (Beautiful Vampire 19)

He also associates himself with Kenealy’s call for research of the mind and ‘plane of psychology’, calling the circumstances “interesting, psychologically” finding that the power “depends largely on force of will and concentration” (Beautiful Vampire 19, 20). Additionally, her support of the investigation of hypnotism is warranted by Lady Deverish’s “basilisk stare, straining her will. She had undoubtedly some baleful hypnotic power which set [people] trembling and stumbling about. [...] They would seem drawn, as by some spell, to stand motionless and dazed beside her bed” (Beautiful Vampire 22). The use of hypnotism, mind-control, and the usurping of energy is again significant and testifies to Kenealy’s faith in the power of the mind. And compared to other vampire novels, “Kenealy was an early purveyor of the ‘psychic vampire’, a figure more typical in Edwardian literature who drinks, energy, emotional generosity, self-control, creativity, talent, memories” rather than blood (Swenson 31).

The team of Dr Andrews and his theoretical knowledge, and Marian and her practicality are opposed to “[o]ld Dr Byrne”, in whose firm Andrew is the junior partner, and who is blind to the true cause of illness (*Beautiful Vampire*). Byrne is the one to take over after Dr Andrews has tried to strangle Deverish, and he does not suspect a thing. He also wanted to send a scared and sick nurse straight back to Lady Deverish’s house. When Dr Andrew’s remarks that she does not look strong enough for nursing Byrne answers that she is “[s]trong enough, [...] a week ago she was sturdy and robust. The Deverish takes care of that. Can’t stand sickness about her” (*Beautiful Vampire* 9). Instead of diagnosing the true cause and preventing her from going back like Dr Andrews does, Byrne remarks that there must be something wrong with the house and blames the ventilation (*Beautiful Vampire* 9). He does not explain why Lady Deverish would not suffer herself, and when later in the story she does fall terribly ill, he attributes it to the shock of bad news. “Why it developed some hours before the news arrived he did not explain”, and he prescribes ammonia (*Vivisection* 15). Even when Lady Deverish weeps that she must have health about her, “[g]et me healthy children”, he complies in all innocence (*Beautiful Vampire* 21). ““Why, of course,” he said; ‘it will be cheerful for you. Get some cherry-cheeked children to amuse her ladyship, Nurse’” (*Beautiful Vampire* 22). But Marian smartly ignores his orders. She is an adherent to the right and effective kind of the art of healing.

In addition to her medical protocols, Kenealy’s theories on heredity and race improvement are reflected in *A Beautiful Vampire*. For one it is suggested that Dr Andrews might be suffering from madness in the family, for his “peculiar” mother “wrote books” (*Beautiful Vampire* 4)². There is also Lady Deverish’s obsession with children; she invites the parson’s children over for tea, asks for the gardener’s child, even though Marian “had never supposed her fond of children” (*Beautiful Vampire* 16). They seem to be the ultimate source of force of life, not yet taxing their powers by raising children themselves. Kristine Swenson relates Lady

² Kenealy herself never had any children (“Arabella Kenealy”)

Deverish's obsession with children and beauty to Kenealy's race improvement theory and the boundaries of motherhood. The ageing women, like the "neuter" and the menopausal woman, would be an example of a "eugenic monstrosity" (Swenson 27). Swenson claims that "a century ago, the medicalization of female sexuality was largely in the interest of eugenics," and that in Kenealy's fiction "these 'other' women, then, most often, appear on the margins of her narratives as foils for the 'good' woman" (Swenson 28, 29). Because "vampires operate as floating signifiers that embody the desires, ills, and dreads of a particular moment", and "in the self-conscious 1890s, females would dominate vampire iconography" it is no wonder Lady Deverish is an unnatural, old woman that steals beauty and powers from reproductive people (Swenson 30). Lady Deverish breaks Kenealy's rules on race improvement by stealing vitality that children need. Nurse Marian, too, is a dissident to Kenealy's rules, for she is a working woman that exhausts the energy her children might need. Despite not being Kenealy's ideal woman, Marian is the hero of the story. She is not described as youthful or healthy because of her profession, since according to Kenealy "with the constitutional and biological changes come physical changes too. In women in whom sex is not highly-specialised, middle-age entails, with its quasi-masculine physical phase, quasi-masculine mental traits" (Sex-extinction 122). But while the menopausal woman and the hard worker would both not have been deemed fit by Kenealy to reproduce, at least Marian has used her force to benefit race improvement by putting an end to the vampirism.

Kenealy "depicted medical women as sexual neuters, and yet invested them with enormous physical strength and moral authority", and Marian most definitely faced the draining of her energy bravely, while significantly still adhering to the moral plan (Heilmann and Sanders 289). Marian might not be pretty enough to attract a suitor because she "has a living to get", in Kenealy's vision that is no issue because as a working woman she ought not to reproduce anyway (Beautiful Vampire 8). The fact that the vampire who abuses the 'Nervous Influence' is

eventually eliminated by two moral and practical medical workers who let Nature run its course ties in with Kenealy's theories on medicine and the possibility of spiritual interchange. In the next chapter it will be established that these theories can also be applied to Florence Marryat's *The Blood of the Vampire*.

3. *The Practice of Spiritualism*

Florence Marryat starts her 1891 spiritual book *There Is No Death* in a very defensive manner. She claims that while her writings are almost incredible, she does not expect to be disbelieved - except by such as are capable of deception themselves (No Death 5). Yet many journalists and scholars were on a quest to disprove spiritualism, with intellectuals arguing that the whole reasoning behind physics “is based on the assumption that these [Spiritualistic] things do *not* happen” (Brown 24). Opposing these people were a big group of believers, with supporters congregating in a Spiritualist church in 1853, writing for a spiritualist newspaper two years later, and a UK national Spiritualist meeting being held in 1890 (“History of Modern Spiritualism”). This chapter will examine first these and other characteristics of spiritualism in fin de siècle Britain, and then discuss Florence Marryat’s works *There Is No Death* and *The Spirit World*. Again, the topics of Victorian (medical) science, morality, the plan of God/Nature, and heredity will be discussed in detail. This will be followed by the representation of spiritualism in her vampire novel *The Blood of the Vampire*.

This chapter will outline how Victorian spiritualism was not on the outskirts of society and had social influences, for it was a progressive movement supported by peripheral groups, and not mutually exclusive with science. Marryat’s spiritual works are argued to underscore this by focussing on her attempts to restore the interest in and reputation of spiritualism, and to emphasise the benefits spiritualism could have to (medical) science should it adhere to theories concerning morality, the plan of Nature, and heredity. The Nervous Influence is again the pivotal in this research and exemplified in *The Blood of the Vampire*. This fiction again is argued to promote morality, heredity, scientific spiritualism, and the plan of Nature.

§ 3.1 *Spiritualism in fin de siècle Britain*

This chapter will mainly focus on fin de siècle spiritualism and its relation to (medical) science and Victorian society. Despite being a significant development in its own right,

spiritualism influenced society in terms of religion and women's rights, and its investigation ties in with contemporary attitudes about science and progression. 31 March 1848 has been used as the specific origin for modern spiritualism, because on that day the two Fox sisters in New York heard 'rappings' and claimed to hold communication with spirits through them (Kontou and Willburn 142). Despite the fact that the sisters were soon exposed for having produced the rappings by snapping their toe-joints, the popularity of spiritualism rose enormously, and it soon spread to the UK (Kontou and Willburn 142).

Victorian spiritualism is no longer viewed as "having been on the outskirts of society and culture, but rather as culturally central for many Victorians", and its social consequences are significant (Kontou and Willburn 1). Whether one opposed spiritualism or not, there is no denying that "[b]y the 1860s Spiritualism had become a conspicuous and, to many, lamentable part of Victorian cultural life, with its mediums, specialist newspapers, pamphlets, treatises, societies and private and public séances"(Brown 26). Kontou wonders why the rappings of the Fox sisters created new spiritual fashions that had such an enormous influence, and says it is likely that several hypotheses are in part true: it was an age of rising mass consciousness (breaking down social boundaries was newly desirable), it was the age of increasing democratization, the age of reform and revolution, and it was the Industrial Age with advances in science and technology both visible and dazzling (Kontou and Willburn 4). And while these revolutions progressed, the composition of the institutions of reform also changed; spiritual leadership was almost entirely lay, and often figureheads were women, in a time where their sex had had "very slim opportunities to exercise spiritual leadership in most established denominations" ("History of Modern Spiritualism"). While also a popular form of entertainment in upper class drawing rooms, spiritualism "was largely a proletarian religious movement in significant alliance with that class's new literacy and sense of power to make itself heard and, moreover, to remake the world. Early Spiritualism therefore perceived itself as a voice of the

‘progressive’ movements of the time” (‘History Spiritualism’). Spiritualism had that ability to reshape society in both in a societal and scientific manner. Like the anti-vivisection movement, it was typified by female and lower-class supporters and figureheads.

Yet the acquiring of scientific wisdom is not mutually exclusive with a belief in spiritualism, on the contrary, “[s]piritualism was popular, not just because it could entertain and provide comfort to the believer, but also because it seemed to combine the empirical methods and discoveries of science (such as the invisible force of electricity) with the religious idea of the afterlife” (‘History Spiritualism’). A group of intelligent and interested Victorians composed of eminent chemists and physicists, philosophers, philologists, biologists and embryologists, founded the Society for Psychical Research in 1882, and in the names of ‘progress, science and modernity’, conducted boundary-work across scientific fields (Kontou and Willburn 7). Kontou and Willburn define spiritualism as a forward looking movement because it was adaptable and modern, with, for example, spirits being photographed and striking typewriter keys (Kontou and Willburn 8). Modern aspects of spiritualism can also be found in methods such as hypnotism; a popular subject of medical research and not very different from mediumship in the sense that “transference in the nineteenth-century mesmerism and hypnotism suggests that the operator can be affected and infected by the subject” (Grimes 70). An important shift in the understanding of ‘life after death’ was the realisation that an event considered supernatural could occur within the boundaries of science rather than within the hazy speculations of superstition (Kontou and Willburn 9). Science did thus not strictly stifle theories about the possibility of spiritualism. Established religion, too, was not an institution that differed completely from the faith in spiritualism. The Catholic Church condemned spiritualism in 1898 and the Anglican Communion saw grave dangers in making “a religion of spiritualism” (‘History Spiritualism’). But be that as it may, “[s]ince scientists during this period were providing fewer supernatural and more natural explanations for the universe, spiritualist manifestations provided religious people with evidence

that there was more to the world that scientists had discovered”, and the spiritual aspects of religion could be justified through the spiritualistic movement (‘History Spiritualism’).

Spiritualism allowed the imagination of the Victorians to roam beyond that which was known, established, and scientifically proven. Marryat herself was accused of having sensational plots in her spiritualist fiction that could have been none other than figments of her imagination. She rebukes those accusations by saying that her most unlikely scenes were drawn from life and that the incidents in her ridiculed by the press have invariably been gained from the same source (Kontou and Willburn 226). We can never know that the truth behind Marryat’s spiritual works was, but fact is they were read by many and possibly believed by a big portion of her readers.

§ 3.2 Florence Marryat’s ‘*There Is No Death*’ and ‘*The Spirit World*’

Florence Marryat’s main aim in publishing her spiritual works was to inspire (scientific) interest in the practice of spiritualism, and she tries to make sure her narrative is seen as factual. The debate surrounding spiritualism was enormous, and reflected in the fact that *There Is No Death* was immensely popular and went through four editions in its first year of publication - but also became notorious amongst disbelievers and made Marryat an object of satire and criticism (Kontou and Willburn 223). Marryat’s spiritual works are recorded experiences that are meant to defend spiritualism from criticism and stimulate the further research public interest of subject. Throughout *There Is No Death*, Marryat defends herself from criticism by claiming that she is not looking to “start a theory nor to promulgate a doctrine”, but simply wishing to enlighten her readers to the hidden world of spiritualism, and that she intends to confine herself to recording facts (No Death 5). She says readers ought to believe her, for like Sir Samuel Baker who described an unknown world we now know as Africa, she is an author “well known in society, who had a reputation for veracity to maintain, and who would have been quickly found out had they dared to deceive” (No Death 6). In the second instalment of her spiritual works, *The Spirit*

World, published in 1894, Marryat takes on a critic attempting to disprove one of her visions in an entire chapter dedicated to ‘Miss Marryat’s bogus bogey’, but also devotes a chapter to discussing dozens of letters from people that felt prompted to tell her their spiritual experiences. Whether she is believed or not, it is the scientific *indifference* to spiritualism that irks her the most, for spiritualism enables “human powers greater than we have ever imagined, and we ought to do a great deal more with them than we do” (No Death 15).

Despite its so-called benefits, many attempts had been made by scientists and the government to reduce spiritualism’s credibility and popularity, and Marryat tries to restore it. Her friend and medium Florence Cook found herself entangled in numerous scandals that exposed her as fraudulent, despite having the endorsement of famous scientist William Crookes. Marryat compliments the latter in *There Is No Death*, and also vouches that she has seen Katie (the spirit associated with Cook) and Florence Cook together on several occasions. This was in defence of reports that claimed Cook was merely impersonating Katie, which Marryat says is understandable for “the strong likeness that existed between the medium and the spirit” (No Death 141). The books are filled with similar descriptions of séances and visions, and also make claims in favour of the legitimacy of spiritualists. But their legitimacy was very much doubted, and spiritualism even illegal, to which Marryat says that is unfair that “it is unfair that if old ladies are imprisoned for laying cards, then why not cheating merchants?” (No Death 201). She holds America as an example for Britain, because in the US public séances are not restricted or seen as a crime in any way (No Death 208).

Marryat thus seeks refuge in the prospering system of American (scientific) spiritualism, and also involves religion to justify a faith in spiritualism. Christian religious institutions were deterring universal knowledge of spiritualism by deeming it dangerous and immoral despite basing their dogmas on it. The existence of the afterlife, Jesus Christ’s healing mediumship, and the appearance of mediums in the Old Testament are cited as proof of spiritualism. Marryat

scolds the Catholic Church for believing spiritualism is “both possible and true, but diabolical - *unless confined to the authority of herself*” (Spirit World 11). The Protestant Church on the other hand, said that the dead could not return, and ascribed forces by which Spiritualism would operate as diabolical. Marryat hits back with “[p]erhaps the Protestant Church may remember that there was a time when all the powers of nature, such as thunder and lightning, and earthquakes, were attributed to the devil - anything, in short, which people understood as little as they do the *science* of Spiritualism (Spirit World 10-11). In this way, spiritualism is a phenomenon that simply needs more research in order for it to be understood. And once it finally is, it will become proof in its own right and “leave us no doubt” that the afterlife, which like “the old, cold faiths [has] melted away beneath the sun of Progress” does in fact exist (No Death 60). And thus the effect of a scientific exploration of spiritualism would benefit religion, and most importantly, “remove the fear of one’s own death” (No Death 264).

Once people understand that there is life after death, their morality on earth will change, and the relationship between spiritualism morality is a significant one. So does Marryat describe the spirit of a monk who must confess and redeem his sins before he is allowed to leave the earthly sphere (No Death 100). She emphasises the existence of a system of spheres through which spirits can work their way up towards heaven, after they have completed their “training to undergo”, because spirits do not become purified “directly a spirit leaves the body” (No Death 76, Spirit World 38). The research into spiritualism is also hindered by the moral aspect, because when it comes to mediumship “like attracts like” (No Death 262). Which is dangerous since people are “all surrounded the loving and noble-hearted by angels, the selfish and unbelieving by devils. Most séances have evil spirits because their sitters bring them there” (No Death 130). Marryat encountered some evil spirits that refuse to go and “show no signs of budging,” and warns that “not all manifestations were nice ones,” and can be produced by a power outside one’s own with no means of repressing it (No Death 235, 113). This is harmful to the (scientific)

reputation of spiritualism, because only people with appropriate faith can summon representative spirits. And when sceptics attempt a séance, they only “try and find out the falsehood, *not the truth* of Spiritualism, and are tricked by the very influences that attend their footsteps” (No Death 130). When pursued “out of curiosity rather than a desire to learn, [spiritualism] gives increased power to the evil that surrounds ourselves (No Death 130)”. Scientists that dismiss spiritualism as bogus will therefore not succeed in producing manifestations, or only summon bad spirits.

Scientists ought to recognize the potential and truth of Spiritualism and explore its possibilities - in medical science too. Marryat says proving the truth of Spiritualism is not easy and that “the best tests we receive are when the very secrets of our hearts, which we have not confided to our nearest friends, are revealed to us” (No Death 31-32). Despite the difficulty in finding other tests to prove it, there was most definitely scientific research; Marryat mentions the Dialectical society and stresses that not one of these men of learning and repute could find any natural cause for the wonders he had witnessed (No Death 52). Effectively, in *The Spirit World*, Marryat devotes an entire chapter on “How to investigate Spiritualism”, providing instructions on the state of the spirit right after death, the manner in which to involve oneself with spiritualism, the types of séances to attend, the ideal characteristics of a crowd attending séances, etc. (Spirit World 108). Marryat also quotes a Reverend who does not denounce the possibility of spiritualism saying that “[t]he time has come when we may promptly abolish the word ‘supernatural’ and distinguish merely between the ‘known’ and the ‘unknown’ in Nature” (Spirit World 73). And so progressive science ought to realise that there is nothing miraculous in Spiritualism, “and far from being *supernatural* it is only a continuation of Nature” (No Death 16). Marryat – like Kenealy – placed great importance in the unlimited and unquestionable power of the plan of God and Nature. Marryat’s disdain of people with no faith in Nature is evident in her description of a doctor she was on friendly terms with, who was a complete disbeliever in the existence of a future life, and one of those people that “have lost their powers of elasticity” and

that “instead of believing the power of God and the resources of nature to be illimitable, they want to keep them within the little circle that encompasses their own brain” (No Death 53).

Spiritualism would actually immensely benefit medical science, and Marryat laments that the aforementioned medical friend, like doctors in general, often attribute spiritual experiences “entirely to a diseased condition of mind or body” (No Death 53). The medical man is often opposed to the spiritualist, making faulty claims about illnesses that are actually attributed to spiritualism, or pronouncing a disease mortal when a medium has foreseen it is not (No Death 165). Yet more often than medicine opposing spiritualism, it actually benefits from it. The most striking example of the collaboration is that of medium Mrs. Fitzgerald, who was “a wonderful medical diagnoser”, and in the service the spirit of a well-known medical man (No Death 161). According to Marryat, she could see the inside of everybody as if they were made of glass, and tell her patients their exact disease. Secondly, Marryat describes a spirit – or ‘control’ – named Dewdrop who “regulated the internal machinery of her medium’s body” (No Death 156). The medium, Bessie, was prone to illness and very delicate, so had to take great care with her diet. Her control Dewdrop on the other hand, devoured food freely. “Yet Bessie has told me that she never felt any inconvenience from the food amalgamated with her system whilst under ‘Dewdrops’ control” (No Death 156). Thirdly, there is the mediumship of Mrs. Olive; who goes to sleep, wakes up with a distinctly manly voice, and turns out to be controlled by celebrated physician Sir John Forbes (No Death 196-197). Marryat’s neighbour at the séance tells her that he has almost as large a connection now as he had when alive, and the physician provides Marryat with a prescription (No Death 197). Marryat’s family doctor is disgruntled at her having consulted a new doctor; and a different doctor, Dr H, refuses to believe that a spirit could have opened a chest that was locked with knots that were known to medical men only (No Death 54). Generally, medical men are thus represented as very incredulous when it comes to spiritualism, Dr. H even confessing that he does “*not* wish to believe. If you convinced me of the truth of

Spiritualism, you would upset all the theories I have held for the best part of my life” (No Death 59). He would rather believe that his senses deceived him (No Death 54). But they might come to terms with spiritualism after death, and utilise it the way Sir Forbes does. The medical mediums greatly benefit the Art of Healing, but it is problematic that this does cause a “deterioration of [their] health and strength” (No Death 112).

This is because mediums in general are being drawn upon by spirits in order for them to materialise, and are often forced to quit after a certain amount of time because their physical strength is drained. It is also possible to hold communication with “spirits of people still in the flesh”, and this can account for the interchange of force too (No Death 34). Marryat herself is told that she is “one of the world’s magnets. [...] You draw people to you, and live upon their life, [...] if you continue to cling to those whose spiritual system you have exhausted, they would poison you instead of nourishing you. You may not like it, but those who you value most you should oftenest part with” (No Death 174-175). And this is not the case for Marryat only, an acquaintance of her consults a medium - not a doctor mind you - to find out what is causing her lover’s illness, and is told “What is the matter with him? Well ! that is easily answered. *You* are the matter with him ! His nerves are all shattered. You are too much for him in every respect, mentally and physically, and the sooner you are separated, the better for him” (Spirit World 215). Again, as covered in § 2.3, the interchange of vital force is essential in the progress of spiritualism, and in spiritual healing too. Marryat’s acquaintance is a vampire similar to Lady Deverish, be she not one consciously.

Like mediums and vampires, doctors can utilise the ‘Nervous Influence’ and ‘Vital Force’, and rely upon the powers of the mind to heal. Kenealy considers the present, orthodox Medical Science superfluous for burdening our minds with “the physiology of cats and guinea-pigs at an era when human physiology is lifting itself on to the plane of psychology” (Vivisection 39). Kenealy thinks the focus of medical research should be to investigate the possibilities of

treating the mind, and argues that hypnotism, ‘Suggestion’, and other allied phenomena should not be ignored. She does not doubt “that in this field and in the subconscious plane of mind which are their sources lies the future of Medical Science and of the Healing Art (Vivisection 39). Since Kenealy “increasingly interested herself in occultism” it is no wonder she takes on this spiritualist approach to the Art of Healing (Richardson). The way she describes how the physician is able to, “by the medium of his subconscious higher intelligence, so to bring himself into relation with the physiology of its patient (which is its lower expression) [which] will be subject to the physician’s will” and control a patient’s mind is similar to Marryat’s description of ‘trance of mediumship’, which is explained as the following:

A person thus gifted has the power of giving him or herself up to the control of the influences in command, who send him or her off to sleep, a sleep so deep and so like death that the spirit is actually parted *pro tem* from the body, which other spirits, sometimes living, but far oftener dead, enter and use as if it were their own.
(No Death 154)

Furthermore, Marryat’s descriptions of the relationship between a medium and a spirit could very well be the same interchange of forces that Kenealy bases her medical theory on. When discussing spiritualism with one of her friends who is a doctor, Marryat laments “Many a medical men attribute such experiences entirely to a diseased condition of mind or body” (No Death 53). But Kenealy is a different physician, who believes in a Vital Force, and suggests that

Mesmerism, Hypnotism, Telepathy and allied manifestations, have their source in this mysterious principle, which pervading creation, the Great Mind of the Universe, is the force about which the phenomena of evolution group themselves. Sooner or later our Scientists must recognize It, and in doing so will find the field of Medical knowledge flooded with new light. (Vivisection 31).

And so Kenealy steers medical science in the direction of spiritualism. She advocates that researchers should closely watch and interpret “the natural process” of “that which may be styled the physical conscience (the centre of subconscious intelligence, whose function it is to preserve the health)” (Vivisection 34). This subconscious intelligence is what may be used by Marryat’s spiritual physicians. The usage of Vital Force in the art of healing can thus be said to be closely connected to spiritualism, and Kenealy’s faith in the power of the mind, and the plan of Nature and natural methods underscores this.

And so it turns out that spiritualism can contribute to the Art of Healing through mediums, but that the practice can also be a drain on the human system. Most importantly, according to Marryat the fight for health ought not to matter that much. The main value of Spiritualism is to remove one’s fear of death. Marryat thus presents spiritualism as a phenomenon that has a harmonious place in the great plan of God and Nature. It draws *and* restores health, and that aspect along with other possibilities of Spiritualism should be researched and allowed to benefit society, and demonstrate that death is not to be feared but simply a transition.

§ 3.3 *Spiritualism in ‘The Blood of the Vampire’*³

The character that appears to be involved with spiritualism the most is the Baroness Madame Gobelli, but she actually represents a fraudulent trickster that pretends to have spiritual powers. She is a very antagonistic character that is constantly described as vulgar and deceitful, but despite this she is acquainted with upper class figures and strikes up a friendship with the protagonist Harriet. Throughout the novel she uses spiritualism to make threats, vaguely claiming that she has “more friends to ‘elp me than perhaps you know of”, and can hold “intercourse with certain supernatural and invisible beings, who had the power to wreak vengeance on all those who offended her” (Blood Vampire 160, 5). This scares many people into submission, and makes

³ A summary of *The Blood of the Vampire* is given in the appendix, on page 52.

her servant Ms. Wynward believe “the Baroness possesses great power - she could ruin me, I believe she could *kill* me if she chose” (Blood Vampire 151). The process the Baroness hosts is very much like the séances Marryat described. The Baroness’ son tells Harriet that

Mamma is very wonderful, you know! She can tell people things they never knew before. And she has a room where -- but I had better not say any more [...] horrible things go on in there! Mamma has threatened sometimes to make me go in with her, but I wouldn’t for all the world. [...] One girl told me before she left that Mamma was a witch, and could raise up the dead. (Blood Vampire 101)

Harriet is not as impressed as you might expect her to be. She says she does not believe the Baroness could bring the only person she would want to see, overseer Pete, back because “‘It wants ‘Obeah’ to do that!’” (Blood Vampire 101). Harriet is adherent to her mother’s, a voodoo priestess, kind of spirituality. She tells Bobby that the voodoo spirituality is “witchcraft”, and that she does not know if it is “wicked” or not (Blood Vampire 101). This supports Marryat’s theory that spirits can choose to appear or not.

Furthermore, Harriet seems to be the only person questioning the Baroness’ powers, and she details a different faith she adheres to, whose take on spiritualism is not identical to that of the Baroness: “She had been brought up by old Pete and the servants on her father’s plantation, to believe in witches, and the evil eye, and ‘Obeah’ and the whole cult of Devil worship”. And while the Baroness claims that she has friends “who can tell me everything - who can ‘elp me, if I choose, to give Life and Fortune to one person, and Trouble and Death another”, Harriet is wiser, and remarks “I know all about that, [...] but you can’t do me either good or harm. I want nothing from you and I never shall!” (Blood Vampire 43). This really complements Marryat’s spiritual theory which prescribes that spirits do not come to earth to run errands, and also that like attracts like; had the Baroness’ spiritual powers been real, she would have only attracted evil spirits. And indeed, Ms Wynward eventually breaks down and is furious at the Baroness for accusing Harriet

of unholy dealings, when she herself “for years past [has] made money by deceiving your fellow creatures in the grossest manner – who professed to hold communication with the spiritual world for their satisfaction, when if any spirits have come to you they must have been those of devils akin to your own!” (No Death 88). Besides trying to financially profit from it, The Baroness violates some other of Marryat’s laws for mediumship; she does not attempt to help people through it, and neither does she lose any of her own strength. This is later explained by the fact that all of it is simply a trick. Ms. Wynward was forced to “play cheating tricks with cards, and dress up stuffed figures to further your money-getting ends”, and even before this confession, Harriet could have realised she was being duped when none of the Baroness’ predictions regarding who will be at dinner or who Harriet will be romantically involved with come true (Blood Vampire 188, 104, 129).

While the Baroness may be a fraud, that does not mean the novel does not contain elements that the mediums in Marryat’s spiritual novels use; Doctor Phillips’ ‘prophecy’ that the child would die comes true, and the slaves already prophesied that “the child would grow up to be a murderess” (Blood Vampire 97, 83). Harriet’s eyes are described as seeming to hypnotise people on multiple occasions, and Ralph mentions “the old sensation of being drawn against my will - hypnotised, I suppose the scientists would call it - to be near to her (Blood Vampire 175). The most apparent example of Marryat’s spiritual theory of interchangeable life force is that Harriet – like her creator – draws strength out of people. The Baroness may be a fraud, but is right in the instance when she claims that Harriet’s ‘devilish arts’ have killed her son. “It’s ‘oo ‘ave killed ‘im, it’s your poisonous breath that ‘as sapped ‘is” [...] She has the vampire’s blood in ‘er and poisons everybody with whom she comes in contact (Blood Vampire 187). And indeed, near her, her friends or lovers feel something alike “a terrible oppression as though some one were sitting on my chest - and such a general feeling of emptiness”, and slowly turn more ill while Harriet grows more energetic and beautiful (Blood Vampire 22).

Harriet's vampiric condition is spread through a hereditary curse – “the fin the siècle's version of original sin” – mostly caused by her occult, gluttonous, and black mother (Hammack v). After Gobelli blames Harriet for killing her son, she exclaims “Do you suppose I don't know your 'istory? Do you think I 'aven't 'eard all about your parents and their vile doings – that I don't know your mother was a devilish negress, and your father a murderer?” (Blood Vampire 187). Doctor Phillips explains the family history by saying that her mother was “a fat, flabby half-caste”, sensual, gluttonous, and possessed a literal “thirst for blood” (Blood Vampire 83). Interestingly, this lust is attributed to vampirism. The servants declared that “when her slave mother was pregnant with her, she was bitten by a Vampire bat, which are formidable creatures in the West Indies, and are said to fan their victims to sleep with their enormous wings, whilst they suck their blood” (Blood Vampire 83). The doctor's faith in racism, atavism, and the occult spiritual powers of the mother are clearly expressed, and are what accounts for the hereditary vampire curse. Harriet's mother is ‘Obeah’, which means ‘diabolical witchcraft’, and the doctor claims that “by the way [Harriet] eats her food, and the way in which she uses her eyes, that she has inherited her half-cast mother's greedy and sensual disposition” (Blood Vampire 93). Heredity is an important theme throughout the novel, and Doctor Phillips states that “we medical men know the consequences of heredity, better than outsiders can do” (Blood Vampire 84). He asserts that heredity is a curse, and that additionally “Harriet Brandt carries a worse curse with her even than that! She possessed the fatal attributes of the Vampire that affected her mother's birth - that endured her with the thirst for blood, which characterised her life- that will make Harriet draw upon the health and strength of all with whom she may be intimately associated! (Blood Vampire 95). Eventually, Harriet is forced to realise that her parents made her “unfit to live” and she wants to go “to a world where the curse of heredity which they laid upon me may be mercifully wipes out” (Blood Vampire 226). Vampirism is a condition that cannot be overcome, and spiritualism and life after death make up the only possible relief.

The explanation of the hereditary curse has a distinct racist element to it. Harriet's "black blood and terrible proclivities" are claimed to be the cause of her bad nature (Blood Vampire 142). Stephanou mentions *The Blood of the Vampire* as one of the many novel that star vampires of colour, and points out that the racist discourse is "steeped in eugenics" and "defines Harriet's mother as a defective, atavistic, mixed racial and degenerated other" (Stephanou 109). Marryat's racism is also evident in her account of a séance that feature spirits of black people. She claims that she would have been able to smell the bad "negro bouquet" if the spirits of the black people had been hired actors instead of actual apparitions (No Death 215). Kenealy is not exactly exemplary either, claiming that "negroes who evolve beyond their fellows in *intellectual* and or *moral* power are particularly prone to tuberculosis or to blindness" (Vivisection 32). And while Harriet too tries her best to disassociate from "the little niggers who smell so nasty, you can't touch them", claiming that she *is* "English, you know", the importance of her prenatal condition seems to outweigh the guidance she received afterwards (Blood Vampire 16, 20). It seems that Marryat links black blood to vampirism (be it mixed with that of the vampire bat). Machlow even claims that Marryat locates "the origins of her gothic threat in the actual region of racial conflict" with "the overt invocation of racial pollution" reflecting the shifting nature of 'race' itself in the course of the century (qtd. in Willburn 438). Kenealy and Marryat's discourse promotes eugenics by seeming to proclaim that 'race-improvement' – both in terms of monitoring the racial other and social circumstances – would help lessen the implications of vampirism.

Aside from Harriet's mother, her father also plays a significant part in causing her evil nature, and represents an immoral branch of science that Marryat strongly opposes. While her mother represented her occultism and sensuality, Harriet's father stands for experimental science. Progenitors are important again, for "Harriet Brandt was not unintelligent, on the contrary she had inherited a very fair amount of brains from her scientific father - but no one ever had seemed to find it out" (Blood Vampire 180). And while her father is described as a doctor throughout the

novel, that definition infuriates Doctor Phillips. He makes an important distinction between a doctor and a scientist; “You call him a doctor - he was not worthy of the name. He was a scientist perhaps - a murderer certainly!” (Blood Vampire 82). Interestingly, like Kenealy it is the aspect of vivisection that Marryat condemns the most: “The Swiss laboratories are renowned for being the most foremost in vivisection and other branches of science that gratify the curiosity and harden the heart of man more than they confer any lasting benefit on humanity. Even there, Henry Brandt’s barbarity was considered to render him unfit for association with civilized practitioners” (Blood Vampire 82). Vivisection is regarded a horrible crime, and seems to have been transferred to Harriet, for when Ralph behaves coldly towards Harriet “[a] the Creole in her, came to the surface - like her cruel mother, she would have given over Ralph Pullen to the vivisectioning laboratory, if she could” (Blood Vampire 134). The novel is very much opposed to vivisection, and could have featured in Kenealy’s manifestation in the sense that Doctor Phillips also sneers that the vivisectionist performed experiments “simply for his own gratification and for no use that he made of them in treating his fellow creatures” (Blood Vampire 93).

Another common ground between the two vampire novels is that *The Blood of the Vampire*’s doctor, too, mentions a medical condition “not discussed amongst medical men” but “undoubtedly true” that is extremely similar to the Nervous Influence and compared to vampirism. Doctor Phillips describes two groups of people, the first are “born in this world who nourish those with whom they are associated; they *give out* their magnetic power, and their families, their husbands or wives, children and friends, feel the better for it”, the others “*draw* from their neighbours, sometimes making large demands upon their vitality - sapping their physical strength, and feeding upon them, as it were, until they are perfectly exhausted and unable to resist disease” (Blood Vampire 195). Again, the “proclivity has been likened to that of the vampire bat who is said to suck the breath of its victims” (Blood Vampire 195). Like in *A Beautiful Vampire*, the family of the affected party initially blames the drains for the unhealthy

disposition of the patient, and a doctor with occult knowledge and a belief in vampirism has to step in and explain the situation (Beautiful Vampire 10, Blood Vampire 223). Both doctors oppose vivisection and vaccination, and understand that – especially in cases like these – these practices will have no effect.

Finally, Marryat's acceptance of the plan of God and Nature and the benefits of the spiritual world are emphasised in the novel. Ms. Wynward tells Harriet that she is glad that Bobby is dead, "I am glad he has escaped from it all, for this is a wicked house, a godless, deceiving and slanderous house" (Blood Vampire 189). Death is not only an escape but also a way of "living with God", as Phillips consoles Margaret (No Death 97). Loved ones are taken away until "Christ our Lord, [is] ready to give them back into our arms again!" (Blood Vampire 210). Margaret consoles the Baroness, despite disliking her, because they both have to suffer the death of their children. She wishes for the strength of looking "forward to our happy meeting and reunion in the better land" ((Blood Vampire 210). *The Blood of the Vampire* echoes Marryat's theories on spiritualism, for the fraudulent medium is eventually exposed and has not been able to seek refuge in the true meaning of spiritualism: a removal of one's fear of death. Had Harriet continued to live as a vampire, she would never have found love or peace, nor would she arrive in a good sphere after her death. Even though Harriet suffers from hereditary curses and vampirism, she *does* find consolation in the fact that after her physical death she will find peace. In 'the spirit world' she will no longer have to worry about extracting life force from the people she loves.

4. Conclusion

The late Victorian period saw a rise in both the movements against vivisection and in favour of spiritualism. The spiritualistic movement was opposed by many scientists, who claimed it to be fraudulent and opposed to all principles of science. Yet there were also scientists who saw the potential of spiritualism, and aimed to acquire proof of its existence and further its acceptance. Marryat advocates the research and use of spiritualism to remove people's fear of death, and Kenealy supports further (medical) research into the plane of the mind and Vital Force because she believes it to be significant to the future of the Art of Healing.

The implication that Marryat and Kenealy's works ought to have had was to convey these lessons and change the future of established (medical and spiritual) science. Both fictional physicians regret that their medical theories would not be believed or supported by peers. Marryat and Kenealy themselves, too, published works that challenged the norm. The spiritualist and anti-vivisection movements both had many adherents in peripheral groups, and can be seen as movements which broke with established notions of religion, science, and professionalism.

For Kenealy and Marryat both believed in an interchange of life force, and describe two kinds of people: those who draw force from others, and those who possess a healing power (Vivisection 39). If we analyse the vampire fiction, it is clear that the (psychic) vampire represent the drawing force, but the counterpart has not often been considered. This thesis argued that in Kenealy and Marryat's vampire fiction, the spiritual doctor is the antithesis of the vampire, provided that he (or she – but Kenealy would not agree on that point) adheres to a few protocols that are in line with the rules outlined in the authors' contextual works.

The doctor must be interested in science and progression, but observe natural conditions rather than experiment. While at first (medical) science and a belief in spiritualism might appear to be mutually exclusive, Marryat opens her first work on spiritualism by professing her wish to elaborate on “the *science* of spiritualism”, and Kenealy advocates for a “true Art of Healing” that

merely assists “the physical conscience (the centre of subconscious intelligence)” in the “natural process by which we perceive a patient’s system is striving to recruit itself” (No Death 5, Vivisection 34). *There Is No Death* and *The Spirit World* are exemplary themselves, in the sense that they are recorded observations of natural circumstances that are intended to further society’s (scientific) knowledge of spiritualism. Kenealy, too, praises the observant doctor that utilises his (spiritual) healing power instead of vivisection or vaccination.

This ideal doctor figure must also recognize the importance of heredity. Degeneration and inheritance are inescapable, and society needs to address these issues in order to bring about change. Kenealy dedicated much of her life to the study of race improvement, and considered hereditary circumstances - both physically and morally - crucial to the outcome of future generations. Because of the cruel disposition of Harriet’s parents, the fact that they taught her to be cruel as a child, and the curse that caused her to have ‘the blood of the vampire’ she possesses a nature that cannot be overpowered by her good intentions. The vampiric curse is hereditary and inescapable and not even a convent or moral environment can avert it.

That does however not mean that morality is unimportant, for it is the doctor’s and spiritualist’s greatest trait. Morality remains held in the uppermost regard - with Kenealy (and contemporary doctors) preaching that a healthy body can only be achieved when it is governed by a moral mind. Marryat despises people that abuse spiritualism - whether they are fraudulent mediums or sceptics that refuse even consider what she regards as a science that can remove the fear of death. Her fraudulent baroness eventually dies without the consolation that she will see her son again in heaven, and Harriet has made the just decision to sacrifice her life in order not to hurt others. The doctor that treated her was compassionate but firm in this matter, and so were Kenealy’s medics, who never overstepped moral boundaries in order to rid themselves of the vampire.

The process of eliminating Lady Deverish was therefore a natural one, and the plan of Nature should always be held in utmost regard. Both authors defend their views on spiritualism or medicine from a society which has failed to grasp the true workings of Nature. Marryat emphasises that spiritualism is natural, not *supernatural*, and Kenealy warns scientists not to get carried away in thinking that nature, and its diseases, are to be fought at all costs. She views disease as a warning from the system that can either be overcome with moral and physical cleanliness or simply must not.

The distinctive factor that the doctors in these novels employ is the belief in the Nervous Influence, which denotes the spiritual interchange of force between individuals. The process is similar to that of Marryat's mediums and their spiritual visitors. Marryat believes an interchange is continually going on between spirits, but that mediums and certain people - like herself but also Harriet - are more prone to exhausting their environment. Vampirism, in these works, is therefore both a metaphor for the selfish usurping of life force from other people, and a demonstration of a theory that is founded upon (medical and spiritual) facts.

The spiritualist physician should thus believe in the interchange of Vital Force, and be willing to research that in a manner that does not include vivisection or vaccination. The research should be based on observation of the plan of Nature, which should be accepted as unchangeable and providing us with the best but finite conditions for survival. Heredity and morality are factors that should be held in great regard, for they shape the future of the race. When all these rules are abided by, the spiritualist physician can cure vampirism.

The Blood of the Vampire and *A Beautiful Vampire* star vampires that are extremely different in nature, for Lady Deverish actively pursues vampirism and Harriet does not even understand it. Yet essentially they suffer the same condition. The Nervous Influence underlies both stories, and future research which traces the implications of this theory in other Victorian vampire fiction would make an interesting case for the (medical) facts which Victorians believed

could account for vampirism. Additionally, the possibly explanatory role spiritualism could have had in other fictions, such as ghost stories for example, might prove a promising route of investigation. The gothic has given us a wide variety of monsters, and some of those might turn out to be partly based on spiritual or medical theory rather than the supernatural, too. And who knows whether these monsters also embody fascinating theories that were not accepted by established science, and have taken refuge in fiction.

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6. Appendix

Summary of Arabella Kenealy's *A Beautiful Vampire*

The first part of the story is narrated by Lord Syfret. He is a friend of Doctor Andrews, who is suspected of trying to strangle one of his clients. Lord Syfret hears gossip about the incident, and interviews the victim's companion, Mrs Lyall. Syfret is shocked at how different she looks, since she has gone from a plump matron to a haggard old woman. Mrs Lyall expresses that she wished Doctor Andrews had in fact strangled the client, and Lord Syfret is shocked. The victim is Lady Deverish, who is known for her beauty, and Lord Syfret assumes Mrs Lyall is just jealous. Lady Deverish does not even really need a nurse or doctor, but she can afford them because she can use the fortunes of her two departed husbands. Lord Syfret decides to confront Doctor Andrews. While doing so, a page-boy raises the alarm, and exclaims that he needs a doctor because Lady Deverish's nurse is fallen ill and might be dying. A second doctor, Dr Byrne, also assists the patient. Byrne suggests that the patient goes back to the house, but the nurse positively refuses. Lord Syfret decides to send one of his acquaintances, nurse Marian, to the house so she can investigate the matter. He still thinks that Doctor Andrews might have strangled Lady Deverish because she did not return his affections. Marian returns to Lord Syfret with a lot of anger - Lady Deverish has not accepted her in her service because she felt like Marian was not young, healthy, and plump enough. Marian is very offended because she is in fact all of those things, and adds a little padding and rouge to trick Deverish into hiring her.

Nurse Marian narrates the second half of the story. Mrs Lyall warns her that she "will soon lose those fine cheeks", and Marian is very confused (11). The servants all seem to dislike the mistress, and Marian wonders that the house must be very unsanitary for everyone to look so gaunt. Marian also feels tired, and the lady is glad and relieved to hear that she is. Marian has to massage her twice a day. Lady Deverish is about to marry her third husband, and because of the housekeepers worries about him, Marian wonders if Lady Deverish poisons her husbands. She

also begins to wonder why a nice man like Dr Andrews would try to kill her, and what might be wrong with the house. When she is about to give Lady Deverish her massage, she hears her and her fiancé argue. The fiancé talks about feeling bewitched, and wanting to be released and able to return to his sweetheart whom he left for Lady Deverish. Lady Deverish refuses. That night, Lady Deverish calls for Marian in a huge panic, demands that she massages her temple, and exclaims that her fiancé must be dead. The next morning that statement is indeed confirmed. She asks for the company of children to cheer her up, and when Dr Andrews finds out about this he is furious. Marian thinks he must be not very sane and does not listen. That is, until Deverish asks for a child again, and Marian has to take the boy away from her when he becomes very cold and still. She calls for Dr Andrews to take care of him, and he is surprised that Marian, who is still wearing lots of rouge, has “resisted her” (17). Scared that Deverish might harm more children, Andrews gives Marian a bottle of poison instead of medicine for Deverish. Marian suspected this, and suggests that instead of poisoning her, they should try to convince Deverish that she is losing her power. Marian still does not completely believe Andrew’s theory on vampirism but plays along. Deverish is shocked by Marian’s healthy appearance, and Marian can feel her power drain when she is touched by her. Later, Andrews explains the theory of “interchange of vital force” to Marian, and lists similar cases (19).

The third chapter details Lady Deverish’s downfall. At first she attempts to pay Marian for blood transfusions, then she tries to gain access to healthy children through Dr Byrne, and finally she absorbs all the life force of a dog. Marian and Andrews continue to isolate her, and in a last attempt to survive, Deverish grabs Marian’s hand and bites in it in order to suck out blood. Marian escapes, and in the third week of isolation, Lady Deverish dies. Dr Andrews fears that he will not be believed if he submits his theory to medical journal the *Lancet*. Yet he believes in human vampires, and at least has managed to stop this one.

Summary of Florence Marryat's *The Blood of the Vampire*

Elinor Leyton and her friend Mrs. Pullen discuss the guests present at the dinner of Hôtel Lion D'Or. The Baroness Gobelli is a guest they disapprove of because of her unmannered behaviour. Despite her vulgarity, the Baroness claims to be closely acquainted with the Royals, and to possess mysterious magical powers. A new guest has arrived, and her name is Harriet Brandt. Harriet quickly has all eyes on her, because of her strange yet good-looking appearance, and the way she devours her food. Elinor immediately dislikes her, and will continue to do so. Margaret Pullen on the other hand, strikes up a friendship with Harriet. The Baroness takes an interest in Harriet too - it is however not clear whether the Baroness genuinely liked Harriet, or whether she was merely interested in using Harriet to wreak vengeance on Elinor. Harriet quickly grows attached to Elinor's fiancé Ralph, unbeknownst that he is engaged to Elinor. The Baroness - who is feuding with Elinor - keeps making sure the two lovebirds meet.

But before Ralph can leave Elinor for Harriet, he has to go back to England. Harriet's friendship with Margaret ends badly; Harriet dotes on Margaret's baby, but she does not know that this causes her to draw on its life-force, and the baby dies. The party returns to England for the funeral, while Harriet and the Baroness go to Brussels. Ralph had promised to follow Harriet to Brussels after, but forgets about her and decides to stay with Elinor in England. Harriet is furious and heartbroken. The Baroness invites her to 'the Red House' in England, but once there Harriet is disappointed because the Baroness' financial situation and social circle is not as flourishing as she made it appear. The Baroness is mostly at the boot factory she and her husband own, and the guests that do arrive quickly go into a mysterious room and do not usually stay for dinner after. Harriet wants to fight for the affections of Ralph, or at least know why he stopped seeing her. Elinor finds out about the correspondence and reveals that Ralph was her fiancé and is now her husband. Harriet attempts to follow Ralph to his camp and get some answers. Margaret interferes by soliciting the help of Anthony Pennell, a family friend, author, and extremely wise

and kind man. Anthony promises to go to the Red House under the guise of being interested in the Baroness' china collection and talk to Harriet. When he meets her, he is surprised that she is a kind and beautiful girl, and not the savage she was made out to be. Anthony blames his cousin Ralph, who he has always disliked, for taking advantage of her. He becomes smitten with Harriet, and eventually proposes. Harriet is overjoyed that her loving nature can be released, and is finally happy.

Before Harriet became engaged to Anthony, the situation at the Red House worsened. The Baroness stopped treating Harriet like a daughter and became cold and distant. Her son Bobby was jealous of Anthony because he liked Harriet too. Bobby becomes very ill, but the Baroness thinks he is just overreacting. She is wrong because Bobby dies even before the doctor is called. Furious, the Baroness accuses Harriet of drawing the life out of Bobby, and reveals the story of Harriet's curse to her. Previously, Doctor Phillips, a good friend of Margaret, has also described the curse and warned Margaret to stay away. Harriet's parents - who owned plantation in Jamaica - turn out to be a scientist who loved vivisection and tortured both animals and humans in experiments, and an occult voodoo priestess with black blood. The latter, Harriet's mother, has a mother who was bitten by a vampire bat that caused her to become a vampire. Harriet, too, will always drain the life of everyone she becomes close to.

Harriet is absolutely devastated. She loves Anthony dearly but feels like she cannot be burden him with a life with her. Anthony refuses to believe in what he calls superstition and an unjust belief in the characteristics of inheritance instead of the behaviour a person chooses to display, and convinces Harriet to marry anyway. Harriet and Anthony spend a few blissful weeks together, until Harriet wakes up to find Anthony dead in bed beside her.