

## *A Ghostly Tale?*

*Text copied from 'Tales of Sutton Town and Chase' by Thomas A. Vaughton,  
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# The House by the Ebrook



The "House by the Ebrook" may still be seen near the bridge over the stream, just below New Hall Mill. The following piece, which perhaps bears the "stamp of modernity" in some of its numbers, is based on a tradition in a Sutton family once well known in the district. The Ebrook is the stream that runs out of Sutton Park, under the main Birmingham road, and then on to New Hall and Penns.

"I've followed him close at the dead o'the night,  
In the House by the Ebrook I've found him,  
A sin-sodden sleep he sleeps in the light,  
Ere the dusk falls again we'll surround him."

"Mystic stranger," I said, "this tale that you tell  
Doth fill me with horror and sadness,  
Methinks 'tis some nightmare or phantasy fell,  
The dream of a brain tinged with madness."

"No dream, but too true is the thing that I tell,  
Come but with me, thou shalt view him,  
Secure, he lies slumbering yet for a spell  
In the house where our strategy drew him."

"Strange man," I replied, "now if as you say,  
Within those stone walls he lies sleeping,  
Be he demon or man, lead thou the way,  
I'll ne'er rest till he's safe in thy keeping."

Together we went to the house by the brook,  
And he beat on its iron bound portal,  
All was silent and still, with a desolate look,  
No sign there of fiend nor of mortal.

"In the House by the Ebrook," he whispered it low  
And furtively glanced round behind him,  
"In the house by the Ebrook, I knew it was so,  
And the time and the way we should find him.

"For forty long days and forty long nights  
Through woodland and waste have I tracked him,  
I've witnessed his murders, his thefts, and his flights,  
And the nameless dark deeds that attract him.

"I've followed him close by the light o'the moon,  
Through the storm-driven rack unavailing,  
I've marked how he craves for each hell-given boon  
With mystical cadence and wailing.

"My myrmidons three lay in wait by the mill,  
And they heard the dread shriek of his victim,  
Now sated with blood he is slumbering still,  
For grief and remorse ne'er afflict him.

A woman's wan face peered forth from the gloom,  
No sound came from dog there, nor from cat -  
"Please mum, I'm Sam, Miss Perkins's groom,  
"And I've called for Miss Perkins's Tom Cat."



*Janet Jordan, December, 2019*