

AN
ACCOUNT OF SOME

Imaginary

APPARITIONS,

THE EFFECTS OF

FEAR OR FRAUD.

FROM VARIOUS AUTHORS.

“Would you your tender offspring rear,
With minds well form'd, devoid of fear,
Ne'er let the nurse with idle tale,
Of Ghost their infant ears assail,
Of Bug-a-boo! or Chimney Sweep!
To terrify them into Sleep.

Thus, when matur'd by rip'ning age,
And brought upon the world's great stage,
No midnight horrors vex the Soul,
Of howling dog, or hooting owl!
But on they move with manly tread,
Across the mansions of the dead;
Or pass the ruin'd tower, where,
Tradition says, Goblins appear.”

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An ACCOUNT of some IMAGINARY APPARITIONS.

An Imaginary Apparition. the Effect of Fear.

From the Secrets of the Invisible World laid open.

A Sober grave gentleman, who must not wear a name in our story because it was rather a distemper in his mind than a real deficiency of brains, had by a long disuse of the sprightly part of his sense, which he really had no want of at other times, suffered himself to sink a little too low in his spirits, and let the Hypochondria emit too strongly in the vapour and fumes up into his head. This had its fits and intervals; sometimes he was clear-sighted, and clear-headed, but at other times he saw stars at noon-day, and devils at night: in a word, the world was an apparition to his imagination, when the flatus prevailed, and the spleen boiled up: of all which he could give no account, nor could he assist the operation of physic by any of his own powers towards a cure.

It happened, that he was abroad at a friend's house later than ordinary one night; but being moon light, and having a servant with him, he seemed to be easy and was observed to be cheerful and even merry, with a great deal of good-humour, more than had been observed in him for some time before.

He knew his way perfectly well, for it was within three miles of the town where he lived, and he was very well mounted; but

though the moon was up, an accident, which a little disordered him, was, that it was not only cloudy, but a very thick, black cloud came suddenly (that is to say, without his notice, so it was sudden to him) and spread over his head, which made it very dark; and, to add to the disorder, it began to rain violently.

Upon this, being very well mounted, as I before observed, he resolved to ride for it, having not above two miles to the town; so clapping spurs to his horse, he galloped away. His man, whose name was Gervais; not being so well mounted was a considerable way behind. The darkness and the rain together put him a little out of humour; but as that was a little unexpected, perhaps it made him ride the harder rather than abate his pace.

In the way there was a small river, but there was a good bridge over it, well walled on both sides; so that there was no danger there, more than any where else; but the gentleman kept on his speed to go over the bridge, when being rather more than half over, his horse stopped on a sudden, and refused as we call it, bearing off to the right hand; he saw nothing at first, and was not much discomposed at it, but spurred his horse to go forward; the horse went two or three steps, then stopped again, snorted, and stared, and then offered to turn short back; then the gentleman looking forward to see what was the matter, and if he could observe what the horse was scared at, saw two broad

staring eyes, which, as he said, looked him full in the face.

Then he was heartily frightened; but by this time he heard his man Gervais coming up. When Gervais came near, the first thing he heard his master say, was——Bless me, it is the Devil! at which Gervais, a low spirited fellow, was as much frightened as his master, however his master a little encouraged to hear his man so near him, press'd his horse once more, and called aloud to Gervais to come; but he, as I said, being frightened too, made no haste; at length with much ado his master spurring his horse again, got over the bridge, and passed by the creature with broad eyes, which (the light a little increasing) he affirmed positively, when he was passed, was a great black Bear, and consequently must be the Devil.

Tho' Gervais was near enough, yet fearing his master would let him to go before, he kept as far off as he could: When his master called he answered indeed, but did not come on, at least did not make much haste; but seeing his master was gone past, and that he himself was then obliged to follow, he went on softly, and when he came to the bridge, he saw what his masters horse snorted at, and refused to go on; of which you shall hear more presently.

His master's horse being got past the difficulty, needed no spurs, but (as frightened horses will) flew away like the wind; and the rain continuing, his master, who on many accounts was willing to be at home, let him

go, so that he was at home and got into the house, long before his man Gervais could get up with him.

The master, as soon as he came into the light, swooned away, and the fright had such an effect upon him, that when with much difficulty they had brought him to himself, he continued very ill; and when his lady and a sister he had in the house with him, as much over-run with the Hippo as himself, came to enquire what had happened to him; he told them a formal story, that at such a bridge he met the Devil; that he placed himself just at the coming off from the bridge, on his left hand, at the corner of the wall; that he stood and stared in his face, and that he could distinctly perceive it was the Devil in the shape of a Bear, He gave other descriptions, so punctual and particular, that there was no room to doubt but it was an apparition, and that it was in the shape of a great bear.

GERVAIS came home soon after, and going into the stable directly, as was his business, to take care of his master's horse as well as his own, there he told the story his way, among the other servants, and especially two or three grooms or servants belonging to gentlemen that were neighbours; and he tells them that his master was in great danger of being thrown over the wall of the bridge, for that his horse was frightened at an ass which stood at the corner of the wall, and it was my fault indeed, says Gervais, for it was a young horse, and I had never told my mas-

ter; but it was a trick he had got, that he could not abide an afs, and would by no means come near one if he could help it.

And are you sure it was an afs Gervais? say the other servants, staring at one another as if they were frightened: Are you sure of it? Yes, says Gervais, for as soon as my master got by it, I rode up to it and threshed it with my stick and it fell a braying, which you know, says Gervais, is a base ugly noise, and so I came away and left it.

Why Gervais, say they, your master believes it was the Devil, as really as if he had spoken to it.

I am sorry my master should be so frightened, says Gervais; but I am very sure it was nothing but an afs. But the story had gotten vent, and the first part of it flew all over the town, that Mr. — had seen the Devil and was almost frightened to death.

Then came his man Gervais's tale, and made it appear that Mr. —'s strange and wonderful apparition was dwindled into an afs, and that the Devil he had seen, in the shape of a bear was no more than a poor Barico; as the Italians call him; this made his master be laughed at sufficiently.

However poor Jarvis or Gervais was fain to turn out, and lost his place for it; and the wise Mr. — to this day insists upon it, that it was the Devil, and he knew him by his broad eyes; though it is known that a bear has very little eyes: But it is impossible to persuade any vapourish body, that they have not seen the Devil, if they have but

seen something, and that they are very sure they are not sure what it is.

An Imaginary Apparition the effect of Fraud, from the Secrets of the invisible world laid open

A Person who kept a lodging house near the springs, at Aix-la-Chapelle, having lost his wife, committed the management of his family to his daughter, a sprightly well made handsome girl, about twenty.

There was at that time in the house two ladies and their waiting woman, two Dutch officers and a Dominican friar.

It happened that as the young woman of the house was asleep one night in her bed, she was awakened by something that attempted to draw the clothes off the bed, she was at first frighted, but thinking, upon recollection, that it might be the house dog, she called him by his name: The cloaths however, were still pulled from her, and she still imagining it was by the dog, took up a brush that lay in her reach, and attempted to strike him. At that moment she saw a flash of sudden light that filled the whole room; upon which she shrieked out, at the same time covering her face with the sheet: When she again ventured to look out, all was dark and silent, and the cloaths were no longer drawn from her.

In the morning when she related this story every one treated it as a dream, and the girl herself at last took it for granted, that it was no more than an illusion.

The night following she was again awakened by something that jogged her, and she thought she felt a hand in the bed; upon endeavouring to repress it, another flash of lightening threw her into a fit of terror; she shut her eyes and crossed herself: When she ventured to open her eyes again, the light was vanished, and in a short time she felt what she supposed to be a hand again in the bed; she again endeavoured to repress it; but looking towards the foot of the bed, she saw a large luminous cross on which was written distinctly, as with light, the words *Be silent*. She was now so terrified, that she had not power to break the injunction, but she shrunk down into the bed, and covered herself all over with the cloaths.

In this situation she lay a considerable time, and being no longer molested, she ventured once more to peep out when, to her unspeakable astonishment, she saw a phantasm standing by the side of her bed, almost as high as the ceiling, a kind of glory encircled its head, and the whole was in the form of a crucifix, except that it seemed to have several hands, one of which again approached the bed.

Supposing the phænomenon to be some celestial vision, she exerted all her fortitude, and leaping out of bed, threw herself upon her knees before it; but she instantly found herself assaulted in a manner which convinced her she was mistaken; she had not strength to disengage herself from something that embraced her, and therefore

screamed out as loud as she could to alarm the house, and bring somebody to her assistance.

Her shrieks awakened the ladies who lay in an adjacent chamber, and they sent their woman to see what was the matter. The woman, upon opening the room saw a luminous phantasm, which greatly terrified her, and heard in a deep threatening tone the word At thy peril begone.

The woman instantly screamed out, and withdrew; the ladies rose in the utmost consternation and terror, but nobody came to their assistance; the old man, the father of the girl, was asleep in a remote part of the house; the friar also rested in a room at the end of a long gallery in another story; and the two Dutch officers were absent on a visit at a neighbouring village.

No other violence, however, was offered to the girl that night. As soon as the morning dawned she got up, ran down to her father, and told all that had happened; the two ladies were not long absent, they did not say much, but discharged their arrears, and quitted the house. The friar asked the girl several questions, and declared that he had heard other instances of the like nature, but said, the girl would do well to obey the commands of the vision, and that no harm would come of it. He said he would remain to see the issue, and in the mean time, he ordered proper prayers and masses to be said at a neighbouring convent of his order, to which he most devoutly joined his own.

The girl was comforted with this spiritual assistance, but, notwithstanding, took one of the maids to be her bedfellow the next night.

In the dead of the night the flaming cross was again visible, but no attempt was made on either of the women. They were however, greatly terrified and the servant said, she would rather leave her place than lie in the room again.

The friar the next morning took the merit of the spirit's peaceable behaviour to himself. The prayers and masses were renewed, and application was made to the convents of Liege for auxiliary assistance. The good friar in the mean time, was by no means idle at home; he performed his devotions with great ardour, and towards evening he bestowed a plentiful libation of holy water on the chamber and the bed.

The girl not being able to persuade the servant to sleep with her again in the haunted room, and being encouraged by the friar to abide the issue, having also great confidence herself in the prayers, masses, and sprinklings that had been used on the occasion: she ventured once more to sleep in the same room by herself.

In the night, after hearing some slight noises, she saw the room all in a blaze, and a great number of small luminous crosses, with scraps of writing here and there very legible, among which the precept to be silent, was most conspicuous.

In the middle of the room she saw some-

thing of a human appearance, which seemed covered only with a linen garment, like a shirt; it appeared to diffuse a radiance round it, and at length, by a slow and silent pace, it approached the bed - When it came up to the bed-side it drew the curtain more open, and lifted up the bed-cloaths was about to come in. The girl, now more terrified than ever, screamed out with all her power; as every body in the house was upon the watch, she was heard by them all, but the father only had courage to go to her assistance, and his bravery was probably owing to a considerable quantity of reliques which he had procured from the convent, and which he brought in his hand.

When he came, however, nothing was to be seen but some of the little crosses and inscriptions, several of which were now luminous only in part.

Being himself greatly terrified at these appearances, he ran to the friar's apartment, and with some difficulty prevailed upon him to go with him to the haunted room, the friar at first excused himself upon account of the young woman's being there in bed. As soon as he entered and saw the crosses, he prostrated himself upon the ground, and uttered many prayers and incantations, to which the honest landlord said Amen.

The poor girl, in the mean time, lay in a kind of trance, and her father, when the prayers were over, ran down stairs for some wine, a cordial being necessary, to recover her; the friar at the same time, ordered him

to light and bring with him a consecrated taper, for hitherto they had had no light but that of the vision; which was full strong enough to discover any thing in the room.

In a short time the old man entered with a taper in his hand, and in a moment all the luminous appearances vanished. The girl, soon after, recovered, and gave a very sensible account of all that had happened, and the landlord and the friar spent the rest of the night together.

The friar, however, to shew the power of the demon and the holy virtue of the taper, removed it several times from the chamber before the day broke, and the crosses and inscriptions were again visible, and remained so till the taper was brought back, and then vanished as at first.

When the sun arose, the friar took his leave to go to Matins, and did not return till noon. In the mean time the two Dutch officers came home, and soon learnt what had happened, though the landlord took all the pains he could to conceal it. The reports they heard were confirmed by the pale and terrified appearance of the girl; their curiosity was greatly excited, and they asked her innumerable questions.

Her answers, instead of extinguishing, increased it: They assured the landlord that they would not leave his house, but, on the contrary, would afford him all the assistance in their power.

As they were young gentlemen of a military profession, and Protestants, they were at

once bold and incredulous. They pretended however, to adopt the opinion of the landlord, that the appearances were supernatural; but it happened that upon going into the room they found the remainder of the taper, on the virtues of which the landlord had largely expatiated, and immediately perceived that it was only a common candle of a large size, which he had brought by mistake in his fright.

This discovery convinced them that there was a fraud, and that appearances that vanished at the approach of unconsecrated light were produced by mere human artifice.

They therefore consulted together, and at length agreed that the masses should be continued, that the landlord should say not one word of the candle, or the suspicions it had produced: that his daughter, the next night, should sleep in the apartment which had been quitted by the ladies, and that one of the officers should lie in the girl's bed, while the other, with the landlord should wait in the kitchen to see the issue.

This plan was accordingly, with great secrecy, carried into execution.

For two hours after the officer had been in bed, all was silent and quiet, and he began to suspect that the girl had been fanciful, or that their secret had transpired: when all on a sudden he heard the latch of the door gently raised, and perceived something approach the bed and attempt to take up the cloaths; he resisted with sufficient strength to frustrate the attempt, and immediately the

room appeared to be all in a flame; he saw many crosses and inscriptions injoining silence, and a passive acquiescence in whatever should happen; he saw also in the middle of the room something of a human appearance, very tall and very luminous. The vision made a second approach to the bedside, but the gentleman recovering his fortitude the first moment of reflection, dexterously threw a slip-knot which he had fastened to one of the bed-posts over the phantom's neck, he instantly drew it close, which brought him to the ground, and then threw himself upon him; the fall and the struggle made so much noise that the other officer and the landlord ran up with the lights and weapons, and the goblin was found to be no other than the good friar, who having conceived something more than a spiritual affection for his landlord's pretty daughter had played this infernal farce to gratify his passion.

It appeared that this fellow, who was near six feet high, had made himself appear still higher, by putting upon his head a kind of tiara of imbossed paper, and had also thrust a stick through the sleeves of his habit, which formed an appearance of a cross, and left all his hands at liberty; and that he had rendered himself and his apparatus visible in the dark by phosphorus.

Another—from the life of J Lackington, Bookseller.

AT Wilkscome, nine miles from Taunton, a gentleman farmer's house was

alarmed every night between twelve and one o'clock. The chamber doors were thrown open, the bed cloaths pulled off the beds, and the kitchen furniture thrown with violence about the kitchen, to the great terror of the family, insomuch, that the servants gave their master and mistress warning to leave their places, and some of them actually quitted their service. This dreadful affair had lasted about six weeks, when a young gentleman who was there on a visit, being in bed one night, at the usual hour he heard his chamber door thrown open, and a very odd noise about his room. He was at first frightened, but the noise continuing a long time, he became calm and lay still, revolving what he had best do. When on a sudden he heard the spirit creep under his bed, which was immediately lifted up, &c. This convinced him that there was some substance in the spirit; on which he leaped out of bed and secured the door, and with his oaken staff belaboured the ghost under the bed as hard as he could, until he heard a female voice imploring for mercy. On that, he opened his chamber door, and called aloud for a light. The family all got up as fast as possible, and came to his room. He then informed them that he had got the spirit under the bed; on hearing which, most of them were terribly frightened; and would have run off faster than they came, but he assured them, they had nothing to fear: then out he dragged the half murdered spirit

from under the bed. But how great was their surprize and shame, when they discovered that this tormenting devil was no other than one of the servant girls, about sixteen years of age, who had been confined to her bed several months by illness.

Another— from the same.

ANOTHER apparition had for a long time stole many geese, turkeys, &c. and although it had been seen by many, yet nobody would venture to go near it: until at length one person a little wiser than the rest of his neighbours, seeing the famous apparition all over white stealing his fowls, was determined to be fully satisfied what kind of a spirit it could be that had so great a predilection for poultry. He accordingly went round the yard, and as the apparition was coming over the wall, he knocked it down, and found that this terrible ghost was a neighbouring woman, who had put on her shroud, in order to deter any persons should they by chance see her, from coming near her. Thus, though she had for a long time successfully practised this new way of procuring poultry, the old fox was caught at last.

F I N I S.