

AN
ESSAY
TOWARDS
A THEORY
OF
APPARITIONS.

BY
JOHN FERRIAR, M. D.

A thousand fantasies
Begin to throng into my memory,
Of calling shapes, and beck'ning shadows dire,
And airy tongues, that syllable men's names
On sands, and shores, and desert wildernesses.
These thoughts may startle well, but not astound.

COMUS, l. 205.

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P R E F A C E.

WHEN a late ingenious Physician discovered the elastic fluid, which he termed his 'Gas of Paradise,' and which he hoped to render a cheap substitute for inebriating liquors, he claimed the honors due to the inventor of a new pleasure.

How far mankind would have benefited, by the introduction of a fresh mode of intoxication, I leave to the reflection of those sages, whose duty it would have become to appreciate its value,

as an additional source of revenue to the state. But when I consider the delight with which stories of apparitions are received by persons of all ages, and of the most various kinds of knowledge and ability, I cannot help feeling some degree of complacency, in offering to the makers and readers of such stories, a view of the subject, which may extend their enjoyment far beyond its former limits. It has given me pain to see the most fearful and ghastly commencements of a tale of horror reduced to mere common events, at the winding up of the book. I have looked, also, with much compassion, on the pitiful instruments of *sliding pannels, trap-doors, back-stairs, wax-work figures, smugglers, robbers, coiners*, and other vulgar machinery, which authors of tender consciences have

employed, to avoid the imputation of belief in supernatural occurrences. So hackneyed, so exhausted had all artificial methods of terror become, that one original genius was compelled to convert a mail-coach, with its lighted lamps, into an apparition.

Now I freely offer, to the manufacturers of ghosts, the privilege of raising them, in as great numbers, and in as horrible a guise as they may think fit, without offending against true philosophy, and even without violating probability. The highest flights of imagination may now be indulged, on this subject, although no loop-hole should be left for mortifying explanations, and for those modifications of terror, which completely baulk the reader's curiosity, and disgust him with a second reading.

Another great convenience will be found in my system; apparitions may be evoked, in open day,—at noon, if the case should be urgent, in the midst of a field, on the surface of water, or in the glare of a patent-lamp, quite as easily, as in the ‘darkness of chaos or old night.’ Nay, a person rightly prepared may see ghosts, while seated comfortably by his library-fire, in as much perfection, as amidst broken tombs, nodding ruins, and awe-inspiring ivy. To those unfortunate persons, who feel a real dread of apparitions, I hope to offer considerations which will quiet their fears, and will even convert the horrors of solitude into a source of rational amusement. But I must forbear to display all the utility of this treatise, lest my reader should imagine that I am copying Echard’s mock-panegyric on his own dialogues.

Take courage, then, good reader, and knock at the portal of my enchanted castle, which will be opened to you, not by a grinning demon, but by a very civil person, in a black velvet cap, with whom you may pass an hour not disagreeably.

Observe, however, that the following treatise is applicable, in its principles, to profane history, and to the delusions of individuals only. If any thing contained in the ensuing pages could be construed into the most indirect reference to theological discussions, the manuscript would have been committed, without mercy, to the flames.

What methods may have been employed by Providence, on extraordinary

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OF THE
THEORY OF APPARITIONS.

CHAPTER I.

Reality of spectral impressions—General law of the system, to which they may be referred—Division of the subject—Spectral illusions exemplified.

I Shall begin this discussion, by admitting, as an undeniable fact, that the forms of dead, or absent persons have been seen, and their voices have been heard, by witnesses whose testimony is entitled to belief.

14 THEORY OF APPARITIONS.

It would be an endless task to ransack the pages of antiquity, for instances of this kind. The apparition of the Genius to Brutus, and of the Fury to Dion, cannot be doubted. We may be allowed, however, to enquire, whether the improved state of physiology affords any glimpse of light on this subject, and whether such extraordinary and terrific impressions ~~cannot be~~ explained, from the known laws of the animal œconomy, independent of supernatural causes, in the examples furnished by profane history.

It is well known, that in certain diseases of the brain, such as delirium and insanity, spectral delusions take place, even during the space of many days. But it has not been generally observed, that a partial affection of the brain may exist, which renders the patient liable to such imaginary impressions, either of sight or sound, without disordering his

judgment or memory. From this peculiar condition of the sensorium, I conceive that the best supported stories of apparitions may be completely accounted for.

To render this inquiry more perspicuous, I shall consider,

I. The general law of the system, to which the origin of the spectral impressions may be referred :

II. The proof of the existence of morbid impressions of this nature, without any sensible external agency :

III. The application of these principles to the best-authenticated examples of apparitions.

§ I.

It is a well-known law of the human œconomy, that the impressions produced

on some of the external senses, especially on the eye, are more durable than the application of the impressing cause. The effect of looking at the sun, in producing the impression of a luminous globe, for some time after the eye has been withdrawn from the object, is familiar to every one.

This subject has been so thoroughly investigated by the late Dr. Darwin, that I need only to refer the reader to his treatise on ocular spectra.* In young persons, the effects resulting from this permanence of impression are extremely curious. I remember, that about the age of fourteen, it was a source of great amusement to myself. If I had been viewing any interesting object in the course of the day, such as a romantic ruin, a fine seat, or a review of a body

* The experiments in this Essay appear to have been suggested, by those of Mariotte, Le Cat, and Bernouilli.

of troops, as soon as evening came on, if I had occasion to go into a dark room, the whole scene was brought before my eyes, with a brilliancy equal to what it had possessed in day-light, and remained visible, for several minutes. I have no doubt, that dismal and frightful images have been presented, in the same manner, to young persons, after scenes of domestic affliction, or public horror.

From this renewal of external impressions, also, many of the phænomena of dreams admit an easy explanation. When an object is presented to the mind, during sleep, while the operations of judgment are suspended, the imagination is busily employed in forming a story, to account for the appearance, whether agreeable or distressing. Then the author enjoys the delight of perusing works of infinite wit and elegance, which never had any real existence, and of which, to his utter mortification, he cannot recollect a single line, next

morning; and then the Bibliomane purchases illuminated manuscripts, and early editions on vellum, for sums so trifling, that he cannot conceal his joy from the imaginary vender.

Dr. R. Darwin seems to believe, that it is from habit only, and want of attention, that we do not see the remains of former impressions, or the *musca volitantes*, on all objects.* Probably, this is an instance, in which the error of external sensation is corrected by experience, like the deceptions of perspective, which are undoubtedly strong in our childhood, and are only detected by repeated observation.

“After having looked,” says Dr. Darwin, “long at the meridian sun, in making some of the preceding experiments, till the disk faded into a pale blue, I frequently observed a bright blue spectrum of the sun in other

* Zoonomia, Sect. xi. 2.

" objects all the next and the succeeding
 " day, which constantly occurred when
 " I attended to it, and frequently when
 " I did not attend to it. When I closed
 " and covered my eyes, this appeared
 " of a dull yellow; and at other times
 " mixed with the colours of other objects
 " on which it was thrown." *

It is scarcely necessary to mention the
 well-known experiment of giving a rota-
 tory motion to a piece of burning wood,
 the effect of which is to exhibit a com-
 plete fiery circle to the eye.

To this principle of a renewal of
 impressions formerly made by different
 objects, belongs the idle amusement of
 tracing landscapes, and pictures of vari-
 ous composition, in the discoloured spots
 of an old wall. This may be truly called
 a waking dream, as it is composed of
 the shreds and patches of past sensations;
 yet there are, perhaps, few persons who

* Sect. xi. 8.

have not occasionally derived entertainment from it. It is probably on the same principle, that we are to account for the appearances of armies marching, in desert and inaccessible places, which are sometimes beheld by the inhabitants of the vallies, in mountainous regions. The accidents of light and shade, and the interposition of partial fogs, or clouds, produce the same effect on the eye, as the discoloured patches of the wall; and the rolling of the mist adds motion to the spectral images.

In like manner, recollected images are attributed to the moving lights, in the splendid exhibitions of the Aurora Borealis. The Icelandic beholds in them the spirits of his ancestors;* and the vulgar discern encountering armies, and torrents of blood, in the lambent meteors of a winter-sky. The humble diversion of seeing pictures in the fire, which

* Voyage d'Islande, in the Ambigu.

occupies children of smaller growth in the nursery, is calculated on the same principles. In some cases, the imagination is assisted by physical causes, in a very imposing manner, as in the instance of the Giant of the Broken,* in Ger-

* I subjoin the original account, as it will amuse the reader.

"In the course of my repeated tours through the Harz,* I ascended the Broken twelve times; but I had the good fortune only twice, (both times about Whitsuntide) to see that atmospheric phenomenon, called the Spectre of the Broken, which appears to me worthy of particular attention, as it must, no doubt, be observed on other high mountains, which have a situation favorable for producing it. The first time I was deceived by this extraordinary phenomenon, I had clambered up to the summit of the Broken very early in the morning, in order to wait for the inexpressibly beautiful view of the sun rising in the east. The heavens were already streaked with red; the sun was just appearing above the horizon in full majesty, and the most perfect serenity prevailed throughout the surrounding country, when the other Harz mountains in the south west, towards the Worm mountains, &c. lying under the Broken began to be

* The Harz mountains are situated in Hanover.

many, the 'nursing mother' of ghosts. The giant was seen to occupy the summit of a mountain, at certain periods, to the inexpressible amazement of the inhabitants of the valley, and of travellers. After many years of alarm and wonder, a passenger, while he was contemplating the dreadful apparition, was obliged to raise his hand quickly to his head, to secure his hat from being carried away, by a gust of

covered by thick clouds. Ascending at that moment the granite rocks called the Tempelskanzel, there appeared before me, though at a great distance, towards the Worm mountains and the Achtermaunshöhe, the gigantic figure of a man, as if standing on a large pedestal. But scarcely had I discovered it when it began to disappear, the clouds sunk down speedily and expanded, and I saw the phenomenon no more. The second time, however, I saw this spectre somewhat more distinctly, a little below the summit of the Broken, and near the Heinnichshöhe, as I was looking at the sun rising, about four o'clock in the morning. The weather was rather tempestuous; the sky towards the level country was pretty clear, but the Harz mountains had attracted several thick clouds, which had been hovering round them, and which beginning

wind. The giant immediately performed a similar motion; when the traveller bowed, the giant bowed in return; and after various experiments, it was ascertained, that the portentous appearance was nothing more than the shadow of the traveller, reflected from a dense white cloud, opposed to the sun.

I remember to have heard, many years ago, a relation of a similar nature,

on the Broken confined the prospect. In these clouds, soon after the rising of the sun, I saw my own shadow, of a monstrous size, move itself for a couple of seconds in clouds, and the phenomenon disappeared. It is impossible to see this phenomenon, except when the sun is at such an altitude as to throw his rays upon the body in a horizontal direction; for, if he is higher, the shadow is thrown rather under the body than before it. In the month of September last year, as I was making a tour through the Harz with a very agreeable party, and ascended the Broken, I found an excellent account, and explanation of this phenomenon, as seen by M. Haue on the 23rd of May 1797, in his diary of an excursion to that mountain. I shall therefore take the liberty of transcribing it.

from a gentleman, who underwent the deception.

He was benighted, while travelling alone, in a remote part of the highlands of Scotland, and was compelled to ask shelter for the evening, at a small, lonely hut. When he was to be conducted to his bed-room, the landlady observed, with mysterious reluctance, that he would find the window very insecure.

“ After having been here for the thirtieth time,” says M. Haue, “ and, besides other objects of my attention, having procured information respecting the above-mentioned atmospheric phenomenon, I was at length so fortunate as to have the pleasure of seeing it; and perhaps my description may afford satisfaction to others who visit the Broken through curiosity. The sun rose about four o’clock, and the atmosphere being quite serene towards the east, his rays could pass without any obstruction over the Heinnichshöhe. In the south west, however, towards the Achtermannshöhe, a brisk west wind carried before it their transparent vapours, which were not yet condensed into thick heavy clouds. About a quarter past four I went towards the inn, and looked round to see whether the atmosphere would permit me to have a free prospect

On examination, part of the wall appeared to have been broken down, to enlarge the opening. After some enquiry, he was told, that a pedlar, who had lodged in the room a short time before, had committed suicide, and was found hanging behind the door, in the morning. According to the superstition of the country, it was deemed improper to remove the body through the door of the house; and to convey it through

to the south west; when I observed, at a very great distance towards the Achtermaunshöhe, a human figure of a monstrous size. A violent gust of wind having almost carried away my hat, I clapped my hand to it by moving my arm towards my head, and the colossal figure did the same. The pleasure which I felt on this discovery can hardly be described; for I had already walked many a weary step in the hope of seeing this shadowy image without being able to satisfy my curiosity. I immediately made another movement by bending my body, and the colossal figure before me repeated it. I was desirous of doing the same thing once more, but my colossus had vanished. I remained in the same position, waiting to see whether it would return, and in a few minutes it again made its appearance in the Achtermaunshöhe.

the window was impossible, without removing part of the wall. Some hints were dropped, that the room had been subsequently haunted by the poor man's spirit.

My friend laid his arms, properly prepared against intrusion of any kind, by the bed-side, and retired to rest, not without some degree of apprehension. He was visited, in a dream, by a fright-

I paid my respects to it a second time and it did the same to me. I then called the landlord of the Broken; and having both taken the same position which I had taken alone, we looked toward the Achtermanshohe, but saw nothing. We had not, however, stood long, when two such colossal figures were formed over the above eminence, which repeated our compliment by bending their bodies as we did; after which they vanished. We retained our position; kept our eyes fixed upon the same spot, and in a little the two figures again stood before us, and were joined by a third. Every movement that we made by bending our bodies, these figures imitated—but with this difference, that the phenomenon was sometimes weak and faint, sometimes strong and well defined. Having thus had an opportunity of discovering the whole secret of this

ful apparition, and awaking in agony, found himself sitting up in bed, with a pistol grasped in his right hand. On casting a fearful glance round the room, he discovered, by the moon-light, a corpse, dressed in a shroud, reared erect, against the wall, close by the window. With much difficulty, he summoned up resolution to approach the dismal object, the features of which, and the minutest parts of its funeral apparel, he perceived distinctly. He passed one hand over it;

phenomenon, I can give the following information to such of my readers as may be desirous of seeing it themselves. When the rising sun, and according to analogy the case will be the same at the setting sun, throws his rays over the Broken upon the body of a man standing opposite to fine light clouds floating around, or hovering past him, he needs only fix his eye steadfastly upon them, and in all probability, he will see the singular spectacle of his own shadow extending to the length of five or six hundred feet, at the distance of about two miles before him. This is one of the most agreeable phenomena, I ever had an opportunity of remarking on the great observations of Germany. Philosophical Magazine, vol. i. page 232.

felt nothing ; and staggered back to the bed. After a long interval, and much reasoning with himself, he renewed his investigation, and at length discovered that the object of his terror was produced by the moon-beams, forming a long, bright image, through the broken window, on which his fancy, impressed by his dream, had pictured, with mischievous accuracy, the lineaments of a body prepared for interment. Powerful associations of terror, in this instance, had excited the recollected images with uncommon force and effect,

In another instance, related by an Italian writer, whole multitudes were deceived for several hours, by an apparition of a more specious kind. A croud was assembled in the streets of Florence, earnestly beholding the image of an angel, hovering in the sky, and expecting some miraculous consequences. He soon perceived, that the deception was

produced by a partial mist, which covered the dome of the church, and left the gilded figure of an angel, which surmounted the building, illuminated by the rays of the sun. Without the presence of a philosopher, this would have passed for a supernatural appearance.

CHAP. II.

A lawyer's argument for the existence of witchcraft—Proofs of spectral impressions, from recollected perceptions—New England witches—Cardan—Donne—Jonson—The maid of France—and other visionaries.

IN a compilation ~~on the~~ duties of a Justice of Peace, published by Nelson, we meet with a proof of the existence of witchcraft, which the editor appears to have thought irrefragable. "It seems," saith he, "that there must formerly "have been such a crime as witchcraft, "because divers statutes have been made "against it." Were we to reason in the same manner, respecting demoniacal

agency, in medical cases, proof could be brought, (particularly from the older German writers), that medicines have been administered, for the purpose of expelling the devil from human bodies, into which it was supposed that he had entered, and that many different remedies had been employed to this end.

Instead of resorting to any arguments of this nature, I shall now proceed to shew, that the forms of objects which have no external prototypes, are exhibited to the mind, in certain states of the brain.

§ II.

In the course of my professional employment, I have frequently conversed with persons, who imagined that they saw demons, and heard them speak. This species of delusion admits of many gradations, and distinctions, exclusive of actual insanity.

When the brain is partially irritated, the patient fancies that he sees spiders crawling over his bed-clothes, or person; or beholds them covering the roof and walls of his room. If the disease increases, he imagines that persons who are dead, or absent, flit round his bed; that animals croud into his apartment, and that all these apparitions speak to him. These impressions take place, even while he is convinced of their fallacy. All this occurs sometimes, without any degree of delirium.

I had occasion to see a young married woman, whose first indication of illness was a spectral delusion. She told me, that her apartment appeared suddenly to be filled with devils, and that her terror impelled her to quit the house with great precipitation. When she was brought back, she saw the whole staircase occupied by diabolical forms, and was in agonies of fear for several days.

After this first impression wore off, she heard a voice tempting her to self-destruction, and prohibiting her from all exercises of piety. Such was the account given by her, when she was sensible of the delusion, yet unable to resist the horror of the impression. When she was nearly recovered, I had the curiosity to question her, as I have interrogated others, respecting the forms of the demons with which they had been alarmed ; but I never could obtain any other account, than that they were small, very much deformed, and had horns and claws, like the imps of our terrific modern romances.

I have been forced to listen with much gravity, to a man partially insane, who assured me that the devil was lodged in his side, and that I should perceive him thumping and fluttering there, in a manner which would perfectly convince me of his presence.

Another lunatic believed that he had swallowed the devil, and had retained him in his stomach. He resisted the calls of nature during several days, lest he should set the foul fiend at liberty. I overcame his resolution, however, by administering an emetic in his food.

In Mather's *Wonders of the invisible World*, containing the trials of the American witches, in 1692, a work which may be regarded as official, it appears that the visions of several persons who thought themselves bewitched, were occasioned by the night-mare.

On the trial of Bridget Bishop, at Salem, for example; " John Cook testified, that about five or six years ago, " one morning about sun-rise, he was " in his chamber assaulted by the shape " of this prisoner, which looked on him, " grinned at him, and very much hurt " him with a blow on the side of the

"head."....." Richard Ceman testified, that eight years ago, as he lay
 "awake in his bed, with a light burning
 "in the room, he was annoyed with
 "the apparition of this *Bishop* and of
 "two more that were strangers to him,
 "who came and oppressed him so, that
 "he could neither stir himself, nor
 "wake any one else," &c.

Again, on the trial of Susannah Martin,
 "Bernard Peache testified, that being in
 "bed, on the Lord's day night, he heard
 "a scrabbling at the window, whereat
 "he then saw Susannah Martin come in
 "and jump down upon the floor. She
 "took hold of this deponent's feet, and
 "drawing his body up into one heap,
 "she lay upon him near two hours; in
 "all which time he could neither speak
 "nor hear."

In the introduction to his history of
 the trials, which were conducted on such
 evidence, Mather gravely says;

“ ’Tis, as I remember, the learned
“ Scribonius, who reports, that one of
“ his acquaintance, devoutly making his
“ prayers on the behalf of a person
“ molested by evil spirits, received from
“ those evil spirits an horrible blow over
“ the face: and I may myself expect
“ not few or small buffetings from evil
“ spirits, for the endeavours wherewith
“ I am now going to encounter them.
“ I am far from insensible, that at this
“ extraordinary time of the *Devil's com-*
“ *ing down in great wrath* upon us, there
“ are too many tongues and hearts there-
“ by *set on fire of hell*, that the various
“ opinions about the witchcrafts which
“ of later time have troubled us, are
“ maintained by some with so much
“ loud fury, as if they could never be
“ sufficiently stated, unless written in
“ the liquor wherewith witches use to
“ write their covenants; and that he
“ who becomes an author at such a
“ time, had need be *fenced with iron,*
“ *and the staff of a spear.*”

Stoughton, the Lieutenant-Governor of New England, affixed his approbation to this book, vouching for the truth of the statements, and declaring that all good men would "greatly rejoice, that "the spirit of the Lord had thus enabled "him (Mather) to lift up a standard "against the infernal enemy, that hath "been *coming in like a flood upon us.*" Such was the force of this memorable fit of national insanity, during which torrents of innocent blood were shed, by the misguided judges and juries, under the impression that they were actually invaded by a legion of devils; the part of which was really performed by themselves.

Nothing, indeed, can be added to the diligence of Remy, or Remigius, with respect to the forms of demons. He was a commissioner for the trial of witches, in Lorrain, and as he informs us, in the

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course of fifteen years, he condemned nine hundred criminals to the stake. His book is one of the most remarkable productions of credulity; for the monstrous absurdities which it contains are supported by juridical proofs, most of which evidently proceeded from spectral impressions, when they were not extorted by torture.

My edition of this work, which is become very rare, was printed by Vincenti, at Lyons, in 1595. It is entitled, *DÆMONOLATREIA*. The trials appear to have begun in 1583. Mr. Remy seems to have felt great anxiety to ascertain the exact features and dress of the demons, with whom many of the persons supposed themselves to be familiar. Yet nothing transpired, in his examinations, which varied from the usual figures exhibited by the gross sculptures and paintings of the middle age. They are

said to be black-faced,* with sunk, but fiery eyes, their mouths wide, and smelling of sulphur; their hands hairy, with claws: their feet horny and cloven.

* Lib. i. p. 76, 77. Nam aut in vultu fœditas est, ac turpitude, aut uncis, hamisque, quales obsœnis vulturibus insunt manus pedesve depravatos habent, aut denique insolita, atque insigni aliqua nota quæ naturæ immanitatem prodant, conspicuos se ostendunt. Joannes Piscator, Henaezel; Salome, Catharina Balandræa, Nicolæa Ganatia, Sennel Armenitaria, et Joanna Gerardina, retulerunt se & sæpe, et otiosè, atque attentè considerasse suos Magistros, cum præsentibus colloquerentur; observasseque semper illis obscuras atque fuisse facies: ac (quod Jorman-des dicit de Hunnis, quos Demonibus incubis satos ferunt) offæsimiles: lumina penitus abdita, flammæ tamen instar micantia: Oris rictus sparsos, profundos, ac perpetuò olidi, sulphureique aliquid æstuantibus: manus strigosas, et villis atque hamis deformes: pedes corneos bifidosque: staturam nunquam justam, sed aut brevitate aut vastitate semper aliqua insolentem, totamque adeo Seriem extra modum.

Addit Alexia Belhoria, illum se aliquando vidisse capite, vel pede altero truncum, mutilumque, cum fortè saltationes nocturnas unâ cum suis agitare. Quæ res me in memoriam inducit ejus rumoris, qui me puero circumferebatur de Empusis, quarum frequentes

Not only are the voices and stature of the demons described by Remy's authorities, but many other extraordinary circumstances are recorded, which might have been omitted with great propriety. The curiosity of the worthy judge seems to have been as unlimited as his credulity. I ought to add, that his book is

de nocte choreæ in triviis tum videri ferebantur (*la Mequie Hennequin*) id est, familiam Hellequinam vocitabant: nam Hellequinos ab incubis Dæmonibus suam traxisse originem non ignobiles Scriptores prodiderunt.

Nicolæa Ganatia, Eva Hesoletia, Jana Nigra Armacuriana, ac pleræque aliæ vocem illis esse aiunt, qualem emittunt, qui os in dolium, aut testam rimosam, insertum habent.....Aut certé exilem et debilem, p. 80.

In the 6th chapter, Remy has indulged his curiosity in a most extraordinary, and almost reprehensible manner.

Ab hoc qui nobis istos concubitus, succubitusque Dæmonum memorant uno ore loquuntur omnes, nihil iis frigidius &c.: The other details are too shocking to be repeated, p. 55.

written in Latin, in a good style, and bears marks of considerable erudition.

The result of all these inquiries has been, that recollected images only are presented to the persons labouring under delusions of this nature.

But the most remarkable and decisive narrative of this kind was published, some years ago, by Nicolai, the celebrated author and bookseller, of Berlin. “ Those who pretend to have seen and “ heard ghosts obstinately maintain, that “ they perceived these apparitions by “ means of their senses. In order to “ defeat that belief, we generally desire “ them to consider how many people have “ been imposed on by artful novices, and “ how liable we are to deceive ourselves; “ we advise them to lay hold of the supposed spectres; assuring them that they “ are generally found to be of a very corporeal nature. But those who have a

“ predilection for the miraculous, pay
“ no regard to these objections; insisting
“ that the productions of their disordered
“ imaginations are real beings. We can-
“ not therefore collect too many of such
“ well substantiated facts, as shew how-
“ easily our imagination imposes on us
“ erroneous notions, and deludes not
“ only delirious persons but even those
“ who are in full possession of their facul-
“ ties, by causing them to see phantasms
“ which scarcely can be distinguished
“ from real appearances.”

“ I have myself experienced a case of
“ this nature, which to me appears highly
“ remarkable, both psychologically and
“ medicinally ; I saw, in a state of mind
“ completely sound, and after the first
“ terror was over, with perfect calmness,
“ for nearly two months, almost constantly
“ and involuntarily a vast number of hu-
“ man and other forms, and even heard
“ their voices, though all this was merely

“ the consequence of a diseased state of
“ the nerves and an irregular circulation
“ of the blood.”

“ It being a matter of considerable im-
“ portance that an incident of this nature
“ should be observed with the strictest at-
“ tention, and related, together with all
“ collateral circumstances, with the most
“ conscientious fidelity, I shall not omit
“ any thing of which I retain a clear
“ recollection. The truth of what I am
“ going to advance will not require a far-
“ ther testimony, as Dr. Selle, who was
“ my physician and was daily informed
“ by me of every trifling occurrence and
“ change that happened, is still living,
“ and will, by all who know him, be most
“ readily admitted as an unobjectionable
“ witness. During the ten latter months of
“ the year 1790, I had experienced seve-
“ ral melancholy incidents which deeply
“ affected me, particularly in September,
“ from which time I suffered an almost

“uninterrupted series of misfortunes that
“afflicted me with the most poignant grief.
“I was accustomed to be bled twice a
“year, and this had been done once on
“the 9th of July, but was omitted to be
“repeated at the end of the year 1790.
“I had, in 1783, been suddenly taken
“with a violent vertigo, which my phy-
“sicians imputed to obstructions in the
“finer vessels of the abdomen, brought
“on by a sedentary life and a continual
“exertion of the mind. This indisposition
“was successfully removed by means of
“a more regular and strict diet; particu-
“larly efficacious in the beginning I had
“found leeches to the arms, and they
“were afterwards repeated two or three
“times annually when I felt violent con-
“gestions in the head. The last leeches
“which had been put on, previous to the
“appearance of the phantasms of which
“I am about to speak, had been applied
“on the first of March 1790, less blood
“had consequently been evacuated in

“ 1790 than was usual with me, and from
“ September, I was constantly occupied in
“ business that required the most unre-
“ mitted exertion, and was rendered still
“ more perplexing by frequent interrup-
“ tions.”

“ I had, in January and February of the
“ year 1791, the additional misfortune to
“ experience several extremely unpleasant
“ circumstances, which were followed on
“ the 24th of February by a most violent
“ altercation. My wife and another person
“ came into my apartment in the morning
“ in order to console me, but I was too
“ much agitated by a series of incidents
“ which had most powerfully affected my
“ moral feeling, to be capable of attending
“ to them ; on a sudden I perceived, at
“ about the distance of ten steps, a form
“ like that of a deceased person, I pointed
“ at it, asking my wife if she did not see
“ it ? It was but natural that she should
“ not see any thing, my question there-

“ fore alarmed her very much, and she
“ sent immediately for a physician, the
“ phantasm continued about eight mi-
“ nutes. I grew at length more calm,
“ and being extremely exhausted, fell
“ into a restless sleep which lasted about
“ half an hour; the physician ascribed
“ the apparition to a violent mental emo-
“ tion, and hoped that there would be no
“ return, but the violent agitation of my
“ mind had in some way disordered my
“ nerves, and produced farther conse-
“ quences which deserve a more minute
“ description.”

“ At four in the afternoon, the form
“ which I had seen in the morning re-
“ appeared. I was by myself when this
“ happened, and being rather uneasy at
“ the incident, went to my wife’s apart-
“ ment, but there likewise I was prevented
“ by the apparition, which, however, at
“ intervals disappeared, and always pre-
“ sented itself in a standing posture: about
“ six o’clock there appeared also several

“ walking figures, which had no connection with the first.”

“ I cannot assign any other cause of all this, than a continued rumination on the vexations I had suffered, which, though calmer, I could not forget, and the consequences of which I meditated to counteract ; these meditations occupied my mind three hours after dinner, just when my digestion commenced. I consoled myself at last with respect to the disagreeable incident which had occasioned the first apparition, but the phantasms continued to encrease and change in the most singular manner, though I had taken the proper medicine and found myself perfectly well. As when the first terror was over, I beheld the phantasms with great emotion taking them for what they really were, remarkable consequences of an indisposition, I endeavoured to collect myself as much as possible, that I might preserve a clear consciousness of

“ the changes which should take place
“ within myself; I observed these phan-
“ tasms very closely, and frequently re-
“ flected on my antecedent thoughts to
“ discover, if possible, by means of what
“ association of ideas exactly these forms
“ presented themselves to my imagination;
“ I thought at times I had found a clue,
“ but taking the whole together I could
“ not make out any natural connection
“ between the occupations of my mind,
“ my occupations, my regular thoughts,
“ and the multifarious forms which now
“ appeared to me, and now again dis-
“ appeared. After repeated and close ob-
“ servations, and calm examination, I was
“ unable to form any conclusion relative
“ to the origin and continuation of the
“ different phantasms which presented
“ themselves to me. All that I could infer
“ was, that while my nervous system was
“ in such an irregular state, such phan-
“ tasms would appear to me as if I actually
“ saw and heard them; that these illusions

“ were not modified by any known laws
“ of reason, imagination, or the common
“ association of ideas, and that probably
“ other people who may have had similar
“ apparitions, were exactly in the same
“ predicament. The origin of the individ-
“ dual forms which appeared to me, was
“ undoubtedly founded on the nature of
“ my mind, but the manner in which it
“ was thus affected, will probably remain
“ for ever as inscrutable as the origin of
“ thought and reflection. After the first
“ day the form of the deceased person no
“ more appeared, but in its place, there
“ appeared many other phantasms, some-
“ times representing acquaintances, but
“ mostly strangers, those whom I knew
“ were composed of living and deceased
“ persons, but the number of the latter
“ was comparatively small. I observed
“ the persons with whom I daily conversed
“ did not appear as phantasms, these repre-
“ senting chiefly persons who lived at some
“ distance from me. I attempted to pro-

“ duce at pleasure phantasms of persons
“ whom I knew by intensely reflecting on
“ their countenance shape &c. but dis-
“ tinctly as I called to my lively imagina-
“ tion the respective shades of three of these
“ persons, I still laboured in vain to make
“ them appear to me as phantasms, though
“ I had before involuntarily seen them in
“ that manner, and perceived them some
“ time after, when I least thought of them.
“ The phantoms appeared to me con-
“ trary to my inclination, as if they were
“ presented to me from without, like the
“ phenomena of nature, though they ex-
“ isted no where but within my mind.
“ I could at the same time distinguish
“ between phantasms and real objects, and
“ the calmness with which I examined
“ them, enabled me to avoid the commis-
“ sion of the smallest mistake. I knew
“ exactly when it only appeared to me
“ that the door was opening and a phan-
“ tasm entering the room, and when it
“ actually opened, a real person entered.”

“ These phantasms appeared equally
“ clear and distinct at all times and under
“ all circumstances, both when I was by
“ myself and when I was in company,
“ and as well in the day as at night, and
“ in my own house as well as abroad ; they
“ were, however, less frequent when I was
“ in the house of a friend, and rarely
“ appeared to me in the street ; when I
“ shut my eyes these phantasms would
“ sometimes disappear entirely, though
“ there were instances when I beheld them
“ with my eyes closed, yet when they
“ disappeared on such occasions, they ge-
“ nerally reappeared when I opened my
“ eyes. I conversed sometimes with my
“ physician and my wife of the phantasms
“ which at the moment surrounded me ;
“ they appeared more frequently walking
“ than at rest, nor were they constantly
“ present. They frequently did not appear
“ for some time, but always reappeared for
“ a longer or a shorter period either singly
“ or in company, the latter however being

“ most frequently the case. I generally
 “ saw human forms of both sexes, but they
 “ usually appeared not to take the smallest
 “ notice of each other, moving as in a
 “ market-place, where all are eager to press
 “ through the crowd ; at times however
 “ they seemed to be transacting business
 “ with each other : I also saw several times
 “ people on horseback, dogs and birds. All
 “ these phantasms appeared to me in their
 “ natural size and as distinct as if alive,
 “ exhibiting different shades of carnation
 “ in the uncovered parts as well as in
 “ different colours and fashions in their
 “ dresses, though the colours seemed
 “ somewhat paler than in real nature,
 “ none of the figures appeared particularly
 “ terrible, comical, or disgusting, most of
 “ them being of an indifferent shape, and
 “ some having a pleasing appearance.”

“ The longer these phantoms continued
 “ to appear the more frequently did they
 “ return, while at the same time they

“ increased in number about four weeks
 “ after they had first appeared. I also be-
 “ gan to hear them talk, the phantoms
 “ sometimes conversed among themselves,
 “ but more frequently addressed their dis-
 “ course to me ; their speeches were com-
 “ monly short and never of an unpleasant
 “ turn. At different times there appeared
 “ to me both dear and sensible friends of
 “ both sexes, whose addresses tended to
 “ appease my grief, which had not yet
 “ wholly subsided : these consolatory
 “ speeches were in general addressed to
 “ me when I was alone, sometimes I was
 “ accosted by these consoling friends
 “ while in company, frequently while
 “ real persons were speaking to me.
 “ These consolatory addresses consisted
 “ sometimes of abrupt phrases, and at
 “ others, they were regularly connected.”

“ Though both my mind and body were
 “ in a tolerable state of sanity all this time,
 “ and these phantasms became so familiar

" to me that they did not cause me the
 " slightest uneasiness, and I even some-
 " times amused myself with surveying
 " them, and spoke jocularly of them to
 " my physician and my wife; I yet did
 " not neglect to use proper medicines,
 " especially when they began to haunt
 " me the whole day, and even at night
 " as soon as I awaked."

" At last it was agreed that leeches
 " should be again applied to me, as for-
 " merly; which was actually done, April
 " 20th 1791, at eleven o'clock in the
 " morning. No person was with me be-
 " sides the surgeon; but during the opera-
 " tion my chamber was crowded with
 " human phantasms of all descriptions.
 " This continued uninterruptedly till
 " about half an hour after four o'clock,
 " just when my digestion commenced. I
 " then perceived that they began to move
 " more slowly. Soon after, their colour
 " began to fade, and at seven o'clock they

“ were entirely white. But they moved
“ very little, though the forms were as
“ distinct as before: growing however
“ by degrees more obscure; yet not
“ fewer in number as had generally
“ been the case. The phantoms did
“ not withdraw, nor did they vanish;
“ which previous to that time had fre-
“ quently happened. They now seemed
“ to dissolve in the air; while fragments
“ of some of them continued visible a
“ considerable time. About eight o’clock
“ the room was entirely cleared of my
“ fantastic visitors.”

“ Since this time I have felt, twice or
“ three times a sensation as if these
“ phantasms were going to re-appear;
“ without however actually seeing any
“ thing. The same sensation surprised
“ me just before I drew up this account,
“ while I was examining some papers
“ relative to these apparitions which I
“ had drawn up in the year 1791.”

This is one of the extreme cases of delusion, which a man of strong natural judgment has ventured to record of himself. Cardan, who fancied himself visited by supernatural impulses, never produced so marvellous a story.

Cardan, however, describes himself as amused, in his youth, with recollected images, similar to those which I have described, in the first chapter. Before he left his bed, in the morning, he saw a succession of figures, composed of brazen rings, like links of mail, (though he had never seen mail-armour at that time,) moving, in a circular direction, upwards, from right to left, till they disappeared. Castles, houses, animals, trees, men in different dresses; trumpeters, appearing to blow their trumpets, though no sound was heard; soldiers, and landscapes; all passed before him, in circular compartments. “Videbam
“ego imagines diversas quasi corporum

“ æreorum. (Constare enim videbantur
 “ ex annulis minimis, quales sunt lori-
 “ carum, cum tamen loricas nunquam
 “ eousque vidissem) ab imo lecti angulo
 “ dextro ascendentes per semicirculum,
 “ lenté et in sinistrum occidentes, ut
 “ prorsus non apparerenti Arcium, do-
 “ morum, animalium, equorum cum
 “ equitibus, herbarum, arborum, instru-
 “ mentorum musicorum, hominum di-
 “ versorum habituum, vestiumque vari-
 “ arum, tubicines præcipue cum tubis
 “ quasi sonantibus, nulla tamen vox aut
 “ sonus exaudiebatur; præterea milites,
 “ populos, arva, formasque corporum
 “ usque ad hunc diem mihi invisas:
 “ lucos et sylvas, aliaque quorum non
 “ memini, quandoque multarum rerum
 “ congeriem simul irruentium, non ta-
 “ men ut se confunderent, sed ut ut pro-
 “ perarent. Erant autem perspicua illa,
 “ sed non ita ut proinde esset, ac si non
 “ adessent, nec densa ut oculo pervia

“ non essent. Sed ipsi circuli opaci
 “ erant spatia prorsus perspicua.”*

Ben Jonson, also, falls under this description, from the *Heads of Conversation*, published by the executors of Drummond of Hawthornden, who have deprived posterity of Drummond's original account of these interesting interviews. Jonson told him, that “ when
 “ the king came to England, about the
 “ time that the plague was in London,
 “ he being in the country, at Sir Robert
 “ Cotton's house with old Cambden, he
 “ saw in a vision his eldest son, then a
 “ young child and at London, appear
 “ unto him with the mark of a bloody
 “ cross on his forehead, as if it had been
 “ cut with a sword, at which amazed
 “ he prayed unto God, and in the morn-
 “ ing he came unto Mr. Cambden's
 “ chamber to tell him, who persuaded

* Cardanus de vita propria, cap. 37.

“ him it was but an apprehension, at
 “ which he should not be dejected. In
 “ the mean time there came letters from
 “ his wife of the death of that boy in
 “ the plague. He appeared to him, he
 “ said, of a manly shape, and of that
 “ growth he thinks he shall be at the
 “ resurrection.”

“ He said, that he had spent a whole
 “ night in looking to his great toe, about
 “ which he hath seen Tartars and Turks,
 “ Romans and Carthaginians fight in
 “ his imagination.”*

Such sights as youthful poets dream,
 On summer's eve, by haunted stream !

That extraordinary, and much misrepresented character, the Maid of France, appears to have been a visionary of this kind, and to have been enthusiastically sincere in her belief of supernatural com-

* Drummond's Works, p. 224.

munications. The ancient memoirs of this heroine, published by Denys Godefroy, convey a high idea of her sagacity and elevation of mind. When she induced Charles VII. to the bold attempt of procuring his inauguration at *Rheims*, she described the celestial voice as having said to her, while she was engaged in prayer, *Fille, va, va, je seray a ton ayde, va.*

Her unknown historian adds; “ Elle
 “ estoit au reste tres-devote, se confessoit
 “ souvent, & recevoit le precieux corps
 “ de N. S. Jesus Christ, estoit de tres-
 “ belle et bonne vie, et d’honneste conversation.”

In a very curious letter, written by the Sieur de Laval, we meet with some characteristic anecdotes of the Maid, to whom he was introduced by Charles VII.
 ‘ Et-fit ladite Pucelle tres bonne chere
 ‘ a mon pere & a moy, estant armée de

‘ toutes pieces, sauve la tete, et tenant la
 ‘ lance en main ; et après que fumes de-
 ‘ scendus á selle, j’allay a son logis la
 ‘ voir ; et fit venir le vin, et me dit, qu’elle
 ‘ m’en feroit bientot boire á Paris ; et
 ‘ semble chose toute divine de son fait,
 ‘ et de la voir et de l’ouyr. ——— et la
 ‘ veis monter a cheval, armée tout en
 ‘ blanc, sauf la teste, une petite hache
 ‘ en sa main, sur un grand coursier noir
 ‘ qui a l’huis de son logis se demenoit
 ‘ tres fort, et ne souffroit qu’elle montast ;
 ‘ et lors elle dit, menez-le a la croix,
 ‘ qui etoit devant l’église aupres, au che-
 ‘ min ; et lors ell monta sans qu’il se
 ‘ meut, comme s’il fut lié ; et lors se
 ‘ tourna vers l’huis de l’église, qui etoit
 ‘ bien prochain, et dit en assez voix de
 ‘ femme : *Vous les Prestres et gens d’église,*
 ‘ *faites procession et prieres a Dieu.*’

Upon her trial, as it is repeated by
 Chartier, she spoke with the utmost sim-
 plicity and firmness of her visions : ‘ Que

' souvent alloit a une belle fontaine au
 ' pays de Lorraine, laquelle elle nom-
 ' moit bonne fontaine aux Feés Nostre
 ' Seigneur, et en icelluy lieu tous ceulx
 ' de pays quand ils avoient fievre ils
 ' alloient pour recouvrer garison; et la
 ' alloit souvent ladite Jehanne la Pucelle
 ' sous un grand arbre qui la fontaine
 ' ombroit; et s'apparurent a elle S^{rs}.
 ' Katerine et S^{rs}. Marguerite qui lui
 ' dirent qu'elle allast a ung Cappitaine
 ' qu'elles lui nommerent, laquelle y alla
 ' sans prendre congé ni a pere ni a mere;
 ' lequel Cappitaine la vestit en guise
 ' d'homme et l'armoït et lui ceint l'epée,
 ' et luy bailla un escuyer et quatre var-
 ' lets; et en ce point fut montée sur un
 ' bon cheval; et en ce point vint aut
 ' Roy de France, et lui dit que du Com-
 ' mandement de lui estoit venue a lui, et
 ' qu'elle le feroit le plus grant Seigneur
 ' du Monde, et qu'il lui fut ordonné
 ' que tretou ceulx qui lui desobeiroient
 ' fussent occis sans mercy, et que St. Mi-

‘chel et plusieurs anges lui avoient baillé
 ‘une Couronne moult riche pour lui;’
 &c.

Unquestionably, the temperament which disposes men to cultivate the higher and graver species of poetry, contributes to render them susceptible of impressions of this nature. Such a temperament, excited by the pathetic circumstances of a story, more interesting than any tale of fiction, produced the vision of Dr. Donne. When residing in Paris, he saw the figure of his wife, then in London, pass through the room, with her hair hanging loose, and carrying a dead child in her arms. After reading the exquisite poem which he wrote, previous to their separation, it is impossible to wonder at an impression of such a nature.

This is, indeed, an instance of that species of ecstasy, which is known, in the North of Scotland, under the name

of 'Second-Sight.' Much has been written on this subject; I shall therefore only mention two instances, which will prove that the spectral impressions certainly take place; of their prophetic nature, there may be different opinions.

A gentleman connected with my family, an officer in the army, and certainly addicted to no superstition, was quartered, early in life, in the middle of the last century, near the castle of a gentleman in the North of Scotland, who was supposed to possess the Second-Sight. Strange rumours were afloat, respecting the old chieftain. He had spoken to an apparition, which ran along the battlements of the house, and had never been chearful afterwards. His prophetic visions excited surprise, even in that region of credulity; and his retired habits favoured the popular opinion. My friend assured me, that one day, while he was reading a play to the

ladies of the family, the chief, who had been walking across the room, stopped suddenly, and assumed the look of a *Seer*. He rang the bell, and ordered the groom to saddle a horse; to proceed immediately to a seat in the neighbourhood, and to inquire after the health of Lady -----; if the account was favourable, he then directed him to call at another castle, to ask after another lady whom he named,

The reader immediately closed his book, and declared that he would not proceed till these abrupt orders were explained, as he was confident that they were produced by the Second-Sight. The chief was very unwilling to explain himself; but at length he owned, that the door had appeared to open, and that a little woman, without a head, had entered the room; that the apparition indicated the sudden death of some person of his acquaintance; and the only

two persons who resembled the figure, were those ladies, after whose health he had sent to inquire.

A few hours afterwards, the servant returned, with an account that one of the ladies had died of an apoplectic fit, about the time when the vision appeared.

At another time, the chief was confined to his bed, by indisposition, and my friend was reading to him, in a stormy winter-night, while the fishing-boat, belonging to the castle, was at sea. The old gentleman repeatedly expressed much anxiety respecting his people; and at last exclaimed, my boat is lost! The colonel replied, how do you know it, Sir? —He was answered; I see two of the boatmen bringing in the third drowned, all dripping wet, and laying him down close beside your chair. The chair was shifted, with great precipitation; in the course of the night, the fishermen re-

turned, with the corpse of one of the boatmen.

MARTIN, who has given a very particular account of *Seers*, in the western Islands, mentions a young woman, who was troubled, during four or five years, with the constant appearance of her own image before her, the back being turned towards her. No event was connected with this spectral impression.

But one of the most remarkable *Seers* on record, was JOHN BEAUMONT, who published a 'treatise of spirits, apparitions, witchcrafts, and other magical practices,' in 1705. He appears to have been a man of a hypochondriacal disposition, with a considerable degree of reading, but with a strong bias to credulity. His collections of stories are entertaining; but my business is with his visions, which shew in a most astonishing manner, how far the mind may be

deceived, without the occurrence of actual derangement. They will be detailed in the next chapter. Had this man, instead of irritating his mental disease, by the study of the Platonic philosophers, placed himself under the care of an intelligent physician, he would have regained his tranquillity, and the world would have lost a most extraordinary set of confessions.

CHAP. III.

*Beaumont's Visions—Those of Tasso—
Kotter—Drabicius—Arise Evans—
Bovet.*

PHYSICIANS have sometimes occasion to regret the prolixity of the statements, which they receive from their patients. Beaumont has been rather more diffusive than usual; for his book, which may be considered as a narrative of his malady, contains four hundred pages, in octavo. It is, however very much to my purpose, for it exhibits the disease of spectral vision, in its full strength and permanency.

Like Nicolai, he sometimes saw a multitude of men and women about him, both in the day and night. "So it was "with myself," says he, "for I saw "hundreds, though I never saw any in "the night-time, without a fire, or candle-light, or in the moonshine, and "as the person mentioned (by Aubrey) "had two particular spirits there named, "which constantly attended him, besides others without names, so it was "with myself; two spirits constantly attending me, night and day, for above "three months together; who called "each other by their names, and several "spirits would often call at my chamber door, and ask whether such spirits "lived there, calling by their names, "and they would answer, they did. "As for the other spirits that attended "me, I heard none of their names mentioned, only I asked one spirit which "came for some nights together, and "rung a little bell in my ear, what his

" name was, who answered *Ariel*. We
 " find that one of the spirits, who
 " attended the second-sighted person,
 " appeared as a boy, the other as a girl;
 " but the two that constantly attended
 " myself, appeared both in women's
 " habit, they being of a brown com-
 " plexion, and about three foot in sta-
 " ture; they had both black, loose net-
 " work gowns, tyed with a black sash
 " about the middle, and within the net-
 " work appeared a gown of a golden
 " colour, with somewhat of a light strik-
 " ing through it. Their heads were not
 " drest with top-knots, but they had
 " white linen caps on, with lace on
 " them, about three-fingers breadth, and
 " over it they had a black loose net-work
 " hood.

" As the foresaid second-sighted per-
 " sons, sitting by the fire, with others
 " in the winter-time, would see spirits
 " standing by, and often seem angry

“ and disturbed, though nothing visible
 “ to others moved him; so, as I have
 “ been sitting by the fire with others,
 “ I have seen several spirits, and pointed
 “ to the place where they were, telling
 “ the company they were there. And
 “ one spirit, whom I heard calling to
 “ me, as he stood behind me, on a
 “ sudden clapped his finger to my side,
 “ which I sensibly perceived, and started
 “ at it, and as I saw one spirit come in
 “ at the door, which I did not like, I
 “ suddenly laid hold of a pair of tongs,
 “ and struck at him with all my force,
 “ whereupon he vanished.

“ *** I must declare, that I would
 “ not for the whole world undergo what
 “ I have undergone, upon spirits com-
 “ ing twice to me; their first coming
 “ was most dreadful to me, the thing
 “ being then altogether new, and con-
 “ sequently more surprizing, though at
 “ the first coming they did not appear

“ to me, but only called to me at my
 “ chamber windows, rung bells, sung
 “ to me, and played on music, &c. but
 “ the last coming also carried terror
 “ enough; for when they came, being
 “ only five in number, the two women
 “ before mentioned, and three men,
 “ (though afterwards there came hun-
 “ dreds) they told me they would kill
 “ me, if I told any person in the house
 “ of their being there, which put me in
 “ some consternation, and I made a
 “ servant sit up with me four nights in
 “ my chamber before a fire, it being
 “ in the Christmas Holidays, telling no
 “ person of their being there. One of
 “ these spirits in women’s dress, lay
 “ down upon the bed by me every
 “ night; and told me if I slept, the
 “ spirits would kill me, which kept me
 “ waking for three nights. In the mean
 “ time, a near relation of mine went
 “ (though unknown to me) to a phy-
 “ sician of my acquaintance, desiring

“ him to prescribe me somewhat for
“ sleeping, which he did, and a sleeping
“ potion was brought me, but I set it
“ by, being very desirous and inclined
“ to sleep without it. The fourth night
“ I could hardly forbear sleeping, but
“ the spirit, lying on the bed by me, told
“ me again, I should be killed if I slept;
“ whereupon I rose, and sate by the
“ fire-side, and in a while returned to
“ my bed; and so I did a third time,
“ but was still threatened as before :
“ whereupon I grew impatient, and
“ asked the spirits what they would
“ have? Told them I had done the
“ part of a christian, in humbling myself
“ to God, and feared them not, and
“ rose from my bed, took a cane, and
“ knocked at the ceiling of my cham-
“ ber, a near relation of mine lying then
“ over me, who presently rose and came
“ down to me, about two o’clock in the
“ morning, to whom I said, you have
“ seen me disturbed these four days past,

"and that I have not slept; the occasion
 "of it was, that five spirits, which are
 "now in the room with me, have
 "threatened to kill me if I told any
 "person of their being here, or if I
 "slept, but I am not able to forbear
 "sleeping longer, and acquaint you
 "with it, and now stand in defiance of
 "them; and thus I exerted myself about
 "them; and notwithstanding their con-
 "tinued threats, I slept very well the
 "next night, and continued so to do,
 "though they continued with me above
 "three months, day and night."*

The celebrated visions of Tasso appear
 to have been of the same nature. He
 fancied that he beheld a celestial being,
 with whom he held converse, in the
 presence of spectators, who perceived no
 apparition, and who heard no voice but
 that of the poet. Would that we could

* Beaumont's Treatise, p. 91, 4.

have exchanged the narratives of Beaumont's reveries, for those of Tasso !

To this class of morbid perceptions, belong also the visions of Christopher Kotter, and Drabicius, which made a considerable noise in the seventeenth century. They were published by Comenius, aided by very ghostly engravings, under the title of 'Lux é Tenebris.' I must refer to Bayle, for many curious observations respecting the tendency of these prophetic rhapsodies : my business is only with the faculty of spectral representation.

For this reason, I shall not notice Drabicius. As a man of superior information, he might be suspected of politic views, in his pretended visions : but there can be no doubt that Kotter was sincere in his enthusiasm, and was as much a *Seer* as any second-sighted prophet of the Hebrides.

Kotter's first vision was detailed by him, on oath, before the magistrates of Sprottaw, in 1619. While he was travelling on foot, in open day-light, in June 1616, a man appeared to him, who ordered him to inform the civil and ecclesiastical authorities, that great evils were impending over Germany, for the punishment of the sins of the people; after which he vanished. The same apparition met him at different times, and compelled him at length, by threats, to make this public declaration,

After this, his visions assumed a more imposing appearance : on one occasion, the angel (for such he was now confessed to be) shewed him three suns, filling one half of the heavens; and nine moons, with their horns turned towards the east, filling the other half. At the same time, a superb fountain of pure water spouted from the arid soil, under his feet.

At another time, he beheld a mighty lion, treading on the moon, and several other lions around him, in the clouds.

Sometimes he beheld the encounter of hostile armies, splendidly accoutred; sometimes he wandered through palaces, whose only inhabitants were devouring monsters; or beheld dragons of enormous size, in various scenes of action.

He was at length attended by two angels, in his ecstasy; one of his visions at this time was of the most formidable and impressive kind.* “On the 13th

* Die 13 Septembris amb. illi Juvenes ad me pederunt, dicentes: Ne metue, sed rei quæ Tibi exhibebitur, attende! 2. Et conspexi ante me subito circulum quandam, magni solis instar, rubrum, ac velut sanguineum: in quo lineæ fuerunt, seu maculæ, albæ & nigræ, tanta mixtura se invicem variantes, ut jam nigrarum, jam albarum major cerneretur numerus: duravitque spectaculum istud per justum spatium. 3. Et cum ad me dixissent Aspice! Attende! nihil metue! nihil tibi accidet mali! 4. Ecce fulmen tribus

" day of September, says he, both the
 " youths returned to me, saying, be not
 " afraid, but observe the thing which will
 " be shewn to thee. And I suddenly be-
 " held a circle, like the sun, red, and as it
 " were, bloody: in which were black and
 " white lines, or spots, so intermingled,
 " that sometimes there appeared a greater
 " number of blacks, sometimes of white;
 " and this sight continued for some space

vicibus exigui temporis intervallis sibi succedentibus
 intonuit, tam horrendé et terribilé, ut totus obriges-
 cerem. 5. Circulus autem ille stabat porro coram me,
 maculæque albæ á nigris disjungebant sese: et circulus
 accessit tam propé mihi, ut manu tangere potuis-
 sem. 6. Fuit autem tam speciosus, ut toto vitæ tem-
 pore amænioris rei speciem nullam viderim: et ma-
 culæ albæ adeó candidæ ac jucundæ, ut admirationis
 modum nón inveniissem. 7. Sed aliæ illæ maculæ á
 nube quadam horribilitér caliginosâ ablatæ sunt: in
 quâ nube tristem audiui ejulatum, etsi viderem neminem,
 8. Verba tamén ejulatus et lamentorum fuerant, bené
 perceptibilia, hæc; vae nobis qui nos caliginosæ rubi
 permisimus abstrahi á rotundo Divinæ gratiæ sanguine
 rubente circulo, quò nos Dei gratia in Christo dilec-
 tissimo filio suo comprehensos concluderat.

Lux é Tenebris, p. 119.

“ of time. And when they had said to
“ me, Behold ! Attend ! Fear not ! No evil
“ will befall thee ! Lo, there were three
“ successive peals of thunder, at short in-
“ tervals, so loud and dreadful, that I shud-
“ dered all over. But the circle stood
“ before me, and the black and white
“ spots were disunited, and the circle
“ approached so near that I could have
“ touched it with my hand. And it was
“ so beautiful, that I had never in my life
“ seen any thing more agreeable : and the
“ white spots were so bright and pleasant,
“ that I could not contain my admiration.
“ But the black spots were carried away
“ in a cloud of horrible darkness, in which
“ I heard a dismal outcry, though I could
“ see no one. Yet these words of lamen-
“ tation were audible : Woe unto us, who
“ have committed ourselves to the black
“ cloud, to be withdrawn from the circle
“ coloured with the blood of divine grace,
“ in which the grace of God, in his well-
“ beloved Son, had inclosed us.”

After several other piteous exclamations, he saw a procession of many thousand persons, bearing palms, and singing hymns, but of very small stature, enter the red circle, from the black cloud, chanting halleluiah.

A Polish Prophetess made her appearance, about the same time; but as there was nothing particularly interesting in her visions, they may be kept, like the madness of Mr. Sheridan's character in the Critic, in the back-ground.

The prophecy of Arise Evans respecting the Restoration of Charles II. is thus detailed by Dr. Warburton, in a letter to Dr. Jortin. Evans, as I have mentioned elsewhere, was a mere juggler in the dates of his title-pages. The vision itself resembles the royal shadows in Macbeth.

“ You desired to have a more particular

“account of ——— a certain prophecy
“of one Arise Evans, which you have
“heard some of your friends speak of in
“terms of astonishment; as I have his
“book which is scarce, I am able to give
“you that satisfaction. But it may not be
“amiss first to let you into the character
“of the prophet. Arise Evans lived and
“flourished in the last century, during
“the time of our civil confusions. He
“was a warm Welshman, and not disposed
“to be an idle spectator in so busy a scene.
“So he left his native country for London,
“and finding on his arrival there that
“*Inspiration* was all running one way, he
“projected to make a division of it from
“the Roundheads to the Cavaliers, and set
“up for a Prophet of the Royalists. He
“did, and said many extraordinary things
“to the grandees of both parties: and it
“must be owned, he had a spice of what
“we seldom find wanting in the ingre-
“dients of a modern prophet, I mean
“prevarication.”

“Of this he has himself given us a
“notable example in the 42nd page of
“his Tract, called an Echo from Heaven,
“which, because it contains an uncommon
“fetch of wit, I shall describe.
“There are two confessions,” says he,
“subscribed by my hand in the city of
“London, which if not now, will in
“after ages be considered. The one was
“made at the Spittle, and subscribed
“with the right hand, in the aforesaid
“vestry, before Sir Walter Earl; and
“that is a confession made by the inner
“man, or new man; the other confession
“is a confession of the flesh, called
“the outward man or old man; and
“the confession made before Green (the
“Recorder), and subscribed with the
“left hand, as the difference in the
“writing, being compared, will make
“it appear. I know the bench, and the
“people thought I recanted, but alas!
“they were deceived.”

“ Well, but this very man has in the
 “ 77th and 78th pages of this Echo printed
 “ for the author in 12^{mo}. and sold at his
 “ house in Long Alley in Black Friars,
 “ 1653, second edition with additions, a
 “ prophecy which astonishes all who care-
 “ fully consider it. It is in these words,
 “ A vision that I had presently after the
 “ king’s death.—I thought that I was in
 “ a great hall like the king’s hall, or the
 “ castle in Winchester, and there was
 “ none there but a judge that sat upon
 “ the bench and myself; and as I turned
 “ to a window in the north-westward,
 “ and looking into the palm of my
 “ hand, there appeared to me a face,
 “ head and shoulders like the Lord Fair-
 “ fax’s, and presently it vanished. Again,
 “ there arose the Lord Cromwell, and
 “ he vanished likewise; then arose a
 “ young face and he had a crown upon
 “ his head, and he vanished also; and
 “ another young face arose with a crown

“ upon his head, and he vanished also ;
 “ and another ----- young face arose
 “ with a crown upon his head, and
 “ vanished in like manner ; and as I
 “ turned the palm of my hand back
 “ again to me and looked, there did
 “ appear no more in it. Then I turned
 “ to the judge and said to him, there
 “ arose in my hand seven ; and five of
 “ them had crowns ; but when I turned
 “ my hand, the blood turned to its veins,
 “ and these appeared no more : so I
 “ awoke. The interpretation of this vision
 “ is, that after the Lord Cromwell, there
 “ shall be kings again in England, which
 “ thing is signified unto us by those that
 “ arose after him, who were all crowned,
 “ but the generations to come may look
 “ for a change of the blood, and of the
 “ name in the royal seat, after five kings
 “ once passed, 2 Kings x. 30. (The
 “ words referred to in this text are these)
 “ And the Lord said unto Jehu, because
 “ thou hast done well, &c. thy children

“ of the fourth generation shall sit upon
 “ the throne of Israel.” *

Sauvages mentions, that a woman, subject to epilepsy, saw, during the paroxysm, dreadful spectres, and that real objects appeared magnified to an extraordinary degree: a fly seemed as large as a fowl, and a fowl appeared equal in size to an ox. In coloured objects, green predominated with her; a curious fact, which I have seen verified in other convulsive diseases. A very intelligent boy, who was under my care for convulsions of the voluntary muscles, when he looked at some large caricatures, glaringly coloured with red and yellow, insisted on it that they were covered with green, till his paroxysm abated, during which his intellects had not been at all affected.

* Jortin's Rem. on Ecclesiast, Hist. App. to vol, I.

Among other instances of *Suffusio*, Sauvages also mentions an aged physician of Narbonne, who, during several days, saw every object crooked.

I shall select, as a remarkable instance of spectral impressions, a story published by Richard Bovet, in his *Pandæmonium, or the Devil's Cloyster*, printed in 1684. The first appearances were probably seen in a dream. The noises, on the second night, were perhaps recollected impressions.*

“ About the year 1667, being with
 “ some persons of honour in the house of
 “ a nobleman in the west country, which
 “ had formerly been a nunnery : I must
 “ confess I had often heard the servants,
 “ and others that inhabited or lodged there,
 “ speak much of the noises, stirs, and
 “ apparitions that frequently disturbed the

* Eighth Relation, p. 202.

“ house, but had at that time no appre-
 “ hensions of it ; for the house being full
 “ of stranger’s, the nobleman’s steward,
 “ Mr. C. lay with me in a fine wainscoat-
 “ room, called my ladies’ chamber ; we
 “ went to our lodging pretty early, and
 “ having a good fire in the room, we
 “ spent some time in reading, in which
 “ he much delighted : then having got
 “ into bed, and put out the candles, we
 “ observed the room to be very light,
 “ by the brightness of the moon, so that
 “ a wager was laid between us, that it
 “ was possible to read written hand by
 “ that light upon the bed where we lay ;
 “ accordingly I drew out of my pocket
 “ a manuscript, which he read distinctly
 “ in the place where he lay : we had
 “ scarce made an end of discoursing
 “ about that affair, when I saw (my face
 “ being towards the door which was
 “ locked) entering into the room, five
 “ appearances of very fine and lovely

“ women, they were of excellent stature,
“ and their dresses seemed very fine, but
“ covered all but their faces, with their
“ light veils, whose skirts trailed largely
“ on the floor. They entered in a file
“ one after the other, and in that posture
“ walked round the room, till the fore-
“ most came, and stood by that side of
“ the bed where I lay (with my left
“ hand over the side of the bed ; for my
“ head rested on that arm, and I deter-
“ mined not to alter the posture in which
“ I was) she struck me upon that hand
“ with a blow that felt very soft, but I
“ did never remember whether it were
“ cold or hot : I demanded in the name
“ of the blessed Trinity, what business
“ they had there, but received no answer ;
“ then I spoke to Mr. C. Sir, do you
“ see what fair guests we have come to
“ visit us ? before which they all dis-
“ appeared : I found him in some kind
“ of agony, and was forced to grasp him

“ on the breast with my right hand
“ (which was next him underneath the
“ bed-clothes) before I could obtain
“ speech of him; then he told me that
“ he had seen the fair guests I spoke of,
“ and had heard me speak to them; but
“ withal said, that he was not able to
“ speak sooner unto me, being extremely
“ affrighted at the sight of a dreadful
“ monster, which assuming a shape, be-
“ twixt that of a lion and a bear, at-
“ tempted to come upon the bed’s foot.
“ I told him, I thanked God nothing so
“ frightful had presented itself to me;
“ but I hoped (through his assistance)
“ not to dread the ambages of hell. It
“ was a long time before I could com-
“ pose him to sleep, and though he had
“ had many disturbances in his own
“ room, and understood of others in the
“ house, yet he acknowledged he had
“ never been so terrified, during many
“ years abode there. The next day at

“ dinner he shewed to divers persons of
“ principal quality, the mark that had
“ been occasioned on his breast by the
“ gripe I was forced to give him, to get
“ him to speak, and related all the pas-
“ sages very exactly ; after which he
“ protested never to lie more in that
“ room ; upon which I set up a resolu-
“ tion to lodge in it again, not knowing
“ but something of the reason of those
“ troubles might by that means be im-
“ parted to me. The next night, there-
“ fore, I ordered a Bible, and another
“ book to be laid in the room, and
“ resolved to spend my time by the fire
“ in reading and contemplation, till I
“ found myself inclined to sleep : and
“ accordingly having taken leave of the
“ family at the usual hour, I addressed
“ myself to what I had proposed, not
“ going into bed till past one in the
“ morning : a little after I was got into
“ bed, I heard somewhat walk about the

“ room, like a woman in a tabby gown.
“ trailing about the room ; it made a
“ mighty rushelling noise, but I could
“ see nothing, though it was near as
“ light as the night before : it passed by
“ the foot of the bed and a little opened
“ the curtains, and thence went to a
“ closet door on that side, through
“ which it found admittance, although
“ it was close locked : there it seemed
“ to groan, and draw a great chair with
“ its foot, in which it seemed to sit, and
“ turn over the leaves of a large folio ;
“ which you know make a loud clatter-
“ ing noise ; so it continued in that pos-
“ ture, sometimes groaning, sometimes
“ dragging the chair, and clattering the
“ book till it was near day ; afterwards
“ I lodged several times in this room,
“ but never met with any molestation.”

“ This I can attest to be a true account
“ of what passed in that room the two

“ described nights ; and though Mr. C.
“ be lately dead, who was a very inge-
“ nious man, and affirmed the first part
“ unto many, with whom he was con-
“ versant ; it remains that I appeal to
“ the knowledge of those who have
“ been inhabitants or lodgers in the said
“ house, for what remains, to justify the
“ credibility of the rest.”

CHAP. IV.

Medical distinctions of spectral impressions.

Sepulchral remedies : Preparations of the human skull—Mumia—Apparition of Ficinus to Michael Mercato.—Warning voice to Quarræus.—Visions of Dr. Por-dage. Latent lunacy—Exemplified in the character of Hamlet.

IN medicine, we have fine names, at least, for every species of disease. The peculiar disorder, which I have endeavoured to elucidate, is termed generally **HALLUCINATION**, including all delusive impressions, from the wandering mote before the eye, to the tremendous spectre, which is equally destitute of existence.

It is unnecessary to my purpose, to pursue the subdivisions of this affection, which have been traced by nosologists. I shall only mention one extreme species, called the Lycanthropia, in which the patient imagines himself to have become a wolf, abandons society, and takes refuge in the woods. These impressions have no doubt been produced, or strengthened by narcotic potions, of hyoscyamus, datura stramonium, and other deleterious infusions, either ignorantly taken, or maliciously administered.

But we may well be surprized to find, that impressions of this kind are registered, under the title of experimental philosophy. Dr. Garmann,* in his chapter on the ghosts of the dead, informs us, that “when human salt, “extracted and depurated from the skull

* De Miraculis Mortuorum.

“ of a man, was placed in a water-dish,
 “ and covered with another plate, there
 “ appeared next morning, in the mass,
 “ figures of men fixed to the cross.”

Another philosopher relates, that, when fresh earth from a church-yard was put into an oblong plate, after the performance of certain ceremonies, a thousand spectres were visible in it.

During the sixteenth century, preparations from the human skull were favourite remedies: the moss which was found on skulls long-interred, and the bones reduced to powder, were often prescribed. In a very respectable work, WEPFER'S *Historiæ Apoplecticorum*, there is a dissertation on this subject, by Dr. Emanuel Kænig,* in which he asserts, that on those nights when the human skull was pounded in the apothecary's

* Wepfer. *Histor. Apoplectic.* p. 459.

house, the family was alarmed by unusual noises, by clappings of the doors and windows, by groans, and other indications that the spirits of the dead were abroad.

I have never found that any effects of this kind were attributed to the MUMIA, a favourite remedy of the same period: that is, the flesh of mummies, which were imported from Alexandria, and which was swallowed in the form of pills or boluses, by the noble and rich, in Europe. The medical writings of that time are full of accounts of this horrible and useless practice, which was at length discontinued, when it was found that the Alexandrians, instead of disinterring the embalmed mummies of the ancient Egyptians, contented themselves with exporting the putrid carcasses of Jews, to which they had easier access.*

* Garmann de Cadaverum Mumiis. Lib. iii.
Tit. ii. p. 1042, 3.

In this manner was anthropophagy sanctioned by physicians, even as late as the reign of Louis XIV. while some writers affected to doubt, whether the practice had ever existed.

§ III.

From the principles which I have established, the reader will easily proceed with me, to account for the most imposing relations of apparitions.

I have shewn that a morbid disposition of the brain is capable of producing spectral impressions, without any external prototypes. The religion of the ancients, which peopled all parts of nature with deities of different ranks, exposed them, in a peculiar manner, to delusions of the imagination; and I have had occasion, in another essay,*

* On Genius.

to mention the influence which the doctrines of Plato have exerted, in this respect, even since the establishment of christianity. From recalling images by an art of memory, the transition is direct to beholding spectral objects, which have been floating in the imagination. Yet, even in the most frantic assemblage of this nature, no novelty appears. The spectre may be larger or smaller ; it may be compounded of the parts of different animals; but it is always framed from the recollection of familiar, though discordant images.

The simple renewal of the impressions of form or voice, in the case of particular friends, is the most obvious, and most forcible of these recollections. Of this kind, seems to have been the celebrated apparition of Ficinus, to Michael Mercato, mentioned by Baronius.

Those illustrious friends, after a long

discourse on the nature of the soul, had agreed that, whoever of the two should die first, should, if possible, appear to his surviving friend, and inform him of his condition in the other world.*

A short time afterwards, says Baronius,† it happened, that while Michael Mercato the elder was studying philosophy, early in the morning, he suddenly heard the noise of a horse galloping in the street, which stopped at his door, and the voice of his friend Eginus was heard, exclaiming, O Michael! O Michael! those things are true. Astonished at this address, Mercato rose and looked out of the window, where

* De Apparitionibus mortuorum, Vivis ex Pacto factis. Lips: 1709.

† Baronii Annales.—This story was told to Baronius, by the grandson of Mercato, who was Proto-notary of the church, and a man of the greatest probity, as well as of general knowledge.

he saw the back of his friend, drest in white, galloping off, on a white horse.

He called after him, and followed him with his eyes, till the appearance vanished. Upon inquiry, he learned that Ficinus had died at Florence, at the very time when this vision was presented to Mercato, at a considerable distance.

Many attempts have been made to discredit this story, but I think the evidence has never been shaken. I entertain no doubt, that Mercato had seen what he described; in following the reveries of Plato, the idea of his friend, and of their compact, had been revived, and had produced a spectral impression, during the solitude and awful silence of the early hours of study. Baronius adds, that after this occurrence, Mercato neglected all profane studies, and addicted himself entirely to divinity.

The vanishing of the imaginary apparition, in these cases, resembles Achilles's vision, in the Iliad.

1 ----- ψυχὴ δὲ μετα χθονὸς ἤϊτε κελπνός
"Ἰχέτο πετρίγυια.-----"

The impression of sound, the most remarkable circumstance in Mercato's vision, is by no means a solitary instance. Beaumont has given us, not only his own ghostly experience, but many examples of this species of delusion.

Cardan believed himself to have possessed a faculty of divination,* by means of voices conveyed to him in different directions. He certainly mistook the symptom called *Tinnitus Aurium*, which accompanies the disease of literary men, for special warnings.

* De vita propria, cap. 32.

In another instance, Cardan has shewed his propensity to ascribe his natural peculiarities to mystical causes. ‘When I lived and lectured at Paris,’ says he, ‘looking accidentally at my hands, I saw, in the ring-finger of the right hand, the figure of a bloody sword, which alarmed me. In the evening a messenger arrived, with letters from my son-in-law, informing me of my son’s imprisonment, and desiring me to go to Milan. That mark continued to spread for fifty-three days, till it reached the point of the finger, and was as red and fiery as blood, to my great consternation. At midnight my son was beheaded; next day the mark had nearly vanished, and in two days afterwards, it was entirely gone.’* There can be little doubt, that this appearance was occasioned by an inflamed lymphatic. The voice of lamentation which

* Cap. 37.

Cardan fancied he heard, about the time of his son's execution, was the result of the agitation of his mind, distracted with grief and terror. Beaumont's perception of sounds consisted chiefly in the tolling of bells, of different sizes, with occasional addresses from the spirits. It is singular, that he never suspected himself to labour under the disease of *Corybantism*, as it has been termed, though he describes it, as applied to others.

The most remarkable instance of this kind, is the story of Quarre, as quoted by Morhoff; * but the proof of its accuracy is defective. Philebert de la Mare, in his life of Guion, takes occasion to introduce the story.

During the French civil wars, Quarreus, or Quarre, and other magistrates of

* Polyhistor. Literar. Lib. i. Cap. 19. 9. Tom i. p. 217.

the royal party, were obliged to quit Dijon, and remove to Saumur. In the month of August, 1594, about two o'clock in the morning, Quarre was awakened by a sudden shock, and heard some unknown words pronounced. He awaked his servant, who lay in the room, and ordered him to strike a light, that he might write down the words, which he continued muttering to himself, lest he should forget them. Having written them, according to the sound, they ran thus: *Oug aposondes sen endon distigvion*. Neither himself nor the servant could imagine what the language was, Quarre being entirely ignorant of Greek. Early in the morning, he met with Guion, on his way to the court, and asked him to interpret the words. Guion knew them to be Greek, and that they ought to be written,

Οὐκ ἀπώσονται τὸν ἐνδὸν δυστυχίαν: *
 * Polyhistor. *Εὐχρηστικὴ ἱστορία* β. 1. c. 14. p. 106.

And he added the translation: *Non repulsuri, quod intus infortunium.*

In attempting to unriddle the meaning of this mystical warning, Guion advised Quarre to leave the house where he lodged in Saumur, the unwholesome air of which had occasioned him several attacks of the cholic. But eight days afterwards, the prediction was fulfilled: Quarre went, on public business, to Flavignac, and during his absence, the house fell down in the night, and crushed its inhabitants to death. Guion is said to have written a poem on the escape of his friend. This story rests, I believe, on the unsupported assertion of La Mare. If it be authentic, it seems to belong to the class of dreams.

On the same principles we must explain the apparitions recorded by VINCENTIUS, in the SPECULUM HISTORIÆ, and extracted from him by WOLFIIUS, in his LECTIONES MEMORABILES ET RECONDITE, particularly the appearance of Pope Benedict to the Bishop of

Capua. “ Idem lib. 25. Damianus re-
 “ fert: Episcopus, inquit, quidam Capu-
 “ anus vidit Benedictum majorem Papam
 “ sibi olim familiarem, nigro, quasi
 “ corporabiter, equo insidentem: (vide
 “ quam convenient scripturæ Apoc. 6
 “ cum historiis) at is territus ea visionē
 “ dicebat: Heus tu, nonne es Papa
 “ Benedictus, quem jam defunctum no-
 “ vimus? Ego sum, inquit, infelix iste.
 “ Quomodo, inquit, est tibi, pater?
 “ Graviter, inquit, torqueor, sed de Dei
 “ misericordia non despero, si mihi ad-
 “ jutorium præbeatur, quia juvari pos-
 “ sum: sed perge, quæso, ad fratrem
 “ meum Joannem, qui nunc sedem apos-
 “ tolicam occupat, eique de mea parte
 “ dic, ut illam summam, quæ potissimè in
 “ tali theca reposita est, in pauperes dis-
 “ tribuat: sicque me redimendum esse
 “ quandocumque, cum hoc divina mise-
 “ ratio decreverit, cognoscat, nam cætera
 “ quæ pro me indigentibus tradita sunt,
 “ nihil, mihi penitus profuerint eo, quod

" de rapinis et injustis acquisita sunt.
 " His auditis, Episcopus Romam impi-
 " ger adiit, et Joanni Papæ (cui et ipse
 " apparuit ille Benedictus 9. precans
 " idem, et dicens, O utinam Odilo Clu-
 " niacensis pro me rogaret!) fratris verba
 " narravit, et episcopatum mox deposuit,
 " et monachatum induit."

Lectio. Memorab. et secundit. T. i. p. 530.

My observations on this subject may be strengthened, by observing the great prevalence of spectral delusions, during the inter-regnum, in this country, after the civil war, in 1649. The melancholic tendency of the rigid puritans of that period; their occupancy of old family seats, formerly the residence of hospitality and good cheer, which in their hands became desolate and gloomy; and the dismal stories propagated by the discarded retainers to the ancient establishments, ecclesiastical and civil, contributed altogether to produce a national

horror unknown in other periods of our history.

A curious example of this disposition is afforded, by the trial of Dr. Pordage, a Clergyman in Berkshire, which was published under the frightful title of '*Dæmonium Meridianum, or Satan at Noon-day*;' among many charges brought against him, Dr. Pordage was accused of demoniacal visions; and of frequent apparitions in his house; one of which consisted in the representation of a coach and six, on a brick-chimney, in which the carriage and horses continued in constant motion for many weeks. It was said 'that a great dragon came into his chamber, with a tail of eight yards long, four great teeth, and did spit fire at him.

That his own angel stood by him, in his own shape and fashion, the same shape, band and cuffs; and that he

supported him in his combat with the dragon, and that Mrs. Pordage and Mrs. Flavel had their angels standing by them also; and that the spirits often came into the chamber, and drew the curtains when they were in bed.'

The developement of the story, which is not necessary for my purpose, exhibits the combined effects of mysticism, superstition and sensuality, which evidently produced a disordered state of the sensorium, and gave rise to the visions, which were admitted by the parties. It is indeed, an awful truth, well known to physicians who see many lunatics, that religious melancholy is one of the most frequent causes of the *Dæmonomania*.

The subject of *latent lunacy* is an untouched field, which would afford the

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richest harvest to a skilful and diligent observer. Cervantes has immortalized himself, by displaying the effect of one bad species of composition on the hero of his satire,* and Butler has delineated the evils of epidemic religious and political frenzy; but it remains as a task for some delicate pencil, to trace the miseries introduced into private families, by a state of mind, which "sees more devils than vast hell can hold," and which yet affords no proof of derangement, sufficient to justify the seclusion of the unhappy invalid.

* There are beauties, in the character of Don Quixote, which can only be understood by persons accustomed to lunatics. The dexterity and readiness with which he reconciles all events with the wayward system which he has adopted: his obstinacy in retaining and defending false impressions, and the lights of natural sagacity, and cultivated eloquence, which break frequently through the cloud that dims his understanding, are managed with consummate knowledge of partial insanity, though it is sometimes hardly perceptible to the general reader.

This is a species of distress, on which no novelist has ever touched, though it is unfortunately increasing in real life; though it may be associated with worth, with genius, and with the most specious demonstrations (for a while) of general excellence.

Addison has thrown out a few hints, on this subject, in one of the Spectators; it could not escape so critical an observer of human infirmities; and I have always supposed, that if the character of Sir Roger de Coverley had been left untouched by Steele, it would have exhibited some interesting traits of this nature. As it now appears, we see nothing more than occasional absence of mind; and the peculiarities of an humourist, contracted by retirement, and by the obsequiousness of his dependants.

It has often occurred to me, that

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Shakespeare's character of Hamlet can only be understood, on this principle. He feigns madness, for political purposes, while the poet means to represent his understanding as really, (and unconsciously to himself) unhinged by the cruel circumstances in which he is placed. The horror of the communication made by his father's spectre; the necessity of belying his attachment to an innocent and deserving object; the certainty of his mother's guilt; and the supernatural impulse by which he is goaded to an act of assassination, alien to his nature, are causes sufficient to overwhelm and distract a mind previously disposed to weakness and to melancholy, and originally full of tenderness and natural affection. By referring to the book, it will be seen that his real insanity is only developed after the mock-play. Then, in place of a systematic conduct, conducive to his purposes, he becomes irresolute, incon-

sequent, and the plot appears to stand unaccountably still. Instead of striking at his object, he resigns himself to the current of events, and sinks at length, ignobly, under the stream.

CHAP. V.

Accessory causes of delusion, regarding spectral impressions—Apparition of Desfontaines—Ghosts at Portnedown Bridge—Lucian's story of a Split Ghost—Instance of a Ghost in two places at once.

IT will readily occur to the reader, that the disposition of the mind to hallucination must sometimes be powerfully aided, and increased, by peculiar circumstances of time and place. Chance may supply, or artifice may contrive concomitant sounds and objects, which must appal even the most incredulous observer. Even Bayle has doubted, whether the imagination alone can produce spectres, without the assistance of

the arts of confederacy. This point, I trust, is now decided.

An apparition which made some noise, about the beginning of the last century, that of DESFONTAINES, seems to have originated in a fit of deliquium, connected strongly with the recollection of a friend.

It was published in the *Journal de Trevour*, in 1726, and its outline is as follows.

Mr. *Bezuel*, when a school-boy of 15, in 1695, contracted an intimacy with a younger boy, named *Desfontaines*. After talking together of the compacts which have been often made between friends, that in case of death, the spirit of the deceased should revisit the survivor, they agreed to form such a compact together, and they signed it, respectively, with their blood, in 1696. Soon after this

transaction, they were separated, by Desfontaines' removal to Caen.

In July, 1697, *Bezuel*, while amusing himself in hay-making, near a friend's house, was seized with a fainting fit, after which he had a bad night. Notwithstanding this attack, he returned to the meadow next day, where he again underwent a deliquium. He again slept ill. On the succeeding day, while he was observing the man laying up the hay, he had a still more severe attack. "I fell into a swoon : I lost my senses :
 " one of the footmen perceived it, and
 " called out for help. They recovered
 " me a little, but my mind was more
 " disordered than it had been before,
 " I was told that they asked me then
 " what ailed me, and that I answered ;
 " *I have seen what I thought I should*
 " *never see.* But I neither remember the
 " question, nor the answer. However,
 " it agrees with what I remember I saw

“ then, a naked man in half length ;
“ but I knew him not.

“ They helped me to go down the
“ ladder ; I held the steps fast ; but be-
“ cause I saw Desfontaines my school-
“ fellow at the bottom of the ladder, I
“ had again a fainting fit : my head got
“ between two steps, and I again lost
“ my senses. They let me down, and
“ set me upon a large beam, which
“ served for a seat in the great *Place de*
“ *Capucins*. I sat upon it, and then I
“ no longer saw Mr. de *Sortoville*, nor
“ his servants, though they were present.
“ And perceiving *Desfontaines* near the
“ foot of the ladder, who made me a
“ sign to come to him, I went back
“ upon my seat, as it were to make
“ room for him ; and those who saw
“ me, and whom I did not see, though
“ my eyes were open, observed that
“ motion.

“ Because he did not come, I got up
 “ to go to him : he came up to me, took
 “ hold of my left arm with his right
 “ hand, and carried me thirty paces
 “ farther into a by-lane, holding me
 “ fast.

“ The servants believing that I was
 “ well again, went to their business,
 “ except a little foot-boy, who told Mr.
 “ de *Sortoville*, that I was talking to
 “ myself. Mr. de *Sortoville* thought I
 “ was drunk. He came near me, and
 “ heard me ask some questions, and
 “ return some answers, as he told me
 “ since.

“ I talked with *Desfontaines* nearly
 “ three quarters of an hour. I promised
 “ you, said he, that if I died before you,
 “ I would come and tell you so. I am
 “ dead : I was drowned in the river of
 “ *Caen*, yesterday, about this hour. I
 “ was walking with such and such per-

“ sons. It was very hot weather ; the
 “ fancy took us to go into the water ;
 “ I grew faint, and sunk to the bottom
 “ of the river. The Abbé *Meniljean*,
 “ my school-fellow, dived to take me
 “ up. I took hold of his foot ; but
 “ whether he was afraid, or had a mind
 “ to rise to the top of the water, he
 “ struck out his leg so violently, that he
 “ gave me a blow on the breast, and
 “ threw me again to the bottom of the
 “ river, which is there very deep.

* * * * *

“ He always appeared to me taller than
 “ I had seen him, and even taller than
 “ he was when he died. I always saw
 “ him in half-length, and naked, bare-
 “ headed, with his fine light hair, and
 “ a white paper upon his forehead
 “ twisted in his hair, on which there
 “ was a writing, but I could only read
 “ *In &c.*” *

These spectral impressions were repeated more than once, with conversations. The accidental death of the young man was ascertained very quickly.

This story was published by the celebrated Abbé de St. Pierre, who concluded, very justly, that the whole appearances might be explained from natural causes, though he failed in his mode of deduction.

The first impression was evidently occasioned by *Bezuel's* fainting. I know, from my own experience, as well as that of others, that the approach of syncope is sometimes attended with a spectral appearance, which I believe is always a recollected image. But the subsequent attacks, in this case, appear to have been delirious; there can be little doubt that *Bezuel* was deceived in the length of his supposed dialogue with the spectre. We know well, how fal-

lacious, in this respect, the train of thought proves, in dreams, and in delirium.

In this case also, we perceive, what I have frequently had occasion to notice, the obstinacy with which a morbid impression is preserved, and defended, long after the restoration of health. I could give most singular, and impressive examples of this nature, if professional delicacy permitted. In one instance, which I heard from a friend on whose veracity I could depend, a gentleman fancied during the delirium of a fever, that a considerable estate had been bequeathed to him; the impression continued long after his recovery, and he was not undeceived without much trouble and difficulty.

There is a relation, published by authority, of some apparitions, which were seen at Portnedown bridge, after the

Irish massacre, which deserves consideration, as it must be explained on principles somewhat different.

I shall give copies of the evidence, produced by Sir John Temple, and shall then endeavour to explain the alarming appearances and sounds, on natural principles.

I. *James Shaw* of *Market-hill* in the county of *Armagh*, inn-keeper, deposeth, that many of the Irish rebels, in the time of this deponent's restraint, and staying among them, told him very often, and it was a common report, that all those who lived about the bridge of Portnedown, were so affrighted with the cries and noise made there of some spirits or visions for revenge, as that they durst not stay, but fled away thence, so as they protested, affrighted to Market-hill, saying, they durst not stay nor return thither, for fear of those cries and spi-

rits, but took grounds and made creats, (Creaghs) in or near the parish of *Mulbrac*. *Jurat*. Aug. 14, 1642.

II. *Joan*, the relict of *Gabriel Constable*, late of *Drumard*, in the county of *Armagh*, gent, deposeth and saith, that she often heard the rebels, *Owen O'Farren*, *Patrick O'Conellan*, and divers others of the rebels at *Drumard*, earnestly say, protest and tell one another, that the blood of some of those that were knocked on the head, and afterwards drowned at *Portnedown* bridge, still remained on the bridge, and would not be washed away; and that often there appeared visions or apparitions, sometimes of men, sometimes of women, breast-high above the water, at or near *Portnedown*, which did most extremely and fearfully screech and cry out for vengeance against the Irish that had murdered their bodies there: and that their cries and screeches did so terrify

the Irish thereabouts, that none durst stay nor live longer there, but fled and removed further into the country, and this was common report amongst the rebels there, and that it passed for a truth amongst them, for any thing she could ever observe to the contrary. *Jurat. Jan. 1, 1643.*

III. · *Katherine*, the relict of *William Coke*, late of the county of *Armagh*, carpenter, sworn and examined, saith, that about the 20th of *December*, 1641, a great number of rebels in that county, did most barbarously drown at that time one hundred and eighty protestants, men, women, and children in the river at the bridge of *Portnedown*; and that about nine days afterwards, she saw a vision or spirit in the shape of a man, as she apprehended, that appeared in that river, in the place of the drowning, bolt upright heart high, with hands lifted up, and stood in that place there, until the

latter end of Lent next following; about which time some of the English army marching in those parts, ~~at~~ whereof her husband was one (as he and they confidently affirmed to this deponent) saw that spirit or vision standing upright, and in the posture aforementioned; but after that time the said spirit or vision, vanished and appeared no more, that she knoweth. And she heard, but saw not, that there were other visions and apparitions, and much screeching, and strange noises heard in that *river* at times afterwards. *Jurat. February 24, 1643.*

IV. *Elizabeth*, the wife of *Captain Rice Price* of *Armagh*, deposeth and saith, that she and other women whose husbands were murderers, hearing of divers apparitions, and visions that were seen near *Portnedown Bridge*, since the drowning of her children and the rest of the protestants there, went unto the bridge aforesaid about twilight in the

evening; then and there upon a sudden, there appeared unto them a vision or spirit, assuming the shape of a woman, waist-high upright in the water, naked with elevated and closed hands, her hair hanging down, very white, her eyes seemed to twinkle, and her skin as white as snow; which spirit seemed to stand straight up in the water, and often repeated the word, *Revenge, Revenge, Revenge*; whereat this deponent and the rest being put into a strong amazement and affright walked from the place. *Jurat. January 29, 1642.*

V. *Arthur Arlun, of Clowarghter* in the county of *Cavan*, Esquire, deposeth that he was credibly informed by some that were present there, that there were thirty women and young children and seven men flung into the river of *Belturbet*, and when some of them offered to swim for their lives, they were by the rebels, followed in carts, and knocked

upon the head with poles; the same day they hanged two women at *Turbet*; and this deponent doth verily believe, that *Rulmore O'Rely* the then sheriff, had a hand in commanding the murder of those said persons, for that he saw him write two notes which he sent to *Turbet* by *Brian O'Rely*, upon whose coming there murders were committed: and those persons who were present also affirmed, that the bodies of those thirty persons drowned did not appear upon the water till about six weeks after past; as the said *Rely* came to the town, all the bodies came floating up to the very bridge; and those persons were all formerly stayed in the town by his protection, when the rest of their neighbours in the town went away.*

That the sounds complained of by these witnesses were mere delusions,

* Hist. of the Irish Rebellion, by Sir John Temple, Kt.—p. 123.

there can be no doubt. The actors in such bloody scenes are liable to tremendous recollections. The solitary hours of Charles IX. of France were rendered horrible by the repetition of the shrieks and cries which had assailed his ears during the massacre of St. Bartholomew.* When the mind is loaded with a sense of insupportable guilt, partial insanity is at hand; and warning, or reproaching voices distract the feelings of the sufferer.

The appearance of bodies, sitting upright in the water, was no deception, though it contributed by its horror, to the illusions of the ear. This terrific visitation has occasioned much alarm, under similar circumstances, even in modern times. We are told, that after the executions which took place, in the bay of Naples, by order of that court,

* Mem. de Sully, Liv. i.

in 1799, the body of Carraccioli* was seen floating, in an erect position, several days after his death, near the vessel on board of which he had suffered. In a certain stage of putrefaction, the bodies of persons which have been immersed in water, rise to the surface, and in deep water, are supported in an erect posture, to the terror of uninstructed spectators. Menacing looks and gestures, and even words, are supplied by the affrighted imagination, with infinite facility, and referred to the horrible apparition. I insert a striking instance from Dr. Clarke. “ One day, leaning
 “ out of the cabin window, by the side
 “ of an officer who was employed in
 “ fishing, the corpse of a man, newly
 “ sewed in a hammock, started half out
 “ of the water, and continued its course,
 “ with the current, towards the shore—
 “ Nothing could be more horrible : its

* Clarke's Life of Nelson, vol. II.

" head and shoulders were visible, turn-
 " ing first to one side, then to the other,
 " with a solemn and awful movement,
 " as if impressed with some dreadful
 " secret of the deep, which, from its
 " watery grave it came upwards to reveal.
 " Such sights became afterwards fre-
 " quent, hardly a day passing without
 " ushering the dead to the contempla-
 " tion of the living, until at length they
 " passed without observation."*

LUCIAN has treated this malady of
 the mind with his usual severe ridicule,
 in one of his most entertaining dialogues,
 the *Philopseudes*. The stories of the
 statues, which descended at night from
 their pedestals, and walked about the
 court, are well told. But that of the
 enchanted stick is the best.

Eucrates says, that he became ac-

* Second Part of Clarke's " Travels in various parts of Europe, Asia, and Africa." Page 268.

quainted, in Egypt, with **Panocrates**, who
 had resided twenty years in the subter-
 raneous recesses, where he had learned
 magic from Isis herself. "At length,
 "he persuaded me to leave all my
 "servants at Memphis, and to follow
 "him alone, telling me that we should
 "not be at a loss for servants. When
 "we came into any inn, he took a
 "wooden pin, latch or bolt, and wrap-
 "ping it in some clothes, when he had
 "repeated a verse over it, he made it
 "walk, and appear a man to every one.
 "This creature went about, prepared
 "supper, laid the cloth, and waited on
 "us very dextrously. Then, when we
 "had no further occasion for it, by
 "repeating another verse, he turned it
 "into a pin, latch or bolt again. He
 "refused to impart the secret of this
 "incantation to me, though very oblig-
 "ing in every thing else. But having
 "hid myself, one day, in a dark corner,
 "I caught the first verse, which con-

"sisted of three syllables. After he had
 "given his orders to the pin, he went
 "into the market-place. Next day, in
 "his absence, I took the pin, drest it
 "up, and repeating those syllables, or-
 "dered it to fetch some water. When
 "it had brought a full jar, I cried, stop,
 "draw no more water, but be a pin
 "again. But instead of obeying me,
 "it went on bringing water, till it had
 "almost filled the house. I, not able to
 "endure this obstinacy, and fearing the
 "return of Pancrates, lest he should be
 "displeased, seized a hatchet, and split
 "the pin into two pieces. But each
 "part, taking up a jar, ran to draw
 "more water, so that I had now two
 "servants in place of one. In the mean
 "time, Pancrates returned, and under-
 "standing the matter, changed them
 "into wood again, as they were before
 "the incantation." We may fairly ap-
 ply the Italian saying to this story;
si non é vero, é ben trovato.

But there is ghostly authority for the division of a goblin, equal to most of Glanville's histories, though I cannot now recover, the names of the parties. The relation came to me, however, from a friend of one of the Seers.

Two elderly ladies, resided, each in her ancient castle, adjoining to the other, near the borders of Scotland. While they were beguiling a tedious winter evening, with accounts of their domestic policy, the conversation insensibly turned on the subject of their household ghosts: for at that time, every venerable old mansion had an established resident of that nature, who was as well known as the family-crest.

‘ Every evening, said one of the
 ‘ Sybils, I perceive the bust of a man,
 ‘ in one of the rooms, which is distinctly
 ‘ visible, down to the girdle.

‘And we,’ cried the other dame,
 ‘have the rest of his person in our
 ‘castle, which perambulates the house
 ‘every night; till this moment, I could
 ‘not imagine ~~how~~ the ~~head~~ and shoulders
 ‘of the figure were disposed of.’

I have thus presented to the reader, those facts which have afforded, to my own mind, a satisfactory explanation of such relations of spectral appearances, as cannot be refused credit, without removing all the limits and supports of human testimony. To disqualify the senses, or the veracity of those who witness unusual appearances, is the utmost tyranny of prejudice. Yet, who, till within the last fifteen years, would have dared to assert that stones fell from the clouds? Livy had regularly recorded such events, and was ridiculed for supplying those most curious facts, which must otherwise have been lost to natural history,

In like manner, I conceive that the unaffected accounts of spectral visions should engage the attention of the philosopher, as well as of the physician. Instead of regarding these stories with the horror of the vulgar, or the disdain of the sceptic, we should examine them accurately, and should ascertain their exact relation to the state of the brain, and of the external senses.

The terror of nocturnal illusions would thus be dissipated, to the infinite relief of many wretched creatures; and the appearance of a ghost would be regarded in its true light, as a symptom of bodily distemper, and of little more consequence than the head-ach and shivering attending a common catarrh.

There is reason to believe, that many persons suffer silently, from these imaginary visitations, who are deterred from divulging their distresses, by the ridicule

with which complaints of this nature are commonly treated. When the proper distinction is established, admitting the reality of the impression, but explaining its production in the mind alone, all difficulties of this kind may be removed, and the apprehensions of the visionary may be readily quieted.

Lastly, by the key which I have furnished, the reader of history is released from the embarrassment of rejecting evidence, in some of the plainest narratives, or of experiencing uneasy doubts, when the solution might be rendered perfectly simple.

FINIS.

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