

VISITS

FROM THE

World of Spirits,

BEING

A COLLECTION OF FACTS

RELATING TO THE

**Appearances of Ghosts, Spectres,
and Apparitions:**

To which is prefixed, the

Best Cure for Imaginary Terrors.



GLASGOW:

PRINTED FOR THE BOOKSELLERS.

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W. & A. G. & Co. Glasgow

GLASGOW: 20
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GHOSTS AND APPARITIONS.

The discovery of a Murder by an Apparition.

There is a remarkable story, which I believe to be true, of a certain man, who was brought to the bar of justice on suspicion of murder, which, however, he knew it was not in the power of human knowledge to detect. When he came to hold up his hand at the bar, he pleaded, not guilty; and the court began to be at a loss for proof, nothing but suspicion and circumstantial evidence appearing, however, such witnesses as they had, they examined as usual; the witnesses standing up, as is usual, upon a little step, to be visible to the court.

When the Court thought they had no more witnesses to examine, and the man in a few moments would have been acquitted, he gave a shriek at the bar, as if he was frightened; but recovering his courage a little, he stretched out his arm towards the place where the witnesses usually stand to give evidence upon trials, and pointing with his hand. 'My lord,' said he aloud, 'that is not fair: 'tis not according to law; he's not a legal witness.'

The Court were surprised, and could not understand what the man meant; but the Judge, a man of more penetration, took the hint, and checking

some of the Court that offered to speak, and which would have perhaps brought the man back again to himself---“ Hold ’ says the judge, the man sees something more than we do, I begin to understand him;” and then speaking to the prisoner “ why” says he “is he not a legal witness? I believe the Court will allow his evidence to be good when he comes to speak.” “ No, my lord, it cannot be just: it can’t be allowed,” says the prisoner (with a confused eagerness in his countenance, that shewed he had a bold heart, but a guilty conscience) “ Why not, friend? what reason do you give for it?” says the Judge. ‘ My lord’ said he, ‘no man can be a witness in his own case; he is a party, my lord: therefore, he can’t be a witness.’ But you mistake,’ says the Judge, ‘ for you are indicted at the suit of the King, and the man may be a witness for the King; as in case of a robbery on the highway, we allow the person robbed is a good witness: and without this the highwayman could not be convicted: but we shall hear what he says, when he is examined.” This the Judge spoke with much gravity, and in so easy and natural a tone, that the criminal at the bar answered, ‘ Nay, if you will allow him to be a good witness, then I am a dead man.’ The last words he said with a lower voice than the rest, but withal called for a chair, which, if he had not had, it was thought he would have sunk down at the bar: as he sat down,

he was in great consternation, and lifted up his hands several times, repeating the words, "A dead man! A dead man!" several times over.

The Judge, however, was at some loss how to act and the whole court appeared to be in a strange consternation, though no body saw any thing but the man at the bar: at length the Judge said to him. 'Look you, Mr ——,' calling him by his name, 'you have but one way left, that I know of, and I'll read it to you out of the Scripture;' and so calling for a bible, he turned to the book of Joshua, and read the text, Josh. vii. 19. 'And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Isreal, and make confession unto him; and tell now what thou hast done, hide it not from me.'

Here the judge exhorted him to confess his crime; for he saw, no doubt, an evidence ready to convict him, and to discover the whole matter against him; and if he did not confess, heaven would, no doubt, send witnesses to detect him. Upon this, the self-condemned murderer burst out into tears and sad lamentations. for his own miserable condition and made a full confession of his crime; and when he had done gave the following account of his case, as to the reasons of his being under such a surprise, viz. That he saw the murdered person standing upon the step as a witness, ready to be examined against him, and ready to

show his throat, which was cut by the prisoner: and who, as he said, stood staring full upon him with a frightful countenance; and this confounded him (as well it might); and yet there was no real apparition, no spectre, no ghost, or appearance; it was figured out to him by the power of his own guilt and the agitation of his soul, fired and surprised by the influence of his conscience.

Apparition of a Corpse to Mrs. Stephens, of Booth Street, Spitalfields.

SOME years since, they lived in Spitalfields, one Mrs. Anne Stephens, a person at that time well known and respected, for her great dealings with the mercers on Ludgate-hill. This person sitting one evening in her house alone, and musing upon business, happened by accident to look behind her, when to her great surprise, she saw, as it were, a dead corpse, as she thought, lying extended upon the floor, just as a dead body should be, excepting that the foot of one leg was fixed on the ground, as it is in bed, when one lies with one knee up; she looked at it a while, and by degrees withdrew her eyes from so unpleasing an object: however, a strange kind of curiosity soon overcame her fears, and she ventured a second time to look that way, and saw it for a considerable time longer fixed as

before, but yet she durst not stir from her seat. She again turned from the horrible and melancholy spectacle, and resuming courage, after a little reflection, got up with a design to ascertain herself of the reality of the vision, by going nearer to it; but lo! it was vanished!

This extraordinary sight proved a very good admonition to her: for, taking it for a warning of her approaching dissolution, she, from that hour began to settle her worldly affairs, and had just time to see them in a regular posture, when she was taken ill of a plenrisy which carried her off in seven days.

*A Remarkable Apparition which appeared to
Mr. T. Lilly.*

On the first Sabbath day, in the year 1749, Mr. Thomas Lilly, the son of a farmer in the parish of Kelso, in Roxburghshire, a young man intended for the church of Scotland, and who then had made no small progress in literature, remained at home to keep the house, in company with a shepherd boy, all the rest of the family, excepting a maid-servant, being at church. The young student and the boy, being sitting by the fire, whilst the girl was gone to the well for some water, a venerable old gentleman, clad in an antique garb, presented himself, and after some little ceremony, desired the student

to take up the family-bible, which lay on a table, and turn over to a certain chapter and verse in the second book of Kings. The student did so, and read—‘ There is death in the pot.’

On this the old man, with much apparent agitation, pointed to the great family pot boiling on the fire, declaring that the maid had cast a great quantity of arsenic into it, with intent to poison the whole family, to the end she might rob the house of the hundred guineas which she knew her master had lately taken for sheep and grain which he had sold. Just as he was so saying, the maid came to the door, announcing her approach by the noise of the nails in her shoe heels.---The old gentleman said to the student, ‘ Remember my warning, and save the lives of the family !’---and that instant disappeared.

The maid entered with a smiling countenance, emptied her pail, and returned to the well for a fresh supply. Meanwhile, young Lilly put some oatmeal into a wooden dish, skimmed the pot of the fat, and mixed it for what is called brose or croudy, and when the maid returned, he, with the boy, appeared busily employed in eating the mixture. ‘ Come Peggy,’ said the student, ‘ here is enough left for you ; are not you fond of croudy ?’ She smiled, took up the dish, and reaching a horn spoon, withdrew to the back room. The shepherd’s dog followed her, unseen by the boy, and the

poor animal, on the croud being put down by the maid, fell a victim to his voracious appetite; for before the return of the family from church, it was enormously swelled, and expired in great agony.

The student enjoined the boy to remain quite passive for the present, meanwhile he attempted to show his ingenuity in resolving the cause of the canine catastrophe into insanity, in order to keep the girl in countenance, till a fit opportunity of discovering the plot should present itself.

Soon after his father, mother brothers, and sisters, with the other servants returned from church, all hungering after the word, and eager to sit down round the rustic board.

The table was instantly replenished with wooden bowls and trenchers, while a heap of barley bannocks graced the top. The kail or broth, infused with leeks or winter cabbages, was poured forth in plenty; Peggy with a prodigal hand, filled all the dishes with the homely dainties of Tiviotdale. The master began grace, and all hats and bonnets were instantly off; 'O Lord,' prayed the farmer, 'we have been hearing thy word from the mouth of thy aged servant, Mr Ramsay; we have been alarmed by the awful famine in Samaria, and of death being in the pot.' Here the young scholar interrupted his father, by exclaiming---'Yes, sir, there is death in the pot now here, as well as there was

ance in Israel!---Touch not! taste not! see the dog dead by the poisoned pot!

‘What!’ cried the farmer, ‘have you been raising the devil by your conjuration? Is this the effect of your study, sir?’—‘No, father,’ said the student, ‘I pretend to no such arts of magic or necromancy, but this day, as the boy can testify, I had a solemn warning from one whom I take to be no demon, but a good angel. To him we all owe our lives. As to Peggy, according to his intimation, she has put poison into the pot for the purpose of destroying the whole family root and branch!’—Here the girl fell into a fit, from which being with some difficulty recovered, she confessed the whole of her deadly design, and was suffered to withdraw from the family and her native country.

Black and White Devils.

The following interesting particulars of a singular apparition is related by Mr Lackington, in his life,—In the workhouse belonging to the parish of St James’, at Taunton, in Somersetshire, there lived a young woman who was naturally an idiot! this poor creature had somehow a great aversion to sleeping in a bed, and at the usual hour of rest, would often slip away to a field in the neighbourhood.

In order to break her of this bad custom, two men agreed to endeavour, if they could, to frighten her out of it. Accordingly, one night, when they knew that she was there, they took a white sheet with them, and coming to the place, one of the men concealed himself to see the event, while the other wrapped himself up in a sheet, and walked backwards and forwards close before the cow-shed in which she was laid. It was sometime before Molly paid any attention to the apparition, but at last she got up, and looking out, exclaimed, ' Ah ! ah ! a white devil ! ' and by her manner of expressing himself, she thought it was very strange to see a white devil. And soon after, she exclaimed again in surprise, ' A black devil too ! '—With that, the man in the sheet, on looking over his shoulder, saw fairly the image of a person all over black behind him ; the sight of which made him take to his heels. Molly then clapped her hands as fast as she could, crying out at the same time, ' Run, run, black devil, and catch white devil ! ' and was highly diverted. But this proved a serious adventure to the white devil, as he expired within a few minutes after he had reached his own house, and from that time poor Molly was left to sleep unmolested in peace.

*Ominous Presages attending the latter end of the
unfortunate Mr. Blandy.*

Several awful presages alarmed the family of the unfortunate Mr Blandy, of Henley, in Oxfordshire, previous to his calamity. A few days before the death of his wife, a grand chorus of music was heard by the daughter and several of the servants at midnight, as if proceeding from the garden behind the apartment where Mrs. Blandy lay; this was succeeded by three distinct knocks on the window of Miss Blandy's chamber adjoining to that of her mother. Meanwhile the old lady, though insensible to those sounds, was most horribly affrighted by a dream, in which she saw her husband drinking a cup administered by her daughter; presently he swelled to a monster, and instantly expired. When she awoke in the morning, she told the dream to the woman who waited upon her, and died the same day.---This happened about two years before the memorable murder of Mr Blandy, of the approach of which he himself had several ominous presages.

The story of that dreadful parricide is briefly as follows---

Mr Blandy was an eminent attorney, and by his practice had accumulated several thousand pounds; he had an only child, a daughter, Miss Mary, whom

by a kind of pious fraud, he gave out to be worth thirty thousand pounds; Captain William Cranston, brother of Lord Cranston, of Scotland, a little before the death of Mr Blandy's spouse, was upon a recruiting party in Oxfordshire, and hearing of the fame of the lady's fortune, found means to introduce himself to the family. He soon gained an ascendancy over the mother; and the daughter soon discovered a very sensible feeling for the soldier. But there was an almost insuperable obstacle in the way of their mutual happiness: The Captain had been privately married in Scotland. This however he hoped to get over by a decree in the Supreme Court of Session. That expectation proved but ill founded; Mr Blandy by no means could assent to the union of his child with a man, however honourable by birth, who was capable of acting contrary to religion and humanity.

The mother departed this life suddenly.—The father remained inexorable, and, like the great gulph, could not be passed over. This set the Captain's sanguine soul to work.—The affection of Miss Blandy for a profligate, almost double her age, was violent. He imposed upon her credulity; sent her from Scotland a pretended love powder, which he enjoined her to administer to her father, in order to gain his affection, and procure his consent. This injunction she declined, on account of a frightful dream, in which she fancied her father falling from

a precipice into the ocean. The Captain wrote a second time; told her his design in words rather enigmatical, but easily understood. This had an amazing effect on the mind of Miss B. and so full was her mind with the project of removing her father, that she was heard to exclaim before several of the servants, 'Who would not send an oldfellow to hell for thirty thousand pounds?'

The die was cast;---the powder was mixed in the tea; the father drank, and soon after swelled enormously.---'What have you given me, Mary!' cried the unhappy dying man; 'you have murdered me! of this I was warned--- but, alas! I thought it was a false alarm!---O fly; take care of the Captain!---So he died a most melancholy spectacle.

Miss Blandy was taken, as she was attempting to run away, conducted to Oxford Castle, lay there till the assizes, was found guilty and executed. Captain Cranston went abroad, and died in a miserable state of mind.

Spectres that haunted the house of a Gentleman in Silesia through his rash wishes.

In 1609 a gentleman residing in Silesia having invited several of his friends to dine with him, the hour of the sumptuous entertainment arrived guests, he entered his apartment in the greatest rage, and

began exclaiming---‘ Since nobody will deign to visit me, may the devils participate my fete.’--- Saying which, he left his house, and went to church, where the curate was preaching. He listened a long time with the greatest attention. Whilst he was there, several men on horseback, exceeding tall, and quite black, went into the gentleman’s courtyard, met one of the servants, and commanded him to go and tell his master that his guests were come. The valet, greatly terrified, ran to the church to inform his master; who very much astonished, related it to the curate.

The latter finished his sermon, advised him to order all his family out of the house. This was no sooner said than executed; but in consequence of the haste that they made in escaping from that awful abode, they left in one of the rooms a little child sleeping in a cradle. The guests, or to speak more properly, the devils, began to overturn the tables, to howl, to look out of the windows in the shape of bears, wolves, cats, and hobgoblins, holding in their hands glasses of wine, fish, and boiled and roasted joints of meat. As the neighbours, the gentleman, the curate, and others, were contemplating the like spectacle with horror, the poor father began to exclaim, “ Alas ! where is my poor infant ? ” The last words were scarcely from his lips, when one of the black guests brought the child in his arms to the windows, and showed him to all

those who were in the street. The gentleman, quite distracted, addressed himself to his trusty servant — ‘ My friend, what shall I do ;’ — ‘ Sir,’ replied the young man trembling. ‘ I will recommend my life to God, and then in his name I will enter the house, and in consideration of his favour and assistance, I will bring you away the child.’ ‘ Well, said the master, God accompany, assist, and fortify you.’ The servant having received the benediction of his master, the curate, and other gentleman who were present, went home, and approaching the room where the dark guests were sitting, he prostrated and recommended himself to the Almighty; then opened the door, and beheld the spectres in a horrible form, some seated, others standing, others crawling upon the floor. They all of them darted towards him, and exclaimed together in a hollow voice — ‘ What brings you here ? The servant trembling with fear, at the same time emboldened by his trust in the Omnipotent, addressed himself to the mischievous one who was holding the infant and said, ‘ Here ! deliver me that child.’ ‘ I will not,’ replied the spectre, ‘ it is mine ; go and tell thy master to come for it himself.’ — The servant insisted, and said — ‘ I am doing the office that God hath commanded me, and know all that I do conformable to that is acceptable to him. Being here in virtue of my office, in the name and assistance of his blessed Son, I snatch from thee and seize

this child, which I shall carry to his father.'—Saying this he caught hold of the infant, and clasped it closely in his arms. The black guests replied with the most dismal shrieks in the words—'Thou wretch, thou profligate, leave the child or thou shalt perish.'—But despising their threats, precipitated out of the house unhurt, and restored the child into the hands of his father. Some days after this the unwelcome visitors disappeared; when the gentleman returned home, and ever after lived as a true christian.

It is really amazing how any body can deny themselves the pleasure of believing such strange facts as these; and especially the following.



A young Girl clasped round the neck by a Skeleton.

On a fine summers evening, as several peasants were enjoying themselves after the labours of the day, and sitting upon the grass, reciting dreadful stories of ghosts and apparitions: one of them, who pretended to be wiser than the rest of his companions, affected to laugh at the different stories he heard, and affirmed that those absurdities were only fit to amuse old women and children. 'Since you pretend to be so very courageous, said one of them, prove it to us, by going this night into the burying ground, and bring with you the skeleton

under the church porch. If you do it, continued he, we will allow that you are the most spirited man in the whole village; you shall have a real from each of us, as a recompence for your bravery, and from that moment we shall no longer believe in ghosts or apparitions.' The incredulous peasant hesitated for some time; and owned at last, that although he was not afraid to perform the task, yet he did not like to be rash. A young girl, who stood at a cottage door, and had heard their conversation, offered herself immediately to perform that fearful task, if they would give her the proposed reward. The peasants were all astonished at the proposal, and instantly agreed to it. Maria accordingly went to the church-yard, and soon after returned loaded with the horrible skeleton, which she laid on the table on which they had been drinking, to the no small terror of the whole company, who stared at each other with terror and surprise at the uncommon instance of spirit in so young a girl. The peasant who had pretended to disbelieve the different tales of apparitions, and treated them with derision, was more frightened than his companions, and in a trembling voice, offered to give her a ducat if she would instantly carry the frightful skeleton back again to the place from which she had taken it. The courageous Maria took it up, and proceeded with it towards the church-yard. When she reached the church door, she endeavoured to lay it down,

but found it impossible; its bony arms were strongly clasped round the trembling girl's neck! She again endeavoured to shake off her dreadful load; but in vain! she was on the point of fainting with excess of horror, when the appalling skeleton, with a sepulchral voice said, 'I will not loose thee.' 'Oh, Father of mercy, assist me!' exclaimed the affrighted girl. The skeleton answered with a still more appalling voice, 'I will never release thee from my arms, until thou promise to do what I shall command thee.' 'Tell me what it is, cried the terrified Maria, and I will perform it, be what it may.' 'Thou must go, said the skeleton, in a deep and hollow voice, into the church; thou wilt find a door in the right hand aisle, which leads to a vault; enter it, and proceed along the subterraneous passage, until thou find a lady wrapped in a black shroud; ask her to forgive my sins. Wilt thou do this,' continued the skeleton in a loud and appalling voice, whilst his bones rattled with a horrible noise, and his bony arms pressed her neck still closer. 'I will' faintly said the trembling girl. The skeleton instantly released her from his terrible grasp. She endeavoured to fly from the church-yard, but, was followed by her dreadful companion, whose bony feet, rattled over the tomb-stones, frightened poor Maria to such a degree, that, unable to proceed, she sank on a new made grave, deprived of motion. Her dreadful pursuer soon reached the inanimate

girl, and clasped her again, with such violence, that she recovered, and was dreadfully alarmed at her horrible situation. When she gathered strength sufficient to walk, she promised once more to go to the vault, and perform what he required of her. Maria entered the church, and approached the entrance of the vault with a palpitating heart. It was dark and gloomy; her steps died away in long echoes, through the gloomy aisles. She proceeded slowly and with a fearful step, along the dark vaults; she perceived the faint glimmering of a light at a considerable distance, and directing her steps towards it, beheld a female, seated on a tomb stone, reading by the faint light of a lamp, which burnt beside her; her long flaxen hair hung loose and dishevelled over black garments, which were disordered, and discovered a deep wound in her fair bosom, from whence issued a stream of blood. Maria threw herself on her knees before the lady; 'Oh! forgive the skeleton that lays under the church porch, murmured the trembling girl, he sends me to obtain thy forgiveness.—The lady slowly turned her face towards Maria, and looking mournfully at her, shook her head three times, and made her a sign to leave her. Maria gladly hastened to quit the vault, and having reaching the church porch, was running swiftly out of the dismal abode, when the skeleton barred her passage, and said—She has not forgiven me, I know she has not. Return to

her once more ! Supplicate for me, and for thy own life ! for if thou return without having obtained her forgiveness, thou shalt forfeit thy life. I will inflict unheard of torments ; I will twine my bony fingers in thy hair, and dash out thy brains against this wall, and after-ages shall relate thy death with horror.” More dead than alive, Maria once more retraced her steps back to the dreadful vault, and again knelt, and earnestly supplicated the figure in black to forgive the dread skeleton ; but the lady again shook her head three times, in the negative. Almost frantic, the wretched girl exclaimed, in an agonized voice, ‘ Oh, do not withhold your forgiveness ! For mercy’s sake do not doom me to the most dreadful death ! If I do not obtain your pardon—the horrible skeleton will destroy me.’ The lady breathed a deep sigh, and after shaking her head three times continued to read on.—Oh thou cruel one, cried Maria, in an agony of despair.—If my fate be so indifferent to thee, pity at least the innocent being which I bear. Alas ! I expect every day to become a mother ; if thou have ever in thy lifetime experienced the feelings of a mother, oh, forgive the skeleton ! pardon him for my sake, and for that of the little innocent, who through me implores thee to save the life of its wretched mother.’ The figure instantly arose, with a face animated with pleasure, closed the book, and extinguished the

lamp; it then cast a look of benign thankfulness towards Maria, and disappeared.

Overcome with joy, the poor girl was suddenly transported under the church porch, where the first thing that struck her sight, was the skeleton, mouldering away into a heap of dust.

—————

Hour of Death foretold by an Apparition.

A youth of sixteen, of a weakly constitution and delicate nerves, but in other respects quite healthy, quitted his room in the dusk of the evening, but suddenly returned with a face pale as death and looks betraying the greatest terror, and in a tremulous voice told a fellow student who lived in the same room with him, that he should die at nine o'clock in the morning of the day after the next.

All enquiries as to the cause of his belief, had hitherto proved abortive. He now disclosed to one of his friends, but in the the strictest confidence, that the preceding evening, on quitting his room, he had seen a figure in white, which beckoned to him, and at the same moment a voice pronounced the words—'The day after to morrow, at nine in the morning, thou shalt die!' and the fate thus predicted nothing could enable him to escape. He now proceeded to set his house in order, made his will and gave particular direction for his funeral,

specifying who were to carry, and who were to follow him to the grave,—He had insisted on receiving the sacrament—a wish, however, which those about him evaded complying with.—Night came on, and he began to count the hours he had yet to live, till the fatal nine the next morning! and every time the clock struck, his anxiety encreased. At the moment the fatal hour at length arrived, and as soon as he heard the first sound of the clock, his eyes fixed, and before it ceased to strike, he was a corpse.

*A Spectre loaded with Chains appears to a
Young Gentleman.*

About the year 1570, a young man named Vasques d' Ayola, having gone to Boulogne with two of his companions to study the law, and not having found a lodging in the city to his wishes, they took an apartment in a spacious and magnificent house, but deserted on account of a spectre which frightened every body that came to reside there. They laughed at this discourse, and took up their abode.

At the end of the first month d' Ayola watching alone in his chamber while his companions were sleeping quietly in their beds, he heard a noise at a distance similar to chains dragging along the ground. It appeared advancing toward him up the

stairs. He recommended himself to God, made the sign of the cross, took a sword and buckler, and having a taper in the other hand, he saw the door opened by a horrible spectre, nothing but bones, but loaded with chains. Ayola conjured him and asked him what he wanted. The phantom made signs for him to follow him; he accordingly did; but on going down stairs his candle going out, he went back to light it and followed the spirit which conducted him along a yard where there was a well. Ayola was fearful lest he should precipitate him into it, and stopped; the spectre made signs for him to follow him; they went into the garden, when the fantom disappeared. Ayola plucked up a few handfuls of grass about the spot and return to relate to his companions what had happened to him. In the morning information was given of it to the principal citizens of Boulogne.

They went to reconnoitre the place and made the most diligent search. The bones of a corse was found there and loaded with chains, Every enquiry was made but they were never able to discover any thing certain as to the fact. Suitable obsequies was made for the deceased, the remains were interred, and from that time the house was no longer haunted.