

GOTHIC BOURNES

**THE APPARITION OF THE GHOST
OF MAJOR GEORGE SYDENHAM
TO CAPTAIN WILLIAM DYKE
(1681)**

TRANSCRIPTION BY

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**EDITING GOTHIC TEXTS
NINTH SERIES, 2021
Nº 7**

Saducismus Triumphatus:
OR,
Full and Plain EVIDENCE
Concerning

WITCHES

AND

APPARITIONS

—
In Two PARTS

The First treating of their

POSSIBILITY

The Second of their Real

EXISTENCE

—
By *Joseph Glanvil* late Chaplain in Ordinary to his Majesty, and Fellow of
the Royal Society.

—
With a Letter of Dr. *HENRY MORE* on the same Subject.

And an Authentick, but wonderful story of certain *Swedish* Witches;
done into English by *Anth. Horneck* Preacher at the *Savoy*.

—
LONDON: Printed for J. Collins at his Shop under the Temple-Church, and S. Lownds
at his Shop by the Savoy-gate, 1681.

Source text:

https://books.google.es/books?id=PK7SfunVdHkC&printsec=frontcover&hl=es&source=gbs_ge_sum

(pages 219-225)

RELAT X.

[219] *The Apparition of the Ghost of Major George Sydenham, to Captain William Dyke, taken out of a Letter of Mr. James Douch of Mongton, to Mr. Jos. Glanvil* [sic].

Concerning the Apparition of the Ghost of Major *George Sydenham* (late of *Dulverton* in the County of *Somerset*) to Captain [220] *William Dyke* (late of *Skilgate* in this County also, and now likewise deceased) be pleased to take the Relation of it as I have it from the Worthy and Learned Dr. *Tho. Dyke*, a near Kinsman of the Captains, Thus: Shortly after the Major's Death, the Doctor was desired to come to the House to take care of a Child that was there sick, and in his way thither he called on the Captain, who was very willing to wait on him to the place, because he must, as he said, have gone thither that Night, thought he had not met with so encouraging an opportunity. After their arrival there at the House and the civility of the People shewn them in their Entertainment, they were seasonably conducted to their Lodging, which they desired might be together in the same bed, where, after they had lain a while, the Captain knockt [sic] and bids the Servant bring him two of the largest and biggest Candles lighted that he could get. Whereupon the Doctor enquires what he meant by this? The Captain answers, you know Cousin what disputes my Major and I have had touching the being of a God, and the Immortality of the Soul. In which points we could never yet be resolved, though we so much sought for and desired it. And therefore it was at length fully agreed between us, That he of us that dyed [sic] [221] first should the third night after his Funeral, between the hours of Twelve and One come to the little house that is here in the Garden and there give a full account to the survivor [sic] touching these matters, who should be sure to be present there at the set time and so receive a full satisfaction. And this, says the Captain, is the very Night, and I am come on purpose to fulfill [sic] my promise.

The Doctor dissuaded [sic] him, minding him of the danger of following those strange Counsels, for which we could have no warrant, and that the Devil might by some

cunning device make such an advantage of this rash attempt, as might work his utter ruine [sic]. The Captain replies, that he had solemnly engaged, and that nothing should discourage him: and adds, That if the Doctor would wake a while with him, he would thank him, if not, he might compose himself to his rest; but for his own part he was resolved to watch, that he might be sure to be present at the hour appointed. To that purpose he sets his Watch by him, and as soon as he perceived by it that it was half an hour past Eleven, he rises, and taking a Candle in each hand, goes out by a back Door of which he had before gotten the Key, and walks to the Garden-house, where he continued two hours and an [sic] half, and at his return declared that he neither saw nor [222] heard any thing [sic] more that was usual. But I know, said he, that my Major would surely have come, had he been able.

About six weeks after the Captain rides to *Eaton* to place his Son a Scholar there, when the Doctor went thither with him. They Lodged there at an Inn, the Sign was the *Christopher*, and tarried two or three Nights, not lying together now as before at *Dulverton*, but in two several Chambers. The Morning before they went thence the Captain stayed in his Chamber longer than he was wont to do before he called upon the Doctor. At length he comes into the Doctors [sic] Chamber, but in a visage and form much differing from himself, with his Hair and Eyes staring, and his whole body shaking and trembling. Whereat the Doctor wondering, presently demanded, What is the matter, Cousin Captain? The Captain replies, I have seen my Major. At which the Doctor seeming to smile, the Captain immediately confirms it, saying, If ever I saw him in my life I saw him but now. And then he related to the Doctor what had passed, Thus: This Morning after it was light, someone comes to my beds side [sic] and suddainly [sic] drawing back the Curtains calls *Cap. Cap.* (which was the term of familiarity that the Major used to call the Captain by) to whom I replied, What my Major? To [223] which he returns, I could not come at the time appointed [sic], but I am now come to tell you, *That there is a God and a very just and terrible one, and if you do not turn over a new leaf* (the very expression as is by the Doctor punctually remembred [sic]) *you will find it so.* (the Captain proceeded) On the Table by, there lay a Sword which the Major had formerly given me. Now after the Apparition had walked a turn or two about the Chamber he took up the Sword, drew it out, and finding it not so clean and bright as it

ought, *Cap. Cap.* Says he, this Sword did not use to be kept after this manner when it was mine. After which words he suddainly [sic] disappeared.

The Captain was not only throughly [sic] perswaded [sic] of what he had thus seen and heard, but was from that time observed to be very much affected with it. And the humour that before in him was brisk and jovial, was then strangely altered. Insomuch as very little meat would pass down with him at Dinner, though at the taking leave of their Friends there was a very handsome Treat provided. Yea [sic] it was observed that what the Captain had thus seen and heard had a more lasting influence upon him, and it is judged by those who were well acquainted with his Conversation, that the remembrance of this passage stuck close to him, and that those words of his dead Friend [224] were frequently sounding fresh in his Ears, during the remainder of his Life, which was about two years.

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For a further assurance of the truth of the story, it will not be amiss to take notice what Mr. Douch writes in his second Letter to Mr. Glanvil [sic], touching the Character of the Major and the Captain. They were both, saith¹ he, of my good acquaintance, Men well bred, and of a brisk humour and jolly conversation, of very quick and keen parts, having also been both of them University and Inns of Court Gentlemen. The Major I conceive was about forty five years old when he dyed, and I believe the Captain might then be fifty or somewhat more. I cannot understand that the Doctor and the Captain had any discourse concerning the former engagement to meet, after the disappointment at that time and place, or whether the Captain had after that any expectation of the performance of the promise which the Major had made him. Thus far Mr. Douch. And truly one would naturally think, that he failing the solemn appointed time, the Captain would consequently let go all hopes and expectation of his appearing afterward. Or if he did, that it would be at such a time of the night as was first determined of, and not at [225] the morning light. Which season yet is less obnoxious to the Impostures of Fancy and Melancholy, and therefore adds some weight to the assurance of the truth of the

¹ Archaic form of the 3rd person singular present of the verb 'say'.

Apparition. I will only add one clause more out of that second Letter that makes to the point. This story, saith he, has and doth² still obtain credit from all that knew the Captain, who it seems was not at all shie [sic] or scrupulous to relate it to any one that askt [sic] him concerning it, though it was observed he never mentioned it, but with great terrour [sic] and trepidation.

Editor's notes:

- The use of capital initials for certain words in the original text has been respected. According to David Crystal, the extended practice in the 17th century was to capitalize any form of address, but capitalization could also be used to emphasize words and even phrases. For further information, refer to David Crystal's *The Cambridge Encyclopaedia of the English Language* (1987).
- The use of italics for certain words in the original text has been respected. Italics became a norm during the 17th century, and they were mostly used for emphasis and in passages such as the advertisement in this story. For further information, refer to David Crystal's *The Cambridge Encyclopaedia of the English Language* (1987).
- The long s is transcribed as ⟨s⟩ instead of using the archaic form ⟨ſ⟩.
- Alternative spellings and peculiarities in the original text have been respected and signalled with [sic]. For instance, words such as 'appinted', 'suddainly', 'disswaded', 'thoroughly' or 'perswaded'.

² Archaic 3rd person singular present of the verb 'do'.