

GOTHIC BOURNES

**A Relation of Thomas Goddard of
Marlborough
(1681)**

TRANSCRIPTION BY
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**EDITING GOTHIC TEXTS
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No. 5**

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 Swe-
dish Witches; done into English by Anth. Horneck,
Preacher at the Savoy.

LONDON Printed for F. Collins at his Shop under the Temples
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_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q=Avon&f=false, pp. 209-19.

Which is a Relation of Thomas Goddard of Marlborough, in the County of Wilts, Weaver, made the 23. Nov. 1674.

Who saith, That on *Monday* the Ninth of this Instant, as he was going to *Ogborn* at a Style on the Highway near Mr. *Goddards* ground, about Nine in the Morning, he met the Apparition of his Father in Law, one *Edward Avon* of this Town Glover, who dyed in *May* last, having on, to his appearance, the same Clothes, Hat, Stockings and Shoes he did usually wear when he was living, standing by, and leaning over that Style. Which when he came near, the Apparition spake to him with an audible voice these words, *Are you* [210] *afraid?* To which he answered, I am, thinking on one who is dead and buried, whom you are like. To which the Apparition replied with the like voice, I am he that you were thinking on, I am *Edward Avon* your Father in Law, come near to me, I will do you no harm. To which *Goddard* answered, I trust in him who hath bought my Soul with his precious Blood, you shall do me no harm. Then the *Apparition* said, How stand cases at home? *Goddard* askt what cases? Then it askt him how do *William* and *Mary*, meaning as he conceived, his Son *William Avon* a Shoemaker here, and *Mary* his daughter the said *Goddards* Wife. Then, it said, What! *Taylor* is dead, meaning, as he thought, one *Taylor* of *London*, who Married his Daughter *Sarah*, which *Taylor* dyed about *Michaelmas* last. Then the *Apparition* held out its hand, and in it, as *Goddard* conceived, twenty or thirty shillings in silver, and then spake with a loud voice: Take this Money and send it to *Sarah*, for I shut up my Bowels of compassion toward her in the time of my life, and now here is somewhat for her. And then said, *Mary* (meaning his the said *Goddards* Wife as he conceived) is troubled for me. But tell her, God hath shewed mercy to me contrary to my deserts. But the said *Goddard* answered, In the Name of Jesus Christ, I refuse all such [211] Money. Then the *Apparition* said, I perceive you are afraid. I will meet you some

¹ This is the ninth relation of the Book of Apparitions embedded in *Saducismus Triumphatus*. These relations consist in narratives of supernatural apparitions in the life of several people, and seek to convince the readers, through evidence and testimonies, of the truth of apparitions. This relation narrates the supernatural apparition seen by Thomas Goddard of his father in law, Edward Avon, who asks him to intercede for him in several ways.

other time. And immediately it went up the Lane to his appearance. So he went over the same Style, but saw it no more that day.

He saith, The next night about seven of the Clock, it came and opened his shop Window, and stood in the like Clothes, looked him in the face, but said nothing to him. And the next night after, as *Goddard* went forth into his Backside with a Candle light in his hand, it appeared to him again in the same shape, but he being in fear ran into his house, and saw it no more then.

But he saith, That on *Thursday* the twelfth instant, as he came from *Chilton*, riding down the Hill between the Mannor-house and *Axford-Farm-field*, he saw somewhat like a Hare crossed his way, at which his Horse frighted threw him in the dirt, and as soon as he could recover on his feet, the same Apparition there met him again in the same habit, and there standing about eight foot directly before him in the way, spake again to him with a loud voice, *Source* (a word he commonly used when living) you have stayed long, and then said to him, *Thomas*, bid *William Avon* take the Sword that he had of me, which is now in his house, and carry it to the Wood as we go to *Alton*, to the upper end of the Wood by the ways [212] side. For with that Sword I did wrong above Thirty years ago, and he never prospered since he had that Sword. And bid *William Avon* give his Sister *Sarah* twenty shillings of the money which he had of me. And do you talk with *Edward Lawrence*, for I borrowed twenty shillings of him several years ago, and did say I had paid him, but I did not pay it him, and I would desire you to pay him twenty shillings out of the money which you had from *James Elliot* at two payments. Which money the said *Goddard* now saith was five pounds, which *James Elliot* a Baker here owed the said *Avon* on Bond, and which he the said *Goddard* had received from the said *Elliot* since *Michaelmas* at two payments, viz. 35s. at one, and 3l. 5s. at another payment.² And it further said to him, Tell *Margaret* (meaning his own Wife as he conceived) that I would desire her to deliver up the little which I have to little *Sarah Taylor* to the Child, or to any one she will trust for it. But if she will not, speak to *Edward Lawrence* to perswade her. But if she will not then, tell her that I will see her very suddenly. And see that this be done within a Twelve-moneth and a day after my decease, and peace be with you. And so it went away over the Rails into the Wood there in the like manner as any Man would go over a Style to his ap[213]prehension, and so he saw it no more at that time. And he saith, that he paid the twenty shillings to *Edward Lawrence* of this Town, who being present

² ‘s’ stands for shillings; ‘l’ stands for French *livre*, i.e., pound.

now doth remember he lent the said *Avon* twenty shillings about twenty years ago, which none knew but himself and Wife, and *Avon* and his Wife, and was never paid it again before now by this *Goddard*.

And this said *Goddard* further saith, That this very day by Mr. Majors order, he with his Brother in Law *William Avon* went with the Sword, and about Nine a Clock this Morning, they laid down the Sword in the Copse near the place the *Apparition* had appointed *Goddard* to carry it, and then coming away thence, *Goddard* looking back, saw the same *Apparition* again in the like habit as before. Whereupon he called to his Brother in Law, and said, Here is the *Apparition* of our Father, Who said I see nothing. Then *Goddard* fell on his Knees and said, Lord open his Eyes that he may see it. But he replied, Lord grant I may not see it, if it be thy blessed Will. And then the *Apparition* to *Goddards* appearance, beckned with his hand to him to come to it. And then *Goddard* said, In the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, what would you have me to do? Then the *Apparition* said to him, *Thomas*, Take up the Sword and follow me. To which he [214] said, should both of us come, or but one of us? To which it answered, *Thomas*, do you take up the Sword. And so he took up the Sword and followed the *Apparition* about Ten Lugs (that is Poles)³ further into the Copse, and then turning back, he stood still about a Lug and a half from it, his Brother in Law staying behind at the place where they first laid down the Sword. Then *Goddard* laying down the Sword upon the ground, saw something stand by the *Apparition* like a Mastiff Dog of a brown colour. Then the *Apparition* coming towards *Goddard*, he stept back about two steps, and the *Apparition* said to him, I have a permission to you, and commission not to touch you, and then it took up the Sword, and went back to the place at which before it stood, with a Mastiff Dog by it as before, and pointed the top of the Sword into the ground and said, In this place lyes buried the Body of him which I murdered in the year 1635. which is now rotten and turned to dust. Whereupon *Goddard* said, I do adjure you in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, wherefore did you do this murder? And it said, I took money from the Man, and he contended with me, and so I murdered him. Then *Goddard* askt him, who was confederate with him in the said murder? and it said, none but my self. Then *Goddard* said, [215] What would you have me to do in this thing? And the *Apparition* said, This is that the World may know that I murdered a Man, and buried him in this place in the year 1635.

³ The lug and the pole are units of length and they are equivalent to around 5 metres (5 ½ yards) (Wikipedia, under ‘Rod (unit).’

Then the Apparition laid down the Sword on the bare ground there, whereon grew nothing, but seemed to *Goddard* to be as a Grave sunk in. And then the Apparition rushing further into the Copse vanished, and he saw it no more. Whereupon *Goddard* and his Brother in Law *Avon*, leaving the Sword there and coming away together, *Avon* told *Goddard* he heard his voice, and understood what he said, and heard other words distinct from his, but could not understand a word of it, nor saw any *Apparition* at all. Which he now also present affirmeth, and all which the said *Goddard* then attested under his hand, and affirmed he will depose the fame when he shall be thereto required.

In the presence of *Christ. Lypyatt* Major, *Rolf Bayly* Town-Clerk, *Joshua Sacheverell* Rector of *St. Peters* in *Marlbrough*,

Examined by me

Will. Bayly.

[216]

ADVERTISEMENT.

That Tho. Goddard saw this Apparition, seems to be a thing indubitable; but whether it was his Father in Law's Ghost, that is more questionable. The former is confirmed from an hand at least impartial, if not disfavoured to the story. The party in his Letter to Mr. G— writes briefly to this effect. 1. That he does verily think that this Tho. Goddard does believe the story most strongly himself. 2. That he cannot imagine what interest he should have in raising such a story, he bringing Infamy on his Wives Father, and obliging himself to pay twenty shillings debt, which his poverty could very ill spare. 3. That his Father in Law Edward Avon, was a resolute sturdy fellow in his young years, and many years a Bailiff to Arrest people. 4. That Tho. Goddard had the repute of an honest Man, knew as much in Religion as most of his rank and breeding, and was a constant frequenter of the Church, till about a year before this happened to him, he fell off wholly to the Non-Conformists.

All this hitherto, save this last of all, tends to the Confirmation of the story. Therefore this last shall be the first Allegation against the credibility thereof. 2. It is further alledged, [sic] that possibly the design of the story may be to [217] make him to be accounted an extraordinary somebody amongst the dissenting party. 3. That he is sometimes troubled with Epileptical fits. 4. That the Major sent the next Morning to digg the place where the

Spectre said the Murdered Man was Buried, and there was neither bones found nor any difference of the Earth in that place from the rest.

But we answer briefly to the first, That his falling off to the Non-Conformists though it may argue a vacillancy of his judgement, yet it does not any defect of his external senses, as if he were less able to discern when he saw or heard any thing than before: To the second, That it is a perfect contradiction to his strong belief of the truth of his own story, which plainly implies that he did not feign it to make himself an extraordinary some-body: To the third, That an Epileptical Person when he is out of his fits, hath his external senses as true and entire, as a Drunken Man has when his Drunken fit is over, or a Man awake after a night of sleep and dreams. So that this argument has not the least shew of force with it, unless you will take away the authority of all Mens senses, because at sometimes they have not a competent use of them, namely in sleep, drunkenness or the like. But now lastly for the fourth which is most considerable, it is yet of no greater force than to make it questionable whether this Spectre was the Ghost of his Father, or some ludicrous Goblin that would put a trick [218] upon Thomas Goddard, by personating his Father-in-Law, and by a false pointing at the pretended grave of the Murdered make him ridiculous. For what Porphyrius has noted, I doubt not but is true, That Daemons sometimes personate the Souls of the deceased. But if an uncoffined body being laid in a ground exposed to wet and dry, the Earth may in 30 years space consume the very bones and assimilate all to to [sic] the rest of the mold, when some Earths will do it in less than the fifteenth part of that space: Or if the Ghost of Edward Avon might have forgot the certain place (it being no grateful object of his memory) where he buried the murdered Man, and only guessed that to be it because it was something sunk, as if the Earth yielded upon the wasting of the Buried body, the rest of the story will still naturally import that it was the very Ghost of Edward Avon. Besides, himself expressly [sic] declares, as that the body was Buried there, so that by this time it was all turn'd into dust.

But whether it was a ludicrous Daemon or Edward Avons Ghost, concerns not our scope. It is sufficient that it is a certain instance of a real Apparition, and I thought fit as in the former story, so here to be so faithful as to conceal nothing that any might pretend to lessen the credibility thereof. Stories of the appearing of Souls departed are not for the tooth of the Non-conformists, who, as it is said, if they generally believe this, it must be from the undeniable evidence thereof, [219] nor could Thomas Goddard gratifie them by inventing of it. And that it was not a phansy the knowledge of the 20 Shillings debt

imparted to Thomas Goddard ignorant thereof before, and his Brother Avon's hearing a voice distinct from his in his discourse with the Apparition, does plainly enough imply. Nor was it Goddard's own phansy, but that real Spectre that opened his shop-window. Nor his imagination, but something in the shape of an Hare that made his Horse start and cast him into the dirt; The Apparition of Avon being then accompanied with that Hare, as after with the Mastiff Dog. And lastly the whole frame of the story, provided the Relator does verily think it true himself (as Mr. S. testifies for him in his Letter to Mr. Glanvil, and himself profest he was ready at any time to swear to it) is such, that it being not a voluntary invention, cannot be an imposing phansy.