

GOTHIC BOURNES

**A TRUE AND PERFECT RELATION
FROM THE FALCON**

Collected by
Anthony Wood
(1661)

(transcriber's name withheld by request)

**EDITING GOTHIC TEXTS
SEVENTH SERIES, 2020
Nº 3**

THE PACK OF AUTOLYCUS

OR

Strange and Terrible News

Of Ghosts, Apparitions, Monstrous Births,
Showers of Wheat, Judgments of God, and
other Prodigious and Fearful Happenings
as told in Broadside Ballads of the Years

1624 — 1693

EDITED BY

HYDER EDWARD ROLLINS

CHRISTO
ET ECCLESIAE
VERITAS

Cambridge

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<https://archive.org/stream/packofautolycus00oroll#page/90/mode/2up>
pp. 87-92.

A true and perfect relation from the Falcon

Wood 401 (183), black letter, four columns, three woodcuts. Wood adds the date “1661.”

There are probably other versions of the remarkable ghost-story of Mr. Powel, but I have not found them. At any rate, it is easy to understand wood’s enjoyment of ballads like this. Real ghost-tales so seldom appear in ballad-form as to make this “True and Perfect Relation” a notable production, but it is equalled by Nos. 29 and 30. The “learned men” mentioned in the title and in stanza 11 were no doubt later members of the Royal Society! Glanvill (who became an F.R.S.¹ in 1665), in particular, would have accepted the story without the slightest hesitation.

Mercurius Democritus, a Commonwealth news-book, in its issue for February 8-15, 1654, told a corking good, if wholly imaginary, story of a ghost, faintly resembling Mr. Powel, that walked “every night among the Butchers at *Smithfield arrs the Shambles, White-chappell and Eastcheap*, in the habit of *Mallet* [i. e., Sir William Mallet] the Lawyer,” and that ate a maid alive!

For the tune see Chappell’s *Popular Music*, I, 198.

There is a true and perfect Relation from the Faulcon at the Bank=side; of the strange and wonderful aperition² of one Mr. Powel a Baker lately deceased, and of his appearing in several shapes, both at Noon=day and at night, with the several speeches which past between the spirit of Mr. Powel and his Maid *Jone* and divers Learned men, who went to alay him and the manner of his appearing to them in the Garden upon their making a circle, and burning of wax Candels [sic] and Jenniper³ wood, lastly how it vanished.

The tune of, *Chevy Chase*.

[87]

1 SStrange news, strange news, I here have write⁴
Come lissen⁵ and Ile⁶ tell,
The strangest news that ever yet
within our age befell.
And Ile repeat it word by word,
to let the Nation know,
The mighty wonders of the Lord,
which he to them doth shew⁷.

¹ [Fellow of the Royal Society. (From now on, the footnotes from the transcriber will be given italicized and between square brackets in order to distinguish them from the editor’s original footnotes that are not italicized.)]

² [Archaic spelling of “apparition”.]

³ [Obsolete form of the word “juniper”.]

⁴ I. e, writ.

⁵ [Obsolete variant of “listen”.]

⁶ [Obsolete spelling of the contraction “I’ll”.]

⁷ [Archaic spelling of “show”.]

2 For near upon five moneths⁸ ago,
there was a Baker dyed,
Close by the *Faulcon* many know,
which is on *Southwarke* side.
His body after buryed was,
in earth for to remain,
But not long sence it came to pass,
that his Spirit rose again

3 And walked up and down the place,
where he before did dwell,
And lookt most Ghasful⁹ in his face,
that hundreds there can tell.
And ratling throw the house would he,
afrighting people that,
He sometimes like a Goat would be,
and sometimes like a Catt.

[88]

4 He into several shaps [sic] would turn,
with dolful¹⁰ voyces then
He'd like a flame of fire burn,
streight¹¹ to a man agen¹².
This house he constant haunted that,
at midnight and noone-day
And sometimes seemed like a Catt,
which scar'd his Son away.

5 Then none within this house did dwell¹³,
but one poor servant Maid
Which very often did perceive,
this ghasful Ghost she said.
Whose pale and dreadful glemering¹⁴ sight,
reduc't her to a fear
For making of the bed one night,
it to her did appear.

6 She then beholding of his face,
poor Soul it made her quake
And she lay trembling in the place,

⁸ [Obsolete spelling of "month".]

⁹ [Archaic form of "ghastly".]

¹⁰ [Alternative spelling of "doleful".]

¹¹ [Obsolete spelling of "strait".]

¹² [Obsolete spelling of "again".]

¹³ Live would make a passable rhyme.

¹⁴ [Alternative spelling of "glimmering".]

that every joynt did shake.
He up and down the Chamber ran,
his hands abroad were spread
His Nose was waxed pale and wan,
his eyes sunk in his head.

7 At which the Maid cry'd out O Lord,
I heartily do pray
That by the power of thy word,
chase this same fiend away.
Repeating these same words agen,
with lifting hands upright
At which the Aperition then,
quite vanisht out of sight.

[89]

8 But on the morrow morning next
the same appear'd again,
He on the house so much reflect,
few durst within remain.
The Maid a fire making was,
about the house did stur¹⁵
Which time she heard a dolefull [sic] voyce,
one knocking at the door.

9 The Maid reply'd then who is there,
and to the door did run
Quoth¹⁶ he thy good old Master's here;
come tell me where's my Son.
At which the Maid run backward in,
and not one word did say
And for that time the spirit then,
did vanish quite away.

[90]

10 But afterwards it came to pass,
late in the Evening tyde
He underneath a Peartree was,
where he again was spyed.
For the within the Garden walkt
where Jone came by chance,
And this same spirit with her talkt,
that she fell in a trance.

11 Beside her sences¹⁷ they were lost,

¹⁵ [Obsolete spelling of "stir".]

¹⁶ [Past tense of *quethe*, "to say".]

¹⁷ [Archaic form of "senses".]

at such a sight to see
For pure Nature with a Ghost,
can never well agree.
Then Learned men of Art came there,
this Spirit to alay
Which did immediatele [sic] appear,
and they to it say:

12 Gods holy Saints did much convert,
there actions now are blest¹⁸
We Conjure thee for to depart,
unto thy place of rest.
The aperition in a pause,
did vanish none knew whether
Saying woe to them which are the cause,
of this my coming hether¹⁹.

13 By skill these Learned men doth see
and by their art discry
Some hiden [sic] treasure there must be,
and in the Garden lye.
And yet these Conjurers doth say,
their task hath proved so
The spirit they cannot alay,
whatever they can do.

[91]

14 O what strange wonders now are these;²⁰
the Lord amongst us send
God grant hereafter they might cease,
and we our lives amend.

Printed for F. Coles, T. Vere, and *William Gilbertson*.

¹⁸ [Archaic spelling of "blessed".]

¹⁹ [Obsolete spelling of "hither".]

²⁰ [The punctuation in this line seems to be misplaced, as for the syntax of the two first lines of stanza 14, it is more reasonable to place the semicolon after "send". Assuming that, the subject of the sentence would be "the Lord" and the word "send" would be a variant spelling of the verb in the past form, "sent".]