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GOTHIC BOURNES

**ACCOUNT OF AN APARITION
WHICH APPEARED TO A
PEDLAR, DISCOVERING WHERE
AN IMMENSE SUM OF MONEY
WAS HID
(1775)**

TRANSCRIPTION BY
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THE
HISTORY
OF
WITCHES, GHOSTS,
AND
HIGHLAND SEERS:

CONTAINING
Many wonderful well-attested RELATIONS
OF
SUPERNATURAL APPEARANCES,

Not Published before in any similar Collection
DESIGNED
For the Conviction of the UNBELIEVER, and
The Amusement of the CURIOUS.

*Somnia, terrores Magicos, miracula, Sagas
Nocturnos Lemures, portentaque, Thessala rides?*
Say, can you laugh indignant at the schemes
Of magick terrours, visionary dreams,
Portentous wonders, witching imps of Hell,
The nightly goblin and enchanting spell?

BERWICK
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(pp. 51-57)

Account of an Apparition which appeared to a Pedlar, discovering where an immense Sum of Money was hid.

There was a pedlar, as it is generally reported through Suffolk, who used to travel about the country with his pack, but kept a chamber or ware-house in the market-town for the depositing and laying up some goods which he had there, and which were too many at a time to carry them all about with him.

It happened that this man having been abroad late, and coming home with his pack, sat himself down upon a stile, resting his pack at the same time for his ease: while he sat here, there came up to him a ghost, in the appearance of a woman in a white shroud; she came up to him with a smiling countenance, and when she discovered herself she stepped backward, and holding up a fine white hand, beckoned to him with a finger to follow her.

The pedlar, frightened as he was, immediately followed the apparition : (what he did in the mean time with his pack, that is a gap in the story, which tradition has not supplied ;)¹ the apparition leads him in this manner, going backward and beckoning with her hand over two or three fields, till it came to a particular place; where there lay a great stone, and there giving a stamp with its foot, it vanished.

[52] The man takes the hint, marks the stone, goes home to carry his pack, as we ought to suppose, and comes out the next night with a spade and a pick-axe, and goes to work to dig a great pit in the earth.

He had not dug far it seems, (though the story does not expressly say how far)² till he found a large chest; I say large, for it could not be a small one, by what you shall hear presently.

He doubled his diligence, when he came to the chest, and with great labour at length got it out of the place; and we may suppose was not long before he found means to split it open, in order to see the contents; for he found it very heavy when he laboured to get it out.

In a word, he found the chest full of silver, that is to say, full of money; then keeping his own counsel, he took care to deposit it so, that by little and little, he got the money all safe home, and after that carried the chest home also.

What the sum was that he found here, the story is not particular in ; but it seems the bulk was such, that the pedlar thought fit to leave off his travelling about the country as

¹ The purpose of the collection in which this story is included is to convince the unbeliever. Whereas the tale seems fantastic, this remark is used by the writer to create a realistic background around the tale. In other words, this remark is used to make the tale more real.

² As before, this remark is used to create a realistic background for the tale. This kind of remarks will be used throughout the story.

a pedlar, takes a house in the town, furnishes himself a shop, and becomes a settled inhabitant and shop-keeper. During his appearing in this figure, it happened that the parish church being exceeding old and out of repair, the parishioners, (whether by order of the diocesan upon a visitation, or by the voluntary act and deed of themselves the parishioners, I know not)³ resolved to repair the church.

In order to furnish the needful sums for this good [53] work, they call a vestry, and propose a subscription of the inhabitants, for supporting the expence;⁴ the minister and church-wardens go about from house to house to see what the charitable parishioners would contribute, and among the rest they at length came to the pedlar's house, and he being told their business, desires them to walk in.

After some discourse, and perhaps treating his neighbours, he asks for their roll or subscription paper, in order to subscribe; looking over the roll, he sees Sir Thomas –five pounds, another gentleman five pounds, another ten pounds, another forty shillings, and go on : Come,⁵ says he, give a poor pedlar the pen and ink : will you gentry subscribe no more than that? he then takes the pen, and subscribes five and twenty pounds.

Sometime after this, having occasion to make a hatch to his shop-door, as in the country is very frequent, it happened, that sending for a workman to make this hatch, and looking about among his old lumber, he found nothing so fit as the old chest that the money was found in, and accordingly a hatch was made of it.

A while after this, as the pedlar was sitting in his shop, he observed an ancient gentleman who lived in the town, and who had the reputation of a scholar, and particularly of a great antiquarian, stand poring very earnestly, with his spectacles on, upon his new hatch : this brought the pedlar to the door, who after waiting a good while to see what it was the old gentleman had discovered, at last asked him what it was he found upon his new hatch that was worth so much of his notice.

[54] Truly, neighbour, says the gentleman, what I observe is very remarkable, though I cannot tell the meaning of it ; and I suppose it is a character that you cannot easily read, as well as a language that you do not probably understand.

The pedlar desired he would read it to him.

Why, says the gentleman, you do not understand it when I have read it.

But, Sir, says the pedlar, can you not tell the meaning of it in English?

Why, says the old gentleman, it is the old Saxon English in the ancient Gothic character, and it may be read thus,

Where this once stood
Stands another twice as good.

³ This type of remark has already been used in the tale. In this case, as before, the writer shows he is not omniscient, and the gasps in his narrative are proof of its verisimilitude. However, in this quote, the writer explains further and suggests that the story he is narrating is not his invention.

⁴ Alternative spelling for 'expense'.

⁵ Direct speech is not highlighted with any mark, as it is done nowadays, in this text

Hum! says the pedlar, that is old stuff indeed : what can that signify?

Nay, says the old gentleman, that I do not know, for who can tell where this stood?

Ay, who indeed? says the pedlar: and if they did, what can it mean?

They had a little more chat of that kind; but in short, the pedlar got rid of his old gentleman as soon as he could, and began to ruminate upon the thing; where this stood! I must go and see, it may be there is some more of the same.

But then he argued, why this is so many years ago (six or seven at least, it seems) and if it was a ghost or spirit that shewed me the way to it, I warrant she has shewed somebody else the way to the rest : indeed I did not deserve it, that I did [55] not look farther when I was at it, to be sure it is gone by this time.

Thus he argued himself almost out of the thing again, till at length he told his wife of it, who it seems had been in the secret before.

Why, you are mad, says she, why do not you go immediately to the place?

Nay, says he, I do not know whether I can find it again or no, now.

What, says his wife, must the devil come to shew it you again? sure you are not so dull, but you may find it again?

Well, the man went however; indeed his wife drove him out almost, go, try, says she, you can but come without it.

He goes, and found the place in general, but could not discern the particular spot, which was levelled partly by himself when he filled up the hole again, and partly grown up with grass and weeds ; so he comes back again, and tells his wife, he could not punctually find the place, so as to be particular enough to go to work.

Well, says his wife, go in the night; I warrant you the good devil that shewed you the first will put you in some way to find the rest, if there is any more.

At length prevailed upon by his wife's importunity away he went, and I think they say his wife went with him ; being come to the place the apparition appeared to them again, and shewed them, in the same manner as before, the very spot; and then vanished.

In short, the man went to work, and digging a [56] little deeper than he had done before, he found another chest or coffer, bound about with iron, not so big as the other, but richer; for as the first was full of silver, so this was full of gold.

They carried it home with joy enough, as you may suppose, and opening it, found (as above) a very great treasure. Fame has not handed down the sum; but something may be guessed at by the latter part of the story, which is told thus.

It seems that all this while the repair of the church (mentioned above) went on but slowly; according to the old saying, it was church-work; and a vestry being called, the pedlar, who was present among the rest of his neighbours, took occasion to complain, that he thought that business was not honestly managed, that it was indeed like church-work, carried on heavily.

Some of the gentlemen took him up a little, and told him, he took too much upon him; that it was none of his affairs; that he was not in trust for the work; that they to whom it was committed knew their business, and that he should let it alone, and mind his shop.

He answered, it was true, that he was not trusted with it, if he had, it should have been finished before now; and that he had a right to complain, because he paid to it as well as other people; adding, that if they did not dispatch, he would complain to the bishop, and obtain another visitation.

This alarmed the people intrusted, so they gave him good words, and told him, the truth was, the parish stock was almost gone, and that they had not [57] money to go on, till the gentlemen would come into a second collection.

Say you so? says the pedlar ; there may be some reason in that ; you cannot go on indeed without money; but pray how much do you want?

They told him it would cost near two hundred pounds more to finish it, and do but indifferently neither; for the roof wanted to be taken off, and they feared the timber was rotten, and would require so much addition, they were afraid to look into it.

In a word, he bid the church wardens call a vestry upon that particular affair, and he would put them in a way to finish it.

A vestry was called; the pedlar told them, that seeing they were poor, and could nor raise money to go on with it, they should leave it to him, and he would finish it for them.

Accordingly he took the work upon himself, laid out near a thousand pounds, and almost new built the church; in memory of which, on the glass windows, there stand the figures of the pedlar and his pack, and (as the people fancy) there is also the apparition beckoning to him, to come to the place where he dug up the money.

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