

it was this knowledge which made me tremble in my bed, and instinctively shrink from it, and put down my knife.

When the figure reached my bed-side, it became motionless for the space of two or three minutes, (I cannot say exactly how long, for to me, at the time, it seemed an hour,) when I thought I observed a slight motion in both the head and the hands. It was so; they were both raised, till, oh, God! one of the most horrible sights met my eyes, which it is possible for the mind of man to conceive.

Let any one imagine a figure such as I have described, covered with blue livid flame from head to foot, disclosing the lineaments of a skull, and the hands of a skeleton, of a startling bright yellow flame; the sockets, where eyes should have been; the holes, once covered with nostrils; the mouth no longer garnished with teeth; differing from the other parts of the skull by their greater intensity; resembling steel when it is heated to a white heat, and the long thin bones of the hand and fingers of an intense bright yellow flame—standing close to his bed-side, and glaring with its horrible visage full into his face, and I am sure they will not accuse me of cowardice, when I confess, that in the intensity of my terror, I shrank from it to the very farthest extremity of the bed, and gathered the bed-clothes around me, as some sort of protection.

I think it was William Cobbett, who used to say, that he always found the English language quite adequate to the expression of all the feelings and emotions of his mind; and up to the present time I could have said the same; but, Sir, no words, no form of expression, with which I am acquainted, can convey any idea of the absolute terror—the horrible feeling of fear and disgust—which I experienced when the spectre, having stood perfectly motionless, with its hands crossed on its breast, gave utterance to such an unearthly, such a dismal, such a *miserable* groan, as never proceeded from mortal breast, and such as, I hope, never to hear again; my eyes were wide open, my tongue stuck to the roof of my mouth, and my blood seemed like ice in my veins. Even now, after an interval of three weeks, at a distance from the spot, with the sun shining brightly in at my window, and the merry voices of my children, who are playing in the garden, ringing in my ears, a cold shiver runs through my frame, when I recall that horrible sight,—that doleful sound!

And yet, what is it that caused this intense, this excessive fear in me? I have asked myself this question a thousand times since. I am not a man to be frightened by any human sight or

sound; on the contrary, I am always rather given to enquiring into, and investigating anything at all unusual or uncommon; and as to my thinking that I should suffer in my person, from or by this apparition, such a thought never entered my head. I can only account for it, by concluding that it was indeed a *super-natural* appearance, and that, consequently, my nature revolted from it; and by quoting a passage from the Book of Job. "Fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake."

Perhaps a minute had elapsed since that groan of hopeless anguish and unmitigated torture had died away in my ear, when I (as I still sat with my eyes fixed intently on the spectre, for I *could not* turn my head or take away my eyes from it,) observed a slight motion in the hands; gradually, slowly, by scarcely perceptible degrees, both the head and the hands fell into their former position, and the robe or mantle of blue flame enfolded them, and hid them from my sight.

This was a relief to me, for although the figure still stood by my bed-side, and I knew what was under those horrid folds, still, I did not see it, and that was something.

Again I must *suppose* it was three or four minutes that the figure remained perfectly still, and then, with a feeling of infinite relief, and drawing a freer breath, I saw that it was slowly moving away. As it slowly receded, it turned, so that when about the door of my room, its back was towards me; when it had passed the door, I could still see it as plainly as before, and never taking my eyes off it, I watched it, to the far end of the garret, where it slowly sunk down and left me in total darkness, and a cold sweat.

What were my thoughts and feelings for the next hour, I can hardly say, they were so confused; but they certainly were not of the most pleasant description. I slept no more that night, and of course, I gradually recovered my self-possession; but this I *do* know, that although I have heard some of the sweetest vocalists now living; the grandest and most charming efforts of the best composers and musicians; the joyous warbling of the feathered tribe in the full enjoyment of life and liberty; the merry sounds of the children's voices in their gladdest moods; nay, sweetest of all, the voice of her I loved, confessing that *she returned my love*,—I never heard any sound half so sweet, so welcome, so refreshing to my ears, as the first cock-crow, which proclaimed the coming day.

Still I had a long and weary time to wait, before it was light enough to dress, (some cocks wake in the night and take the earliest opportunity of letting their neighbours know that they