would recommend Farmer on Miracles ; a book in which this queſtion is fully examined.

Spectres appear only in the night. But why ſhould they ſhun the light of the ſun ? Thoſe miſchievous ghoſts that Glanville mentions might indeed have ſome reason to chooſe midnight for the execution of their pranks, as they would be more eaſily detected in open day. Such was the roguiſh drummer that haunted Mr Mompeſſon’s houſe, who beat his drum all night, threw the old gentlewoman’s clothes about the room, hid her Bible in the aſhes, plucked the clothes off the bed, and amuſed himſelf with toſſing about Mr Mom. pesson’s ſhoes. But why ſhould a grave ſerious ghoſt appear at midnight ? Might it not deliver its message with as much eaſe and more ſucceſs in the day-time ? In the day-time it would not excite much fear ; it would be liſtened to therefore with more attention; and did it chooſe to exhibit itself before a number of witneſſes, its grievances would be more ſpeedily redreſſed, becauſe more perſons would intereſt themſelves in ſeeing juſtice done to the injured ghoſt.

Spectres not only chooſe the most improper time, but the moſt improper perſons. To render the teſtimony of any perſon credible, he muſt not only be a man of veracity, but he muſt have sufficient ability to judge of the ſubject to which he is to bear witneſs. It is not on the evidence of an ignorant illiterate perſon, who has more fancy and fear than judgment, that we are to rest our belief of what is ſupernatural. It is also wor­thy of remark, that we have never heard of a ghoſt ap­pearing to any perſon who did not previouſly believe their exiſtence. A man muſt be prejudiced in favour of this opinion, or he will never ſee a ghoſt. But ſenſible men know, that he who has been accuſtomed to hear frightful ſtories of ghoſts and apparitions gliding thro’ a church-yard, or haunting ſome particular place, can ſcarcely paſs through a church-yard or haunted ſpot without conjuring up in his imagination the hideous phantoms which he has been accuſtomed to aſſociate with ſuch places. Is it ſtrange, then, that an ignorant man, with a mind uncultivated and uninformed, with all the prejudices of the nurſery about him, ſhould ima­gine he ſees ghoſts in thoſe places where he believes they hover, eſpecially in the dead hour of midnight, when, with the ſlighteſt aid of the imagination, a cow may be turned into a monſtrous phantom, and the re­flection of the beams of the moon from a little water be converted into a ghoſt with a winding-ſheet ? But why ſhould apparitions ſhun men of underſtanding and learning ? Why ſhould learning be formidable to them @@(a) ? it was not ſo with the celeſtial meſſengers men­tioned in the Scriptures : they appeared to the patri­archs and prophets ; and the miracles there recorded were performed in the moſt public places, before the eyes of Rabbies, of Scribes, and Phariſees. Indeed this circumſtance is sufficient to deſtroy the evidence of ſpectres. They have never been ſeen by any but men of weak or diſtempered minds, or by men who have pre­viouſly believed in them.

Having now conſidered the evidence on which the belief of ſpectres reſts, we will endeavour to give ſome account of the foundation of it. To trace an opinion that has prevailed ſo generally in the world to its ſource, is a labour not unworthy of the philoſopher, even tho’ the opinion be falſe. It is always gratifying to detect the cauſes of error : it is no leſs uſeful ; for in order to refute error, it is often sufficient to point out the ſources from which it has ſprung. To reach the origin of the belief of ſpectres is not more difficult than to account for idolatry or polytheiſm. In the infant ſtate of the intellectual powers every thing is conſider­ed as posseſſing life and intelligence. The child beats the ſtool over which he has fallen with the same passion that he would treat his companion : The young girl talks to her doll as if it underſtood her : The ſavages aſcribe every change which they obſerve on the face of nature to the action of ſome animated being. As knowledge advances, they single out thoſe beings which ſeem to produce the moſt ſtriking effects, arrange them into ſome kind of order, and divide the government of the world among them. Unable, at the ſame time, to conceive any nation of a pure ſpirit, they imagine thoſe divinities are corporeal beings. This is the foundation of idolatry. The belief of ſpectres is but another ſtep. That theſe animated corporeal beings, to whom they addreſs their prayers, and who preside ‘over the world, ſhould on particular occaſions display themſelves to the human eye, is what they muſt be previouſly diſpoſed to expect. Hence the numberleſs appearances of the hea­then gods, of the Perſian and Mahometan genii. The

@@@(a) The celebrated hiſtorian De Thou had a very singular adventure at Saumur, in the year 1598. One night, having retired to rest very much fatigued, while he was enjoying a found ſleep, he felt a very extraordi­nary weight upon his feet, which, having made him turn ſuddenly, fell down and awakened him. At firſt he imagined that it had been only a dream, but hearing soon after ſome noiſe in his chamber, he drew aſide the cur­tains, and ſaw, by help of the moon, which at that time ſhone very bright, a large white figure walking up and down, and at the ſame time obſerved upon a chair ſome rags, which he thought belonged to thieves who had come to rob him. The figure then approaching his bed, he had the courage to aſk it what it was. “ I am (ſaid it) the Queen of Heaven.” Had ſuch a figure appeared to any credulous ignorant man in the dead of night, and made ſuch a ſpeech, would he not have trembled with fear, and have frightened the whole neighbour­hood with a marvellous deſcription of it ? But De Thou had too much underſtanding to be so impoſed upon. Upon hearing the words which dropped from the figure, he immediately concluded that it was ſome mad wo­man, got up, called his ſervants, and ordered them to turn her out of doors ; after which he returned to bed and fell aſleep. Next morning he found that he had not been deceived in his conjecture, and that having forgot to ſhut his door, this female figure had eſcaped from her keepers, and entered his apartment. The brave Schom­berg, to whom De Thou related his adventure ſome days after, confessed that in ſuch a caſe he would not have shown ſo much courage. The king also who was informed of it by Schomberg, made the same acknowledge­ment.