repeated it. It turned out to be the ſame with Smollet’s story of the three black crows, which ſome body was ſaid to have vomited.

Upon inquiry at the inn where the West Indian gen­tleman had lodged, no ſuch gentleman had been ſeen there. It was found afterwards he had never left the West Indies. Still, however, the veracity of the wi­dow was not disputed ; and ſome dark and ſecret tranſaction was ſuſpected. But the whole affair was at length explained by diſcovering that ſhe was ſomewhat deranged by melancholy. And the cries which ſhe had at firſt imagined ſhe had heard were afterwards imitated by ſome roguiſh perſon, who was highly amuſed with ſpreading terror among the credulous.

5. Drunkenneſs alſo has the power of creating ſpectres. Its natural effect in most caſes is to derange the understanding, to throw it off its guard, and to give full ſcope to that paſſion which has a natural diſpoſition to gain an aſcendancy ; and ſometimes it excites paſſions which ſcarcely ſeem to exiſt at any other time. It makes ſome men licentious, ſome furious, ſome all benevolence and kindneſs, ſome from being cowards it renders un­daunted heroes. It ſeldom, if ever, excites fear ; and therefore it may be thought ſtrange that men ſhould imagine they ſee ghoſts when intoxicated. But it must be remarked, that the ghoſts which the drunkard ſees, he ſees not with the ſame alarm and terror as men who are ſober. He is not afraid of them. He has the cou­rage to converſe with them, and even to fight with them, if they give him provocation. A man returning home intoxicated, affirmed that he had met with the devil; and that after a ſevere encounter he had vanquiſhed him and brought him to the ground, to which he had nailed him faſt by driving his ſtaff through his body. Next morning the ſtaff was found ſtuck with great violence into a heap of turfs !

6. Many apparitions of ſpectres have no other origin than the artifices of the waggiſh or ſelf-intereſted. Dr Plot, in his Natural Hiſtory of Oxfordſhire, relates a marvellous ſtory, which will illuſtrate this affertion. Soon after the murder of King Charles I. a commiſſion was appointed to ſurvey the king’s houſe at Woodſtock, with the manor, park, woods, and other demeſnes to that manor belonging ; and one Collins, under a feigned name, hired himſelf as ſecretary to the commissioners, who, upon the 13th of October 1649, met, and took up their reſidence in the king’s own rooms. His majeſty’s bed-chamber they made their kitchen, the council hall their pantry, and the preſence-chamber was the place where they ſat for the diſpatch of buſineſs. His majeſty’s dining-room they made their wood-yard, and ſtored it with the wood of the famous royal-oak from the High Park, which, that nothing might be left with the name of king about it, they had dug up by the roots, and ſplit and bundled up into faggots for their firing. Things being thus prepared, they ſat on the 16th of the ſame month for the diſpatch of buſineſs; and in the midſt of their firſt debate there entered a large black dog (as they thought), which made a dread­ful howling, overturned two or three of their chairs, and then crept under a bed and vaniſhed. This gave them the greater ſurpriſe, as the doors were kept conſtantly locked, ſo that no real dog could get in or out. The next day their ſurpriſe was increaſed, when sitting at dinner in a lower room, they heard plainly the noile of perſons walking over their heads, though they well knew the doors were all locked, and there could be no body there. Preſently after they heard alſo all the wood of the king’s oak brought by parcels from the dining­room, and thrown with great violence into the preſence chamber ; as alſo all the chairs, ſtools, tables, and other furniture, forcibly hurled about the room ; their papers, containing the minutes of their tranſactions, were torn, and the ink-glaſs broken. When all this noiſe had ceaſed, Giles Sharp, their ſecretary, propoſed to enter firſt into theſe rooms ; and in preſence of the commiſſioners, from whom he received the key, he opened the doors, and found the wood ſpread about the room, the chairs toſſed about and broken, the papers torn, the ink-glaſs broken (as has been ſaid), but not the leaſt tract of any human creature, nor the leaſt reaſon to ſuſpect one, as the doors were all faſt, and the keys in the cuſtody of the commiſſioners. It was therefore unanimouſly agreed, that the power who did this miſchief must have entered the room at the key-hole. The night following, Sharp the ſecretary, with two of the commiſſioners ſervants, as they were in bed in the ſame room, which room was contiguous to that where the commiſſioners lay, had their bed’s feet lifted up ſo much higher than their heads, that they expected to have their necks broken, and then they were let fall at once with ſo much violence as ſhook the whole houſe, and more than ever terrified the commiſſioners. On the night of the 19th, as all were in bed in the ſame room for greater ſafety, and lights burning by them, the can­dles in an inſtant went out with a ſulphureous ſmell, and that moment many trenchers of wood were hurled about the room, which next morning were found to be the ſame their honours had eaten on the day before, which were all removed from the pantry, though not a lock was found opened in the whole houſe. The next night they ſtill fared worſe ; the candles went out as before, the curtains of their honours beds were rattled to and fro with great violence ; their honours received many cruel blows and bruiſes, by eight great pewter-diſhes and a number of wooden trenchers being thrown on their beds, which being heaved off, were heard rolling about the room, though in the morning none of theſe were to be ſeen. This night likewiſe they were alarm­ed with the tumbling down of oaken billets about their beds, and other frightful noiſes; but all was clear in the morning, as if no ſuch thing happened. The next night the keeper of the king’s houſe and his dog lay in the commiſſioners room, and then they had no diſturbance. But on the night of the 22d, though the dog lay in the room as before, yet the candles went out, a number of brick-bats fell from the chimney into the room, the dog howled piteouſly, their bed clothes were all ſtripped off, and their tenor increaſed. On the 24th they thought all the wood of the king’s oak was violently thrown down by their bed-ſides ; they counted 64 billets that fell, and ſome hit and ſhook the beds in which they lay ; but in the morning none were found there, nor had the door been opened where the billet wood was kept. The next night the candles were put out, the curtains rattled, and a dreadful crack like thun­der was heard ; and one of the ſervants running in halte, thinking his maſter was killed, found three dozen of trenchers laid ſmoothly under the quilt by him. But all this was nothing to what ſucceeded afterwards ; The