belief of ghoſts may be eaſily deduced from the opi­nions entertained reſpecting a future ſtate. Theſe opi­nions are founded on that eſſential doctrine of natural religion, that there is another world in which men ſhall exiſt when death has removed them hence. This doc­trine has been univerſally received both by ſavage and civilized nations ; but, as might be expected, men have formed very different ſentiments concerning the nature of a future ſtate, of the ſituation and employments of departed ſpirits, according to the degree of knowledge which they posseſſed. But the general opinion in ancient and rude nations was, that departed ſpirits retain­ed the ſame external appearance, the ſame paſſions and principles as before. Nothing therefore was more na­tural than the opinion, that they might occaſionally reviſit this world, from an anxious deſire to alleviate the ſufferings of thoſe beloved friends and relations whom they had left behind them, or to communicate from the unſeen world what might be important to their welfare. Upon ſuch an errand did Creuſa appear to Æncas. The apparition of the ghoſts of murder­ers is eaſily explained upon the ſame general principles. The remorſe and horror of mind which the murderer feels are ſuppoſed to haunt him in the other world, and to render his ſituation there intolerable (eſpecially if the murder was never detected and puniſhed), till he re­turn and give information againſt himſelf. In this way, then, we think it highly probable the belief of ſpectres has originated. But many other cauſes concur to con­firm and propagate this belief. Theſe are, imperfect viſion united with fear, dreams, opium, diſeaſes, drunkenneſs, and artifice.

1. Tndiſtinct viſion is one ſource of apparitions, eſpe­cially when the mind is under the influence of fear. It is well known, that the ſenſe of seeing conveys no idea of diſtance till improved by experience and obſervation ; and how we come at length to diſtinguiſh ob­jects at a diſtance from thoſe that are near, has been explained in another place (see Metaphysics, n⁰ 50).

In the day-time we ſeldom commit miſtakes, becauſe we know the object at which we look ; but at night, when we ſee objects obſcurely, and know not what they are, we have no diſtinct idea either of their diſtances or of their magnitude. We may miſtake a bush that is near us for a tree at a diſtance ; or if the imagination be under the influence of fear, it will eaſily convert it into a gigantic figure. “ It is generally aſſerted (ſays Buffon) that theſe figures exiſt only in the imagination ; yet they may have a real exiſtence in the eye ; for whenever we have no other mode of judging of an unknown ob­ject but by the angle it forms in the eye, its magnitude will uniformly increaſe in proportion to its propinquity. If it appears, when at the diſtance of 20 or 30 paces, to be only a few feet high, its height, when within two or three ſeet of the eye, will be many fathoms. An ob­ject of this kind muſt naturally excite terror and aſtoniſhment in the ſpectator, till he· approaches and recogniſes it by actual feeling ; for the moment a man knows an object, the gigantic appearance it aſſumed in the eye inſtantly diminiſhes, and its apparent magnitude is re­duced to its real dimenſions. But if, inſtead of ap­proaching ſuch an object, the ſpectator flies from it, he can have no other idea of it but from the image which it formed in his eye ; and, in this case, he may affirm with truth that he ſaw an object terrible in its aſpect, and enormous in its ſize. Thus the notions concerning ſpectres is founded in nature, and depend not, as ſome philoſophers affirm, upon the imagination alone.”

In addition to theſe obſervations of Buffon, we may take notice, that objects are always magnified in a fog ; ſo that when a fog happens in the night-time, objects may be magnified to an enormous ſize. But, at any rate, whether there be fog in the night or not, there is ſuch a great analogy between darkneſſs and a fog, that if the latter deceive us with reſpect to the ſize of ob­jects, the former will alſo deceive us. The writer of this article was paſſing the Frith of Forth at Queenserry, near Edinburgh, one morning which was extremely foggy. Though the water be only two miles broad, the boat did not get within sight of the ſouthern ſhore till it approached very near it. He then ſaw to his great ſurpriſe a large perpendicular rock, where he knew the ſhore was low and almoſt flat. As the boat advanced a little nearer, the rock ſeemed to ſplit perpendicularly into portions, which ſeparated at a little diſtance from one another. He next ſaw theſe perpendicular divi- ſions move ; and upon approaching a little nearer, found it was a number of people ſtanding on the beach, wait­ing the arrival of the ferry-boat.

2. Dreams are another fertile ſource of apparitions. It is well known to every perſon, that while the mind is under the influence of a dream it conſiders it as much a reality as it does any particular action while awake. Now *if* a person of a weak ſuperſtitious mind ſhould have a very lively dream, which intereſts his passions, particularly the paſſion of fear, it may make ſo deep an impression, that he may be firmly convinced that he has actually ſeen with his eyes what has only paſſed be­fore his imagination (See Apparition) @@(b). We ſhall here tell a ſtory, by way of illuſtration, which we have received on unqueſtionable authority, An East Indian captain had an honeſt faithful ſervant named *John,* for whom he had a great regard. John died, if we recollect right, on a voyage from England to the Eaſt Indies during a French war. As the ship ap­proached the place of its deſtination the captain had a dream, in which John appeared to him, and earneſtly beſought him not to ſail to the port for which he was bound, as it was in the hands of the French. The cap­tain, though not addicted to ſuperſtition, thought it prudent to follow this admonition ; and after landing at a different port, he was informed that the place to which he had intended to ſteer was, according to the information of the dream, captured by the French. On the voyage home, the captain had a second dream, in which John again appeared to him, and gave him no-

@@@(b) When the thoughts are much troubled, and when a perſon ſleeps without the circumſtances of going to bed, or putting off his clothes, as when he nods in his chair, it is very difficult, as Hobbes remarks, to diſtin­guiſh a dream from a reality. On the contrary, he that compoſes himſelf to ſleep, in caſe of any uncouth or absurd fancy, eaſily ſuſpects it to have been a dream.—*Leviathan,* par. i. c. I.