

by my terror, also returned frightened, and said that she too had seen the woman's hand; which, however, did not seem to be the case. And finally, my mother going to the door, saw nothing, though she appeared much impressed by the extremeness of my terror and the minuteness of my description. I communicate the story as it lies fixed in my memory, without attempting to explain it. The supposed apparition may have been merely a momentary affection of the eye, of the nature described by Sir Walter Scott in his "Demonology," and Sir David Brewster in his "Natural Magic." But if so, the affection was one of which I experienced no after-return; and its coincidence, in the case, with the probable time of my father's death, seems at least curious.

There followed a dreary season, on which I still look back in memory, as on a prospect which, sunshiny and sparkling for a time, has become suddenly enveloped in cloud and storm. I remember my mother's long fits of weeping, and the general gloom of the widowed household; and how, after she had sent my two little sisters to bed,—for such had been the increase of the family,—and her hands were set free for the evening, she used to sit up late at night, engaged as a seamstress, in making pieces of dress for such of the neighbors as chose to employ her. My father's new house lay untenanted at the time; and though his sloop had been partially insured, the broker with whom he dealt was, it would seem, on the verge of insolvency, and having raised objections to paying the money, it was long ere any part of it could be realized. And so, with all my mother's industry, the household would have fared but ill had it not been for the assistance lent her by her two brothers, industrious, hard-working men, who lived with their aged parents and an unmarried sister, about a bow-shot away, and now not only advanced her money as she needed it, but also took her second child, the elder of my two sisters, a docile little girl of three years, to live with them. I remember I used to go wandering disconsolately about the harbor at this season, to examine the vessels which had come in during the night; and that I oftener than once set my mother a crying by asking her