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WHOLE NO. 390

Select Tale.

KATTIE AND "THE DEIL."

A BOHEMIAN STORY.

In a certain village in Bohemia lived a peasant woman called Katie. She possessed a little hut of her own, a garden, and a small income; but had she rolled in wealth, not a lad would have ventured to say—Katie, will you be mine? for she was snappish as a cat of the woods, and owned a tongue which worked like a flail. She had an old mother, who looked as deaf as a log, and her she soddled from morning till night, so that her voice was audible half a mile off. If any neighbor entered her cottage, she spat, and set up her back, and bawled, so that the intruder was only too glad to escape without a scratched face. When any one passed her door, Katie flung him a spiteful word; and was only too glad if the passer stopped to retaliate, for if he had an ugly expression to cast at her, she had a dozen to pelt him with in return.

By the time she had reached the age of forty without having found a lover, all the—milk of human kindness she never had, which might have been the vinegar of her nature had become concentrated sulphuric acid, ready to blacken and burn anything with which it came in contact.

It is the custom in Bohemia for young people to resort to the tavern on Sunday afternoon, for a dance. As soon as the fiddle or bagpipe is heard, the lads run into the streets, the girls appear at the cottage doors, and the children peep out of the windows. Young men and women then follow the musicians to the inn, and the dance begins.

Katie was always the first to follow the fiddle, and to appear in the public house; there she saw the lads whirling about with the lassies, but never in all her life had she been invited by any one to dance; Sunday after Sunday she tried her luck, and hoped against hope; no man solicited her hand as a partner. "Well," said she impetuously, one Sunday, "here am I getting an old woman, and have never danced yet; never saw anything like this here! Such a set of clowns! This is provoking. I'd dance with any one, with the old Deil himself, if he were to ask me!" and she snapped her fingers, and stamped on the ground.

She bustled into the inn, sat down and looked about her at the whirling, merry figures. Suddenly a gentleman in a butler's suit came into the room, seated himself at the table, called for beer and had a tumbler filled. Running his eye over the assembly, he rested on Katie. He sprang to his feet, walked across the room, and with the most graceful bow, and with the most courteous air, offered her the glass.

Katie, delighted at the attention, drank the beer with avidity, and made room for the gentleman to seat himself at her side. After a few words had passed between them, the stranger flung some silver to the fiddler, and asked for a "solo." The dancers deserted the centre of the room, cleared the area, and the gentleman led Katie forth to dance.

"Bless us all! It will rain to-morrow!" exclaimed the old people, opening their eyes wide with astonishment.

The lads hid their fingers, and the girls hid their faces to conceal their laughter. But Katie saw no one; she was radiant with joy, now that she had a chance of dancing; and danced she would have, in spite of the whole world laughing.

All that afternoon, and all that evening, the strange gentleman danced with Katie, and with her alone. He bought her gingerbread, almond-rock, and lemon-drops, and she ate and sucked to her heart's content. As soon as the dancing came to an end, the stranger escorted her home.

"Oh dear!" exclaimed Katie, "would that I might dance with you forever!"

"That is quite within the range of possibility," replied the stranger.

"Where do you live, sir?"

"Put your arms round my neck, and I will whisper to you." Katie did so, and presto! the stranger had become a devil, and was flying with her to his home, a place which need not be specified. In he came at the door, bathed in profuse perspiration; for his neck was a heavy one.

"Now, then, Katie, let go," said he.

"Oh, never! never!"

"Come, there's a dear soul, take your arms off."

"Dearest, never!"

"Why, whom have you got there?" asked the master of the spirit, in a voice of thunder which had in it a faint thrill of dismay.

"K-K-Katie," panted the unfortunate devil, struggling to shake his fat load off.

"Katie!" echoed his majesty, leaping from his throne, casting aside his bifurcated sceptre, and turning—not exactly pale, but Oxford mixture: "Katie here's an end to our quiet life, if that woman becomes an inmate of Pandemonium. She'll bring the place down about your ears. Away with you, Moloch, and do not show your face in here till you have shaken off your dreadful incubus."

So there was nothing for it, but that the quondam Jager should return to earth, and free himself from the embrace of Katie as best he might. He flew back wearily and despondingly, with a decided crack in his neck. On reaching earth, he seated himself on a flowery bank, and putting on a solemn expression, said in a hollow voice:

"Katie, if you do not let go, I shall plunge you in molten brimstone!"

"Oh! replied she with emphasis, 'I

fear no pain so long as I am with you!" and she laid her hand on his breast.

"Ahem!" Moloch looked vacantly at the landscape. "Katie!" he resumed, as a brilliant idea entered his head, and illumined his countenance with a momentary gleam of ghastly joy. "Katie, I am so rich; I will give you a mountain of solid gold if you will only let go."

"What! leave you for filthy lucre? Never, never, never!" and she buried her head in his breast.

"Here's a pretty kettle of fish," said the spirit; "what is to be done now?"

He rose, and wandered despairingly over a desolate moor, which lay stretched before him.

Presently, staggering under his load, he came upon a young shepherd, in a sheepskin, with all his wool upon it. The evil spirit resumed his former human form, and the shepherd was consequently quite ignorant of who he was.

"Why, my good sir, whom are you carrying?" asked the shepherd in perplexity.

"Ah, good friend, I scarcely know! why look you; I was walking peacefully along my way, without thinking of anything in particular, when, with a hop, skip and jump, this woman fastened herself to my neck, and will on no account let me go. I want to carry her to the next village, and there obtain my liberation; but I am scarcely in a fit condition to do so, my knees shivering under me."

"Come now," said the compassionate peasant, "I will help you; but I cannot carry her for long, as I have my sheep to attend to: half the way—will that suit you?"

"Ah! I shall be thankful!"

"Now then you! hang yourself to me!" cried the shepherd, addressing Katie.

The woman looked round, observed that the shepherd was infinitely preferable to Moloch; he was good-looking and young. She let go her hold on the Deil, and clung—she was fast as a spring collar round the shepherd's neck.

The man had now quite enough to carry, what with Katie, and what with his immense sheepskin dress; and in a very short time he was tired, and strove to disengage himself from his incubus. In vain! Katie would not listen to his remonstrances, and the more he struggled the tighter she clung.

Presently he came near a pool. Oh! if he could but cast her in! But how? Could he manage to slip out of his sheepskin? No harm trying—but it must be done very cautiously—very gently. Hist! he has slipped one arm out. Katie is none the wiser. Hist! he has slipped the other one out. Katie has not observed it. Now, then, he slides his head stealthily up his breast and unbuttons the collar. He has undone one button, two, three—a bob of the head, a splash, and Katie and the sheepskin are in the pond. She sinks, she rises and her expiring eyes rests upon the shepherd and the evil spirit dancing in an ecstasy of delight upon the bank.

"My best of friends!" exclaimed Moloch, enthusiastically, "you have laid me under an everlasting obligation; you have imposed upon me a debt of gratitude which I never can adequately discharge. But for you I might have Katie hanging round my neck through eternity; I might never have been able to shake that woman off; and never," continued the spirit musingly, "never is a very long word. Now look you here, shepherd, I am—"

"In fewer words than I can express it, the spirit had described his nature to the young man." "Well, and being what I am, it lies in my power to repay you in my poor way, for what you have done. I will forthwith proceed to the next town, and will enter into and possess the Chancellor. As soon as all the doctors and exorcists have failed to free the Chancellor from me, do you go to town and offer, for the recompense of two bags of dollars, to liberate the Chancellor from the evil spirit which torments him. Then come up to the bedside, say 'Hocus pocus!' and I will fly away out of the window, and enter into and possess the Prime Minister. When all other means of cure have failed, do you volunteer, at the price of two sacks of gold pieces, to free the Prime Minister. Come to him, say as before, 'Hocus pocus!' and I will fly from him through the window, and possess the King. And now, I warn you, beware how you venture to attempt to expel me from the body of the King. Should you, notwithstanding this caution, risk the attempt, I shall infallibly tear you in pieces, limb from limb."

The shepherd expressed his acknowledgment in the best and most appropriate terms of which he was master. "Ta, ta!" said the Deil, as he spread his wings and flew away.

"Ta, ta!" replied the shepherd gravely looking after him. Shortly after this, a rumor spread through the country that the Chancellor was not quite—to put it mildly—what he should be. It was whispered aside that the Chancellor had been playing pretty pranks, and that it was asserted by professors of medicine and of theology that he was possessed by a bad spirit.

All medicines, allopathic and homoeopathic, had failed to cure the Chancellor. The clergy took him in hand and tried the last approved forms of exorcism; but the Chancellor, or rather the Chancellor's tenant, was proof against all ecclesiastical demonstrations.

The young shepherd now came to the town, and loudly proclaimed his power to cure any one of diabolical possession. All other resources having failed, the King determined to give the shepherd a try, and so ordered him to visit and prescribe for the Chancellor. As soon as the shepherd entered the room, he saw that the condition of the highest law officer of the Crown was critical. He was kicking his attendants, abusing them in language hardly consistent with the dignity of his position, and foaming at the mouth.

The shepherd demanded as his fee for curing

him two sacks of dollars, and they were readily promised. He now approached the unhappy man, whose convulsions became more terrible as he drew near.

"Hocus pocus!" said the shepherd, *en rotunda* and with a solemn face, at the same time making various fanciful signs in the air with his hand. Away flew the spirit, shivering the panes of glass in the window into countless fragments on his way. The shepherd received his fee, and returned to his cottage.

But it was soon noised about that something had gone wrong with the Prime Minister, and it was surmised that the demon which had been expelled from the Chancellor had entered into the keeper of the King's conscience—awful, decidedly. What was to be done? A regular practitioner were applied to first, as a matter of course. The allopaths sapped the Minister's constitution with violent medicines, without expelling the evil spirit. The homoeopaths did nothing at all, and the divines sent the devil to sleep. When all had failed, recourse was had to the quack, and at the price of two sacks of gold pieces the shepherd agreed to perform a cure.

The circumstances resembled those in the former case, with one exception: the window was prudentially opened, and a glazier's bill saved. But now the evil spirit struck at higher game, and he took full and undisturbed possession of the monarch.

As might be expected, people were not one half so porth the wiser for experience, and the usual allopathic, homoeopathic, and ecclesiastical systems were tasked to recover the King, and proved, as every one knew would be the case, a failure. Then they sent for the shepherd, but he refused to go, and offered a room full of gold dust, but he persisted in his refusal, remembering the devil's warning. The Prime Minister now ordered out a regiment of horse, and had the shepherd exorcist brought will he kill he. In vain did he protest his inability to cure the King; the Prime Minister insisted, and the Chancellor threatened to put the law in force, which required that the bird which could sing and wouldn't sing should be made to sing. Cowed by this threat, the shepherd determined to do his best.

He entered the regal apartment. The King was howling and frothing at the mouth and looking desperate. "Hallo!" roared the spirit within; "you here shepherd? did not I warn you not to attempt to cast me out of my Majesty?"

"Steady," said the shepherd, putting on an expression of awe, and stealing on tip-toe across the room, with hand on his mouth he whispered, "Do you think me such a fool as to attempt anything of the kind? I am only come to tell you, dear friend, that—that—KATIE IS OUT OF THE POND, AND IS INQUIRING AFTER YOU!"

"Katie!" gasped the devil; "then I'm off!" and away he flew.

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The Little Cup of Tears.

We find the following North German legend in "Thorpe Yule-tide Stories," one of Bohm's Antique Stories. It is too beautiful to remain in the sole keeping of antiquaries. "There was a mother who loved her only child with her whole heart, and thought she could not live without it; but the Almighty sent a great sickness among children, which seized this little one, who lay on his sick bed even to death. Three days and three nights the mother watched and wept, and prayed by the side of her darling child, but it died. The mother, now alone in the wide world, gave way to the most violent and unspeakable grief; she ate nothing and drank nothing, and wept, wept, wept, three long days and three long nights. This the mother did without ceasing, calling constantly on her child. The third night, as she thus sat, overcome with suffering, in the place where her child had died, her eyes bathed in tears, and faint from grief, the door softly opened, and a mother started, for before her stood her departed child. It had become a heavenly angel, and smiled sweetly as innocence, and was beautiful like the blessed. It had in its hand a small cup that was almost running over, so full was it. And the child spoke: 'O! dearest mother, now more for me; the angel of mourning has collected in this little cup the tears which you have shed for me. If for me you shed but one tear more, it will overflow, and I shall have no more rest in the grave and no joy in heaven. Therefore, O dearest mother, I warn you, no more for your child; for it is well and happy, and angels are its companions.' It then vanished. The mother shed no more tears, that she might not disturb her child's joy in heaven."

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An Irish Notion of Honour.

A story is told of an Irish Prince, who, travelling in former days with a trusty and valued attendant, arrived at an inn where but one bed could be procured for their accommodation. They were wayworn and tired, more especially the servant, and the master revolted at the idea of leaving his humble friend without a place of repose. Still his dignity could not be compromised by sleeping with a mere menial. The difficulty was solved by putting the follower into the bed and making another for his liege lord on the roof, which happened to be a flat one. During the night the servant begged to know if the Prince felt comfortable, when the latter replied, "Well, Teague, except for the honour of the thing I think I would just as soon be below."

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What is it that increases the more you take of it?—Why, a hole, of course.

How many little insects will name those who live in other men's houses?—Ten ants.

When is wheat like a blunt knife?—When it is sent to be ground.

Why is an egg overdone like one underdone?—Because it is hardly done.

Jewish Sabbath Observance.

The Jewish sages, in order to prevent the infringement or violation of any laws, have established a fence round them, by which anything which might possibly lead to the infringement of the law is itself interdicted. For example, the Jews are forbidden to kindle a fire on the Sabbath Day; as a fence, they are forbidden by the sages to touch the fire when kindled, or to lift a candlestick with a lighted candle in it, or even blow out a candle or extinguish a fire when kindled. The reason of the commandment to the Israelites not to kindle a fire on the Sabbath Day has been explained in this way:—When the children of Israel were wandering in the wilderness, the only method they had of kindling a fire was by rubbing two pieces of wood together until a flame was produced. This was a work requiring great exertion, and on account of being a labor was forbidden on the Sabbath. But the sages forbid any such liberal construction, and follow the commandments literally, so that on account of the prohibition to light a fire on the Sabbath, no Jew smokes a cigar or pipe on that day. Some of the very strict Hebrews carry their religious formalities to an excess. They believe that carrying a handkerchief into the pocket, or a superfluous pin in the clothes, is carrying a burden, a work that should not be done on the Sabbath-day. But if they pin the handkerchief to the pocket, or tie it round the waist like a girdle, there is no harm, as it may be considered a part of the garments. They will not gather any fruit from a tree on the Sabbath, although for their own consumption they may eat of it. They will not pick up anything that they find on the ground, but if they find it, they will pick it up and throw it away. They will not ride on horseback, nor go by water, nor play on a musical instrument, nor bathe, nor tear, nor break anything, not even a hair, for which reason a very strict Jew will not suffer his hair to be combed on the Sabbath. In the present day, however, many of these rules are unobserved.—*Cornhill Magazine.*

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Josh Billings on Laffing.

Laffing is strictly an amusement, also sum folks make a business of it.

He has bin considered an index or character, and there is sum so class at reasoning that they say they can tell what a man had for dinner by seeing him laff.

I never saw two laff alike.

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Items Foreign & Local.

The New Zealand war cost England last year £794,000.

A man is on trial in Paris for murdering sixteen women.

The ladies in Paris now plate the heels of their boots with gold and silver.

The Davenport Brothers have abandoned the title of mediums and now call themselves merely jugglers.

The Tycoon of Japan has made a present to the Emperor Napoleon of 15,000 papers of silk worms' eggs, which have arrived at Marseilles.

The revenue of P. E. Island for the year ending 31st January, 1866, was £38,041 and the expenditure £56,800. The revenue of the previous year was £56,333.

Prince Napoleon is about to start from Italy on an exploring expedition in Dalmatia, whither he is attracted by the Roman antiquities discovered in that portion of the Austrian empire.

Boston sells its house off under a contract for \$5,500 per annum; the ashes collected for it at \$3,000, and the street dirt and sweepings for \$2,000.

Among the novelties in ladies' fashions are the bells to be worn upon the wrists of white kid gloves, and even upon the edge of the Panama bonnets.

An eminent physician of Philadelphia is prepared to prove that rinderpest is caused by parasites growing in the skin, and will be checked by washing the animal with a solution of corrosive sublimate.

The receipts on the E. & N. A. Railway for the month ending 31st March, 1866, were \$10,447, 47, and for the corresponding month of the previous year \$8,475 53, being an increase in favor of the former of \$1,971 84.

The New York World says "trichinosis" has appeared in the pork establishments of that city, and eight pork butchers have been ordered to close their doors.

An English paper says that the newest novelty in the London dress is a long, loosely introduced coat of blue velvet, and that they are patronized principally by lady skaters—busts, hair, teeth, and legs, what next?

At a recent great steeple chase, near Liverpool, thirty horses started, all the favorites were beaten, and the winner was a common outsider, whose owner quietly pocketed \$155,000 by the race.

There is a plague of mice this spring in Ohio. They have attacked the fruit trees in some cases, and have destroyed over five thousand trees. They are so