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THE REVIEW

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THE GREAT NORTH SHORE ROUTE!

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THE REVIEW

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Christmas Eve.

Upstairs from the quiet nursery. Where the lamp burned soft and low I could hear the prattle of voices. Come floating down below. And I knew bright eyes were trying. A lengthened watch to keep. Lest Santa Claus pass by them, And they be fast asleep.

I heard the voice of Mabel— 'Perhaps he won't come because Lucy Gray says there's no such person As good old Santa Claus. And if there isn't—truly. Why then he won't come you know, And our stockings will all be empty From the top clear down to the toe.'

Then arose Will, indignant At such a suggestion as this,— Such a sudden 'spelling of fancies And visions of Christmas bliss; Of a rocking horse, saddled and bridled, Of stockings stuffed full to the toe, Of pictures and games without number, And a wonderful trumpet to blow.

A Christmas Ghost Story.

THE GREY COTTAGE

By Mrs. CLAXTON.

The cottage was old and grey. A pear tree ran over the front of it; there was a wooden porch covered with jessamine and honeysuckle, which promised to be very sweet and delightful in the spring. It stood in a pretty garden, sloping down to a thick hedge; beyond this, and much below it ran the lane leading up into the village. A large walnut tree and some tall fir trees shaded the cottage to the south; while the hill, on the side of which it was built, protected it from the north winds; they blew keenly enough at times. An open road divided us from our neighbors at the back; from the front we looked over the thatched roofs of a few low dwellings to the wide valley beyond, where a lazy river wound in and out through clumps of pollards. A picturesque mill and loch lay to the left; to the right a graceful spire rose in the distance.

Such was my new home. It was chosen partly for its retirement and its pretty garden, chiefly on account of its low rental and the inexpensive neighborhood. The nearest town was three miles off; more than that when the floods were out, as was often the case, for then the short cut across the fields was impassable.

This Grey Cottage—called so, possibly, from the old greystone of which it was built—had belonged to an aged man of the name of Vallyer. He had purchased it some fifty years before. By nature, as we heard, he had been close and miserly, saving up by little and little until he was reputed to be very rich. His wife he lost shortly after their marriage; and since that time he had led a most solitary life, the only other inmate of the cottage being an aged housekeeper, very deaf, and as eccentric as himself. Occasionally a married sister would come over to spend a few hours with him, but never stayed over the night. These visits were like angels' in like being few and far between; but in

another respect very unlike angels', for they never took place without a quarrel, and a declaration on the part of the sister, Mrs. Bittern, that she would never enter the house again. People said her only reason for making these quarrels up, was the old man's money. Be that as it might virtue proved to be its own reward, for when he died it was found he had left her nothing.

The old gentleman was wonderfully fond of his garden, working in it the greater part of the day, and seldom going beyond it. It was strange that with all his love for his flowers, he should never have cared to show them to his neighbors. On the contrary, he did what he could to keep them from their sight. During his life the place was unknown land; and, consequently, the subject of much curiosity, especially to the village children. Mr. Vallyer always seemed to be on the lookout if they attempted to peer and pry through the hedge or over the gate, and he carried a thick stick, with which he would make sudden lunges and thrusts, scattering the young visitors ignominiously. It was not safe for juvenile eyes to gaze into Mr. Vallyer's property. Another peculiarity he had. It was to stand by the garden gate in the gloaming leaning on his stick, and watching the few people who went up and down.

It has been said that he was supposed to have saved money. None—save a few pounds—could be found after his death. It then became known that he had purchased a life annuity, which had died with him. The cottage and furniture were left to a nephew, a chemist in London. Not requiring to live in it himself, he advertised it to be let furnished. Two maiden ladies had taken it first by the mouth; but they had quickly given notice to leave complaining of damp and other disagreeables. They had, however, always been considered rather crotchety people. I with my two pretty nieces, Hilda and Cecily, took possession at Michaelmas, a few weeks after they left. We were pleased with our country home. The few neighbors were friendly and sociable. I began to look upon the little Grey Cottage as a haven of rest after a changeful and troubled life.

As our old servant, Martha, was not quite as active as she used to be, I enquired for a charwoman, to come in twice a week to assist her, and was recommended to a Mrs. Briggs. She did not do her work amiss, but her propensity to gossip was irrepressible.

"You should see the place in spring, ma'am, when the gilly-flowers and stocks is out," she said to me one day when I was in the kitchen making a tart, and she stood at the other end of it cleaning brasses and tins. "It looked beautiful when the Miss Jessops first came here."

"I wonder what made them leave so soon?" I remarked. "Damp, the agent told me; but I have discovered no damp about the cottage."

"It weren't the damp, ma'am," was Mrs. Briggs' answer, and I thought her tone significant. "At first they liked it—oh, so much; but in a little time they said they must leave. Doubtless," lowering her voice, they had their reasons."

"Perhaps they found it too lonely?"

"No, and it weren't exactly the loneliness," returned Mrs. Briggs. "Not that altogether ma'am."

I asked no more; for gossip, though Mrs. Briggs' chief failing, was not one of mine; but went on with my pastry-making. She, rubbing fiercely at the copper tea-kettle, began again after an interlude.

"Did you chance to hear nothing about this cottage, ma'am?"

"Nothing particular. Why? What is there to hear?"

"Perhaps I ought not to tell you, ma'am; you might be scared," returned she, as she looked at me over the kettle. "Scared! Not I. Pray tell what you have to tell—if it concerns the cottage."

"Well, ma'am, it's a healthy place and a pretty place; that's for sure. But—it's about the old gentleman."—"The old gentleman?"

"Old Mr. Vallyer. They say he is in the House."

"Why, what do you mean?" I asked, feeling somewhat as the woman had said—scared.

"The first to see him was the widow Munn's children; he had been dead about a month. I was at her place, helping her with a day's washing. 'Mother,' said they with a day's washing. 'We have seen the old gentleman at the Grey Cottage; he's leaning over the gate with his stick just as he used to be.' They weren't frightened, those young children; they told it as a bit of news. The Widow Munn looked at me, and I at her, and then she whipped 'em all round, thinking it might be the best way to put it out of their heads."

I laughed, and said the children might have been mistaken.

"So they might, ma'am," assented Mrs. Briggs. "The next to see it was a stranger; a young man coming through the village one moonlight night on his way to London; he was walking in it. He went into a public-house, down there in Greenford and called for a glass of ale. While he was sitting by the fire drinking it, he began to talk. 'What uncivil people you seem to have in these parts,' says he. 'I asked an old gentleman, standing at his garden gate half way up the hill, whether there was a public house near, and he would not answer me; he just stared straight in my face with his glassy-looking eyes, and never spoke.' The company in the tap-room stopped talking at this, and looked at one another. 'What sort of an old gentleman was it,' they asked; 'how was he dressed?'

"He wore a long grey coat, with a curious little cape to it," says the traveller, "and a spotted white kerchief tied loose around his neck, with the ends hanging, and he had a stick in his hand. Very civil I must say he was! I asked him the question in a louder tone, thinking he might be deaf; but he never answered, only continued to stare at me.' It was the dress of old Vallyer, ma'am; he never wore any other, and I'll leave you to judge what the company at the White Hart thought of it. A great deal of talk went about Greenford next day."

We found that Mr. Vallyer's ghost was firmly believed in by the neighborhood. Fortunately my nieces were sensible girls and only laughed. The stories told were made a source of amusement to them and their young friends. They treated the subject as a good joke; sometimes intruding irreverently near the confines of that strange and mysterious world beyond whose veil we know so little, and which, it has always seemed to me, should be treated with respect, if not with awe. On one occasion I felt obliged to expostulate.

"Why, Aunt Cameron," exclaimed Hilda, laughing, "I am almost sure you believe in the ghost!"

Cecily took the matter more seriously, and agreed with me that too much fun had been made. After that it was a favorite joke of Hilda's to tell her friends confidentially that her aunt and Cecily believed in old Vallyer's re-appearance.

Weeks passed away, during which we saw nothing, and the winter set in. A young nephew of mine, and cousin of my nieces, came to spend some days with us; chiefly, I believe, on account of the skating. His arrival made Hilda and Cecily think it high time to make a little return for the kindness and hospitality which had been shown to us; or, rather, to induce me to think it. I let myself be persuaded and cards went out for a small evening party.

The evening of the party arrived, and brought our guests. Sixteen in all, including our own young people; I made the seventeenth. The time passed pleasantly, and lastly dancing was introduced. They had had a few quadrilles, when one gentleman had to leave, to catch a midnight train; and a double set of lancers was formed after his departure, one was lacking to make it up. There were only fifteen. You may think it strange I should enter into such particulars, but you will see.

"You must do double duty, Leonard," I said.

"No, aunt," exclaimed Hilda, with a saucy smile. "You shall invite old Mr. Vallyer to join us. I wish he would!"

All laughed; and then our neighbor, Mrs. Goldsmith, a tall, handsome woman, called out that she had no objection to dance with the old gentleman—should like to. "See, here he is!" she went on, making a bow to the sofa cushion in her careless merriment, and taking it up in her arms. "You are not accustomed to dancing, sir, we will go to the side. Now let us begin."

I had been so used to playing dance music, that I did it quite mechanically, often turning half round on the music stool to watch the dancers while my fingers were busy. My nieces were fine-looking girls, and I liked to follow Hilda's striking figure and Cecily's quiet grace as they moved through the mazes of the dance. After striking up the first inspiring chords of the Lancers, I turned to see how Mrs. Goldsmith was getting on with

her "partner." She stood opposite to Cecily and young Kirby, a rising engineer, with whom she was dancing. Hilda and Leonard were at the bottom of the set.

There was a good deal of laughing at the cushion at first, but it soon subsided, and I was glad of it, for I had fatigued myself much in preparing for our little entertainment; my head ached now, and the mirth jarred upon my nerves. I began to feel in that stage of weariness when voices sound far off; when the hands work on at whatever occupies them, with out help from the brain; when the thoughts roam away and the eyes sees things mistily. It suddenly struck me that the room was growing very cold. Just as Mrs. Goldsmith was passing me, cushion in arm, I felt a shiver.

"Ten degrees below freezing point last night, and colder to-night," I thought to myself. "What shall we come to?"

Turning round again to look at the dancing, I noticed how very pale they appeared, and how singularly quiet. Why had they ceased talking? As Cecily glided past me, I was struck by her face. It was white as marble, and her blue eyes were strangely distended and fixed with a puzzled kind of fascination on Mrs. Goldsmith. Mine followed them. That lady was moving through the figure in her stately manner, the cushion still in her arms, and a fixed smile on her lips; and by her side—now, was it an overwrought brain or was I dreaming? Surely the latter, for I felt no surprise, no alarm—there danced by her side a little old man!

This old man was dressed in a long grey coat, with a little cape, and a white spotted neckerchief loosely tied, and he carried a thick stick in his hand. He danced in an old-world fashion, executing his steps with great precision, and making formal bows to his partner and the rest of the company. Just then Mrs. Goldsmith laid the cushion back on the sofa; shivering apparently with cold, she took up a scarf, and wrapped it closely round her, dancing all the time. It was now the grand chain in the last figure, and for a moment or two I lost sight of the old man. Suddenly there was a wild scream—the dance stopped—Cecily had fainted!

A medical man, Mr. Brook, was the party. He attributed Cecily's attack to the intense coldness of the weather, and to the morning's skating, when she must have over-fatigued herself. The depression most of them had felt during the last set of quadrilles he put down to the same cause—unusual cold.

Cecily continued very poorly the following day. She confided to me privately her extraordinary impressions of the previous evening. I found them to be similar to my own; but I mentioned nothing to her about myself, and laughed a little.

"But I did see the old man, Aunt Cameron," she persisted. "He was by Mrs. Goldsmith's side."

I would not listen. On the contrary, I treated the matter entirely from a common-sense point of view; endeavoring to persuade her that the whole thing was due to an overwrought imagination.

Cecily tried to take up my view of the case. We agreed not to mention the matter to Hilda, or anyone else.

"Please, Mr. Cameron, you are wanted," said Martha to my nephew, interrupting us that same evening when we were all sitting together, young Kirby, the engineer, being with us.

"Who is it?" cried Leonard.

"Will you please come out, sir; he won't give any name."

Leonard went out. He came back in a minute or two, and beckoned to Kirby, who was playing chess with Hilda.

"It's nothing," he said, as we all started up. "Only Martha has been frightened at some one standing at the back door and then going away without speaking. We'll go round the garden to make sure no tramps are about."

I left the room myself, thinking of tramps, and of nothing else. The cottage was so low and so covered by fruit trees and trellis, that it would have been a very easy matter to climb into the bed-rooms. My window, just over the porch, had especial facilities that way, and I went up to it. Opening the lattice very gently, I concealed myself behind the curtain and looked out. The moon was bright. The voices of the two young men reached me from below.

"It's queer, Kirby—after all the talk, you know. Martha says she opened the door to get some wood, and there the old man stood. She thought it was a real tramp, mind you, and she did not like his staring in her face and never speaking. I am sure I saw him; he was going round towards the orchard."

"Very odd!" replied young Kirby. "I saw him too. He was leaning over the front gate."

"And, by Jove, there he is now!" "Where?"

"At the gate."

"I don't see him!"

"Nor do I now—he's gone."

Yes, there was no mistake; I saw him too from my window; the old man leaning on his stick at the gate, where he used to stand so often in life. Presently the two young men came in, and I went down.

"Have you seen any tramp, Leonard?"

"No, aunt. Not a tramp."

"What then? Anything?"

"A little old man leaning on a stick."

"I saw him too, Mrs. Cameron," added Mr. Kirby.

"We had better say nothing to the girls' whispered Leonard.

"No, nor anyone else, Leonard. The whole place would be astir."

"What—on account of old Vallyer?"

I nodded. Just then the girls came running out.

"What a long time you have been! Have you found him?"

"Of course not," Leonard replied.

"He had got clear off; those tramps are cunning. Let us have supper—it's awfully cold!"

This second little episode put me very much out of conceit with my pretty cottage. My nieces had a pressing invitation from Leonard's mother, and were to return with him to London. I thought I would go away somewhere too.

It was the afternoon of the day before Leonard and they were to leave. We had one heavy fall of snow, and the air was a thin thick with the feathery flakes. Strangely depressed, both mentally and bodily, I stood alone at the window and looked out over the valley, which lay so still under its great white shroud. At last Cecily came in and stood by me.

"You will be very lonely, aunt, after we are gone."

"Ah." And then we stood in silence.

Suddenly the girl laid her hand on my arm, as though to attract my attention. A chilly draught of wind seemed to blow through the room, raising the hair off my forehead with a pricking sensation.

A feeble, bent figure, leaning heavily on a stick, passed slowly and silently from the door to the other window. A coal falling in the grate, the flame flickered up, showing distinctly the old man whom I had twice before seen!

DODD'S KIDNEY PILLS

Two Instances of Many where They Effected Cures.

MEN AND WOMEN MADE WELL

Gratitude Compels them to Testify to the Curative Value of Dodd's Kidney Pills—The Greatest Discovery of the 19th Century.

SMITH'S FALLS, Ont., Dec. 21.—This village can produce evidence indisputable that the diseases most feared by men and women are curable. Two well-known citizens gratefully testify to the efficacy of Dodd's Kidney Pills. They have been cured.

No kidney disease is so far advanced or so severe that these Pills will not effect a cure. Bright's disease disappears, diabetes is conquered, gout subsides, calculi are dissolved, weak backs are made strong, rheumatism vanishes, through the agency of Dodd's Kidney Pills.

Thousands of Canadians who have suffered from some form or other of kidney complaint, to-day enjoy perfect health—thanks to Dodd's Kidney Pills.

Dodd's Kidney Pills are the cure. They cure backache, weak back, bearing-down sensations of women, rheumatic pains wherever located. They cure Bright's disease. They cure diabetes. They cure them for all time. They have cured others. They will cure you.

Don't take our word for it, if you don't wish to. Inquire of those who have been cured. Let those who have tried Dodd's Kidney Pills speak in their behalf.

For example, read this statement from a well-known citizen of a town in Eastern Ontario:—

ALMONTE, Ont., Dec. 2.—Harry Grace of this own, has been troubled with Lumbago for over a year. Doctors could give him no relief. He is now cured. He says:—"I heard of the wonderful cures effected by Dodd's Kidney Pills. I have tried one box, and I must say they have cured me. I have no objection to allowing you to publish this, as you see fit, so it may help others."

"HARRY GRACE, Ottawa St."

CASTORIA. In every drug store.

Slaves of Alcohol.

The most common of all forms of intoxication is of course that due to alcohol and the question of its treatment is most formidable. Alcohol effects the system in such a variety of ways, perverts the functions of so many organs, invades and erodes so many tissues, that the physician is often puzzled as to what part of the organism needs treatment first. The poison produces chronic inflammation of the stomach, it gradually inflames the liver and in fact strangles it like an iron band; it injures the heart, it affects the kidneys, it does harm to the lungs, it produces neurasthenia, delirium tremens, insanity and epilepsy by its influence upon the nervous system, it attacks the spinal cord and causes pseudo ataxia.

Sometimes the physicians treat one of these conditions in a patient and sometimes many. But the worst condition is that of the vice or disease itself. He may treat and relieve to a certain extent the disorders just enumerated, but the habit offers terrible difficulties to overcome in order to conquer it. How shall the habit be cured? For many decades this complex question has commanded the attention not only of physicians, but of laymen, lawyers, clergymen and statesmen. Either the desire for alcohol must be got rid of or the alcohol itself must be made unobtainable.

To accomplish the first, appeal has been made to the enfeebled will of the victim by lectures, pledges, hypnotic suggestions, religious influences and the like, often with considerable success. And drugs, too have been lauded by physicians and a multitude of secret nostrums by quacks to accomplish the same purpose, also with considerable success, though not so much through the merit of being an antidote to the impulse for drink as by virtue of the support by faith or suggestion given to the weak will of the victim.

On the other hand, to make alcohol unobtainable, or at least to put it as far as possible out of reach, the law has been invoked to regulate liquor selling in general, to prevent its sale to drunkards, to imprison habits or to commit inebriates to special institutions for a certain period of time.

While all these means have, in individual instances, been productive of successful results, the facts remain that no drug has been found that is always equal to destroying the morbid craving, and the laws are inadequate as regards the legislation of the liquor traffic and the isolation of the drunkard from the contiguity of his ruling demon.—New York Sun.

COULD NOT TURN IN BED.

Terrible Suffering of an Elora Lady From Rheumatism—Fifteen Years a Sufferer, But Cured By Two Bottles of South American Rheumatic Cure.

No pen can describe the intensity of suffering that may come from an attack of rheumatism. "For fifteen years," says Mrs. John Beaton of Elora, Ont., "I have been more or less troubled with rheumatism, which took the form of pains in my back, often confining me to my bed, and rendering me part of the time wholly unfit for my duties. At times I suffered so intense that I could not turn in my bed, and the disease was fast reaching a point where both myself and my husband had become thoroughly discouraged of recovery. A friend recommended South American Rheumatic Cure, and after the first bottle I was able to sit up, and before four bottles were taken I was able to go about as usual, and have been in excellent health since." Sold by W. W. Short.

Reading Notes.

We thought to have heard from our Kert Co. friends before this, but suppose they are much too interested in smelt fishing.

Xmas is drawing near and there is every prospect that it will be a green one.

Mr. James Dodge, of Roxbury, paid a visit to Reading lately. Watch out Will. One of our fair ones attends the Boston theatre quite regularly. Is all the attraction at the theatre, Tena?

Mr. and Mrs. W. Duncan, of Lynnfield, paid their Reading friends a flying visit last week.

One of the young men from Wakefield's provision market is seen here quite frequently of late. Is the attraction on Bancroft Avenue, Herbert?

Mr. Edward McMichael has returned to Uncle Sam's territory, but his many Reading friends were disappointed at not seeing him as he has gone to Bridgewater.

J. C. is rarely seen among us of late. We hope Xmas will bring him again.

Misses Bessie and Maud Ferguson, Miss Tena McNevin and Miss Grace Warman, spent an evening lately with their friends Mr. and Mrs. Smith Murray, in Charlottown and reported an enjoyable time.

JACK FROST.

La Grippe weakens digestion, use K D C.