

pressions of the natured beauty, so the tiny mere imitated the moods of a great lake or of the ocean. Shadows of clouds drifted on it like rafts. When glints of sun straggled through its marginal willows its face became reticulated with a fine network of lace as if Arachne herself had done the weaving with alternate lights and shadows for threads. When Eurus, with his rage modified by being filtered through trees, struck the miniature sea it raised little billows that would not have shipwrecked a pearly nautilus. It was a place on summer days for wildrose petals to float like the boats of water fays, until when autumn came the crimsoned maple leaves fell and gleamed on the surface like patches of blood. In winter it lay quiescent amid its leafless trees. Mists shrouded it, and the undines, if any there were, retired into their caves.

To return to Charles and Dr. Pother in the common room of the Swan-with-two-necks. From the worthy doctor, Charles learned that his father Sir Nokes Nicely was bluff as ever, and My Lady as final: that second-cousin Lucy was the belle of the county and still unmarried, although young Tooms followed her like her shadow. Also, that it was rumored the family ghost was about again, and that the rector (Rev. Cleophas Bang), on being begged to allay it, had stated this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting. The landlord, moreover, informed the young man that a carriage had come from the hall three times in the course of the day to meet him, until it had at length been decided that with his usual carelessness he had missed the train. Whereupon young Nicely threw on his coat of many capes, and with a malicious expression of countenance set out to walk to the hall. "Doctor," said he solemnly as he left, "dost remember the words of our greatest dramatist in reference to Hamlet's father?"

Be it a spirit of health or goblin Dee Dee'd, I'll cross it though it b-b-bust me. [Exit.]

Setting off at a brisk walk he speedily reached his destination. Entering by a private door and avoiding the side where the servants were carousing in honor of Christmas, he made his way to the pantry of Meggot the butler, where he found that functionary, in rather a hazy condition, regaling himself with a special bottle of wine and surrounded by unwashed plates from the dinner table. Checking Meggot's amazement and sternly commanding him not to announce his arrival to the family, Charles demanded the keys of the haunted corridor. This was an unused passage leading by closed doors past the main apartments and running the length of the house, but the tears of the servants had caused it to be locked up and disused. No one believed more firmly than the butler himself that there was something "behind the arras", although he had lived there from boy to man and had never heard anything. Very reluctantly he gave the keys to his young master, who, taking a lamp in his hand, remarked, "Now I am off to bed," and disappeared in the haunted corridor. Meggot looked after him dully, and murmured, "Same as ever is Master Charles. Never had no steadiness. And never will have none, I'm afear'd."

II. THE GHOST STORY.

Dinner was over in the long, low dining-room of Nicely Hall. In old times the apartment had been the refectory of the monks, where they had held many a jovial carouse, else tradition belies them. But never in monkish times, even in the absence of the abbott had so innocently gay a social party sat around, and risen from the hospitable board. There were some of the Dunderheads there, good people who always tempered the too high spirits of the young folks with an agreeable shade of dullness, also two or three lively Mildew girls, longing to change their surname for a less suggestive one. Some of the Pumph-Guggles would have been there, but Jemima had a headache and could not come. I must not omit to mention three or four nice old maids belonging to county families, all of whom, it was apparent to the eye, wore whalebone in their stays, even if it had not been betrayed by creaking when they moved; one or two poor relations thrown in for make-weight; a due proportion of average fair ones, intelligent or stupid as the case might be; and one sprightly widow who was there in virtue of having made a runaway match with a disolute far-off scion of the baronial house of Mondiwarp. As to the men, why should I tire my pen by describing the kind of persons we meet at our club every day? Besides the guests were the genial host, Sir Nokes Nicely and his narrow wife, Lady Nicely, and that darling half-niece Lucy, with her school-girl sister Fan, whose frock only reached to her knees; and cousin Geoff, who at fifteen labored under the delusion that he was a man. Cousin Lucy, he it whispered, confessed to her heart that her wild half-cousin Charles was very dear to her, and, if angels can be cross (can they?) she was cross because he did not put in an appearance. Most of the other girls shared her disappointment. "It was so like thoughtless Charles to miss the train." So they all said.

In the early part of this pleasant day, the gay houseparty had rambled about; and, among other amusements, had assisted the rustics in practising a new Christmas Carol, the work of a local poet:—

The Star shone down on the village green.
Hie, hie, nonny,
And O, it was a lovely star,
An three gay kings came from afar
In gowns of buff, and blue, and green.
Hie, nonny,
And every kind did bring with her
Red gold and frankincense and myrrh,
Hie, hie, (and so on for a dozen stanzas.)

And now in the evening they had music, with a carpet dance or so, and a few games of blindman's buff and hunt the slipper, until near midnight when all were seated in a semi-circle around the wide open fire. Then it was that Buddie Bligh demanded a Ghost Story. The proposal was received with acclamation, and bald-headed Mr. Peeper, a noted raconteur, kindly consented to state the legend of the House of Nicely in which they sate. This gentleman was peculiarly qualified for narrator, inasmuch as he was afflicted with "The Society for the Unghosting of Haunted Premises"—of which Lord Tennyson is a member,—and on one occasion had been very nearly scared out of his wits by a cat-fight in a London slum where he was watching for a reappearance of the Cock Lane ghost.

"Sir Nokes, My Lady, Ladies and Gentlemen," he began, and (with a glance more than paternal at the younger fair ones) "and you, My Dears. Once upon a time—"

"Was it very long ago, Sir?" asked that forward minx, Cissie Meggs.

"Ever so long. It was in the days of bluff King Hal,—you have all read about him in your compendiums,—how he cut off seven of his wives', heads—"

"How horrid," said Buddie

"Wasn't it?" resumed Mr. Peeper. "Well, he not only quarrelled with his unfortunate wives but he had a row with the monks and seized all their abbey and gave one of them an eagle-eyed hawk-beaked follower of his,—your common ancestor, Miss Lucy,—one Funnidos de Noseley, since corrupted into Nicely—"

"How kind of him!" sneered sharp-tongued Miss Brake, a rival of Lucy's. "I'm sure I quite love Henry the Eighth, but he didn't give us one, you see. It was real mean of him."

"Now, Sir Funnidos de Noseley, or Nicely, had a companion-in-arms, one Brian Dunshunner that he had been kind to,—had sold him horses, occasionally endorsed accommodation kites for him, and had frequently given him sucks out of his canteen on the field of battle. In fact they were quite Corsican Brothers with an ideal friendship for each other, like as Damon had for,—er,—for the other gentleman whose name at this moment has escaped me. Yet this Brian was a very scheming man. Sir Funnidos found that his trusted friend was coming too much after Miss Nicely—"

Here Elderly Penelope Thitsey was heard to murmur, "how shocking! what depravity. We live under a better dispensation."

"—too much after Miss Nicely. Or it might have been the dowager Lady Nicely he was after," resumed Mr. Peeper. "at all events it was one of the family, and, of course, the head of such a house as this could not for a moment entertain the thought of giving his daughter, or even his mother, to a man who had nothing but a lieutenant's pay—"

"Certainly not!" exclaimed Sir Nokes Nicely with great decision.

"Things went on in this way for some time, notwithstanding that the house-servants were instructed always to say, 'not at home' when Dunshunner called, and it was hinted to two stalwart grooms that if they kicked him next time he came it would be half-a-crown in their pocket. He would persist in dropping in every morning to ask how the ladies were? This exasperated Sir Funnidos so much that he one day drew his rapier and ran his former friend through the midriff. The unfortunate man had just time to breathe forth, 'look here! Funnidos, I wouldn't have thought it of you.' Then his body rolled down the area steps, even a, the decapitated head of the doge Marino Falieri rolled down the Giants' stairs. "Thus did Brian Dunshunner give up the ghost."

A shudder here ran through the assembly. Jessie Lambton and Phemie Miles sobbed audibly. More than one of the old maids wiped their poor eyes. I am sorry to say that some of the young men, especially Tom Millard, sniggered. Sir Nokes, as the head of the house, drew from his coat-pocket a very large yellow bandana, and blew his nose violently in deprecation of the inexpressible act of his ancestor.

"But no," continued Mr. Peeper, gravely, "the murdered man did not give up the ghost—he merely died. Sir Funnidos had great trouble in disposing of the corpse of his friend. There was no railway, nor parcel post, in those days to send it away by, and he did not care to bury it. So he dragged it into the corridor that runs just outside these apartments, and locking the door gave the key to the butler with orders, never to part with it. But here comes the dreadful mystery! Sometimes at midnight—just about this hour, by the way—Brian is heard in the passage, scratching and groaning—Good gracious! What's that?"

III. THE DENOUEMENT.

Terror and horror held the breath of everyone suspended. The cry of Good gracious! What's that? was not affected,

although certainly democratic, but was a genuine exclamation of surprise and enquiry. I put it candidly to the sweeter sex that has the finer sensibility, if any sudden cry coming unexpectedly when nerves are at tension, does not make the frame shudder and the blood run cold? So it was now. Mr. Peeper's ear, accustomed to the doings of ghosts, had heard a rustling on the wall that he could attribute to no known physical cause. He brought his right forefinger near his ear, and tipped his head on one side as believers do when trying to catch a message from the spirit world. Every ear was, like his, on the rack. Then was plainly heard a scratching on the wall on the side of the closed passage. It might have been a rat. But no! the scratching became louder and fiercer until it grew as loud as if some wild animal, such as a tiger, were clawing its way through the partition. By this time the bravest heart stood still, and faces were very pale. Sir Nokes seized the poker and threw himself into a warlike attitude, like Ajax defying the lightning. Words fail to depict the awesomeness of the moment, but when with the scratching came three prolonged diabolical groans, the scene became wildly hysterical. "Ring the butler's bell! Ring everybody's bell!" shouted Sir Nokes, and every bell was rung like an alarm. Only a minute or two had elapsed, when a crowd of frightened servants came rushing in, headed by Meggot, the butler, with his usually red face pale to a ghastly whiteness, and carrying in his trembling hands a bell-mouthed blunderbuss which he pointed so directly at Sir Nokes, that had it gone off, the consequences would have been fatal. Young Tom Millard, less flurried than the rest, struck up the barrel of the piece, when a terrific explosion ensued, and the chandelier fell shattered in a shower of glass, leaving the company in total darkness. Then arose shrieks upon shrieks that might have been heard at the distance of a measured mile. The same Tom who had struck up the blunderbuss, bellowed for lights, which when brought, disclosed a series of tableaux that, to say the least, were fetching. Meggot was found on his knees, partly from the recoil of his piece, and partly from a vague idea that he wanted remission of his sins. One group of two little young damsels twined around a youth of the Y. M. C. A., was eminently classic, and suggestive of the laocoon. And there, in the centre of the stricken groups, stood Charles Nicely, feeling he had gone too far, but putting a bold face on it. For he was the ghost of the corridor. Had it not been that the prodigal had just returned from a four years' absence, his father might have been justly incensed, but he was forgiven, more or less willingly by everybody, and speedily fell into his proper place of hero of the evening, relating tales of his travels.

Of quarries, hills and rocks whose heads touch heaven,
And of the cannibals that each other eat,
And anthropophagi, and men whose heads
Do grow between their shoulders.

It was observed that the returned heir made all due haste to range alongside his half-cousin Lucy, with whom he held a long conversation in a low earnest tone. Now it happened that the boy Geoff, who fancied himself in love with Lucy, got behind the window curtain and overheard Charlie say something about "ineffable love." What Lucy's reply was the eavesdropper did not catch, but the precocious lad went to a side-table where lay a copy of Webster's Unabridged of the period in which he looked up the word "ineffable" and found it to mean "incapable of being expressed unspeakable, unutterable." As soon as the young Romeo got a chance he drew the object of his boyish passion aside and whispered, "O Lucy! do you think you could love me like that?"

"Like what?"

"Ineffable, you know,—unspeakable, unutterable,—for, Lucy dear, I have loved you for years."

"How many years?"

"Ever so many."

"Silly boy! you were not born then."

"Wasn't I though?" retorted Geoff, justly galled by the aspersions, "you just look in the family bible and see if I wasn't? But, I say Lucy, if you cannot love me inappreciably,—ineffably, I mean,—do you think your sister Fan would?"

"You had better try her," replied Lucy, "she is simple enough for anything."

Were this history to roll on a few years till her frocks were longer it would be seen that Fan was simple enough.

There is a moral attached to this story. And that is that Christmas ghosts are always good ghosts that do their spitting kindly in aid of mirth and harmless jollity. When the veriest misanthrope of a modern Timon looks back through his long stretch of years, he must admit to his own heart that there hangs a pleasant and peaceful remembrance of many Christmases, from the one when his mother gave him his first gift of a penny toy, to the present one in the year ninety, when he buys for his grandson a \$200 bicycle, and for that pet of a grand-daughter (so like Lucy,) a \$500 bracelet. Blessings on all Christmas-masses say we! And there is another moral, too, and that is, that if a bad boy will only reform and repent and do well, the time may come for him to have a dear Lucy of his own, even as Charles had to carve his Christmas pudding for him.

HUNTER DUVAR.

PROGRESS PICKINGS.

Glass houses and gymnasiums turn out tumbler.—Pittsburg Dispatch.
Man always likes to have his innings; but he also enjoys his outings.—Puck.
Primus—"Does he foot his wife's bills?" Secundus—"I've seen him kick at them."—Epoch.
You can generally get a point on insect life by making yourself familiar with the bee.—Texas Siftings.
A girl should remain under her mother's wing, particularly if she is a little chic.—Richmond Recorder.

The farmer is guileless, ho-ho! ha-ha! But he knows several tricks, And turkey brings twenty cents a pound. While shot costs only six.—[Ex.]

Susie—"O, dear, I haven't a cent of money to spend. Sallie—Neither have I. Let's go shopping.—Minneapolis Journal.

"Hark! Somebody is playing a delightful bit from Wagner." "Oh, that's only James shovelling coal into the furnace."—[Ex.]

Mrs. Bingo—"My dear, why did you get two brushes for this bottle of muckage?" Mr. Bingo—"I got one to dip in the ink-well."—Puck.

If a man serves him faithfully six days in the week the devil doesn't care much whether he goes to church on Sunday or not.—N. Y. Herald.

Smiley—"Now, remember, I don't want a very large picture." Photographer—"All right, sir. Then please close your mouth."—Boston Traveller.

Set Right—"Do you belong to the church?" inquired the clergyman of the janitor. "No," replied the janitor; "the church belongs to me."—N. Y. Sun.

More than she asked for.—Mrs. Spooner—"Will you love me just as much, darling, when I am old?" Mr. Spooner—"More, Lydia; you won't be so silly then!"—Puck.

"What a pretty girl Jimson's typewriter must be," mused Watts. "I never saw such an outrageous lot of misspelled words in a business letter before in all my days."—Indianapolis Journal.

A Solicitous Daughter.—Old Gentleman (at head of stairs)—"Sally, ain't it time to go to bed?" Sally—"Yes, father, dear, don't put it off another minute, your health, you know, is not robust."—Life.

The newspapers are forever speaking of "the blushing bride." Well, when you reflect upon the kind of husband not a few of the brides marry, you cannot wonder that they should blush.—Boston Transcript.

How does it happen that Dr. Worldly performs the marriage ceremony for so many old maids? "Oh, he always asks them in an audible tone if they are of age, and they all like him."—New York Herald.

An Unexpected Answer.—Mrs. Bob Taylor—"Bob, what did you mean by talking in your sleep last night about chips and three of a kind?" B. Taylor—"Why, we'd been playing poker at the club all the evening."—[Ex.]

The force of heredity.—"Judge"—"You confess to having stolen the money, do you?" Well, have you any exonerating circumstances to offer?" Culprit—"Yes, your honor, my grandfather was an alderman."—St. Joseph News.

Pat's little joke.—Mike—"Phwat wages do you be gettin' now, Pat?" Pat—"One hundred dollars." Mike—"Phwat? One hundred dollars a month?" Pat—"One hundred dollars for one hundred days."—New York Weekly.

Foggy—"I have never yet been able to stand up to a New Year's resolution." Boggy—"I am proud to say my pledge for 1890 has been kept sacredly." Foggy—"What was it, pray?" Boggy—"I quit quitting."—Harper's Bazar.

Old Brown (bringing out the strap)—"Do you know why I'm going to whip you, my son?" Little Johnny—"Cause I'm small. If I was as big as that man next door who called you a liar, last night, you wouldn't put a finger on me."—Puck.

Editor of the Bazaar—Does it pay to advertise in my paper? Well, I should say it does. Look at Smith, the grocer, for instance. He advertised for a boy last week, and the very next day Mrs. Smith had twins—both of them boys!—[Ex.]

The Pastor—"Gentlemen, you have heard the subject under discussion. What are your views?" Deacon Upgriff—"I've nothing to say." Deacon Cudback—"Nor I." Deacon Lunsworth—"Nor I." Deacon Grimes (absent-mindedly)—"Let's make it a jack-pot."—[Ex.]

Thirty-seven young ladies of the congregation had in mind 37 pairs of slippers for the minister for Christmas. But one young lady made known her intention. And when the day arrived young Mr. Thumper received one pair of slippers and 36 dressing-gowns.—[Ex.]

Distracted woman (at the police station)—"Oh, sir, I have lost my poor old father! This morning he wandered away, and I fear for his safety, as he is totally deaf. Police sergeant—In that case, madam, we will soon find him. He is walking on the railway track.—[Ex.]

Met him way.—James (to Mr. Montmoragony, who has called upon Mrs. Benthousand)—"Mrs. Benthousand has sent me down to say that she is not at home, sir."

Mr. Montmoragony, having swallowed his gri-f—"Say to Mrs. Benthousand that I didn't call."—[Ex.]

All's Fair in Love.—"You consider engagements binding, you say?" She—"Yes." He—"And yet you confess that you were engaged to two men at the same time. How can that be possible?" She—"The engagements were binding on them, but not on me."—Munsey's Weekly.

Miss Igenue (just from school)—"Cousin Tom, won't you tell me what the mistletoe is hung under the chandelier at Christmas time for?" Cousin Tom (politely)—"Certainty; just step over here, and I'll show you. Now you see that large dull-green leaf just above your head!—No, not that one—just a little to this side"—and then she knew!—[Ex.]

Rather Tangled.—But it Goes.—"I say, Blobson, me boy, do me a favor?" "What is it now, Jack?" Let me have the loan of that 'fiver' again I paid you last night. Brown wants to lend it to young Chumly, so as Chumly can pay the 'V' he owes me. I'll make it O. K. with you tomorrow eve—does it go, old fel?—Smith, Gray & Co's Monthly.

Mr. Wildwest—I suppose it's all right, but I can't help feeling that this continual presence of a chaparone is a reflection on my character. Miss Two Seasons—O nonsense! It's lots more fun this way. Out west you are on your honor, while here you shift the entire responsibility for your conduct upon the chaparone; she'll be asleep in a moment.—Life.

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Is an inflammation of the bronchial tubes—the air-passages leading into the lungs. Few other complaints are so prevalent, or call for more prompt and energetic action. As neglect or delay may result seriously, effective remedies should always be at hand. Apply at once a mustard poultice to the upper part of the chest, and, for internal treatment, take frequent doses of

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Young Children,

so that the medicine is known among them as "the consoler of the afflicted."—J. Jaime Rufus Vidal, San Cristobal, San Domingo. "A short time ago, I was taken with a severe attack of bronchitis. The remedies ordinarily used in such cases failed to give me relief. Almost in despair of ever finding anything to cure me, I bought a bottle of Ayer's Cherry Pectoral, and was helped from the first dose. I had not finished one bottle before the disease left me, and my throat and lungs were as sound as ever."—Geo. B. Hunter, Altoona, Pa.

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