

rent, in relation to Mrs. Austwicke, compared with those that agitated her as she thought of him so long called father, to whom she had been even since she could remember an object of such entire affection. She had been told that one reason he was so intensely fond of her was because, in her infancy, she had been left by her mamma; and, also, because—as she had secretly believed—she was slighted by her. Now all would slight her. However, on one point she was strong: Rupert should never have to blush for her past. All, from that time, was over between them. As soon as Mr. Austwicke permitted, she would tell Rupert so, and bid him farewell.

These thoughts about Rupert had kept her mind from dwelling on any minor contingencies that might arise as to property, home, or kindred; in the tumult of her mind she thought not of them. Indeed, some vague notion of being cast out by Mrs. Austwicke, and being obliged to earn her own living, had come to her.

She was by no means reassured when she was ordered to accompany Mr. Austwicke down to the Chace. He, indeed, helped her into the carriage with as tender care as ever, but he did not talk to her. He had evidently passed a sleepless night, and was moody and troubled. Dr. Griesbach, who had been closeted with Mr. Austwicke until a late hour on the evening of the day that Gertrude made her revelation, had, indeed, that very morning, shown her more attention than it was his custom to bestow. As he parted with her, he pressed her hand, and said—

"You must come back soon to Ella; neither she, nor I, nor Rupert, can afford to have a long absence from such a dear little True."

There was an affectionate emphasis on the words that, at any other time, would have made her wild with delight. Her greatest fear had been that Dr. Griesbach, a man centred in study himself, would forbid his son having any disturbing thoughts, such as she knew he had indulged in. Yet now, what mattered his kindness?—she would be disgraced, and he must hear of it.

However, the heaviest time passes, and, as a hired carriage took Mr. Austwicke and Gertrude to the Chace, he said to her, just before they arrived—

"I mean, child, to speak to Allan to-night. You must see your aunt with me in the morning. I shall decline to see her to-night, and so must you. I expect Mr. Weby down to-morrow."

Gertrude gave the promise submissively, and like a culprit entered the old house, Martin, in the greatest astonishment, coming forward to meet her, and receiving Mr. Austwicke's charge,—

"See Miss Gertrude to her room, and take care of her, Martin; she is tired, and must not be disturbed by any one."

While he spoke, Allan, who was dining alone, came rushing into the hall, and, after his usual mirthful fashion, while speaking to his father, ran to True, and lifted her from her feet to give her a kiss.

"Put me down, Allan, put me down; I'm tired—I'm ill," half sobbed the poor girl.

"No nonsense, Allan," said Mr. Austwicke, so sternly, to the youth's astonishment, that, feeling something was completely wrong, he followed his father into the dining-room; and Martin, seeing Gertrude was in tears, supported her up-stairs, ordering a maid, as she went, to bring up that feminine panacea for all ills—a cup of tea.

It was not wonderful that, as the poor child lay down on the sofa in the chamber she knew so well, she should weep the most passionate tears she had yet shed since Ruth had told her guilty secret; and Martin, whom both real affection for her young mistress, and natural officiousness, moved to attempt the task of consolation, of course blundered on the most painful topics.

"Poor Ruth isn't here, miss; but I'll do my best. Don't cry, don't. I knew you afore she. You don't happen to 'a heard of her from the doctor, eh?"

"Don't speak of her. I wish I'd never known—"

"Deary me—well to be sure! Now, don't be so put out: the tea 'll soon be here. Deary me; have Ruth been a-making mischief?"

Now, it so happened that Martin had noticed the intimacy lately at the parsonage; and Mr. Rupert Griesbach's looks and manners in relation to her young mistress had told the keen-sighted old woman that tale which all women are quick to understand. She had, indeed, made it a matter of cogitation, whether such a match would accord with Mrs. Austwicke's high notions, as fitting for her only daughter. Martin knew, as well as every servant in the house did, that the lady had no great love for Gertrude; but she quite understood her having, nevertheless, great pride; and she had foreseen trouble for the young people. Now it was come. Of course, that was the reason of the young lady being brought home, and of the squire's stern manner. Gertain of this, she hazarded another question.

"Does Mr. Allan expect Mr. Rupert—is he a-coming?"

"What do you mean, Martin?" said Gertrude, drying her tears, "annoying me with your questions?"

When she chose it, her air of command was sufficient to check even Martin's intrusiveness, and so she was soon served with refreshments, and left alone. But Martin made herself amends by going instantly to Miss Austwicke, and, with the elaborate obsequiousness that often so well covers presumption, poured out, not only a history of all she had seen of Gertrude's grief and the squire's crossness, but added her own conjectures.

Miss Austwicke was sitting alone, as usual, by the side of her embroidery-frame, but not working: listless and melancholy, she sat for hours thus. She had not heard the arrival of her brother—indeed, she took small note of anything; but Martin's tidings at once roused her. Mr. Austwicke back again! ordering his daughter to her room, and forbidding her being interrupted! Was that prohibition intended to extend to her?

To be continued.

GHOST OR NO GHOST.

MANY years ago the following singular case created great excitement in the French law courts. The record is worth preserving, from the curious matters elicited. It is also an illustration of the familiar manner in which a not distant generation dealt with the subject of ghosts in court.

Honoré Mirabel, a poor labourer on the estate of a family named Gay, near Marseilles, invoked the protection of the law under the following extraordinary circumstances:

He declared that, while lying under an almond-tree, late one night, striving to sleep, he suddenly noticed a man of remarkable appearance standing, in the full moonlight, at the window of a neighbouring house. Knowing the house to be unoccupied, he rose to question the intruder, when the latter disappeared. A ladder being at hand, Mirabel mounted to the window, and, on entering, found no one. Struck with a feeling of terror, he descended the ladder with all speed, and had barely touched the ground, when a voice at his back accosted him:

"Pertuisan" (he was of Pertuis), "there is a large treasure buried close at hand. Dig, and it is yours."

A small stone was dropped on the terrace, as if to mark the spot alluded to.

For reasons not explained, the favoured Mirabel shrank from pursuing the adventure alone, but communicated with a friend, one Bernard, a labourer in the employ of the farmeress Paret. This lady being admitted to their confidence, the three assembled next night at the place indicated by the spectre, and after digging to a considerable depth, came upon a large parcel wrapped in many folds of linen. Struck with the pickaxe, it returned, unmistakably, the melodious sound of coin; but the filthy, and, as Paret suggested, plague-stricken appearance of the covering,

checked their eager curiosity, until, having been conveyed home and well soaked in wine, the parcel was opened, and revealed to their delightful gaze more than a thousand large gold pieces, subsequently ascertained to be Portuguese.

It was remarkable, yet so it was, that Mirabel was allowed to retain the whole of the treasure. Perhaps his friends felt some scruple in interfering with the manifest intentions of the ghost. But Mirabel was not much the happier for it. He feared for the safety of his wealth—he feared for his own life. Moreover, the prevailing laws respecting "treasure-trove" were peculiarly explicit, and it was questionable how far the decision of the ghost might be held to override them.

In France, of treasure found in the highway, half belonged to the king, half to the finder. It in any other public place, half to the high-justiciary, half to the finder. If discovered by magical arts, the whole to the king, with a penalty upon the finder. If, when discovered, the treasure were concealed from the proprietor of the ground, the finder forfeited his share. To these existing claims the phantom had made no allusion. In his perplexity, honest Mirabel bethought him of another friend, one Auguier, a substantial tradesman of Marseilles.

The advice of this gentleman was, that the secret should be rigorously confined to those who already knew it, while he himself (Auguier) was prepared to devote himself, heart and soul, to his friend's best interests, lend him any cash he needed (so as to obviate the necessity of changing the foreign money), attend him whithersoever he went, and, in fine, become his perpetual so-lace, monitor, and guard.

To prevent the possibility of his motives being misinterpreted, the worthy Auguier took occasion to exhibit to his friend a casket, in which was visible much gold and silver coin, besides a jewel or two of some value.

The friendship thus happily inaugurated grew and strengthened, until Mirabel came to the prudent resolution of entrusting the whole treasure to the custody of his friend, and appointed a place and time for that purpose.

On the way to the rendezvous, Mirabel met with an acquaintance, Gaspard Delieu, whom—Auguier being already in sight—Mirabel requested to wait for him at the side of a thicket; then, going forward, he handed to the trusty Auguier two sealed bags, one of them secured with a red ribbon, the other with a blue, and received in return an instrument conceived in the following satisfactory terms:

"I acknowledge myself indebted to Honoré Mirabel twenty thousand livres, which I promise to pay on demand, acquitting him, moreover of forty livres which he owes me. Done at Marseilles, this seventh of September.

(Signed) "LOUIS AUGUIER."

This little matter settled, Mirabel rejoined Delieu, and, next day, departed for his native village. After starring it there for a few weeks, the man of wealth revisited Marseilles, and, having passed a jovial evening with his friend and banker, Auguier, was on his way home, when, at a dark part of the road, he was set upon by a powerful ruffian, who dealt him several blows with some sharp weapon, flung him to the ground, and escaped. Fortunately the wounds proved superficial.

This incident begat a certain suspicion in the mind of Mirabel. As soon as he was able, he repaired to Marseilles, and demanded of Auguier the return of his money, or liquidation of the bond. His friend expressed his extreme surprise. What an extraordinary application was here! Money! What money? He indignantly denied the whole transaction. Mirabel must be mad.

To establish his sanity, and, at the same time, refresh the memory of his friend, Mirabel without further ceremony, appealed to the law, and, in due course, the Lieutenant-Criminal, with his officer, made his appearance at the house of Auguier, to conduct the perquisition. Search being made on the premises, no money was found; but there were discovered two bags and a red ribbon which were identified by Mirabel as those which he had delivered to his friend.