## THE MYSTERIOUS HOUSE

CHAPTER L

"Large and roomy; well furnished; good garden; healthy neighbourhood; within easy reach of a railway station; good boys school near; not far from London; cheap!" Thus with something more than a suspicion of scorn in her voice, my sister Margaret ran up on her fingers the list of my requirements in a house.

a house.

I had just returned from India with my six children, and I was anxious to settle them comfortably before their father's return. "You want every comfort," continued my sister, "and you dont want to pay for every comfort. I believe you Anglo-Indians think we live upon nothing in England."

Her husband came in as she spoke. Turn-

Her husband came in as she spoke. Turning to him, she ran over again, with a slight anaggeration and a deeper infusion of contempt, the catalogue given above.

He took a seat, "Difficult," he said oracularly; "but it might be done. I have it," said he, turning to his wife.

"What? The right house! Then you are cleverer than I thought you."
"Do you remember the story Williams told

us yesterday?"
"Now, James," said my sister, rising to her feet and looking at her husband severely, "if you advise Eleapor to take that house you do it on your own responsibility. I wash my hands of it."

"Sit down again, Margaret," he said. "Be reasonable, my dear. Is there any sufficient reason why Eleanor should not take that

reason why Eleanor should not take that house?"

"There is one very good reason—she will have to do the housework herself. No servant will stay a week."

"She has an Indian servant! at any rate, who must stand by her."

"But think of herself, of her feelings. You smile, James. O yes; I know you think me absurd. Very likely I am absurd; but remember this—there's no smoke without some fire. Beside, I know the last tenants. Mrs. Green is not an idiot. She told me"—

"Stay a moment," said my brother-in-law, and he addressed himself to me. "Eleanor, bell me the truth; are you a believer in ell me the truth; are you a believer in ghosts?"
"Does this mean that the eligible house is

haunted?" I exclaimed, much stimulated by what I had heard. "If so, I will take it at what I had neard. If so, I will take to be once. Write to the agent for me, James."

"I do believe you are all going mad," said my worthy sister, holding up her hands in horror. "James, you are a sensible man. You know things ought not to be done in a hurry. Eleanor, listen to what I heard from the last tenant. She told me with her own lips; it is none of your second-hand stories"—

"I'll a tenant to the last tenant." Write to the agent for me, James.

"No," I interrupted. "Don't tell me. If there is a ghost it will show itself. If there there is a ghost it will snow itself. It there is a not I might be set thinking of your story, and might imagine it; or at least"—correcting myself—"I might be betrayed into telling somebody else. Somebody else might

tuto an elaborate description of the house, which had everything I could desire, and he believed I could have it for a rent and he beneved 1 could have it for a rent which was so small, considering its advantages, as to seem merely nominal. "The fact is," he said, "their principal object is to have the thing off their hands. Tenants have been coming and tenants have been going, and some have paid and some have not paid. The place has got a bad name in the neighbourhood. The owners, however, think that bourhood. The owners, however, think that if a respectable tenant comes and stays for some time it will have a good effect on the public mind. But, as Margaret says, you must count the cost. Your servants will be sure to hear the ghost story. They will see visions and dream dreams. You may have to do a good deal of the work yourself. By-the-bye, there is an old housekeeper, a Mrs. Weevil, who lives in the lower rooms."

"Could we not get rid of her?" I said. "She might tell the servants."

"I am afraid that would be easier said than

"I am afraid that would be easier said than done," he answered. "She has some claim upon the family. But they say she is a quiet old soul, who interferes with nobody. You might warn her, you know"
"Well," I said, "let us write to the agent,

and see what can be done."

The result of all this was that, a week or month of August, I drove up with my chil-dren, servants, and luggage before the deep porch of one of those moderately sized coun-try houses which abound in the county of Surrey. It was to be my home for the next twelve months—servants and ghosts permit-

ting.

For once, description and the expectation that followed hard upon it were, I felt, abundantly justified. My earthly paradise was a paradise indeed; and joyfully, on the evening of our arrival, I sat and wrote to my husband of our good fortune. The house was beautifully situated, and was itself picturesque, with its deep porch in front, and the neat balcony that surmounted it. It was an irregular building, and its red brick walls were half smothered with ivy and clematis. Beyond the garden in front was a broad lawn. Beyond the garden in front was a broad lawn bounded by the grand old beeches and almost bounded by the grand old beeches and elms which form a belt round Lord B——'s ing the first few weeks nothing happened to change my good opinion of the

There was one circumstance I did not like; but I persuaded myself it was trivial, and to be affected by it proved ultra-sensitiveness; beside, I had been warned beforehand. Two of the lower rooms were occupied by an old woman. She was a pensioner, I was told, of our landlord's. Many years ago she had been housekeeper to some relatives of his who lived in the house, and she had lived in it ever since. I wished to see her, and have some conversation with her. I disliked, in the first place, that anyone of whom I knew nothing should be in my house; and in the second place, I was anxious to warn her to keep the ghost story (whatever that might be) secret. My three English servants were tooth country girls. I had taken good care that they should be utter strangers to the neighbourhood; but I knew if the possineighbourhood; but I knew it the possi-bility of seeing a ghost were suggested to them they would promptly make the possi-bility a certainty, and then my troubles

Would begin.

I sent a polite message to Mrs. Weevil, asking for an interview; and she came to my room. She was not a preposessing woman. Her age might be somewhere between sixty and seventy; and as she dropped an awkward courtesy on entering I felt that she was giving me a homage which she did not pay willingly. I said I understood that she had ion from the owner of the house to oc-

onpy certain rooms in it.
"Yes, ma'am," she said; "but not from the owner as is the owner of the 'ouse now,

She manifested, I thought, a certain little led sulkiness as I went on to ask her it to find accommodation for herself in some of the cottages on the

adjoining estate, so as to give us the house to ourselves. She stubbornly refused.

"No, ma'am," she went on to say, "I am an old woman as has lived here for night wenty years, and I never gives trouble to no one. I only wishes to be let alone; and I means to tay, ma'am—yes, I means to stay."

I saw that it would serve no purpose at present to try to dissuade her; and as I did not wish to quarrel with her, I changed the

not wish to quarret with ner, I changed the conversation. I said I understood there were some foolish stories current about the house heing haunted, and I hoped, whatever she thought of it, that she would say nothing to my servants on the subject.
"If your servants 'll let me alone, ma'am, "It your servants it to me ander, ms an, il let them alone. I has no wish to meddle ith any lady's servants."

I then permitted her to go. She was certainly no trouble about the house; and she was very seldom seen either by me or the servants was included.

vants. She only went out occasionally, as if to make such purchases as her necessities might require, locking the door of her rooms A month passed by. People in the neigh-irhood began to call. They all praised the use and grounds; but they all looked sterious, and one and another hinted:

My answer was a smile. But the winter came. Flowers faded; trees grew red, golden brown; and at last their shivering leaves fell to the ground. It was an early winter. In November the cold was intense, and the days were short and gloomy. Many years had passed by since I had spent a winter in England, and I felt the cold very much. I made the best of things, however, muffling myself and the children in flannel, keeping the doors and windows closed, and having large fires in the rooms and hall. In spite of all I could do two of them fell ill. Their illness was not serious; but nursing and looking after them gave me much to do, for their ayah (Indian nurse) was suffering at the moment from a severe cold, which rendered her almost incapable of helping me.

Such was my position, when one morning my housemaid asked to see me. I knew what this meant, and was not surprised to hear that she intended to leave us that very day. Her mother's reason. She was impenetrable. I offered her higher wages. She said, tremblingly, that she would not stay if I were to offer her a hundred pounds. I began to perceive that the news of the ghost story had got abroad, and I asked her if there was anything in the house of which she was afraid; but to this question she was dumb. I said I would see her again, and sat down to think, with my sick child in my lap. Even while I was thinking, there came a knock at the door of my room. I cried out, "Come in," but my heart sank.

My cook was at the door. The girl who

but my heart sank.

My cook was at the door. The girl who helped in the kitchen and house was behind her. Both looked scared, and announced

her. Both looked scared, and announced that they were going.

I did not know what to do. To gain time I ordered them back to their work. I had no money in the house, I said. The bank, as they knew, was some miles distant. They had no right to leave me without due notice; in fact, I would not let them go. So I said, and hoped they were quieted for a time. But late that evening the ayah came to me with consternation in her face. All the three English servants had left me!

By that time the children were in bed and everything was still. I bade the ayah go to her room with the younger children, and after locking my bedroom door, sat alone, thinking. I had passed through an exciting day. The night was chilly; I was tired and not very well. That the warmth of the fire and the comfort of my favourite lounging chair should presently cause a delightful sense of indifference to all and everyannoyance need not be considered wonderful. As I sat there I gave way to the pleasant compulsion, and was soon, I imthe pleasant compulsion, and was soon, I imagine, fast asleep. I say I imagine, because there was no witness present; and of what we do or what we don't do, in that strange indefinite border-land of sensation which separates waking time from sleeping time, was can never be perfectly certain.

separates waking time from steeping time, we can never be perfectly certain.

So far as I know I slept for some considerable time. It was a sensition, I believe, of my feet waxing cold that first loosened the bonds of slumber. When I was in that semi-conscious state which has a peculiar discomfort, I became dimly alive to the fact that there was in the room some presents of the there was in the room some presence other than my own. There was movement—a stirring in the air, as if some creature had come in. The events of the day returned to my memory, which was still only half alive. I started up, rubbing my eyes, for I could not be at all sure that I was awake and in my right mind.

alive. I started up, rubbing my eyes, for I could not be at all sure that I was awake and in my right mind.

When I went to sleep I was alone. Yes, certainly. But even if it were not so, what strange pale face was this now gazing at me across the dimly-lighted space of the shadowy room? I was but half awake. My nerves werein an excited state. The ghost in the house had been my last conscious idea. And now this strange face, which seemed to be advancing on me out of the gloon, was it a creation of my own fancy? Or was it some one playing a trick upon me? In any case, now was my time to fathom the mystery. Trying to be courageous and gather my wits together, I advanced. The face receded, and passed into the deeper shadow, till it appeared to be suddenly swallowed up in the draperies of the heavily curtained window. I rushed forward, but was not swift enough. Before I touched the curtains the face had disappeared. I was certain, however, perfectly certain, that as I drew the curtains open I feit resistance to my hand, and at the same time a gust of colder air rushed against my face, as if from an opened window. At first I felt as if about to faint; but my will. my face, as if from an opened window. At first I felt as if about to faint; but my will, fortunately, was strong, and I threw the curtains aside and put my hand on the window. It was closed. I tried the bar, which could only be fixed from the inside, and it

was as I had left it early in the evening. At this discovery my agitation overpowered me; my head swam, and I fainted. When I recovered consciousness I was lying in the broad recess of the curtained window, and I felt a trickling sensation on my forehead, and suspected, what I afterward found to be the case, that I had struck my head on some article of furniture and was bleeding. This involuntary blood-letting helped to revive me, and I sat up.

me, and I sat up.

For a few minutes I remained partly stunned and bewildered. I felt a creeping sensation, as if I had been struck by a frost sation, as if I had been struck by a frost-wind. After a while, my heart began to beat less andibly, and I rose to my feet. At that moment the embers of the fire suddenly sank into the bottom of the grate, sending up a faint flickering light, which was absolute cheerfulness as contrasted with the horrible semi-darkness that had hitherto prevailed. I felt my courage returning, and managed to ring the bell. The ayah came, alarmed that I should have summoned her at an hour when she supposed I had retired to rest. I did not tell her what I had witnessed, only asked her to light a candle. She did so, and as the light fell upon my face, she gave a light scream. I had forgotten at the moment that the blood was trickling from the wound I had received, or I should not have asked her to light the andle. As it was, I had to make the best

candle. As it was, I had to make the best excuse I couln in answer to her inquiries. I said I must have slept long by the fire, and moving about the darkened room had fallen and hurt myself. The wound, however, was found to be a mere scratch; and in a few minutes the ayah had succeeded in removing from my face all marks ofthe disaster.

I asked her to leave the candle with me, and allow me to retire to rest. She did so; and after the door was closed upon her, I proceeded with the candle to examine the window more minutely. The mystery was as much a mystery as ever. The window had certainly not been opened by anyone, and no trace was visible on the walls of any possible means of egress or ingress. I felt more nercertainly not been opened by anyone, and no trace was visible on the walls of any possible means of egress or ingress. I felt more nervous than ever, and was about to turn and quit the room altogether, so much did my fears oppress me, when something lying on the floor within the recess attracted my attention. I stooped and picked it up. It was a small piece of white cloth—a few inches square—very frail in the texture, as if halfrotted with damp or age, and adorned with a peculiar kind of embroidery such as I thought I had seen before, but could not recall where. On one edge there was a hem; the other three edges being irregular and jagged. It looked like a piece of cloth wrenched out of a garment by the foot being suddenly placed upon it. I felt I had made a discovery.

Returning to the fireplace I sat down to think. It seemed clear to me now that my visitant, however he or she had effected an entrance, was no spirit. This piece of linen was certainly not lying there when I had closed and barred the window for the night; nor could it belong to the apparel of any member of my household. It was not unlikely that it was part of the loose garment of dingy white which I now remembered my strange visitant wore.

I am naturally strong-minded, and gradually began to recover my composure. I said to myself: "I shall find out the secret. The first link of the chain is between my fingers, I never before heard of ghosts tramping bits out of their drapery, and no doubt the ghost I saw had been nearly as much afraid as myself when I so suddenly approached it, and had not got away without a little flurry. This accounts, too, "I thought," for the resistance which I felt to my hand when I first laid hold of the window ourtains."

I was more than ever persuaded that a trick was being played upon me. I did not feel, however, as if I could alsop in the room

that night. If my visitor was as I suspected, a mortal like myself, there is no saying what he or she might be induced to attempt, should the desire of revenge prompt a second visit. My life was not sale in such circumstances, when a barred window and a locked door were not sufficient to protect me from intrusion. I resolved for that night to occupy the bedroom where my two eldest children slept, which I could reach without disturbing the rest of the house.

which I could reach without disturbing the rest of the house.

I was about to take up my candle and go, when I imagined I heard a sound behind me. In my state of nervousness, I started, and had almost dropped the candle. I looked toward the window, but the curtains hung motionless, and were parted as I had left them.

motionless, and were parted as I had left them.

A thought struck me. If my visitor were to return after I had retired, how should I know? I pondered the matter a little, and then proceeded to action. Trickery must in this case be met by trickery. I went to my workbox, took out a reel of thread and drew off a few yards. There were curtain fasteners on each side of the window, about two feet from the floor; and between these I stretched and made fast the length of thread, so that no one could enter the room from the window recess in the course of the night without unconsciously breaking the frail barrier I had erected. This would afford me sufficient proof as to whether the privacy of my sleeping room had again been invaded. Taking up my candle and the bit of cloth, I then passed quietly out, locking the door of the room, and carrying the key with me. I felt myself stronger in the presence of my children, and soon managed to fall asleep.

CHAPTER IL.

CHAPTER IL

My first quest next morning on leaving the apartment where I had slept was for the purpose of ascertaining whether my bed-room had been again entered after I had left it on the previous evening. I unlocked the door and cautiously looked in. Enough light came through between the drawn curtains to show me that the room was apparently as I left it. I advanced to the window and found the thread there, unbroken, and evidently untouched. I must confess I felt somewhat disappointed. My fears had probably exaggerated my conceptions of the danger, and I had anticipated a second visit as more than probable. After thinking, however, I came to the conclusion that it was better as it was. Had my strange visitor for any purpose entered my room a second time, and found that I had quitted it, the effect might have been the reverse of favourable to the discovery of the trickery, which discovery could best be forwarded by making as little change in my gual habits as possible. It was not improbable, seeing that no suspicions had been aroused by the knowledge that I had changed my sleeping apartment, that the "ghost" might be emboldened to pay me a visit on the following night; and by that time I hoped to be able to arrange for the interception of my strange visitor, and the detection of the trick.

In the course of the morning I made up my CHAPTER IL

my strange visitor, and the detection of the trick.

In the course of the morning I made up my mind how I should proceed. Mrs. Weevil generally left after breakfast on her errands to the neighbouring village or elsewhere, not generally returning for a few hours; and I thought this a good time to obtain an interview with Andrew, the old gardener, who, I saw, was engaged trimming the walks in front of the door. I had no doubt now that what I had seen had been also appearing to the servants who had so suddenly departed on the previous evening; and I had no doubt also that Andrew knew the whole story about the ghost having been again seen in the house. I opened the parlour window and spoke with him over the balcony. "Will you come up stairs, Andrew? I should like to speak to you."

stairs, Andrew? I should like to speak to you."

He stood for a moment in hesitation, scratching his head. I think he would have preferred anything to entering my house at that moment; but evidently he did not see his way to refusing. A few moments later he was in the drawing-room.

"Andrew," I began, with some intentional solemnity of manner, "you see the position I am, in." His expression indicated that he considered the position an exceedingly unpleasant one. "The story has got about." I went on, "that this house is haunted." He turned pale. "You think it is haunted?" I asked, looking at him fixedly.

He hesitated for a few moments, shook his head slowly, and succeeded finally in saying: ad slowly, and succe

head slowly, and succeeded finally in saying:
"Wat is folks to think, ma'am?"
"I acknowledge," I answered, "that the
thing has a queer look. When people appear
and vanish as suddenly as they came, it is
difficult to think of them as creatures of flesh
and blood like ourselves."
"Tain't possible like," was Andrew's comment; and I observed that with the words
is fore tooks mere healthy have. The conist

his face took a more healthy hue. The quiet tone I had assumed reassured him. Ghosts, when they can be reasoned about, lose half their terrors.

"No," I answered him; "It is not possible.

"No," I answered him; "It is not possible.
But Andrew, if we look at these things from another point of view—"

"Be there another?"he eagerly asked, as I paused to allow him time for expression of prinion.
"Yes," I said; "there is another. Before "Yes," I said; "there is another. Detore I believe in your interpretation, Andrew—before I believe it possible that spirits can wander about the world for no other reason than to frighten people, I must test mine."

His eyes, awakened to new interest, were

His eyes, awakened to new interest, were looking at mine very inquiringly.

I explained at once. "What I mean is this. I suspect a trick. Somebody has a spite against the owner of this house—somebody has an interest in keeping it empty."

Andrew was naturally shrewd. As I spoke there came into his face a new look of keenness. He smiled. "There has been queer things done," he observed, with a cautious impartiality. mpartiality.
"You have been here some weeks," I said

"You have been here some weeks," I said.
"Have you heard anything during that time about this house, about the people who own it? I am told they lived here once."

Thus stimulated, Andrew told me that the house and grounds originally belonged to Lord B—, father of the present lord; whose park was commanded by our front windows. On the marriage of a favourite sister with Mr. Roupel, a man somewhat beneath her in position, he gave her the house. Here the married pair lived in much unhappiness it was said; and here their only child, a daughter, was born. After running through his wife's money the husband died. When left alone, the widow, and her now grown-up daughter, determined to let their house, and live abroad. The rent of the furnished house, with its excellent garden, would bring them live abroad. The rent of the furnished house, with its excellent garden, would bring them in an income sufficient to enable them to live quietly in some foreign town. But while this project was being discussed the widow died suddenly an dmysteriously. An inquest was held over her; for strange suspicions were circulated abroad. The verdict was that she had died of the family complaint, heart disease. But there were those who still spoke mysteriously about the circumstances of the death, and declared that the poor lady had met with foul play.

Now this was the germ of the ghost story; for it was said far and near that Mrs. Roupel, if she had really been murdered—and murdered by her own child, as some dared to whisper—would never rest in her grave. And

per—would never rest in her grave. And when singular appearances came and went, and strange sounds were heard in the house, now empty save for an ancient housekeeper, the suspicion, scarcely spoken of at first above the breath, so dark it was and mon-

above the breath, so dark it was and monstrous, was by-and-bye openly discussed.

On this part of the story old Andrew was
very ready to dilate. He warmed to the
theme indeed, and would willingly have given
me, had I desired it, a full and particular account of the various people who from time to
time had been driven from the premises. But
I, holding still to my point, that trick had to
do with it, restrained his flow of language,
and endeavoured by close questioning to find
out what he knew about the daughter of Mrs.
Roupel, who, if his story were true, was the
present owner of the hannted house.

I elicited the following facts. Miss Roupel
was nineteen years of age about the period of
her mother's death. She was then a young
lady of high spirit and cheerful temper; she
was accomplished, witty, and unusually attractive in appearance. Thus, in spite of the
drawbacks antailed by poverty, and a sad

melancholy mother, the young lady was not without suitors. The suit of one of these was, according to her mother and herself—they remembered their old antecedents and were proud—little short of an impertinence; for the man was neither more nor less than Lord B——'s house-steward. The old housekeeper to whom, before he bestowed the house upon his sister, the old lord had apportioned two rooms, was Mrs. Weevil, the steward's mother.

It was natural that Miss Roupel, niece of his former employer, should reject his suit

It was natural that Miss Roupel, niece of his former employer, should reject his suit with disdain. It was perhaps no less natural that the rejection, imbittered by contempt, should sink deeply into the steward's soul. The fact was that from the day when he was forbidden the house where his mother lived the young man changed. People spoke of his black looks, of his hard ways, of his cruel cynical speeches, and some predicted a bad end for him.

Meanwhile Miss Roupel, now left alone by her mother's death, married Mr. Egerton, aman, from a monetary point of view, scarcely more eligible than the steward. He was a lieutenant in the navy; but as he had nothing in the world but his pay, they carried out Mrs. Roupel's plan of letting their house furnished, believing it would bring them in a sufficient income to enable the young wife to live in comfort while her husband was away from her. But, as Andrew remarked, if this was her belief, she must have been "often sore pinched," for the house could have brought in very little.

I thanked him for his story. "Now," I said, "you must do something more for me. Go to the village at once. Find the carpenter and blacksmith. Tell them I want them on important business. There must be no delay. I will pay them well for their work. Do you understand?" For the old man was staring at me as if he thought I had taken leave of my senses.

"I understan'," he answered slowly, "But

at me as if he thought I had taken leave of my senses.

"I understan'," he answered slowly, "But what will you be wanting with them ma'am?"

"You will know all in good time. They must bring their tools. Now go Andrew—go quickly. And mind, Andrew," I sadded, "say nothing to anyone of your errand; and bring the joiner and blacksmith in by the back-entrance, for I do not wish them to be seen coming here to-day by everybody."

Notwithstanding these bold words, I must confess that when Andrew started on his message, and I was left alone—for the ayah had gone down to the village—I felt alittle uneasy. I did not believe in spiritual presences, but I did believe in wickedness driven to desperation. I was bidding defiance to a foe of whose resources I was utterly ignorant. What if my defiance should be taken up? Mentally, I felt strong enough; physically, I was conscious of being weak; but I set about the performances of my household duties, which occupied me fully till the return of Andrew.

I took him, as also the joiner and black-

Andrew.

I took him, as also the joiner and black

Andrew.

I took him, as also the joiner and blacksmith, into the parlour, and told them my experiences of the previous evening. Andrew
exhibited symptoms of alarm; but I found the
joiner a sensible man, and inclined, after
what I told him, to take a similar view with
myself of the situation, namely, that we were
being made the subject of some diabolical
trickery, in order to drive us out of the house.
He asked about Mrs. Weevil, and if I had
ever been in her rooms. I said I had not.
He proposed at once to visit them. The door
of her apartments was, as usual, locked; but
the blacksmith had little difficulty in successfully picking the lock, and effecting an entrance for us—Andrew being meanwhile sent
to keep a lookout in the garden that no one
approached the house unawares.

There was nothing to attract attention in
Mrs. Weevil's apartments. The joiner carefully examined them; but no means of egress
from either of the rooms could be discovered,
save the door by which we had entered, the
windows having iron gratings outside. We
took the utmost care that nothing was disarranged; and any piece of furniture or apparel which we had occasion to disturb was
replaced exactly as found. Previous to this,
I should have mentioned, both the joiner and
the blacksmith had made a particular examination of the bow window, of my hedroom;
but had failed to sind anything to awaken
suspicion in the alightest. Our search had
so far been antirely fruitless; and I was beginning to feel more perplexed than ever, as,
after what Andrew had told me of Mrs.
Weevil, and of her son's former relations to
the owner of the house, I had somehow begun to connect her in my mind with the the owner of the house, I had a

gun to connect her in my mind with the mysterious appearances which had given it such's bad fame.

We were in the act of quitting the house-keeper's stiting-room, arraid that she might return before we had had time to refasten the door, when I moticed the blackemith kneel down on the floor of the inner apartment and examine the foot of one of the bedposts. It was an ancient Elizabethan, with heavy faded hangings, and stood on a floor covered with a carpet out of which long use had extracted almost all traces of its original pattern. At a signal, the joiner stooped down beside him; and I then observed that the castor at the foot of the bedpost was glistening with oil, as if it had but secently been lubricated; and we all three then noticed that there was a distinct dark oily streak along the carpet, as if the bed had been moved forward obliquely for a few feet from where it stood, and then been moved back again. The, joiner at once roes; and, taking hold of the bed, he found that he could pull, it forward easily and without making the flightest noise, till it was about a foot from the wall against which it stood. At this point we noticed that the bed seemed to dip slightly to one side, as if something were yielding to its weight; and at the same moment we observed a panelling silently open in that part of the wall which had formerly been hid behind the hangings.

I was in a high state of excitement, and with difficulty could suppress my feelings, but stood silent as the two men went round and looked into the opening thus discovered. They asked for a candle, which I presently brought them; when we found that the recess was a small place, shout five feet high and two deep, and that it was formed of solid mason-work on all sides but the front. A box, large enough to fill the whole space of the bettom, was attached to the wall by strong iron staples, as if to prevent its removal; but our outsily enough, the box itself was not locked, though supplied with a hasp and padleck. The lid was at once lifted, when we asaw s

bers of the household and the watchers could possibly be in it; and here was L<sub>p</sub> striting at my bedroom fire, making-believe to sleep, with two men concealed in the wardrobe, all hoping to catch—we did not know what. The humour of the situation so strongly affected me at one time, that I could scarcely refrain from bursting into laughter. But the thought of Mr. Burrowes having put himself to so much trouble on my account, combined with a remembrance of what I had experienced during the past twenty-four hours, gradually sobered my feelings; and I shortly found my thoughts floating away in the dim remembrances to my life in India; to my distant husband; to our long separation; to the terrible nights and days of that fearful mutiny whose horrors still rose up before me; to—

reem which I had occupied, or to any other part of the house which had been so mysteriously visited. In these discumstances it was agreed at once to replace everything as we had found them, except that the blacksmith took the precaution of drawing the charge out of both pistols, stuffing the barrel afterward to the required depth with paper, so that on being probed they might still appear as if loaded. This done, the bed was moved back to its place, when the panelling of itself closed as before. We then left the apartment, the door of which was, though not without some difficulty, so fastened as not readily to excite the woman's suspicion that it had been tampered with.

It was now two hours after noon, and Mrs. Weevil might return at any moment. The two men therefore departed, but first arranging with me that they should return after dusk, bringing the village constable along with them, to await with me the events of the evening; as I felt certain somehow that the "ghost" would again appear, with the object of driving me from the house, as other tenants had been driven before.

Like his namesake in "Rob Roy," the old gardener Andrew was not a very good keeper of secrets; hence it was proposed that the joiner and blacksmith should take him along with them to the village, and keep him under surveillance till the evening. I was glad when I saw them all out of the place, without, so far as I knew, being seen by anyone; and still more glad when the ayah shortly afterwards returned with the children, as I could not help feeling timorous and alarmed in the house by myself, considering what we had discovered, and especially what we had failed to discover, namely, how the person playing the ghost could obtain access to different parts of the house so freely as report represented, and as I had myself in one instance painfully experienced.

CHAPTER III.

readily to carried the voransi's unsprices that the boen tampered with.

West might return as any moment. The work of the third is the second of the third of third of the third of third of the third o

with my plans on which I had not counted. I had no one to advise with me, and felt much perplexed. As evening approached and the gloom of twilight I had a strange nervous feeling, such as I had only once before experienced, and that was in India, during the terrible days when the mutiny was at its height, and every footfall made us start, as if next moment were to be our last. As the dusk deepened my anxiety increased; and when at length the ayah conducted the joiner, as I had before instructed her, to my room I was almost too overpowered to speak. Andrew and the blacksmith were for the time detained in the kitchen, as I wished to talk the matter over with the joiner, as the most in-

my poor terrified children, while Mr. Burrowes, accompanied by the joiner, proceeded to the house of the steward. I need not burden the reader with details, but I may mention that in answer to a quiet tap at the win-

tion that in answer to a quiet tap at the window the door of the bouse was immediately opened, and old Mrs. Weevil was at once in the grip of the officer. She was absolutely thunderstruck, and quite lost her presence of mind. Without telling her anything of what had happened, Mr. Burrowes asked for her son, the steward. At first she hesitated, then said he was ill in bed.

"No," said Mr. Burrowes; "he is not in bed, but he is safe enough by this time in the police office; so you had better just tell us all about it."

At this Mrs. Weevil entirely broke down and confessed all. It is unnecessary to re-

bed, but he is safe enough by this time in the police office; so you had better just tell us all about it."

At this Mrs. Weevil entirely broke down and confessed all. It is unnecessary to repeat at length what the reader can guess in great measure for himself; but the sum of her story was this. The mother, equally with her son, hated Miss Roupel for despising his addresses, and took the means we have seen in order to drive each successive tenant out of her house. She also admitted that after the sudden death of Mrs. Roupel it was they who had spread the stories charging foul play against the daughter. In answer to a question from Mr. Burrowes she confessed that it was she who had played the ghost on the previous evening; but she had never before shown herself to anyone who did not at once flee and quit the house. My attempt to get hold of her, therefore, had so alarmed her that she had great difficulty in escaping; and next morning had gone to her son and told him she durst not play the part of ghost any longer, as the present tenant was likely to stand her ground, and they would in that way be found out. They were both enraged at thus being at last baffled in their long-cherished course of malicious practices against Miss Roupel; and her son determined to take out his revenge upon me that night by first frightening me and then robbing the house, after which they were resolved to take the first opportunity of quitting that part of the country. Their cunditiy had been aroused by the sight of some trinkets in Indian jewellery which I possessed; hence the desire to rob me. In order to cover their purpose the old hag was sent to me with the story of her son being ill; and as me had a secret means of access to the house, he readily effected an entrance after he supposed the family askep. It was her son who had first put her upon these evil practices—had brought the old surplice from Lord B— 'a house, in which either of them, as occasion offered, was in the habit of terrifying the immovent to spend settlement. Mrs.

Some vandals have been desecrating the St.

Some vanuals involved the Vectorial state of the Vectorial value of the Vectorial value of the Vectorial value of the blood is shown beyond a doubt by the great numbers who have taken it, and received immediate with such remarkable cures.

tained in the kitchen, as I wished to talk the matter over with the joiner, as the most intelligent of the three.

As he entered my room I was surprised to find a second person behind him, whom he introduced to me as Mr. Burrowes, the district inspector of police, who had been on an official visit to the village that day, and who, when he heard the story, volunteered his services in place of the constable. His presence at once gave me great relief, and this was enhanced when I found he had long ay. sence at once gave me great relief, and this was enhanced when I found he had long ex-

perience in the London detective force, and was entering with the enthusiasm of his profession into our plans. He had heard already from the joiner what had passed that day; complimented me highly on the previous evening, and expressed his acquiescence in everything that we had since done.

When, however, I mentioned to him my unexpected interview that afternoon with Mrs. Weevil, and that she had left the house, he was a good deal taken aback. He questioned me closely as to her manner and appearance when she was in the room, and as to whether she seemed much affected by her son's illness. I answered his several questions to the best of my ability, and he after thinking awhile, pacing up and down the room, turned to me and said:

"Let everything be carried out as you formerly proposed. See that your family retire to rest at their usual time, with as little appearance as possible of anything unusual going on. If the woman has taken alarm, nothing will be lost by waiting till tu-morrow, when her rooms can be more carefully examined by daylight. In the first place, will you show me the bedroom in which you were disturbed last night?"

I conducted him thither, the joiner following; and after he had ascertained where, to use his own expression, I had first seen the "party," and where and how the party had disappeared, he at once intimated his plans. He said I was to retire to my room as usual, seat myself in my chair by the fire as on the previous evening, and either sleep or appear to sleep, as was most agreeable to myself. Beyond the window stood a large wardrobe, in which, after the house was all quiet, he and the joiner would conceal themselves; the blacksmith and the fgardener being set as a guard upon the door of the housekeeper's room below. The duties of the household, in the absence of my servants, fell somewhat heavily on the ayah and myself; and the time passed quiekly for me as I bustled about, seeing the children put to bed; after which the ayah also retired. During all this time everything had been carr

WIT AND HUMOUR.

The letter "E" is like many men. It is first in everything, but ends in smoke. "Let me see your paper a moment, dear?" Husband—" Yes, as soon as we get to the

Every man has his follies, and oftentimes they are the most interesting things he has got.—Josh Billings.

Market reports for travellers—Trunks are heavy and are going down with a crash—at all the railway stations.

"I say," cried a fashionable youth to an old usurer, "the ready is needful." "Yes," cried the other, "but the needful isn't ready."

Getting up in the morning is like getting

Getting up in the morning is like getting up in the world. You cannot do either without more or less self-denial.—Boston Tran-

A man who offered bail for a friend was asked by the judge if he had any incumbrance on his farm. "Oh yes," said he, "my old woman." The sanguine mind will find comfort even in adversity. When trade is "flat on its back" it is in the best possible condition for

looking up." A Chicago man left \$17,000 in greenbacks on a saloon bar and no one took the pile.

Well, they thought it was a roll of old newspapers.

No "Angelina," the Miller coupler is not matrimonial instrumentality, nor is the "buffer" you refer to an elderly gentleman

Vennor says this is his snow storm—that he predicted it two weeks ago. We are willing to admit that it is, if he will only come and pay expenses and take it away.—Norristown Herald. A professor asked his class, "What is the surora?" A student, hesitating, replied: "Professor, I did know, but I have forgot-

ten," "That is sad, very sad," rejoined the professor. "The only man in the world that ever knew has forgotten it!" An Irish priest was addressing his flock on the dangers of intemperance, and concluded his harangue with these words:—"Drink, my children, makes you beat your wives, starve your families, and shoot your landlords—aye, and miss them, too!"

The Dominion census will be taken on April 4th, and every person will be counted as be-fonging to the place where he is found on that day. A goodly number will, if they are not cautions, be caught in the attractive abode of

cautions, be caught in the attractive abode or Tom and Jerry.—Detroit Free Press.

Three red-haired men walked solemnly into a Main street saloon and stood before the bar. "Helloa," said the barkeeper, in a tone of interest, "Who's elected? Oh, I beg pardon," he added. "I thought it was a turchlight procession."—Burlington Hawk-

cisco wedding was the bride's father's cheque for \$100,000. The cashier of the bank on for \$100,000. The casnier of the balls of which the cheque was drawn was a guest. It was observed that he looked queerly at the document, then turned up his nose, and remarked, "Why, he hasn't \$500 to his credit

They tell of a very cultured divine in Bos-They tell of a very cultured divine in Boston, who, instead of saying "The collection will now be taken up," impressively remarks, "The accumulation of moneys will now ensue." But a Philadelphia clergyman, a great athlete and lover of sports, forgot himself once and said, "Here endeth the first innings—let us pray."

Emerson went to see Bernhardt in Boston, then drove home and wrote the following essay on Thinness: "As matter ascenda from its grosser to its finer forms, it becomes more diaphanous. Solidity belongs to earth. The illimitable is peopled with the aeriform. The more one knows the thinner he gets. This is the thinnest performance I ever saw."

We have discovered why young ladies have become so fond of wearing long fringe. Recently in a crowd a gentleman's coat button became tightly entangled in the fringe of a young lady's dress. "It is evident," he said, smiling, "that I am very much attached to you, and that I cannot make up my mind to tear myself away." Fringy, but a fact.—

Philadelphai Sun.

Minister to Rory—"Why weren't you at Emerson went to see Bernhardt in Boston,

minister to Kory—"Why weren't you as the kirk on Sunday?" Rory—"I was at Mr. Dunlop's kirk." Minister—"I don't like your running about the strange kirks in that way. Not that I object tae yer hearing Mr. Dunlop; but I'm shure ye wadna like yer ain sheep straying away into strange pastures." Rory—"I wadna care a grain, sir, if it were better grass."—Judy.

Where better grass."—Judy.

Where the shoe pinches. Eldest daughter—"I think you might let me come out mamma! I'm 20, you know, and surely I've finished my education!" Festive mamma (by no means prepared to act the part of chaperon and wallflower)—"Not yet, my love. Society is so hollow! I really must preserve that sweet girlish freshness of yours a little while longer!"—London Punch.

A Hilbertian writch tender who saw a train

A Hibernian switchtender who saw a train A Hiberman switchtender who saw a train coming in on time said, "You are first at last, and you were always behind before." This is considered as a made-up story. But yesterday a fairly intelligent man, who had a very bad cold, met another gentleman on the street, and said, "I would rather be at work than to be sick at home, although, to tell the truth, I this morning started out to stay in

A man bought an estate in Ireland the other day. He was of small stature, we are told, and very thin and wiry-looking. When he went down to see the place the tenants ne went down to see the piace the tenants turned out to inspect the new landlord, and after his departure began to discuss him. "Well, Pat, what do you think of the new landlord?" "Oh, begorra, not much. Why, that little gossoon would be as hard to shoot as a jack-snipe."

A Honeymoon Abruptly Ended by a Dose of Laudanum.

A man and woman who registered as Arthur A man and woman who registered as Arthur W. Pierson and wife took a room on Saturday night at the Bartlett house, on Seventh street, opposite the local depot, in Oakland. They went out to supper at a restaurant in the vicinity, and came back apparently in cheerful spirits. About two o'clock on Sunday morning the man aross and woke his wife, and told her that he was out of work, with no more and no prospects of better times. and told her that he was out of work, with no money and no prospects of better times, and at the same time saying, "Here is what will end our troubles," took a half-ounce vial of landanum out of his pocket. At his request she drank one-half of it, remarking that she wanted to make a sure thing of it, and he then took the remainder. She also swallowed some more landanum from a bottle which she had herself precured, fearing the first dose was not large enough. The determined suicides then deliberately dressed themselves and lay down on the bed, and calmly awaited the result of the would-be fatal doses. Soon afterwards the woman was taken with a fit of vomiting, and ejected all the poison she had taken. He, however, was less fortunate, and his dose took effect. Notwithstanding the efforts of two physicians, who were summoned by the now badly frightened woman, he died at one o'clock yesterday afternoon. His body was taken to the morgue, where an inquest will be held to-day. He was about 27 years old, an architect by profession, and formerly lived in Sacramento, and was for a time in the employ of N. D. Goodell. The couple had been married only one week, the woman, for merly Mrs. Leftwich, being a widow with one child. She is now pronounced out of danger.

Ague Conquerer Will Cure. Ague Conqueror Will Cure.

There is no disease or affliction more easily cured than the ordinary Fever and Ague of this country, and yet it is one of the most dreaded. In fact, in some persons, Fever and Ague, Intermitting, Remitting, and kindred Fevers, if continued, bring on other diseases which eventually prove very difficult to cure, and sometimes result in death. The Ague Conqueror, although a vegetable preparation, containing no poisons, has never failed to cure any case of Ague within our knowledge, and the chills do not return during that season. Price 50 cents and \$1 per bottle. To make a permanent cure of a difficult case it will require a \$1 bottle to cleanse the system and leave the Liver and other organs in a healthy condition so that the chills will not return. Sold by all drugging and dealers everywhere.

## THE FARM

EDITORIAL NOTES.

Secretary Evarts puts it this way : peasant of Ireland or Germany," I "carrying a soldier on his back, canno pete with the American peasant, who soldier to carry."

A meeting of United States maltster brewers was held in New York on th ult., and a resolution passed urging Co ult., and a resolution passed urging Co to change the duty on Canadian malt fr per cent. ad valorem to a specific duty cents per bushel. The meeting was not influential, or fairly representative, an great number of brewers and others States are decidedly against the char would not seem probable that Congres be swayed one way or the other by the whereases and the one resolved adoptementorial.

The U. S. Commissioner of Agricult not a mere theorist or chronicler, bu shrewd, practical man, who has faith it he says and shows it. Last week we're to his report on the efforts to cultivate the Southern States. Now, it seems, s is his belief in the possibilities of his co growing its own tea, and so anxious his o prove that he is on the right tack, t has just rented a farm in South Carolina which an attempt will be made to grow varieties of tea; and the best guarantee success is that excellent tea has been in that very neighbourhood.

English grain dealers have settled firm belief that America has more grains wanted in Europe, and the falling of the past ten days register the result opinion. The only doubt abroad apputure on the extent of the decrease in It is still held to be doubtful whether details will be been except to be the control of the decrease in It is still held to be doubtful whether details. duction will be large enough to leave farmers with no profit, or small eno furnish some margin on the business past year. For the present it is oul that the opening months of the comin are little likely to see either the prices sales of American produce which wen the beginning of 1880.

The Huron Signal, which pays spectention to agricultural matters and tre them very ably, is convinced that the ness of the Agricultural and Arts Asso is gone. It says the prize list has b is gone. It says the prize list has be duced and the expenses increased untit costs \$15,100 to distribute prizes aring to \$12,900. "The directors," sa contemporary, "are not competent me they regard the time spent upon the boof the Association more as a holiday that thing else, and at the same time pock snug sum of \$3,112 of public money. Signal is not far wrong; and no doub will be a debate upon the subject wh Ontario Assembly is asked to make the annual grant of \$10,000 to the institution.

The grape crop of 1880 in Cal has been large, and, though late in ing, the season has been favourab making wine and raisins. There v wain until the 23rd of November then it was light, and lasted only a then it was light, and lasted only a day—not enough to do much damage few grapes not then gathered. The quef wine made in 1880 is a matter of subut will probably be 10,000,000 or 12,0 gallons. It has been the custom of the dealers to overstate the quantity in payears. They would publish 8,000,000 000,000 gallons when it was not mo 5,000,000. San Francisco has never remore than 3,500,000 gallons in a years than 3,500,000 gallons in a years. The receipts Francisco were 1,700,000 gallons in 2,400,000 in 1877, 3,000,000 in 1878, 000 in 1879, and the same in 1880. 000 in 1879, and the same in 1880. eeipts of brandy were 60,000 gallons i 130,000 in 1877, 110,000 in 1878, an 000 in 1879. The wine exports by 510,000 gallons in 1876, 890,000 i 1,230,000 in 1878, 1,400,000 in 1879, same amount in 1880. The export by about 800,000 gallons annually. The for 1881 will probably show a decurease over 1880. The State has ne proached the limit of its capacity in making, the greater part of the grapes been used every year for the table many have been allowed to spoil on the many have been allowed to spoil of the and the hogs have been turned into vineyards as the most profitable us could be made of them. There have years when grapes sold at Los Angel Sonoma for half a cent a pound at who and such low prices still prevail in larg yards in the Sierra Nevada, remote from the still provide the still provide

There are more ways than one of ! cat, and there are more ways than making money out of the unfo and unsophisticated intending emi This land sharks and others have out long ago, but perhaps the shr and most lucrative method yet hit i that of the individual or individuals w the following advertisement inserted sively in the English newspapers: "Parents wishing to find desirable

ings for their sons can have them place responsible American farmers in good and excellent climate. They will be and excellent climate. They will be cally taught American farming, and entirely independent of any aid from from the time they leave England. Pr. 50 to 75 guineas. Address—." In England it is customary to pay privilege of apprenticing youths tanything, and therefore the trap is catch many victims. As a matter of has already proved eminently success a large number of fathers have paid vance money desired, and have providesons with through tickets to farms in sons with through tickets to farms in sota, Iowa, and Nebraska. The exp of these emigrants has not, however, be couraging. On their arrival at their d tion they have found that they were ta one of the farm hands, with the excitation they were part only about one-ti the wages given to their associates, and service was demanded. That they have able to pick up some knowledge of fairs true, but no more than they would is true, but no more than they woul obtained if they had started out indently in search of a job, while, as the of service is usually fixed at about two they have in this time lost quite an a in wages. At the end, they are merel labourers, and if they desire to take they must either work for a long time the necessary money or send home than for funds. The sum and subst the whole thing is that the swindlers it land are able to pocket two or three h dollars on every contract of this ki they make, while at the same time de

High-priced Hay in Colorado Hay is now selling in San Juan Col., for \$300 per ton. That is pret up, but is still far behind what was a the Comstock in early days. All old will remember when hay sold at twe cents per pound. Green grass was tailed at ten cents per pound. In the mer of 1860 an old Frenchman made little raise at packing grass up from District on an old horse. This bunches, about a rod apart, was at bunches, about a rod apart, was at thickness of a riding-whip and fro eight feet long. Having no scales, man used to count his hay out, give three to five stalks for a pound. Whind of hay was criticised by his cuthe good old man, who did his mowin hatchet, was wont to say:—"Ahagree wis you! Ze hay is a leetle on he is very succulent. Besides, I good weight. I neval pour one hay a series of the say and the say and the say are neval."

their victims of money that would be wonderfully useful in establishing the