

saw her husband fall, nor the share I had in it. I made up a tale and she listened to it with all her ears. And John Rackham, he bore me out. Little choice he had—John Rackham! . . .

"One day they sat just without, where I could hear them plain, on the seat nigh the door to the garden. I was ready to catch every word. And I would have heard it all, but for the noises in the stable-yard, the combing of the horses and their hoof-clack on the cobble-stones, and young Kenneth singing 'Arthur a'Bradley.' 'Twas a Sunday morning, warm like a spring day, and there was a many sounds about. But I had a shrewd ear, and caught the most of what they said. First she was telling him about the ghost. They had all seen it, Oliver dearest!—all but herself. There was old Cicely, twice; and now she wouldn't come to this side of the house; and Awdrey and Maud, and little Nell from the Old Hall, and Rachel Anstiss before she went back . . . well!—she was in a great rage, dearest Oliver . . . and Reverstoke the butler—indeed, all but Rackham and Kenneth; but then, they never came hitherward of the garden-door. Now was it not a strange story? All of a tale, and about the same hour—in the very early morning. Except Reverstoke, who saw it coming back from the Thorpe, near on to midnight. 'Come, say it was a strange story, Oliver dearest!'

"The Squire made a poor hand of ridiculing my lady's wonderment; for he had seen the ghost himself. But he could try to make his own seeing of it into so much explanation of the whole. Of course the first one to see it had the tale from him, and the next would follow on with a fancy bred of both, and so on in order, each ghost to match the other. But, said my lady, none had ever known aught of what he saw. To which he answered pish!—one *must* have known it, else how could any have