

WHEN GHOST MEETS GHOST

and as for Dolly, her brother was making her every bit as bad as himself. At such times a great resource was to induce Uncle Moses to tell some experiences of a glorious past, his own. For he had been a member of the Prize Ring, and had been slapped on the back by Dukes, and had even been privileged to grasp a Royal hand. He was now an unwieldy giant, able to get about with a stick when the day was fine, but every six months less inclined for the effort.

Uncle Moses, when he retired from public life, had put all his winnings, which were considerable, into a long lease of a pot-house near Golden Square, where he was well-known and very popular. If, however, there had been a rock on the premises and he had had all the powers of his namesake, four-half would have had to run as fast from it as ever did water from the rock in Horeb, to keep down the thirst of Golden Square. For Uncle Moses not only refused to take money from old friends who dwelt in his memory, but weakly gave way to constructive allegations of long years of comradeship in a happy past, which his powers of recollection did not enable him to contradict. "Wot, old Moses!—you'll never come for to go for to say you've forgot old Swipecy Sam, jist along in the Old Kent Road—Easy Shavin' one 'apenny or an arrangement come to hy the week!" Or merely, "Seein' you's as good as old times come alive again, mate." Such like appeals were almost invariable from any customer who got fair speech of Uncle Moses in his own bar. In his absence these claims were snuffed out roughly by a prosaic barman—even the most pathetic ones, such as that of an extinct thimble-rigger for whom three small thimbles and one little pea had ceased for ever, years ago, when he got his fingers in a sausage-machine. But Uncle Moses was so much his own barman that this generosity told heavily against his credit; and he would certainly have been left a pauper but for the earnest counsels of an old friend known in his circle of Society as Affability Bob, although his real name was Jeremiah Alibone. By him he was persuaded to dispose of the lease of the "Marquess of Montrose" while it still had some value, and to retire on a pound a week. This might have been more had he invested all the proceeds in an annuity. "But, put it I do!" said he. "I don't see my way to no advantage for David and Dorothy and this here young newcome, if I was to hop the twig." For this was at the time of the birth of little Dave, nearly six years before the date of this story.

Affability Bob applauded his friend's course of action in view