

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS.

Like small curled feathers, white and soft,
The little clouds went by,
Across the moon, and just far stars,
And down the western sky,
In cold pointed shivers, he grass
With frost-dew was white,
Like snow clouds, the coming sleep lay
That first blood Christmas night.

The shepherds slept, and glimmering faint,
With twist of their little snails,
Only their fire's flicker flames
Glimmered silence broke,
Saw when a young lamb raised his head,
And when the night wind blew,
A nestling bird would startle,
Where dusky olives grew.

With finger on his solemn lip,
Night looked the short night,
And only stars and angels saw
The little star's light,
Then came such flash of silver light
Across the bending skies
That wondering shepherds woke and hid
Their frightened, dazzled eyes.

But all their gentle, sleep flew
Locked up, then slept again,
Not knew the light that dawned the stars,
Brought endless peace to earth,
Not even heard the gracious words
That dawned the age thus:
"The Christ is born, the Lord has come,
Good will on earth to bring."

Then over the moonlit, misty fields,
Dumb with the world's great joy,
The shepherds sought the white wailed
down,
Where lay the baby boy
And all the gladness of the world,
The glory of the skies,
Because the found for Christ had smiled
In Mary's happy eyes.

SOME GHOSTLY REMARKS.

I am a Ghost by profession.
I haunt residences, chateaux, castles, corner lots—anything—for a consideration.
And, what is more, I am the oldest ghost in the business.

I began in an amateurish way to do haunting for private families when I wasn't more than five years old.

That was in the year 402 B. C.
Then, as the years of that period grew beautifully less, I became more expert, and opened a Spectre Bureau and laid the foundation of a large trade, which I regret to say, has fallen off of late years.

My headquarters were then in Rome; as time went on, I established branches in other cities, and made myself agent for other specks, securing them engagements to do haunting in places where I could not spare the time to go myself.

In the old Roman days there wasn't much Christmas work to be done, but there was a great lot of political haunting in hand.

I am the ghost who played the Pompey act as Cesar; and later on Mrs. Cesar employed me to make it unpleasant for Brutus.

Brutus thought I really was Cesar. My make-up was fine—Mrs. Cesar having lent me a fog-colored toga and a transparent laurel wreath used to wear.
It would have been you laugh to see Brutus quail.

It was worse than quail.
That was a whole covey of partridges.
By slow degrees I built up a monopoly of European haunting.

Hanuel was one of my best customers, and gave me a letter of recommendation to some English friends of his, through whose influence I got the contract for haunting the Royalty.

I sent down to my main office and got a batch of spectres to come and help me haunt Richard III.

You doubtless remember the episode. That was the proudest moment of my life.

It was haunting on a grand scale, you know.

Ordinary spectres never do business in that way.

They seem to think that it is enough alone at a man's bedside, it is enough.

They have no mind to grasp the cumulative effect upon the victim who gets a whole invoice of ghosts thrown at him all at once.

But lately—trade is dull.

People haven't time to be haunted; and, unless they have some full purpose in view, they no longer hire specks to haunt other people.

Here it is Christmas-time, and I haven't more than five engagements—and what paltry engagements they are!
One fellow living off in the country has his wife's mother living with him, and he wants me to haunt the old lady until she departs.

Nice business for a respectable ghost to be in!

Then listen to this—here's a man who writes to say that his wife is set on having a seashell squeak, and he wants to know what I'll charge to sit on the footboards of her bed, grinning at her through a skull for an hour every night for three nights running, with a seal squeak over my shoulders.

I like to do a kind act of that sort, particularly when, as in the present instance, my client offers to give me half of what he gets out of it.

What's that?

I must be rich by this time?

Well, I guess not.

That's the one great trial of my business.

So many of my clients go back on me. I haunt for one, I horrify and terrify; I do everything a speck can do to achieve their ends; and, lo George! when I come to ask for my money, they pretend not to see me.

It's easy to pretend, and to see a ghost, you know; and what redress have I?

Not a bit.

Who ever heard of a speck having any standing in court?

That's why I'm disgusted with the business; I'm going to give it up after this year.

What am I going to do for a living?

Well, I don't know exactly!

I'm sorter uncertain whether to go into

a museum, or settle down in some old French or English castle until I expirate.

What?

Why, of course I'll expirate some day!

Particularly in those days when castles are heated by steam.

I'd dry up in seven minutes if I haunted near steam.

But for a year after the coming January I'm engaged by a wealthy young New York boy.

One hundred dollars a month and my board and lodging.
He wants me to sit in one corner of his room as a specimen of real London fog.

It's a nice, easy job; and, being foggy is one of my specialties.



Joban's Dream on Christmas Eve.

Do you call that a dignified thing?
Now, here's a bit I rather like:

A young man out at Poke-Stogy wants me to attend a big ball there on Christmas Eve, and horrify everybody but himself—his idea being that the girl he loves will so admire his bravery in the presence of a supernatural being, that she will refrain from being a sister to him.

That's the kind of business that I like, because it makes somebody happy; but this trade of badgering an old lady just because she happens to be a man's wife's mother,—why, it's positively low!

Then, there's another congenial bid I've got for Christmas Eve.

A boy who was discovered to be dissipated by his rich father ten years ago, and whose name has been removed from the old gentleman's will, has retained me to appear at his governor's bedside as the clock strikes twelve, and simply sack him with renouance, and secure the boy's reinstatement.

CHINA HALL

ALUMINUM...

Shakers, Strainers
Trays, Spice Boxes
Bottle Holders, etc.



PAPER
JULEP
STRAWS

... Full Lines of ...

Tumbler, Wines, Cocktails,
etc.

JUNIOR & IRVING, 49 King St. E., Toronto,
Telephone 2177

Sole Agent for Messrs. E. BEANES & CO'S.
(Falcon Works, London, Eng.)

Brewing Materials

No. 1 and No. 2, and

Potassium Sulphite

The Best Known Preservatives
in Use.

AGENT FOR...

Eureka and Cape Ann Iceinglass,
D. D. Williamson's Bi-sulphite of Lime
and Porterine,
Hugh Baird & Sons', Glasgow, Imported
Porter Malt,
Cleveland Faucet Company's Beer Pump.