

I could not sleep.
I could not even lie down.
The clock struck twelve, one, and still I watched the dying embers.
Ten minutes more had gone by, when suddenly a frightful shriek rang through the house—another and another.

I rushed to the door.
Other people were in the entry.
The shrieks came from Mrs. Bray's room, and ere we could open it, it was flung wide and she rushed towards us, her long, white night-robe all ablaze, a horrible moving column of fire.

I don't know what I thought.
I don't know what I did.
I cannot remember anything more, until I had her down upon the floor, with a blanket I had snatched, wrapped about her.

I heard myself crying—
"Lie still and you will save your face."
And I saw the flames choked out and the light, black tinder floating about me, and knew that I had at least saved her from being quite burnt to death.

Soon I knew that I have saved her life.
It was night again when someone came to my door, and told me that Mrs. Bray wished to see me.

Of course I went to her.
She was lying in her bed, wrapped in bandages, and she could not stir, but she looked at me earnestly.

"Send them out of the room," she said. "I want to speak to you alone."
And when the nurse had closed the door behind herself and Mrs. Norton, she looked at me again in the same strange way.

"You saved my life," she said, "Yes, and I remember what you said. 'Lie still and you'll save your face.' Most women would have liked me to spoil my face, had I used them so. And you don't know the world either. Go to that desk. There's a letter there. It's yours. I wanted to make you jealous, and I wrote to your beau, to ask his escort somewhere."

"Two notes came at the same time to the house.

"I knew very well that there was a mistake made—that mine had been put into your envelope, and yours into mine.

"I scratched your name out of that one you have there, and showed it about to make you jealous.

"He's as true as steel to you. I love you for saving my face, and I tell you that. Now try to forgive me."

I was too happy to do anything else.
I knew that what she said was true and when she asked me, I stooped down and gave her a kiss. It was our last interview.

When Mrs. Bray recovered, she left Mrs. Norton's, and Harry Heathcote never knew anything about those two miserable days until I had been his wife too long to have any secrets from him.

AN AUTUMN MEMORY.

BY F. P. A.

'Twas long ago in the gloaming
Of so Autumn day gone by,
When we went out a-nutting,
My lost, lost love and I.

I see her as she stood there,
While I held down the bough;
Ah, eyes, what wouldst thou barter
To gaze upon her now.

That bright young form so stately,
That face so sweet and fair,
Crowned with a golden glory
Of clustering auburn hair.

The music of her laughter
Sounds yet upon mine ear;
Her voice still haunts my dreamland—
So far and yet so near.

And now, when leaves are falling,
When sinks the sky-king red,
I think upon the glory
Around my darling shed.

I think, till thought is sorrow,
Of happy days gone by—
When we went out a-nutting,
My lost, lost love and I.

STRANGE VISITORS.

A few winters ago, myself and friend, who had been stopping for some days in a northern town heard by accident that there was a few miles away an old mill that had the unenviable reputation of being the home of ghosts. Of course we laughed at the idea; but our informant assured us he had himself seen the apparitions, and would never enter the mill again after dark.

"Was the mill uninhabited?" we asked.
"No; Mr. Brown, the owner, lived there. He was a man of high standing, unimpeachable honor, and he, too, had frequently seen the ghosts."

Here was a puzzle which we resolved to unravel.

"Could we get an order to sleep at the mill?"
Our informant promised to use his influence to procure the required permission. The next

day we received a letter, stating we could, if we still felt so inclined, stay at the mill that night; but we must excuse the absence of Mr. and Mrs. Brown, as they had been called away suddenly to see one of their children, who was at school. Accordingly, at nightfall, Tom Selford and myself made our way to the ghostly tryst.

When we arrived, we were well received by Mr. Brown's foreman, a jolly-faced north countryman, called Tullock, who proceeded to show us over the mill, as if to prove that there was no deceit, in the same manner as a conjuror allows one to examine the inside and outside of the box into which he puts, and out of which he afterwards takes, such marvellous things without unlocking the casket.

It was a strongly built stone mansion, that had at one time evidently belonged to some great family, but had now become the residence of the miller, who had built the mill out of the left wing of the house, so that the machinery was not in the old building at all.

As we walked through the rooms, my friend and I took care to express our disbelief in ghosts, and show our revolvers; but the only effect produced upon our guide by this display was a shrug of the shoulders and a broad grin that would have done honor to Grimaldi. We took up our position in the "second best room," if I may use that term, the chief apartment being the one just above.

We mounted cigars, drew a table up close to a wall, lit two candles, placed them on the mantel-piece, and two others we put upon the table; then seating ourselves with our backs to the wall, so as not to be taken by surprise, we prepared a bowl of "bishop" to cheer us up and keep out the cold.

After sitting some time, we were disturbed by the stamping of feet overhead—a heavy tread, followed by a quick scuffling sound, that made our hearts beat fast as we gazed at each other. We knew the room was empty, for we had locked the door after carefully examining the chamber, and the key was now on the table at which we sat.

Seizing a candle and the key, I hurried upstairs, followed quickly by Tom. I unlocked the door, and threw it open. The room was empty. We sounded the walls thoroughly, examined the floor and the ceiling, but could not detect the slightest thing to give us cause to imagine we had been imposed upon.

"Nobody is here," said Tom. "It's very strange!"

"Very," I replied.

"I propose that we fetch up our wine and candles, and watch here," he said, after a pause.

"I think we had better," I replied; "but I shall take the precaution of fastening up this room until we return, so that there may be no intruders."

Carefully looking the door, we began to descend the stairs, but paused before we were half-way down them. We heard, distinctly, other steps keeping time with our own, until we reached the place whereon we stood; we felt a cold wind waft by, and the steps went on until we reached the foot of the staircase, when, turning to the right, they entered the room where we had commenced our watch.

I need not say how terribly frightened we were, for nothing could we see. It seemed to us that had we beheld the most ghastly sight, it would not have been so awful as these sounds, without any apparent cause. At first we felt inclined to beat a hasty retreat; but we plucked up courage, and carried out our purpose of keeping watch in the ghostly chamber.

There was nothing in the room at all of an unusual nature. The walls were neatly papered, the fireplace was a modern one, having evidently been but newly erected; two large cupboards stood at each side of the chimney, and these we most carefully examined. We found them empty, and, therefore, contented ourselves by locking them. Unlike the haunted room described in Mr. Thomas Hood's beautiful poem, there was here no secret inspiration to whisper us that

"That chamber is the ghostly."
Having drunk one or two bumpers of wine to keep up our spirits, we took up our stations, with our chairs placed close to the wall, so as to command a full view of the room. We heard so many strange noises, that at length we grew used to them, and began to laugh at the sounds.

Suddenly there came a loud rapping at the cupboard door, which Tom declared must proceed from Old Mother Hubbard, who was resenting the cupboard being bare.

The joke seemed to have the effect of stopping any further proceedings in the cupboard; whereupon, Tom suggested that "ghosts did not like jokes, as they were grave subjects."

Scarcely were the words out of his mouth, than the knocking commenced upon the room door.

"Come in," cried Tom; "the door is locked, but I suppose that does not matter to you."

With a tremendous crash, it flew open; but nothing could we see. We each took a candle, and went out into the passage, but there was not a creature there. We next carefully examined the lock, and found the bolt had been shot back; therefore, the door must have been unlocked from the inside, for we had left the key in that side of the door, and there it still remained.

"This is very strange!" said Tom in that peculiar whisper, which shows that a person is being forced by awe to believe against his will; "this is really unaccountable!"

"It is strange, I allow; but that it is inexplicable I do not."

"Then how do you account for it?" demanded Tom.

"My dear Tom, because I cannot solve it, is no reason it should not be capable of solution. How do we know the bolt actually shot into the lock? The key may not have turned properly. Now, if that be the case, some sudden gust of wind could have blown the door open."

"Gusts of wind don't rap at doors to ask permission to come in," replied Tom. "For my own part, I freely confess that this is one too many for me. Still, my fear—for I admit I was frightened on the stairs—has given away to curiosity; and, therefore, we will see it out."

I agreed with Tom and having once more carefully fastened the door, we resumed our seats.

I can't say that I did not feel uneasy, and yet I should not like to acknowledge that I was frightened. I had a strange, irritable feeling. I had come to the mill to discover what I considered a fraud; and here, after two hours or more careful watching, I found myself believing, in spite of myself.

Tom and I talked and laughed incessantly, much the same way as

"Children whistle in the dark."

The sound of our own voices was a comfort to us, and gave us more confidence.

In the midst of a merry peal of laughter we paused. Our mouths remained open, but the laughter died away! Our gaze became fixed, and our muscles rigid, as though we had beheld the head of Medusa, and had been changed into stone.

Again the room door opened but this time slowly and silently. No sooner had it done so, than a weird figure entered.

It was that of an old man, dressed in a long, loose robe or gown. His hair, which was quite white, flowed in long tresses from underneath a skull-cap. His face was livid, and covered with a long white beard, which flowers down to his waist, and would have given him a venerable appearance had it not been stained with blood. His long, thin, veiny hands were stretched forth as if to grasp something. The whole expression of the countenance was that of hatred, mingled with fear.

With noiseless step, the figure advanced towards us.

Quickly recovering myself, I caught up the revolver, and fired at it. The ball passed through it, and struck the cupboard door. The next moment, the figure had vanished.

"This is fearful!" groaned Tom.

"It is, indeed!" I exclaimed. "There is some mystery here, that I am determined to fathom."

At that moment, there came a sharp rapping on the room door followed by the voice of the miller's foreman, demanding if there was anything wrong? Quickly slipping my hand over Tom's mouth, to prevent him replying, I called out, in as careless a tone as I could assume, "Nothing, I am glad to say; although there might have been a serious accident, through my carelessness. I was playing with my revolver, and somehow managed to pull the trigger hard enough to left it off. Thank goodness, no one is hurt."

"I thought it might be you'd seen Old Jasper or Agnes, and had a pop at them; you wouldn't have been the first one who wasted powder and ball in that way."

I laughed, as if the idea of the thing was too absurd to require answer, and we soon heard the old man descending to the kitchen.

"Why did you not let him come in?" said Tom, who was nearly as pale as the spectre. "You surely don't mean to stop here any longer?"

"Indeed I do. Look here, Tom; this may, or may not, be a ghost; but one thing is evident—it can't hurt us."

"It does look like it," said Tom rather reassured.

"The first thing," I continued, "is to examine the door."

We did so; and, to our amazement, found it securely locked from the inside, just as we had left it. This, of course, made us wonder more than ever, and so shook Tom's nerves, that he vowed he would not stop in the room unless it was left unlocked, so that there should be no impediment to his escape, should he wish to fly. I easily consented to this; for as he argued, the door and lock had already proved that they could not shut out these strange visitors.

Once more we resumed our seats; Tom making me very uncomfortable by the nervous glances he cast round the room, and the readiness he showed to grasp the pistol to the least noise; whereby I augured the likelihood of an accident.

Slowly the time passed, for Tom would not talk. I must confess I began to have somewhat of contempt for my companion, and felt proud of my courage. I felt sure that, come what might, having passed so firmly through my first introduction to the phantom, that I should feel much more at my ease upon my second one.

Tom's fears, as time went on, began to diminish, and gradually he dozed off to sleep. I had just looked at my watch, and replaced it, thinking that I would wait another half-hour before I gave it up, when my attention was attracted by a rustling of silk in the further corner of the room.

I looked up, and beheld a little woman. She was neatly, but richly, dressed. Her tight-fitting bodice showed off a comely figure; a handsome small lace shawl was placed over her shoulders, and fastened on her bosom by a massive brooch; her head was disguised by a huge cap, such as you now and then see in old family portraits. Whether she was young or old,

ugly or pretty, I could not tell; for she walked with her head bent down so low, I could only see the top of her cap, which concealed her hair entirely. On her left breast she held her right hand, with a convulsive pressure, as if she had a terrible pain at the heart. With her left, she pointed to the ground close by her feet.

I can solemnly aver I felt no fear. I took up my pistol, and presented it at her, thinking that enough to make her halt. It had no effect. With a terrible slowness, she advanced towards me. I let her come on, taking care to keep her well covered.

When about four feet from me, she paused, and, raising her left hand, pointed straight at me. Then, with a movement, the terror of which I cannot describe, she lifted her head, and I beheld the face.

I was horrible. No words can describe it. Blackened and swollen, as if by blows; livid as that of a corpse. The orbless sockets glared at me, as if endued with sight.

With a loud exclamation, I rushed at the figure, and fell senseless on the floor.

When I came to myself, I was in the kitchen, Tom standing on one side of me, and Tullock, the foreman, on the other.

It was some time before I recovered sufficiently to tell what I had seen to the foreman; but when I did so, he shook his head, sorrowfully, and said, "I thought it was her. Few people can bear the sight of her. It's a dreadful story."

"What is?" I ejaculated. "I thought no one knew anything about the unearthly shadows that fit about here?"

"Ah, so it is said, sir," replied Tullock. "You see, Mr. Brown doesn't like to hear these sort of things talked about, neither did his father before him; and, therefore, he discouraged the people from mentioning it, so it died out."

It is said there is a skeleton in every cupboard. I set to work to discover the one here, and at length succeeded in learning the tradition associated with Brown's house.

Many, many years ago, there dwelt in this old house one Sir Jasper Forsythe, a cruel, bad man. With him there lived his wife and only son, Percy. These—so the story goes—he treated so badly, that the boy ran off to sea, and was for many years thought to be lost. However, the loss of his son did not seem to trouble Sir Jasper Forsythe much; indeed, if all accounts be true, he was rather pleased at it. Things at the Hall grew worse. Dark tales of orgies and wickedness were muttered by the people, and as for the high folk who lived about here, they shunned Sir Jasper as they would the plague.

Poor Lady Forsythe bore all patiently.
One day a pretty, buxom lass came to the Hall to be housekeeper. Sir Jasper had met her somewhere, and fallen deeply in love with the girl, and had promised her that, when his wife died, she should be Lady Forsythe.

No one knows what this girl Agnes did to the poor wife; but it was evident every cruelty was resorted to, in hopes the poor creature would break her heart; but the lady thought of her boy, and for his sake bore all patiently.

"One day, in the depth of winter, when the cold north-east winds came blowing across the moors from the German Ocean, some shepherds, seeking for a stray sheep, came upon the body of a woman who had evidently frozen to death during the night. Wrapping it in their plaids, they carried it to the village, where it was recognized as that of Lady Forsythe.

Of course there was a great stir made. Sir Jasper brought forward witnesses to prove that the poor lady was mad, and had strayed away during the night, when everyone was asleep.

Soon after his wife's death, he married the pretty Agnes, with whom he was supposed to have lived happily, though his love for riotous living in no way abated.

One night, years after, a sailor came to the village, and whilst having some refreshment at the inn, learned what had happened. He said nothing, but, pulling his cap over his brow, paid his score and left. That stranger was Percy Forsythe. Making his way to the Hall, he entered it unperceived, and creeping stealthily from room to room, found his mother-in-law in the room in which the watchers kept revel.

The miserable creature knew him at once, and, stretching forth her hands, implored mercy. Without one word, he plunged a dagger into her heart.

As he rose from his terrible work, he beheld his father, standing horror-stricken at the sight. The old man turned to fly, but, quick as lightning, the son flew after him, grasped him tightly by the arm, and, leaning over his shoulder, smote him to the earth.

Percy was never heard of afterwards; since that time, the house has been the nightly resort of strange visitors.

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS.

LETTING THE CAT OUT OF THE BAG.—According to a Cologne newspaper, there is in that city a booth in which is exhibited a "bearded lady." At the entrance is stationed a girl to take the money, and recently a visitor, having feasted his eyes on the strange phenomenon, thinking on his departure, to have a joke with the little money-taker, said to her, fondling her under the chin the while, "Well, little one, so I suppose the bearded woman is your mamma, eh?" "No, sir," replied the child, "she is my papa."

NEW DRESS.—The Jupécloche, or bell skirt is to come out at Paris. The bell is to be "as