

*ONE HALLOWE'EN.*

## A TRUE GHOST STORY.

I was extremely weak and extremely nervous. Such a remark may seem an altogether inappropriate, irregular, and unjustifiable introduction to a tale of the nature this purports to be. Ghost stories, I know, like last wills and testaments, are invariably prefaced by the solemn statement that the hero, as the testator, was "sound of body and of mind." Yet I must insist upon it that I was sick, and weak, and nervous. Let the fact be distinctly understood, otherwise my story may appear strangely extravagant, not to say, preposterous. For some months, then, I had wasted away in decline so rapid and so mysterious as to baffle the undoubted skill of the village doctor; until now as good Father M——stood at my bedside he could scarcely recognize in the living skeleton before him, his robust, rosy-cheeked altar-boy of but one short year ago. I lay upon the couch a perfect physical wreck, weakly, pale, emaciated—a bundle of bones bound together by a superabundant quantity of nerves and enclosed in a covering of skin of excessive tautness and pallor.

"Come back to L——with me, Will. You'll soon recover your health and vigor there, I'll warrant you"; and as he spoke the genial, generous soul of Father M——beamed upon me through his bright eyes of Irish blue. Somehow or other, the very magic of his presence had a beneficial effect upon me and, although I was as yet doubtful whether I had strength sufficient to enable me to

walk across the room, I readily consented to accompany him back to his new parish of L——. How it can be explained I do not know, but this much is certain that I did walk from my home to the railway station and (after a forty-mile journey by rail) from the depot at L—— to the priest's house, in each of which pedestrian feats I had to walk over a mile. It was about sunset of a balmy October day that we entered the sombre front hall of the presbytery. Without delay, Father M—— conducted me up a broad flight of stairs, then down a long corridor to a door at its further end, through which he ushered me into my room. He then retired with the remark that he would return to call me to supper. Left to myself, I began a leisurely inspection of my apartment. The chamber was a hollow cube of about 20 feet to each dimension. It had a peculiarly homelike appearance, and from its bed of "ye olden style," from its bureau, chairs and fireplace of equally ancient make, it borrowed an air of antiquity well in keeping with the house itself which was a relic of the pioneer days of the settlement. The walls were pierced almost from ceiling to floor by two immense windows whose recesses were screened by long, flowing, snow-white curtains of a light, filmy material. From the western window, I looked out upon a scene of pastoral beauty. Far away my eye wandered over farmland and moorland, over rolling fields and roaming river, until further view was