

# OLD GUBBY.

BY CLEMENT W. SCOTT.

CHAPTER I.—THE LITTLE BACK-PARLOUR.  
He had been Old Gubby from time immemorial. It is quite enough that such a person as young Gubby had never been known, no, not even by his worthy old parents, who, years ago, had been put to sleep under the green turf which flourished in the churchyard of St. Nicholas Staining.

He was a queer, old-fashioned child, Old Gubby; and really, on reflection, it would have been an anomaly if he had, turned out young and frisky, for his father and mother had silvery heads when he was born, and being an only child, with no playmate but an antiquated cat, and a dog who had long ago forsaken the gates of the famous quarter in the City of London in which he lived; to say nothing of the undoubted fact that a City parish after business hours, and on Sundays, is not now, and was not then, the most lively place in a world. I repeat that, had Old Gubby turned out a frolicsome boy, his parents would have been as surprised as their neighbours.

His queer, old-fashioned ways, as a child, were translated by his parents into genius of an astounding order; but beyond possessing the additional intelligence which children of old parents undoubtedly possess, and acquiring that dry, peculiar manner which such children cannot fail to pick up, I cannot account for the eulogistic remarks bestowed upon their offspring by his parents. He made a pigeon-house, for the famous fat City pigeons, somewhat successfully at the age of ten, and a few years later performed extraordinary flourishes on his father's flute; but his after-life proved incontrovertibly that this young-old fellow was not born to be a skilled mechanic or musician.

It was at school that Old Gubby really became Old Gubby. His real name was Nicodemus Gubbs, and although Nick Gubbs was playfully suggested when he first put in an appearance at school, his methodical habits so plainly indicated "Old Gubby," that by common consent he was nicknamed Old Gubby at once.

All this must serve as a kind of prologue. I have told you that the parents Gubbs were long ago hidden under the turf of St. Nicholas Staining. With the death of these kind old parents the sorrows of Old Gubby began. Misery often meets excellent, conscientious, upright fellows in a mysterious way.

The two pale stars which guided the course of this old-young man were called respectively—a wife and a little back parlour. Old Gubby's industry could acquire the one, but certainly not the other; for then, as now, women were fantastical creatures, and music, countable in their likes and dislikes. You see Old Gubby laboured under this serious disadvantage; to women and men alike he was always Old Gubby. The notion of his being in love, or wishing to get married, was absolutely ludicrous. Women were never shy with Old Gubby. They talked about love, and marriage, and a future prospect before him without any reserve whatever. He was looked upon as a tame cat who might harmlessly purr about them, chaperone them, hold their skirts, receive their confidences, amuse them, and still be Old Gubby.

When, in time, his industry and little savings acquired for him one of his pet objects in life—the little back-parlour—matters took a somewhat different turn. Then the young girls, and particularly the old-young girls, began to simmer and to sigh, and suggest in the most delicate manner that the little back-parlour at night must be somewhat dull. However, he was not caught, like a sparrow, with a little bit of salt on his tail. He had made up his mind years ago as to the mistress he should like for the back-parlour. He was determined to infuse a little country blood and freshness into the somewhat faded gentility society of the Lower Road, Islington, where the shop attached to the little back-parlour was to be found; so he sneaked away one morning to Tottenham, and got married in the Old Church to the fair-haired daughter of the parish clerk, with whom he used to discuss politics, and play duets on the flute, the latter of which amusements I should have vigorously protested against, had I known Old Gubby or his friend the parish clerk.

Two years of life's sunshine were passed in the little back-parlour in the Lower Road. They were so very, very happy, and so very, very good, and so very, very kind to the poor, and so very, very unselfish and unworldly, that perhaps it was not altogether strange that those who only recollected God's punishments, never his mercies, should sigh and, and ask, as we all have asked at some time or another—why such a dreadful black cloud should fall upon the little back-parlour in the Lower Road.

Anyhow, there was the black cloud, and it broke in a deluge of tears from Old Gubby's eyes as he followed his young dead wife under the ivied porch of Old Tottenham Church. Old Gubby was not left quite alone. There was one little tender ray of sunshine which stole out, trying to drive away that black cloud, whose waters had swept away all his bright visions of happiness, and almost all the purpose of his life. A fair-haired baby-girl lay in a pretty cot, and smiled at poor Old Gubby when he returned from his melancholy journey to Tottenham Churchyard. Then it was that he knelt down by his baby's bedside, worn out and miserable as he was, and prayed that all the love which he would have expended on his dead wife might be intensified towards her child. His life was henceforth to be devoted to his tiny daughter.

Old Gubby idolized and spoiled his child. Men are but indifferent nurses after all, and a girl who had never known a mother's tenderness and affection too often grows up like a wild untrained plant. She was wilful from her cradle, proud and headstrong, and her fond father "had not the heart," as he called it, to correct her. Had she been of an affectionate disposition, she would have been won over many a time by the pitiful expression which stole over her father's face.

TO BE CONTINUED

That visitant from the spirit world most often seen by ladies, is their late husband.

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Guelph, Dec. 11. JAMES O'NEIL davy

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which produces a variety of very brilliant orchestral effect, including a remarkable imitation of stringed instruments; also the nearest approach to the peculiarly sympathetic, rich and attractive quality of a cultivated human voice yet attained in any instrument. The facilities and resources of the MASON & HAMLIN Company are now so great that they can afford to undertake to furnish, not only the best, but also the Lowest Priced Organs made. Every instrument is fully warranted for five years, and furnished at prices ranging from \$50 to \$1000 and upwards.

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There will positively be no credit given during this sale. All indebted to the firm are respectfully requested to call and settle their accounts at once.

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December 17, 1868. dw

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Guelph, Dec. 15. davy