

## THE GHOST'S VISIT ON THE "FELDBERG."

(Translated from the German of Hebel, "the German Burns," written in the Alemannic dialect. A story told by a young man of Basle to a group of beer-drinkers in the tavern at Todtnau, a little village at the foot of the Mountain "Feldberg," South-Western corner of Germany.)

Har' ve, fellows of Todtnau, if ever I told ye the *Seythe Ghost* (1)

Was a sp'it of evil, I've now (2) got a different story; Out of the Town am I, yes, that I'll honestly own to. Related to Merchants. At seven tables free to take pot-luck.

But I'm a Sunday's child (3) and wherever the Ghosts at the cross-roads Stand in the air, in vaults and cellars and out o' w'y places,

Guardin' hidden money, with eyes like fiery sauc'e pans, Washin' with bitter tears the spot where somebody's murder'd. Shovelin' the dirt and scratchin' it over with nails all so bloody.

Clear as day I can see, when it lightens. When I howl they whimper! Also, whenever with beautiful blue eyes the Heavenly Angels

Deep in the night, in the silent, sleepin' villages wander, Peepin' in at the windows, and talkin' together so pleasant.

Smilin' out at the other, and sittin' outside o' the house doors, So that the pious folks shall take no harm while they're sleepin'.

Then ag'in, when in couples or three they walk in the grave-yard, Talkin' in this like, "There a faithful mother is layin'." (4) And, "here's a man that was poor, but took no advantage o' no one." (5)

Take your rest, for you're tired. "We'll reckon ye up when the time comes!" Clearly I see by the light o' the stars, and I hear them a talkin'.

Many I know by their names, and speak to whenever I meet 'em. Give 'em the time o' day, and ask 'em, and answer their questions.

How do ye do? How's y'r watch? "Praise God, its tolerable, thank you!" Believe it or not! Well, once on a time, my cousin he sent me

Over to Todtnau, (6) on business with all sorts o' trouble-some people. Where you've coffee to drink, and biscuit they give you to eat in 't.

Don't you stop on the road, nor gabble whatever comes foremost. Hooted my cousin at startin', "Nor don't you let go o' your snuff box!" (7)

Leavin' it round in the Tavern, as gentlemen do for the next time. Up and away I went, and all my cousin he'd ordered Fairly and squarely I fixed. At the sign o' the eagle in Todtnau

Sat for a while, then, sure o' my way, tramped off again home-wards. Nigh by the village I reckoned, but found myself climbin' the "Feldberg."

Lured by the birdies, and down by the brooks the beautiful posies. That's a weakness o' mine—I run like a fool after such things.

Now, it was dusk, and the birdies hushed up, sittin' still in the branches. Hither and yonder, a starlie stuck its head through the darkness.

Peepin' out as uncertain whether the sun was in bed yet. Whether it might n't come, and called to the other ones "come now."

Then I know'd I was lost, and laid myself down. I was weary. There, you know there's a hut, and I found an armful o' straw in 't.

"Here's a go," I thinks to myself, and I wish I was safely Coddled in bed to home, or 'twas midnight and some little sp'it.

Somew'ere popped out, as o' night, when it's twelve, they're accusin' o' it. Passin' the time with me, friendly, till winds that blow early o' mornin'.

Blow out the Heavenly lights (8) and I see the way back to the village. Now, at thinkin' in this like, I felt all over my watch-face.

Dark as pitch all around, and felt with finger the hour hand. Found it was nigh on to seven and hauled my pipe from my pocket.

Thinkin', "May be a bit of a smoke'll keep me from somnolence." Thund'ring! all of a sudden, beside me, was two o' 'em talkin'.

Like as they'd business together, you'd better believe that I list'n'd. "Say, a'n't I late a coupla'?" Because there was over in Mambach. (9)

"Dyin' a girl with pains in the bones and terrible fever. Now, but she's easy, I held to her mouth the drink o' departure." (10)

"So that the sufferin' ceased, and softly lower'd the eyelids. "Sayin' "Sleep and in peace." "I'll reckon thee up when the time comes!"

"Do me the favor, brother, fetch in the basin o' silver water, ever so little. "My seythe as you see must be whetted."

"Whetted I says I to myself, "and a sp'it!" and peeped from the window. Lo and behold, there sat a youngster with wings that were golden.

White was his mantle, white, and his girllie the color o' roses. Fair and lovely to see, and beside him, two lights all a burnin'.

"All the good sp'its," says I, "Mr. Angel, God have you in ke'p!" "Praise their Master, the Lord," said the Angel, "God thank you, as I do."

"Take no offence, Mr. Ghost, and by y'r good leave and permission. (11) Note.—"Seythe Ghost" (*Dengle Grist*), literally "whetting sp'it." The exact meaning of *dengle* is to sharpen a seythe by hammering the edge of the blade, which was practised before whet stones came into use.

(12) On a former occasion the narrator had told them that the "Seythe Ghost" was a sp'it of evil.

Note.—The superstition is universal among the German peasantry that a child born on a Sunday, has the power of seeing and conversing with sp'its, at midnight.

(4) Pointing at one grave. (5) Pointing at another grave.

(6) Note.—"Todtnau" a small village a short distance beyond Mambach.

(7) Note.—I do not know exactly what this expression signifies; it may be intended to convey a caution.

(8) The stars.

(9) Note.—"Mambach," a small town situate a few miles from Basle.

(10) "Drink o' departure." The Holy Sacrament and Sacramental Cup.

"Tell me, what have you got for to mow?" "Why," the Seythe "was his answer.

"Yes," says I, "for I see it, and that is my question ex-actly."

"What you're goin' to do with the Seythe?" "Why to mow," was his answer.

Then I ventur'd to say, "And that is my question exactly. "What you're goin' to mow, supposin' you're willin' to tell me?"

"Grass!" "—And what is y'r business so late up here in the night time?"

"Nothin' special," I answer'd, "I'm burnin' a little tobacco."

"Lost my way, or most likely, I'd be at the 'eagle in Todtnau."

"But to come to the subject, supposin' is'n't a secret. "Tell me, what do you make o' the grass?" And he answer'd me, "Fodder!"

"Don't understand it," says I, "for the Lord has no cows up in Heaven!"

"Not precisely a cow," he remarked, "but helps and asses."

"See it up yonder, the star?" (11) and he pointed one out with his finger.

"There's the ass o' the Christmas Child (12) and Fridolin's heifers, (13)

"Bravatin' the starry air and waitin' for grass that I bring 'em."

"Grass doesn't grow there, nothin' grows but the Heavenly raisins.

"Milk and honey a runnin' in rivers, plenty as water. "But they're particular cattle, grass they must have every mornin'."

"Mouthfuls o' hay and drink from earthly fountains, they're used to."

"So, for them I'm a whettin' my seythe, and soon must be mowin'."

"Wouldn't it be worth while, if politely you'd offer to help me?"

So the Angel he talked, and this way, I answered the Angel.

"Hark ye, this it is, just, and I'll go with the greatest of pleasure."

"Folks from the town know nothin' about it; we write and we cypher."

"Reckon up money, that we can do, and measure and weigh out."

"Unload and unload, and eat and drink without any trouble."

"All that we want for the belly, in kitchen, pantry and cellar."

"Come in lots from every gate, in baskets and boxes. "Runs in every street and cries at every corner."

"Buy my cherries!" and "Buy my butter!" and "Look at my salad!"

"Buy my onions!" and "Here's y'r carrots!" and "Spinach and parsel!"

"Lucifer matches!" "Lucifer matches!" "Cabbage and Turnips!"

"Here's y'r umbrellas!" "Caraway seed and juniper berries!"

"Cheep for cash and all to be traded for sugar and coffee."

"Say Mr. Angel, didn't ever drink coffee? and how do you like it?"

"Stop with y'r nonsense!" then he said, but he couldn't help laughin'.

"No, we drink but the Heavenly air, and eat nothin' but raisins."

"Four on a day o' the week, and afterwards five on a Sunday."

"Come, if you want to go with me, now, for I'm off to my mowin'."

"Back o' Todtnau, there, on the grassy bolt (14) by the highway."

"Yes, Mr. Angel, that will I truly, seein' you're willin'."

"Seems to me that its cooler, give me y'r seythe for to carry."

"Here's a pipe and a pouch, you're welcome to smoke if you want to."

While I was talkin' "Poo-hoo!" (15) cried the Angel. A fiery man stood

Quicker than lightning beside me! "Light us the way to the village!"

Said he, and truly, before us, marched a burnin', the "Poo-hoo."

Overstock and rock, through the bushes, a travellin' torch-light.

"Handy, is n't it?" laughin' the angel said: "What are you doin'?"

Why do you nick at y'r flint? (16) You can light y'r pipe at the "Poo-hoo."

"Use him whenever you like, but it seems to me you're a frighten'd."

"You, and a Sunday's child as you are? do you think he will bite you?"

"No, he ha'n't bit me, but this you'll allow me to say, Mr. Angel."

"Half and half, I mistrust him, besides, my tobacco's a burnin'."

"That's a weakness o' mine; I'm a feared o' them fiery creatures."

"Give me seventy angels, instead o' this big burnin' devil."

"Really, it's dreadful," the angel says he, "that men are so silly."

"Fearful o' ghosts and spectres, and skeery without any reason."

"Two o' 'em only, is dangerous, two o' 'em hurtful to mankind."

"One o' 'em known by the name o' "Delusion" (17) and "Worry" (18) the other."

"Him Delusion, a dweller in wine; from cans and decanters."

"Up to the head he rises, and turns y'r sense to confusion."

"This is the ghost that leads you astray in forest and highway."

"Undermost, uppermost, hither and yonder, the ground is a rollin'."

"Bridges bendin' and mountains movin' and everything double."

"Hark ye, keep out of his way." "Aha!" I says to the Angel.

"There you prick me, but not to the blood: I see what you're after."

"Sotter am I, as a Judge, to be sure, I emptied my tankard."

"Once, at the Eagle, once, and the landlord (19) 'll tell you the same thing."

"Spusin' you doubt me, and now, pray tell me, who's the 'other'?"

"Who is the 'other'?" "Don't know without askin'!" answered the angel.

"He's a terrible Ghost! the Lord forbid you should meet him!"

"When you waken early, at four or five in the mornin'."

"There he stands a waitin' with burnin' eyes at y'r bed-side."

(11) The Star of Bethlehem.

(12) Our Saviour.

(13) Note.—According to an old legend, Fridolin (a favorite Saint with the German peasantry,) harnessed two young heifers to a mighty fir-tree and hauled it into the Rhine near Sackingen, thereby damming the river and forcing it to take a new course on the other side of the town.

(14) Note.—"Grassyholt" the Village Cemetery.

(15) Note.—"Poo-hoo," an onomatopoeic German peasant cry, is the nickname for the Devil.

(16) Note.—"Nick at y'r flint," the narrator, being in mortal dread, was lagging behind on pretence of striking a light.

(17) Note.—"Delusion," Intemperance.

(18) "Worry," an evil conscience.

(19) Not a very reliable authority.

"Gives you the time o' day with blazin' switches and pluckers."

"Even prayin' don't help, nor help all your *Ave Marias*!"

"W'en you begin 'em, he takes your jaws and claps 'em together."

"Look to Heaven!" he comes and blinds y'r eyes with his ashes.

"Be you hungry and eat! he poisons y'r soup with his wormwood."

"Take you a drink o' night! he squeezes gall in the tankard."

"Run like a stag! he follows as close on y'r trail as a blood hound."

"Creep like a shadow! he whispers, 'good, we had best take it easy.'"

"Kneels at y'r side in the church, and sits at y'r side in the tavern."

"Go wherever you will, there's Ghosts a hoverin' round you."

"Shut y'r eyes in y'r bed! they mutter, 'There's no need o' hurry.'"

"By and bye, you can sleep, but listen! 'We've somethin' to tell you.'"

"Have you forgot how you stole! and how you cheated the orphans!"

"Secretly stolen! and this and that 'other, and when they have finished."

"Say it over ag'in, and you get little good o' y'r slumber. So the Angel he talked, and, like iron under the hammer Sparkled and spurted the "Poo-hoo." (20) "Surely," I says to the Angel.

"Born on Sunday was I, and friendly, with many a preacher."

"Yet the Father protect me from these! Says he to me smilin'."

"Keep y'r conscience pure, it is better than crossin' and blessin'."

"Here we must part, for y'r way turns off and down to the village."

"Take the "Poo-hoo" along, but mind, put him out in the meadow."

"Lost he should run in the village, settin' fire to the stables."

"God be with you and keep you!" And then says I, "Mr. Angel."

"(God the Father, protect you. Be sure when you come to the city. (21)

"Christmas evenin', call, and I'll hold it an honor to see you."

"Raisins I'll have at y'r service, and hippocras (22) if you like it."

"Chilly's the air o' mornin', especially 'down by the river."

Day was breakin' by this, and right there was Todtnau before me!

Past and onward to Basle I wander'd out! the shade and the coolness.

When into Mambach I came, they bore a dead girl (23) to the grave yard.

After the Holy Cross and the faded banner o' Heaven (24) With the funeral garlands upon her, with sobbin' and weepin'.

Ah! but she'd heard what he said, "I'll reckon thee up when the time comes!"

Afterwards, Tuesday it was, I got safely back to my cousin.

But it turned out as he said, I'd somewhere "FORGOTTEN MY SNUFF BOX!" (25)

Cap Santé, 15th January, 1867.

## THE HUNCHBACKS.

They lived in a queer-looking shanty, the roof of which sloped down behind to the ground, and protruded in front like the peak of a fireman's cap. The walls were good, solid log ones however, that could keep out almost any pressure of storm, and bid defiance to Jack Frost. There was only one window in the place, and that was of little use, as it contained but a single pane of glass, badly broken, and stuffed with an old coat.

The Hunchbacks had not much furniture, and evidently were strongly in favor of home manufacture, as the little they had—to wit: two rough stools and a large article, that looked like an overgrown stool, but was called a table—bore token.

They slept upon a motley heap of old rags, that lay piled upon the floor in one corner of the hut, and they used the broad, old fire-place for what little cooking they did.

There were only two Hunchbacks—senior and junior—and they were of the masculine gender. They resembled each other considerably, inasmuch as they were both greatly deformed, wore very ragged clothes, and were very dirty.

Oh, no, they were not father and son! Hunchback senior had no son, and Hunchback junior had no—well, his father was dead; he had been dead several years, and the boy could not remember him. His mother was dead also. She, poor unfortunate creature, had been a drunkard. It was the old story, that has been so often repeated. Once she was young, fair, and happy, but whiskey ruined all, and for years before her death she led a beggar's life, wandering from place to place, and spending what she had begged in the purchase of liquor.

Hunchback junior had a tough bringing up. His mother used to take him around with her in order to excite pity among the people. Many a weary jaunt the tottering little fellow had over the country after whiskey money. One day he went crying to the saw-mill, where Hunchback senior was fireman, and told the men that his mother was sick on the side of the road not far off. The men were busy, and no one paid any attention to him except the dirty little fireman, who looked with pitying eyes at the lad, deformed so like himself, and trotted away with him to see what he could do for the sufferer.

The mill hands laughed, and shouted after

(20) Of course all this was very distasteful to the "Poo-hoo."

(21) The city, Basle.

(22) Note.—"Hippocras," a kind of preserved fruit.

(23) Note.—The same young girl mentioned above by one of the angels.

(24) The faded banner o' "Heaven" the sky over east.

(25) I rather think that the narrator "tarried too long at the wine-cup," in the "Tavern at Todtnau," and that all the above was a *reverie*. Be this as it may, however, to my mind it is a singularly beautiful poem and conveys an excellent moral.

them: "Hallo! There goes Hunchback senior and Hunchback junior!"

Thus they obtained the names, that stuck to them for a long time. When they reached the poor woman she was dead. Whiskey had done its work. The little fireman shrunk back in horror. The child rushed forward and flung himself upon the cold, ghastly corpse in an agony of grief. She had not been good to him in life, and had frequently beaten him cruelly when she was drunk, yet she was his mother and he loved her.

Hunchback senior gave the alarm, and crowds of people, uttering exclamations of horror, thronged to see the dead woman, who would exert themselves ere she died to prevent such a catastrophe. There was a brief inquiry into the cause of her death, and then she was buried. In the meantime the orphan boy clung to his friend the fireman.

"Who among you can take care of this boy?" was asked, after the clouds had been hastily thrown over the woman's coffin. It seemed at first as if nobody could. Mrs. Jones said she had more children now than she could manage, but if she was Mrs. Smith who had none, she'd be most happy to take the lad. Mrs. Smith could not see the matter in the same light as her friend, however.

While the subject was under discussion, Hunchback senior quietly led away the weeping orphan, and installed him as his companion in his humble hut. Some of the people said it was a shame to let the child go to such a den, but nobody tried to prevent his going.

Hunchback senior had been proprietor of his house and a square plot of ground around it for several years. Nobody knew where he had come from, and his age was a matter of much conjecture, the prevailing opinion being that he was somewhere between thirty and fifty years old.

He was not exactly a good looking man, irrespective of his bodily deformity. His features were coarse and irregular, and one of his eyes was not set straight, so he had to hold his head very much aside in order to bring his vision to a proper level. He had a great, bushy head of brown hair and immense, scraggy whiskers. With one notable exception, he had neither been shaved, nor had his hair been cut since he came into that section of the country.

Two years before the time he had adopted the boy, he was the victim of a very severe attack of—not illness, but love. Poor, lonely fellow, every morning as he jogged away to work he passed a tall, plump, shouldered, red-faced maiden, who was always engaged at that time in milking her father's cows. Soon, to his amazement, he found himself haunted day and night by a vision of the girl and the cows.

At first he used to wonder what made him think so much about these cows. There was a black cow, a spotted one, and an old gray one, and he actually walked over to the pasture field one Sunday, in order to satisfy his mind as to whether or not there was something extraordinary about them. He found three very ordinary looking animals, and went home shaking his head, and cogitating profoundly over the subject. Next morning he made a discovery; it was the girl, and not the cows, that had bewitched him. Sometimes he would stop and speak to her, and then, when she would smile and show her beautiful, gleaming teeth, he would hurry away as if he was frightened.

Thus matters went on until the cold weather came, and the girl no longer milked the cows in the field. He did not see her for several days, and became so uneasy and desperate, that his life seemed a burden to him. He went to a store and bought a razor. Then he hurried home, and, with an expression of the utmost determination, raised it to his throat, and began to shave himself.

It was a tough job. His whiskers were very very long, and he had not cut them off before he started to shave; so he rasped away at his devoted face, and groaned with pain, as he ripped off masses of whisker and blood. He did not remove his heavy moustache, but soaped the ends of it until they stood out in the most imperial style. He then cut about four inches of hair from one side of his head, and nearly three inches from the other side. It took him some time to staunch the blood that flowed from about fifty intersecting gashes upon his cheeks, after which, with a sigh of relief, he fished out a long-tailed, shabby-looking coat, put it on, and inspected himself in a broken bit of looking glass for a few minutes. Then he started away with the air of a man who had nerved himself up for a great undertaking.

When he reached the house he gave a thundering knock at the door, which was at once opened by the object of his affections. He twisted his ungainly form into the most uncouth shapes, and at first the girl did not recognize the fierce moustache and the scraped face.

"I've come to see if you'll be my—my—if you'll give me a drink of water!"

"Certainly," was the reply.

He received the water, and departed from the place in great perspiration.

"Tut, tut!" he grunted to himself when he had gone about a hundred yards, "that isn't what I went for!"