

clining, slowly and steadily, to the spectral side, when some new and startling evidence appeared.

Auguier proved that *subsequently* to the alleged delivery of the treasure into his hands, Mirabel had declared that it was still concealed in the ground, and had invited his two brothers-in-law from Pertuis to see it. Placing them at a little distance from the haunted spot, he made pretence of digging, but, suddenly raising a white shirt, which he had attached to sticks placed crosswise, he rushed towards them, crying out, "The ghost! the ghost!" One of these unlucky persons died from the impressions engendered by this piece of pleasantry. The survivor delivered this testimony.

The case now began to look less favourable for the spectre. It was hardly probable that Mirabel should take so unwarrantable a liberty with an apparition in which he believed, as to represent him, and that for no explainable purpose, by an old white shirt! Was it barely possible that Mirabel was, after all, a humbug, and that the whole story was a pure fabrication, for the purpose of obtaining damages from the well-to-do Auguier?

It does not appear to what astute judicial intellect this not wholly impossible idea presented itself. At all events, a new process was decreed, the great object of which was to discover, in the first instance, how and whence came the money into Mirabel's possession?

Under the pressure of this inquiry, the witness Paret was, at length, brought to confess: first, that she had never actually beheld one coin belonging to the supposed treasure; secondly, that she did not credit one word of Mirabel's story; thirdly, that, if she had already deposed otherwise it was at the earnest entreaty of Mirabel himself.

Two experts were then examined as to the alleged receipt. These differed in opinion as to its being in the handwriting of Auguier; but a third being added to the consultation, all three finally agreed that it was a well-executed forgery.

This, after, twenty months, three processes, and the examination of fifty-two witnesses, was fatal to the ghost. He was put out of court.

The final decree acquitted Auguier, and condemned Mirabel to the galleys for life, he having been previously submitted to the question. Under the torture, Mirabel confessed that one Etienne Barthélemy, a declared enemy of Auguier's, had devised the spectral fable, as a ground for the intended accusation, and, to substantiate the latter, had lent him (for exhibition) the sum of twenty thousand livres. By an after process, Barthélemy was sentenced to the galleys for life, and the witnesses Deleuil and Fourmière to be hung up by the armpits, in some public place, as false witnesses.

So far as records go, this singular case was the last in which, in French law-courts, the question of ghost, or no ghost, was made the subject of legal argument and sworn testimony.

LOST AND FOUND.

I WILL tell you a true and touching story which I heard not many years since, when I was staying in the north of England. In a small village, in the very heart of one of the largest colliery districts, lived two young people, whose names—well, I really forget what their names were, but it does not much matter; so, if you like, I will call them Margaret Blythe and Richard Stone.

Richard Stone's father had been a miner all his life, and the little Dick almost opened his eyes in the bowels of the earth. Nearly as soon as his little legs could carry him he toddled to the pit's mouth, and by the time he could lisped out a few intelligent phrases he had been down below in the shaft, and had begun to amuse his mother with wonderful and sometimes highly-coloured description of all he had seen, and all he fancied took place in the heart of the old mine. All the rough miners loved little Dick for his father's sake, and petted him for his own. And then years slipped away, and Dick was no longer a child,

but a strong healthy, active young man; and when his father, who was the foreman of the works, was away on account of illness or any other cause, there was no one under whom the rest of the men liked better to work, or by whom they would sooner be guided, than the foreman's son, young Dick Stone.

One evening, when young Dick was yet a child, his father, who happened to be returning rather late from a neighbouring village, heard a strange noise in the hedge which bordered the roadside. He stopped and listened, and then fancied it was a little stifled cry. He thought it must be some poor, half-starved animal which had wandered away from the miner's house and could not get back again, so he groped his way towards the hedge, for it was pitch dark, and felt among the soft, dead leaves. No, it certainly was not an animal—it moved, and felt warm, and was wrapped in some rough flannel. Just then the moon emerged from a thick, black bank of clouds, and its rays fell full upon the bundle which old Stone had now extricated from the hedge.

It was a little, golden-haired girl.

When the little one turned its eyes towards the old man it cried bitterly. The old man's hands were rough, but his heart was very warm. He thought of his bonny boy at home, and kissed away the little foundling's tears, and by the time he got to his cottage door there were no more tears, and the child was fast asleep underneath old Stone's thick jacket, very close to his heart.

"Wife," said the old man, when he opened the door, "I have brought you home a present. We are chosen out among all the rest round here to watch over and care for this poor little one. We have got a boy, my woman, here's a little girl. Some one has basely deserted the little darling, and if I had not happened to be passing and heard her cry, she would have been dead and cold by the morning. I think we both know our duty, and I know it is no good asking you what we ought to do."

Richard Stone's wife made no reply. She took the little child tenderly from her husband's arms, and when she had kissed the old man she sat down by the fire, undressed and re-clothed the child, and soothed it to sleep on her breast. The next morning the miner's cottage echoed with the babbling laughter of its new inmate.

The old miner and his wife resolved to adopt the foundling, and they called it Margaret. And so the little Margaret was restored to life, as it were, and found a home and affectionate parents.

The years stole on, and she played with her little foster-brother Dick. They were seldom, if ever, apart, and used to wander away, and tell one another stories in a small cave they had manufactured close by the pit's mouth; and Margaret opened her large blue eyes in astonishment as she listened to Dick's enthusiastic description of what it was all like below, and to his thrilling narratives which he had picked up from listening to the miners at their work.

And again the years stole on, and Dick was a tall, handsome young man, and Margaret's little sunny curls now fell in rich luxuriance down her back. Dick had no longer any time for stories or afternoons in the cave, out of which, by-the-bye, they had both most certainly grown; but when the bucket came to the top, and brought up the stalwart miner, there was a bright face awaiting him, and pretty Margaret Blythe walked home to the cottage by the side of Richard Stone.

They loved one another truly and deeply. They were no longer brother and sister now, and their kisses were less publicly offered and accepted; and so it was that young Dick asked his parents' consent to his marriage with Margaret, and from his father and mother received the same reply—"Bless you both!"

It was the dearest wish on earth of the old people to see Richard and Margaret man and wife, and there was greater joy than ever in the cottage now, and the wedding-day was fixed.

It was to be a great occasion, this wedding-day of Richard and Margaret; and according to all accounts there would be very little work done in the mine. The young people were dearly loved, and the miners had prepared an ovation in a small way for their favourites.

The wedding-day arrived, and a bright and sunny one it was. The happy couple were attended to church by a large crowd, all dressed in their Sunday best, and soon there was not even standing room to be had; and when the service was over there was a still larger crowd standing in the churchyard. When young Dick Stone came out of church, with his fair young bride leaning on his arm, at a signal from one of the oldest miners there was a great, ringing cheer, and before it had died away among the hills, Dick's hand had been seized by a hundred rough and honest men, and the women were kissing one another, and crying for joy.

In the course of the afternoon, the young couple received state visits from their friends, and each one brought some little, useful present in memory of the day. And then Dick prepared to offer his own gift, which he had kept back as a pleasant surprise for Margaret.

Accordingly, he told a few of his most confidential friends that he wanted to slip away to get the present, and asked them not to take any notice of his absence.

"I shall only be gone a little time," he said. "Keep up the merriment till I return."

They watched him out of the cottage, and saw him go across the fields in the direction of the old mine. On and on he went, and at last he was out of sight, and his friends went back to keep up the merriment.

Richard Stone never returned. They waited for him that evening; they grew anxious when night came on; and the next morning many a stout heart trembled. They searched for him, called, but there was no answer. Day succeeded day, months dawned and died, a year passed away, and still Richard Stone never returned.

Every hole and corner of the mine and the whole neighbourhood round was searched, but with no effect. There was not even a trace of the lost man, and not one who could agree about his fate.

Poor Margaret nearly died. It was an awful shock for her, and for weeks and weeks she was delirious, and not expected to live an hour. She recovered, and arose from her bed an aged and an altered woman. Her whole life was now devoted to her dear old friends, to whom also the loss of their dear son was a terrible blow. They never dared to allude to poor Richard. But Margaret was often heard to mutter to herself—

"I am sure he will return!"

Years and years after the terrible occurrences above related, the circumstances of Richard Stone's extraordinary disappearance were known to very few of the inhabitants of the little mining village. Long and long ago Margaret Blythe had stood in turn at the death-bed of her benefactors, and now they were asleep in a warm corner of the little churchyard. Almost all the friends who had come to offer their congratulations on that fatal wedding-day had died. Little children who had scattered flowers before her and her bonny young husband on their road from church to home were now strong and hearty men and women—some, indeed, pretty far advanced in years. A new generation had sprung up in the village, and the sad story of Richard Stone's disappearance had become one of those mythical old women's stories, in which few could place much credence, so exaggerated had it become from constant repetition. It was almost tradition now.

At last it turned out that one of the principal mines in the place had never been thoroughly explored, and there was a rumour of some grand discovery of new passages in a wheel which most imagined was thoroughly worked out.

The new excavations turned out to be thoroughly successful. Landlord and tenants were in the highest spirits; and all seemed to be going on happily enough.

One day, when the new works had for some little time been put in hand, a signal was suddenly given from the bottom of the pit to lower the shaft. The alarm bell was rung; the foreman of the works waited anxiously at the pit's mouth for the first intelligence, and did what he could to allay the terror of the villagers, who were flocking, in the greatest consternation, to