

am certain that she was the cause why I deemed a visit to my uncle's one of the most blissful events in Christendom.

As Kate had remarked, Uncle Bob had lately inhabited Merton Abbots, an old rambling country-house, standing in its own grounds, and surrounded by almost a forest of trees, which gave it truly a somewhat supernatural aspect. By invitation, my sisters and I had been asked to spend a fortnight there, and, on the afternoon following the receipt of Maud's letter, we started.

"Well, Ned," said Uncle Bob, his bright gray eyes twinkling and gleaming from beneath his shaggy brows as he raised them from his dinner plate,—"I hear from Maud—you needn't blush, girl—that you are on the *qui vive* to accept my conditions?"

"I am, sir."

"It's a shame," broke out Lucie, backed by Maude.

"My dears, it isn't compulsory," chuckled Uncle Bob. "He can refuse, if he likes."

"But he doesn't," said I.

"Good! Now I propose that we pass the evening telling ghost stories."

Despite feminine protest, Uncle Bob kept his word. He related the most creeping tales he knew; told of corpse-lights and candles burning dim, and capped off by reading the most thrilling and wondrous ghost story extant—Bulwer's "Haunters and the Haunted."

"Well, Ned," he chuckled, glancing at me, when we prepared to separate for the night; "have I shaken your nerves?"

"Not a whit, sir," I answered, staunchly.

"Good! If you 'lay the ghost,' you shall take Maud with my blessing—he, he, he!" he cackled going up stairs. "By the way, should the spirits come it too strong, Ned, I've had the room opposite prepared, to which you can beat a retreat."

"I am sure he has concocted some trick," whispered Lucie. "It's like him. He'll play the ghost himself; but I'll keep a watch on his door."

I laughed at the idea, though I really thought it by no means improbable; and, as composed as ever I had been in my life, entered the haunted chamber.

Now most haunted chambers are large antiquated, wain-coted, and dark, with four-post bedsteads and funeral hangings. This on the contrary, was small, cheerfully papered, with a bright French bedstead. There was nothing ghostly about it.

"I wonder if he is tricking me?" I reflected, as, with a little difficulty, I shut the door.

It closed so exactly, that it could not be easily opened, which assured me that none could enter without my hearing them. Besides this, it bolted inside.

I looked under the bed, examined the walls, and also the window, which was of double glass, like those in law chambers, to exclude the noise from without. It was fastened; no one could gain access by that means, for it looked upon a dead wall, and was over thirty feet from the ground.

Convinced nothing human could take me by surprise, and utterly discrediting the supernatural, I undressed, lighted my night lamp, and went to bed.

"I fancy I see it all," I thought as I laid down. "He imagined he would frighten me into displaying the white feather, and I'd cry peccavi. Not if I know it, when Maud is the prize to be won."

Thinking of Maud, and Maud alone, I fell asleep.

I do not know how long I slept, but suddenly I awakened with the sense of a fearful oppression on my brain, the air felt close and heavy about me, and though anxious to move, to break, as it were, the spell, I seemed to lack all strength to do so.

"What can it be? Am I ill?" I reflected; then abruptly recognising the room, remembered why I was there. "Is it the ghost?" I murmured, trying to smile as I turned towards the lamp. Was it the fault of my eyes, or did it burn blue and dim? Most assuredly it did; its flame was pale and sickly. I was watching it in surprise, when, giving a flicker it went out, leaving me in darkness.

Scarcely had it done so, than a violent trembling seized me, accompanied by increased difficulty of respiration. Did spirits really exist? Was the room haunted? Was I being tricked?

No; I was assured not the latter, for no human power could make me feel as I did; while during the lamp's burning, I had seen the room was just as I had first beheld it. I laid a space, considering, I would have given worlds to move, yet could not. My faculties appeared gone. I felt like one slowly dying from congestion of the brain, produced by suffocation. It was just the sensation Uncle Bob had described all felt who had tried to sleep in that room.

The pain in my head and chest grew at last so intense that I entertained serious thoughts of retreating to the other room, until I recollected Maud.

"What!" I reflected, "beat an ignominious retreat, to be the eternal butt of Uncle Bob, and lose Maud? Never! I'll remain here until morning, though I die!"

Resolutely shutting my eyes, I had recourse to the many modes to court sleep, and, for a space was unconscious. Only for a space. With a violent throes of the body, I again opened my eyes—oh, heaven, to what horror! The darkness around me was no longer a void. It was peopled by myriads of forms, some luminous, others awful, hideous. Wherever I turned, they confronted me, jibbering, wriggling, dashing themselves into my face.

I writhed and groaned, as, ineffectually, I strove to shove them back.

"There are ghosts," I cried, "and this room is the abode of the cursed!"

At the sound of my voice, all vanished, all was darkness. Then, far off, appeared a spot of light. As it approached, it appeared in magnitude, until it grew into a face. But, merciful heaven, what a face! As long as I live, I shall never forget it. Its color was of one risen from the grave—of one who had long been dead. The hue was blue, stony, livid; lips, hair, eyes, were all of the same awful tint. But the most terrible yet was the fearful luminosity it possessed, which, radiating from it, sent a peculiar light around. Slowly, slowly, it advanced, my eyeballs dilating painfully as it did so, though I laid powerless from horror. It reached my bedside, paused, and raised two long, bony hands of the same nature as its face. I shrieked, divining its intent. In vain. With a bound, it was upon me, its bony fingers clutching my throat, its knees dug in my chest, its rolling countenance pressed close, close upon mine.

It was too awful to bear. Uttering a cry, making a violent effort, I leaped up, seized my dressing-gown, pulled open the door, and darted into the other room, where I fell on the bed, panting and almost insensible.

With daylight, the visions of the night lost power, and I felt somewhat ashamed of my retreat, and experienced much nervousness in facing my uncle, though own to a defeat I determined I would not. When I at last ventured into the breakfast-room, Uncle Bob hailed my pale face with a loud burst of merriment.

"By George, he has seen the ghost!" he cried.

The girls, especially Maud, were full of compassion and questions.

"It is nothing," I said, "except that I slept ill, having had night-mare; but"—and I looked at my uncle—"I shall sleep there again to-night."

"You will?" he asked seriously. "You'd better not, Ned."

"With your permission, I will."

"Oh, certainly; but I should advise you not," I would not admit having seen anything nor, listen to the girls' entreaties for me to abandon the idea of another trial, and that night was once more shut and bolted in the haunted room.

I had, however, no intention to sleep, but to watch until dawn. Lighting my lamp, I sat down on the table, and opened the book I had managed to procure from the drawing-room. I had taken the first to hand, and it proved not very amusing. Nevertheless, I resolutely set to work.

One, two o'clock struck, when finding the light bad, I looked up: the lamp had begun to burn as it had the previous night. The involuntary start I gave also told me that the oppressive feeling had possession of me. Oh, heaven, was that awful spectre again to appear?—those bony hands to be again about my throat? Had I courage to wait? Yes, to win Maud.

Strengthening myself thus, I waited. My brain increased in dizziness. Yes, it was just the same; I could hardly breathe. In a few seconds, I knew the lamp would expire, and I should be in darkness. Going to the window, I drew back the heavy curtains. The moon shone brightly. All without, was bright, cool, fresh. Ah, if I could but breathe it for a space! Why not open the window? Mounting a chair, for the catch was high up, I tried, but the fastening, from rust or other cause, would not move. My brain swam as I got down, and reeling, I fell, coming in such violent contact with the glass, that my elbow smashed not only an inner, but an outer pane too.

My first feeling was regret at the accident; my next rapture; for, kneeling, I literally drank the pure cool, night air that rushed in.

"It is like wine," I cried. "Now can I meet the ghost!"

I rose up. Why, what was the meaning of this? The lamp was burning as brightly as ever. The oppression had gone from my chest. The room was as unghostlike as it had ever been. I stood bewildered, until my eyes resting upon the "Discourse on Mines," an idea flashed across my mind. I pondered, rejecting this explanation of my visions, accepting that, until, with a cry of rapture, I exclaimed, "By jove, I have it! It's a trick, after all—a clever one, and does credit to the knowledge and invention of the perpetrator. But Maud—Maud is mine!"

Having made one or two little alterations in the apartment, I went to bed, and never slept better in my life. When I entered the breakfast-room the next morning, Uncle Bob cried, "Hallo! I say, you haven't see the ghost?"

"Excuse me, sir, I have; and—have laid it!"

"By what means, I pray?"

"By breaking the window, and forcing open the stove register."

"Oh, ho, youngster! then you discovered the trick?"

"That you had so hermetically sealed up the room from the entrance of air," I answered, "that after I had breathed all that was breathable, I was seized with something very like asphyxia, which, by producing suffocation and surcharging the brain with blood, created the fearful visions of last night. I've laid the ghost Uncle Bob, but it was a cruel one."

"Never mind, lad; you're a brick, and most decidedly deserve the prize."

"I have won," I laughed. "Maud," I added, taking her in my arms, and giving her a hearty kiss, "get your trousseau ready, as I shall be married at once; for now I have ventilated it there will be no more ghosts in Uncle Bob's Haunted Room."

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS.

ENERGETIC TEACHING.—A young student from Wesleyan University, teaching at East Glastonbury, Ct., brutally maltreated one of his pupils, a girl of fifteen years, striking her heavy blows and seizing her by the hair of her head. The citizens were very indignant, and about fifty of them met the teacher in the street at night and mobbed him, but he escaped with a few bruises. The next day he settled with his pupil by paying \$25, and was warned out of the town on pain of tar and feathers.

A CASE OF SOLAR ATTRACTION.—It is said by a gossiping correspondent that the late astronomer of Florence, Donati, made the discovery by means of a delicate instrument that the earth is being pulled into the sun. When the transatlantic cable was laid the movement was accelerated. His conclusion was this: That in twelve years the climate of Europe would become tropical, if not unfit for human existence, and that in a few more years this globe which, with all its faults, we love so well would be precipitated into the sun.

AMATEUR JUSTICE.—Mr. R. A. Kinglake, J. P., of Weston-super-Mare, advertises in a local paper that he has established a "Court of Reconciliation for the prompt settlement of petty disputes," and that "he will preside every Monday morning, at the Town Hall, to hear and determine in private, and without expense, disputes between persons resident in Weston-super-Mare and its neighborhood. His aim will be not only to do justice, but also to secure the restoration of peace and good-will between the parties. Persons dissatisfied with the decisions will have it in their power to carry the matter into a court of law."

STRONG IN DEATH.—Donald McGregor, a notorious sheep stealer in the North Highlands, being at last overtaken by the grim tyrant, was visited by the minister of the parish, whose appearance, however, was by no means agreeable to him. The holy man exhorted the dying Highlander to reflect upon the black catalogue of his sins, before it was too late, otherwise he would have a tremendous account to give at the great day of retribution, when all the crimes he had committed in this world would appear in dreadful array as evidence to his guilt. "Och, sir!" cried the dying man, "and will a' the sheeps, and the cows, and ilka things Donald has helped herself to be there. 'Undoubtedly,'" replied the parson. "Then let ilka shentleman tak her nain, and Donald will be an honest man again."

THE TRUTH ABOUT KOSSUTH.—A cousin of Louis Kossuth contradicts in a letter to the Chicago *Tribune* the statement that Kossuth is in the impecunious strait the papers have placed him in. He is not compelled to teach for a livelihood, having sufficient means of his own to live upon snugly and pleasantly. His two sons who live with him, are civil engineers, and earn largely more than enough for their own support, and are but too glad to share what they have with their beloved father. He is now seventy-two, and his hair is perfectly white. He is by no means forgotten by his countrymen; on the contrary, though not in accord with the present order of things between Hungary and Austria, he nevertheless enjoys the highest esteem of his countrymen.

A WAGER.—The Duc de Feltré has just won by a neck an extraordinary wager. He backed himself to drive his trotter in a light carriage to Lyons before the comte Philippe de Nevalis would reach the place on his velocipede. The distance was 356 kilometres, or 222 miles. The distance was run in 60 hours, and was won by a neck by the Duc de Feltré, who drove into the courtyard of the Grand Hotel at Lyons just two minutes before the count rattled in on his velocipede. The first day's journey was 80 kilometres, or 50 miles; the second was 104 (65 miles), and the last day both competitors ran 172 kilometres, or 107 miles. Neither the horse nor the man seemed much beat by the long race, and the Count is still so confident that he offers to back himself for a thousand louis over the same course again.

SELF-DESTRUCTION.—There are, on an average 400 cases of self-destruction per annum, costing the Paris municipal budget a mean sum of 400 francs each on account of medical fees, apothecaries' bills, burial expenses, and rewards. The suicides, unhappily, being at present rather prevalent, are original. One at Passy revealed an unfortunate who destroyed himself by drinking sulphuric acid; he was in good circumstances, had a weakness to dress himself in threadbare garments, for which he atoned to society by purchasing his wadding sheets in advance. A John Anderson and his wife, both nearly eighty, committed self-destruction by stuffing wadding steeped in chloroform into their mouths, after previously lighting a pan of charcoal. They asked, also, pardon of society, and begged to be buried in a common coffin, and in their ordinary clothes. He was a banker. Indeed, between flights and suicides, Paris will not have a banker left.

ANTHROPOPHAGY.—Anthropophagy and its origin find an ingenious explanation from the pen of M. Joulin, a Parisian doctor. M. Joulin holds that in the primitive ages, when man was unprovided with weapons, he satisfied his voracious appetite with the weakest of his brethren, as being less capable of resistance than the beasts of the field. As civilisation crept on, members of a tribe ceased to eat their own people, but chose those of some different community whom they might have been able

to overpower. By-and-by, when weapons of defence and attack came into use, men found their own race more difficult to overcome, and accordingly turned for their daily nourishment to animals as less capable of defending themselves by artificial assistance. From this M. Joulin argues that to kill one's own kind from hunger, and for the victor to eat the vanquished, was quite natural and excusable.

YOUNGER BROTHERS' FATE.—It is related that an English lord, on an adventurous journey in the East, was received by the chief of a large tribe which trade had brought in contact with Great Britain. The barbaric potentate was unsparring in attentions to his distinguished guest. The lord was quite unable to understand why so much pains had been taken to honor him. His entertainer finally threw light on the subject by remarking that the English custom for keeping the aristocracy strong and powerful was similar to their own. "With us," he continued, "we put to death all the younger brothers; you degrade them and leave them to starve. It accounts to the same thing—concentrating power in one at the expense of the rest of the family. But you perceive our practice is far superior to yours, and I have no doubt your king will adopt it at your recommendation."

"A ROSARY OF GLEES."—An epistolary curiosity written by General Oliver, of Salem, includes the following extraordinary combination of song titles: "Friend of My Soul"—"With glad delight and joyful heart, will I join my 'Comrades dear' of the 'Tuneful Choir' in 'Undisturbed song of pure concert,' and 'Harmony Divine,' and led by 'Glorious Apollo' 'Strike again the lyre,' and 'Loudly sound the golden wire' for the dear sake of pleasant 'Auld lang syne.' Ah, 'Friend of my soul,' whither have fled those 'Happy days,' 'The days we never, never more shall see?' How often 'In this lonely vale of streams' do I think of them, 'In tears, with heart oppressed with grief,' and 'with earnest longing of a sorrowing soul,' again do 'I wish to tune my quivering lyre.' 'Ah! well-a-day!' 'Are those white hours forever fled,' 'That led me up the roseate steep of youth,' when 'All by the shady greenwood tree,' while 'The radiant Ruler of the day,' the 'Sun, was up,' and 'When winds breathed soft along the silent deep, I heard the 'Foresters sound the cheerful horn,' and bade a 'Welcome to the sons of harmony.'—'Ah! yes, dear Jack,' how often 'When the moon shines bright, in the clear cold night,' 'Sad memory brings the light of other days around me!'"

THE SECRET OF ECONOMY.—A good paradox is sometimes refreshing especially if it be as reasonable as one just given to the world by a French dramatic author. At the moment when most households are convulsed by questions of economy, and the lavish expenditure of housekeepers or cooks is a matter for regret and perplexity, this audacious person stands up for extravagant cooks. He has, however, some excuse for the immoral eccentricity. Having lately engaged a cook, and being accustomed to verify his expenses daily, he soon perceived that his new acquisition was saving for him at the rate of 50 per cent. The fowls she supplied, according to a system of housekeeping in use abroad, were charged at half the price demanded by her predecessor, and every other item in her housebook was equally moderate. She was besides an accomplished artist. Thus, supplied with excellent dinners at the lowest possible price, the dramatist's satisfaction with his household arrangements was at its height, when a Commissioner of Police, followed by several of his subordinates, appeared to arrest his domestic treasure. She proved to be one of a gang of women employed by an association of thieves to gain the confidence of householders by a combination of economy and culinary skill, with a view to the introduction of their male confederates into their master's dwellings by means of keys made from wax models taken by themselves. Her disenchanted employer means to look out for a cook who will rob him above board.

CHARACTER OF DOGS.—Some very painful evidence affecting the character of dogs was given on Wednesday in a poaching case heard by the Leamington magistrates. Trained dogs, it seems, are let out to poachers at a shilling a night. These unprincipled animals, it was stated, had quite lost all feeling of attachment to one particular person, and will go out with anybody provided he carries rabbit-nets. This is a sad falling off from the dog of old days, whose habit was to stand—

"With eye upraised, his master's looks to scan,
The joy, the solace, and the aid of man,
The rich man's guardian and the poor man's friend,
The only creature faithful to the end."

Thus sang the poet Crabbe, who would sing to another tune had he witnessed the degeneration of dogs which has taken place since he sketched them in these glowing colors. There is something, too, inexpressibly low in following any one merely because he carries "rabbit-net." It would be degrading to the dog to leave his master even to follow any one carrying a boar-spear or other deadly weapon to be used in combat with a dangerous beast; but that a dog should have so lost his self-respect as not to be able to withstand the temptation of going with a stranger bearing a net to trap a weak-minded and diminutive creature like a rabbit is almost incredible.