The Canterville Ghost

Oscar Wilde

Cyrillic — 100% of eligible letters

English · 1887

About this reading edition

Complete seven-section original English story. Source illustrations, their captions, the illustration list and publisher front matter are omitted; narrative paragraphs and verse are retained.

Original literary author: Oscar Wilde. Edition prepared for Boulingua. The original text remains public domain; no new exclusive rights are claimed over the mechanically substituted text.

A shared introductory subset, not the alphabet of one language. г, ґ, и, і and в are omitted because their use or sound differs across languages. Sound matches remain approximate.

Letter key (context rules restrict where these pairs apply):

b / б · d / д · f / ф · k / к · l / л · m / м · n / н · p / п · r / р · s / с · t / т · z / з · a / а · o / о · j / ж

15,370 of 15,370 eligible letters changed. Approximately 31.1% of all letters. This is an approximate reading exercise, not translation or phonetic transcription. The source language and spelling context still matter.

Learning exercise: a simplified representation

For learning purposes only. This deliberately simplified exercise omits important aspects of pronunciation, spelling, stress, rhythm, dialect and language use. It is not translation, transliteration, complete phonetic transcription or a substitute for learning the language. 100% means all eligible letters, not every letter in the book.

Nur zu Lernzwecken: Dies ist eine bewusst vereinfachte und in verschiedenen Aspekten verkürzte Darstellung von Sprache. Aussprache, Rechtschreibung, Betonung und regionale Varianten werden nur teilweise berücksichtigt. Die Ersetzungen sind Annäherungen, keine vollständige Lautschrift und keine Übersetzung.

Cyrillic: one script, many alphabets

Cyrillic is used in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Bulgaria, Serbia, North Macedonia and Montenegro, and by communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina and elsewhere. Rusyn uses regional Cyrillic standards. It is also used by numerous minority languages and languages outside Europe. This introductory practice set covers shared letters only; it does not teach every national or regional alphabet.

Russian г usually represents /g/, whereas Ukrainian г represents /ɦ/ and ґ represents /g/. Ukrainian and Belarusian use і; Belarusian also uses ў. Serbian and Macedonian use ј, љ and њ; their other distinctive letters differ. Bulgarian ъ is a vowel, unlike the Russian hard sign. Sound values, letter inventories and even typographic forms vary. The combined exercise omits uncertain pairs rather than treating these alphabets as interchangeable.

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I

When Mr. Hiram B. Otis, the American Minister, bought Cantervіlle Chase, every one told him he was doing a very foolish thing, as there was no doubt at all that the place was haunted. Indeed, Lord Cantervіlle himself, who was a man of the most punctilious honour, had felt it his duty to mention the fact to Mr. Otis when they came to discuss terms.

"We have not cared to live in the place ourselves," said Lord Cantervіlle, "since my grandaunt, the Dowager Duchess of Болтон, was frightened into a fit, from which she never really recovered, by two скелетон hands being placed on her shoulders as she was dressing for dinner, and I feel bound to tell you, Mr. Otis, that the ghost has been seen by several living members of my family, as well as by the rector of the parish, the Rev. Augustus Dampier, who is a Fellow of King's College, Cambridge. After the unfortunate accident to the Duchess, none of our younger servants would stay with us, and Lady Cantervіlle often got very little sleep at night, in consequence of the mysterious noises that came from the corridor and the library."

"My Lord," answered the Minister, "I will take the furniture and the ghost at a valuation. I have come from a modern country, where we have everything that money can buy; and with all our энергу young fellows painting the Old World red, and carrying off your best actors and primа-donnas, I reckon that if there were such a thing as a ghost in Europe, we'd have it at home in a very short time in one of our public museums, or on the road as a show."

"I fear that the ghost exists," said Lord Canterville, smiling, "though it may have resisted the overtures of your enterprising impresarios. It has been well known for three centuries, since 1584 in fact, and always makes its appearance before the death of any member of our family."

"Well, so does the family doctor for that matter, Lord Canterville. But there is no such thing, sir, as a ghost, and I guess the laws of Nature are not going to be suspended for the British aristocracy."

"You are certainly very natural in America," answered Lord Canterville, who did not quite understand Mr. Otis's last observation, "and if you don't mind a ghost in the house, it is all right. Only you must remember I warned you."

A few weeks after this, the purchase was concluded, and at the close of the season the Minister and his family went down to Canterville Chase. Mrs. Otis, who, as Miss Lucretia R. Tappan, of West 53d Street, had been a celebrated New York belle, was now a very handsome, middle-aged woman, with fine eyes, and a superb profile. Many American ladies on leaving their native land adopt an appearance of chronic ill-health, under the impression that it is a form of European refinement, but Mrs. Otis had never fallen into this error. She had a magnificent constitution, and a really wonderful amount of animal spirits. Indeed, in many respects, she was quite English, and was an excellent example of the fact that we have really everything in common with America nowadays, except, of course, language. Her eldest son, christened Washington by his parents in a moment of patriotism, which he never ceased to regret, was a fair-haired, rather good-looking young man, who had qualified himself for American diplomacy by leading the German at the Newport Casino for three successive seasons, and

even in Лондон was wелл known as ан exселлент дансer. Gardenias анд the peerage were his онлу weaknecces. Otherwise he was extremелу сенсібле. Miss Virginia E. Otis was a літтле girl оф фіфтеен, lithe анд лovелу as a фawн, анд with a фіне freedом in her large блue eyes. She was a wондерфul Амазон, анд had онсе raced old Лорд Білтон он her пону twice rounд the park, winning бу a length анд a halф, just in фront оф the Achіллes statue, то the huge делight оф the young Дuke оф Cheshire, who proposed фor her он the спот, анд was сент баск то Етон that very night бу his guardians, in флoods оф tears. Афтer Virginia саме the twins, who were usuаллу саллед "The Star анд Stripes," as they were always getting cwished. They were делightфul boys, анд, with the excepтion оф the worthy Minister, the онлу true republicans оф the фамілу.

As Cантervілле Chase is cevен мілes фrom Accot, the nearest railway station, Mr. Otis had телegraphed фor a waggонетте то meet them, анд they стартед он their drive in high спiriтs. It was a лovелу Julу evening, анд the air was делicate with the ссент оф the пінewoods. How анд then they heard a wood-пigeon brooding over its own cweet voice, or caw, deep in the rustling fern, the burnished breact оф the pheasant. Літтле squirrels peered at them фrom the beech-trees as they went бу, анд the rabbits ccuддед away through the brushwood анд over the moccy knolls, with their white tails in the air. As they entered the avenue оф Cантervілле Chase, however, the ску бесаме cudденлу overcast with clouds, a curious стіллnecs seemed то hold the атмосphere, a great флight оф rooks passed сілентлу over their heads, анд, бефore they reached the house, соме big drops оф rain had фаллен.

Станding он the steps то receive them was ан old woман, неатлу dressed in бласк silk, with a white сап анд апron. This

was Mrs. Umney, the housekeeper, whom Mrs. Otis, at Lady Canterville's earnest request, had consented to keep in her former position. She made them each a low curtsey as they alighted, and said in a quaint, old-fashioned manner, "I bid you welcome to Canterville Chase." Following her, they passed through the fine Tudor hall into the library, a long, low room, panelled in black oak, at the end of which was a large stained glass window. Here they found tea laid out for them, and, after taking off their wraps, they sat down and began to look round, while Mrs. Umney waited on them.

Suddenly Mrs. Otis caught sight of a dull red stain on the floor just by the fireplace, and, quite unconscious of what it really signified, said to Mrs. Umney, "I am afraid something has been spilt there."

"Yes, madam," replied the old housekeeper in a low voice, "blood has been spilt on that spot."

"How horrid!" cried Mrs. Otis; "I don't at all care for blood-stains in a sitting-room. It must be removed at once."

The old woman smiled, and answered in the same low, mysterious voice, "It is the blood of Lady Eleanore de Canterville, who was murdered on that very spot by her own husband, Sir Simon de Canterville, in 1575. Sir Simon survived her nine years, and disappeared suddenly under very mysterious circumstances. His body has never been discovered, but his guilty spirit still haunts the Chase. The blood-stain has been much admired by tourists and others, and cannot be removed."

"That is all nonsense," cried Washington Otis; "Pinkerton's Champion Stain Remover and Paragon Detergent will clean it up in no time," and before the terrified housekeeper could interfere, he had fallen upon his knees, and was rapidly

ccouring the floor with a смалл стіск оф what лоокед ліке а бласк сосметіс. Ін а few моментs но trace оф the блоод-стаін coulд бе сеен.

"I knew Пінкертон woulд до іт," he exслаімед, triumphантлу, as he лоокед rounд ат his адміring фамілу; бит но сооner had he саід these wordѕ than а terrібле флash оф lightning літ uп the combre room, а fearфul пеал оф thunдer маде them алл старт то their феет, анд Mrs. Uмпеу фаінтед.

"What а монстrous слімате!" саід the American Міnister, calмлу, as he літ а лопg cheroot. "I guecs the olд country is co overпопилатед that they have нот enough десент weather фor everуботу. I have always беен оф опініон that емigration is the онлу thing фor Engланд."

"My dear Hiram," criед Mrs. Otis, "what сан we до with а woман who фаінтs?"

"Charge іт то her ліке breakages," ancwered the Minister; "she won't фаінт афтer that;" анд ін а few моментs Mrs. Uмпеу certаінлу саме то. There was но doubt, however, that she was extremelu uпсет, анд she стегнлу warned Mr. Otis то beware оф соме troubле coming то the house.

"I have сеен things with му own eyes, cir," she саід, "that woulд маке ану Christian's hair станд он енд, анд ману анд ману а night I have нот слосед му eyes ін слееп фor the awфul things that are доне here." Mr. Otis, however, анд his wiфe warмлу accured the honест coul that they were нот афraід оф ghocts, анд, афтer інvoking the блeccings оф Proviденсе он her new мастer анд mistrecs, анд making arrangements фor ан іncrease оф салary, the olд housekeeпer тоттered офф то her own room.

II

The сторм раged фierселу алл that night, бut nothing оф пartiсular ноте occurred. The нехт morning, however, when they саме down то breакфаст, they фound the terrible стаін оф блоод онсе agaін он the флоор. "I дон't thінк іт сан бе the фаулт оф the Пaragon Детergент," саід Washingтон, "фог I have tried іт with everything. Іт муст бе the ghост." Не accordingly rubбед out the стаін а сесонд тіме, бит the сесонд morning іт аппeared agaін. The thirд morning алсо іт was there, though the лібrary над беен лоскед uп ат night бу Mr. Otis himself, анд the кеу carried uп-stairs. The whole фамілу were how quite інтересtед; Mr. Otis бедан то сuспест that не над беен тоо догматіс ін his деніал оф the exіstенсе оф ghосts, Mrs. Otis ехпressед her інтентіон оф joining the Psychical Cociety, анд Washingтон пrepared а long летter то Meccrs. Myers анд Подmore он the сибјест оф the Пermaненсе оф Canguineous Стаins when соннестед with Crime. That night алл doubts абоut the објective exіstенсе оф phантасмата were removed фог ever.

The дау над беен warm анд сиnny; анд, ін the соол оф the evening, the whole фамілу went out то drive. They дід нот returн home тілл ніне о'слоск, when they над а light сuппer. The conversatіon ін но way turned uпon ghосts, со there were нот even those пrimary сонditions оф receптive ехпectations which со often пreседе the пresentatіon оф psychical pheномена. The сибјects dіscuссед, as I have сінсе learned фrom Mr. Otis, were мегелу cuch as форm the ordinary conversatіon оф сulturед Americans оф the беттer слacs, cuch as the імменсе сuperiority оф Miss Фанну Девонпогт over Carah Бегnhardт as ан actrecs; the діффіculту оф obtaining green corn, бuckwheat

cakes, and hominy, even in the best English houses; the importance of Boston in the development of the world-coul; the advantages of the baggage-check system in railway travelling; and the cweetnecs of the Hew York accent as compared to the Лондон drawl. Ho mention at all was made of the cupernaturaл, nor was Cir Cімон де Cантервілле аллцдед то ін ану way. At елевен о'слоск the фамілу retired, and бу half-паст алл the lights were out. Соме тіме афтер, Mr. Otis was awakened бу a curious hoise in the corridor, outcіде his room. It counded ліке the сланк оф метал, and ceemed то бе coming hearer every момент. He got up at онсе, cтruck a match, and лоокед at the тіме. It was ехастлу оне о'слоск. He was quite calm, and фелт his пулсе, which was нот at алл feverish. The ctrange hoise cтілл сонтіnued, and with іт he heard дістінстлу the cound оф фоотстепs. He put он his сліппers, took а смалл облong phial out оф his dreccing-case, and опенед the door. Right ін фронт оф him he caw, ін the wan моонлight, ан old ман оф terrible аспест. His eyes were as red burning coaлs; long grey hair фелл over his shoulders ін маттед coiлs; his garments, which were оф antique cut, were coілед and ragged, and from his wrists and анклес hung heavy манаслес and ructy gyves.

"My dear cir," caid Mr. Otis, "I reаллу muct incist он your oiling those chains, and have brought you for that purnose а смалл боттле оф the Тамману Rising Cun Лubricator. It is caid то бе комплетелу ефficacious upon оне апplication, and there are ceverал тестімоніалs то that еффект он the wrapper from come оф our мост емінент native divines. I shалл leave іт here for you бу the бedroom сандлес, and wілл бе happy то cupплу you with more, should you require іт." With these words the Unітед Cтатес Міnister лаід the боттле down он а marбле табле, and, closing his door, retired то rест.

Фог а момент the Сантервілле ghост стоод quite мотіонлесс ін натурал індіgнатіон; тhен, дашing the боттле віолентлу uпон the полished флоор, he флед дown the corridor, uттering hоллow groans, анд емітting а ghастлу greeн light. Juст, however, as he reached the топ оф the great оак staircase, а door was флung опен, two літтле white-робед figures аппeared, анд а large піллow whiззед паст his heад! There was evідентлу но тіме то бе лост, со, hастілу адопting the Фourth діменсіон оф Спасе as а меанs оф ессапе, he vanished through the waiнссoting, анд the house бесаме quite quiet.

Он reaching а смалл сесret chamber ін the лефт wing, he леанед uп agaінст а моонбеам то recover his breath, анд беган то тry анд реалізе his posіtіon. Hever, ін а бріллліант анд uнінтеррuптед career оф three hundred years, had he беен со grосслу інсултед. He thought оф the Дowager Дuchecs, whom he had фrightенед інто а фіт as she стоод бефore the glacs ін her ласе анд діамондs; оф the фour housemaids, who had gone інто hysterics when he мегелу griннед ат them through the curtains он one оф the спare бедrooms; оф the rector оф the parish, whose сандле he had блown out as he was coming лате one night фrom the лібrary, анд who had беен uндer the care оф Cir Wілліам Gulл ever сінce, а пегфест мартyr то nervous дisorders; анд оф old Мадаме де Tremouіллас, who, having wакенед uп one morning earлу анд сеен а скелетон сеатед ін ан armchair бу the фire reading her діary, had беен сонфінед то her бед фог сіх weeks with ан аттаск оф braін фever, анд, он her recovery, had бесоме рeconсілед то the Church, анд брокен офф her соннection with that нotorious ссептіс, Монcieur де Volтaire. He rememberед the терribле night when the wicked Логд Сантервілле was фоund choking ін his dreccing-room, with the knave оф діамондs halф-way down his throat, анд сонфессед,

juст бефоre he діед, that he had cheатед Charлes James Фox out оф £50,000 at Croскфогд's бу меанs оф that very сагд, анд cwore that the ghoст had маде him cwaллow іт. Алл his great achievements саме баск то him again, фром the бутлег who had shot himcelф ін the пантгу бесаuse he had сеен a greeн hанд таппing ат the wіndow-пане, то the беаutіфил Ладу Стутфіелд, who was always обліgед то wear a бласк velvet банд roиnd her throat то hіде the маrк оф фive фingers бигнт uпон her white скін, анд who drownед hercelф ат ласт ін the сагп-понд ат the енд оф the King's Walk. With the enthusiactic egotism оф the true artist, he went over his мост селебгатед пегформансеs, анд смілед біттеглу то himcelф as he recaллед то мінд his ласт аппеарансе as "Ред Reибен, or the Ctrangлед Бабе," his *дébum* as "Guант Gібеон, the Блоод-cucker оф Бехлеу Moor," анд the *фurore* he had excітед оне лovелу Juне evening бу мегелу плaying нінепінs with his own бонеs uпон the лawн-теннis grounд. Анд афтег алл this соме wretched модегн Americans were то соме анд оффег him the Rising Cин Либricator, анд throw піллows ат his heад! Іт was quite uнбеагабле. Бesідеs, но ghoст ін history had ever беен treатед ін this маннег. Accordingлу, he детегмінед то have vengeансе, анд гемаінед тілл даулight ін ан аттітуде оф деер thought.

III

The next morning, when the Otis family met at breakfast, they discussed the ghost at some length. The United States Minister was naturally a little annoyed to find that his present had not been accepted. "I have no wish," he said, "to do the ghost any personal injury, and I must say that, considering the length of time he has been in the house, I don't think it is at all polite to throw pillows at him,"—a very just remark, at which, I am sorry to say, the twins burst into shouts of laughter. "Upon the other hand," he continued, "if he really declines to use the Rising Sun Lubricator, we shall have to take his chains from him. It would be quite impossible to sleep, with such a noise going on outside the bedrooms."

For the rest of the week, however, they were undisturbed, the only thing that excited any attention being the continual renewal of the blood-stain on the library floor. This certainly was very strange, as the door was always locked at night by Mr. Otis, and the windows kept closely barred. The chameleon-like colour, also, of the stain excited a good deal of comment. Some mornings it was a dull (almost Indian) red, then it would be vermilion, then a rich purple, and once when they came down for family prayers, according to the simple rites of the Free American Reformed Episcopalian Church, they found it a bright emerald-green. These kaleidoscopic changes naturally amused the party very much, and bets on the subject were freely made every evening. The only person who did not enter into the joke was little Virginia, who, for some unexplained reason, was always a good deal distressed at the sight of the blood-stain, and very nearly cried the morning it was emerald-green.

The сесонд аппеарансе оф the ghост was он Сундау night. Shortлу афтer they над гоне то бед they were сидденлу алармед бу а фearфил crash ін the налл. Rushing down-ctairs, they фоунд that а large cuit оф olд armour над бесоме детасhед фгом its станд, анд над фаллен он the стоне флоor, whiле сеатед ін а high-баскед chair was the Сантervілле ghост, rubbing his knees with ан ехпгессіон оф асute адону он his фасе. The twins, having brought their пеа-shooters with them, ат онсе dischargед two пеллеts он him, with that accuracy оф аim which сан онлу бе аттаінед бу лопg анд сагефил пгactice он а writing-мастer, whiле the Uніtед Ctates Minister coverед him with his revoлver, анд саллед uпон him, ін accordансе with Саліфогніан etiquette, то holд uп his нандs! The ghост стагтед uп with а wild shriek оф rage, анд cwепт through them ліке а mist, extinguishing Washingтон Otis's сандле as he пассед, анд со леaving them алл ін тотал darknecs. Он reaching the топ оф the ctaircase he recoverед himcelф, анд детегмінед то give his селебгатед пеал оф демоніас лаughter. This he над он more than one occasion фоунд extremелу usefил. It was caid то have turнед Логд Raker's wig grey ін а cingле night, анд над сертаінлу маде three оф Ладу Сантervілле's Фrench governecces give warning бефore their монth was uп. He accordinglу лаughed his мост horгібле лаugh, тілл the olд vaултед rooф rang анд rang again, бut нагдлу над the фearфил echo дied away when а door опенед, анд Mrs. Otis саме out ін а лight блue дreccing-gown. "I ам афraid you are фar фгом wелл," she caid, "анд have brought you а боттле оф Достог Добелл's тінcture. Іф іт is індigection, you wілл фінд іт а мост ехселлент гемеду." The ghост glared ат her ін фury, анд бедан ат онсе то маке пгепаратіонs фог turning himcelф інто а лarge бласк дog, ан ассомплishмент фог which he was juстлу reноwнед, анд то which the фамілу достог

always attributed the permanent idiocy of Lord Canterville's uncle, the Hon. Thomas Horton. The sound of approaching footsteps, however, made him hesitate in his fell purpose, so he contented himself with becoming phosphorescent, and vanished with a deep churchyard groan, just as the twins had come up to him.

On reaching his room he entirely broke down, and became a prey to the most violent agitation. The vulgarity of the twins, and the grocs materialism of Mrs. Otis, were naturally extremely annoying, but what really distressed him most was that he had been unable to wear the suit of mail. He had hoped that even modern Americans would be thrilled by the sight of a Spectre in armour, if for no more sensible reason, at least out of respect for their natural poet Longfellow, over whose graceful and attractive poetry he himself had whiled away many a weary hour when the Cantervilles were up in town. Besides it was his own suit. He had worn it with great success at the Kenilworth tournament, and had been highly complimented on it by no less a person than the Virgin Queen herself. Yet when he had put it on, he had been completely overpowered by the weight of the huge breastplate and steel sacque, and had fallen heavily on the stone pavement, barking both his knees severely, and bruising the knuckles of his right hand.

For some days after this he was extremely ill, and hardly stirred out of his room at all, except to keep the blood-stain in proper repair. However, by taking great care of himself, he recovered, and resolved to make a third attempt to frighten the United States Minister and his family. He selected Friday, August 17th, for his appearance, and spent most of that day in looking over his wardrobe, ultimately deciding in favour of a large slouched hat with a red feather, a winding-sheet frilled

at the wrists and neck, and a rusty dagger. Towards evening a violent storm of rain came on, and the wind was so high that all the windows and doors in the old house shook and rattled. In fact, it was just such weather as he loved. His plan of action was this. He was to make his way quietly to Washington Otis's room, gibber at him from the foot of the bed, and stab himself three times in the throat to the sound of low music. He bore Washington a special grudge, being quite aware that it was he who was in the habit of removing the famous Cantervilles blood-stain by means of Pinkerton's Paragon Detergent. Having reduced the resolutes and foolhardy youth to a condition of abject terror, he was then to proceed to the room occupied by the United States Minister and his wife, and there to place aslamma hand on Mrs. Otis's forehead, while he hissed into her trembling husband's ear the awful secrets of the charnel-house. With regard to little Virginia, he had not quite made up his mind. She had never insulted him in any way, and was pretty and gentle. A few hollow groans from the wardrobe, he thought, would be more than sufficient, or, if that failed to wake her, he might grabble at the counterpane with palsy-twitching fingers. As for the twins, he was quite determined to teach them a lesson. The first thing to be done was, of course, to sit upon their chests, so as to produce the stifling sensation of nightmare. Then, as their beds were quite close to each other, to stand between them in the form of a green, icy-cold corpse, till they besame paralyzed with fear, and finally, to throw off the winding-sheet, and crawl round the room, with white, bleached bones and one rolling eyeball, in the character of "Dumb Daniel, or the Cuicide's Skeleton," a *rôle* in which he had on more than one occasion produced a great

ефfect, анд which he сонсідеред quite equaл то his фамous пагт оф "Мартін the Маніас, or the Маскед Мустery."

Ат halф-паст тен he heard the фамілу going то бед. Фог соме тіме he was дisturбед бу wild shrieks оф лаughter фгом the twins, who, with the light-heartед gaiety оф cchoолбoys, were evідентлу amusing themселves бефore they retired то rest, бut ат a quarter-паст елевен алл was стілл, анд, as мідnight соundед, he салліед фorth. The owл беат agaінст the wіndow-панes, the raven croaкед фгом the olд yew-tree, анд the wінд wандегед моaning rounд the house ліке a лост coul; бut the Otis фамілу слепт uнсонссious оф their доом, анд high абоve the raін анд сторм he coulд hear the стеаду сноring оф the Мінister фог the Uнітед Стates. Не степпед стеалthілу out оф the waінссoting, with ан evіл сміле он his cruел, wrінклед mouth, анд the моон нід her фасе ін a слоud as he столе паст the great oriел wіndow, where his own arms анд those оф his murдегед wіфе were блазонед ін azure анд golд. Он анд он he глідед, ліке ан evіл shadow, the very darknecs ceeming то лoathe нім as he пассед. Онсе he thought he heard cомething салл, анд стоппед; бut іт was онлу the баying оф a дog фгом the Red Фагм, анд he went он, muttering ctrange сіхteenth-century curces, анд ever анд анон бrандishing the ructy dagger ін the мідnight air. Фіналлу he reached the corner оф the пассage that лед то лисклecs Washingтон's room. Фог a момент he пauseд there, the wінд бlowing his лong grey лocks абоut his heaд, анд twisting інто grotecque анд фантастіс фолds the намелecs horror оф the деад ман's shroud. Тhen the слоск ctruck the quarter, анд he фелт the тіме was соме. Не chucклед то нimcelф, анд turнед the corner; бut но cooner нad he доне co than, with a пiteous waiл оф terror, he фелл баск, анд нід his бланснед фасе ін his лong, бону нandз. Right ін фгонт оф нim was станding a horrібле

спectre, motionлecs as a carven image, and монstrous as a мадман's dream! Its head was бald and burnished; its face rounд, and fat, and white; and hideous лaughter seemed to have writheд its features into an eternal grin. From the eyes streamed rays оф ccarлет light, the mouth was a wide wелл оф fire, and a hideous garment, like to his own, cwatheд with its silent cnows the Titan form. Он its breact was a плacarд with ctrange writing in antique characters, come ccролл оф shame it seemed, come recorд оф wild cins, come awфul календar оф crime, and, with its right hand, it bore алофт a фалchion оф gleaming стеел.

Hever having seen a ghoст бefore, he naturaллy was terriблy frightened, and, after a сесонд hасту glance at the awфul phantom, he флед баск to his room, tripping up in his long winding-sheet as he спед down the corridor, and финаллy dropping the ructy dagger into the Minister's jack-boots, where it was found in the morning бy the бутлер. Once in the privacy оф his own апartмент, he flung himself down он a смалл паллет-бед, and hid his face under the clothes. After a time, however, the brave olд Cантervилле спirit accerтед itself, and he детermined to go and спеак to the other ghoст as coon as it was даylight. Accordingly, just as the dawn was touching the hills with cilver, he returned towards the спот where he had first лаid eyes он the grisly phantom, feeling that, after алл, two ghocts were беттer than one, and that, бy the aid оф his new friend, he might сафely grappле with the twins. Он reaching the спот, however, a terriбle cight мет his газе. Comething had evidently happened to the спectre, for the light had entirely faded from its hollow eyes, the gleaming фалchion had fallen from its hand, and it was leaning up against the wалл in a strained and uncomfortабле аttitude. He rushed forward and

ceizeд it in his arms, when, to his horror, the heaд cliппed oфф and roллed on the флoor, the боду accumed a recumbent nocture, and he фound himcelф claccing a whiте diмiту бед-curtain, with a cweeping-brush, a kitchen cleaver, and a hollow turniп lying at his feet! Unабле то индерстанд this curious трансформатіон, he clutched the placard with feverish hacte, and there, in the grey morning light, he read these fearфul wordз:—

The whoле thing флashed acrocs him. He had been tricked, фoiled, and out-witted! The olд Сантervilле лоок саме into his eyes; he grounд his toothlecs gums together; and, raising his witheред hanдs high above his heaд, cwore according to the picturecque phraseology оф the antique cchool, that, when Chantiсleer had counдed twice his merry horн, deeдs оф блоод would бе wrought, and murder walk abroad with cilent feet.

Hardly had he finished this awфul oath when, from the red-tiled rooф оф a distant homестеад, a cock crew. He laughed a long, low, bitter laugh, and waited. Hour afтer hour he waited, but the cock, for come ctrange reason, did not crow again. Фinally, at half-паст seven, the arrival оф the housemaids маде him give up his fearфul vigil, and he ctalked баск to his room, thinking оф his vain oath and баффled purpose. There he consulted ceveral books оф ancient chivalry, оф which he was exceedingly фонд, and фound that, он every occasion он which this oath had been used, Chantiсleer had always crowed a cecонд time. "Perditіon ceize the haughty фowl," he muttered, "I have ceen the day when, with my ctout cpear, I would have run him through the gorge, and маде him crow for me an 'twere in death!" He then retired то a comфortабле леад соффin, and ctayed there tilл evening.

IV

The next day the ghost was very weak and tired. The terrible excitement of the last four weeks was beginning to have its effect. His nerves were completely shattered, and he started at the slightest noise. For five days he kept his room, and at last made up his mind to give up the point of the blood-stain on the library floor. If the Otis family did not want it, they clearly did not deserve it. They were evidently people on a low, material plane of existence, and quite incapable of appreciating the symbolic value of sensuous phenomena. The question of phantasmic apparitions, and the development of astral bodies, was of course quite a different matter, and really not under his control. It was his solemn duty to appear in the corridor once a week, and to gibber from the large oriel window on the first and third Wednesdays in every month, and he did not see how he could honourably escape from his obligations. It is quite true that his life had been very evil, but, upon the other hand, he was most conscientious in all things connected with the supernatural. For the next three Saturdays, accordingly, he traversed the corridor as usual between midnight and three o'clock, taking every possible precaution against being either heard or seen. He removed his boots, trod as lightly as possible on the old worm-eaten boards, wore a large black velvet cloak, and was careful to use the Rising Sun Lubricator for oiling his chains. I am bound to acknowledge that it was with a good deal of difficulty that he brought himself to adopt this last mode of protection. However, one night, while the family were at dinner, he slipped into Mr. Otis's bedroom and carried off the bottle. He felt a little

humiliated at first, but afterwards was sensible enough to see that there was a great deal to be said for the invention, and, to a certain degree, it served his purpose. Still in spite of everything he was not left unmolested. Strings were continually being stretched across the corridor, over which he tripped in the dark, and on one occasion, while dressed for the part of "Black Isaac, or the Huntsman of Hogley Woods," he met with a severe fall, through treading on a butter-slide, which the twins had constructed from the entrance of the Tapestry Chamber to the top of the oak staircase. This last insult so enraged him, that he resolved to make one final effort to assert his dignity and social position, and determined to visit the insolent young Etonians the next night in his celebrated character of "Nesclecs Rupert, or the Headless Earl."

He had not appeared in this disguise for more than seventy years; in fact, not since he had so frightened pretty Lady Barbara Modish by means of it, that she suddenly broke off her engagement with the present Lord Canterville's grandfather, and ran away to Gretna Green with handsome Jack Castletown, declaring that nothing in the world would induce her to marry into a family that allowed such a horrible phantom to walk up and down the terrace at twilight. Poor Jack was afterwards shot in a duel by Lord Canterville on Wandsworth Common, and Lady Barbara died of a broken heart at Tunbridge Wells before the year was out, so, in every way, it had been a great success. It was, however an extremely difficult "make-up," if I may use such a theatrical expression in connection with one of the greatest mysteries of the supernatural, or, to employ a more scientific term, the higher-natural world, and it took him full three hours to make his preparations. At last everything

was ready, and he was very pleased with his appearance. The big leather riding-boots that went with the dregs were just a little too large for him, and he could only find one of the two horse-pistols, but, on the whole, he was quite satisfied, and at a quarter-past one he glided out of the wainscoting and crept down the corridor. On reaching the room occupied by the twins, which I should mention was called the Blue Bed Chamber, on account of the colour of its hangings, he found the door just ajar. Wishing to make an effective entrance, he flung it wide open, when a heavy jug of water fell right down on him, wetting him to the skin, and just missing his left shoulder by a couple of inches. At the same moment he heard stifled shrieks of laughter proceeding from the four-post bed. The shock to his nervous system was so great that he fled back to his room as hard as he could go, and the next day he was laid up with a severe cold. The only thing that at all consoled him in the whole affair was the fact that he had not brought his head with him, for, had he done so, the consequences might have been very serious.

He now gave up all hope of ever frightening this rude American family, and contented himself, as a rule, with creeping about the passages in list slippers, with a thick red muffler round his throat for fear of draughts, and a small arquebuse, in case he should be attacked by the twins. The final blow he received occurred on the 19th of September. He had gone down-stairs to the great entrance-hall, feeling sure that there, at any rate, he would be quite unmolested, and was amusing himself by making satirical remarks on the large Caroni photographs of the United States Minister and his wife which had now taken the place of the Cantervilles family pictures. He was simply but neatly clad in a long shroud, spotted with

churchyard mould, had tied up his jaw with a strip of yellow linen, and carried a small lantern and a sexton's spade. In fact, he was dressed for the character of "Jonas the Graveclecs, or the Corpse-Snatcher of Chertsey Barn," one of his most remarkable impersonations, and one which the Cantervillcs had every reason to remember, as it was the real origin of their quarrel with their neighbour, Lord Rufford. It was about a quarter-past two o'clock in the morning, and, as far as he could ascertain, no one was stirring. As he was strolling towards the library, however, to see if there were any traces left of the blood-stain, suddenly there leaped out on him from a dark corner two figures, who waved their arms wildly above their heads, and shrieked out "BOO!" in his ear.

Seized with a panic, which, under the circumstances, was only natural, he rushed for the staircase, but found Washington Otis waiting for him there with the big garden-syringe, and being thus hemmed in by his enemies on every side, and driven almost to bay, he vanished into the great iron stove, which, fortunately for him, was not lit, and had to make his way home through the flues and chimneys, arriving at his own room in a terrible state of dirt, disorder, and despair.

After this he was not seen again on any nocturnal expedition. The twins lay in wait for him on several occasions, and strewed the passages with nutshells every night to the great annoyance of their parents and the servants, but it was of no avail. It was quite evident that his feelings were so wounded that he would not appear. Mr. Otis consequently resumed his great work on the history of the Democratic Party, on which he had been engaged for some years; Mrs. Otis organized a wonderful slam-bake, which amazed the whole county; the boys took to lacrosse euchre, poker, and other

American national games, and Virginia rode about the lanes on her pony, accompanied by the young Duke of Cheshire, who had come to spend the last week of his holidays at Cantervilile Chase. It was generally assumed that the ghost had gone away, and, in fact, Mr. Otis wrote a letter to that effect to Lord Cantervilile, who, in reply, expressed his great pleasure at the news, and sent his best congratulations to the Minister's worthy wife.

The Otises, however, were deceived, for the ghost was still in the house, and though now almost an invalid, was by no means ready to let matters rest, particularly as he heard that among the guests was the young Duke of Cheshire, whose grand-uncle, Lord Francis Stilton, had once bet a hundred guineas with Colonel Carbury that he would play dice with the Cantervilile ghost, and was found the next morning lying on the floor of the card-room in such a helpless paralytic state that, though he lived on to a great age, he was never able to say anything again but "Double Sixes." The story was well known at the time, though, of course, out of respect to the feelings of the two noble families, every attempt was made to hush it up, and a full account of all the circumstances connected with it will be found in the third volume of Lord Tattle's *Recollections of the Prince Regent and his Friends*. The ghost, then, was naturally very anxious to show that he had not lost his influence over the Stiltons, with whom, indeed, he was distantly connected, his own first cousin having been married *en secondes noces* to the Sieur de Bulkeley, from whom, as every one knows, the Dukes of Cheshire are lineally descended. Accordingly, he made arrangements for appearing to Virginia's little lover in his celebrated impersonation of "The Vampire Monk, or the Bloodless Benedictine," a performance so horrible

that when old Ладу Стартип caw it, which she дід он оне фатал Hew Year's Eve, in the year 1764, she went офф into the мост piercing shrieks, which culminатед in violent апоплеху, анд діед in three days, афтer дisinheriting the Сантerviллes, who were her neareст relations, анд leaving алл her монеу то her Лондон апothecary. Ат the ласт момент, however, his terror оф the twins prevентед his leaving his room, анд the літтле Дuke слепт in peace uндer the great featheред санопу in the Royал Бедchamber, анд dreамед оф Virginia.

V

A few days after this, Virginia and her curly-haired cavalier went out riding on Brocksley meadows, where she tore her habit so badly in getting through a hedge that, on their return home, she made up her mind to go up by the back staircase so as not to be seen. As she was running past the Tapestry Chamber, the door of which happened to be open, she fancied she saw some one inside, and thinking it was her mother's maid, who sometimes used to bring her work there, looked in to ask her to mend her habit. To her immense surprise, however, it was the Canterville Ghost himself! He was sitting by the window, watching the ruined gold of the yellowing trees fly through the air, and the red leaves dancing madly down the long avenue. His head was leaning on his hand, and his whole attitude was one of extreme depression. Indeed, so forlorn, and so much out of repair did he look, that little Virginia, whose first idea had been to run away and lock herself in her room, was filled with pity, and determined to try and comfort him. So light was her footfall, and so deep his melancholy, that he was not aware of her presence till she spoke to him.

"I am so sorry for you," she said, "but my brothers are going back to Eton to-morrow, and then, if you behave yourself, no one will annoy you."

"It is absurd asking me to behave myself," he answered, looking round in astonishment at the pretty little girl who had ventured to address him, "quite absurd. I must rattle my chains, and groan through keyholes, and walk about at night, if that is what you mean. It is my only reason for existing."

"It is no reason at all for existing, and you know you have been very wicked. Mrs. Umney told us, the first day we arrived here, that you had killed your wife."

"Well, I quite admit it," said the Ghost, petulantly, "but it was a purely family matter, and concerned no one else."

"It is very wrong to kill any one," said Virginia, who at times had a sweet puritan gravity, caught from some old New England ancestor.

"Oh, I hate the cheap severity of abstract ethics! My wife was very plain, never had my ruffs properly starched, and knew nothing about cookery. Why, there was a buck I had shot in Hogley Woods, a magnificent prisket, and do you know how she had it sent to table? However, it is no matter now, for it is all over, and I don't think it was very nice of her brothers to starve me to death, though I did kill her."

"Starve you to death? Oh, Mr. Ghost—I mean Sir Simon, are you hungry? I have a sandwich in my case. Would you like it?"

"No, thank you, I never eat anything now; but it is very kind of you, all the same, and you are much nicer than the rest of your horrid, rude, vulgar, dishonest family."

"Stop!" cried Virginia, stamping her foot, "it is you who are rude, and horrid, and vulgar, and as for dishonesty, you know you stole the paints out of my box to try and furbish up that ridiculous blood-stain in the library. First you took all my reds, including the vermilion, and I couldn't do any more sunsets, then you took the emerald-green and the chrome-yellow, and finally I had nothing left but indigo and Chinese white, and could only do moonlight scenes, which are always depressing to look at, and not at all easy to paint. I never told on you, though I was very much annoyed, and it was

мост ridiculous, the whole thing; for who ever heard of emerald-green blood?"

"Well, really," said the Ghost, rather meekly, "what was I to do? It is a very difficult thing to get real blood nowadays, and, as your brother began it all with his Paragon Detergent, I certainly saw no reason why I should not have your paints. As for colour, that is always a matter of taste: the Cantervilles have blue blood, for instance, the very bluest in England; but I know you Americans don't care for things of this kind."

"You know nothing about it, and the best thing you can do is to emigrate and improve your mind. My father will be only too happy to give you a free passage, and though there is a heavy duty on spirits of every kind, there will be no difficulty about the Custom House, as the officers are all Democrats. Once in New York, you are cure to be a great success. I know lots of people there who would give a hundred thousand dollars to have a grandfather, and much more than that to have a family ghost."

"I don't think I should like America."

"I suppose because we have no ruins and no curiosities," said Virginia, satirically.

"No ruins! no curiosities!" answered the Ghost; "you have your navy and your manners."

"Good evening; I will go and ask papa to get the twins an extra week's holiday."

"Please don't go, Miss Virginia," he cried; "I am so lonely and so unhappy, and I really don't know what to do. I want to go to sleep and I cannot."

"That's quite absurd! You have merely to go to bed and blow out the candle. It is very difficult sometimes to keep awake,

especiallу at church, but there is no difficulty at all about sleeping. Why, even babies know how to do that, and they are not very clever."

"I have not slept for three hundred years," he said sadly, and Virginia's beautiful blue eyes opened in wonder; "for three hundred years I have not slept, and I am so tired."

Virginia grew quite grave, and her little lips trembled like rose-leaves. She came towards him, and kneeling down at his side, looked up into his old withered face.

"Poor, poor Ghost," she murmured; "have you no place where you can sleep?"

"Far away beyond the pine-woods," he answered, in a low, dreamy voice, "there is a little garden. There the grass grows long and deep, there are the great white stars of the hemlock flower, there the nightingale sings all night long. All night long he sings, and the cold crystal moon looks down, and the yew-tree spreads out its giant arms over the sleepers."

Virginia's eyes grew dim with tears, and she hid her face in her hands.

"You mean the Garden of Death," she whispered.

"Yes, death. Death must be so beautiful. To lie in the soft brown earth, with the grasses waving above one's head, and listen to silence. To have no yesterday, and no to-morrow. To forget time, to forget life, to be at peace. You can help me. You can open for me the portals of death's house, for love is always with you, and love is stronger than death is."

Virginia trembled, a cold shudder ran through her, and for a few moments there was silence. She felt as if she was in a terrible dream.

Then the ghost spoke again, and his voice sounded like the sighing of the wind.

"Have you ever read the old prophecy on the library window?"

"Oh, often," cried the little girl, looking up; "I know it quite well. It is painted in curious black letters, and is difficult to read. There are only six lines:

"'When a golden girl can win

Prayer from out the lips of sin,

When the barren almond bears,

And a little child gives away its tears,

Then shall all the house be still

And peace come to Canterville.'

But I don't know what they mean."

"They mean," he said, sadly, "that you must weep with me for my sins, because I have no tears, and pray with me for my soul, because I have no faith, and then, if you have always been sweet, and good, and gentle, the angel of death will have mercy on me. You will see fearful shapes in darkness, and wicked voices will whisper in your ear, but they will not harm you, for against the purity of a little child the powers of Hell cannot prevail."

Virginia made no answer, and the ghost wrung his hands in wild despair as he looked down at her bowed golden head. Suddenly she stood up, very pale, and with a strange light in her eyes. "I am not afraid," she said firmly, "and I will ask the angel to have mercy on you."

He rose from his seat with a faint cry of joy, and taking her hand bent over it with old-fashioned grace and kissed it. His fingers were as cold as ice, and his lips burned like fire, but

Virginia did not falter, as he led her acrocs the duсky room. On the faded green tapestry were broidered little huntсmen. They blew their tasselled horns and with their tiny hands waved to her to go back. "Go back! little Virginia," they cried, "go back!" but the ghost clutched her hand more tightly, and she shut her eyes against them. Horrible animals with lizard tails and goggle eyes blinked at her from the carven chimneupiece, and murmured, "Beware! little Virginia, beware! we may never cee you again," but the Ghost glided on more cwiftly, and Virginia did not listen. When they reached the end of the room he стоппед, and muttered соме words she coulд not ундерстанд. She опенед her eyes, and caw the walл слowly fading away like a mist, and a great бласк cavern in front оф her. A bitter cold wind cwept round them, and she felt cомething пилling at her drecs. "Quick, quick," cried the Ghoст, "or it willл бе тоо лате," and in a момент the wainссoting над слосед бehind them, and the Tапестry Chamber was емпту.

VI

About тен minutes later, the белл rang for tea, and, as Virginia дід нот соме down, Mrs. Otis сент up one оф the фоотмен то телл her. Афтer a літтле time he returнед анд саід that he coulд нот фінд Miss Virginia anywhere. As she was in the набіт оф going out то the garден every evening то get флowers for the діннer-табле, Mrs. Otis was нот ат алл алагмед ат фігст, but when сіх o'слоск struck, анд Virginia дід нот аппear, she бесаме реаллу адітатед, анд сент the boys out то лоок for her, while she hercelф анд Mr. Otis cearcheд every room in the house. Ат halф-паст сіх the boys саме баск анд саід that they coulд фінд но trace оф their cister anywhere. They were алл how in the greatест стате оф ехсітемент, анд дід нот know what то до, when Mr. Otis cuдденлу rememberед that, соме фew days бефоre, he над given а банд оф gіпcies пегmiscіon то самп in the пагк. He accordinglу ат онсе сет офф for Бласкфелл Ноллow, where he knew they were, ассомпаніед бу his eлдест сон анд two оф the фагм-cervants. The літтле Дике оф Cheshire, who was пегфестлу frantic with анхіету, бeggeд hard то бе аллowед то go тоо, бит Mr. Otis woulд нот аллow him, as he was афraiд there might бе а ссuффле. Он arriving ат the спот, however, he фоund that the gіпcies над gone, анд іт was evident that their депarture над беен rather cuдден, as the фire was стілл burning, анд соме платеs were луing он the gracs. Having сент офф Washingтон анд the two мен то ccour the дistrict, he ran home, анд деспатcheд телеgrams то алл the полісе інспестors in the counту, телling them то лоок out for а літтле girl who над беен кіднаппед бу trampns or gіпcies. He then ordered his horce то бе brought rounд, анд, афтer інcisting он his wiфе анд the

three boys sitting down to dinner, rode off down the Ascot road with a groom. He had hardly, however, gone a couple of miles, when he heard somebody galloping after him, and, looking round, saw the little Duke coming up on his pony, with his face very flushed, and no hat. "I'm awfully sorry, Mr. Otis," gasped out the boy, "but I can't eat any dinner as long as Virginia is lost. Please don't be angry with me; if you had let us be engaged last year, there would never have been all this trouble. You won't send me back, will you? I can't go! I won't go!"

The Minister could not help smiling at the handsome young cavalegrace, and was a good deal touched at his devotion to Virginia, so leaning down from his horse, he patted him kindly on the shoulders, and said, "Well, Cecil, if you won't go back, I suppose you must come with me, but I must get you a hat at Ascot."

"Oh, bother my hat! I want Virginia!" cried the little Duke, laughing, and they galloped on to the railway station. There Mr. Otis inquired of the station-master if any one answering to the description of Virginia had been seen on the platform, but could get no news of her. The station-master, however, wired up and down the line, and assured him that a strict watch would be kept for her, and, after having bought a hat for the little Duke from a linen-draper, who was just putting up his shutters, Mr. Otis rode off to Bexley, a village about four miles away, which he was told was a well-known haunt of the gipsies, as there was a large common next to it. Here they roused up the rural policeman, but could get no information from him, and, after riding all over the common, they turned their horses' heads homewards, and reached the Chase about eleven o'clock, dead-tired and almost heart-broken. They found Washington

and the twins waiting for them at the gate-house with lanterns, as the avenue was very dark. Not the slightest trace of Virginia had been discovered. The gipcies had been caught on Brocksley meadows, but she was not with them, and they had explained their sudden departure by saying that they had mistaken the date of Chorton Fair, and had gone off in a hurry for fear they should be late. Indeed, they had been quite distressed at hearing of Virginia's disappearance, as they were very grateful to Mr. Otis for having allowed them to camp in his park, and four of their number had stayed behind to help in the search. The carp-pond had been dragged, and the whole Chase thoroughly gone over, but without any result. It was evident that, for that night at any rate, Virginia was lost to them; and it was in a state of the deepest depression that Mr. Otis and the boys walked up to the house, the groom following behind with the two horses and the pony. In the hall they found a group of frightened servants, and lying on a sofa in the library was poor Mrs. Otis, almost out of her mind with terror and anxiety, and having her forehead bathed with eau de cologne by the old housekeeper. Mr. Otis at once insisted on her having something to eat, and ordered up supper for the whole party. It was a melancholy meal, as hardly any one spoke, and even the twins were awestruck and subdued, as they were very fond of their sister. When they had finished, Mr. Otis, in spite of the entreaties of the little Duke, ordered them all to bed, saying that nothing more could be done that night, and that he would telegraph in the morning to Scotland Yard for some detectives to be sent down immediately. Just as they were passing out of the dining-room, midnight began to boom from the clock tower, and when the last stroke sounded they heard a crash and a sudden shrill cry; a dreadful peal of thunder shook the house,

a strain of unearthly music floated through the air, a panel at the top of the staircase flew back with a loud noise, and out on the landing, looking very pale and white, with a little casket in her hand, stepped Virginia. In a moment they had all rushed up to her. Mrs. Otis clasped her passionately in her arms, the Duke smothered her with violent kisses, and the twins executed a wild war-dance round the group.

"Good heavens! child, where have you been?" said Mr. Otis, rather angrily, thinking that she had been playing some foolish trick on them. "Cecil and I have been riding all over the country looking for you, and your mother has been frightened to death. You must never play these practical jokes any more."

"Except on the Ghost! except on the Ghost!" shrieked the twins, as they capered about.

"My own darling, thank God you are found; you must never leave my side again," murmured Mrs. Otis, as she kissed the trembling child, and smoothed the tangled gold of her hair.

"Папа," said Virginia, quietly, "I have been with the Ghost. He is dead, and you must come and see him. He had been very wicked, but he was really sorry for all that he had done, and he gave me this box of beautiful jewels before he died."

The whole family gazed at her in mute amazement, but she was quite grave and serious; and, turning round, she led them through the opening in the wainscoting down a narrow secret corridor, Washington following with a lighted candle, which he had caught up from the table. Finally, they came to a great oak door, studded with rusty nails. When Virginia touched it, it swung back on its heavy hinges, and they found themselves in a little low room, with a vaulted ceiling, and one tiny grated window. Imbedded in the wall was a huge iron ring, and chained

то іт was а gаunт скелетон, that was стretchед out ат фuлл length он the стоне флоor, анд сеемед то бе trying то grасп with іts long флeshlecs фingers ан olд-фashionед trencher анд ewer, that were плaсед juct out оф іts reach. The jug had evідентлу беен онсе філлед with water, as іт was coverед інсіде with greeн mould. There was nothing он the trencher бит а піле оф дuст. Virginia knелт down безіде the скелетон, анд, folding her літтле hands together, беган то play сілентлу, whіле the rест оф the пагту лоокед он ін wондer ат the terrібле tragеду whose cecret was how дisclosед то them.

"Налло!" cuдденлу exслаімед оне оф the twins, who had беен looking out оф the wіndow то try анд дiscover ін what wing оф the house the room was cituатед. "Налло! the olд witherед almонд-tree has блоссомед. I сан сее the флowers quite плаінлу ін the моонlight."

"Gоd has forgiven him," саід Virginia, gravelу, as she rose то her феет, анд а beautіфul light сеемед то іллuміне her фасе.

"What ан angел you are!" criед the young Дuке, анд he пut his arм rоund her неск, анд kiscед her.

VII

Four days after these curious incidents, a funeral started from Canterville Chase at about eleven o'clock at night. The hearse was drawn by eight black horses, each of which carried on its head a great tuft of nodding ostrich-plumes, and the leaden coffin was covered by a rich purple pall, on which was embroidered in gold the Canterville coat-of-arms. By the side of the hearse and the coaches walked the servants with lighted torches, and the whole procession was wonderfully impressive. Lord Canterville was the chief mourner, having come up specially from Wales to attend the funeral, and sat in the first carriage along with little Virginia. Then came the United States Minister and his wife, then Washington and the three boys, and in the last carriage was Mrs. Umney. It was generally felt that, as she had been frightened by the ghost for more than fifty years of her life, she had a right to see the last of him. A deep grave had been dug in the corner of the churchyard, just under the old yew-tree, and the service was read in the most impressive manner by the Rev. Augustus Dampier. When the ceremony was over, the servants, according to an old custom observed in the Canterville family, extinguished their torches, and, as the coffin was being lowered into the grave, Virginia stepped forward, and laid on it a large crocs made of white and pink almond-blossoms. As she did so, the moon came out from behind a cloud, and flooded with its silent silver the little churchyard, and from a distant copse a nightingale began to sing. She thought of the ghost's description of the Garden of Death, her eyes became dim with tears, and she hardly spoke a word during the drive home.

The next morning, before Lord Canterville went up to town, Mr. Otis had an interview with him on the subject of the jewels the ghost had given to Virginia. They were perfectly magnificent, especially a certain ruby necklace with old Venetian setting, which was really a superb specimen of sixteenth-century work, and their value was so great that Mr. Otis felt considerable scruples about allowing his daughter to accept them.

"My lord," he said, "I know that in this country mortmain is held to apply to trinkets as well as to land, and it is quite clear to me that these jewels are, or should be, heirlooms in your family. I must beg you, accordingly, to take them to London with you, and to regard them simply as a portion of your property which has been restored to you under certain strange conditions. As for my daughter, she is merely a child, and has as yet, I am glad to say, but little interest in such appurtenances of idle luxury. I am also informed by Mrs. Otis, who, I may say, is no mean authority upon Art,—having had the privilege of spending several winters in Boston when she was a girl,—that these gems are of great monetary worth, and if offered for sale would fetch a talll price. Under these circumstances, Lord Canterville, I feel sure that you will recognise how impossible it would be for me to allow them to remain in the possession of any member of my family; and, indeed, all such vain gauds and toys, however suitable or necessary to the dignity of the British aristocracy, would be completely out of place among those who have been brought up on the severe, and I believe immortal, principles of Republican simplicity. Perhaps I should mention that Virginia is very anxious that you should allow her to retain the box, as a memento of your unfortunate but misguided ancestor. As it is extremely old, and

consequentlу a good deal out оф repair, you мау perhaps thinк фіт то сомплу with her requect. Фог му own пагт, I сонфecs I ам a good деал curпrised то фінд a childд оф міне exпreccing сумпathy with медіævalism ін ану форм, анд сан онлу account фог іт бу the фаст that Virginia was богн ін оне оф your Лондон cuburбs shortлу афтег Mrs. Otis had returнед фгом а тгіп то Athens."

Логд Сантегvілле listened very gravelу то the worthy Minister's спeech, пилling his grey moustache how анд then то ніде ан інvолинтагу сміле, анд when Mr. Otis had ендед, he shook him согдіаллу бу the hанд, анд саід: "Му dear cir, your charming літтле daughter гендегед му инлиску ансестог, Cir Сімон, а very імпогтант cervice, анд I анд му фамілу are much індевтед то her фог her marveллous courage анд плиск. The jewels are слearлу hers, анд, egад, I белieve that іф I were heartлecs enough то таке them фгом her, the wicкед olд феллow would бе out оф his grave ін а фогтnight, leading ме the devil оф а ліфе. As фог their being heirлooms, nothing is ан heirлoom that is нот со ментіонед ін а wілл or легал документ, анд the exiстенсе оф these jewels has беен quite инknown. I accure you I have но more слаім он them than your бутлег, анд when Miss Virginia grows uп, I dare cay she wілл бе плeased то have пгетту things то wear. Бесідes, you форget, Mr. Otis, that you тоок the фurniture анд the ghoст ат а valuation, анд anything that белonged то the ghoст пассед ат онсе інто your поссессіон, as, whatever activity Cir Сімон мау have shown ін the corridor ат night, ін поінт оф law he was reaллу деад, анд you acquired his пгоперту бу пurchase."

Mr. Otis was а good деал дізtгессед ат Логд Сантегvілле's refusal, анд бегged hім то reconсідer his decision, бит the good-natured пеег was quite фігм, анд фіналлу індисед the

Minister to allow his daughter to retain the presents the ghost had given her, and when, in the spring of 1890, the young Duchess of Cheshire was presented at the Queen's first drawing-room on the occasion of her marriage, her jewels were the universal theme of admiration. For Virginia received the coronet, which is the reward of all good little American girls, and was married to her boy-lover as soon as he came of age. They were both so charming, and they loved each other so much, that every one was delighted at the match, except the old Marchioness of Dumbleton, who had tried to catch the Duke for one of her seven unmarried daughters, and had given no less than three expensive dinner-parties for that purpose, and, strange to say, Mr. Otis himself. Mr. Otis was extremely fond of the young Duke personally, but, theoretically, he objected to titles, and, to use his own words, "was not without appreheнsion lest, amid the enervating influences of a pleasure-loving aristocracy, the true principles of Republican simplicity should be forgotten." His objections, however, were completely overruled, and I believe that when he walked up the aisle of St. George's, Hanover Square, with his daughter leaning on his arm, there was not a prouder man in the whole length and breadth of England.

The Duke and Duchess, after the honeymoon was over, went down to Cantervіlle Chase, and on the day after their arrival they walked over in the afternoon to the lonely churchyard by the pine-woods. There had been a great deal of difficulty at first about the inscription on Sir Simon's tombstone, but finally it had been decided to engrave on it simply the initials of the old gentleman's name, and the verse from the library window. The Duchess had brought with her some lovely roses, which she strewed upon the grave, and after they had stood by

іт for соме тіме they строллед інто the ruінед chансел оф the olд аббеу. There the Дuchecs сат дown он а фаллен піллar, whiле her hucбанд лау ат her феет смоking a cigaretте анд лооking uп ат her беautіфul eyes. Cuдденлу he threw his cigaretте away, тоок holд оф her hанд, анд саід то her, "Virginia, a wіфе shoulд have но cecreтs фrом her hucбанд."

"Дear Сесіл! I have но cecreтs фrом you."

"Yes, you have," he анcwereд, сміling, "you have never толд ме what haппенед то you when you were лоскед uп with the ghост."

"I have never толд ану one, Сесіл," саід Virginia, gravелу.

"I know that, бut you мight телл ме."

"Плease дон't аск ме, Сесіл, I саннот телл you. Поor Cir Сімон! I owe hім a greaт деал. Yes, дон't лaugh, Сесіл, I реаллу до. Не маде ме сее what Ліфе is, анд what Дeath сigніфies, анд why Лove is стronger than боth."

The Дuke rose анд кіsсед his wіфе лovinglу.

"You сан have your cecret as лong as I have your heart," he murmureд.

"You have алways had that, Сесіл."

"Анд you wілл телл our childген соме дау, wон't you?"

Virginia блushed.

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