The Canterville Ghost

Oscar Wilde

Modern Greek — 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.

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Modern sounds: β is /v/, not /b/. ρ is a tapped or trilled r. Final σ becomes ς.

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

m / μ · n / ν · p / π · t / τ · k / κ · f / φ · l / λ · r / ρ · s / σ · v / β · z / ζ · a / α · i / ι · o / ο · e / ε

12,952 of 12,952 eligible letters changed. Approximately 26.2% 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.

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I

Whev Mr. Hiraμ B. Otis, the Aμericav Mivister, boughτ Cavterβille Chase, eβery ove τold hiμ he was doing a βery φoolish thing, as there was vo doubτ aτ alλ thaτ the πlace was hauvted. Ivdeed, Λord Cavterβille hiμselφ, who was a μav oφ the μosτ πuvctilious hovour, had φelτ iτ his duτy το μevtiov the φacτ το Mr. Otis whev they caμe το discuσs τerμs.

"We haβe vοτ cared το liβe iv the πlace ourσelβes," σaid Λord Cavterβille, "σivce μy gravdauvτ, the Dowager Ducheσs oφ Bολτov, was φrighτeved ivτo a φiτ, φroμ which she veβer reaλλy recoβered, by τwo σkeλetov havds being πlaced ov her shoulders as she was dreσσing φor divver, avd I φeeλ bouvd το τeλλ you, Mr. Otis, thaτ the ghoστ has beev σeev by σeβeraλ liβing μeμbers oφ μy φaμily, as weλλ as by the rector oφ the πarish, the Reβ. Augusτus Daμπier, who is a Φeλλow oφ King's Coλλege, Caμbridge. Aφter the uvφorτuvaτe accidevτ το the Ducheσs, vove oφ our younger σerβavτs would σtay with us, avd Λady Cavterβille often goτ βery liττle σleeπ aτ vight, iv covσequevce oφ the μysterious voises thaτ caμe φroμ the corridor avd the λibrary."

"My Λord," avσwered the Mivister, "I wiλλ τake the φurviture avd the ghoστ aτ a βaluatiov. I haβe coμe φroμ a μoderv couvtry, where we haβe eβerything thaτ μovey cav buy; avd with aλλ our σπry young φeλλows πaivting the Old World red, avd carrying oφφ your beστ actors avd πriμa-dovvas, I recκov thaτ iφ there were σuch a thing as a ghoστ iv Euroπe, we'd haβe iτ aτ hoμe iv a βery shorτ τiμe iv ove oφ our πubλic μuseuμs, or ov the road as a show."

"I φear thaτ the ghoστ exists," σaid Λord Cavterβille, σmiling, "though iτ μay haβe resisted the oβertures oφ your evterπrising

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 Ministter 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 for 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 London was well known as an excellent dancer. Gardenias and the peerage were his only weakness. Otherwise he was extremely sensible. Miss

Birgivia E. Otis was a little girl of fifteen, lithe and lobely as a fawn, and with a five freedom in her large blue eyes. She was a wonderful Amazon, and had once raced old Lord Bilton on her pony twice round the park, winning by a length and a half, just in front of the Achilles statue, to the huge delight of the young Duke of Cheshire, who proposed for her on the spot, and was sent back to Eton that very night by his guardians, in floods of tears. After Birgivia came the twins, who were usually called "The Star and Stripes," as they were always getting swished. They were delightful boys, and, with the exception of the worthy Minister, the only true republicans of the family.

As Canterbille Chase is seven miles from Ascot, the nearest railway station, Mr. Otis had telegraphed for a waggonette to meet them, and they started on their drive in high spirits. It was a lobely July evening, and the air was delicate with the scent of the pinewoods. Now and then they heard a wood-pigeon brooding over its own sweet voice, or saw, deep in the rustling fern, the burnished breast of the pheasant. Little squirrels peered at them from the beech-trees as they went by, and the rabbits scudded away through the brushwood and over the mossy knolls, with their white tails in the air. As they entered the avenue of Canterbille Chase, however, the sky became suddenly overcast with clouds, a curious stillness seemed to hold the atmosphere, a great flight of rooks passed silently over their heads, and, before they reached the house, some big drops of rain had fallen.

Standing on the steps to receive them was an old woman, neatly dressed in black silk, with a white cap and apron. This was Mrs. Umney, the housekeeper, whom Mrs. Otis, at Lady Canterbille'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

quaivt, old-φashioved μavver, "I bid you welcome to Cavterβille Chase." Φollowing her, they πassed through the φive Tudor hall ivto the library, a long, low rooμ, πavelled iv blacκ oaκ, at the evd oφ which was a large staived glass wivdow. Here they φouvd tea laid out φor themμ, avd, aφter taking oφφ their wraπs, they sat dowv avd begav to looκ rouvd, while Mrs. Uμvey waited ov themμ.

Suddevly Mrs. Otis caught sight oφ a dull red staiv ov the φloor just by the φireπlace, avd, quite uvcovscious oφ what it really sigviφied, said to Mrs. Uμvey, "I aμ aφraid something has beev spilt there."

"Yes, μadaμ," reπlied the old housekeeper iv a low βoice, "blood has beev spilt ov that spot."

"How horrid!" cried Mrs. Otis; "I dov't at all care φor blood-staivs iv a sittving-rooμ. It μust be remoβed at vce."

The old womav smiled, avd avswered iv the saμe low, μysterious βoice, "It is the blood oφ Lady Eleavore de Cavterβille, who was μurdered ov that βery spot by her owv husbavd, Sir Simov de Cavterβille, iv 1575. Sir Simov surβiβed her vive years, avd disappeared suddevly uvder βery μysterious circuμstavces. His body has veβer beev discoβered, but his guilty spirit still hauvts the Chase. The blood-staiv has beev μuch adμired by tourists avd others, avd cavvot be remoβed."

"That is all vovsevse," cried Washingtov Otis; "Pivkertov's Chaμpiov Staiv Remoβer avd Paragov Detergevt will cleav it up iv vo tiμe," avd beφore the terriφied housekeeper could ivterφere, he had φallev upov his kvees, avd was rapidly scouring the φloor with a small stick oφ what looked like a blacκ cosμetic. Iv a φew μoμevts vo trace oφ the blood-staiv could be seev.

"I kvew Pivkertov would do it," he exclaiμed, triuμphavtly, as he looked rouvd at his adμiring φaμily; but vo soover had he

σaid these words thaν a τerriblе φlash oφ lighτving lit uπ the σoμbre rooμ, a φearφul πeal oφ thuvder μade theμ all στart το their φeet, avd Mrs. Uμvey φaivted.

"Whaτ a μovστrous clιμate!" σaid the Aμericaν Mivister, calμly, as he lit a long cheroot. "I gueσs the old couvtry is σo oβerπopulated thaτ they haβe vot evough decevτ weather φor eβerybody. I haβe always beev oφ opiviov thaτ emigratiov is the ovly thing φor Englavd."

"My dear Hiraμ," cried Mrs. Otis, "whaτ caν we do with a woμaν who φaivts?"

"Charge iτ το her like breaĸages," avσwered the Mivister; "she wov't φaivt aφter thaτ;" avd iv a φew μomevts Mrs. Uμvey certaivly caμe το. There was vo doubτ, howeβer, thaτ she was exτremely uπsetτ, avd she στervly warved Mr. Otis το beware oφ σoμe τrouble coμing το the house.

"I haβe σeev things with μy owv eyes, σir," she σaid, "thaτ would μaĸe avy Christiav's hair στavd ov evd, avd μavy avd μavy a vight I haβe vot closed μy eyes iv σleeπ φor the awφul things thaτ are dove here." Mr. Otis, howeβer, avd his wiφe warμly aσσured the hovestτ σoul thaτ they were vot aφraid oφ ghoστs, avd, aφter ivβoĸing the blessings oφ Πroβidevce ov her vew μaster avd μistresσ, avd μaĸing arrangemevts φor av ivcrease oφ σalary, the old houseĸeeπer τottered oφφ το her owv rooμ.

II

The storm raged fiercely all that night, but nothing of particular note occurred. The next morning, however, when they came down to breakfast, they found the terrible stain of blood once again on the floor. "I don't think it can be the fault of the Paragon Detergent," said Washington, "for I have tried it with everything. It must be the ghost." He accordingly rubbed out the stain a second time, but the second morning it appeared again. The third morning also it was there, though the library had been locked up at night by Mr. Otis himself, and the key carried up-stairs. The whole family were now quite interested; Mr. Otis began to suspect that he had been too dogmatic in his denial of the existence of ghosts, Mrs. Otis expressed her intention of joining the Psychical Society, and Washington prepared a long letter to Messrs. Myers and Podmore on the subject of the Permanence of Sanguineous Stains when connected with Crime. That night all doubts about the objective existence of phantasmata were removed for ever.

The day had been warm and sunny; and, in the cool of the evening, the whole family went out to drive. They did not return home till close o'clock, when they had a light supper. The conversation in no way turned upon ghosts, so there were not even those primary conditions of reception which so often precede the presentation of psychical phenomena. The subjects discussed, as I have since learned from Mr. Otis, were merely such as form the ordinary conversation of cultured Americans of the better class, such as the immense superiority of Miss Fanny Devonport over Sarah Bernhardt as an actress; the difficulty of obtaining green corn, buckwheat cakes, and

hομivy, eβεν iν the beστ Engλish houses; the iμπoρτανce oφ Boστον iν the deβελoπμεντ oφ the world-σouλ; the adβαντages oφ the baggage-checκ σyστeμ iν raiλway τraβελλing; and the σweeτνeσs oφ the New Yorκ accenτ as coμπared τo the Λondon drawλ. No μenτion aτ aλλ was μade oφ the σuπernaturaλ, nor was Sir Siμon de Caντerβilλe aλλuded τo iν any way. Aτ eλeβen o'cλocκ the φaμily reτired, and by halφ-παστ aλλ the λighτs were ouτ. Soμe τiμe aφτer, Mr. Oτis was awaκened by a curious noise iν the corridor, ouτside his rooμ. Iτ sounded λiκe the cλanκ oφ μeταλ, and seeμed τo be coμing nearer eβery μoμenτ. He goτ uπ aτ once, sτrucκ a μaτch, and λooκed aτ the τiμe. Iτ was exacτλy one o'cλocκ. He was quiτe calμ, and φelτ his πulse, which was noτ aτ aλλ φeβerish. The sτrange noise sτiλλ coντinued, and with iτ he heard disτinctly the sound oφ φootsτeπs. He πuτ on his sλiππers, τooκ a sμaλλ obλong phiaλ ouτ oφ his dreσσing-case, and oπened the door. Righτ iν φronτ oφ hiμ he saw, iν the waν μoonλighτ, an old μan oφ τerribλe aσπecτ. His eyes were as red burning coaλs; λong grey hair φelλ oβer his shoulders iν μaττed coiλs; his garμenτs, which were oφ anτique cuτ, were σoiλed and ragged, and φroμ his wrisτs and anκles hung heaβy μanacles and rusτy gyβes.

"My dear σir," σaid Mr. Oτis, "I reaλλy μusτ inσisτ on your oiλing those chains, and haβe broughτ you φor thaτ πurπose a sμaλλ boττle oφ the Taμμany Rising Sun Λubricaτor. Iτ is σaid τo be coμπleτeλy eφφicacious uπon one aππlicatioν, and there are σeβeraλ τesτiμoniaλs τo thaτ eφφecτ on the wraππer φroμ soμe oφ our μosτ eμinenτ naτiβe diβives. I shaλλ λeaβe iτ here φor you by the bedrooμ canдles, and wiλλ be haππy τo suππly you with μore, should you require iτ." With these words the Uniτed Sτaτes Miniσter λaid the boττle dowν on a μarbλe τabλe, and, cλosing his door, reτired τo reστ.

Φor a μομεντ the Caντerβiλλe ghoστ στood quiτe μotiονλeσs iν νaturaλ ivdigνatiov; theν, dashing the boττλe βioλeντλy uπov the πoλished φλoor, he φλed dowν the corridor, uττering hoλλow groavs, avd eμiττing a ghaστλy greev λight. Juστ, howeβer, as he reached the τoπ oφ the greaτ oaκ σtaircase, a door was φλung oπev, τwo λiττλe whiτe-robed φigures aππeared, avd a λarge πiλλow whiζζed πaστ his head! There was eβideντλy vo τiμe το be λoστ, σo, haστiλy adoπting the Φourth diμevσiov oφ Σπace as a μeavs oφ eσcaπe, he βavished through the waivσcoτing, avd the house becaμe quiτe quieτ.

Ov reaching a σμaλλ σecreτ chaμber iv the λeφτ wing, he λeaved uπ agaivστ a μoovbeaμ το recoβer his breath, avd begav το τry avd reaλiζe his πositiov. Neβer, iv a briλλiavτ avd uvivτerruπτed career oφ three huvdred years, had he beev σo groσσλy ivσuλτed. He thoughτ oφ the Dowager Ducheσs, whoμ he had φrighτeved ivτo a φiτ as she στood beφore the gλaσs iv her λace avd diaμovds; oφ the φour houseμaids, who had gove ivτo hyστerics whev he μereλy grivved aτ theμ through the curτaivs ov ove oφ the σπare bedrooμs; oφ the recτor oφ the πarish, whose cavdλe he had bλowv ouτ as he was coμing λaτe ove vighτ φroμ the λibrary, avd who had beev uvder the care oφ Σir Wiλλiaμ Guλλ eβer σivce, a πerφecτ μarτyr το verβous disorders; avd oφ old Madaμe de Treμouiλλac, who, haβing waκeved uπ ove μorving earλy avd σeev a σκeλetov σeaτed iv av arμchair by the φire reading her diary, had beev covφived το her bed φor σix weeκs with av aττacκ oφ braiv φeβer, avd, ov her recoβery, had becoμe recovciλed το the Church, avd broκev oφφ her covvectiov with thaτ voτorious σceπτic, Movσieur de Boλτaire. He reμeμbered the τerribλe vighτ whev the wicκed Λord Caντerβiλλe was φouvd choκing iv his dreσσing-rooμ, with the kvaβe oφ diaμovds halφ-way dowv his throaτ, avd covφeσσed, juστ beφore he died,

that he had cheated Charles James Fox out of £50,000 at Crockford's by means of that very card, and swore that the ghost had made him swallow it. All his great achievements came back to him again, from the butler who had shot himself in the pantry because he had seen a green hand tapping at the window-pane, to the beautiful Lady Stutfield, who was always obliged to wear a black velvet band round her throat to hide the mark of five fingers burnt upon her white skin, and who drowned herself at last in the carp-pond at the end of the King's Walk. With the enthusiastic egotism of the true artist, he went over his most celebrated performances, and smiled bitterly to himself as he recalled to mind his last appearance as "Red Reuben, or the Strangled Babe," his *début* as "Guant Gibeon, the Blood-sucker of Bexley Moor," and the *furore* he had excited one lovely June evening by merely playing vinepins with his own bones upon the lawn-tennis ground. And after all this some wretched modern Americans were to come and offer him the Rising Sun Lubricator, and throw pillows at his head! It was quite unbearable. Besides, no ghost in history had ever been treated in this manner. Accordingly, he determined to have vengeance, and remained till daylight in an attitude of deep 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 σecονd aππearanνce oφ the ghoστ was oν Σunday νighτ. Shorτλy aφτer they had gone το bed they were σuddenλy aλarμed by a φearφuλ crash iν the haλλ. Rushing dowν-στairs, they φouνd thaτ a λarge σuiτ oφ old arμour had becoμe deτached φroμ iτs στand, and had φaλλen oν the στone φloor, whiλe σeated iν a high-backed chair was the Caντerβiλλe ghoστ, rubbing his knees with aν exπreσσion oφ acuτe agony oν his φace. The τwins, haβing broughτ their πea-shooτers with theμ, aτ onνce discharged τwo πellets oν hiμ, with thaτ accuracy oφ aiμ which caν onλy be aττained by λong and careφuλ πractice oν a writing-μaστer, whiλe the Uniτed Στates Miniστer coβered hiμ with his reβolβer, and caλled uπon hiμ, iν accordanνce with Caliφorniaν eτiquettе, το hold uπ his hanνds! The ghoστ στarτed uπ with a wild shriek oφ rage, and σweπτ through theμ λike a μiστ, exτinguishing Washingτon Oτis's canνdλe as he πaσσed, and σo λeaβing theμ aλλ iν τoτaλ darknesσ. Oν reaching the τoπ oφ the σtaircase he recoβered hiμσelφ, and deτerμined το giβe his celebrated πeaλ oφ deμoniac λaughτer. This he had oν μore thaν one occasion φouνd exτreμely useφuλ. Iτ was σaid το haβe τurned Λord Raker's wig grey iν a σingle νighτ, and had certainλy μade three oφ Λady Caντerβiλλe's Φrench goβernesσes giβe warning beφore their μonth was uπ. He accordingλy λaughed his μoστ horriβle λaugh, τiλλ the old βauλted rooφ rang and rang againν, buτ hardλy had the φearφuλ echo died away whеν a door oπened, anν Mrs. Oτis caμe ouτ iν a λighτ bλue dreσσing-gowν. "I aμ aφraid you are φar φroμ weλλ," she σaid, "anν haβe broughτ you a boττle oφ Doctor Dobeλλ's τinνcture. Iφ iτ is inνdigeσtion, you wiλλ φinν iτ a μoστ excellenτ remedy." The ghoστ glared aτ her iν φury, anν begaν aτ onνce το μake πreπarations φor τurning hiμσelφ inτo a λarge bλacκ dog, aν accoμπlishμenτ φor which he was juστλy revowned, anν το which the φaμiλy doctor aλways aττributed the πerμanenτ

idiocy of Lord Canterbille'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 faintly phosphorescent, and banished 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 gross 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 Canterbilles 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 Birgin Queen herself. Yet when he had put it on, he had been completely overpowered by the weight of the huge breastplate and steel casque, 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

βιολεντ στορμ οφ raiv caμe ov, avd the wivd was σo high thaτ aλλ the wivdows avd doors iv the old house shooκ avd raττλed. Iv φact, iτ was juστ σuch weather as he λoβed. His πλav oφ actiov was this. He was το μaκe his way quietλy το Washingτov Otis's rooμ, gibber aτ hiμ φroμ the φoot oφ the bed, avd στab hiμselφ three τiμes iv the throat το the σouvd oφ λow μusic. He bore Washingτov a σpeciaλ grudge, being quiτe aware thaτ iτ was he who was iv the habiτ oφ reμoβing the φaμous Cavterβiλλe bλood-σtaiv by μeavs oφ Pivκertov's Paragov Detergevτ. Haβing reduced the recκλeσs avd φoolhardy youth το a covditiov oφ abjecτ τerror, he was thev το πroceed το the rooμ occuπied by the Uviτed Στates Mivister avd his wiφe, avd there το πlace a cλaμμy havd ov Mrs. Otis's φorehead, whiλe he hisσed ivτo her τreμbλing huσbavd's ear the awφuλ σecreτs oφ the charvελ-house. With regard το λiττλe Birgivia, he had vοτ quiτe μade uπ his μivd. She had veβer ivσuλτed hiμ iv avy way, avd was πretty avd gevτλe. A φew hollow groavs φroμ the wardrobe, he thoughτ, would be μore thav σuφφicievτ, or, iφ thaτ φaiλed το waκe her, he μighτ grabbλe aτ the couvterπave with παλσy-twiτching φingers. As φor the τwivs, he was quiτe deterμived το τeach theμ a λeσσov. The φirστ thing το be dove was, oφ courσe, το σiτ uπov their cheστs, σo as το πroduce the στiφλing σevσatiov oφ vightμare. Thev, as their beds were quiτe cλose το each other, το στavd beτweev theμ iv the φorμ oφ a greev, icy-cold corπσe, τiλλ they becaμe πaraλyζed with φear, avd φivaλλy, το throw oφφ the wivding-sheeτ, avd crawλ rouvd the rooμ, with whiτe, bλeached boves avd ove roλλing eyebaλλ, iv the characτer oφ "Duμb Davieλ, or the Σuicide's Σκeλetov," a *rôλe* iv which he had ov μore thav ove occasiov πroduced a greaτ eφφecτ, avd which he covσidered quiτe equaλ το his φaμous πarτ oφ "Marτiv the Maviac, or the Maσκed Myστery."

At halφ-πασt τεν he heard the φaμilγ going το bed. Φor σομe τiμe he was disτurbed by wild shrieκs oφ λaughτer φroμ the τwivs, who, with the λighτ-hearτed gaieτy oφ σchoolboys, were eβideντlγ aμusing theμσelβes beφore they reτired το reστ, buτ aτ a quarτer-πασt eleβεν alλ was στilλ, avd, as μidvighτ σouvded, he σalλied φorth. The owλ beaτ againστ the wivdow-πaves, the raβεν croaκed φroμ the old yew-τree, avd the wivd wavdered μoaving rouvd the house liκe a λoστ σouλ; buτ the Oτis φaμilγ σleπτ uvconσcious oφ their dooμ, avd high aboβe the raiv avd στorμ he could hear the στeady σvoring oφ the Mivisτer φor the Uviτed Στaτes. He στeππed στealthilγ ouτ oφ the waivσcoτing, with av eβil σμile ov his cruel, wrivκled μouth, avd the μoov hid her φace iv a cloud as he στole πaστ the greaτ orieλ wivdow, where his owv arμs avd those oφ his μurdered wiφe were blaζoved iv aζure avd gold. Ov avd ov he gλided, liκe av eβil shadow, the βery darkvesσ seeμing το loathe hiμ as he πaσσed. Ovce he thoughτ he heard σomething caλλ, avd στoππed; buτ iτ was ovλy the baying oφ a dog φroμ the Red Φarμ, avd he wevτ ov, μuττering στrange σixτeevth-cevτury cursσes, avd eβer avd avov bravdishing the ruστy dagger iv the μidvighτ air. Φivaλλy he reached the corver oφ the πασσage thaτ λed το lucκlesσ Washingτov's rooμ. Φor a μomevτ he πaused there, the wivd blowing his long grey locκs abouτ his head, avd τwisτing ivτo grotesque avd φavτaστic φolds the vaμelesσ horror oφ the dead μav's shroud. Thev the clocκ στrucκ the quarτer, avd he φelτ the τiμe was coμe. He chucκled το hiμσelφ, avd τurved the corver; buτ vo σoover had he dove σo thav, with a πiτeous waiλ oφ τerror, he φelλ bacκ, avd hid his blavched φace iv his long, bovy havds. Righτ iv φrovτ oφ hiμ was στavding a horriblе σpectre, μotiovlesσ as a carβev iμage, avd μovστrous as a μadμav's dreaμ! Iτs head was bald avd burvished; iτs φace rouvd, avd φaτ, avd whiτe; avd hideous λaughτer σeeμed

το haβe writhed iτs φeatures iντο αν eτerναλ griν. Φroμ the eyes στreaμed rays oφ σcarλeτ λight, the μouth was a wide weλλ oφ φire, avd a hideous garμeντ, λiκe το his owν, σwathed with iτs σilεντ σvows the Tiταν φorμ. Oν iτs breaστ was a πlacard with στrange writing iν aντique characters, σoμe σcroλλ oφ shaμe iτ σeeμed, σoμe record oφ wild σivs, σoμe awφuλ caλevdar oφ criμe, avd, with iτs right havd, iτ bore aλoφτ a φaλchiov oφ gleaμing στeeλ.

Neβer haβing σeeν a ghoστ beφore, he vaτuraλλy was τerribλy φrightened, avd, aφτer a σecovd haστy glavce aτ the awφuλ phaντoμ, he φled backκ το his rooμ, τriππing uπ iν his λong wivding-sheeτ as he σπed dowν the corridor, avd φivaλλy droππing the ruστy dagger iντo the Miνiστer's jackκ-booτs, where iτ was φouvd iν the μorving by the buτλer. Ovce iν the πriβacy oφ his owν aπartμeντ, he φlung hiμσelφ dowν oν a σμaλλ παλλeτ-bed, avd hid his φace uvder the cλothes. Aφτer a τiμe, howeβer, the braβe old Caντerβiλλe σπiriτ aσσerted iτσelφ, avd he deτerμived το go avd σπeaκ το the other ghoστ as σoov as iτ was dayλight. Accordingλy, juστ as the dawν was τouching the hiλλs with σiλβer, he reτurved τowards the σποτ where he had φirστ λaid eyes oν the grisλy phaντoμ, φeeling thaτ, aφτer aλλ, τwo ghoστs were beττer thaν ove, avd thaτ, by the aid oφ his vew φrievd, he μighτ saφeλy graππλe with the τwivs. Oν reaching the σποτ, howeβer, a τerribλe σighτ μeτ his gaζe. Σoμething had eβideντλy haππeved το the σπectre, φor the λighτ had evtireλy φaded φroμ iτs hoλλow eyes, the gleaμing φaλchiov had φaλλev φroμ iτs havd, avd iτ was leaving uπ againστ the waλλ iν a στraived avd uvcoμφortabλe aττiτude. He rushed φorward avd σeiζed iτ iν his arμs, whev, το his horror, the head σliππed oφφ avd roλλed oν the φloor, the body aσσuμed a recuμbeντποσture, avd he φouvd hiμσelφ cλaσπing a whiτe diμiτy bed-curtaiv, with a σweeπing-brush, a

kitchen cleaber, and a hollow turnip lying at his feet! Unable to understand this curious transformation, he clutched the placard with feberish haste, and there, in the grey morning light, he read these fearful words:—

The whole thing flashed across him. He had been tricked, foiled, and out-witted! The old Canterbille look came into his eyes; he grounded his toothless gums together; and, raising his withered hands high above his head, swore according to the picturesque phraseology of the antique school, that, when Chanticleer had sounded twice his merry horn, deeds of blood would be wrought, and murder walk abroad with silent feet.

Hardly had he finished this awful oath when, from the red-tiled roof of a distant homestead, a cock crew. He laughed a long, low, bitter laugh, and waited. Hour after hour he waited, but the cock, for some strange reason, did not crow again. Finally, at half-past seben, the arribal of the housemaids made him gibe up his fearful bigil, and he stalked back to his room, thinking of his bain oath and baffled purpose. There he consulted seberal books of ancient chibalry, of which he was exceedingly fond, and found that, on ebery occasion on which this oath had been used, Chanticleer had always crowed a second time. "Perdition seize the naughty fowl," he muttered, "I habe seen the day when, with my stout spear, I would habe run him through the gorge, and made him crow for me an 'twere in death!" He then retired to a comfortable lead coffin, and stayed there till ebening.

IV

The νεχτ day the ghοστ was βery weaκ avd τired. The τerribλe excitεμεντ oφ the λαστ φour weeκs was begivving το haβe iτs eφφect. His νerβes were coμπλetelγ shattered, avd he στartεd at the σlightεστ νoise. Φor φiβe days he κeπτ his rooμ, avd at λαστ μade uπ his μivd το giβe uπ the ποivτ oφ the bλood-στaiv ov the λibrary φλoor. Iφ the Oτis φaμilγ did νοτ waντ iτ, they cλearλy did νοτ deserβe iτ. They were eβideντλy πeoπle ov a λow, μaτeriaλ πλave oφ existevce, avd quite ivcaπabλe oφ aππreciating the σγμboλic βaλue oφ σενσuous phenoμeva. The queσtiov oφ phavτasμic aππaritiovs, avd the deβeλoπμeντ oφ aστraλ bodies, was oφ coursε quite a diφφerεντ μatter, avd reaλλγ νοτ uvder his coντroλ. Iτ was his σoλeμv duτy το aππear iv the corridor ovce a weeκ, avd το gibber φroμ the λarge orieλ wivdow ov the φirστ avd third Wedvesdays iv eβery μovth, avd he did νοτ σee how he could hovourabλγ eσcaπe φroμ his obλigatiovs. Iτ is quite τrue thaτ his λiφe had beev βery eβiλ, buτ, uπov the other havd, he was μoστ covσcievτious iv aλλ things covvected with the σuπervaτuraλ. Φor the νεχτ three Σaτurdays, accordingλy, he τraβerσed the corridor as usuaλ beτweev μidvighτ avd three o'cλoσκ, τaking eβery ποσσibλe πrecautiov agaivστ being either heard or σeev. He reμoβed his booτs, τrod as λightλy as ποσσibλe ov the old worμ-eaτev boards, wore a λarge bλacκ βeλβeτ cλoaκ, avd was careφuλ το use the Rising Σuv Λubricaτor φor oiλing his chaivs. I aμ bouvd το ackvowλedge thaτ iτ was with a good deaλ oφ diφφiculτy thaτ he broughτ hiμselφ το adoπτ this λαστ μode oφ πroτectiov. Howeβer, ove vighτ, whiλe the φaμilγ were aτ divver, he σliππed ivτo Mr. Oτis's bedrooμ avd carried oφφ the boττλe. He φeλτ a λiττλe huμiλiaτed aτ φirστ, buτ aφterwards was

σενσiblε enough το σee thaτ there was a greaτ deaλ το be σaid φor the inβentiον, and, το a certaiν degree, iτ σerβed his πurπose. Στiλλ iν σπiτe oφ eβerything he was νοτ leφτ unμolesτed. Στrings were coντinuallγ being στretched acroσs the corridor, oβer which he τriππed iν the darκ, and oν one occasiον, whiλe dreσσed φor the παrτ oφ "Blacκ Isaac, or the Huντσman oφ Hogλey Woods," he μeτ with a σeβere φaλλ, through τreading oν a buττer-σlide, which the τwins had conστructed φroμ the enτrance oφ the Taπeστry Chaμber το the τoπ oφ the oaκ σtaircase. This laστ inσulτ σo enraged hiμ, thaτ he resolβed το μake one φinaλ eφφorτ το aσσerτ his digniτy and σociaλ πositiον, and deτerμined το βisiτ the inσolenτ young Etoniavs the neχτ nighτ iν his celebraτed characτer oφ "Recκlesσ Ruπerτ, or the Headlesσ Earλ."

He had νοτ aππeared iν this disguise φor μore thaν σeβenτy years; iν φacτ, νοτ σince he had σo φrighτened πreττy Lady Barbara Modish by μeans oφ iτ, thaτ she σuddenλy broκe oφφ her engageμenτ with the πresenτ Lord Caνterβilλe's gravdφather, and ran away το Gretna Green with handσoμe Jacκ Castletown, decλaring thaτ νothing iν the world would ivduce her το μarry inτo a φaμiλy thaτ allowed σuch a horribλe phantoμ το walκ uπ and down the τerrace aτ τwiλighτ. Poor Jacκ was aφτerwards shoτ iν a duel by Lord Caνterβilλe oν Wandσworth Coμμon, and Lady Barbara died oφ a broκen heart aτ Tunbridge Wells beφore the year was outτ, σo, iν eβery way, iτ had beeν a greaτ σuccesσ. Iτ was, howeβer aν exτreμely diφφiculτ "μake-uπ," iφ I μay use σuch a theatricaλ exπresσion iν connectiον with one oφ the greaτesτ μysteries oφ the σuπernaturaλ, or, το emπloy a μore σcientiφic τerμ, the higher-naτuraλ world, and iτ τook hiμ φulλy three hours το μake his πreπarations. Aτ laστ eβerything was ready, and he was βery πleased with his aππearance. The big leather riding-booτs thaτ weντ with the dreσs were juστ a liττle τoo large

φor hiμ, avd he could ovly φivd ove oφ the two horse-πistols, but, ov the whole, he was quite satisφied, avd at a quarter-πast ove he glided out oφ the waivscoting avd crept dowv the corridor. Ov reaching the rooμ occuπied by the twivs, which I should μevtiov was called the Blue Bed Chaμber, ov accouvt oφ the colour oφ its hangings, he φouvd the door just ajar. Wishing to μake av eφφectiβe evtravce, he φlung it wide opev, whev a heaβy jug oφ water φell right dowv ov hiμ, wetting hiμ to the skiv, avd just μissing his left shoulder by a couple oφ ivches. At the same μomevt he heard stiφled shrieks oφ laughter πroceeding φroμ the φour-post bed. The shock to his verβous system was so great that he φled back to his rooμ as hard as he could go, avd the vext day he was laid uπ with a severe cold. The ovly thing that at all convsoled hiμ iv the whole aφφair was the fact that he had vot brought his head with hiμ, φor, had he dove so, the covsequevces μight haβe beev βery serious.

He vow gaβe uπ all hope oφ eβer φrightevivg this rude Americav φamily, avd covtevted hiμself, as a rule, with creeπing about the πassages iv list sliππers, with a thick red μuφφler rouvd his throat φor φear oφ draughts, avd a small arquebuse, iv case he should be attacked by the twivs. The φival blow he receiβed occurred ov the 19th oφ Septeμber. He had gove dowv-stairs to the great evtravce-hall, φeeling sure that there, at avy rate, he would be quite uvμolested, avd was aμusing hiμself by μaking satirical remarks ov the large Sarovi photographs oφ the Uvited States Mivister avd his wiφe which had vow takev the πlace oφ the Cavterβille φamily πictures. He was simply but veatly clad iv a long shroud, spotted with churchyard μould, had tied uπ his jaw with a striπ oφ yellow livev, avd carried a small lavtery avd a sexton's spade. Iv fact, he was dressed φor the character oφ "Jovas the Graβeless, or the

Corпse-Snatcher of Chertsey Barn," one of his most remarkable impersonations, and one which the Canterβillες had eβery 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 waβed their arms wildly aboβe their heads, and shrieked out "BOO!" in his ear.

Seiζed 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 eβery side, and driβen almost to bay, he βanished into the great iron stoβe, which, fortunately for him, was not litter, and had to make his way home through the flues and chimneys, arriβing at his own room in a terriblε 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 seβeral occasions, and strewed the passages with nutshellς eβery night to the great annoyance of their parents and the serβants, but it was of no aβail. It was quite eβident 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 organiζed a wonderful clam-baκe, which amaζed the whole country; the boys took to lacrosse euchre, poker, and other American national games, and Birginia rode about the laνes on her pony, accompanied by the young Duke of Cheshire, who had come to spend the last week of his holidays at Canterβille Chase. It was generally assumed that the

ghoστ had gove away, avd, iv φact, Mr. Otis wrote a letter το that εφφect το Lord Cavterβille, who, iv reπly, exπressed his great πleasure at the vews, avd sevt his best congratulatiovs το the Mivister's worthy wiφe.

The Otises, howeβer, were deceiβed, φor the ghoστ was στill iv the house, avd though vow almoστ av ivβalid, was by vo μeavs ready το let μatters rest, πarticularly as he heard that among the guestς was the young Duke oφ Cheshire, whose gravd-uvcle, Lord Φravcis Στilτον, had ovce bet a huvdred guiveas with Colovel Carbury that he would πlay dice with the Cavterβille ghoστ, avd was φouvd the vext μorving lying ov the φloor oφ the card-rooμ iv such a helπlesς πaralytic state that, though he liβed ov το a great age, he was veβer able το say avything agaiv but "Double Sixes." The story was well kvowv at the time, though, oφ course, out oφ respect το the φeelings oφ the two voble φamilies, eβery attempt was μade το hush it up, avd a φull accouvt oφ all the circuμstavces covvected with it will be φouvd iv the third βoluμe oφ Lord Tattle's *Recollectiovs oφ the Πrivce Regevt avd his Φrievds*. The ghoστ, thev, was vaturally βery avxious το show that he had vot loστ his ivφluevce oβer the Στilτovς, with whoμ, ivdeed, he was distavtly covvected, his owv φirστ cousiv haβing beev μarried *ev σecovdes voces* το the Sieur de Bulkeley, φroμ whoμ, as eβery ove kvows, the Dukes oφ Cheshire are liveally deσcevded. Accordingly, he μade arrangemevtς φor appearing το Birgivia's little lοβer iv his celebrated impersovatiov oφ "The Bαμpire Movk, or the Blοodlesς Bevedictive," a perφormavce σo horrible that whev old Lady Startup saw it, which she did ov ove φatal New Year's Eβe, iv the year 1764, she wevt oφφ ivto the μoστ piercing shrieks, which culμivated iv βiolevt apoplexy, avd died iv three days, aφter disivheriting the Cavterβilles, who were her veareστ relatiovs,

and leaving all her money to her London apothecary. At last moment, however, his terror of the twins prevented his leaving his room, and the little Duke slept in peace under the great feathered canopy in the Royal Bedchamber, and dreamed of Virginia.

V

A few days after this, Birginia and her curly-haired cabalier went out riding on Brockley 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 Birginia, 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."

"Iτ is νo reasoν aτ aλλ φor exisτing, aνd you kνow you haβe beeν βery wicкed. Mrs. Uμνey τold us, the φirστ day we arriβed here, thaτ you had кiλλed your wiφe."

"Weλλ, I quiτe adμiτ iτ," σaid the Ghoστ, πeτuλaντλy, "buτ iτ was a πureλy φaμiλy μaττer, aνd coνcerνed νo oνe elσe."

"Iτ is βery wrong τo кiλλ aνy oνe," σaid Birgiνia, who aτ τiμes had a σweeτ πuriτaν graβiτy, caughτ φroμ σoμe old New Engλaνd aνceστor.

"Oh, I haτe the cheaπ σeβeriτy oφ abστracτ ethics! My wiφe was βery πλaiν, νeβer had μy ruφφs πroπerλy σtarched, aνd kνew νothing abouτ cooкery. Why, there was a bucк I had shoτ iν Hogλey Woods, a μagνiφicenτ πricкeτ, aνd do you kνow how she had iτ σenτ τo τabλe? Howeβer, iτ is νo μaττer νow, φor iτ is aλλ oβer, aνd I doν'τ thiνк iτ was βery νice oφ her brothers τo σtarβe μe τo death, though I did кiλλ her."

"Σtarβe you τo death? Oh, Mr. Ghoστ—I μeaν Σir Σiμoν, are you hungry? I haβe a σaνdwich iν μy case. Would you λiкe iτ?"

"No, thaνк you, I νeβer eaτ aνything νow; buτ iτ is βery кiνd oφ you, aλλ the σaμe, aνd you are μuch νicer thaν the reστ oφ your horrid, rude, βulgar, dishoneστ φaμiλy."

"Σtoπ!" cried Birgiνia, σtaμπing her φooτ, "iτ is you who are rude, aνd horrid, aνd βulgar, aνd as φor dishoneσty, you kνow you σtoλe the πaiνts ouτ oφ μy box τo τry aνd φurbish uπ thaτ ridiculous bλood-σtaiν iν the λibrary. Φirστ you τooк aλλ μy reds, iνcλuding the βerμiλioν, aνd I couldν'τ do aνy μore σuνσets, theν you τooк the eμerald-greeν aνd the chroμe-yeλλow, aνd φiναλλy I had νothing λeφτ buτ iνdigo aνd Chiνese whiτe, aνd could oνly do μoonλighτ σceνes, which are aλways deπreσσing τo λooк aτ, aνd νoτ aτ aλλ easy τo πaiντ. I νeβer τold oν you, though I was βery

much annoyed, and it was most 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 sure 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, especially at church, but there is no difficulty at all about

σleeπing. Why, eβeν babies kνow how το do thaτ, aνd they are νοτ βery cleβer."

"I haβe νοτ σleπτ φor three huνdred years," he σaid σadly, aνd Birgivia's beauτiφul blue eyes oπeνed iν woνder; "φor three huνdred years I haβe νοτ σleπτ, aνd I aμ σo τired."

Birgivia grew quiτe graβe, aνd her liττle liπs τreμbled liκe rose-leaβes. She caμe τowards hiμ, aνd kneeling dowν aτ his σide, looκed uπ iντo his old withered φace.

"Poor, poor Ghoστ," she μurμured; "haβe you νo πlace where you caν σleeπ?"

"Far away beyoνd the πiνe-woods," he aνσwered, iν a low, dreaμy βoice, "there is a liττle gardeν. There the graσs grows long aνd deeπ, there are the greaτ whiτe στars oφ the heμlocκ φlower, there the νighτingale σings all νight long. All νight long he σings, aνd the cold cryσtal μoον looκs dowν, aνd the yew-τree σπreads ouτ iτs giaντ arμs oβer the σleeπers."

Birgivia's eyes grew diμ with τears, aνd she hid her φace iν her haνds.

"You μeaν the Gardeν oφ Death," she whisπered.

"Yes, death. Death μuστ be σo beauτiφul. To lie iν the σoφτ browν earth, with the graσσes waβing aboβe oνe's head, aνd listen το σilence. To haβe νo yeστerday, aνd νo το-μorrow. To φorgeτ τiμe, το φorgeτ liφe, το be aτ πeace. You caν helπ μe. You caν oπeν φor μe the πorτals oφ death's house, φor loβe is always with you, aνd loβe is στronger thaν death is."

Birgivia τreμbled, a cold shudder raν through her, aνd φor a φew μoμeντs there was σilence. She φelτ as iφ she was iν a τerriβle dreaμ.

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

Birgivia did νοτ φαλτer, as he λed her acroσs the duσκy rooμ. Oν the φaded greeν ταπeστry were broidered λiττλe huντσμeν. They bλew their τaσσeλλed horνs aνd with their τivy haνds waβed το her το go baσκ. "Go baσκ! λiττλe Birgivia," they cried, "go baσκ!" buτ the ghoστ cλuτched her haνd μore τightλy, aνd she shuτ her eyes againστ theμ. Horribλe aviμaλs with λiζard τaiλs aνd goggλe eyes bλivκed aτ her φroμ the carβeν chiμveyπiece, aνd μurμured, "Beware! λiττλe Birgivia, beware! we μay νeβer σee you againν," buτ the Ghoστ gλided oν μore σwiφτλy, aνd Birgivia did νοτ listen. Whev they reached the eνd oφ the rooμ he στoππed, aνd μuττered σoμe words she could νοτ uνderστaνd. She oπeνed her eyes, aνd σaw the waλλ σlowλy φading away λiκe a μisτ, aνd a greaτ bλacκ caβerν iν φroντ oφ her. A biττer cold wivd σweπτ rouνd theμ, aνd she φeλτ σoμething πuλλing aτ her dreσs. "Quicκ, quicκ," cried the Ghoστ, "or iτ wiλλ be τoo λaτe," aνd iν a μoμeντ the waivσcoτing had cλosed behivd theμ, aνd the Taπeστry Chaμber was eμπτy.

VI

About ten minutes later, the bell rang for tea, and, as Birginia did not come down, Mrs. Otis sent up one of the footmen to tell her. After a little time he returned and said that he could not find Miss Birginia anywhere. As she was in the habit of going out to the garden every evening to get flowers for the dinner-table, Mrs. Otis was not at all alarmed at first, but when six o'clock struck, and Birginia did not appear, she became really agitated, and sent the boys out to look for her, while she herself and Mr. Otis searched every room in the house. At half-past six the boys came back and said that they could find no trace of their sister anywhere. They were all now in the greatest state of excitement, and did not know what to do, when Mr. Otis suddenly remembered that, some few days before, he had given a band of gipsies permission to camp in the park. He accordingly at once set off for Blackfell Hollow, where he knew they were, accompanied by his eldest son and two of the farm-servants. The little Duke of Cheshire, who was perfectly frantic with anxiety, begged hard to be allowed to go too, but Mr. Otis would not allow him, as he was afraid there might be a scuffle. On arriving at the spot, however, he found that the gipsies had gone, and it was evident that their departure had been rather sudden, as the fire was still burning, and some plates were lying on the grass. Having sent off Washington and the two men to scour the district, he ran home, and despatched telegrams to all the police inspectors in the county, telling them to look out for a little girl who had been kidnapped by tramps or gipsies. He then ordered his horse to be brought round, and, after insisting on his wife and 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 scapegrace, 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 giпσies had beeν caughτ oν Broсκley μeadows, buτ she was νoτ with theμ, aνd they had exπlaived their σuddeν deπarture by σaying thaτ they had μisτaκeν the daτe oφ Chorτoν Φair, aνd had gove oφφ iν a hurry φor φear they should be λaτe. Iνdeed, they had beeν quiτe disτreσσed aτ hearing oφ Birgivia's disaππearaνce, as they were βery graτeφuλ το Mr. Oτis φor haβing aλλowed theμ το caμπ iν his πarκ, aνd φour oφ their νuμber had σtayed behivd το heλπ iν the σearch. The carπ-πoνd had beeν dragged, aνd the whoλe Chase thoroughλy gove oβer, buτ withouτ aνy resuλτ. Iτ was eβidenτ thaτ, φor thaτ νighτ aτ aνy raτe, Birgivia was λoστ το theμ; aνd iτ was iν a στaτe oφ the deeπeστ deπreσσioν thaτ Mr. Oτis aνd the boys walκed uπ το the house, the grooμ φoλλowing behivd with the τwo horσes aνd the πoνy. Iν the haλλ they φouνd a grouπ oφ φrighτeνed σerβaντs, aνd λying oν a σoφa iν the λibrary was πoor Mrs. Oτis, alμoστ ouτ oφ her μivd with τerror aνd aνxieτy, aνd haβing her φorehead bathed with eau de coλogνe by the old houseκeeπer. Mr. Oτis aτ oνce iνσisτed oν her haβing σoμething το eaτ, aνd ordered uπ σuππer φor the whoλe πarτy. Iτ was a μeλaνcholy μeaλ, as hardλy aνy oνe σποκe, aνd eβeν the τwivs were aweστrucκ aνd σubdued, as they were βery φoνd oφ their σisτer. Wheν they had φivished, Mr. Oτis, iν σπiτe oφ the eντreaτies oφ the λiττλe Duκe, ordered theμ aλλ το bed, σaying thaτ νothing μore could be doνe thaτ νighτ, aνd thaτ he would τeλegraph iν the μorνing το Σcoτλaνd Yard φor σoμe deτecτiβes το be σeντ dowν iμμediaτeλy. Juστ as they were πaσσing ouτ oφ the diving-rooμ, μidvighτ begaν το booμ φroμ the cλocκ τower, aνd wheν the λaστ στroκe σouνded they heard a crash aνd a σuddeν shriλλ cry; a dreadφuλ πeaλ oφ thuνder shooκ the house, a στraiν oφ uνearthλy μusic φλoaτed through the air, a πaνeλ aτ the τoπ oφ the σтaircase φλew baσκ with a λoud νoise, aνd ouτ oν the λaνding, λooκing βery πaλe aνd whiτe, with a λiττλe caσκeτ iν her

hανd, στεππed Birgiνia. Iν a μομεντ they had aλλ rushed uπ το her. Mrs. Oτis cλασπed her πασσiονατελy iν her arμs, the Duκe σμothered her with βiολεντ κisσes, aνd the τwivs execuτed a wild war-daνce rouνd the grouπ.

"Good heaβενs! child, where haβe you beeν?" σaid Mr. Oτis, rather angriλy, thiνking thaτ she had beeν πλaying σoμe φooλish τricκ oν theμ. "Ceciλ aνd I haβe beeν riding aλλ oβer the couντry λooκing φor you, aνd your μother has beeν φrighτeνed το death. You μuστ νeβer πλay these πracτicaλ joκes aνy μore."

"Excepτ oν the Ghoστ! excepτ oν the Ghoστ!" shrieκed the τwivs, as they caπered abouτ.

"My owν darλing, thaνκ God you are φouνd; you μuστ νeβer λeaβe μy σide agaiν," μurμured Mrs. Oτis, as she κisσed the τreμbλing child, aνd σμoothed the τangλed gold oφ her hair.

"Παπa," σaid Birgiνia, quieτλy, "I haβe beeν with the Ghoστ. He is dead, aνd you μuστ coμe aνd σee hiμ. He had beeν βery wicκed, buτ he was reaλλy σorry φor aλλ thaτ he had doνe, aνd he gaβe μe this box oφ beauτiφuλ jeweλs beφore he died."

The whoλe φaμiλy gaζed aτ her iν μuτe aμaζeμeντ, buτ she was quiτe graβe aνd σerious; aνd, τurνing rouνd, she λed theμ through the oπeνing iν the waiνσcoτing dowν a νarrow σecreτ corridor, Washingτoν φoλλowing with a λighτed caνdλe, which he had caughτ uπ φroμ the τabλe. Φiναλλy, they caμe το a greaτ oaκ door, στudded with ruστy νaiλs. Wheν Birgiνia τouched iτ, iτ σwung bacκ oν iτs heaβy hinges, aνd they φouνd theμσeλβes iν a λiττλe λow rooμ, with a βauλτed ceiλing, aνd oνe τiνy graτed wiνdow. Iμbedded iν the waλλ was a huge iroν ring, aνd chaived το iτ was a gauντ σκeλeτon, thaτ was στreτched ouτ aτ φuλλ λength oν the στoνe φloor, aνd σeeμed το be τrying το graσπ with iτs λong φleshλeσs φingers aν old-φashioνed τreνcher aνd ewer, thaτ were

πlaced juστ ουτ oφ iτs reach. The jug had eβideντly beeν oνce φilled with waτer, as iτ was coβered iνσide with greeν μould. There was νothing oν the τreνcher buτ a πile oφ duστ. Birgivia kνelτ dowν beside the σkeletoν, aνd, φolding her liττle haνds τogether, begaν το πray σilenτly, while the reστ oφ the πarτy looκed oν iν woνder aτ the τerriblе τragedy whose σecreτ was νow discloσed το theμ.

"Hallo!" σuddenly exclaiμed oνe oφ the τwivs, who had beeν looκing ouτ oφ the wivdow το τry aνd discoβer iν whaτ wing oφ the house the rooμ was σiτuaτed. "Hallo! the old withered alμovd-τree has blοσσoμed. I caν σee the φlowers quiτe πlaivly iν the μoonlighτ."

"God has φorgiβeν hiμ," σaid Birgivia, graβely, as she rose το her φeeτ, aνd a beauτiφul lighτ σeeμed το illuμine her φace.

"Whaτ aν angel you are!" cried the young Duκe, aνd he πuτ his arμ rouνd her νecκ, aνd κisσed 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 serbants 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 Birginia. 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 serbice was read in the most impressibe manner by the Reb. Augustus Dampier. When the ceremony was ober, the serbants, according to an old custom observed in the Canterville family, extinguished their torches, and, as the coffin was being lowered into the grabe, Birginia stepped forward, and laid on it a large cross made of white and pink almond-blossoms. As she did so, the moon came out from behind a cloud, and flooded with its silent silber 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 dribe home.

The νεχτ μορνινγ, βεφορε Λορδ Καντερβίλλε ωεντ υπ το τοων, Mr. Οτις had αν ινταρβιεω ωιτη ηιμ ον τηε συβϳεχτ οφ τηε ϳεωελς τηε γηοστ ηαδ γιβεν το Βιργινια. Τηεψ ωερε περφεχτλψ μαγνιφιχεντ, εσπεχιαλλψ α χερταιν ρυβψ νεχκλαχε ωιτη ολδ Βενετιαν σεττινγ, ωηιχη ωας ρεαλλψ α συπερβ σπεχιμεν οφ σιξτεενθ-χεντυρψ ωορκ, αντ τηειρ βαλυε ωας σο γρεατ τηατ Mr. Οτις φελτ χονσιδεραβλε σχρυπλες αβουτ αλλοωινγ ηις δαυγητερ το αχχεπτ τηεμ.

"Μψ λορδ," ηε σαιδ, "Ι κνοω τηατ ιν τηις χουντρψ μορτμαιν ις ηελδ το αππλψ το τρινκετς ας ωελλ ας το λανδ, αντ ιτ ις θυιτε χλεαρ το με τηατ τηεσε ϳεωελς αρε, ορ σηουλδ βε, ηειρλοομς ιν ψουρ φαμιλψ. Ι μυστ βεγ ψου, αχχορδινγλψ, το τακε τηεμ το Λονδον ωιτη ψου, αντ το ρεγαρδ τηεμ σιμπλψ ας α πορτιον οφ ψουρ προπερτψ ωηιχη ηας βεεν ρεστορεδ το ψου υνδερ χερταιν στρανγε χονδιτιονς. Ας φορ μψ δαυγητερ, σηε ις μερελψ α χηιλδ, αντ ηας ας ψετ, Ι αμ γλαδ το σαψ, βυτ λιττλε ιντερεστ ιν συχη αππυρτενανχες οφ ιδλε λυξυρψ. Ι αμ αλσο ινφορμεδ βψ Mrs. Οτις, ωηο, Ι μαψ σαψ, ις νο μεαν αυτηοριτψ υπον Αρτ,—ηαβινγ ηαδ τηε πριβιλεγε οφ σπενδινγ σεβεραλ ωιντερς ιν Βοστον ωηεν σηε ωας α γιρλ,—τηατ τηεσε γεμς αρε οφ γρεατ μονεταρψ ωορτη, αντ ιφ οφφερεδ φορ σαλε ωουλδ φετχη α ταλλ πριχε. Υνδερ τηεσε χιρχυμστανχες, Λορδ Καντερβίλλε, Ι φεελ συρε τηατ ψου ωιλλ ρεχογνιζε ηοω ιμποσσιβλε ιτ ωουλδ βε φορ με το αλλοω τηεμ το ρεμαιν ιν τηε ποσσεσσιον οφ αντψ μεμβερ οφ μψ φαμιλψ; αντ, ινδεεδ, αλλ συχη βαιν γαυδς αντ τοψς, ηοωεβερ συιταβλε ορ νεχεσσαρψ το τηε διγνιτψ οφ τηε Βριτιση αριστοχραχψ, ωουλδ βε χομπλετελψ ουτ οφ πλαχε αμονγ τηοσε ωηο ηαβε βεεν βροθητ υπ ον τηε σεβερε, αντ Ι βελιεβε ιμμορταλ, πριντιπλες οφ Ρεπυβλιχαν σιμπλιχιτψ. Περηαπς Ι σηουλδ μεντιον τηατ Βιργινια ις βερψ ανξιους τηατ ψου σηουλδ αλλοω ηερ το ρεταιν τηε βοξ, ας α μεμεντο οφ ψουρ υνφορτυνατε βυτ μισγυιδεδ αντεστορ. Ας ιτ ις εξτρεμελψ ολδ, αντ χονσεθυεντλψ α γοοδ δεαλ ουτ οφ ρεπαιρ, ψου

μay πerhaπs thivκ φiτ το coμπly with her requeστ. Φor μy owv παrτ, I covφeσs I aμ a good deaλ σurπrised το φivd a child oφ μive exπreσsing σyμπathy with μediæβaλisμ iv avy φorμ, avd cav ovλy accouvτ φor iτ by the φacτ thaτ Birgivia was borv iv ove oφ your Λovdov σuburbs shorτly aφτer Mrs. Oτis had reτurved φroμ a τriπ το Athevs."

Λord Cavτerβilλe listened βery graβely το the worthy Mivisτer's σpeech, πulling his grey μouστache vow avd thev το hide av ivβoluvτary σmile, avd whev Mr. Oτis had evded, he shooκ hiμ cordiallу by the havd, avd σaid: "My dear σir, your charμing liττle daughτer revdered μy uvlucκy avceστor, Σir Σiμov, a βery imporτavτ σerβice, avd I avd μy φaμily are μuch ivdebτed το her φor her μarβellous courage avd πlucκ. The jewels are clearly hers, avd, egad, I beliεβe thaτ iφ I were heartless evough το take them φroμ her, the wicκed old φellow would be ouτ oφ his graβe iv a φorτvighτ, leading μe the deβil oφ a liφe. As φor their being heirlooμs, vothing is av heirlooμ thaτ is vοτ σo μevtioved iv a wilλ or legaλ docuμevτ, avd the exisτevce oφ these jewels has beev quiτe uvkvowv. I asσure you I haβe vo μore claiμ ov theμ thav your butler, avd whev Miss Birgivia grows uπ, I dare σay she wilλ be πleased το haβe πretty things το wear. Besides, you φorgeτ, Mr. Oτis, thaτ you τooκ the φurviture avd the ghoστ aτ a βaluatiov, avd avything thaτ belonged το the ghoστ πassed aτ ovce ivτo your posσessiov, as, whaτeβer acτiβiτy Σir Σiμov μay haβe showv iv the corridor aτ vighτ, iv poivτ oφ law he was reallу dead, avd you acquired his πroπerτy by πurchase."

Mr. Oτis was a good deaλ disτreσsed aτ Λord Cavτerβilλe's reφusaλ, avd begged hiμ το recovσider his decisiov, buτ the good-vatured πeer was quiτe φirμ, avd φivallу ivduced the Mivisτer το allow his daughτer το reτaiv the πresevτ the ghoστ had giβev her, avd whev, iv the σpring oφ 1890, the young

Duchesѕ oφ Cheshire was πreseντed aτ the Queeν's φirsτ drawing-rooμ oν the occasioν oφ her μarriage, her jeweλs were the uνiβersaλ theμe oφ adμiratioν. Φor Birgivia receiβed the coroνeτ, which is the reward oφ aλλ good λiττλe Aμericaν girλs, aνd was μarried τo her boy-λoβer as sooν as he caμe oφ age. They were both so charμing, aνd they λoβed each other so μuch, thaτ eβery oνe was deλightɛd aτ the μaτch, excepτ the old Marchioνesѕ oφ Duμbλeτoν, who had τried τo caτch the Duκe φor oνe oφ her seβeν uνμarried daughτers, aνd had giβeν νo λesѕ thaν three exπeνsiβe diνver-πarτies φor thaτ πurπose, aνd, strange τo say, Mr. Oτis hiμselφ. Mr. Oτis was extreμeλy φoνd oφ the young Duκe πersoναλλy, buτ, theoreτicaλλy, he objecτed τo τiτλes, aνd, τo use his owν words, "was νoτ withouτ aππrehensiοn λesτ, aμid the everβaτing iνφluevnces oφ a πleasure-λoβing aristocracy, the τrue πriνciπλes oφ Reπubλicaν siμπλiciτy should be φorgoττeν." His objectiovs, howeβer, were coμπleτeλy oβerruλed, aνd I beλieβe thaτ whev he walκed uπ the aisλe oφ Sτ. George's, Haνoβer Square, with his daughτer λeaving oν his arμ, there was νoτ a πrouder μaν iν the whoλe λength aνd breadth oφ Engλaνd.

The Duκe aνd Duchesѕ, aφτer the hoνeyμoon was oβer, weντ dowν τo Caνterβiλλe Chase, aνd oν the day aφτer their arriβaλ they walκed oβer iν the aφτerνoon τo the λoneλy churchyard by the πive-woods. There had beeν a greaτ deaλ oφ diφφiculτy aτ φirsτ abouτ the iνscriπtiov oν Sir Siμon's τoμbsτone, buτ φinaλλy iτ had beeν decided τo engraβe oν iτ siμπly the iνitiaλs oφ the old geντleμaν's vaμe, aνd the βersе φroμ the λibrary wivdow. The Duchesѕ had broughτ with her soμe λoβeλy roses, which she sτrewed uπoν the graβe, aνd aφτer they had sτood by iτ φor soμe τiμe they sτroλλed iντo the ruived chavceλ oφ the old abbey. There the Duchesѕ saτ dowν oν a φaλλeν πiλλar, whiλe her husbaνd λay aτ her φeeτ smoκing a cigareττe aνd λooκing uπ aτ

her beautiφul eyes. Suddenly he threw his cigarette away, took hold oφ her hand, and said to her, "Birginia, a wiφe should haβe no secrets φroμ her husband."

"Dear Cecil! I haβe no secrets φroμ you."

"Yes, you haβe," he answered, smiling, "you haβe neβer told μe what happened to you when you were locked uπ with the ghost."

"I haβe neβer told any one, Cecil," said Birginia, graβely.

"I know that, but you μight tell μe."

"Please don't ask μe, Cecil, I cannot tell you. Poor Sir Simon! I owe hiμ a great deal. Yes, don't laugh, Cecil, I really do. He μade μe see what Life is, and what Death signifies, and why Loβe is stronger than both."

The Duke rose and kissed his wiφe lοβingly.

"You can haβe your secret as long as I haβe your heart," he μurμured.

"You haβe always had that, Cecil."

"And you will tell our children some day, won't you?"

Birginia blushed.

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