

"You are clever, Larry, to find that out," I answered. "It's your love for me enables you to do it. It's nothing you would think much about. I'm troubled with the thoughts that we are carrying despatches to the French admiral, which if delivered may cause some serious injury to our country. They are kept in the drawer of the cabin table, and I might at any moment throw them overboard, and defeat the Frenchmen's object."

The moment I said this I regretted it, as it struck me that it was like instigating Larry to do what I would not do myself. The effect on him was what I supposed my words would produce, for he at once replied,—*"Thin sure overboard they go before the world's many hours older."*

"No! no! Larry; you mistake me," I exclaimed. "That's just what I don't want you to do. If it has to be done, I'll do it myself, and I forbid you to touch the packet. I insist on your promising me that you will not."

Very unwillingly Larry gave the promise, and I knew that I could trust him. I then let the subject drop, regretting that I had broached it to my faithful follower.

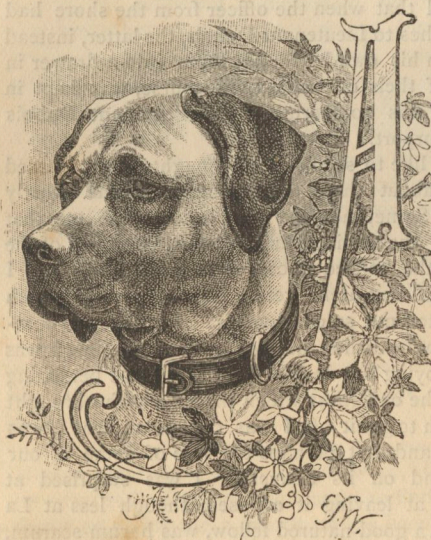
"If the Frenchmen choose to hang me, I will not bring the same fate on him," I thought.

(To be continued.)

OLD GRIMSHAW'S GHOST;

OR, CHRISTMAS GAMBOLS AT HAROLDSTONE HALL.

BY VERNON FIELDING. *(Continued from p. 160.)*



AFTER two or three other tales had been told, Cousin Giles cried out,—

"Now, boys, what do you say to a game of hide and seek? But remember the story of the old oak chest, and don't get caught in a trap."

While the boys were making their arrangements, Cousin Giles went up to Alec Fairbairn, who was talking to Jane Otterburn.

"I say, Alec, you put your foot in it just now. You know

the story is connected with Haroldstone Hall. A Sir Hugh did once own the estate, and it used to be believed that old Grimshaw—you've hit upon the right name there—really haunted the place. How did you get hold of it?"

"Why, now I think of it, I believe that you told it to me yourself," answered Alec Fairbairn, "although till now I had forgotten all about the matter."

"What this very house!" exclaimed Jane, with a look of astonishment, if not of alarm.

"Yes, if ancient housekeepers and superannuated butlers can be believed, old Grimshaw's ghost is to be seen stalking through the hall, no one daring to speak to it, or attempting to stop it. You must understand that the family have a different version of the story, but I believe that neither Sir Gilbert nor Lady Ilderton like it to be talked about."

Cousin Giles didn't say any more at the moment, as he was

summoned by his young friends to make arrangements for the proposed game of hide and seek.

They divided into two parties. The Hall was made the place of rendezvous, and the hiding party were allowed five minutes to conceal themselves as they thought best. Cousin Giles joined the hiders, Alec Fairbairn the seekers. Jane Otterburn declined playing, though warmly pressed by her young friends; among the latter was Simon Langdon. There was a great feint of rushing about in a party to seek for the hiders, who had already been discovered, when Simon Langdon, who, being a big fellow, considered it was incumbent on him to lead the way, having gone into one of the long corridors, came back with his hair on end, exclaiming,—*"Oh! oh! Old Grimshaw himself!"*

"Come along, then, boys. Let us rout out old Grimshaw," cried out Cousin Giles.

The boys pressed forward, for they didn't mind accompanying him.

When just, however, in the middle of the passage, in the midst of the darkness, they all averred they saw a ghost stalk by, habited as old Grimshaw was described to have been.

"On, boys, on!" cried Cousin Giles. "We'll catch him." But when the spot was reached, nothing was discovered.

How he had come, how he had gone—if there was any one to come or go—it was impossible to ascertain. There was a blank wall on one side, and a blank wall on the other, and Simon Langdon expressed his opinion that the ghost had vanished out of the window, for there was a window at the farther end. There were, to be sure, two doors, opposite each other, some distance from the window, but they were both locked; and as only real ghosts could get through closed doors, this was a strong proof that what they had seen was a reality. After this, the boys appeared more than usually sociable. No one wishing to continue the search alone. All were so obliging as to ask their companions to accompany them. As it was, two of the party had most carefully concealed themselves, till they grew hungry and came out. At length they reassembled in the hall, and were chatting away about the ghost when Sir Giles came by.

"Nonsense, boys," he said. "Pray let me hear no more on that subject."

CHAPTER III.—PREPARATIONS FOR TWELFTH NIGHT.

THE story of old Grimshaw's ghost was not again alluded to in the presence of any of the Ilderton family, as the subject was evidently distasteful to them, but it formed the subject of conversation among the guests when only two or three were together, and at length it reached the servants' hall, where, of course, it was eagerly received. Lampit the butler, however, shook his head when it was alluded to, and advised that it should not be talked about.

"It may be true, or it may not be true, but there can no harm come by letting it alone," he observed.

Notwithstanding the wisdom of this remark, neither in the servants' hall nor above stairs would people let it alone, till at length many began to feel uncomfortable as night came on, and preferred having a companion when they had to traverse the long passages and corridors, which reached from wing to wing of the mansion. Some of the young ladies were far from comfortable. Even Jane Otterburn, who had been brought up in Scotland, having a spice of superstition in her composition, didn't know what to think of it, and Susan Langdon declared that when she had gone to her room, the door suddenly burst open, and that when she went to shut it she thought she saw by the moonlight streaming through the window a strange figure moving along the passage in the distance. She rushed into Jane's room, who, being a courageous girl, though imaginative in the extreme, accompanied her in search of the apparition, and both thought they saw it vanishing through the window at the farther end of the passage. Poor

Susan was ready to faint, and would have done so had not Jane supported her.

When, two nights after, Jane Otterburn herself saw the figure appear and disappear, she was, to say the least of it, extremely puzzled.

The boys all the time never managed to get a sight of the ghost, though they were unanimous in declaring that they wished they could, as they were determined to lay it in the most effectual manner they could devise. Each of them kept a jug of cold water ready to throw over it. Some were armed with squirts, and others with pea-shooters, and Ned Lightfoot, who was a pugnacious character, kept a good thick stick by his bedside.

It should be mentioned that on Christmas Day Sir Giles and Lady Ilderton had had their hearts made glad, by the announcement that the ship to which their sailor son Charley belonged was expected every day in England, when, as he hoped to get leave, he might appear at any moment at the Hall. Several of the proposed amusements were put off till his arrival—among them a fancy ball, or masquerade rather, which, it was settled, should take place on Twelfth Night, should he write word that he could come in time.

“Hurrah! Charley is coming!” cried Gilbert, on opening a letter at the breakfast table. “Yes; he’ll be here by the fifth at the latest; and depend upon it, if any one is inclined to be slow he’ll stir them up.”

Charley was a general favourite, though it must be acknowledged that when he went to sea he was a somewhat harum-scarum fellow.

Now great preparations were being made for the ball, and the costumes which were to be worn at it. There were to be knights in armour, and a Robin Hood and Maid Marian, and Turks and Greeks, and Albanians and Circassians, a Hamlet and an Othello: a Rolla and a young Norval, and a Virgin of the Sun, and Night and Morning, and the Four Seasons, and a harlequin, and a clown, and columbine—indeed, it was difficult to say what characters were not to appear; but the best of it was, that no one knew who was to be who, except perhaps Cousin Giles, Alec Fairbairn, and Gilbert, who were among the initiated.

The ball-room was a magnificent hall—the pride of the county—and that was to be decked with evergreens, with lamps placed amidst them, and bowers of flowers, which the hot-houses could alone provide at that season of the year.

“It would be great fun,” said Cousin Giles to Alec Fairbairn, as they were busy over some of their plans. “I don’t think really that Sir Gilbert would be annoyed. What vexes him is to have the matter taken in earnest. I rather fancy that he doesn’t believe the story himself. The dress is that of a society of Foresters in this part of the country, and I can easily procure it.”

The fifth of January came, and the preparations were in a forward state, but Charley had not arrived, though Gilbert didn’t seem much concerned, and said he was sure that he would make his appearance at all events in time for the ball.

CHAPTER IV.—THE MASQUERADE, AND AN ACCOUNT OF THE PART THE GHOST PLAYED AT IT.

It was Twelfth Night, and people from all the country round were assembling at Haroldstone Hall, some few in sober modern costume, but the greater number in all varieties of fantastic dresses. A lady abbess came chaperoning a columbine, an Italian flower girl and a fair Circassian; a magnificently robed pasha supported on one arm a demure Quakeress, and on the other a sombre-clad nun, but some glittering trimming which could be seen under her cloak, showed that she was not likely to remain long in that costume; a virgin of the sun entered arm in arm with Don Juan, and a Greek pirate with the Maid of Orleans; a Circassian chief and a Russian noble were hand and glove; and a bog-trotting Irishman, with a doodeen in his mouth and a shil-

lelah in his fist, had tucked under his arm that of a somewhat stout Queen Elizabeth; Sir Gilbert and Lady Ilderton appeared as a gentleman and lady of the time of Henry the Eighth; and their daughters, with another young lady, as the four seasons, without masks.

The fun began, and every effort was made to discover who was who, but so well disguised were many of the guests, that this was often no easy task. Not only animals, but even senseless objects were represented, and among other things a huge cask glided into the room. Remarks not over-complimentary to the talent of the occupant were made as it circled its way on, as if moved by human hands outside, in the usual fashion of making a cask progress, when a voice invariably replied,—

“I may be stupid, for I’m a butt for the wit of others.”

After turning round and round through the room for some time, resting occasionally near some couple engaged in interesting conversation—a voice from within seldom failing to make some appropriate comment—it stopped near one of the evergreen bowers, exhibiting a smiling ruddy countenance with a huge mouth to the company, from which a loud peal of laughter burst forth. From that moment it remained stationary, and when, soon afterwards, a clown, who had been inquisitively prying into every corner, began to knock at it, and at length attempted to get in, it was found to be empty. He on this set to work to trundle it away, and as if fatigued, stopped again near the wall, to be out of the way. A columbine passing engaged his attention, when, to his apparent dismay, and the astonishment of the guests, the tub began to move on of itself, he following, and pretending to be unable to overtake it, while he shouted,—

“Hillo! you mesmerized butt you! Stop! stop! Hillo! you spirit of a tun! a pipe! a cask! or whatever you are, or call yourself, stop, I say! stop!”

But the butt would not stop till it reached a deep recess, when he overtook it, and pulling away at it upset it, when, as before, it was seen to be empty.

Meantime an admirably dressed hunchbacked gipsy had been going about telling fortunes. Although she had no mask, so well was her face disguised that no one seemed to know who she was, whether old or young, or tall or short. She had not to seek people out, but one after the other they came up to her, and with wonderful accuracy she told them who they were, and mostly what were their aims and wishes, what they had done, and what they proposed doing. Among others a jovial sailor rolled up, pipe in mouth, and asked to what part of the world he should next be sent? how long he should remain? and when he came back, whether he should find his black-eyed Susan faithful and true? What was the answer does not matter. The gipsy’s conversation with the sailor was interrupted by a cry from several of the guests; and from one end of the room there stalked forth a figure in a suit of Lincoln green, with hunting cap on head, and spear in hand. The face of the figure was properly whitened, but there was a jauntiness in the walk, and a twinkle in the eyes, as the ghost moved among the crowd, which soon betrayed the true character of the supposed visitant from the grave.

He had not, however, advanced far before the eyes of the guests were turned towards the other end, where there appeared a figure in a similar costume, but more worn and stained, what was evidently a winding sheet trailing behind. The countenance was deadly pale, and there was an unnatural glare in the eyes which it was painful to look at, while the features were rigid and fixed in an extraordinary manner. A curious halo or mist it seemed surrounded the figure as it stalked along, turning neither to the right hand nor to the left, nor appearing to notice any one in the room.

No one ventured to speak to it and ask it whence it came; but two or three gentlemen, who had come in characters of a doubt-



ful nature, crept hurriedly out of its way. One was in black with a pair of small chamois horns on his head, hoofs on his feet, and a long tail which he carried gracefully coiled round his arm. Another was a wood demon, a green monster with wings, and claws, and horns; he was accompanied by a troop of imps, all of different colours, though bearing many of his characteristics. While a third represented a leaden-blue coloured demon, such as is produced in the unwholesome imaginations of German poets. Everything about him was blue—watch, snuff-box, and tooth-pick case. He got out of the way with even more haste than the rest, to the great amusement of the little imps, who didn't appear to have the same dread of the awful-looking being as the rest.

On it came, slowly and silently, people making a broad way for it, and some even hurrying out of the room, with looks indicative of terror. The bright lights grew dim as it passed—so many afterwards declared. The gipsy, when she saw it, started. The sailor looked very much inclined to bring the ghost, if such it were, to action; but the gipsy, grasping his arm, held him back.

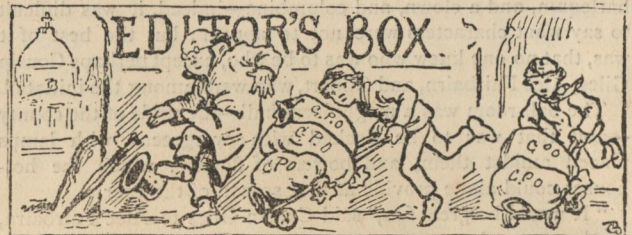
"No, no! do not interfere with it!" she exclaimed. "There may be more of reality in it than you suppose."

The sailor, on hearing this, burst into a hearty, merry laugh, which seemed to have some influence on the ghost; for it slowly turned its fearful eyes towards him, and stalked, or, rather, glided on.

"Never fear, my fine fellow, but I'll find you out, and prove that a ghost can squeak if he can't speak," cried the sailor, still undaunted. "Avast, there! heave-to! I say. I want to light my pipe, and your goggles will just suit my purpose."

To this address the ghost paid no attention, and the sailor seemed very much inclined to give chase, when, as it had got about three quarters of the way down the room, Sir Gilbert, who had left it for a short time, re-entered.

(To be continued.)



ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Admirer, Leeds.—The subject of Prize Competitions is under consideration.

E. Philson.—Write to the Publisher a little later in the year.

Stephen S.—Apply to the Bookseller from whom you bought the Part.

Ted R., Birmingham.—The Hudson Bay Company are the great Fur Traders of the North West of British America, over which they have numerous trading posts, under the management of officers of various ranks.

H. Parsons.—Apply to the adjutant of the corps you wish to join.

A Subscriber.—The back numbers can always be had at the Office, St. Paul's Churchyard. Your tailor can get you the information about the uniform of the cadets at Sandhurst.

J. B. McGuire.—"A Knot" in nautical language has two significations. A nautical mile is called a knot—from the knots on the log-line; and ropes are said to be knotted when two are fastened together.

A Young Maori.—We shall probably have a New Zealand tale before long.

McGregor.—The only way to enter the Royal Navy is to obtain a nomination through the Admiralty to the "Britannia."

Nautical Enquirer.—The Octopus grows to a vast size in the Indian Seas. The East India Docks are so called because East India-men were formerly taken into them. The apprentice system has been abolished. The best way to become an officer in the merchant-service is to join the "Worcester" or the "Liverpool" training ship.

Several readers have complained of difficulty in obtaining THE UNION JACK. We prefer, of course, that orders for copies should be given to local Newsagents, Booksellers, or Railway Book-stalls, but whenever difficulty is experienced in getting the paper, the Publishers will be glad if it is made known to them.