

that very hour; and rode away until they came to the village of Gorni-Dubnik. This, like all other places they had passed through, was deserted by its inhabitants; but there were all manner of live stock about—pigs, and sheep, and cattle, and poultry. Half-a-dozen men were despatched on a poultry hunt. Jack rode down a young porker, who gave him an excellent run of nearly half a mile, before he could head him back on the village. Having driven him home, he settled him with a shot from his revolver. One of the doctors dealt with him as deftly as a butcher would have done. Another had caught and killed a sheep. A couple of dozen ducks and fowls were caught, and tied by the legs for future service.

The adventurers went into any house, and took what they wanted. They found one great, handsome house, from which every removable scrap of furniture had been carried, and they took possession of it in a body. They ransacked the whole village for cooking utensils, and found not only what they sought, but a great case of capital rum, some very decent wine of the country, more than a hundredweight of native tobacco, and as much sugar and salt as they cared for. They had also, by special good fortune, found flour.

Drascovitch was in his glory now; and such a dinner as he cooked, that starven assemblage thought they had never tasted before in all their lives. The night was cold; and they filled the great stove with logs, and heaped up the fire within it, until it gave out a glowing heat. Then Jack Delamaine made punch in a huge tin bowl he had discovered in a neighbouring house, and they sat about the fire, and smoked pipes, and drank punch, and sang songs, and told stories, and had a jolly evening generally.

When at length they were weary of jollity, they lay down upon the floor in groups about the big earthenware stove, and as silence fell upon them, they were suddenly aware of a great booming noise, like the sound of breakers heard far inland on a quiet night.

"What is that?" asked one.

"It is the sound of the guns round Plevna," said old Drascovitch.

(To be continued.)

OLD GRIMSHAW'S GHOST;

OR, CHRISTMAS GAMBOLS AT HAROLDSTONE HALL.

BY VERNON FIELDING. (Continued from p. 176.)



"WHAT grammar is this?" he asked with a look of astonishment and annoyance. "I did not suppose that a visitor to this house would have taken so unwarrantable a liberty. Whoever you are, I must beg that you will instantly retire, and only appear again in your proper costume. We have

all assembled to enjoy ourselves in an evening of harmless amusement, and I cannot allow the opportunity to be taken to try the nerves of ladies

and children; for I hope all the men present will perceive that it is only a remarkably well got up piece of mummery."

The figure stopped for an instant, listening to this address, and then turned round so withering a glance that even the baronet was put out of countenance. He soon recovered himself, exclaiming,—“Nonsense! Such things cannot be!”

But the unusual expression of doubt and vexation which his countenance wore showed too plainly what were his real feelings. To have a ghost walk into his room without his will, or to receive a visit from any unwelcome visitor, is enough to annoy any man; and this post-sepulchral visit of old Grimshaw, if such it were, was certainly anything but pleasant. But besides this, Sir Gilbert had been vexed at the non-appearance of his son Charley, whom, in spite of his wildness, he dearly loved. He could not help fearing that he had got into some scrape at Portsmouth, or had been detained elsewhere by some escapade or other. Probably, had Lady Ilderton seen the ghost, and been alarmed at it, he would have been still more angry than he was—that is to say, as far as his kind, genial nature would allow him to be angry.

There was a dead silence after Sir Gilbert had spoken, but no one stepped forward to confront or stop the ghost, probably from the impression that such things cannot be stopped, or that unpleasant consequences would ensue if the attempt were made. At all events, the appearance of old Grimshaw passed on unimpeded until it reached one of the bowers at the end of the room, where no seats had been placed. When it got there, suddenly a blue flame burst forth, surrounded by which it vanished.

"The mummery has been admirably got up, I must confess," observed Sir Gilbert. "Some of my household have, of course, been in the secret, though I wish that I had first been consulted. And now, my friends, let the dancing commence, as I must, before long, request you all to unmask."

Some little time, however, elapsed before the equanimity of many of the guests was restored. At length the gay strains of the music and the exertions of Cousin Giles, who had re-appeared as Robin Hood, and others, put them into their former good spirits, and they began to talk and laugh and joke, as if no such unpleasant visitor as the long-buried old Grimshaw had appeared. When Cousin Giles was asked what he thought of the matter, he shook his head, and declared that he was in a great hurry to get out of the room and out of the clothes when the real thing had so unexpectedly appeared.

Sir Gilbert, as soon as he had seen his guests once more amusing themselves as if nothing had happened, sent his steward and two or three other trusty people to endeavour to discover what had become of the person, if person it was, who had represented old Grimshaw's ghost. They returned, after searching in every possible place, declaring that they could find no one hid away, nor had they seen any one pass in any similar costume, except Cousin Giles, who had taken no pains to conceal himself.

"Very strange, very strange indeed," muttered Sir Gilbert. "Did you examine the attics, Masham?" he asked his steward. "There are several old chests in the north lumber attic. Several of them contain dresses, and if they have been disturbed it may give us a clue to the culprit, for a culprit I consider whoever played the trick, admirably as I must own it was done."

"As to that, Sir Gilbert, with due respect to your opinion, I don't exactly like to be certain," answered Masham, with a bow. "I have heard of a gentleman who came down to these parts, with a Scotch name, I think, who could make tables turn and articles of furniture and musical instruments fly about the room, and spirits of persons a long time dead, some of them in foreign parts, come and talk and say all sorts of things to people who liked to ask them questions. Now if this is true, and it's extraordinary how many gentlefolks believe in it, I don't see why the ghost of old Grimshaw shouldn't walk about the house, or even through

the ball-room, especially when he knew that somebody had been dressing up like himself, which, of course, wouldn't be pleasant to him; and besides, Sir Gilbert, though I didn't like to say it before, this is the very day, so it is reported, that he came to his end, and that's another reason why he wouldn't like people to be dancing and jiggling away like mummers over his grave, so to speak."

"Nonsense, man! nonsense!" exclaimed Sir Gilbert. "The fellow you speak of is an impostor, an arrant humbug; and the people are geese who believe in him, whatever their station in life—more shame to them if they are well educated. That is a poor reason for believing that old Grimshaw's ghost should haunt the Hall. Go and search again; I am resolved to have the trick discovered before the guests leave the house. They shall not go away and spread all over the country the report of its being haunted. Look first into the north attic. Take care, Masham, that none of the servants set the place on fire, by letting a candle fall in their fright, should a cat jump up or a rat move. I conclude that you know the chests I mean."

"Oh, yes, Sir Gilbert, I helped Master Charles to overhaul one of them three years ago, when he wanted to collect some dresses for a play; and I went up with the housekeeper, and we put them all safe back again, a day or two after," answered the steward, hurrying off.

Not long after this, two most riotous sailors rushed into the room, insisting on playing leap-frog, tumbling over each other, and committing a variety of eccentricities unheard of in a ball-room. At last one of them rushed up to Lady Ilderton, and, throwing his arms round her neck, gave her a hearty kiss; when, his mask falling off, displayed the well-bronzed, merry countenance of her son Charley. He introduced his companion as a brother officer, whom he had invited to spend a few days at the Hall. He was heartily welcomed by his father, who loved him, in spite of his occasional wild proceedings; and of course his mother and sisters doted on him, and fully believed that he would turn out a second Nelson if he had the opportunity.

The ball came off with the greatest possible spirit, and without any other *contretemps*, could the incident which has been described be considered one. Masham came back, and reported that the old chests had undoubtedly been opened and the contents tumbled out, as there were marks where the dust had been disturbed, but that he had discovered no trace of the person who had represented old Grimshaw's ghost.

CHAPTER V.—MORE OF THE GHOST'S PRANKS, AND HOW HE WAS FINALLY LAID.

SIR GILBERT had allowed the adornment of the ball-room to remain undisturbed, that his tenants and others might see them, a favour which was sure to be highly prized.

The following evening a large party were assembled in the ball-room, for the young people had declared that they should be far too tired to do anything but dance, and musicians were therefore retained, and all the people in the immediate neighbourhood invited to come back. Charley and his brother midshipman declared that they were ready for a dance every night of their lives.

Jane Otterburn had gone to her room after dinner, which was in a wing of the house away from the ball-room, and at this time was as silent as at midnight.

The evening guests had not as yet arrived. A cheerful fire was burning, the flames of which sent at times a flickering and uncertain light through the room, but were generally bright enough to enable her to dispense with the use of her candles, as she sat down in an armchair to meditate—pleasantly, there could be no doubt; but recollecting that she might be missed, she was about to get up to go down into the ball-room, when a feeling that she was not alone made her turn her head, and there, stand-

ing at the open door, was the figure of old Grimshaw the keeper, exactly as it had appeared on the previous evening. Though her heart beat quick, and she felt that she would very much rather it had not been there, she rose from her seat, determined to confront it, when with a sound which might be described as a plaintive cry it glided from the door. She bravely hurried after it, exclaiming,—

"Stop! stop! I must insist on knowing who you are."

But the passage was in total darkness, and the figure had disappeared. She had heard of the phantoms of the imagination to which some people are subject when out of health, but she felt perfectly well, and never had had any visitation of the sort, and so discarding all idea of a supernatural appearance, she felt convinced that somebody who had played off the trick on the previous evening, had again dressed up to carry it on further. Still therefore undaunted by what might have frightened some ladies into hysterics, she lighted her candle, and drawing a large shawl over her shoulders, for the passages were cold, she prepared to descend to the ball-room. It would be too much to say that she had no uncomfortable sensation, or that she did not peer into the darkness ahead, and occasionally take an anxious glance over her shoulder, or that she altogether felt sure that she should not see old Grimshaw gliding before her, or noiselessly coming up behind her. She could not help allowing all the ghost stories she had ever heard to pass in ghastly review through her mind. Still she tried not to walk faster than she would otherwise have done; indeed, she foresaw that if she attempted to run, the wax taper she held would most probably be blown out. This, strong minded as she was, she would much rather should not happen. The keen wind of Christmas was blowing outside, and blasts here and there found their way along the passages in consequence of one or two doors which ought to have been shut having been left open.

Haroldstone Hall was an old edifice, and the same attention to warming the passages and shutting out the wind had not been paid when it was constructed, as is the case in more modern buildings. The young lady saw before her a door partly open, but which seemed at that moment about to close with a slam. To prevent this, forgetting her former caution, she darted forward, when the same blast which, as she supposed, was moving the door, blew out her candle. She knew her way, and remembered that a few paces further on there were two steps, down which she might fall if not careful. A creeping feeling of horror, however, stole over her when, as she attempted to advance, she felt herself held back. It must be fancy. She made another effort, and again was unable to move forward. Her heart did indeed now beat quickly. She would have screamed for help, but she was not given to screaming, and besides her voice failed her. Once more she tried to run on, but she felt herself in the grasp of some supernatural power, as a person feels in a dream when unable to proceed. Her courage at length gave way. Every moment she expected to hear a peal of mocking laughter from the fiend who held her, for her imagination was now worked up to a pitch which would have made anything, however, dreadful, appear possible. At length, by an effort, she cried out,—“Help me! Help! Pray come here!”

The words had scarcely passed her lips, when a door in the passage opened, and she saw a person hurrying with a light towards her. It was Captain Fotheringsail.

“What is the matter?” he asked, in a voice of alarm.

“Oh, nothing, nothing,” she answered. “My candle went out, and I felt myself unable to move on.”

“I see you could not, for the skirt of your dress and your shawl have both caught in the door,” he exclaimed, with a merry laugh, which did more than a dose of sal-volatile or camphor would have done to dispel her fears; and taking his arm, she accompanied him to the ball-room.

On the way she told him of the reappearance of old Grimshaw, or some living representative. Again he gave way to a peal of merry laughter, and exclaimed,—

“I’m delighted to hear it, for now he’ll be caught to a certainty. I have not the slightest doubt that he intends again to visit the ball-room or the servants’ hall, but whenever he comes, we will be ready for him. I have an idea that your wild young

Finding that the trick was discovered, Charley dashed out from behind a screen with a tin tube and a lamp in his hand, and blew a superb blue flame over Simon, who was quickly divested of his hunting dress amid the laughter of the guests. Charley and his friend confessed that they had induced Simon to act the ghost that evening, though who had played it the previous day, they did not say.



CAUGHT IN THE DOOR. (See p. 183)

cousin and his friend have no little to do with the trick, for I have ascertained that they arrived at the Hall some hours before they made their appearance in the ball-room in the character of sailors. When I saw their proceedings I rather regretted the character I had assumed, lest I should have been taken for one of the party.”

The guests were assembling in the ball-room as the captain and Jane reached it. They at once, however, separated, and went round to each of the guests, whispering in their ears. A quadrille was instantly formed, and the musicians struck up. On this the captain slipped from the side of his partner and adroitly ran a dark thin line across the room, almost the height of a man’s knee from the floor. The quadrille was concluded, and nothing happened. A valse was gone through, and then another quadrille was played. It seemed, however, that if the captain had hopes of catching the ghost, the ghost was not to be caught. He begged Cousin Giles to ascertain whether old Grimshaw had appeared in the servants’ hall or anywhere about the house. Cousin Giles had assured him that he knew nothing at all about the matter, and was on the point of going to perform his commission, when, from the exact spot where the ghost had appeared on the previous day, it stalked forth, looking quite as dreadful as before. The guests ran from side to side to let it pass, when just as it reached the middle of the room it stumbled, made an attempt to jump, and came down full length upon the floor. Off came a head and a pair of shoulders, and then was seen the astonished and somewhat frightened countenance of Simon Langdon, who exclaimed,—“Oh, Charley! Charley! I didn’t think you were going to play me that trick.”

“Well, young gentlemen, you’ve had your fun, and no harm has been done, though the consequences might have been more serious than you anticipated,” said Sir Gilbert. “It requires no large amount of wit to impose on the credulous, as the spirit-rappers and mediums have shown us, and as we may learn by the exhibition of my young friend here and his coadjutors.” And the baronet looked very hard at Simon and Charley. He then added, in his usual good-natured tone, “However, as I said, no mischief has been done, though I must have it clearly understood that I cannot allow old Grimshaw’s ghost to make his appearance again at Haroldstone Hall.”

(Concluded.)

PADDY FINN;

OR, THE EXPLOITS AND ADVENTURES OF AN IRISH
MIDSHIPMAN, AFLOAT AND ASHORE.

BY THE EDITOR.

(Continued from p. 175.)

DAY after day went by. Though we occasionally saw a sail we kept out of her way.

At length, one morning the look-out shouted, “A sail on the starboard quarter.”

We were just then setting royals, which we did not carry at night. We watched the stranger. “She has borne up in chase,” cried La Touche, who had gone aloft.