

Mick Murphy and the Ghost.

AN incident occurred in the hotel of one of the picturesque marine villages which skirt Lake Pontchartrain, on a certain occasion last summer, that effectually served to dispel the listless ennui too prevalent in such places. Among the guests there, for the time being, was one Michael Murphy, an eccentric, good natured soul, that used to be par excellence in the land of potatoes, but which may now be called potatoless land. He had been on a big bust in the city, and went over to the lake to dispel the fumes of his debauch, and take salt baths and soda water at the same time.

All this became known to the ventriloquist who had paid a flying visit to that place, and who had such command over his voice that he could make it do anything, from the squeaking of a pig under the gate to the singing of a mocking bird. Believing that Michael was just about that time in an impressive state—in a reformatory mood—he thought he would, through the medium of his art endeavor to effect a favorable change in his morals. With this view he booked his name for a bed in the same room with Michael, at about twelve o'clock at night—that hour to superstitious minds so fraught with terror—he pitched his voice outside the door, saying in a trombone tone:

"Michael Murphy! Michael Murphy! are you asleep?"

"Who's that?" said Michael, much startled at the sepulchral tone in which the query was put, and the time of putting it.

"Ask me not, but answer," said the ventriloquist, still continuing his ghost like accent.

"Well, what have you got to say?" said Michael.

"Much of which I want you to take notice," said the ventriloquist, or rather the ventriloquist voice.

"O, clear off," said Michael, "or else I'll give you your taw." "Better had you continued to take tea than to break the pledge, as you have done," said the voice outside the door.

"What's all this noise about?" said the ventriloquist, speaking from the bed.

"Some dirty blackguard that's outside the door there," said Michael, "interferin' with what's none of his business."

"Why don't you drive him from it?" said the ventriloquist from the bed.

"I wish he dare," said the voice outside the door.

"Be jabers, I'll let you see I dare," said Michael, jumping up, seizing his hickory, and hurriedly opening the door, ready on sight to knock down the annoyer.

"Give it to him said the ventriloquist from the bed.

"Be gorry, I believe it's the Old Boy himself was it," said Michael, "for I don't see a soul here."

"It's very mysterious said the ventriloquist from the bed.

"I wonder," said Michael, "if there's any evil spirits in this country?"

"I don't know said the ventriloquist, "but they say the ghost of the departed Indians haunt this place."

"O, that was no Indian's ghost," said Michael, "for it spoke as good English as I do myself."

"And a little better, Michael," said the voice, as proceeding from one standing by his side.

"O, the cross o' Christ about us," said Michael. "What are you, at all at all?"

"No evil spirit, but your guardian genius," said the voice.

"A mortal queer jantious you are," said Michael, "that can be heard and not seen."

"Get into bed then," said the voice, "I have something to say to you."

"You won't do anything bad to me," said Michael.

"Nothing," said the voice.

"Honor bright?" said Michael.

"Honor bright," said the voice, "you know you have been a hard liver."

"That's a fact," said Michael.

"You broke the pledge," said the voice.

"More than I ever could keep a tally of," said Michael.

"Then you'll pledge yourself to me, that you'll change your mode of life?" said the voice.

"I'll do any thing you ask me," said Michael.

"Then I'm off," said the voice, "but remember if you attempt to break it I'll be present and punish you through life."

"Who is that with whom you are holding conversation?" said the ventriloquist, speaking again from the bed.

"Devil a one at all," said Michael, "barrin' some mighty polite, invisible gentleman, that seems to take a great interest in my welfare."

"O, you are dreaming," said the ventriloquist continuing to speak in his proper voice.

"Faix, it's like a dream, sure enough," said Michael.

The next morning a friend asked Michael to take his bitters. He consented, but just as he took the glass in his hand, the voice of the ventriloquist, who was present, was heard above his head, in the air, crying out: "Touch it not, Michael Murphy—remember your promise." It was enough, Michael would not taste.

"The pleasure of the wine with you Mr. Murphy," said a gentleman at the table.

"With pleasure, sir," said Michael, but just at that moment a voice was heard to issue from the corner of the room—it was that of the ventriloquist, who sat by his side, uttering his admonition.

Thus the thing went on for a week, till Michael was then and forever made a tototaller. He now industriously mends his business, enjoys good health and prospers. In relation to the circumstances under which he became a tototaller, he says he never had the pleasure of seeing his best friend.

A Famous Actor.

THE Sunday Times, of London, answering a correspondent, revives the memory of the once famous Joe Holmes, who died in 1701. He is said to have been a person of great facetiousness and readiness of wit, which, together with his imitable performances on the stage as a comedian, introduced him not only to the acquaintance, but the familiarity of persons of the first rank. His forte seems to have been in speaking prologues and epilogues, particularly those written by himself.

Anthony Aston said, "Joe Haines is more remarkable for the witty, though wicked pranks he played, and for his prologues and epilogues than for acting. He was a first-rate dancer. After he had made his tour of France, he narrowly escaped being seized and sent to the Bastille for personating an English peer, and running 3,000 livres in debt, but, happily, landing at Dover, he went to London. However, this affair spoiled Joe's expiring credit, for next morning a couple of bailiffs seized him in an action of £30, as the Bishop of Ely was passing by in his coach. Quoth Joe to the bailiffs, "Gentlemen, here is my cousin, the Bishop of Ely, going into his house; let me speak to him, and he'll pay the debt and charges." The bailiffs thought they might venture that, as they were within three or four yards of him. So up goes Joe to the coach, pulling off his hat, and got close to it. The bishop ordered the coach to stop, whilst Joe, close to his ear, said, softly, "My lord, here are two poor men who have such great scruples of conscience that I fear they will hang themselves."

"Very well," said the bishop; so, calling to the bailiffs, he said, "You two men come to me to-morrow morning and I'll satisfy you." The men bowed and went away. Joe hugging himself with this device, also went his way. In the morning, the bailiffs, expecting the debt and charges, repaired to the bishop's. "Well," said he, "what are your scruples of conscience?"

"Scruples," said the bailiffs, "we have no scruples. We are bailiffs, my lord, who yesterday arrested your cousin, Joe Haines, for £20. Your lordship promised to satisfy us to-day, and we hope your lordship will be as good as your word." The bishop, reflecting that his honor and name would be exposed if he complied not, paid the debt and charges.

The Fisherman and the Sea Swallow.

An interesting association exists between the sea swallows and the fisherman of Lake Palageri, in Lapland. In the centre of this lake is an island on which the fishermen build their huts in summer. At early dawn the sea swallow gather round these huts, and their cries admonish the occupants that it is time to begin the day's work. The boats are hardly loosened from their moorings when the birds start out to find a spot where the fish are abundant.—The boatmen are governed entirely by the movements of the swallow. When the birds stop and redouble their cries, the fishermen know they have found a spot where they will be repaid for their labor. They hasten forward, cast their nets, and soon have the satisfaction of finding them well filled. In accordance with the old maxim that the laborer is worthy of his hire, the swallows receive their share of the booty. Every fish that the fishermen throw up in the air is gracefully caught by the birds; and, indeed, they are so tame that they sometimes come into the boats and help themselves out of the nets. If one spot becomes non-productive, the birds lead the way to another. Toward evening men and birds return to the island, and the birds hasten to clear the boats of the share left behind for them by the fishermen.

A Long Engagement.

About 60 years ago, John Griswold Rogers, of East Lyme, Conn., fell in love with Eliza D. Griswold, and in 1817 the couple were betrothed and doubtless commenced to talk about fixing the wedding day. There appears, however, to have been more than the usual difficulty in deciding the question; at least, it was not until last Thanksgiving day that the ceremony took place, when the bride and groom had reached the ages respectively of 78 and 79. Both parties, however, belong to a long lived race, and look forward to a wedded life of no short duration.

Epizooty Dries up a Cow.

A case occurred near Bridgeport, Conn., where feed left by a horse having the epizootic was given to a cow, and she was similarly affected. Though she has now recovered, and eats her regular allowance of food, she has suddenly dried up. Previous to her sickness she gave nine quarts of milk daily.

Making a Fortune

SAMUEL McF—was a watchman in a bank. He was poor but honest, and his life was without reproach. The trouble with him was that he felt that he was not appreciated. His salary was only four dollars a week, and when he asked to have it raised the President, the Cashier and the Board of Directors glared at him through their spectacles, and frowned on him, and told him to go out and stop his insolence; when he knew business was dull and the bank could not meet its expenses now, let alone lavish one dollar a week on such a miserable worm as Samuel McF—. And then Samuel McF—felt depressed and sad, and the haughty scorn of the President and the Cashier cut him to the soul. He would often go into the side yard and bow his venerable twenty-four inch head, and weep gallons of tears over his insignificance, and pray that he might be worthy of the Cashier's and President's polite attention.

One night a happy thought struck him; a gleam of light burst upon his soul, and gazing down the dim vista of years with his eyes all blinded with joyous tears, he saw himself rich, honored and respected. So Samuel McF—looked around and got a jimmy, a monkey wrench, a cross cut saw, a cold chisel, a drill, and about half a ton of gun powder and nitro-glycerine, and all those things. Then in the dead of night he went to the fire-proof safe, and after working at it for a while, burst the door and brick into an immortal smash with such perfect success that there was not enough of that safe left to make a carpet tack. McF—then proceeded to load up with coupons, greenbacks, currency and specie, and to nail all the odd change that was lying anywhere, so that he pranced out of the bank with over one million dollars on him. He then retired to an unassuming residence out of town, and sent word to the detectives where he was.

A detective called on him one day with a soothing note from the Cashier. Mr. McF. treated it with lofty scorn. Detectives called on him every day with humble notes from the President, Cashier and Board of Directors. At last the bank officers got up a magnificent supper to which Mr. McF. was invited. He came, and as the bank officers bowed down in the dust before him, he pondered over the bitter past, and his soul was filled with wild exultation. Before he drove away in his carriage that night, it was all fixed that McF. was to keep half a million of that money and to be unmolested if he returned the other half. He fulfilled his contract like an honest man, but refused with haughty disdain the offer of the Cashier to marry his daughter.

Mac is now honored and respected. He moves in the best society; he goes around in purple and fine linen and other fine clothes, and enjoys himself first-rate. And now he takes his infant son on his knee and tells him of his early life, and instills holy principles into the child's mind, and shows him how, by industry and perseverance, frugality and nitro-glycerine, monkey-wrenches, cross-cut saws and familiarity with the detective system, even the poor may rise to influence and respectability.—Mark Twain.

Wanted—A Boy with Ten Points.

1. Honest. 2. Pure. 3. Intelligent. 4. Active. 5. Industrious. 6. Obedient. 7. Steady. 8. Obliging. 9. Polite. 10. Neat. One thousand first-rate places are open for one thousand boys who come up to the standard. Each boy can suit his taste as to the kind of business he would prefer. The places are ready in every kind of occupation. Many of them are already filled by boys who lack some of the most important points, but they will soon be vacant. One is in an office not far from where we write. The lad who has the situation is losing his first point. He likes to attend the circus and the theatre. This costs more money than he can afford, but somehow he manages to be there frequently. His employers are quietly watching to learn how he gets so much extra spending money; they will soon discover a leak in the money-drawer, detect the dishonest boy, and his place will be ready for some one who is now getting ready for it by observing point No. 1, and being truthful in all his ways. Some situations will soon be vacant, because the boys have been poisoned by reading books, such as they would not dare to show their fathers, and would be ashamed to have their mothers see. The impure thoughts suggested by these books will lead to vicious acts; the boys will be ruined and their places must be filled. Who will be ready for these vacancies? Distinguished lawyers, useful ministers, skillful physicians, successful merchants, must, all soon leave their places for somebody else to fill. One by one they are removed by death. Mind your ten points, boys; they will prepare you to step into vacancies in the front rank. Every man who is worthy to employ a boy is looking for you, if you have the points. Do not fear that you will be overlooked. A young person having these qualities will shine as plainly as a star at night.

Life according to the Arabic proverb is composed of two parts—that which is past, a dream, and that which is to come, a wish.

SUNDAY READING.

A Beautiful Illustration.

God knows everything. He knows you through and through. He knows the most secret parts of your life. He knows your sins. He knows your sins in their origin, in their development, in their full form, in their ten thousand obscure forms. He knows your sorrows. He knows everything about you. Come to God because you are naked and open before him.

When a man is hard pressed for money, he goes to the bank, and slaps down his securities, and says, "I must have twenty thousand dollars; here are the securities. If it is not convenient for you to let me have the money, I will go to my—"

"Oh, yes—oh, yes—," says the banker. He thinks the man is all right, and lets him have the twenty thousand dollars, because he is so bold; and the man put on boldness because he wanted to make an impression.

But suppose the banker knows everything about the man—what bad debts he has; just how hard it is for him to collect them; just how much he has to pay his notes with; how impossible it is for him to get the required amount; how his creditors are urging him; and how some of his notes are going to protest in the afternoon at three o'clock; and suppose, knowing all these things, he should beckon to him, and say, "Look here; come in; I have been watching for you; I know all about you; and I want you, when you need any help to call on me. I am well acquainted with your affairs. I know all about your expectations. I know where you broke down. Your circumstances are plain and open before me. And when you are in need of assistance, come right to me!" Oh, what a load would roll off from the man's mind! He has been trying to get help by putting on appearances, and he has found it hard work; but if there is a man with a real kind heart, who, having the power of money behind him, calls him in, and says, "You are naked and open before me; I know all about you, and all about your business; I know where you were tempted to go wrong, and where you went wrong; I know what your mistakes have been; I know what bad debts you have; I know what your expectations were; now come and I will help you," what a relief it must be to him!

Now you cannot find any such bankers in New York; but it is just on that ground that God says, "I know all; therefore come boldly."—Becher.

Beauty of Old People.

Men and women make their own beauty and their own ugliness. Lord Lytton speaks in one of his novels, of a man "who was uglier than he had any business to be," and if he could but read it, every human being carries his life in his face, and is good looking or the reverse as that life has been good or evil. On our features the fine chisel of thought and emotion are eternally at work. Beauty is not the monopoly of blooming young men and white and pink maidens. There is a slow-growing beauty which only comes to perfection in old age. Grace belongs to no period of life, and goodness improves the longer it exists. I have seen sweeter smiles upon a lip of seventy than upon the lip of a seventeen.

There is the beauty of youth and the beauty holiness, a beauty much more seldom met and more frequently found in the arm-chair by the fire with grandchildren around its knee, than in the ball-room or promenade. Husband and wife, who have fought the world side by side, who have made common stock of joy or sorrow, and grown aged together, are not unfrequently found curiously alike in personal appearance, and in pitch and tone of voice—just as twin pebbles on the shore, exposed to the same tidal influences, are each other's second self. He has gained a feminine something, which brings his manhood into full relief. She has gained a masculine something which acts as a foil to her womanhood.

Printing Sermons.

The New York Evangelist says: There are, perhaps, 50,000 sermons preached every Sabbath in the United States. The greater part of those are listened to by the assembled worshippers with reasonable interest and attention. How many of them would find readers, if they were all printed instead of being spoken? We may safely say they would not reach a tenth part of the number they do now. We sincerely believe that if one writes with a view to the appearance of his sermon in print he will infallibly write a poor sermon.

It will fail of any immediate effect upon the congregation, and if we understand the design of preaching the Gospel, that is the very thing at which it aims. The more earnest, impassioned, glowing, and sympathetic it is the higher its excellence as a sermon. The very qualities which make it effective in the pulpit are to a great degree a blemish in the published discourse. A certain expansion, reiteration, and amplification, which give force to the utterance of the preacher, and insufferable on the printed page.

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