

Mountain Sentinel.

"WE GO WHERE DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES POINT THE WAY;—WHEN THEY CEASE TO LEAD, WE CEASE TO FOLLOW."

BY JOHN G. GIVEN.]

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SELECT TALES.

THE GHOST SEEKER.

BY AN ENGLISH PHYSICIAN.

PERHAPS one of the most singular stories in my diary turns upon an event which happened to me in the early part of my professional life; and it is the more remarkable, in consequence of being the only case of mania presenting so many curious symptoms and contrary manifestations which I ever encountered.

I was waited upon one morning by a lady who appeared in very deep affliction, and who in broken accents asked me if I would meet Dr. —, an eminent physician, whom I knew well by name, to consult concerning her husband's case.

I, of course, professed my readiness to do so, and at the same time said—

"If quite consistent with your feelings, madam, I should be glad to know the nature of your husband's disease."

"It's dreadful, sir," she replied, "most dreadful!"

"Indeed! I trust you deceive yourself, madam. There are many diseases that appear dreadful to a patient and his friends, but which promise no extraordinary difficulties to the physician or the surgeon."

"Oh, doctor!" she said, "I wish it were so, but I am worn out."

"Worn out?"

"Yes, with watching and anxiety; my supplications, my entreaties, my prayers and tears have been of no avail—he will not give up the mad pursuit."

"Mad pursuit, mad pursuit!"

"Yes, a horrible conceit."

"Pray explain yourself. I presume some species of dementia afflicts your husband?"

"Yes, I can bear it no longer; my health is sinking; want of rest is killing me."

"Pray, madam, be more explicit," said I, my curiosity being strongly awakened by what she had said.

"I will, doctor, my husband, in every other respect, is all that an attached wife could wish, but he is a ghost-seeker."

"A what?" cried I, in astonishment.

"I use his own words. He calls himself the ghost-seeker, and says he never shall be satisfied till he has seen a ghost."

"I should not be at all surprised at his being soon gratified," said I.

"Gracious! Heavens! doctor, what do you mean?"

"I mean," said I, smiling, "that if his imagination be so strongly acted upon on that subject, I am surprised it does not create visions enough for him."

"Can anything be done sir?"

"I can scarcely say at present. Dr. — you tell me, has attended him?"

"Yes."

"I apprehend the case, then, comes within the sphere of medical influence."

"The principal difficulty in all the brain diseases, whether general or local, is to manage the patient so as to induce him to adopt the necessary remedies."

"But you will come, doctor."

"Certainly, if you wish it; but perhaps it would be better to leave him alone. Does he run into any violent excess, in pursuit of that mania?"

"Oh, yes—yes. He is always making incantations; then he brings home human bones from churchyards; and at twelve o'clock he rises from his bed, and calls and taunts the ghosts of their owners to come for them."

"That is sufficiently disagreeable," I replied. "And now tell me one other thing. Is your husband willing to see medical men?"

"Yes, doctor, quite so. He will talk quite rationally to you except on that one point. Nay, he will argue with you as to whether it is a disease or not."

"Well, I will attend any appointment you may make with Dr. —."

"The lady then left her address as Mrs. Harrington, St. John's Wood, and it was arranged that I should meet Dr. — the next morning at eleven o'clock at her residence."

I must confess I was a little anxious to see the singular Mr. Harrington, and during the day I made some inquiries concerning him, the result of which was that he was a retired merchant of considerable wealth, and had always been esteemed a most sensible and acute man.

Had my time been at my own disposal, I should have called on Dr. — previously, but as it was, I had no resource but to meet him at St. John's Wood, and there glean what I could of the nature of the case.

I was punctual to the hour, and found a house replete with every comfort. I was ushered into a handsome and spacious drawing-room, and there found Dr. — who had been waiting for me about five minutes.

Mrs. Harrington joined us in a moment, and now that she was divested of walking attire, I could plainly see that want of rest and anxiety had made great ravages on her health.

"Madam, I said, 'something must be done for your health, if we should fail in giving a more healthy tone to your husband's mind.'"

Before she could reply, the door opened, and a tall, gentlemanly man, of apparently about fifty years of age, entered the room. He bowed and we both returned the salutation.

"Mr. Harrington," said the wife to me; then turning to her husband—Henry, this is Dr. —."

"Sir, I am delighted to see you," said Mr. Harrington. "Gentlemen, will you take any refreshment?"

"Do," said D. — to me.

"Thank you, I said.

"Mary," said the mad Mr. Harrington, in the most rational manner in the world, tell William to bring a tray and some wine."

While he was giving this order, Dr. — whispered to me—

"Don't allude to the mania. Let him come round to it himself."

I nodded acquiescence.

The tray was brought, and we all three sat down to an excellent, though somewhat early luncheon. Mrs. Harrington had left the room, and we certainly looked as rational a party as could be well supposed.

"You have a charming abode here, Mr. Harrington," said I.

"Yes," he replied; "to me, who have lived pent up in the city, the greater part of my life, it appears indeed most delightful."

"These suburban villas," remarked Doctor —, "always had a charm for me."

Mr. Harrington seemed thoughtful for a moment, and then looking me hard in the face, he said—

"I beg your pardon for the abrupt question I am going to ask you."

Dr. — gave me a nudge with his elbow, and Mr. Harrington continued—

"Did you ever see a ghost?"

"A ghost?" I repeated.

"Yes, sir, a ghost. Did you ever find a ghost, sir? that's what I ask. Because you know that Dr. Johnson says that many persons who deny their existence with their tongues confess it by their fears, and the Rosicrucians could raise spirits. The world is teeming with invisible life, sir. We are surrounded, hemmed in. At our table—in our chambers we have them—everywhere. Now what I ask you is, did you ever see one?"

"I certainly have not," I said.

"Nor have I," he replied, "and that's what vexes me and nearly drives me mad."

Here he gave a thump on the table that made the glasses jump again.

"Sometimes," he continued, "I catch a glimpse of one, and then he's off again. A hand—a foot—the side glimpse of a face—the flash of an eye. I have seen all that; but they torment me, and won't let me see a whole chest. So I'm a ghost-seeker, you see, naturally. Look here."

He suddenly drew from his pocket a human thigh bone, and laid it with a dab upon the table.

"Look here," he continued. "Here's the thigh bone of some fellow. I've been taunting him for a week about it, but he won't come."

Again he gave the table a thump. Then suddenly fixing his eyes on one part of the room, he cried—

"There—now there's one there! but he won't show himself—no, no. There's just a dim shadow of something. Don't you see! look!—there—there! It goes along by the wall. See! see! Curse you."

So saying, he caught up the bone and threw it, with great force against the wall. During all this paroxysm, one circumstance struck me as confirmatory of his insanity. He carefully avoided meeting my eye. When he had thrown the bone, however, he turned to me, and I fixed his gaze and saw him cower, immediately, as all insane people will do.

"Mr. Harrington," said I, "you can't expect people to call upon you if you behave so strangely."

"—I," he muttered—"I was provoked, you see."

"Provoked!—nonsense!"

"I'm the ghost-seeker, you know," he said calmly, "and people know how annoying I am."

"That may be," said I, "but you ought to know better than to behave so ridiculously. I'll place you in the way of seeing as many ghosts as you like. Why, you are making a fuss about the commonest thing to men of science that can be."

Mr. Harrington looked at me with an air of profound astonishment.

"You shall be gratified," I continued. "Good day for the present. To-morrow

we will again meet and arrange the particulars."

I saw his cheek grow pale, and I congratulated myself that I had frightened him a little. We said nothing particular to Mrs. Harrington, except that we had hopes of a cure, and we then took our leave.

"What do you think of our plan?" I said to Dr. —.

"It is the only one that presents any chance of success," he said. "He may be frightened out of his ghost mania."

"So I think," I replied; "although we may find some difficulty in carrying out the scheme. The only chance is to bring him to your or my house, and if needs be we must make a ghost for him. I think that the shock to the nervous system will prove beneficial. As it is, he is a pest to his whole household."

"That he certainly is, and unless this crotchet of his is checked by some stronger feeling, he will become an unmanageable lunatic."

"Well," I said, "I will call upon you to-morrow at ten, and we can take a quiet drive to the villa, and consult upon a plan of operations on the road. I pity his poor wife from my soul."

So we parted, and I flattered myself I had made a step towards the cure of Mr. Harrington.

The next morning I was true to my appointment with Doctor —, whom I found waiting anxiously for me.

"I like the idea of humoring this mania of Harrington's," he said. "Have you arranged any means of carrying it out?"

"Yes," I replied. "We must get him to my house, and I think I can then manage it pretty well. I have a very dark room in the back of my house, and I think if we could get him there, and make him believe that we can easily gratify his whim of seeing a ghost, that he will give it up because it is no longer unobtainable."

"I think that nothing is more probable," said Doctor —. "Now let us see our patient."

We were conducted to the room in which Mr. Harrington sat, and were welcomed by him in the same courteous manner as on the preceding day. I inquired after his health, and he replied—

"I am very well thank you. Really you are very kind. Will you take lunch?"

"Why," said I, "the fact is, I made you a promise yesterday, Mr. Harrington, which I am bound to fulfil."

"Well," he said quickly, "I should not have mentioned it, if you had not. What I want is to see a ghost. You know that?"

Bang went his hand on the table, and I assented, saying, "Certainly and you shall be gratified."

"Gratified?"

"Yes."

"You mean I shall see a ghost?"

"Certainly."

"Along with you?"

"No, I can't say that. I have no liking for such company. Every one to his taste you know, Mr. Harrington. You shall see a ghost, but it must be alone."

"Alone?"

"Yes, to be sure. You will be gratified. Are you not the ghost-seeker?"

"True—very true. Then you believe in—ghosts?"

"You do likewise," I replied.

"Yes—yes; but it's so strange you are the only person I've found who didn't argue me mad about what they call my delusion."

I shook my head in a very disparaging manner of every body else, and I saw that the monomaniac began to look upon me with fear.

"You must come to my house," I continued.

"Oh, very well," he said. "Here Mary my dear, this gentleman is going to show me a ghost at last. Just take care of these for me till I come back."

So saying he disencumbered his coat pockets of several human bones, and laid them upon the table. I saw a tear in Mrs. Harrington's eye, and her voice faltered as she whispered to me—

"Should you succeed in scaring from his mind this terrible mania, you will have restored me to a new life."

"It is only an experiment, my dear Madam, we are trying," I said; "but from what I can observe of the state of your husband's mind, I am, I own, sanguine of success."

Mr. Harrington, although with a little nervousness of manner, stepped willingly enough into my chariot, and he, I, and Doctor — proceeded to town very amicably.

The room that I have mentioned in my house, was admirably adapted for the purpose I had in view of alarming Mr. Harrington, so as to give him a thorough sickness of ghost-seeking. I could see he was in a nervous, fidgety state as we proceeded, and he looked almost as if he would

gladly run away when my carriage stopped at the door of my residence.

I took him by the arm, and at once led him to the room I have mentioned, and which, I ought to have stated, was a dark room, having no window, whatever, so that I had been compelled to have gas laid in it for my convenience.

Mr. Harrington looked a little scared when he saw the dark den in which I requested him to walk.

"Sit down, sir," I said. "I trust we shall not be obliged to detain you long here."

"It's—it's very dark," he remarked.

"Yes," said I, "and we must keep it so to a certain extent, or we shall not succeed in our endeavors."

I then lighted a small chemical lamp, which burned pyroigneous ether, and which only sufficed to impart an additional air of gloom to various objects in the room.

The light from such lamps robs the complexity of every particle of color; and if the face be placed near the flame, it acquires the ghastly hue of death. Doctor — purposely placed himself close to the lamp and he being a man of florid complexion, the palid hue that the flame gave to his face was all the more remarkable, and I took care that Mr. Harrington should notice it.

"Doctor —," I said, "you look very ill; perhaps you would rather not go any further in this matter yourself. Mr. Harrington and I can manage, I think, without you."

"No—no," replied Doctor —, "I'll stay. But the real fact is, I do feel a strange nervousness creeping over me."

"So—so do I," said Harrington.

"That," said I solemnly, "the lamp is beginning to act."

"The lamp," cried Harrington.

"Yes; it's very singular, but that lamp, if it be continued for any length of time attracts around it the inhabitants of another world."

"Indeed, I—I wasn't aware you had begun," stammered Harrington.

"What was that Doctor —?" I said suddenly pretending to hear something.

"Hush—hush!" said Harrington.

"Hush—hush!" replied Doctor —, "I am sure one is here."

"One!—eh?" cried Harrington, giving a start. "You don't really mean?"

"Now I smell it," I remarked.

"Smell it!"

"Hush—hush!" I said, laying my hand on Harrington's arm. "Say as little as possible. Don't you smell a very strange odor?"

"Yes."

"As if from some long pent up vault?"

"Yes—yes."

"Where the dead have been rotting for centuries in all the ghastly corruption of the silent tomb?"

"Yes, I—I smell just that. It's—it's rather awful."

The fact is, that the pyroigneous ether has a singular charnal house kind of smell and approaches nearer to the peculiar odor from graves than anything else I am aware of.

"There, again!" suddenly cried Doctor —, "did you hear?"

"Yes," said I, "a rushing sound."

"Yes—yes," faltered Harrington "I heard it too."

"My dear sir," I said, "you will soon be gratified. I hope you will not again ask for such an exhibition, for I know it will be days before the impression leaves my mind."

"Yes it is certainly very dreadful," said Harrington.

I was beginning to be disappointed that our patient did not back out of the experiment before this, for I was scarcely prepared to go any further; and how to show him anything that would do for a ghost, I could not conceive on the spur of the moment, and as I passed Doctor —, I whispered—

"When I say, 'now it's coming,' put out the light."

He nodded assent, and I went to a drawer in which were some osteological specimens, and selected a finely-whitened and well-articulated arm, with all the fingers very perfect.

"Now it's coming," said I, and at that moment Doctor — put out the light.

"The light's gone out," cried Harrington. "Hilloa! Light—light."

I gave a groan.

"What's that?" he cried—"eh? Doctor —, where are you? I don't like this. God bless me! how very dark—eh? What! Didn't you speak? What an odd smell! Really, now, I—eh?"

Another groan.

"Somebody in pain, Doctor —, I say Doctor —, upon second thoughts, do you know, I think you—you need not trouble yourself. After all, it's better to—leave ghosts alone."

Here I made a most unearthly sound,

which nearly threw Doctor — into fits of laughter, which he was nearly smothered in suppressing.

"There—there," cried Harrington. "I don't want to see one. That'll do. Let them go. I say. I'm done with them—Hilloa, there!—help!—murder!—good God! murder!"

I glided behind Doctor —'s chair and giving him a lucifer match, I said—

"Light the lamp again."

He did so, and I having the skeleton arm in my hand, placed the long bony fingers over Doctor —'s shoulder.

Mr. Harrington turned his eyes towards the light, and the first thing he saw was the seeming hand of a skeleton grasping the shoulder of Doctor —.

"The Lord help us!" he cried, making a spring to the door. "There's one!—there's one!"

Now, it never struck me that Doctor — was a nervous man himself, and did not know what I was doing at all, and when Harrington, with horror depicted on his countenance called out, "There's one! there's one!" he thought it merely the effect of an excited imagination, and he said—

"Where, Mr. Harrington—where?"

"Help!" cried Harrington, trying to open the door which I had locked, "on your shoulder—"

Doctor — turned his eyes to his shoulder, and saw the hand apparently playing with his collar, upon which, to my surprise, he gave a jump, and upset the table, lamp and everything else, coming down in the midst of the ruins himself with a great crash.

I ran and unlocked the door, dragging Harrington out with me, who seem petrified with terror.

In a quarter of an hour afterwards, I bade Mr. Harrington good-bye at my door when I said to him—

"Now, my dear sir, I think you have had enough of ghosts. I should advise you to take a trip to the continent and amuse yourself."

I find entered in my diary, about six months after—

"My dear sir—I promised to write to you, and I do so with great pleasure to say that we shall be in England by Christmas. By-the-by, I begin to think I was a little cracked about that ghost business. I am quite ashamed of it."

Foreign Intermeddling.

The New York Albion, a paper edited by an Englishman, and supported chiefly by British residents in this country, contains the following paragraph:

Mr. G. Thompson, M. P. for the Tower Hamlets, arrived here by the last steamer, and we learn with some sense of shame, through public journals, that he is about to meddle in the internal political affairs in the United States—or, in the words of a London paper, to go through an anti-slavery campaign. A tour of observation through this country, and a study of its destructive characteristics may be eminently useful to Englishmen in public life. Dabbling in its local concerns is altogether another affair; and we beg to enter a protest against it before-hand, lest individual action in this case should be mistaken for national. Though Mr. Thompson be an able, an eloquent, and sometimes a useful man in his legitimate sphere, we hope that, if he thrusts himself where he has no business to be, he will receive that significant hint—"mind your own affairs."

These are sentiments (adds the Billmore Patriot) which it becomes every American to utter. We need not the service of a foreign intermeddler like Mr. Thompson. If he be a philanthropist, and has sincerely at heart the cause of humanity, there is work enough for him in Great Britain. Let him do what he can to alleviate the misery of the poor factory operatives, and ameliorate the condition of the half starved population of Ireland, and he will have no time to spare to cross the ocean and preach humanity to us Americans.

A Novel Move.—A company have formed themselves in New York, for the purpose of going to and working a mine about a mile from the City of Mexico. This mine was abandoned at the time of the revolution, and has not since been worked. The Mexicans not having the facilities to bail out water, this company have contracted with SHIELDS & Co., to build an engine and pumps, and W. McLEAN the boiler will be shipped in small pieces in order that it can be packed on mules from the City of Mexico to the mines. The shaft will be nine hundred feet in length. We hope this enterprising company may meet with the success they richly deserve.—*Cin. paper.*

Practical.—Night threw her mantle over the world, and pined it with a star.



POETRY.

THE NEEDLE.

The gay belles of fashion may boast of excellent
In waltz or cotillon—at whist or quadrille,
And seek admiration by vauntingly telling
Of drawing, and painting, and musical skill;
But give me the fair one, in country or city,
Whose home and its duties are dear to her heart.
Who cheerfully warbles some rustic dittie,
While plying the needle with exquisite art.
The bright little needle—the swift flying
needle,
The needle directed by skill and art.

If love have a potent, a magical token,
A talisman, ever resistless and true—
A charm that is never cradled or broken—
A withery certain the heart to subdue—
'Tis this—and his armory never has furnished
So keen and unerring, or polished a dart;
Let beauty direct it, so pointed and burnished,
And oh! it is certain of touching the heart.
Be wise then, ye maidens, nor seek admiration
By dressing for conquest, and flirting with all;
You never, whatever be your fortune or station,
Appear half so lovely at court or at ball,
As gaily convoked at a work covered table,
Each cheerfully active and playing her part,
Regulating the task with a song or a fable,
And plying the needle with exquisite art.

A Capital Anecdote.

Professor Risley, who is now in Italy, says that recently when he was in Venice an American captain and an Englishman met at dinner.
"You are an American, sir?" said the Englishman.
"I reckon I am," returned the captain. "You have the name of being great warriors?"
"Yes," said the Yankee, "we shoot pretty well."
"But how is it you were so anxious to make peace with Mexico—this does not appear much like spunk!"
"You are an Englishman?" interrogated the Yankee.
"Yes," replied the Englishman.
"Well," said the Yankee, "I don't know what our folks offered to do with Mexico; but, stranger, I'll just tell you one thing—I'll be d—d if I ever offered to make peace with you!"
This home thrust at the Englishman set the whole table in an uproar of laughter.

A Smart Boy.

"Well, sonny whose pigs are those?"
"Old sow's, sir."
"Whose sow is it?"
"Our old man's, sir."
"Well, then, who is your old man?"
"If you'll mind these pigs, I'll run home and ask the old woman."
"Never mind, sonny. I want a smart boy; what can you do?"
"Ah! I can do more than considerable. I milk the geese, ride the turkeys to water, ham strings the grasshoppers lights fires for fires to court by, cut the buttons off dads coat when he's at prayer, keeps tally for dad and mam when they sold at a mark—old woman is always ahead."
"Got any brothers?"
"Lots of em—all named Bill, except Bob, his name's Sam—my name's Lary, but they call me Lazy Lawrence for shortness."
"Well, you're most to smart for me."
"Travel on, old-stick-in-the-mud, I shant trouble you for a boss to day."

Precocity.—"Ma, said a little girl the other day, who had scarcely entered her teens, "Ma, ma, I get married!"
"Why child," said the anxious mother, "what upon earth put that notion in your head?"
"Cause all the other girls are getting married as fast as they can, and I want to, too."
"Well, you must not think of such a thing. Don't you ever ask me such a foolish question again—Married! I never heard the like."
"Well, ma, I can't have a husband, *maint I have a piece of bread and butter!*"
"Certainly. Now you begin to talk rationally, and you may have as much as you want. When you have done, put on your bonnet and go to school."
A lady who has exhausted the vocabulary of names for her numerous daughters named the last "Ann-so forth."