

mouth, his redeeming feature, was wreathed with smiles. But Alec Fairbairn was not an ordinary person. He was known to be a poet and a professor of science, and was supposed to be a novelist. At all events, few people could beat him, so Uncle Giles declared, at telling a good story.

Among the ladies, was a Miss Jane Otterburn, a niece of Lady Ilderton's, a small, active, intelligent young lady, well out of her teens, and acknowledged by all to be very pretty. Captain Fotheringsail, of the navy, a thorough sailor from top to toe—or, as he would have said, from truck to kelson, must not be forgotten. He was not supposed to be a marrying man, because he loved his ship so well when he had one; but opinions were divided on that subject. Not that the boys, who had plenty of other things to think of, troubled their heads about such nonsense, as they were employed from early morning till bedtime in carrying out the various plans devised for them by Cousin Giles and his friend, who, though he was tall, and lank, and a poet, took no small amount of pains to make himself useful to them.

By-the-bye, Miss Susan Langdon—a distant relation of Sir Gilbert, and as different as possible to Jane Otterburn—must not be overlooked. She was good-natured, and fair, and fat, and deliciously dull, as Cousin Giles used to say. She was a general and well-satisfied butt; for she was, he added, too obtuse to observe the shafts aimed at her, or too good-natured to mind them when they struck her harder than usual. She had a brother, Simon, possessed of the same characteristics, who always chuckled and rubbed his hands whenever he discovered any tricks played on Susan, not perceiving that similar ones were practised on himself. However, the individual members of the party must be made to appear as they are required.

Christmas Day arrived. Everybody walked over the hard, crisp ground to the church, which was decked with holly and bright red berries; and there were appropriate inscriptions over the organ gallery; and the sermon inculcated on the congregation peace and good-will towards each other. No one could doubt that Sir Gilbert practised this, as they saw the pleased countenances of the villagers as he passed among them. Then there was luncheon, and a brisk walk taken by the younger people—Cousin Giles leading—among hedges no longer green, and woods denuded of leaves, and by ponds to see how soon the ice was likely to bear; and a dozen or more cottages were visited, and gifts bestowed on old people unable to move out, the party singing joyous carols; and Susan Langdon laughing, she knew not why, except that she felt happy; and Simon trying to play her a trick, but not having the wit to invent one.

Then came the dinner—old English fare, but better cooked than formerly—roast beef, and turkey, and plum-pudding, and mince-pies, all decked with holly; and lighted brandy to warm the pies and puddings; and no lack of generous wine of the best; and a blessing asked by the minister, present with his family.

Little attendance was demanded from the servants when the cloth was removed, for they, too, were enjoying Heaven's bounteous gifts, bestowed through their kind master's hands, in the servants' hall below. This was decked with holly; and at one end, with the aid of screens and boughs, a graceful stage had been formed. The meals, in dining-room and hall, over, voices outside announced the arrival of the carol-singers, who, being speedily admitted, after partaking of refreshment, were arranged on the stage. The whole party from the drawing-room now assembled in the hall, where chairs and benches had been placed in long rows, to hear them, Sir Gilbert taking his seat in front, with purse in hand, giving many an encouraging and approving smile at the sweet sounds produced by their bells.

When the ringers retired, the curtain dropped; but was speedily drawn up again, and the oddest possible little dwarf

was seen, with a huge head encircled by a crown, and a bowl of barley porridge before him, which his goggle eyes were regarding with disconsolate glances, as if he was longing for better fare. After his majesty had produced roars of laughter by his grimaces, the curtain fell; but almost instantly again rising, the king appeared, with pipe in hand, and a glass of punch by his side; but after trying to sing, in a cracked voice, "Old King Cole was a merry old soul," as he smoked and sipped, his head nodded, his nose grew red, his eyes half closed, his visage elongated, when Sir Gilbert, considering that he was not keeping up his kingly dignity, ordered him to disappear. Down came the curtain, and, Presto! he had vanished. When it rose an instant afterwards, a band of mummies, to the great satisfaction of the younger part of the audience, next marched on to the stage. There was Father Christmas, and his attendant sprites—Hail, Frost, and Snow, and heroes innumerable, dressed in paper helmets, and armour decked with spangles and ribbons, and swords of wood, and long spears—altogether a motley group. The Duke of Wellington and Napoleon Buona-parte, Nelson, Soult, and Blucher, the Black Prince and Julius Cæsar, the Duke of Marlborough and Richard of the Lion Heart, and numerous other men of renown of all ages, brought together, with delightful disregard to historical correctness. They fought one with the other till all fell mortally wounded, the Great Duke of modern days alone surviving; when a new character rushed in—a doctor, with a nostrum to cure all complaints; and applying it to their noses, with some words of a cabalistic character, which sounded like, "Take some of this riff-raff up thy sniff-snaff," he set each dead hero on his feet, ready to fight another day.

"That gentleman would have wonderful practice if he could be as successful among the public as he has been to-night," observed Cousin Giles, while Sir Gilbert was bestowing his largesse on the performers.

"Let's have it all over again!" "Encore! encore!" was shouted by the younger members of the audience; and, not unwillingly, the actors, with the utmost gravity, went through their parts without the slightest variation of word or gesture.

Tea over, the juveniles were invited into the dining-room, where, at the far end of the table, a hideous witch was seen presiding over a huge bowl, from which suddenly, as the lights were withdrawn, blue flames burst forth, and the witch, her long arms extending over the bowl, grew more hideous still, and a voice was heard inviting them to partake of the contents. "Hot raisins, sweet raisins, nice burning raisins." But few hung back, for the voice was not unfriendly, and was easily recognized as that of Cousin Giles; and when they had seen their own faces turn blue, and yellow, and green, and the raisins were eaten up, the witch sunk down under the table, and Cousin Giles popped up.

Then came games of all sorts, old and young gentlemen joining with equal zest, led by Cousin Giles and Alec Fairbairn. Now all were silent to listen to, and many to join in, a Christmas Carol, sweetly sung; and family prayers were held, and the Scriptures read, and Christmas Day was over, and all retired, with grateful hearts, and kindly thoughts of one another, to rest.

CHAPTER II.—A TALE OF A GHOST.

THERE is said to be a skeleton in some out-of-the-way cupboard of every house. There was one at Haroldstone Hall. No one liked to speak of it though. Even the jovial Sir Gilbert shunned the subject. The morning had been spent on the ice. Several of the ladies had put on skates for the first time, and the gentlemen had exerted themselves to teach them, until all were tolerably tired. Notwithstanding this, however, when the party were assembled after dinner games of all sorts were carried on, for the benefit of the younger members of the party. They had a jolly game of blind-man's buff, when Cousin Giles, Alec

Fairbairn, and even Jane Otterburn, consented in their turn to act blind-man. It was great fun to see Cousin Giles leaping about in the most extraordinary fashion, darting here and there, and seldom failing before long to catch one of his tormentors, though in a short time he again got caught himself. Alec Fairbairn, however, caused quite as much merriment by his extraordinary antics, greatly resembling as he did a huge daddy long-legs, or a spider rushing on its prey. Jane Otterburn was in reality the most active of the party, though she glided about in a more graceful way, soon managing to catch some one, aided by her sense of hearing, however, rather than by her activity.

"The game over, what say you to a story," cried Cousin Giles, "that we may rest ourselves after our exertions?"

"A story! a story!" exclaimed a dozen boyish voices.

"Who shall tell it? that's the question," said Cousin Giles.

"Miss Otterburn, will you?"

Jane shook her head. Perhaps it was that Captain Fotheringsail had just then seated himself by her side, and was saying something which appeared to interest her.

"Then Fairbairn, we must get a story from you," said Cousin Giles.

"Yes! yes! Let's have a jolly story from Mr. Fairbairn. Do, Mr. Fairbairn, tell us one," cried the boys, gathering round him.

Alec Fairbairn looked bashful, but at length took the seat to which Cousin Giles led him, in a part of the large semicircle formed round the fire. Sir Gilbert took a chair on one side, and Lady Ilderston on the other.

"We're all listening; do begin," cried the boys.

"Go ahead, Alec!" said Cousin Giles.

Alec Fairbairn, after having been silent for a moment, as if collecting his thoughts, began,—

"Some of you may have read 'The Castle of Otranto,' and 'The Old English Baron.' True as you must have thought those tales of mystery, they are not so true as the story I am about to narrate.

"There was an old, old family, whose ancestors were among the Norman Conquerors of Britain, and who had ever since owned the same estate those ancestors had won by the sword. At length a certain Sir Hugh Oswald inherited the property.

"Sir Hugh was a bold knight, who had gained credit and renown in many a fierce battle. He was proud of his family, proud of his estate, and prouder yet of himself.

"It chanced that his head keeper had been shot in an affray with some deer-poachers, when the subordinate keepers had, like dastards, run away. On hearing of their cowardly conduct, Sir Hugh swore that none of them should be raised to the vacant post. It was necessary, however, to fill it. Sir Hugh was seated

in his justice-room, when a stranger was announced. He was habited in a hunting-frock of Lincoln green, with a leathern belt; he wore a round-topped forester's hat on his head, and a long hunting-knife stuck in his leathern belt. High boots encased his legs, while in his hand he held a huge spear, which must have required a strong arm to wield it.

"I come to offer myself as your head keeper, Sir Hugh," said the stranger. "Here are documents which will prove that I possess the necessary knowledge and qualification for the post."

"Sir Hugh glanced over the papers.

"Your name, my friend?" he asked.

"Grimshaw," answered the forester.

"You look grim enough to keep the boldest poacher in awe!" observed the knight.

"I take your remark as a compliment, Sir Hugh," said the forester.

"I engage you," said the knight; "the steward will put you in possession of the house left vacant by the late keeper."

The stranger bowed, and receiving a note from the knight stalked out of the room.

"He's a bold churl that, and will keep the rest in order," said the knight to himself.

"Grimshaw, the new keeper, was duly installed in his office. The poachers came as they had been wont to do, to carry off Sir Hugh's deer, but soon found that they had made a mistake, and more than one paid the penalty with his life. The new keeper not only kept the poachers in awe, but everybody else on the estate. The steward paid him the greatest respect, and even Sir Hugh dare find no fault with any of his acts. Mysterious whispers were uttered among the retainers; they said he was not what he seemed—he had got a footing on the property, and it would be found a hard task to drive him out.

"A report, long forgotten, that Sir Hugh's title to the estate was not so sound as it should be, was revived; some went even so far as to aver that old Grimshaw was the rightful owner; but how that exactly was, no one knew. These rumours at length reached Sir Hugh's ears, and disgusted him greatly. Though formerly a cheery, jovial man, he became morose and silent, no longer taking pleasure in the sports of the field; nor did he even associate, as was his former custom, with the magnates of the county. Why did not he dismiss his head keeper unless there was some truth in what was said? Whether or not the keeper heard these reports it was hard to ascertain, as no one ventured to ask him.

It was a stormy night at the end of autumn; dark clouds covered the sky; not a star was seen; the thunder roared, the lightning flashed, and the wind howled through the boughs of the trees, scattering the leaves which had hitherto clung to them. The rain came down in heavy showers, occasionally ceasing for a short time. It was a night that poachers would have selected for killing the deer or other game. Notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather, Sir Hugh, with his cloak wrapped round him, which might have concealed any arms he carried, was observed to sally forth into the park—an unwonted proceeding on his part. He walked quickly on until the lights streaming from the windows of his mansion were lost to view. Yet further into the depths of the forest he went. He came to an open glade, when he saw by a flash of lightning which just then darted from the clouds a figure approaching. He recognized his keeper. Drawing his sword, and folding his cloak around his arm, he stepped rapidly on.

"Defend yourself, whoever you are," he exclaimed; "the survivor shall be the owner of the estate."

"Whether I live or die, I intend to hold my own," answered the pretended keeper in a hollow voice, presenting as he spoke his hunting-spear to defend himself. But Sir Hugh, with an activity





for which he had been celebrated in his youth, springing on one side, rushed forward with his drawn sword, which he plunged into the breast of his antagonist, who, with his dying breath, groaned out, 'I'll, notwithstanding, have my rights. In generations yet to come my spirit will wander over these broad lands and the mansion you now inhabit, when you and I have met in another world beyond the grave, while no son of yours shall ever inherit the property you have wrongfully withheld from me and mine.' The moment the keeper was dead, Sir Hugh, conscience-stricken at his act, hurried from the spot, and reaching the house, he passed unnoticed and shut himself up in his room. The next day the body of old Grimshaw was discovered, where it had fallen. Some said he had committed suicide; but as no weapon with which he could have killed himself had been found, others averred that he had been murdered by the poachers; but the truth was more than suspected, though no one ventured to accuse Sir Hugh of the deed. From that day forward, till his death, he lived a solitary life. His sons were killed in the wars. His daughters, once fair and blooming, withered and died. Sir Hugh, who took to the bottle to drown his conscience, sank into an unhonoured grave, his brother's son succeeding to the estate. Notwithstanding that another family inhabited the mansion, old Grimshaw's ghost appeared, it was stated, at intervals to several of the members; and on stormy nights, when one of them was returning home later than usual, it might be seen stalking among the trees; and it frequently on other occasions was met in the gloom of evening, either at the further end of a long passage, or gliding forth from the doorway of an unoccupied room. The maid-servants saw it the most frequently, and now and then it appeared to one of the children, or to some timid young gentleman on a visit to the hall; but though not one of the grown-up members of the family could say that they had positively seen it, few doubted but that it was a fearful reality."

"Thank you, Mr. Fairbairn, thank you," said several of the party in rather doubtful tones.

"What was the name of the estate owned by the unfortunate Sir Hugh?" asked Simon Langdon.

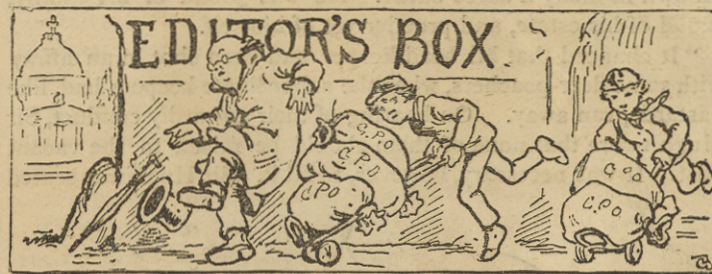
"To that question I cannot reply," said Mr. Fairbairn in a solemn tone.

It should be understood that he had narrated a much longer tale than has here been given, and in language which had a thrilling effect on his audience.

"Where did you get that story from?" asked Sir Gilbert, in a grave tone.

"I most probably heard it; or I may possibly have read it in a tale of fiction," answered Mr. Fairbairn.

(To be continued.)



ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A Sunderland School Boy.—Thanks for your good wishes. Your friends when they have seen the numbers now appearing will agree with you.

"Jack," Southampton.—The UNION JACK will be published each year in twelve monthly parts.

Bill, Southampton.—The subject of Prize Competition is under consideration.

J. S. B.—The "Worcester" is an excellent training ship. You might have some rough work at first, but when once a mate in a regular line of steamers, you would live as well as any officer in the royal navy.

A Subscriber, Bristol.—Thanks. See above.

A Well Wisher, Christ's Hospital. Many thanks.

We heartily thank numerous readers for the approval they express of the UNION JACK, and for their efforts to promote its circulation. We hope that many others will follow their example. To those who have sent their addresses we have replied by letter.

"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.

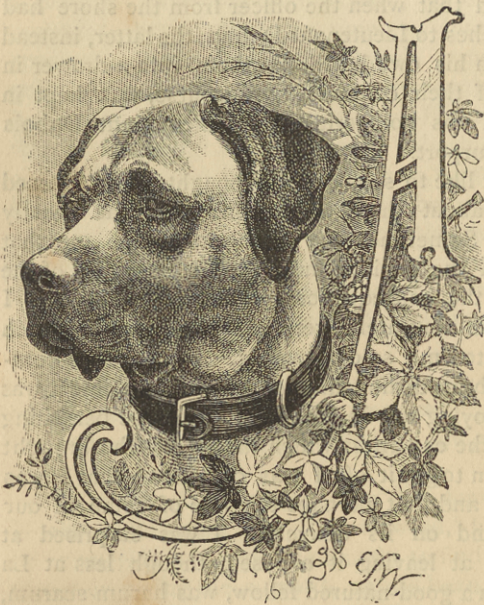
"If the Frenchmen choose to hang me, I will not bring the same fate on him," I thought.

(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



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.

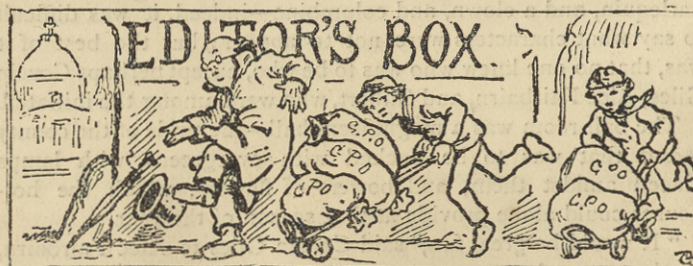
"No, no! do not interfere with it!" she exclaimed. "There may be more of reality in it than you suppose."

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.

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-ye 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

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.