

would not believe me. Look for yourself—the cranes have only one leg and one wing apiece.”

“You stupid idiot,” shouted Corrado, “I will soon show you whether they have two legs or not,” and then he cried: “Houp, houp—holloa!” so lustily that, as might be supposed, the frightened birds stretched forth both legs, and ran away out of sight and hearing.

“Now tell me,” said the master, turning sharply on his servant, “do your eyes serve you? or are you blind, as well as stupid? What have you to say for yourself now—have the cranes one leg or two?”

“Sir,” answered Quinquibio humbly, but bethinking him of an answer which might turn the current of Corrado’s wrath, “you did not cry, ‘Houp, houp—holloa!’ at the crane last night. If you had done this, who knows but it might have put its other leg to the ground and run away, as these have done?”

This reply amused Signor Corrado vastly, and he burst into a fit of hearty laughter.

“In truth you are not such a simpleton as men think you,” said he; “for you know how to get out of a difficulty by the help of a ready tongue. There, I forgive you this time; but let there be no more tricks played with my supper.”

Thus, by his ready wit, Quinquibio kept his place in Corrado’s kitchen, and from that time was better thought of, not only by his master, but by his fellow-servants.

APPEARANCES ARE DECEITFUL.

THE Signor de Rabata could not have been called a handsome man, even by his dearest friends. He was small and misformed; he had a flat face, and a nose much like that of a terrier-dog. In a word, this gentleman was so hideous that, search as one might, it would have been impossible to find one worse-favoured, except, perhaps, in the person of the famous painter, Giotto, who, at all events, was scarcely less ugly.

Despite this unattractive appearance, the Signor de Rabata was a very learned person, and was respected by the scholars of the day as the greatest judge on every point of civil law.

These two men—the ugly judge and the ugly artist—lived in the same village, not far from Florence, at the time of my story.

One day, as they were riding in company thence to the city, each being badly mounted and shabbily attired, they were surprised by a heavy rain, which forced them to seek

shelter in a peasant’s hut. The downpour continuing, the friends grew impatient. Therefore, as they knew the man beneath whose roof they were sheltering, they borrowed some clothing of him. He could only offer an old rough cloak of grey felt, and a very bad and ragged hat, which, however, the gentlemen accepted. Thus equipped, they continued their way. After a while, the storm abated, and they fell into-conversation. Giotto talked extremely well, no matter what might be the subject, and, as Signor de Rabata listened, he reflected that this was indeed a gifted man. Nevertheless, as he surveyed the painter from head to foot, his ugliness in the borrowed clothing was so striking that he could not refrain from bursting into a loud laugh. Feeling obliged to explain, he said:

“Master Giotto, imagine if anyone met us who had never seen or heard of you. Think you that such an one would take you for the greatest painter in the world?”

“Yes, sir,” replied Giotto promptly. “I think this might be possible, if the same person, in examining you from top to toe, was able to credit you with knowing more than the letters of the alphabet.”

The judge was confounded, for, in ridiculing his companion, he had not realised that his own aspect was equally absurd.

“I was imprudent,” said he humbly. “You have taught me now that one must never ridicule others when one can oneself furnish abundant matter for ridicule also.”

SPRING-HEELED JACK.

It is now nearly half a century since the inhabitants of London and its suburbs were kept in a constant state of terror by a man, who, under various disguises, would suddenly appear before the unsuspecting pedestrian, and, after having nearly frightened the traveller out of his or her senses, would as suddenly disappear with terrible bounds, leaving the impression upon his affrighted victim that his Satanic Majesty had condescended to pay him a visit in person. Evening was the time generally chosen by this eccentric character for his exploits, and, doubtless, there are many living who can recollect the pang of fear which shot through their hearts when, leaping from some dark corner, out of a doorway, or over a hedge, he stood before them.

Who this singular being was, or what the true object of his escapades, can only be

left to conjecture, as he was never captured; certain it is, that robbery was not the motive, for he was never known to take a single coin from his victims, even when fright had rendered them an easy prey, nor did he often practise any other degree of cruelty beyond scaring them, which, however, was quite sufficient, as in some instances the sufferers never thoroughly recovered the shock to their nerves.

The only surmise as to his identity that was ever hazarded, was that he was the Marquis of Waterford—then famous as a ringleader in all that savoured of fun and frolic—but not a shadow of proof could be ever adduced in support of this theory. The more general belief appears to have been that there were several persons concerned in the affair; that they were members of high families, and that the cause of their pranks was a bet of three thousand pounds that they would procure the death of not less than thirty human beings, apportioning them with nice discrimination as follows: eight old bachelors, ten old maids, and six lady's-maids, and as many servant-girls as they could, trusting that by depriving them of their reason they would accelerate their deaths. This is, of course, incredible, but the chief clerk of the Mansion House police-court, in a letter to the newspapers, said it was so reported to a committee that was formed by the Lord Mayor for the purpose of tracking and prosecuting the scoundrels.

It is difficult to assign the exact locality which gave birth to this extraordinary freak, either side of the Thames claiming the distinction; some averring that it was at Hammersmith, others again that it was Barnes. The most trustworthy accounts give the palm to the latter village.

It was in the latter end of 1837, at Barnes, that the ghost made its first appearance in the shape of a large white bull, attacking several persons, more particularly women, many of whom suffered most severely from the fright. At East Sheen, in the form of a white bear, the alleged spirit carried on similar gambols. His ghostship then extended his operations to the town renowned for "maids of honour," and in the course of a few days all Richmond was aghast at the tales of women being frightened to death and of children being torn to pieces by him. The search after the unearthly visitant was here becoming too warm for him, and he shifted the scene of his labours to Ham, Kingston, and Hampton, at which latter

place he was seen, clad in armour of brass, with spring shoes, and large claw-like gloves, but being hotly pursued he scaled the walls of Bushey Park and vanished. Teddington, Twickenham, and Hounslow, all had stories to tell of his appearance, and in Sion Park, the seat of the Duke of Northumberland, many and fearful were the injuries said to have been inflicted by him. At Isleworth a carpenter was seized at eleven o'clock at night, and most unmercifully beaten by the ghost, who was attired in polished steel armour, with red shoes, etc. It must be noted what an exceedingly varied wardrobe this sprite must have had, rendering it very difficult, one would think, for him to move, with such extensive properties, with alacrity from place to place.

The neighbourhood of Uxbridge was the next scene of his pranks, and he approached the metropolis through Hanwell, Brentford, and Ealing, in which last place he was seen in steel armour, striking terror into the inmates of the various schools located there, and frightening the blacksmith of the village so completely as to force him to keep his bed in consequence of the shock he sustained. At Hammersmith he found a determined opponent in the shape of a valorous laundress, to whom he appeared in the form of an immense baboon, six feet high, with enormous eyes, and arms of an extensive length; and in strict keeping with his animal appearance, he grunted like an hyena. This courageous woman, after an ineffectual attempt to avoid her uncanny visitor, determined to give him battle, and flew at him with such fury that he was glad to give up the contest. Even the royal precincts of Kensington Palace did not escape from his visits, children having seen the unearthly being dancing by moonlight on the Palace Green, and ever and anon scaling the walls of the royal forcing-houses.

In consequence of the panic attending these exaggerated stories, the police had strict orders to investigate their truth, but were unable, in the majority of cases, to trace any person who had really seen the apparition. That there was mischief afoot, however, was clearly shown by the applications at the Mansion House and other police-courts for protection.

At Peckham he caused the greatest alarm (judging by a letter to the Lord Mayor, from a resident there), appearing in a new character, as a spectre, and scaring out of

her senses, amongst others, an unfortunate servant-girl who opened a door to him; and the writer also said that seven ladies had been reduced to the same unhappy state through fright at the awful apparition. Letters poured into the Mansion House from all parts of London, showing how universal was the terror which had been inspired by this masquerading miscreant. Several persons, more especially women, were injured bodily in many instances by the claws with which he appears to have armed his hands, and if one writer may be believed, several deaths on the south side of London had been caused by the shock his appearance had given. A letter from St. John's Wood stated that for a whole fortnight that neighbourhood had been favoured with Spring-heeled Jack's attentions; he sometimes appearing as a bear, and sometimes clad in mail. This correspondent asserted that the bet, which was supposed to be the cause of these pranks, was that the monster should kill six women in some given time.

That his appearance was calculated to upset even the stoutest-hearted must be admitted, for the Lord Mayor himself, though much inclined to be sceptical, acknowledged that he had been given to understand, on undoubted authority, that in the vicinity of Forest Hill, where he resided, one of the female servants of a gentleman who lived near his house had been terrified into fits by the sudden appearance of a figure clad in a bear's skin, which, upon being drawn aside, exhibited the human body, with long horns—emblematical of Satan himself—clad in a suit of mail.

The "ghost" did not disdain to avail himself of material means of conveyance occasionally, as is shown by a letter to the *Morning Herald*, January 16th, 1838, from "A Resident on Paddington Green," who stated that he had seen, close to his house, a figure clad in white, closely pursued by two men, and, after a smart chase, this matter-of-fact apparition jumped into a cabriolet, and was driven out of the reach of his would-be captors.

A Committee was formed at the Mansion House in January, 1838, for the purpose of receiving subscriptions, and to decide upon the best means of capturing this uneasy spirit, and of visiting it with the punishment which it so richly deserved.

In sending a donation of five pounds to the fund, a gentleman residing at Dulwich wrote that his daughter was lying in a very dangerous state, having been

nearly deprived of her senses by the sudden appearance of a figure enveloped in a white sheet and blue fire, which had met her on her return home from a friend's house; others equally testified to injuries received at the hands of the hobgoblin. A reward of ten pounds was offered for the apprehension of the heartless scoundrel, but unhappily it completely failed in its object, and the perpetrator of this ghastly "joke" continued to be at large.

Thinking, perhaps, that he had done as much harm as he desired in the other parts of London, for a whole month Spring-heeled Jack devoted himself to disturbing the peace of mind of the dwellers in the East End of the metropolis, the neighbourhood of Bow being particularly patronised by him. One gross outrage came before the police-magistrate at Lambeth Street, and caused considerable attention.

A young lady, named Alsop, living with her parents in the vicinity of Bow, stated that at about a quarter to nine o'clock on the evening of February 21, 1838, she heard a violent ringing at the front gate of the house, and on going to the door to see what was the cause, she saw a man standing outside, of whom she enquired what was the matter. The person instantly replied that he was a policeman, and said: "For God's sake bring me a light, for we have caught Spring-heeled Jack here in the lane." She returned into the house, and brought a candle and handed it to the man, who was enveloped in a large cloak. The instant she had done so, however, he threw off his outer garment, and applying the lighted candle to his breast, presented a most hideous and frightful appearance, and vomited forth a quantity of blue and white flame from his mouth, his eyes resembling red balls of fire. From the hasty glance which her fright enabled her to get at his person, she observed that he wore a large helmet, and his dress, which appeared to fit him very tight, seemed to her to resemble white oil-skin. Without uttering a sentence he darted at her, and catching her partly by her dress, and the back part of her neck, placed her head under one of his arms, and commenced tearing her clothes with his claws, which she was certain were made of some metallic substance. She screamed out as loud as she could for assistance, and by considerable exertion got away from him, and ran towards the house to get in. Her assailant, however, followed, and caught her on the doorstep, when he again used

considerable violence, tore her neck and arms with his claws, as well as a quantity of hair from her head; but she was at length rescued from him by one of her sisters. Her story was fully corroborated by her parents and sisters, and her injuries, which were very considerable, bore unmistakable testimony to the truth of the assault.

Subsequently in Bow Fair Fields Jack narrowly escaped capture by some workmen, and it was only by his extreme agility, and intimate knowledge of the locality, that he got clear off. Two men were arrested as being concerned in this affair—one a master-bricklayer, and the other a carpenter; but after a very long and searching investigation at Lambeth Street police-court, they were discharged, as they were not fully identified as being the actual perpetrators, though it was certain they knew something more about the matter than they chose to acknowledge.

Another sample of the ghost's playful ways in the East End of London, was shown by a statement made before the magistrate at Lambeth Street police-court, March 8, 1838, by a Miss Scales, who deposed that as she and her sister were walking in Limehouse about half-past eight in the evening, on coming to Green Dragon Alley they observed some person standing in an angle in the passage. She was in advance of her sister at the time, and just as she came up to the person, who was enveloped in a large cloak, he spirted a quantity of blue flame right in her face, which deprived her of her sight, and so alarmed her, that she instantly dropped to the ground and was seized with violent fits, which continued for several hours. This individual was described as tall, thin, and of gentlemanly appearance, and carried in front of him a small lamp, similar to those used by the police; he did not utter a word, nor did he attempt to lay hands on the young woman, but walked away in an instant.

Not confining himself to the crowded parts of the metropolis, he made the suburbs his hunting-ground, and terrorised both sides of the Thames to such an extent that but few females would venture out after dark without sufficient escort. He visited Blackheath in a truly novel and marvellous manner. Three ladies were crossing the heath at about six o'clock, when they suddenly came upon a monstrous figure before them, and as the lamps had been lit some time, they had a good view

of it. The monster, they said, had a phosphoric lustre, showed tremendous long ears, horns and tail like those of a bullock. One of the ladies fell down in a fit, and the other two had resort to that potent weapon in the female armoury, a good scream, which promptly brought a policeman to their assistance, and on his bold advance the apparition threw itself over his head and disappeared on the heath, during which gymnastic performance, it was said, the hooks, or springs, on his heels were distinctly visible.

In a pamphlet, published at the time, we have preserved to us a portrait of the "ghost," as he appeared in this instance, and the representation even, much less the reality, is quite enough to upset the nerves of any ordinary-minded person. He is depicted as clad in all the orthodox details of a satanic outfit, horns, tail, etc., with fearful claws on both hands and feet, the latter additionally armed with large hooks, attached to the heels, whilst his countenance puts any mediæval conception of the Evil One quite to the blush. No wonder, then, the ladies are shown as suffering an extremity of terror, with their mouths extended to their utmost capacity, presumably screaming.

In another tract there is a similar portrait of this man-fiend, its horrors being heightened by being highly-coloured, and there he is represented as appearing in a churchyard to two women.

In a third booklet he appears as in half-armour, with helmet, etc., his nether limbs being clad in a species of fox-hunting costume, a huge cloak adorning his back.

Having alarmed the dwellers on the south side of the Thames, so as nearly to deprive them of their senses, he again crossed the water, and appeared to a party of people near Holloway in the guise of a bear. Here, however, he met with a reception he hardly contemplated, for there being a brickfield handy, the men of the party treated him to a shower of bricks, a mode of treatment which he by no means relished, and which induced him to beat a speedy retreat.

One evening, near Lord Holland's gate at Kensington, a gaunt figure, accoutred like Don Quixote, and covered with spikes, was seen striding along the road, and, after staring in the faces of some labouring men, disappeared in an instant. These men, it is said, went into a beer-shop in the vicinity, and then relating what they had seen, they again went to the place

where the figure had appeared, in expectation of its return. However, they did not meet it, but they saw an uncouth monster, having the shape of an enormous baboon, playing its antics beneath some trees which overhung the road. As they approached the creature sprang up on the branches and disappeared, Spring-heeled Jack, of course, being credited with this mysterious occurrence.

Hackney was favoured with an extraordinary vision of this many-shaped intruder on the public peace, for he appeared, so the story runs, in the shape of a lamp-lighter walking on his head and hands, and carrying his ladder between his feet, to which was suspended a lantern of large dimensions, amply lighted. And this curious creature, on being approached, somersaulted so high, that those who saw it were utterly astonished. But this, surely, is rather more than even the most credulous ought to be expected to swallow, and the story must have been manufactured to feed the public taste for the marvellous.

Another glimpse of him was had on the road to Woolwich, when a blue flame issued from his mouth, and a girl who witnessed it fell into fits. His dress on this occasion is described as that of a gentleman, with the somewhat startling addition of a wide strip of scarlet down the back of his coat. Being pursued, he sprang over the fences as usual, and was out of sight in an instant. Still lingering in Kent, he was found the following night at Dartford, where he was clad in a bearskin, and amused himself with the mischievous trick of putting out the town gas and leaving the streets in darkness. The ubiquity of the fellow was something wonderful, and tended, of course, very much to enhance his fame; no sooner was he heard of in Kent than he turned up at Hampstead Heath, springing over the furze-bushes and somersaulting over the gravel-pits.

So numerous were the tales told of Spring-heeled Jack that a good many must be supposed to be true; whilst, on the other hand, great allowance must be made for credulity, some people not being content with the marvellous as they find it, but being only too happy to add thereto. As a final specimen of the nonsense circulated about his appearance, perhaps the following is the best. A wonderful sight, it was said, was witnessed on Primrose Hill one evening. On the summit appeared a huge figure of a man, in a flame of pale blue;

it then assumed the bulk of a massive elephant, then of a windmill in full operation, and lastly, in lessening its dimensions, it became a large ball of snow, which rolled down the hill, and escaped further notice. What Spring-heeled Jack had to do with this dreadful appearance is not at all clear, but it was attributed to him, nevertheless, such was the hold that he had obtained over the public mind.

Whether too much attention was beginning to be paid to him with a view to his capture, or whether his love of mischief had died out, cannot be told, but certain it was that nothing was known publicly of this singular being after April, 1838, having kept London in a ferment of excitement and terror for about six months. The foregoing are only a few of the stories, veracious or otherwise, that were related of him, space not permitting any more detailed account to be given.

The notoriety this fellow had obtained seems to have had the effect of making many silly young men emulous to enact the ruffian in a small way, considering it the height of cleverness to frighten women and children out of their wits, under the belief that Spring-heeled Jack was attacking them. Many cowardly assaults on women were reported in various parts of the metropolis, under the impression, doubtless, that it was all a "lark;" but it was a joke the victims hardly appreciated, as, should they scream out in their terror, their unmanly assailants did not hesitate to strike them with their fists in the mouth, in order to silence them.

One of these imitators of Jack, a young footman, who had kept the inhabitants of Kilburn in considerable alarm by sallying out upon them disguised as a ghost, in a white sheet and hideous mask, from which depended a long beard, was captured and fined four pounds, which seems hardly an adequate sentence for the offence, seeing how seldom these gentry gave justice a chance of punishing them.

In a satirical paper, *The Age*, of March 11, 1838, is found a recipe for the cure of "spring-heels" in "Jacks": "Take of peas, pepper, salt, and gunpowder an equal amount. Fiat mixture in blunderbusii without scruple. Make application in the region of the 'os cocygis,' and let fly. We are happy in having the best opinion that no person afflicted with 'Spring-heeled Jackism' can withstand the effects of this treatment of his nervous system." Undoubtedly, if this pre-

scription had been followed extensively in its entirety by the inhabitants of London, there would not have been much more heard of the pranks of these cowardly fellows, whose only redeeming point was that they abstained from plundering those who had been weak enough to be frightened by their appearance.

OUR SHINING RIVER.

I.

NOTHING was ever seen like Paddington Station on that particular morning—businesslike Paddington, with its long rows of white railway-coaches continually gliding away to distant parts; with its platforms and their constantly-changing groups, and the great piles of luggage that accumulate as fast as they are wheeled away by busy porters. All this ordinary, workaday aspect of the familiar terminus is for the moment effaced. Wonderful toilettes of the whitest, the creamiest, the most refreshing; pretty faces under the most ravishing of hats, go to form a white and radiant cloud of womankind, which has invaded and taken possession of the scene. And instead of the usual sombre foil of masculine garments, we have all kinds of brilliant and startling arrangements of colour—in jerseys, and jumpers, and gay caps, and parti-coloured ribbons—combined with white flannels. Festive trains are freighted fast with all these festive people—the newest and brightest of saloon-carriages, each appropriated to some club or private party; and instead of brown portmanteaux and black bullock-trunks, we have baskets of flowers and fruits by way of luggage, with tempting-looking picnic-baskets, and bundles of white sunshades, or parti-coloured Japanese umbrellas.

All the gay crowd is moving to and fro with a perfectly distracting play of colour in the tempered sunshine that filters through the great glass roof. I am dazed, bewildered, and experience, also, a certain sadness in the thought that none of these bright and pleasing young women are looking out for me. Indeed, I had no share in the bright glances and pleasant recognitions, and thus it was a relief to be seized upon by an active porter, whose instinct of self-interest had kept him clear of the crowd of feminine passengers, for women, however costly their array, are generally more lavish of smiles and thanks than of shillings and half-crowns. "This

way, sir; here's your friend a-waiting for you. She's jest off, is the fast train, and she'll run afore these specials."

And so I found myself and my belongings shot into a smoking carriage as the train moved on, while opposite sat my friend Charlwood Pycroft, generally known as Charley, who gripped my hand and arm with some fervour.

"You got my telegram, then, from Paris? So good of you to come."

The fact was, that I had got into the habit of being very much at Charley's beck and call, who was an erratic kind of being; often lost sight of for months, or years even, and then making known his existence in a peremptory way by telegraph, asking me, perhaps, to meet the Cunard boat at Queenstown, or to run over to Marseilles to join him in a yachting trip in the Mediterranean. Generally speaking, when Charley had recourse to me, he was in some kind of a scrape. And I guessed pretty confidently that something was the matter now, for beneath the superficial cheerfulness of his greeting there lurked a settled kind of gloom.

Poor Charley! he had been left to his own devices at an early age, with a nice little property, including a pleasant old mansion on the Thames, where his family had lived for generations in credit and good repute. How much was left for him now? Very little, I fancied, for already had appeared in the Times a preliminary announcement of the sale of Pycroft Court, with all its lands and demesnes. Soon, no doubt, I should hear from Charley's own lips how it had happened that matters had come to this pass. In the meantime, we beguiled the way with ordinary conversation.

"What has brought you over from Paris in such a hurry?" I asked.

"Arthur, my boy," replied Charley gloomily, "it was baccarat. Had a cruel time of it. Lost fifty thousand francs to the marquis—cleared me out, and came home partly to see you."

"And partly to see somebody else," I interposed. "Oh, I have heard something about your affairs, although you have kept me so much in the dark."

"Why, what do you mean?" asked Charley, flushing, and looking embarrassed; "you can't have heard anything about her—"

"About the little cousin who is to redeem the fortunes of young Prodigal? Yes, I have been told—"