

WHEN SCHOOL LETS OUT.

When school lets out at sundown time,
And shadows long up hillside climb,
With leap and romp and laugh and shout,
In hills and meadows roundabout,
By grain-field fence, through pasture grass,
A foot-worn way, the scholars pass;
And bright-faced elf and brown-faced lout
Go heart-glad home, when school lets out.

I sit and watch, where, white and slow,
The mistress moves in grace below;
A little young girl, with folded hands,
With low-down looks in wide, brown bands,
Who floats in light where deep shade lies,
With sweet, sad looks in lake-blue eyes;
I sit and watch, and hope and doubt
I know not what, when school lets out.

Were I so young as they who know
The mild made-rule, just there below,
Would I be glad as they who pass
By grain-field fence and pasture grass?
Would I be glad the home-bound way?
And laugh and shout and romp as they?
It might be so in roundabout,
But not as now, when school lets out.

Some day—how soon I cannot tell,
But some-day soon, I know full well—
My feet shall fall with beat as slow
The green-laid way that here do go,
And I shall feel my great heart rise
To tender looks from lake-blue eyes,
And there shall be, no fear, no doubt,
Her hand in mine, when school lets out.

My Grandmother's Ghost Story.

BY M. W.

We were seated around the fire, in the old oak-paneled parlor, tired out after a long day's skating, and thoroughly enjoying the quiet and repose and the comfort and warmth of the domestic hearth, in a sleepy, cat-like fashion, when Jack, my eldest brother, rousing himself with a stretch and a mighty yawn, exclaimed, "Why, girls, how quiet you all are! Are you quite done up? Can't any one sing a nice pathetic ballad, or a good jolly hunting song?—No?—all too tired? Well, who will tell us a good ghost story?"

"Rubbish, Jack! A ghost story—what believes such follies?" replied Geraldine. We were quite above such nonsense in these practical matter-of-fact days.

"Ah," replied Jack, with a long-drawn sigh, "is there no faith left on the earth? Oh, these degenerate days! Are all the charming tales we used to shudder at so delightfully in the days of our childhood utter bosh?—does not one amongst us, in his or her secret soul, nurse a fond, lingering, unconfessed belief in the shadowy world of ghosts, hobgoblins, fairies or spirits?"

"I do," interrupted our grandmother, shortly.

"You, granny?" exclaimed a chorus of astonished voices.

"Yes, children, I do," replied the old lady, looking at us over her spectacles in a very dignified manner.

Now, my grandmother was the last person I should have accused of believing in the supernatural. A strong-minded, strong-bodied old lady, somewhat on the wrong side of seventy; practical and matter-of-fact to a fault; handsome still in her old age; and the clear-cut nose and brow, and decided mouth and chin, forbade the notion of weakness or credulity being leading features in her character.

"You believe in ghosts, grandma?" said little Alice at length; "and in fairies, too?"

"In wraiths, corpse lights, and fetiches?" laughed Geraldine.

"Nay—I did not say that," replied my grandmother, "You make too much of my confession of faith. I merely said I believe in ghosts; and I do."

"Why?" we all exclaimed, with one voice.

"Because," answered the gentle lady, "I have seen what I firmly believe to have been a spirit from the other world."

"Oh!" exclaimed Alice, in a voice of awe; "tell us about it, grandma, please, do?" And we all joined eagerly in the request.

"Well, my dears," said the old lady, after a little hesitation, taking off her spectacles, and laying down her knitting, "I will relate to you my one sole experience of the spiritual world. Though the event I am going to tell you about, happened more than fifty years ago, it is as fresh in my mind as if it had only taken place yesterday. No lapse of time will ever deaden or efface the impression it made on me.

Fifty-three years ago I was a young girl of eighteen years old. I was a tall, strong, active lassie, fond of riding, hunting, fishing, and all country sports and pastimes. I could dance down any one in the country side, lead the hunt in my own county, and was never known to turn aside for the stiffest fence, or to refuse the broadest ditch. Fear was an unknown sensation to me. I did not know what nerves meant, and headaches were strangers to me. I was full of health, strength, and spirits. I was not bad-looking, either, in those days," added the gentle lady, with a sigh, and glancing at Geraldine, who our father had often told us, was the image of what he remembered his mother in the days of his own childhood. "I had many offers, and not a few admirers. I never cared but for one of them, children, and he was your grandfather. 'Ah, what years ago it seems!' and my grandmother paused a moment, and wiped her eyes.

Well, when I was just about eighteen I went to pass a couple of months with your grandfather's uncle at Gayton Castle. It was a long time before the fire which afterwards destroyed the

west wing took place, and no one who had not seen the Castle before that happened can imagine what a perfect specimen of a mediæval architecture it then was.

It made a great impression on me, I remember, as I drove up to it for the first time one afternoon early in December. The rays of the setting sun glistened on the windows, and caused the stained glass to glow and sparkle like jewels in their light; a long avenue of beeches led to the Castle gate, through a finely wooded park, and in the distance a long range of mountains stood out, clear and distinct, against the sunset sky.

A large party of visitors were assembled at the Castle—quite thirty of us I should say, and I put on a log or two to keep up the fire. Now that the place had been dusted, and the furniture set in order, the room didn't look so weird; and yet—and yet—well, I was not sorry when I found myself in bed, and the candle safely put out! I felt odd, but, for all that, I soon fell asleep.

Next morning many were the inquiries with which I was greeted when I appeared at the breakfast table, but to all them I triumphantly replied that never had I passed a better night, and that Mrs. Carey's ghost, like all others, was a myth.

So two or three nights passed quietly, but on the fourth I awoke suddenly with a start. What had brushed by my bed-curtains, and whose was the footstep I now distinctly heard cross the room? I waited with a beating heart. The fire-light still dimly illuminated the room, and, to my horror, a dark "something" crossed it, then the flickering flame died out, and I was left in the darkness with my unknown visitor. At this moment the Castle clock struck two—a deep sigh echoed through the room. I remember no more—I suppose I fainted!

Next morning my pale looks attracted universal attention. But I complained of a violent headache, to which I attributed them.

"Well, well, Kate," said Sir Guy, "I've news for you that will bring back the color to your cheek. Gerald will be here to-morrow!"

This was news indeed! Your grandfather, who was then in the Guards, had not expected to get leave for another three weeks at least.

I soon forgot the vision (for so I persisted in calling it to myself) of the previous night, in dreams of a far different order; and when, that night, I retired to bed, sleep quickly fell on my weary eyes, and I woke not until the bright morning sun flung his rays on the newly awakened world.

But the day passed and no Gerald arrived. Vainly I waited and watched, longing to hear the sounds of his horse's hoofs ringing up the avenue; and when the Castle clock struck eleven, more disappointed and vexed than I cared to acknowledge, I slowly took my departure to my weird chamber in the west wing.

It looked more repellant and gloomy than usual, I thought, and felt as if unseen beings were lurking about. I started at the sound of my own footsteps, and when I crossed the room to get into bed, hardly dared to look up behind me.

But I slept; for I remember rousing to a sense of existence by a loud thud that shook the whole room, and the same low, shivering sigh I had heard three nights before was repeated close to my ear. The heavy footstep crossed the room, and distinctly, at the foot of my bed, the figure of a monk wrapped in a long, dark robe, with a hood drawn closely over his head, shaped itself slowly out of the darkness.

I could not discern the features of the apparition, but the glittering of the snake-like eyes was plainly to be distinguished. I gazed as if fascinated on the awful being before me. I cannot say I feared it, but my heart felt chill, and the marrow in my bones frozen with awe; and a sense of deep, inexplicable mystery took hold of me, as I saw it raise its white hand, and beckon to me to follow it.

The eyes of the fearful being seemed to exercise a strange influence over me and I raised myself in bed as if to obey its bidding. At that moment the sigh was repeated and I heard a faint voice whisper close to my ear in tones that curdled my blood, "Heed him not!"

But the influence of those eyes was too strong for me, I could not resist, and quitting my bed I followed my ghostly conductor across the room, feeling I had no will but his.

The room seemed changed and was lit up by a strange glare. Over the niche in the wall hung a large crucifix, veiled in black, and beneath it stood an altar, on which burned many lighted tapers; and to the left of it a small door in the oaken wainscoting stood open.

Through it and down a narrow staircase I followed my guide.

Presently we stood together on the edge of the moat beneath the oriel window. The snow fell fast, and the wind whistled bitterly around us, but I felt it not.

What awful power had this fearful being obtained over me that I followed him whither he would through storm and snow?

I felt spell-bound, without an atom of my boasted power of will to resist his behests.

At length we arrived at the angle of the west wing, where the old drawbridge had once stood; and there my guide, turning suddenly towards me and throwing back his hood, struck at me with a shining weapon he held in his hand.

Thereupon the spell that had held me seemed broken, and, with a wild cry, I fell to the earth insensible.

When I recovered consciousness, Gerald was bending over me. He raised me in his arms, wrapped his traveling cloak round me, and carried me into the Castle.

Then for many days, I lay sick unto

death. The strain on my nerves, and the exposure to the cold had been too much for me, and it was months before my wonted strength returned.

For a long time Gerald and I avoided all conversation relative to my strange adventure; but curiously to know how it was he had arrived just in time to save me, overcame my dislike to talk on the subject. Your grandfather told me that when a mile or so only from the Castle he had suddenly become imbued with a certainty that I was in some deadly peril, and in need of him; and that this feeling had quickly increased; and that as he entered the avenue a voice had whispered to him, "Haste! haste!"

He then galloped to the door, and as he dismounted he had distinctly heard the same voice whisper, "Help! help! the moat!" and some unknown influence had then impelled him to rush to the spot, where he found me insensible on the ground.

Now, children, do you wonder I believe in ghosts?"

We were all silent for a while, and then Alice said, "Is there no legend relating to this monk, grandma?"

"Yes, child, she replied; 'your grandfather told me that too, afterwards. The legend is vague, but tradition says that the young widow of one of the first Lords of Gayton was drowned in the moat by her confessor, a monk of the Dominican order. Since the west wing has been burned down, Gayton Castle has been free from spiritual visitants. And now, grand-children, see, it is past the witching hour of midnight, and so let us off to bed.'"

Literary Predictions.

A writer in the seventeenth century—William Winstanley—in his "Lives of the English Poets," thus speaks and prophecies of Milton: "John Milton was one whose natural parts might deservedly give him a place among the principal of our English poets, having written two heroic poems, and a tragedy. But his fame has gone out like a candle in a snuff, and his memory will always stink." One of the most illustrious of Milton's brother bards, Edmund Waller, in one of his letters, referred to "Paradise Lost" as a tedious poem by the blind old schoolmaster, in which there is nothing remarkable but the length. Horace Walpole as shrewd a man and as accomplished a critic as ever lived, has obligingly informed us who were the "first writers" in 1753. Posterity would probably guess with Macaulay that they were Hume, Fielding, Smollett, Richardson, Johnson, Warburton, Collins, Akenside, Gray. Not at all. They were, according to a contemporary, Lord Chesterfield, Lord Bath, Mr. William Whitehead, Sir Charles Williams, Mr. Soame, Jenynge, Mr. Cambridge, and Mr. Coventry—that is to say, a pack of scribblers, only one of whom is known even by name to ninety-nine readers out of a hundred.

—Lord Chesterfield, and he is remembered chiefly as the nephew of Dr. Johnson and Cowper. George Stevens has remarked that nothing short of an act of Parliament would induce people to read the sonnets of Shakespeare, and Johnson prophesied a safe immortality for Poushret's famous "Choice."

Everyone knows how the great Edinburgh received Byron's first attempts and what it prophesied concerning him. When Dickens brought out "Pickwick," a leading review, condescendingly noticed the "low cockney tale," shrewdly perceived that the author was already proving himself unequal, and that the "thin vein of humor" was rapidly showing signs of exhaustion. In the author of "Ezra" "Locksley Hall," and "The Lotus Eaters," the keen and searching criticism of the Quarterly could only see a minor star of the "galaxy or Milky Way" of poetry of which the lamented Keats was the harbinger, and the future author of the "Idylls" and "In Memoriam" was received with peals of laughter, and consigned placidly to oblivion.—London Globe.

Soldiers Afraid of Mice.

The correspondent of the London News writes: Our company is made up of Servians, Russians, a Frenchman, a Swiss, a Prussian, an Austrian and a Croat, so that we are rather a polyglot were. The thatch of the barrack swarms with mice, which have a festive habit of dropping down on the sleeper's face, and they have been accused, I cannot say with what justice, of attempting to nestle in beards. The Russians have a perfectly frantic horror of mice. I have seen a veteran who would not turn his head at an exploding shell, jump from his bed in the middle of the night in a paroxysm of fear, and drawing his sword, make frantic cuts and passes at the spot where he believed his tormentors were harboring. I have seen another rush out into the cold night air because a mouse ran across his face, and refuse to re-enter till the break of day. Gen. Douchtouroff, who used to be one of the inhabitants of our barracks, emigrated altogether on account of the mice, and fitted up for himself a rough *teate d'abri* behind it, into which he crept nightly without undressing, and slept there till the wind wrecked his habitation, when he had to go into winter quarters in the Chancellerie. Mice abound there, too, but he fights against them by the device of having his iron bedstead in the middle of the room, and he does not so much mind their playing on the floor under him.

—The new Chinese coin is the fiftieth part of a cent in value, and five pounds are equal to a nickel.

—An average of 110,000 letters is daily received at the Boston postoffice. A year ago the average was 91,000 letters a day.

Fourth Month Dance.

The curious custom of joking on the first of April, sending the ignorant or unwary on fruitless errands, for the sake of making them feel foolish and having a laugh at them, prevails very widely in this world. And whether you call the victim a "Fourth month dunce," an "April fool," an "April fish" (as in France), or an "April gowk" (as in Scotland), the object, to deceive him and laugh at him, is everywhere the same.

The custom has been traced back for ages; all through Europe, as far back as the records go. "The Feast of Fools" is mentioned as celebrated by the ancient Romans. In Asia the Hindus have a festival, ending on the 31st of March, called the "Huli festival," in which they play the same sort of first of April pranks,—translated into Hindoo,—laughing at the victim, and making him a "Huli fool." It goes back even to Persia, where it is supposed to have a beginning, in very ancient times, in the celebration of spring when their New Year begins.

How it came to be what we everywhere find it, the wise men cannot agree. The many authorities are so divided, that I see no way but for us to accept the custom as we find it, wherever we may happen to be, and be careful not to abuse it.

Some jokes are peculiar to particular places. In England, where it is called All Fools' Day, one favorite joke is to send the greenhorn to a bookseller to buy the "Life and Adventures of Eve's grandmother," or to a cobbler to buy a few cents worth of "strap oil,"—strap oil being, in the language of the shoe-making brotherhood, a personal application of the leather. The victim usually gets a good whipping with a strap.

There was a old superstition in England that prays to the Virgin at eight o'clock on All Fools' Day would be of wonderful efficacy, and it is seriously mentioned by grave writers of old days. In Scotland the first of April fun is called "hunting the gowk," and consists most often in sending a person to another a long way off, with a note which says, "Hunt the gowk another mile." The recipient of the note gives him a new missive to still another, containing the same words; and so the sport goes on, till the victim remembers the day of the month, and sits down to rest and think about it.

In France, where the custom is very ancient, the jokes are much the same; but the victim is called an "April fish," because he is easily caught. In one part of France there is a custom of eating a certain kind of peas which grow there, called *pois chiches*. The joke there is to send the peasants to a certain convent to ask for these peas, telling them that the fathers are obliged to give some to every one who comes on that day. The joke is as much on the monks as on the peasants, for there is often a perfect rush of applicants all day.

A more disagreeable custom prevails in Lisbon on the first of April, when the great object is to pour water on the passers-by, or, failing in that, to throw powder in their faces. If both can be done, the joker is happy.

I need not tell you the American styles of joking: nailing a piece of silver to the side-walk; tying a string to a purse, and jerking it away from greedy fingers; leaving tempting-looking packages, filled with sand, on door steps; frying doughnuts with an interlarding of wool; putting salt in the sugar bowl, etc. You know too much already.

But this custom, with others, common in coarser and rougher times, is fast dying out. Even now it is left almost entirely to playful children and the uneducated classes. This sentiment, quoted from an English almanac, of a hundred years ago, will I'm sure, meet the approval of "grown-ups" of the nineteenth century:

"But 't is a thing to be disputed,
Which is the greatest fool reputed,
The one who innocently went,
Or he that him designedly sent."
—St. Nicholas.

Books.

Books are not made for furniture, but there is nothing else that so beautifully furnishes a house. The plainest row of books is more significant of refinement than the most elaborately carved sideboard. Give us a home furnished with books rather than furniture—both if you can, but books at any rate. To spend several days at a friend's house, and hunger for something to read, while you are treading on costly carpets, and sitting on luxurious chairs and sleeping upon down, as if one were bribing your body for the sake of cheating your mind. Books are windows through which the soul looks out. A house without them is like a room without windows. No man has a right to bring up his children without surrounding them with books, if he has the means to buy them. It is a wrong to his family. Children learn through being in the presence of books. The love of knowledge comes with reading, and grows upon it; and the love of knowledge in a young mind is almost warrant against the inferior excitements of passion and vice.

NEWS IN BRIEF.

—Boston is striving to get the bulk of the beef-shipping business to England in her own hands.

—A chair of homoeopathy is to be established in the Iowa State University during the summer.

—Prof. Seelye, the scholar in politics, has given his salary to the town of Amherst, the money to be expended in sidewalks.

—It is claimed that \$30,000 worth of hogs have died during the past year of cholera in a circle of five miles around Homer, Ill.

—It is said that there are more Baptist churches and members in Philadelphia than in any other city in the world, save London.

—The Graphic is the only paper in this country which can illustrate a boat race 6,000 miles away on the same day of its happening.

—The Pennsylvania railroad company is having 126 refrigerator cars constructed for the carrying of meat from Texas to New York.

—The boats of the Royal National Life Boat Institution, of England, last year saved 515 lives, besides assisting numerous vessels in distress.

—Judge Peleg Sprague of Boston is the oldest ex-United States senator now living. He was a member of the Maine Legislature fifty-six years ago.

—The manufacture of silk in the United States increased from two million dollars worth in 1860, to twenty-five million dollars worth in 1876.

—The Permanent Exhibition at Philadelphia is an assured success. Every foot of space has been applied for, and half as much again could have been disposed of.

—The Russian czar, during the 22 years of his reign, has not indorsed a single capital sentence, although there were 222 such in the period from 1855 to 1860 alone.

—The colored people of Raleigh, N. C., have called a convention on the first Monday of May to devise some plan for bettering their condition by colonization or otherwise.

—A private polar expedition will leave New York in the early summer, ostensibly for trading purposes, but in reality to search for records of the Franklin expedition.

—The male members of the Swedish colony in Aroostook county, Me., were all naturalized several days ago. The colony now numbers about 600 persons, and is said to be flourishing.

—Capt. Eben Pierce and Reimar Eggers, both of New Bedford, Mass., have jointly invented a breech-loading whaling gun, which will throw a lance 750 feet with destructive effect.

—Off the coast of Virginia, about five miles from the mainland, is an island upon which roam numbers of ponies as wild as the mustang. How or when they settled there is not known.

—The city council of Danville, Ill., prohibited the boys from running velocipedes upon the sidewalks. The boys in a spirit of retaliation petitioned the council to prohibit the wheeling of baby wagons.

—One of the rarest books printed in the nineteenth century is the first edition of the "Book of Mormon," published at Palmyra, N. Y., in 1830. Lord Macaulay tried in vain for years to procure a copy of it.

—Hannibal Hamlin, since Simon Cameron's retirement, is the oldest senator, reckoning from the time he entered that body, but his services has not been continuous. Senator Anthony is the oldest senator in continuous service.

—The Baroness Mayer de Rothschild lately died on board her yacht at Nice. She had been sailing about the Mediterranean all winter in the hope of benefiting her health. Her only child, Mile. Hannah de Rothschild, inherits the estate.

—Joseph Bonaparte, King of Spain, once possessed a ponderous set of military maps of France and Belgium, and these have just been presented to the University of California, by Mr. Mallard, of San Rafael. One of the maps is perforated by a bullet.

—Mrs. Frost Thorne, the widow of the gentleman who was drowned in the Mohawk disaster last summer, intends to return to the stage. She is a daughter of E. L. Davenport, and will take back her maiden name of Lily Vining Davenport when she resumes her old profession.

—Judge S. C. Hastings, of San Francisco, has offered to deposit \$100,000 with the Treasurer of California, on condition that the State shall promise to pay 7 per centum a year forever to the University of California, the amount thus received to be divided into two parts, one of \$4,000 and the other of \$3,000, the former to be used at first to purchase books for a law library, and the latter for a professor's salary.

—The Central Pacific Railroad Company has lately arranged to have 40,000 *Eucalyptus Globulus* trees set out along the 500 miles of the right of way of the company. This is only the first instalment, as it will require about 800,000 of the trees for the 500 miles of valley where they are to be cultivated. The immediate object of the plan is to increase the humidity of the region, and lessen the liability to droughts.

—The Modoc Indians, now numbering fifty-four males and sixty-three females, are located on a very fertile tract containing 4,000 acres, in the northeast corner of the Shawnee reserve, Indian Territory. They have engaged energetically in labor during the past year, and as a result, have a large and valuable crop on their farm. The Government has expended \$1,883 for their schooling for ten months, which is under the supervision of the Society of Friends.