

Hollow Ash Hall

BY MARGARET BLOUNT.

CHAPTER XV.—(Continued.)

"What? Are the village tales really true, then?" asked his nephew, with a look of the greatest interest.

"What did they tell you?"

"That you were in a haunted house—with not one or two, but a perfect legion of ghosts around you!"

Mr. Cowley groaned.

"They are in the right. I have been introduced to four since my arrival; and if you had not come tonight, I should have struck my tent and run away in sheer terror and desperation."

"Four ghosts! You must be joking, uncle. You never used to believe in such things, you know!"

"Ah, but I do now! It is no joke, I can assure you, to see three such horrors as I have seen. And there is a beast of a cradle that will go on rocking in the butler's pantry. You can't see it, but you hear it directly under your feet."

"Ah! the girls were telling me something of that. But I confess I thought it was only some of their nonsense."

"I wish it was! However, now that you have come, I don't care so much for anything of the kind as I did before. You'll see me through it, won't you, my boy?"

"Through what?"

"Why, I'll dig the old place up by the roots but what I'll come to the bottom of that cradle business. I fancy that all the other disturbances arise from that."

"And I am very willing to help you."

"I knew you would be. And now just look around this chamber, Charles."

"Well, it is a very pretty room."

"We must sound these walls and take up this floor. There's something wrong here, too."

"Indeed?"

"Why, I was sitting over my cigar the other night, as innocent as a lamb, when the door opened, and a great hulking nigger came in, leading a bleeding nun by the hand—You young villain, what are you laughing at?"

"My dear uncle, it is too absurd to think of such things happening in this matter-of-fact century!"

"Why, you puppy! do you mean to say I am inventing the story?"

"Oh, no; but you might have fallen asleep—"

"A likely thing for me to do! I tell you I saw them as plainly as I see you now. And the nun's hands were tied; and, by George! they came so close to me that I could have touched them if I liked."

"Why didn't you?"

"Well, if you must know, they tried to touch me, and I bolted."

Charles nodded his head and showed his teeth.

"The wisest thing you could possibly do, under the circumstances."

"I see you don't half believe the story. But I swear I was not asleep. And that was not the end of it—for last night I saw another!"

"Ghost?"

"Yes, sir; and in this very room."

His nephew looked incredulous.

"In this room, sir—a woman dressed in red, with a black mask. And she held a confounded lock of hair in her hand that I had seen before; and her face—You are laughing again, you unfeeling wretch! I'll say no more. I'll give no orders to have your room changed! You shall sleep here to-night; and I hope with all my heart she will appear to you, and make you sing out of the other side of your mouth. Laughing, indeed, at such a story! I am quite ashamed of you!"

And the worthy gentleman trotted indignantly back to the drawing-room, and never spoke to his nephew again that evening—not even when he took his candle and bade them good-night.

CHAPTER XVI.

A day or two passed before Mr. Cowley and his nephew could put their valiant project into execution. Meanwhile the ladies found the house exceedingly dull. The two gentlemen were always closeted together. The weather was inclement; the box of books from Mudge's failed to come; and, to crown the whole, Christmas was fast approaching, and they knew well that they ought to be in town.

On the evening of the second day they were sitting together after tea, in Marjorie's little turret-room. Mr. Cowley and Charles were in the parlor, hatching some plot against the ghosts together, and Mrs. Cowley gave a tremendous yawn.

"So dull!" she exclaimed. "Rose, child, do read something."

"Very well, mamma; here is the new book papa brought the other night," and the girl's eyes twinkled mischievously as she began:

THE DOCTOR'S STORY.

On my eighteenth birthday I commenced the study of medicine, and, with a proud heart, placed my name upon the books of—College. I had heard much of the vagaries and madcap escapades of medical students, but, to my surprise, I found myself among a quiet and intelligent set of young men, who seemed much more intent upon mastering the mysteries of the divine art of healing than upon wrenching off knockers, and who seemed more inclined to mend bones than to break them. As I was studiously disposed also we got on well together.

It was on the first day of our studies that we had an original character

imaginative kind. Dr. Lee listened as we talked, smoked his pipe, but said nothing.

We heard no more from that day of the vision that haunted him. His fits of silence and gloom grew less frequent; he mingled more with the students, and seemed in a measure to lose his dread of the deathly objects by which he was surrounded.

One day, at the college, on my way to the dissecting-room, I opened the door of the great hall and looked in. It was empty and silent. The rows of circular benches were deserted, but a stray glove lay upon one of them; a faint and sickening smell of chloroform pervaded the place; and the foot of the suspended skeleton, whose grinning face was turned toward me, dangled to and fro, as if he were kicking it for his own amusement. I shut the door, and left him to the solitude over which he seemed to chuckle.

The air of the dissecting-room was never pure, but on that day it was peculiarly fetid and nauseating. The mingled odor of burnt flesh and muscles, stagnant blood, and a certain indescribable dead smell, such as any one may notice on entering a room that contains a corpse, greeted me as I went in.

Upon the table lay a headless body, the corpse of a man in the prime of life. I looked at it carelessly, wondering why the head had been removed. Suddenly I saw something that made my blood run cold.

The right hand was clenched closely. Upon the little finger was a heavy signet ring, and the strong pressure had caused the stone to cut deep into the palm beneath. It was a little thing, but it brought the murdered man before my eyes as plainly as if he had been lying there instead of that unknown corpse.

Hurrying from the room, I met a classmate on the stairs. He looked pale and excited.

"Have you seen it?" he asked eagerly.

"What?"

"The body?"

"Yes."

"And the head?"

"No."

"It is the most singular thing—perfectly unaccountable. It gave me quite a shock, in fact."

"But why?"

"My dear fellow, it is the very feature for feature, of the man whose story Lee told us; and the professor, fearing some bad, if not fatal consequences from this strange resemblance, removed the head. It is lucky Lee did not see it."

"Lucky, indeed! I will keep him away today," I replied.

I hurried to his rooms. Much to my relief he was there, smoking and reading. I pretended a severe headache, and asked him to accompany me on a long ramble in the country. He consented, and we spent a long, happy day among the green fields and lanes.

(To be continued.)

AIR SHIP IS PROMISING.

Flying Machine Test in England Satisfactory to Inventors.

Mechanics have not yet despaired of constructing a ship that will navigate the air, but are constantly at work developing new ideas or improving upon old ones. A new type of such craft has been tried with some success at the Crystal Palace, London, the design being the invention of Auguste Gaudron and Cecil Barth. The contrivance is rather an air ship than a flying machine proper, from the fact that it depends for its support upon a cigar-shaped balloon seventeen feet in length by three feet in diameter, holding about 100 cubic feet of hydrogen. The ideal flying machine, of course, is to support itself by mechanical power apart from any balloon. Beneath the balloon in question are fixed platforms, certain of these containing a motor and fan to supply the propulsive power, the center platform being reversed for the aeronaut who there controls the steering gear. During the trial the machine behaved very satisfactorily, ascending and descending at any given angle and answering readily to the rudder. On a windless day the inventors hope to attain a speed of thirty miles an hour and have in contemplation a machine to accommodate five people. The balloon of such an apparatus would have to be 100 feet long and thirty feet in diameter, and would require four motors, each of ten horse power. The balloon would be made for safety's sake in compartments and would require 120,000 cubic feet of hydrogen to inflate it.—Chicago Chronicle.

Keep Your Children Busy.

Keep your children busy if you would have them happy. When the occupation is some daily labor which has been wisely allotted, see that it is accomplished as well as it is possible for the child to accomplish it under existing circumstances. But whether it be in work or play, let him understand that no matter how well he may have done today—and do not be chary of your praise—he has within himself that which will make it possible for him to do still better tomorrow. This treatment, instead of discouraging, will encourage, by inciting the child toward even better work, and will early implant that spirit of divine discontent which allows of no absolute satisfaction in that which has been accomplished until the achievement reaches perfection. This is the discontent which Emerson preaches and which is holy if doubt is not allowed to creep in to mar the aspiration.—Woman's Home Companion.

In days of old when a maiden wanted to make a match she set her knig cap.

Judge Blackenham's Heroic Moment

BY JAMES NOBL JOHNSON.

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I have been spending a bit of the torrid season with my friend Judge Thomas Marshall Blackenham of Tygart Creek, Kentucky.

After dinner to-day the Judge led the way to the broad veranda. The Judge ponderously seated himself in a shrieking rustic rocking-chair, threw his fat right leg across the left, pushed backward and rested a chunky fist (that held the handle of a palm leaf) on the center of his protuberant girth.

Soon through the heated silence came the imperious voice of Mrs. Blackenham:

"Do all that over again, my lady! I saw you souse a plate in the water, turn it over a time or two, give it a slap and a swipe with the drying rag and dismiss it. Do it all over again."

"That's tough on Little, hot as it is, but there is no help for it," spoke the Judge in smiling sympathy; "her mother would never abate one jot or tittle of her stringent housewifery exactions."

"What a wonderfully lucky man you are, Judge," I said, with the frank freedom of intimacy. "In your wife the beautiful and practical have met in harmonious union. How could you, with your careless habits, ever win a woman of such punctilious preciseness?"

The Judge rolled his sunset face over toward me. He affected indignation.

"What do you mean, suh? While probably I am no prize beauty now, I was the Lochinvar of this state. I was the glass of gallantry, the beau ideal, the tossing blossom of Kentucky chivalry, suh! 'Twas her was a lucky woman, suh; yes, suh, though at one time, suh, she didn't have the propah appreciation of it, probably."

"She was the reverse of practical, too, when she was young, suh. She had gone to school at Lexington a few terms, and when she returned her little brown head fairly swarmed with romantic ideas. A dishrag in her white hands then would have seemed defilement. Though rich in all the alluring graces of manner and physical attributes of perfect femininity, she seemed to possess no inclination for the sterner sex. We young fellows in the community who aspired to hold her on a level with hers were greatly nonplused at her frigid bearing. I couldn't believe she was a born man-hater. Her glowing lips, her pink-mantled cheeks, her sparkling blue eyes, her form filling all the rules of perfect symmetry, her step light as if she trod an unpalpable substance, all conspired to resent such a charge. But she gave scant attention to us, I tell you."

"Tom Baker bought a span of fine bay horses and a buggy to match. Every day he would dash by her house, his grand steeds smiting the hard road with rapid, ringing hoofs, his buggy wheels richly humming, the black top catching and throwing sunlight at every motion. 'Twas all vanity and vexation. She scarcely gave his showy equipage a glance, or if she did deign a look it was to wonder why a young man of his lean means should incur so much expense to advertise himself a fool. He soon sold his rig at half price and left for Frankfort, where he is now a popular saloonkeeper."

"Milt Turner bought a suit of clothes on a credit—worth seventy-five dollars. The next Sunday when he thought she was badly in need of his company, he told her he was all the company she required. He is now a restaurant keeper in Chicago."

"John De Laney, knowing her to be a church member, thought the short cut to her heart was the ministerial path. Accordingly he went to Cincinnati, and for six months gorged his mind on theology. He returned with a smooth face, an affectedly meek, but withal, superior clerical smile, a long-tailed black coat and a nicely gotten up parson voice. He made an appointment to preach, but lo! though the house was jammed by a curious throng, the only one he would have

on my shoulders. I was analyzing the situation—drawing intelligent deductions from the failures of others. I made noiseless, but exhaustive inquiries into the habits and secret tastes of this anomalous beauty. I finally learned she was an unquenchable reader of heroic literature. I went to town and secretly learned from the woman who kept the book store, the titles of all those high-spiced novels that constituted her daily mental and emotional feed, and I bought them. Day and night I would lie on my couch and read novels. Dark, handsome chaps rushed through the pages, scattering heroic deeds at every turn and corner.

"I now had the key that I was sure would unlock the door of her indifference."

"There, now!" she exclaimed, knitting her brow. "No more romance for me!"

"I had a cousin living in Kansas City, and thither I went on a two months' visit."

"While there I contrived, on paper, to become a hero of the first water. I went to a job printer with a piece of newspaper, blank on one side."

"I next day mailed a clipping to the local paper of my home county. I didn't forget to inclose a crisp ten dollar bill, and a request that the editor should publish the clipping and say nothing about how he had come by it. Heroes must be modest, you know. He was a personal friend of mine, and I knew I could trust him. Well, the next issue of the East Kentucky Deadshot had the following article, topped with fireworks headlines:

DARING DEED

Of That Gallant Knight of Modern Chivalry,

THOS. MARSHALL BLACKENHAM.

A Lewis County Youth Becomes the Hero of the Hour in Kansas City, Mo.

[From the Kansas City Journal.]

Kentucky, the home of modern chivalry, has another gem to wear in her brilliant crown of glory and honor in the person of Thos. Marshall Blackenham of Lewis County.

Last evening while Mrs. Ella Edwards, a wealthy and beautiful young widow of Southwestern street, was going home from a call she was set upon by three masked robbers. At the place where the miscreants came upon her there is a long distance between the street lamps, and is most favorable locality for the perpetration of villainous deeds. Mrs. Edwards was within a block of her home and never anticipated any foul play, as she was used to traversing that part of the street in the early evening. All at once, when about midway between the lamps, the three men sprang out and seized her. One threw a cloak over her head, but not before she had uttered a piercing scream. Instantly, as if he had risen from the earth, the bold Kentuckian sprang like a lion among them. Right and left he laid with his Herculean fists. There was a terrible struggle as the three footpads were powerful men. Endurance and resistance were joined in a manly fight. The third man came to a sudden halt with a bullet in his left leg. The noise of the shot brought policemen to the spot. All three of the assailants were arrested. One of them is "Cribber" Darnley, a veteran footpad, who has served several terms, and is regarded as a dangerous man to tackle. Another of the beautiful trio is "Cross-eyed" Irons, wanted badly in New York and Philadelphia for safe cracking. He has murdered several officers who have attempted to arrest him.

The third is "Bully" Adams, who last year cleared out an entire sheriff's posse by capturing him, and escaping with his consciousness. Her pocketbook, containing three hundred dollars, her gold watch and diamond necklace were jotted from the hands of the robbers when Col. Blackenham, like a hero, is an exceedingly modest man, and acts as if he were not aware he had done anything out of the ordinary. In the meantime, his deed is the theme of universal praise. Col. Blackenham refused to accept the gold watch, the grateful lady, however, begged him to take it, but later on—who knows? The old story, possibly.

"Well, suh, I staid away long enough to let that story sink into the heart of the beautiful Flossie, and prepare for me a haven of welcome and favor."

"When I returned I demeaned myself as becomes a modest hero, unassuming, but with a quiet dignity that bespeaks the importance of the man on whom it sits."

"When I met Flossie at church there was no ice on her, no suh. She bowed to me, smiled, trembled a little while her eyes emitted sparks that flew upward from a very warm heart. She took a proffered arm and leaned on it with that air of delicious dependence so grateful to the heart of the true hero."

"After we had been married about two weeks I told her about my ruse. She gazed at me a long time, her expression a compound of mirth, astonishment and mock contempt."

"Finally, she made a motion as if throwing something away."

"There, now!" she exclaimed, knitting her brow. "No more romance reading for me. As for you, Mr. Blackenham, I want you to study law



Your genius must have scope for me, to the science of plain, practical housekeeping, I hereby dedicate my days."

CERTAINLY DESERVED THE CHECK.

College Provost Catches Philadelphia Broker in His Own Trap.

The University of Pennsylvania has not a large endowment, and that it finds the means to pay its current expenses and put up new buildings is due in great measure to its provost, Charles C. Harrison. His little black subscription book is well known in many a down-town office—too well known, a prominent broker told him not long ago. Mr. Harrison was pleading persistently with him for a subscription, but in vain. Finally the broker said:

"See here, Mr. Harrison, I will give you something on one condition."

"Very well, Mr. T—," said the provost, "name it."

"The condition is that you promise never come into my office again until I ask you to do so."

"Certainly, Mr. T—, I agree to that," said the provost promptly, and walked out smiling with a check for \$1,000.

A month or so later the broker heard a knock at his door. "Come in," he called, and in walked Mr. Harrison. He had his black book under his arm.

"Good morning, Mr. T—," he said; "I want you to help me with a little university matter I am—"

"Look here, Mr. Harrison," the broker continued, "when I gave that last thousand dollars wasn't it on the express condition that you wouldn't come into my office again until I invited you?"

"Why, yes," returned the provost, "I believe that was the understanding. But didn't you say 'Come in' just now when I knocked?"

"They say the check this time was for five thousand.—Philadelphia Times.

WAS NOT WORKING WITHOUT PAY.

How One Boy Declined to Blow Glass and Make a Bottle.

Thinking to please the visitors who come to look round his works, a certain glass manufacturer allows them all to try their skill at bottle-making, an experiment which the majority of them are very eager to undertake. It is only necessary to blow through a specially prepared pipe, and a bottle or glass in its smooth state can be produced by a mere child.

Some hundreds of school board boys were in the works the other day, and only one youngster refused to put his mouth to the blow-pipe. He stood there with his hands in his pockets, watching the others with a comical air of contempt.

"It's a rare fine dodge," he remarked to his bosom companion, as they left the works together, "but the old rascal didn't take me in by it."

"Why didn't you have a go at the pipe?" queried the other, in astonishment.

"I wasn't such a fool," was the scornful rejoinder. "Don't you see his little game? You chaps have been cracking your cheeks and wasting your breath all the afternoon, and you've blown as many bottles as a man can turn out in a week. Talk about saving labor! Why, he'll make his fortune in a year if he goes on like this."

Put Up a good "Bluff."

The Rev. Alexander Allison, Jr., pastor of the Southwestern Presbyterian church, in a recent sermon on the subject of "Lying," illustrated his text with numerous stories, and one of these showed how, even in church, a man's false pride sometimes leads him to prevarication. A young man took his best girl to church and, when the time for "collection" came round, rather ostentatiously displayed a \$5 gold piece. Presuming upon the engagement to marry that had been made by her, the young lady placed a restraining hand upon the arm of her fiance. "Why, don't be so extravagant, George," she exclaimed.

"Oh, that's nothing, I always give \$5 when I go to a strange church."

Just then the deacon came with the plate, and George dropped a coin. Everything seemed favorable, and the young man beamed with a sense of generosity. Then the minister made the announcements for the week, and concluded with the wholly unexpected announcement of the day's collection.

"The collection to-day," said he, "was \$3.75."

George hadn't much to say all the way to his fiancee's home.

Immense Sarcophagus.

The most remarkable specimen of Punic art which has ever come to light was discovered recently at Carthage by P. Delattre, a well-known archaeologist, which is fashioned of white marble and beautifully ornamented with engravings. That it served at one time as the tomb of some Carthaginian ruler all obtainable evidence tends to show.

M. Heron de Villefosse gave a graphic account of this discovery at the last meeting of the French Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres and maintained that it was by far the most notable specimen of ancient Carthaginian art which has yet been found.

It was while excavating in the Punic necropolis near the hill of Saint Monica that P. Delattre came across this royal tomb. As to its future destination various rumors are afloat, but it is most likely that it will be removed to some French museum.

