

That Seaforth's nervous system was powerfully acted upon on this occasion I can well believe. The circumstance brings to my recollection a fearful adventure — or what might perhaps have proved one — of my own in early life while grinding Gerunds at Canterbury. A sharp touch of the gout, and the reputed sanatory qualities of a certain spring in St. Peter's Street, then in much repute, had induced my Uncle to take up a temporary abode within the Cathedral "Precinct." It was on one of those temporary visits which I was sometimes permitted to pay on half-holidays, that, in self defence, I had to recount the following true narrative. I may add, that this tradition is not yet worn out: a small maimed figure of a female in a sitting position, and holding something like a frying pan in her hand, may still be seen on the covered passage which crosses the Brick Walk, and adjoins the house belonging to the sixth prebendal stall. — There are those, whom I know, who would, even yet, hesitate at threading the Dark Entry on a Friday — "not", *of course*, "that they believe one word about"

NELL COOK! A LEGEND OF THE "DARK ENTRY": THE KING'S SCHOLAR'S STORY.

"From the 'Brick Walk' branches off to the right a long narrow vaulted passage, paved with flagstones, vulgarly known by the name of the 'Dark Entry.' Its eastern extremity communicates with the cloisters, crypt, and, by a private stair-case, with the interior of the Cathedral. On the west it opens into the 'Green-court,' forming a communication between it and the portion of the 'Precinct' called the 'Oaks.'" — *A Walk round Canterbury, etc.*

Scene — A back parlour in Mr. John Ingoldsby's house in the Precinct. — A blazing fire. — Mine Uncle is seated in a high-backed easy-chair, twirling his thumbs, and contemplating his list shoe. — Little Tom, the "King's Scholar," on a stool opposite. — Mrs. John Ingoldsby at the table, busily employed in manufacturing a cabbage-rose (cauliflower?) in many-coloured worsteds. — Mine Uncle's meditations are interrupted by the French clock on the mantelpiece. — He prologizeth with vivacity.

"Hark! listen, Mrs. Ingoldsby,—the clock is striking nine!
Give Master Tom another cake, and half a glass of wine,
And ring the bell for Jenny Smith, and bid her bring his coat,
And a warm bandana handkerchief to tie about his throat.

"And bid them go the nearest way, for Mr. Birch has said
That nine o'clock's the hour he'll have his boarders all in bed;
And well we know when little boys their coming home delay,
They often seem to walk and sit uneasily next day!"

"— Nay, nay, dear Uncle Ingoldsby, now send me not, I pray,
Back by that Entry dark, for that you know's the nearest way;
I dread that Entry dark with Jane alone at such an hour,

It fears me quite — it's Friday night! — and then Nell Cook hath pow'r!"

"And, who's Nell Cook, thou silly child?—and what's Nell Cook to thee? That thou shouldst dread at night to tread with Jane that dark entrée?" — "Nay, list and hear, mine Uncle dear! such fearsome things they tell Of Nelly Cook, that few may brook at night to meet with Nell!"

"It was in bluff King Harry's day's, — and Monks and Friars were then, You know, dear Uncle Ingoldsby, a sort of Clergymen. They'd coarse stuff gowns, and shaven crowns, — no shirts, — and no cravats; And a cord was placed about their waist — they had no shovel hats!

"It was in bluff King Harry's days, while yet he went to shrift, And long before he stamped and swore, and cut the Pope adrift; There lived a portly Canon then, a sage and learned clerk; He had, I trow, a goodly house, fast by that Entry dark!

"The Canon was a portly man — of Latin and of Greek, And learned lore, he had good store, — yet health was on his cheek. The Priory fare was scant and spare, the bread was made of rye, The beer was weak, yet he was sleek—he had a merry eye.

"For though within the Priory the fare was scant and thin, The Canon's house it stood without; — he kept good cheer within; Unto the best he prest each guest with free and jovial look, And Ellen Bean ruled his *cuisine*. — He called her 'Nelly Cook!'

"For soups, and stews, and choice *ragouts*, Nell Cook was famous still; She'd make them even of old shoes, she had such wond'rous skill: Her manchets fine were quite divine, her cakes were nicely brown'd, Her boil'd and roast, they were the boast of all the 'Precinct' round;

"And Nelly was a comely lass, but calm and staid her air, And earthward bent her modest look — yet she was passing fair; And though her gown was russet brown, their heads grave people shook: — They all agreed no Clerk had need of such a pretty Cook.

"One day — 'twas on a Whitsun-Eve — there come a coach and four; — It pass'd the 'Green-Court' gate, and stopp'd before the Canon's door; The travel-stain on wheel and rein bespoke a weary way, — Each panting steed relax'd its speed — out stept a Lady gay.

"Now, welcome! welcome! dearest Niece,' — the Canon then did cry, And to his breast the Lady prest — he had a merry eye, — 'Now, welcome! welcome! dearest Niece! in sooth thou'rt welcome here, 'Tis many a day since we have met—how fares my Brother dear?' —

" 'Now, thanks, my loving Uncle,' that Lady gay replied;

‘Gramercy for thy benison!’ — then ‘Out, alas!’ she sighed;
‘My father dear he is not near; he seeks the Spanish Main;
He prays thee give me shelter here till he return again!’ —

“ ‘Now, welcome! welcome! dearest Niece; come lay thy mantle by!’
The Canon kissed her ruby lip — he had a merry eye, —
But Nelly Cook askew did look, — it came into her mind
They were a little less than ‘kin,’ and rather more than ‘kind.’

* * * * *

“Three weeks are gone and over—full three weeks and a day,
Yet still within the Canon’s house doth dwell that Lady gay;
On capons fine they daily dine, rich cates and sauces rare,
And they quaff good store of Bourdeaux wine, — so dainty is their fare.

“And fine upon the virginals is that gay Lady’s touch,
And sweet her voice unto the lute, you’ll scarce hear any such;
But is it ‘*O Sanctissima!*’ she sings in dulcet tone?
Or ‘*Angels ever bright and fair?*’ — Ah, no! — it’s ‘*Bobbing Joan!*’

* * * * *

“The Canon’s house is lofty, and spacious to the view;
The Canon’s cell is ordered well — yet Nelly looks askew;
The Lady’s bower is in the tower, — yet Nelly shakes her head —
She hides the poker and the tongs in that gay Lady’s bed?

* * * * *

“Six weeks were gone and over — full six weeks and a day,
Yet in that bed the poker and the tongs unheeded lay!
From which, I fear, it’s pretty clear that Lady rest had none;
Or, if she slept in any bed — it was not in her own.

“But where that Lady pass’d her nights, I may not well divine,
Perhaps in pious oraisons at good St Thomas’ Shrine,
And for her father far away breathed tender vows and true —
It may be so — I cannot say — but Nelly look’d askew.

“And still at night, by fair moonlight, when all were lock’d in sleep,
She’d listen at the Canon’s door, — she’d through the keyhole peep —
I know not what she heard or saw, but fury filled her eye —
— She bought some nasty Doctor’s-stuff, and she put it in a pie!

* * * * *

“It was a glorious summer’s-eve — with beams of rosy red
The Sun went down — all Nature smiled — but Nelly shook her head!

Full softly to the balmy breeze rang out the Vesper bell —
— Upon the Canon's startled ear it sounded like a knell!

“ Now here's to thee, mine Uncle! a health I drink to thee!
Now pledge me back in Sherris sack, or a cup of Malvoisie! —
The Canon sigh'd — but rousing, cried, 'I answer to thy call,
And a Warden-pie's a dainty dish to mortify withal!'

“ 'Tis early dawn — the matin chime rings out for morning pray'r —
And Prior and Friar is in his stall — the Canon is not there!
Nor in the small Refect'ry hall, nor cloister'd walk is he—
All wonder — and the Sacristan says, 'Lauk-a-daisey-me!'

“They've searched the aisles and Baptistry — they've search'd above —
around —

The 'Sermon House' — the 'Audit Room' — the Canon is not found.
They only find that pretty Cook concocting a *ragout*,
They ask her where her master is — but Nelly looks askew!

“They call for crow-bars — 'jemmies' is the modern name they bear —
They burst through lock, and bolt, and bar — but what a sight is there!—
The Canon's head lies on the bed — his Niece lies on the floor!
— They are as dead as any nail that is in any door!

“The livid spot is on his breast, the spot is on his back!
His portly form, no longer warm with life, is swoln and black! —
The livid spot is on her cheek, — it's on her neck of snow,
And the Prior sighs, and sadly cries, 'Well! — here's a pretty Go!'

* * * * *

“All at the silent hour of night a bell is heard to toll,
A knell is rung, a *requiem's* sung as for a sinful soul,
And there's a grave within the Nave, it's dark, and deep, and wide,
And they bury there a Lady fair, and a Canon by her side!

“An Uncle — so 'tis whisper'd now throughout the sacred fane, —
And a Niece — whose father's far away upon the Spanish Main —
The Sacristan, he says no word that indicates a doubt,
But he puts his thumb unto his nose, and he spreads his fingers out!

“And where doth tarry Nelly Cook, that staid and comely lass?
Ay, where? — for ne'er from forth that door was Nelly known to pass.
Her coif, and gown of russet brown were lost unto the view,
And if you mention'd Nelly's name — the Monks all looked askew!

* * * * *

“There is a heavy paving-stone fast by the Canon's door,

Of granite grey, and it may weigh some half a ton or more,
And it is laid deep in the shade within that Entry dark,
Where sun or moonbeam never play'd, or e'en one starry spark.

“That heavy granite stone was moved that night, 'twas darkly said,
And the mortar round its sides next morn seem'd fresh and newly laid;
But what within the narrow vault beneath that stone doth lie,
Or if that there be vault, or no — I cannot tell — not I!

“But I've been told that moan and groan, and fearful wail and shriek
Came from beneath that paving-stone for nearly half a week —
For three long days and three long nights came forth those sounds of fear;
Then all was o'er — they never more fell on the listening ear.

* * * * *

“A hundred years were gone and past since last Nell Cook was seen,
When, worn by use that stone got loose, and they went and told the Dean. —
— Says the Dean, says he, 'My Masons three! now haste and fix it tight;'
And the Masons three peep'd down to see, and they saw a fearsome sight.

“Beneath that heavy paving-stone a shocking hole they found —
It was not more than twelve feet deep, and barely twelve feet round;
— A fleshless, sapless skeleton lay in that horrid well!
But who the deuce 'twas put it there those Masons could not tell.

“And near this fleshless skeleton a pitcher small did lie,
And a mouldy piece of 'kissing crust,' as from a warden-pie!
And Doctor Jones declared the bones were female bones and, 'Zooks!
I should not be surprised,' said he, 'if these were Nelly Cook's!'

“It was in good Dean Bargrave's days, if I remember right,
Those fleshless bones beneath the stones these Masons brought to light;
And you may well in the 'Dean's Chapelle' Dean Bargrave's portrait view,
'Who died one night,' says old Tom Wright, 'in sixteen forty-two!'

“And so two hundred years have passed since that these Masons three,
With curious looks, did set Nell Cook's unquiet spirit free;
That granite stone had kept her down till then — so some suppose, —
— Some spread their fingers out, and put their thumb unto their nose.

“But one thing's clear — that all the year on every Friday night,
Throughout that Entry dark doth roam Nell Cook's unquiet Sprite:
On Friday was that Warden-pie all by that Canon tried;
On Friday died he, and that tidy Lady by his side!

“And though two hundred years have flown, Nell Cook doth still pursue
Her weary walk, and they who cross her path the deed may rue;
Her fatal breath is fell as death! the Simoom's blast is not

More dire — (a wind in Africa that blows uncommon hot).



“But all unlike the Simoom’s blast, her breath is deadly cold,
Delivering quivering, shivering shocks unto both young and old,
And whoso in that Entry dark doth feel that fatal breath,
He ever dies within the year some dire, untimely death!

“No matter who — no matter what condition, age, or sex,
But some ‘get shot,’ and some ‘get drown’d,’ and some ‘get’ broken necks;
Some ‘get run over’ by a coach; — and one beyond the seas
‘Got’ scraped to death with oyster-shells among the Caribbees!

“Those Masons three, who set her free, fell first! — it is averred
That two were hang’d on Tyburn tree for murdering of the third:
Charles Storey†, too, his friend who slew, had ne’er, if truth they tell,
Been gibbeted on Chartham Downs, had they not met with Nell!

“Then send me not, mine Uncle dear, oh! send me not, I pray,
Back through that Entry dark to-night, but round some other way!
I will not be a truant boy, but good, and mind my book,
For Heaven forfend that ever I foregather with Nell Cook!”

* * * * *

† In or about the year 1780, a worthy of this name cut the throat of a journeyman paper-maker, was executed on Oaten Hill, and afterwards hung in chains near the scene of his crime. It was to this place, as being the extreme boundary of the City’s jurisdiction, that the worthy Mayor with so much *naïveté* wished to escort Archbishop M—— on one of his progresses, when he begged to have the honour of “attending his Grace *as far as the Gallows.*”

The class was call'd at morning tide, and Master Tom was there; He look'd askew, and did eschew both stool, and bench, and chair. He did not talk, he did not walk, the tear was in his eye, — He had not e'en that sad resource, to sit him down and cry.

Hence little boys may learn, when they from school go out to dine,
They should not deal in rigmarole, but still be back by nine;
For if when they've their great-coat on, they pause before they part
To tell a long and prosy tale, — perchance their own may smart!

MORAL

— A few remarks to learned Clerks in country and in town —
Don't keep a pretty serving-maid, though clad in russet brown! —
Don't let your Niece sing "Bobbing Joan!" — don't with a merry eye,
Hob-nob in Sack and Malvoisie, — and don't eat too much pie!!

And oh! beware that Entry dark, — especially at night, —
And don't go there with Jenny Smith all by the pale moonlight! —
So bless the Queen and her Royal Weans, — and the Prince whose hand she
took, —

And bless us all, both great and small. — and keep us from Nell Cook!

* * * * *

Kind, good-hearted, gouty Uncle John! how well I remember all the kindness and affection which my mischievous propensities so ill repaid — his bright blue coat and resplendent gilt buttons — his “frosty pow” *si bien poudré* — his little quill-like pigtail! — Of all my praiseworthy actions — they were “like angels visits, few and far between” — the neverfailing and munificent rewarder; of my naughty deeds — they were multitudinous as the sands on the seashore — the ever-ready palliator; my intercessor, and sometimes even my defender against punishment, “staying harsh justice in its mid career!” — Poor Uncle John! he will ever rank among the dearest of my

NURSERY REMINISCENCES.

I remember, I remember,
When I was a little Boy,
One fine morning in September
Uncle brought me home a toy.

I remember how he patted
Both my cheeks in kindest mood;
“Then,” said he, “you little Fat-head,
There’s a top because you’re good!”

Grandmama — a shrewd observer —
I remember gazed upon
My new top, and said with fervour,
“Oh! how kind of Uncle John!”

While Mama, my form caressing, —
In her eye the tear-drop stood,
Read me this fine moral lesson,
“See what comes of being good!”

* * * * *

I remember, I remember,
On a wet and windy day,
One cold morning in December,
I stole out and went to play;

I remember Billy Hawkins
Came, and with his pewter squirt
Squibb’d my pantaloons and stockings
Till they were all over dirt!

To my mother for protection
I ran, quaking every limb:
— She exclaimed, with fond affection,
“Gracious Goodness! look at *him!*” —

The Ingoldsby Legends

Pa cried, when he saw my garment,
— 'Twas a newly-purchased dress —
“Oh! you nasty little *Warment*,
How came you in such a mess?”

Then he caught me by the collar,
— Cruel only to be kind —
And to my exceeding dolour,
Gave me — several slaps behind.

Grandmama, while yet I smarted,
As she saw my evil plight,
Said — 'twas rather stony-hearted —
“Little rascal! *sarve* him right!”

I remember, I remember,
From that sad and solemn day,
Never more in dark December
Did I venture out to play.

And the moral, which they taught, I
Well remember; thus they said —
“Little Boys, when they are naughty,
Must be whipped and sent to bed!”

* * * * *



Poor Uncle John!

“After life’s fitful fever he sleeps well,”

in the old family vault in Denton chancel — and dear Aunt Fanny too! — The latter also “loo’d me weel,” as the Scotch song has it — and since, at this moment, I am in a most soft and sentimental humour — (— whisky toddy should ever be made by pouring the *boiling* fluid — *hotter* if possible — upon the thinnest lemon-peel — and then — but everybody knows “what *then* — ”) I dedicate the following “True History” to my beloved

AUNT FANNY: A LEGEND OF A SHIRT.

Virginibus, Puerisque canto. — HOR.

Old Maids, and Bachelors I chaunt to! — T. I.

I sing of a Shirt that *never was* new!
In the course of the year Eighteen hundred and two,
Aunt Fanny began, Upon Grandmama’s plan,
To make one for me, then her “dear little man.” —
— At the epoch I speak about, I was between
A man and a boy,
A hobble-de-hoy,
A fat, little, punchy concern of sixteen, —
Just beginning to flirt,
And ogle, — so pert,
I’d been whipt every day had I had my desert,
— And Aunt Fan volunteer’d to make me a shirt!

I’ve said she *began* it, —
Some unlucky planet
No doubt interfered, —f or, before she, and Janet
Completed the “cutting-out,” “hemming,” and “stitching,”
A tall Irish footman appear’d in the kitchen;—
— This took off the maid, —
And, I’m sadly afraid,
My respected Aunt Fanny’s attention, too, stray’d;
For, about the same period, a gay son of Mars,
Cornet Jones of the Tenth (then the Prince’s) Hussars,
With his fine dark eyelashes,
And finer moustaches,
And the ostrich plume work’d on the corps’ sabre-taches,
(I say nought of the gold-and-red cord of the sashes,
Or the boots far above the Guards’ vile spatterdashes,) —
So eyed, and so sigh’d, and so lovingly tried
To engage her whole ear as he lounged by her side,
Looking down on the rest with such dignified pride,

That she made up her mind
She should certainly find
Cornet Jones at her feet, whisp'ring, "Fan, be my bride!"—
— She had even resolved to say "Yes" should he ask it,
— And I — and my Shirt — were both left in the basket.

To her grief and dismay
She discover'd one day
Cornet Jones of the Tenth was a little too gay;
For, besides that she saw him — he could not say nay —
Wink at one of the actresses capering away
In a Spanish *bolero*, one night at the play,
She found he'd already a wife at Cambray; —
One at Paris, — a nymph of the *corps de ballet*; —
And a third down in Kent, at a place call'd Foot's Cray. —
He was "viler than dirt!" —
Fanny vow'd to exert
All her powers to forget him, — and finish my Shirt.
But, oh! lack-a-day!
How time slips away!—
Who'd have thought that while Cupid was playing these tricks,
Ten years had elapsed, and — I'd turn'd twenty-six? —

"I care not a whit,
— He's not grown a bit,"
Says my Aunt, "it will still be a very good fit."
So Janet, and She,
Now about thirty-three,
(The maid had been jilted by Mr. Magee,
Each taking one end of "the Shirt" on her knee,
Again began working with hearty good will,
"Felling the Seams," and "whipping the Frill," —
For, twenty years since, though the Ruffle had vanish'd,
A Frill like a fan had by no means been banish'd;
People wore them at playhouses, parties, and churches,
Like overgrown fins of overgrown perches. —

Now, then, by these two thus laying their caps
Together, my "Shirt" had been finish'd, perhaps,
But for one of those queer little three-corner'd straps,
Which the ladies call "Side-bits," that sever the "Flaps;"
— Here unlucky Janet
Took her needle, and ran it
Right into her thumb, and cried loudly, "Ads cuss it!
I've spoiled myself now by that 'ere nasty Gusset!"

For a month to come Poor dear Janet's thumb
Was in that sort of state vulgar people call "Rum."
At the end of that time,

A youth, still in his prime,
 The Doctor's fat Errand-boy,—just such a dolt as is
 Kept to mix draughts, and spread plaisters and poultices, —
 Who a bread-cataplasm each morning had carried her,
 Sigh'd, — ogled, — proposed, — was accepted, — and married her!

Much did Aunt Fan Disapprove of the plan; —
 She turn'd up her dear little snub at "the Man."
 She "could not believe it" —
 "Could scarcely conceive it
 Was possible — What! *such* a place! — and then leave it! —
 And all for a 'Shrimp' not as high as my hat —
 A little contemptible 'Shaver' like that!!
 With a broad pancake face, and eyes buried in fat!"
 — For her part, "She was sure
 She could never endure
 A lad with a lisp, and a leg like a skewer. —
 Such a name too! — ('twas Potts!) — and so nasty a trade —
 No, no, — she would much rather die an old maid! —
 He a husband, indeed! — Well — mine, come what may come,
 Shan't look like a blister, or smell of Guaiacum!" —
 But there!
 She'd "declare,
 It was Janet's affair—
 — *Chacun à son gout* —
 As she baked she might brew—
 She could not prevent her — 'twas no use in trying it —
 Oh, no — she had made her own bed, and might lie in it. —
 They 'repent at leisure who marry at random.'
 No matter — *De gustibus non disputandum!*"

Consoling herself with this choice bit of Latin,
 Aunt Fanny resignedly bought some white satin,
 And, as the Soubrette
 Was a very great pet
 After all, — she resolved to forgive and forget,
 And sat down to make her a bridal rosette,
 With magnificent bits of some white-looking metal
 Stuck in, here and there, each forming a petal.—
 — On such an occasion one couldn't feel hurt,
 Of course, that she ceased to remember — my Shirt!

Ten years, — or nigh, —
 Had again gone by,
 When Fan, accidentally casting her eye
 On a dirty old work-basket, hung up on high
 In the store-closet where herbs were put by to dry,
 Took it down to explore it — she didn't know why. —

Within, a pea-soup colour'd fragment she spied,
Of the hue of a November fog in Cheapside,
Or a bad piece of gingerbread spoilt in the baking. —
— I still hear her cry,—
“I wish I may die
If here isn't Tom's Shirt, that's been so long a-making!
My gracious me! Well, — only to see!
I declare it's as yellow as yellow can be!
Why, it looks just as though't had been soak'd in green tea.
Dear me! *Did you ever?* —
But come — 'twill be clever
To bring matters round; so I'll do my endeavour —
'Better Late,' says an excellent proverb, 'than Never!' —
It is stain'd, to be sure; but 'grass-bleaching' will bring it
To rights 'in a jiffy,' — We'll wash it, and wring it;
Or, stay, — 'Hudson's Liquor'
Will do it still quicker,
And —” Here the new maid chimed in, “Ma'am, Salt of Lemon
Will make it, in no time, quite fit for the Gemman!” —
So they “set in the gathers,” — the large round the collar,
While those at the wrist-bands of course were much smaller, —
The button-holes now were at length “overcast;”
Then a button itself was sewn on — 'twas the last!

All's done!
All's won!
Never under the sun
Was Shirt so late finish'd — so early begun! —
— The work would defy
The most critical eye.
It was “bleach'd,” — it was wash'd, — it was hung out to dry, —
It was mark'd on the tail with a T, and an I!
On the back of a chair it
Was placed, just to air it,
In front of the fire. — “Tom to-morrow shall wear it!” —

— *O cæca mens hominum!* — Fanny, good soul,
Left her charge for one moment — but one — a vile coal
Bounced out from the grate, and set fire to the whole!

* * * * *

Had it been Doctor Arnott's new stove — not a grate; —
Had the coal been a “Lord Mayor's coal,” — viz.: a slate; —
What a different tale had I had to relate!
And Aunt Fan — and my Shirt — been superior to Fate! —
One moment — no more!
— Fan open'd the door!
The draught made the blaze ten times worse than before;

And Aunt Fanny sank down — in despair — on the floor!

You may fancy perhaps Agrippina's amazement,
 When, looking one fine moonlight night from her casement,
 She saw, while thus gazing,
 All Rome a-blazing,
 And, losing at once all restraint on her temper, or
 Feelings, exclaimed, "Hang that Scamp of an Emperor,
 Although he's my son! —
 — He thinks it prime fun,
 No doubt! — While the flames are demolishing Rome,
 There's my Nero a-fiddling, and singing 'Sweet Home!'"
 — Stay — I'm really not sure 'twas that lady who said
 The words I've put down, as she stepp'd into bed, —
 On reflection, I rather believe *she* was dead;
 But e'en when at College,
 I Fairly acknowledge, I
 Never was very precise in Chronology;
 So, if there's an error, pray set down as mine a
 Mistake of no very great moment — in fine, a
 Mere slip — 'twas some Pleb's wife, if not Agrippina.

You may fancy that warrior, so stern and so stony,
 Whom thirty years since we all used to call BONEY,
 When, engaged in what he styled "fulfilling his destinies,"
 He led his rascallions across the Borysthenes,
 And had made up his mind Snug quarters to find
 In Moscow, against the catarrhs and the coughs
 Which are apt to prevail 'mongst the "Owskis" and "Offs,"
 At a time of the year
 When your nose and your ear
 Are by no means so safe there as people's are here,
 Inasmuch as "Jack Frost," that most fearful of Bogles,
 Makes folks leave their cartilage oft in their "fogles."
 You may fancy, I say,
 That same BONEY'S dismay,
 When Count Rostopchin
 At once made him drop chin,
 And turn up his eyes, as his rapee he took,
 With a sort of a *mort-de-ma-vie* kind of look,
 On perceiving that "Swing,"
 And "all that sort of thing,"
 Was at work, — that he'd just lost the game without knowing it —
 That the Kremlin was blazing — the Russians "a going it," —
 Every plug in the place frozen hard as the ground,
 And never a Turn-cock at all to be found!

You may fancy King Charles at some Court Fancy-Ball,
 (The date we may fix

In Sixteen sixty-six,)
In the room built by Inigo Jones at Whitehall,
Whence his father, the Martyr, — (as such mourn'd by all
Who, in *his*, wept the Law's and the Monarchy's fall,) —
Stept out to exchange regal robes for a pall —
You may fancy King Charles, I say, stopping the brawl,
As bursts on his sight the old church of St. Paul,
By the light of its flames, now beginning to crawl
From basement to buttress, and topping its wall —
— You may fancy old Clarendon making a call,
And stating in cold, slow, monotonous drawl,
“Sire, from Pudding Lane's End, close by Fishmongers' Hall,
To Pye Corner, in Smithfield, there is not a stall
There, in market, or street, — not a house, great or small,
In which Knight wields his faulchion, or Cobbler his awl,
But's on fire!!” — You may fancy the general squall,
And bawl as they all call for wimple and shawl! —
— You may fancy all this — but I boldly assert
You *can't* fancy Aunt Fan — as she looked on MY SHIRT!!!

Was't Apelles? or Zeuxis? — I think 'twas Apelles,
That artist of old — I declare I can't tell his
Exact patronymic — I write and pronounce ill
These Classical names — Whom some Grecian Town-Council
Employ'd — I believe, by command of the Oracle, —
To produce them a splendid piece, purely historical,
For adorning the wall
Of some fane, or Guildhall,
And who for his subject determined to try a
Large painting in oils of Miss Iphigenia
At the moment her Sire,
By especial desire
Of “that Spalpeen, O'Dysseus” (see Barney Maguire),
Has resolved to devote
Her beautiful throat
To old Chalcas's knife, and her limbs to the fire;
— An act which we moderns by no means admire, —
An offering, 'tis true, to Jove, Mars, or Apollo cost
No trifling sum in those days, if a holocaust, —
Still, although for economy we should condemn none,
In an ἀναξ ἀνδρῶν, like the great Agamemnon,
To give up to slaughter
An elegant daughter,
After all the French, Music, and Dancing they'd taught her,
And Singing, — at Heaven knows how much a quarter, —
In lieu of a Calf! — It was too bad by half!
At a “nigger”† so pitiful who would not laugh,

† Hibernicè “nigger,” quasi “niggard.” Vide B. Maguire *passim*

And turn up their noses at one who could find
 No decener method of "Raising the Wind"?
 No doubt but he might,
 Without any great *Flight*,
 Have obtain'd it by what we call "flying a kite."
 Or on mortgage — or sure, if he couldn't so do it, he
 Must have succeeded "by way of annuity."
 But there — it appears,
 His crocodile tears,
 His "Oh!s" and his "Ah!s" his "Oh Law!s" and "Oh dear!s"
 Were all thought sincere, — so in painting his Victim
 The Artist was splendid — but could not depict *Him*.
 His features, and phiz awry
 Shewed so much misery,
 And so like a dragon he
 Look'd in his agony,
 That the foil'd Painter buried — despairing to gain a
 Good likeness — his face in a printed Bandana.
 — Such a veil is best thrown o'er one's face when one's hurt
 By some grief which no power can repair or avert! —
 — Such a veil I shall throw o'er Aunt Fan — and My Shirt!

MORAL

And now for some practical hints from the story
 Of Aunt Fan's mishap, which I've thus laid before ye;
 For, if rather too gay,
 I can venture to say
 A fine vein of morality is, in each lay
 Of my primitive Muse, the distinguishing *trait!* —

First of all — Don't put off till to-morrow what may,
 Without inconvenience, be managed to-day!
 That golden occasion we call "Opportunity"
 Rarely's neglected by man with impunity!
 And the "Future," how brightly soe'er by Hope's dupe colour'd,
 Ne'er may afford
 You a lost chance restored,
 Till both you, and YOUR SHIRT, are grown old,
 and pea-soup-colour'd!
 You to guard your attire,
 Young Ladies, — and never go too near the fire!—
 — Depend on't there's many a dear little Soul
 Has found that a Spark is as bad as a coal, —
 And "in her best petticoat burnt a great hole!"

The Ingoldsby Legends

Last of all, gentle Reader, don't be too secure! —
Let seeming success never make you "cock-sure!"
But beware! — and take care,
When all things look fair,
How you hang your Shirt over the back of your chair!—
— "There's many a slip
'Twixt the cup and the lip!"
Be this excellent proverb, then, well understood,
And DON'T HALLOO BEFORE YOU'RE QUITE OUT OF THE WOOD!!!

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