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Final Project for Speak Better: Increasing Student Discourse in the English Language Learning Classroom (10th-14th July, 2017)

I am modifying my unit on *The Canterville Ghost (Oscar Wilde)* to make it more student-centered and to include more opportunities for oral discourse. The whole unit will be based on *The Canterville Ghost*, so the students will be required to read it beforehand.

The overarching question for my unit is:

Why are ghost stories so popular?

My three content learning targets are:

I can define the main characteristics of ghost stories.

I can identify these characteristics in a given text.

I can create my own ghost story and act it out in front of the class.

My three language learning targets are:

I can use a wide range of connectors and expressions to support my point of view and express agreement/disagreement.

I can paraphrase authors and classmates using appropriate language and grammar points (e.g. reported speech and different verb tenses).

I can use the necessary language and literary resources to create a story.

Three driving questions I can show my students to model how to write driving questions are:

Is the Canterville Ghost frightening?

Who's the real victim of the story?

What's the role of the different members of the Otis family?

An oral discourse protocol or activity that I will use to build background knowledge or introduce the topic is: (explain the activity and provide a question to be used in your unit)

Continuum dialogue.

The students are given a number of possible victims in the story and will move to the front of the room if they strongly agree or to the back of the room if they strongly disagree with the statements provided by the teacher. Should they not know what to choose, they will remain seated in their places or stay in the middle of the room. This activity will help the students to understand the role of the different characters and will enable them to express opinions and show agreement and disagreement. The purpose of this task is to give reasons to support one's point of view.

- 1. Sir Simon de Canterville is the real victim of the story.*
- 2. Virginia Otis is the real victim of the story.*
- 3. Sir Simon de Canterville's wife is the real victim of the story.*
- 4. Lord Canterville (the owner of Canterville Chase) and Mrs Umney (the housekeeper) are the real victims of the story.*

This task will lead to the Chalk Talk protocol. The students will be divided into four groups, each of them supporting one of the options provided in the continuum dialogue. In case one of the options does not have enough supporters, one of the group members will try to persuade other students to join their group with the necessary arguments to support their view.

They will sit in groups and brainstorm arguments, which will be written on a sheet of paper. Once the brainstorming has been completed, the groups will rotate and take turns reading what each group has written and adding comments to express their agreement or disagreement.

The purpose of these tasks is to express points of view, paraphrase and show agreement and/or disagreement.

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Academic conversations are:

Academic conversations can be defined as interactions between individuals in which something new is learned. This type of exchanges fosters meaningful learning and requires the ability to take turns, listen actively and respond appropriately.

In this unit, academic conversations will be implicit in the first part, when students answer the overarching question and, especially, in the continuum dialogue and the chalk talk. In both tasks, the students will express their point of view and support their ideas with the necessary examples. The rest of the students will listen attentively and

then will be allowed to express their agreement or disagreement, providing new ideas that might have been overlooked.

Two benefits of academic conversations are:

*In my opinion, the most important benefit of academic conversations is the **use of vocabulary within a context**. New vocabulary shouldn't be learned as a list of isolated words, these words should be **learned in a meaningful way** if we really want to have them ingrained in our memory. For instance, some students might not know the meaning of the word 'stain', but they will definitely remember it when they have to talk about 'America's Pinkerton's Champion Stain Remover', the miraculous detergent that can remove any stain.*

*Another benefit of academic conversation is the **use of language functions such as predicting, summarising, clarifying, interpreting or connecting**. In our unit, some of these skills will be put into practice:*

In the continuum dialogue and chalk talk, students will have to interpret, summarise and connect parts of the story in order to present their ideas and justify them with examples from the text. For instance, some students might consider that Virginia Otis is the real victim of the story. To support this argument, they will probably say that The Canterville Ghost takes advantage of her good will when he asks her to read a prophecy written in the library window to help him rest in peace:

*When a golden girl can win
Prayer from out the lips of sin,
When the barren almond bears,
And a little child gives away its tears,
Then shall all the house be still
And peace come to Canterville.*

At this point, they will read the prophecy and try to explain it using their own words and why it affects Virginia.

The five communication skills practiced during academic conversations are:

Elaborating and clarifying ideas

Synthesizing

Supporting ideas with examples

Building on or challenging ideas

Paraphrasing

(Explain the paraphrase card activity) A question for the paraphrase card activity is:

The paraphrase card activity consists in providing pairs of students with two empty cards and a question. Working in pairs, they take turns asking the question to their partner, answering it and noting down what their partner is saying. It is a useful activity to practise paraphrasing. In this unit, this task can be carried out with both the overarching question and the driving questions. Nevertheless, the teacher might opt for a new question, also related to the story:

*Oscar Wilde wrote a collection of short stories for his own children. Would you say that *The Canterville Ghost* is suitable for children?*

I would provide this list of words or expressions to support my students during the speaking activity:

I would mainly provide expressions used to voice an opinion, ask for clarification, give examples, paraphrase and show agreement or disagreement:

Express opinion: *as I see it, in my opinion...*

Ask for clarification: *I'm confused when you say..., could you explain that, please?*

Give examples: *for example, for instance, to illustrate my point...*

Paraphrase: *so what you're saying is..., I hear you saying that...*

Express agreement: *absolutely, I totally agree, that's a good point.*

Express disagreement: *I see your point, but... I don't really agree with you because...*

It goes without saying that students will be taught all the necessary words they might need in order to carry out this task successfully.

An authentic text that I would use during this unit with my students to build background knowledge is:

*Since the unit focuses on literature, two texts will be used to carry it out. Both texts are different versions of *The Canterville Ghost*: a simplified, adapted version of the story for weaker students and the original unabridged text for the most advanced students. (See appendix 1).*

This unit requires prior reading of the story, which may take a few days.

One protocol I would use to get students to talk about this text is...(explain protocol)

There are different possibilities to get students to talk about the text. Perhaps one of the most motivating protocols could be a variation of the GoGoMo.

In order to carry out this task, the students will be provided with a sheet of paper containing a table with 3 boxes. They will be asked to write down, in pairs, an alternative ending to the story. Then they will talk to other pairs and add two endings they find particularly interesting until all the boxes have been filled with ideas. A discussion will follow.

To have my students show a relationship between characters, setting or events in the text, they could use these words (list 7-10) and these symbols (list 3).

WORDS

SYMBOLS

Otis twins

→ (2)

Virginia

+ (2)

Ghost

= (1)

Fear

Disbelief

Victim

Murder

Wife

Sympathy

Peace

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A Newsela article I could use in my unit to differentiate reading for my students is: a story about haunted houses and Halloween, a topic which is closely related to the ghost story chosen for the present unit (The Canterville Ghost).



A. *It's just not Halloween without a haunted house.* (This text is suitable for the students with a higher level)

Every year, a website called Hauntworld ranks the scariest haunted houses in the United States. This year's winner is outside of Austin, Texas. It is called House of Torment and it features flesh-eating zombies, insane monsters and terrifying clowns.

Last year's winner, Haunted Overload, dropped slightly in this year's rankings. However, it's still scary enough that people with heart problems are warned against buying tickets.

This is what a haunted house is supposed to do. They exist to scare people. The idea behind haunted houses is not new, of course, as people have sent shivers down their spines with spooky stories for centuries. Haunted houses are different, though, because Halloween made them famous. They could not exist without Halloween, and Halloween would not be the same without them.

The origins of the haunted house date back to London in the 1800s. New attractions introduced the public to a new form of gruesome entertainment. In 1802, French artist Marie Tussaud shocked British audiences with an exhibition of headless wax sculptures, modeled after historical figures whose heads were chopped off in the French Revolution. When she set up a permanent London exhibition, she called it the "Chamber of Horrors." The name has stuck to the wax museum to this day.

The Original Haunted Houses

Around the year 1900, the closest relatives to today's haunted houses started experimenting with gruesome themes. In Paris, the Grand Guignol theater became famous for seeming to show people being torn limb from limb. The theater's director, Max Maurey, bragged that he judged performances by the number of people who passed out in the audience. In 1915, an English fairground debuted one of the first "ghost houses," an early type of horror attraction.

Lisa Morton, the author of "Trick or Treat: A History of Halloween," said that Halloween-themed haunted houses first emerged during the 1930s. American parents

cooked up ways to distract young tricksters, whose holiday pranks included damaging property and bothering strangers. "They came in about the same time as trick-or-treat did," she says of haunted houses. "Cities looked for ways to buy these kids off, essentially."

Those first haunted houses were very basic. Groups of families would decorate their basements and hold parties. Kids would travel from basement to basement experiencing different scary scenes. A 1937 party pamphlet describes how parents could also design "trails of terror" to spook their children:

An outside entrance leads to a rendezvous with ghosts and witches in the cellar or attic. Hang old fur, strips of raw liver on walls, where one feels his way to dark steps. Weird moans and howls come from dark corners, damp sponges and hair nets hung from the ceiling touch his face. Doorways are blockaded so that guests must crawl through a long dark tunnel.

The pamphlet recommends placing a black cardboard cat outlined in glow-in-the-dark paint at the exit.

Disney Makes Them Famous

The haunted house didn't become famous, though, until Disneyland opened its Haunted Mansion in 1969. The attraction quickly became a success. In a single day not long after it opened, more than 82,000 people passed through it. The attraction's centerpiece is the Grand Hall, a 90-foot-long ballroom of dancing ghouls. "It's the start of the haunted attraction industry," Morton says.

Within a few years, the haunted house had spread across the country.

In the 1970s and 1980s, Hollywood began to put out horror movies like "Halloween," "A Nightmare on Elm Street," and "Friday the 13th." The popularity of these movies created more demand for scary attractions.

Professional haunted houses first emerged in the same era. Then, tragedy struck: A fire at a haunted house in New Jersey trapped and killed eight teenagers. Soon, attractions were shut down, and lawmakers passed stronger safety regulations. Bigger, splashier professional haunted houses survived. It was an important moment for the industry, says Larry Kirchner, president of Haunted House Association, a trade group for haunted house operators.

New And Extreme Frights

During the next two decades, the number of professional haunted houses grew. Kirchner estimates that roughly 2,700 of them were in operation nationwide last year. A large haunted house attraction can earn \$3 million during the Halloween season, and the industry is worth \$300 million, according to an NBC news report.

These days, haunted houses are no longer just about creepy characters and realistic horror. Instead, the industry has embraced all sorts of new, extreme frights, such as

zombie runs, escape games and traumatizing experiences. How long will these successes last? Can the haunted house last another 50 years?

Kirchner doubts that the haunted house is here to stay. "If I was going to guess, I'd say no," he says. "Every business will eventually fail, so we just want to last as long as we possibly can."

A Halloween without haunted houses? Now that's a scary thought.

B. How haunted houses got their start. *(a simplified version of the text for weaker students).*

Every year, a website called Hauntworld lists the scariest haunted houses in the United States. This year's winner is in Texas. It is called House of Torment. It has flesh-eating zombies, crazy monsters and scary clowns.

Last year's winner was a house called Haunted Overload. It's not at the top of the list this year, but it is still very scary. People with heart problems are told not to enter.

People like to feel afraid. This idea is not new, of course. Spooky stories have terrified people for centuries. Haunted houses are different, though. They are part of Halloween. This holiday would not be the same without the haunted house.

Haunted Houses Began 200 Years Ago

The idea for haunted houses goes back about 200 years. In 1802, the French artist Marie Tussaud created a new kind of entertainment. She shocked crowds in London, England. She showed wax sculptures of dead people. They were very realistic. She later called it the "Chamber of Horrors."

Around the year 1900, a theater in Paris started showing really scary scenes on stage. People in the audience would pass out from fright. Then, in 1915, an English fair opened an attraction called a "ghost house." It was one of the first scary houses for the public.

Lisa Morton wrote "Trick or Treat: A History of Halloween." She said that Halloween-themed haunted houses first started in the 1930s. Kids were destroying property and bothering strangers on Halloween. Haunted houses gave them something else to do.

The first haunted houses were not fancy. Groups of families decorated their basements and held parties. Kids traveled from basement to basement. They experienced different scary scenes.

People Love Scary Attractions

The haunted house became famous in 1969. That year, Disneyland opened its Haunted Mansion. It was a big success. In a single day after it opened, more than 82,000 people passed through it.

Soon, haunted houses spread across the country.

In the 1970s and 1980s, Hollywood started to make horror movies. People really liked them. This made them want more scary attractions.

Large haunted houses started about the same time. Lawmakers created rules so that these places would be safe for visitors.

During the next 20 years, the number of professional haunted houses grew. Larry Kirchner is the president of the Haunted House Association. People who run haunted houses belong to the group. Kirchner says there were about 2,700 haunted houses last year. A large haunted house can make \$3 million during Halloween. All together, these businesses make \$300 million, according to an NBC news report.

Will the haunted house be around in 50 years? Kirchner says no. He doesn't think any business can last forever.

Can you imagine a Halloween without haunted houses? Now that's a scary thought.

Five possible final products that my students could create are:

1. Posters representing ghosts and haunted houses that will be used for oral presentations and to decorate the classroom or the hallways.
2. Writing Halloween poems.
3. Writing ghost stories (either scary or humorous).
4. Writing alternative endings to *The Canterville Ghost* and acting them out in class.
5. Creating a Kahoot including questions related to the contents of the present unit.

Another activity I would use to provide oral discourse practice is: (provide name of activity, explain the activity and write a question to be used in the activity)

Turn and Talk: Sir Simon de Canterville (The Canterville Ghost) was accused of murdering his own wife and later starved to death by his wife's brothers. Would you have helped him to rest in peace, as Virginia Otis did? Discuss in pairs.

Students will turn to their partners and discuss the question in pairs. The teacher will monitor the activity, walking around the class and helping with difficult words or expressions.

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A student-engaged formative assessment that I would use during this unit is: (explain it)

In order to get and give feedback, I would design a table including all the different tasks and protocols carried out in the unit:

Continuum dialogue

Chalk Talk protocol

Paraphrase card activity

GoGoMo

For each activity, I would consider different parameters: commitment, cooperation, use of appropriate vocabulary, use of appropriate grammar. I would use a rubric per student, which would be filled in while they carry out the different tasks.

<i>STUDENT:</i>	<i>Commitment</i>	<i>Cooperation</i>	<i>Use of vocabulary</i>	<i>Use of grammar</i>	<i>Body language</i>
<i>TASK:</i>	<i>Good</i> <i>Average</i> <i>Weak</i>	<i>Good</i> <i>Average</i> <i>Weak</i>	<i>Good</i> <i>Average</i> <i>Weak</i>	<i>Good</i> <i>Average</i> <i>Weak</i>	<i>Good</i> <i>Average</i> <i>Weak</i>
<i>COMMENTS</i>					

*The aim of this rubric is to get the necessary information to **provide feedback** once the task has been completed. That way, I can tell my students about their strengths and weaknesses, valuable information that they will use to improve their future performances.*

A summative oral assessment for this unit that I would use is:

My summative assessment would consist in gathering all the feedback taken during the students' performance in the tasks provided: each student would have a rubric per activity.

**I would use these rubrics to measure how the students met the learning targets:
(include prompts or a chart).**

CONTENT LEARNING TARGETS (Tick where appropriate).

Student:	Good	Average	Needs improvement	Comments
<i>I can define the main characteristics of ghost stories</i>				
<i>I can identify these characteristics in a given text</i>				
<i>I can create my own ghost story and act it out in front of the class.</i>				

LANGUAGE LEARNING TARGETS (Tick where appropriate).

Student:	Good	Average	Needs improvement	Comments
<i>I can use a wide range of connectors and expressions to support my point of view and express agreement/disagreement.</i>				
<i>I can paraphrase authors and classmates using appropriate language and grammar points (e.g. reported speech and different verb tenses).</i>				
<i>I can use the necessary language and literary resources to create a story.</i>				

APPENDIX 1

THE CANTERVILLE GHOST (OSCAR WILDE)

FULL UNABRIDGED TEXT

I

When Mr. Hiram B. Otis, the American Minister, bought Canterville Chase, every one told him he was doing a very foolish thing, as there was no doubt at all that the place was haunted. Indeed, Lord Canterville himself, who was a man of the most punctilious honour, had felt it his duty to mention the fact to Mr. Otis when they came to discuss terms.

'We have not cared to live in the place ourselves,' said Lord Canterville, 'since my grand-aunt, the Dowager Duchess of Bolton, was frightened into a fit, from which she never really recovered, by two skeleton hands being placed on her shoulders as she was dressing for dinner, and I feel bound to tell you, Mr. Otis, that the ghost has been seen by several living members of my family, as well as by the rector of the parish, the Rev. Augustus Dampier, who is a Fellow of King's College, Cambridge. After the unfortunate accident to the Duchess, none of our younger servants would stay with us, and Lady Canterville often got very little sleep at night, in consequence of the mysterious noises that came from the corridor and the library.'

'My Lord,' answered the Minister, 'I will take the furniture and the ghost at a valuation. I come from a modern country, where we have everything that money can buy; and with all our spry young fellows painting the Old World red, and carrying off your best actors and prima-donnas, I reckon that if there were such a thing as a ghost in Europe, we'd have it at home in a very short time in one of our public museums, or on the road as a show.'

'I fear that the ghost exists,' said Lord Canterville, smiling, 'though it may have resisted the overtures of your enterprising impresarios. It has been well known for three centuries, since 1584 in fact, and always makes its appearance before the death of any member of our family.'

'Well, so does the family doctor for that matter, Lord Canterville. But there is no such thing, sir, as a ghost, and I guess the laws of Nature are not going to be suspended for the British aristocracy.'

'You are certainly very natural in America,' answered Lord Canterville, who did not quite understand Mr. Otis' last observation, 'and if you don't mind a ghost in the house, it is all right. Only you must remember I warned you.'

A few weeks after this, the purchase was concluded, and at the close of the season the Minister and his family went down to Canterville Chase. Mrs. Otis, who, as Miss Lucretia R. Tappan, of West 53rd Street, had been a celebrated New York belle, was

now a very handsome, middle-aged woman, with fine eyes, and a superb profile. Many American ladies on leaving their native land adopt an appearance of chronic ill-health, under the impression that it is a form of European refinement, but Mrs. Otis had never fallen into this error. She had a magnificent constitution, and a really wonderful amount of animal spirits. Indeed, in many respects, she was quite English, and was an excellent example of the fact that we have really everything in common with America nowadays, except, of course, language. Their eldest son, christened Washington by his parents in a moment of patriotism, which he never ceased to regret, was a fair-haired, rather good-looking young man, who had qualified himself for American diplomacy by leading the German at the Newport Casino for three successive seasons, and even in London was well known as an excellent dancer. Gardenias and the peerage were his only weaknesses. Otherwise he was extremely sensible. Miss Virginia E. Otis was a little girl of fifteen, lithe and lovely as a fawn, and with a fine freedom in her large blue eyes. She was a wonderful amazon, and had once raced old Lord Bilton on her pony twice round the park, winning by a length and a half, just in front of the Achilles statue, to the huge delight of the young Duke of Cheshire, who proposed for her on the spot, and was sent back to Eton that very night by his guardians, in floods of tears. After Virginia came the twins, who were usually called 'The Stars and Stripes,' as they were always getting swished. They were delightful boys, and with the exception of the worthy Minister the only true republicans of the family.

As Canterville Chase is seven miles from Ascot, the nearest railway station, Mr. Otis had telegraphed for a waggonette to meet them, and they started on their drive in high spirits. It was a lovely July evening, and the air was delicate with the scent of the pinewoods. Now and then they heard a wood pigeon brooding over its own sweet voice, or saw, deep in the rustling fern, the burnished breast of the pheasant. Little squirrels peered at them from the beech-trees as they went by, and the rabbits scudded away through the brushwood and over the mossy knolls, with their white tails in the air. As they entered the avenue of Canterville Chase, however, the sky became suddenly overcast with clouds, a curious stillness seemed to hold the atmosphere, a great flight of rooks passed silently over their heads, and, before they reached the house, some big drops of rain had fallen.

Standing on the steps to receive them was an old woman, neatly dressed in black silk, with a white cap and apron. This was Mrs. Umney, the housekeeper, whom Mrs. Otis, at Lady Canterville's earnest request, had consented to keep on in her former position. She made them each a low curtsey as they alighted, and said in a quaint, old-fashioned manner, 'I bid you welcome to Canterville Chase.' Following her, they passed through the fine Tudor hall into the library, a long, low room, panelled in black oak, at the end of which was a large stained-glass window. Here they found tea laid out for them, and, after taking off their wraps, they sat down and began to look round, while Mrs. Umney waited on them.

Suddenly Mrs. Otis caught sight of a dull red stain on the floor just by the fireplace and, quite unconscious of what it really signified, said to Mrs. Umney, 'I am afraid something has been spilt there.'

'Yes, madam,' replied the old housekeeper in a low voice, 'blood has been spilt on that spot.'

'How horrid,' cried Mrs. Otis; 'I don't at all care for bloodstains in a sitting-room. It must be removed at once.'

The old woman smiled, and answered in the same low, mysterious voice, 'It is the blood of Lady Eleanore de Canterville, who was murdered on that very spot by her own husband, Sir Simon de Canterville, in 1575. Sir Simon survived her nine years, and disappeared suddenly under very mysterious circumstances. His body has never been discovered, but his guilty spirit still haunts the Chase. The blood-stain has been much admired by tourists and others, and cannot be removed.'

'That is all nonsense,' cried Washington Otis; 'Pinkerton's Champion Stain Remover and Paragon Detergent will clean it up in no time,' and before the terrified housekeeper could interfere he had fallen upon his knees, and was rapidly scouring the floor with a small stick of what looked like a black cosmetic. In a few moments no trace of the blood-stain could be seen.

'I knew Pinkerton would do it,' he exclaimed triumphantly, as he looked round at his admiring family; but no sooner had he said these words than a terrible flash of lightning lit up the sombre room, a fearful peal of thunder made them all start to their feet, and Mrs. Umney fainted.

'What a monstrous climate!' said the American Minister calmly, as he lit a long cheroot. 'I guess the old country is so over-populated that they have not enough decent weather for everybody. I have always been of opinion that emigration is the only thing for England.'

'My dear Hiram,' cried Mrs. Otis, 'what can we do with a woman who faints?'

'Charge it to her like breakages,' answered the Minister; 'she won't faint after that;' and in a few moments Mrs. Umney certainly came to. There was no doubt, however, that she was extremely upset, and she sternly warned Mr. Otis to beware of some trouble coming to the house.

'I have seen things with my own eyes, sir,' she said, 'that would make any Christian's hair stand on end, and many and many a night I have not closed my eyes in sleep for the awful things that are done here.' Mr. Otis, however, and his wife warmly assured the honest soul that they were not afraid of ghosts, and, after invoking the blessings of Providence on her new master and mistress, and making arrangements for an increase of salary, the old housekeeper tottered off to her own room.

II

The storm raged fiercely all that night, but nothing of particular note occurred. The next morning, however, when they came down to breakfast, they found the terrible stain of blood once again on the floor. 'I don't think it can be the fault of the Paragon Detergent,' said Washington, 'for I have tried it with everything. It must be the ghost.' He accordingly rubbed out the stain a second time, but the second morning it appeared again. The third morning also it was there, though the library had been locked up at night by Mr. Otis himself, and the key carried upstairs. The whole family were now quite interested; Mr. Otis began to suspect that he had been too dogmatic in his denial of

the existence of ghosts, Mrs. Otis expressed her intention of joining the Psychical Society, and Washington prepared a long letter to Messrs. Myers and Podmore on the subject of the Permanence of Sanguineous Stains when connected with Crime. That night all doubts about the objective existence of phantasmata were removed for ever.

The day had been warm and sunny; and, in the cool of the evening, the whole family went out to drive. They did not return home till nine o'clock, when they had a light supper. The conversation in no way turned upon ghosts, so there were not even those primary conditions of receptive expectation which so often precede the presentation of psychical phenomena. The subjects discussed, as I have since learned from Mr. Otis, were merely such as form the ordinary conversation of cultured Americans of the better class, such as the immense superiority of Miss Fanny Davenport over Sara Bernhardt as an actress; the difficulty of obtaining green corn, buckwheat cakes, and hominy, even in the best English houses; the importance of Boston in the development of the world-soul; the advantages of the baggage check system in railway travelling; and the sweetness of the New York accent as compared to the London drawl. No mention at all was made of the supernatural, nor was Sir Simon de Canterville alluded to in any way. At eleven o'clock the family retired, and by half-past all the lights were out. Some time after, Mr. Otis was awakened by a curious noise in the corridor, outside his room. It sounded like the clank of metal, and seemed to be coming nearer every moment. He got up at once, struck a match, and looked at the time. It was exactly one o'clock. He was quite calm, and felt his pulse, which was not at all feverish. The strange noise still continued, and with it he heard distinctly the sound of footsteps. He put on his slippers, took a small oblong phial out of his dressing-case, and opened the door. Right in front of him he saw, in the wan moonlight, an old man of terrible aspect. His eyes were as red burning coals; long grey hair fell over his shoulders in matted coils; his garments, which were of antique cut, were soiled and ragged, and from his wrists and ankles hung heavy manacles and rusty gyves.

'My dear sir,' said Mr. Otis, 'I really must insist on your oiling those chains, and have brought you for that purpose a small bottle of the Tammany Rising Sun Lubricator. It is said to be completely efficacious upon one application, and there are several testimonials to that effect on the wrapper from some of our most eminent native divines. I shall leave it here for you by the bedroom candles, and will be happy to supply you with more should you require it.' With these words the United States Minister laid the bottle down on a marble table, and, closing his door, retired to rest.

For a moment the Canterville ghost stood quite motionless in natural indignation; then, dashing the bottle violently upon the polished floor, he fled down the corridor, uttering hollow groans, and emitting a ghastly green light. Just, however, as he reached the top of the great oak staircase, a door was flung open, two little white-robed figures appeared, and a large pillow whizzed past his head! There was evidently no time to be lost, so, hastily adopting the Fourth Dimension of Space as a means of escape, he vanished through the wainscoting, and the house became quite quiet.

On reaching a small secret chamber in the left wing, he leaned up against a moonbeam to recover his breath, and began to try and realise his position.

Never, in a brilliant and uninterrupted career of three hundred years, had he been so grossly insulted. He thought of the Dowager Duchess, whom he had frightened into a fit

as she stood before the glass in her lace and diamonds; of the four housemaids, who had gone off into hysterics when he merely grinned at them through the curtains of one of the spare bedrooms; of the rector of the parish, whose candle he had blown out as he was coming late one night from the library, and who had been under the care of Sir William Gull ever since, a perfect martyr to nervous disorders; and of old Madame de Tremouillac, who, having wakened up one morning early and seen a skeleton seated in an armchair by the fire reading her diary, had been confined to her bed for six weeks with an attack of brain fever, and, on her recovery, had become reconciled to the Church, and broken off her connection with that notorious sceptic Monsieur de Voltaire. He remembered the terrible night when the wicked Lord Canterville was found choking in his dressing-room, with the knave of diamonds half-way down his throat, and confessed, just before he died, that he had cheated Charles James Fox out of £50,000 at Crockford's by means of that very card, and swore that the ghost had made him swallow it. All his great achievements came back to him again, from the butler who had shot himself in the pantry because he had seen a green hand tapping at the window pane, to the beautiful Lady Stutfield, who was always obliged to wear a black velvet band round her throat to hide the mark of five fingers burnt upon her white skin, and who drowned herself at last in the carp-pond at the end of the King's Walk. With the enthusiastic egotism of the true artist he went over his most celebrated performances, and smiled bitterly to himself as he recalled to mind his last appearance as 'Red Reuben, or the Strangled Babe,' his debut as 'Gaunt Gibeon, the Blood-sucker of Bexley Moor,' and the furore he had excited one lovely June evening by merely playing ninepins with his own bones upon the lawn-tennis ground. And after all this, some wretched modern Americans were to come and offer him the Rising Sun Lubricator, and throw pillows at his head! It was quite unbearable. Besides, no ghost in history had ever been treated in this manner. Accordingly, he determined to have vengeance, and remained till daylight in an attitude of deep thought.

III

The next morning, when the Otis family met at breakfast, they discussed the ghost at some length. The United States Minister was naturally a little annoyed to find that his present had not been accepted. 'I have no wish,' he said, 'to do the ghost any personal injury, and I must say that, considering the length of time he has been in the house, I don't think it is at all polite to throw pillows at him' - a very just remark, at which, I am sorry to say, the twins burst into shouts of laughter. 'Upon the other hand,' he continued, 'if he really declines to use the Rising Sun Lubricator, we shall have to take his chains from him. It would be quite impossible to sleep, with such a noise going on outside the bedrooms.'

For the rest of the week, however, they were undisturbed, the only thing that excited any attention being the continual renewal of the blood-stain on the library floor. This certainly was very strange, as the door was always locked at night by Mr. Otis, and the windows kept closely barred. The chameleon-like colour, also, of the stain excited a good deal of comment. Some mornings it was a dull (almost Indian) red, then it would be vermilion, then a rich purple, and once when they came down for family prayers, according to the simple rites of the Free American Reformed Episcopalian Church, they found it a bright emerald green. These kaleidoscopic changes naturally amused the party very much, and bets on the subject were freely made every evening. The only person who did not enter into the joke was little Virginia, who, for some unexplained reason,

was always a good deal distressed at the sight of the blood-stain, and very nearly cried the morning it was emerald-green.

The second appearance of the ghost was on Sunday night. Shortly after they had gone to bed they were suddenly alarmed by a fearful crash in the hall. Rushing downstairs, they found that a large suit of old armour had become detached from its stand, and had fallen on the stone floor, while, seated in a highbacked chair, was the Canterville ghost, rubbing his knees with an expression of acute agony on his face. The twins, having brought their pea-shooters with them, at once discharged two pellets on him, with that accuracy of aim which can only be attained by long and careful practice on a writing-master, while the United States Minister covered him with his revolver, and called upon him, in accordance with Californian etiquette, to hold up his hands! The ghost started up with a wild shriek of rage, and swept through them like a mist, extinguishing Washington Otis's candle as he passed, and so leaving them all in total darkness. On reaching the top of the staircase he recovered himself, and determined to give his celebrated peal of demoniac laughter. This he had on more than one occasion found extremely useful. It was said to have turned Lord Raker's wig grey in a single night, and had certainly made three of Lady Canterville's French governesses give warning before their month was up. He accordingly laughed his most horrible laugh, till the old vaulted roof rang and rang again, but hardly had the fearful echo died away when a door opened, and Mrs. Otis came out in a light blue dressing-gown. 'I am afraid you are far from well,' she said, 'and have brought you a bottle of Dr. Dobell's tincture. If it is indigestion, you will find it a most excellent remedy.' The ghost glared at her in fury, and began at once to make preparations for turning himself into a large black dog, an accomplishment for which he was justly renowned, and to which the family doctor always attributed the permanent idiocy of Lord Canterville's uncle, the Hon. Thomas Horton. The sound of approaching footsteps, however, made him hesitate in his fell purpose, so he contented himself with becoming faintly phosphorescent, and vanished with a deep churchyard groan, just as the twins had come up to him.

On reaching his room he entirely broke down, and became a prey to the most violent agitation. The vulgarity of the twins, and the gross materialism of Mrs. Otis, were naturally extremely annoying, but what really distressed him most was, that he had been unable to wear the suit of mail. He had hoped that even modern Americans would be thrilled by the sight of a Spectre In Armour, if for no more sensible reason, at least out of respect for their national poet Longfellow, over whose graceful and attractive poetry he himself had whiled away many a weary hour when the Cantervilles were up in town. Besides, it was his own suit. He had worn it with great success at the Kenilworth tournament, and had been highly complimented on it by no less a person than the Virgin Queen herself. Yet when he had put it on, he had been completely overpowered by the weight of the huge breastplate and steel casque, and had fallen heavily on the stone pavement, barking both his knees severely, and bruising the knuckles of his right hand.

For some days after this he was extremely ill, and hardly stirred out of his room at all, except to keep the blood-stain in proper repair. However, by taking great care of himself, he recovered, and resolved to make a third attempt to frighten the United States Minister and his family. He selected Friday, the 17th of August, for his appearance, and spent most of that day in looking over his wardrobe, ultimately deciding in favour of a large slouched hat with a red feather, a winding-sheet frilled at the wrists and neck, and a rusty dagger. Towards evening a violent storm of rain came on, and the wind was so

high that all the windows and doors in the old house shook and rattled. In fact, it was just such weather as he loved. His plan of action was this. He was to make his way quietly to Washington Otis's room, gibber at him from the foot of the bed, and stab himself three times in the throat to the sound of slow music. He bore Washington a special grudge, being quite aware that it was he who was in the habit of removing the famous Canterville blood-stain, by means of Pinkerton's Paragon Detergent. Having reduced the reckless and foolhardy youth to a condition of abject terror, he was then to proceed to the room occupied by the United States Minister and his wife, and there to place a clammy hand on Mrs. Otis's forehead, while he hissed into her trembling husband's ear the awful secrets of the charnel-house. With regard to little Virginia, he had not quite made up his mind. She had never insulted him in any way, and was pretty and gentle. A few hollow groans from the wardrobe, he thought, would be more than sufficient, or, if that failed to wake her, he might grabble at the counterpane with palsy-twitching fingers. As for the twins, he was quite determined to teach them a lesson. The first thing to be done was, of course, to sit upon their chests, so as to produce the stifling sensation of nightmare. Then, as their beds were quite close to each other, to stand between them in the form of a green, icy-cold corpse, till they became paralysed with fear, and finally, to throw off the winding-sheet, and crawl round the room, with white, bleached bones and one rolling eyeball, in the character of 'Dumb Daniel, or the Suicide's Skeleton,' a role in which he had on more than one occasion produced a great effect, and which he considered quite equal to his famous part of 'Martin the Maniac, or the Masked Mystery.'

At half-past ten he heard the family going to bed. For some time he was disturbed by wild shrieks of laughter from the twins, who, with the light-hearted gaiety of schoolboys, were evidently amusing themselves before they retired to rest, but at a quarter past eleven all was still, and, as midnight sounded, he sallied forth. The owl beat against the window panes, the raven croaked from the old yew-tree, and the wind wandered moaning round the house like a lost soul; but the Otis family slept unconscious of their doom, and high above the rain and storm he could hear the steady snoring of the Minister for the United States. He stepped stealthily out of the wainscoting, with an evil smile on his cruel, wrinkled mouth, and the moon hid her face in a cloud as he stole past the great oriel window, where his own arms and those of his murdered wife were blazoned in azure and gold. On and on he glided, like an evil shadow, the very darkness seeming to loathe him as he passed. Once he thought he heard something call, and stopped; but it was only the baying of a dog from the Red Farm, and he went on, muttering strange sixteenth-century curses, and ever and anon brandishing the rusty dagger in the midnight air. Finally he reached the corner of the passage that led to luckless Washington's room. For a moment he paused there, the wind blowing his long grey locks about his head, and twisting into grotesque and fantastic folds the nameless horror of the dead man's shroud. Then the clock struck the quarter, and he felt the time was come. He chuckled to himself, and turned the corner; but no sooner had he done so, than, with a piteous wail of terror, he fell back, and hid his blanched face in his long, bony hands. Right in front of him was standing a horrible spectre, motionless as a carven image, and monstrous as a madman's dream! Its head was bald and burnished; its face round, and fat, and white; and hideous laughter seemed to have writhed its features into an eternal grin. From the eyes streamed rays of scarlet light, the mouth was a wide well of fire, and a hideous garment, like to his own, swathed with its silent snows the Titan form. On its breast was a placard with strange writing in antique characters, some scroll of shame it seemed, some record of wild sins,

some awful calendar of crime, and, with its right hand, it bore aloft a falchion of gleaming steel.

Never having seen a ghost before, he naturally was terribly frightened, and, after a second hasty glance at the awful phantom, he fled back to his room, tripping up in his long winding sheet as he sped down the corridor, and finally dropping the rusty dagger into the Minister's jack-boots, where it was found in the morning by the butler. Once in the privacy of his own apartment, he flung himself down on a small pallet-bed, and hid his face under the clothes. After a time, however, the brave old Canterville spirit asserted itself, and he determined to go and speak to the other ghost as soon as it was daylight. Accordingly, just as the dawn was touching the hills with silver, he returned towards the spot where he had first laid eyes on the grisly phantom, feeling that, after all, two ghosts were better than one, and that, by the aid of his new friend, he might safely grapple with the twins. On reaching the spot, however, a terrible sight met his gaze. Something had evidently happened to the spectre, for the light had entirely faded from its hollow eyes, the gleaming falchion had fallen from its hand, and it was leaning up against the wall in a strained and uncomfortable attitude. He rushed forward and seized it in his arms, when, to his horror, the head slipped off and rolled on the floor, the body assumed a recumbent posture, and he found himself clasping a white dimity bed-curtain, with a sweeping-brush, a kitchen cleaver, and a hollow turnip lying at his feet! Unable to understand this curious transformation, he clutched the placard with feverish haste, and there, in the grey morning light, he read these fearful words: -

YE OTIS GHOSTE.

Ye Onlie true and Originale Spook.

Beware of Ye Imitationes.

All others are Counterfeite.

The whole thing flashed across him. He had been tricked, foiled, and outwitted! The old Canterville look came into his eyes; he ground his toothless gums together; and, raising his withered hands high above his head, swore, according to the picturesque phraseology of the antique school, that when Chanticleer had sounded twice his merry horn, deeds of blood would be wrought, and Murder walk abroad with silent feet.

Hardly had he finished this awful oath when, from the red-tiled roof of a distant homestead, a cock crew. He laughed a long, low, bitter laugh, and waited. Hour after hour he waited, but the cock, for some strange reason, did not crow again. Finally, at half-past seven, the arrival of the housemaids made him give up his fearful vigil, and he stalked back to his room, thinking of his vain oath and baffled purpose. There he consulted several books of ancient chivalry, of which he was exceedingly fond, and found that, on every occasion on which his oath had been used, Chanticleer had always crowed a second time. 'Perdition seize the naughty fowl,' he muttered, 'I have seen the day when, with my stout spear, I would have run him through the gorge, and made him

crow for me an 'twere in death!' He then retired to a comfortable lead coffin, and stayed there till evening.

IV

The next day the ghost was very weak and tired. The terrible excitement of the last four weeks was beginning to have its effect. His nerves were completely shattered, and he started at the slightest noise. For five days he kept his room, and at last made up his mind to give up the point of the blood-stain on the library floor. If the Otis family did not want it, they clearly did not deserve it. They were evidently people on a low, material plane of existence, and quite incapable of appreciating the symbolic value of sensuous phenomena. The question of phantasmic apparitions, and the development of astral bodies, was of course quite a different matter, and really not under his control. It was his solemn duty to appear in the corridor once a week, and to gibber from the large oriel window on the first and third Wednesdays in every month, and he did not see how he could honourably escape from his obligations. It is quite true that his life had been very evil, but, upon the other hand, he was most conscientious in all things connected with the supernatural. For the next three Saturdays, accordingly, he traversed the corridor as usual between midnight and three o'clock, taking every possible precaution against being either heard or seen. He removed his boots, trod as lightly as possible on the old worm-eaten boards, wore a large black velvet cloak, and was careful to use the Rising Sun Lubricator for oiling his chains. I am bound to acknowledge that it was with a good deal of difficulty that he brought himself to adopt this last mode of protection. However, one night, while the family were at dinner, he slipped into Mr. Otis's bedroom and carried off the bottle. He felt a little humiliated at first, but afterwards was sensible enough to see that there was a great deal to be said for the invention, and, to a certain degree, it served his purpose. Still, in spite of everything, he was not left unmolested. Strings were continually being stretched across the corridor, over which he tripped in the dark, and on one occasion, while dressed for the part of 'Black Isaac, or the Huntsman of Hogley Woods,' he met with a severe fall, through treading on a butter-slide, which the twins had constructed from the entrance of the Tapestry Chamber to the top of the oak staircase. This last insult so enraged him, that he resolved to make one final effort to assert his dignity and social position, and determined to visit the insolent young Etonians the next night in his celebrated character of 'Reckless Rupert, or the Headless Earl.'

He had not appeared in this disguise for more than seventy years; in fact, not since he had so frightened pretty Lady Barbara Modish by means of it, that she suddenly broke off her engagement with the present Lord Canterville's grandfather, and ran away to Gretna Green with handsome Jack Castleton, declaring that nothing in the world would induce her to marry into a family that allowed such a horrible phantom to walk up and down the terrace at twilight. Poor Jack was afterwards shot in a duel by Lord Canterville on Wandsworth Common, and Lady Barbara died of a broken heart at Tunbridge Wells before the year was out, so, in every way, it had been a great success. It was, however, an extremely difficult 'make-up,' if I may use such a theatrical expression in connection with one of the greatest mysteries of the supernatural, or, to employ a more scientific term, the higher-natural world, and it took him fully three hours to make his preparations. At last everything was ready, and he was very pleased

with his appearance. The big leather riding-boots that went with the dress were just a little too large for him, and he could only find one of the two horse-pistols, but, on the whole, he was quite satisfied, and at a quarter past one he glided out of the wainscoting and crept down the corridor. On reaching the room occupied by the twins, which I should mention was called the Blue Bed Chamber, on account of the colour of its hangings, he found the door just ajar. Wishing to make an effective entrance, he flung it wide open, when a heavy jug of water fell right down on him, wetting him to the skin, and just missing his left shoulder by a couple of inches. At the same moment he heard stifled shrieks of laughter proceeding from the four-post bed. The shock to his nervous system was so great that he fled back to his room as hard as he could go, and the next day he was laid up with a severe cold. The only thing that at all consoled him in the whole affair was the fact that he had not brought his head with him, for, had he done so, the consequences might have been very serious.

He now gave up all hope of ever frightening this rude American family, and contented himself, as a rule, with creeping about the passages in list slippers, with a thick red muffler round his throat for fear of draughts, and a small arquebuse, in case he should be attacked by the twins. The final blow he received occurred on the 19th of September. He had gone downstairs to the great entrance-hall, feeling sure that there, at any rate, he would be quite unmolested, and was amusing himself by making satirical remarks on the large Saroni photographs of the United States Minister and his wife, which had now taken the place of the Canterville family pictures. He was simply but neatly clad in a long shroud, spotted with churchyard mould, had tied up his jaw with a strip of yellow linen, and carried a small lantern and a sexton's spade. In fact, he was dressed for the character of 'Jonas the Graveless, or the Corpse-Snatcher of Chertsey Barn,' one of his most remarkable impersonations, and one which the Cantervilles had every reason to remember, as it was the real origin of their quarrel with their neighbour, Lord Rufford. It was about a quarter past two o'clock in the morning, and, as far as he could ascertain, no one was stirring. As he was strolling towards the library, however, to see if there were any traces left of the bloodstain, suddenly there leaped out on him from a dark corner two figures, who waved their arms wildly above their heads, and shrieked out 'BOO!' in his ear.

Seized with a panic, which, under the circumstances, was only natural, he rushed for the staircase, but found Washington Otis waiting for him there with the big garden-syringe; and being thus hemmed in by his enemies on every side, and driven almost to bay, he vanished into the great iron stove, which, fortunately for him, was not lit, and had to make his way home through the flues and chimneys, arriving at his own room in a terrible state of dirt, disorder, and despair.

After this he was not seen again on any nocturnal expedition. The twins lay in wait for him on several occasions, and strewed the passages with nutshells every night to the great annoyance of their parents and the servants, but it was of no avail. It was quite evident that his feelings were so wounded that he would not appear. Mr. Otis consequently resumed his great work on the history of the Democratic Party, on which he had been engaged for some years; Mrs. Otis organised a wonderful clam-bake, which amazed the whole county; the boys took to lacrosse, euchre, poker, and other American national games; and Virginia rode about the lanes on her pony, accompanied by the young Duke of Cheshire, who had come to spend the last week of his holidays at Canterville Chase. It was generally assumed that the ghost had gone away, and, in fact,

Mr. Otis wrote a letter to that effect to Lord Canterville, who, in reply, expressed his great pleasure at the news, and sent his best congratulations to the Minister's worthy wife.

The Otises, however, were deceived, for the ghost was still in the house, and though now almost an invalid, was by no means ready to let matters rest, particularly as he heard that among the guests was the young Duke of Cheshire, whose grand-uncle, Lord Francis Stilton, had once bet a hundred guineas with Colonel Carbury that he would play dice with the Canterville ghost, and was found the next morning lying on the floor of the card-room in such a helpless paralytic state, that though he lived on to a great age, he was never able to say anything again but 'Double Sixes.' The story was well known at the time, though, of course, out of respect to the feelings of the two noble families, every attempt was made to hush it up; and a full account of all the circumstances connected with it will be found in the third volume of Lord Tattle's 'Recollections of the Prince Regent and his Friends'. The ghost, then, was naturally very anxious to show that he had not lost his influence over the Stiltons, with whom, indeed, he was distantly connected, his own first cousin having been married *en secondes nocces*, the *Sieur de Bulkeley*, from whom, as every one knows, the Dukes of Cheshire are lineally descended. Accordingly, he made arrangements for appearing to Virginia's little lover in his celebrated impersonation of 'The Vampire Monk, or, the Bloodless Benedictine,' a performance so horrible that when old Lady Startup saw it, which she did on one fatal New Year's Eve, in the year 1764, she went off into the most piercing shrieks, which culminated in violent apoplexy, and died in three days, after disinheriting the Cantervilles, who were her nearest relations, and leaving all her money to her London apothecary. At the last moment, however, his terror of the twins prevented his leaving his room, and the little Duke slept in peace under the great feathered canopy in the Royal Bedchamber, and dreamed of Virginia.

V

A few days after this, Virginia and her curly-haired cavalier went out riding on Brockley meadows, where she tore her habit so badly in getting through a hedge, that, on their return home, she made up her mind to go up by the back staircase so as not to be seen. As she was running past the Tapestry Chamber, the door of which happened to be open, she fancied she saw some one inside, and thinking it was her mother's maid, who sometimes used to bring her work there, looked in to ask her to mend her habit. To her immense surprise, however, it was the Canterville Ghost himself! He was sitting by the window, watching the ruined gold of the yellowing trees fly through the air, and the red leaves dancing madly down the long avenue. His head was leaning on his hand, and his whole attitude was one of extreme depression. Indeed, so forlorn, and so much out of repair did he look, that little Virginia, whose first idea had been to run away and lock herself in her room, was filled with pity, and determined to try and comfort him. So light was her footfall, and so deep his melancholy, that he was not aware of her presence till she spoke to him.

'I am so sorry for you,' she said, 'but my brothers are going back to Eton tomorrow, and then, if you behave yourself, no one will annoy you.'

'It is absurd asking me to behave myself,' he answered, looking round in astonishment at the pretty little girl who had ventured to address him, quite absurd. I

must rattle my chains, and groan through keyholes, and walk about at night, if that is what you mean. It is my only reason for existing.'

'It is no reason at all for existing, and you know you have been very wicked. Mrs. Umney told us, the first day we arrived here, that you had killed your wife.'

'Well, I quite admit it,' said the Ghost petulantly, 'but it was a purely family matter, and concerned no one else.'

'It is very wrong to kill any one,' said Virginia, who at times had a sweet Puritan gravity, caught from some old New England ancestor.

'Oh, I hate the cheap severity of abstract ethics! My wife was very plain, never had my ruffs properly starched, and knew nothing about cookery. Why, there was a buck I had shot in Hogley Woods, a magnificent pricket, and do you know how she had it sent up to table? However, it is no matter now, for it is all over, and I don't think it was very nice of her brothers to starve me to death, though I did kill her.'

'Starve you to death? Oh, Mr. Ghost, I mean Sir Simon, are you hungry? I have a sandwich in my case. Would you like it?'

'No, thank you, I never eat anything now; but it is very kind of you, all the same, and you are much nicer than the rest of your horrid, rude, vulgar, dishonest family.'

'Stop!' cried Virginia, stamping her foot, 'it is you who are rude, and horrid, and vulgar, and as for dishonesty, you know you stole the paints out of my box to try and furbish up that ridiculous blood-stain in the library. First you took all my reds, including the vermilion, and I couldn't do any more sunsets, then you took the emerald-green and the chrome-yellow, and finally I had nothing left but indigo and Chinese white, and could only do moonlight scenes, which are always depressing to look at, and not at all easy to paint. I never told on you, though I was very much annoyed, and it was most ridiculous, the whole thing; for who ever heard of emerald-green blood?'

'Well, really,' said the Ghost, rather meekly, 'what was I to do? It is a very difficult thing to get real blood nowadays, and, as your brother began it all with his Paragon Detergent, I certainly saw no reason why I should not have your paints. As for colour, that is always a matter of taste: the Cantervilles have blue blood, for instance, the very bluest in England; but I know you Americans don't care for things of this kind.'

'You know nothing about it, and the best thing you can do is to emigrate and improve your mind. My father will be only too happy to give you a free passage, and though there is a heavy duty on spirits of every kind, there will be no difficulty about the Custom House, as the officers are all Democrats. Once in New York, you are sure to be a great success. I know lots of people there who would give a hundred thousand dollars to have a grandfather, and much more than that to have a family ghost.'

'I don't think I should like America.'

'I suppose because we have no ruins and no curiosities,' said Virginia satirically.

'No ruins! no curiosities!' answered the Ghost, 'you have your navy and your manners.'

'Good evening; I will go and ask papa to get the twins an extra week's holiday.'

'Please don't go, Miss Virginia,' he cried; I am so lonely and so unhappy, and I really don't know what to do. I want to go to sleep and I cannot.'

'That's quite absurd! You have merely to go to bed and blow out the candle. It is very difficult sometimes to keep awake, especially at church, but there is no difficulty at all about sleeping. Why, even babies know how to do that, and they are not very clever.'

'I have not slept for three hundred years,' he said sadly, and Virginia's beautiful blue eyes opened in wonder; 'for three hundred years I have not slept, and I am so tired.'

Virginia grew quite grave, and her little lips trembled like rose-leaves. She came towards him, and kneeling down at his side, looked up into his old withered face.

'Poor, poor Ghost,' she murmured, 'have you no place where you can sleep?'

'Far away beyond the pine woods,' he answered, in a low dreamy voice, 'there is a little garden. There the grass grows long and deep, there are the great white stars of the hemlock flower, there the nightingale sings all night long. All night long he sings, and the cold, crystal moon looks down, and the yew-tree spreads out its giant arms over the sleepers.'

Virginia's eyes grew dim with tears, and she hid her face in her hands.

'You mean the Garden of Death,' she whispered.

'Yes, Death. Death must be so beautiful. To lie in the soft brown earth, with the grasses waving above one's head, and listen to silence. To have no yesterday, and no tomorrow. To forget time, to forgive life, to be at peace. You can help me. You can open for me the portals of Death's house, for Love is always with you, and Love is stronger than Death is.'

Virginia trembled, a cold shudder ran through her, and for a few moments there was silence. She felt as if she was in a terrible dream.

Then the Ghost spoke again, and his voice sounded like the sighing of the wind.

'Have you ever read the old prophecy on the library window?'

'Oh, often,' cried the little girl, looking up; 'I know it quite well. It is painted in curious black letters, and it is difficult to read. There are only six lines:

Whan a golden girl can win
Prayer from out the lips of sin,

When the barren almond bears,
And a little child give away its tears,
Then shall all the house be still
And peace come to Canterville.

But I don't know what they mean.'

'They mean,' he said sadly, 'that you must weep with me for my sins, because I have no tears, and pray with me for my soul, because I have no faith, and then, if you have always been sweet, and good, and gentle, the Angel of Death will have mercy on me. You will see fearful shapes in darkness, and wicked voices will whisper in your ear, but they will not harm you, for against the purity of a little child the powers of Hell cannot prevail.'

Virginia made no answer, and the Ghost wrung his hands in wild despair as he looked down at her bowed golden head. Suddenly she stood up, very pale, and with a strange light in her eyes. 'I am not afraid,' she said firmly, 'and I will ask the Angel to have mercy on you.'

He rose from his seat with a faint cry of joy, and taking her hand bent over it with old-fashioned grace and kissed it. His fingers were as cold as ice, and his lips burned like fire, but Virginia did not falter, as he led her across the dusky room. On the faded green tapestry were brodered little huntsmen. They blew their tasselled horns and with their tiny hands waved to her to go back. 'Go back! little Virginia,' they cried, 'go back!' but the Ghost clutched her hand more tightly, and she shut her eyes against them. Horrible animals with lizard tails, and goggle eyes, blinked at her from the carven chimney-piece, and murmured 'Beware! little Virginia, beware! we may never see you again,' but the Ghost glided on more swiftly, and Virginia did not listen.

When they reached the end of the room he stopped, and muttered some words she could not understand. She opened her eyes, and saw the wall slowly fading away like a mist, and a great black cavern in front of her. A bitter cold wind swept round them, and she felt something pulling at her dress. 'Quick, quick,' cried the Ghost, 'or it will be too late,' and, in a moment, the wainscoting had closed behind them, and the Tapestry Chamber was empty.

VI

About ten minutes later, the bell rang for tea, and, as Virginia did not come down, Mrs. Otis sent up one of the footmen to tell her. After a little time he returned and said that he could not find Miss Virginia anywhere. As she was in the habit of going out to the garden every evening to get flowers for the dinner-table, Mrs. Otis was not at all alarmed at first, but when six o'clock struck, and Virginia did not appear, she became really agitated, and sent the boys out to look for her, while she herself and Mr. Otis searched every room in the house. At half past six the boys came back and said that they could find no trace of their sister anywhere. They were all now in the greatest state of excitement, and did not know what to do, when Mr. Otis suddenly remembered that, some few days before, he had given a band of gipsies permission to camp in the park.

He accordingly at once set off for Blackfell Hollow, where he knew they were, accompanied by his eldest son and two of the farm-servants. The little Duke of Cheshire, who was perfectly frantic with anxiety, begged hard to be allowed to go too, but Mr. Otis would not allow him, as he was afraid there might be a scuffle. On arriving at the spot, however, he found that the gipsies had gone, and it was evident that their departure had been rather sudden, as the fire was still burning, and some plates were lying on the grass. Having sent off Washington and the two men to scour the district, he ran home, and despatched telegrams to all the police inspectors in the county, telling them to look out for a little girl who had been kidnapped by tramps or gipsies. He then ordered his horse to be brought round, and, after insisting on his wife and the three boys sitting down to dinner, rode off down the Ascot road with a groom. He had hardly, however, gone a couple of miles, when he heard somebody galloping after him, and, looking round, saw the little Duke coming up on his pony, with his face very flushed and no hat. 'I'm awfully sorry, Mr. Otis,' gasped out the boy, 'but I can't eat any dinner as long as Virginia is lost. Please, don't be angry with me; if you had let us be engaged last year, there would never have been all this trouble. You won't send me back, will you? I can't go! I won't go!'

The Minister could not help smiling at the handsome young scapegrace, and was a good deal touched at his devotion to Virginia, so leaning down from his horse, he patted him kindly on the shoulders, and said, 'Well, Cecil, if you won't go back I suppose you must come with me, but I must get you a hat at Ascot.'

'Oh, bother my hat! I want Virginia!' cried the little Duke, laughing, and they galloped on to the railway station. There Mr. Otis inquired of the station-master if any one answering to the description of Virginia had been seen on the platform, but could get no news of her. The station-master, however, wired up and down the line, and assured him that a strict watch would be kept for her, and, after having bought a hat for the little Duke from a linen-draper, who was just putting up his shutters, Mr. Otis rode off to Bexley, a village about four miles away, which he was told was a well-known haunt of the gipsies, as there was a large common next to it. Here they roused up the rural policeman, but could get no information from him, and, after riding all over the common, they turned their horses' heads homewards, and reached the Chase about eleven o'clock, dead-tired and almost heartbroken. They found Washington and the twins waiting for them at the gate-house with lanterns, as the avenue was very dark. Not the slightest trace of Virginia had been discovered. The gipsies had been caught on Brockley meadows, but she was not with them, and they had explained their sudden departure by saying that they had mistaken the date of Chorton Fair, and had gone off in a hurry for fear they might be late. Indeed, they had been quite distressed at hearing of Virginia's disappearance, as they were very grateful to Mr. Otis for having allowed them to camp in his park, and four of their number had stayed behind to help in the search. The carp-pond had been dragged, and the whole Chase thoroughly gone over, but without any result. It was evident that, for that night at any rate, Virginia was lost to them; and it was in a state of the deepest depression that Mr. Otis and the boys walked up to the house, the groom following behind with the two horses and the pony.

In the hall they found a group of frightened servants, and lying on a sofa in the library was poor Mrs. Otis, almost out of her mind with terror and anxiety, and having her forehead bathed with eau-de-cologne by the old housekeeper. Mr. Otis at once

insisted on her having something to eat, and ordered up supper for the whole party. It was a melancholy meal, as hardly any one spoke, and even the twins were awestruck and subdued, as they were very fond of their sister. When they had finished, Mr. Otis, in spite of the entreaties of the little Duke, ordered them all to bed, saying that nothing more could be done that night, and that he would telegraph in the morning to Scotland Yard for some detectives to be sent down immediately. Just as they were passing out of the dining-room, midnight began to boom from the clock tower, and when the last stroke sounded they heard a crash and a sudden shrill cry; a dreadful peal of thunder shook the house, a strain of unearthly music floated through the air, a panel at the top of the staircase flew back with a loud noise, and out on the landing, looking very pale and white, with a little casket in her hand, stepped Virginia. In a moment they had all rushed up to her. Mrs. Otis clasped her passionately in her arms, the Duke smothered her with violent kisses, and the twins executed a wild war-dance round the group.

'Good heavens! child, where have you been?' said Mr. Otis, rather angrily, thinking that she had been playing some foolish trick on them. 'Cecil and I have been riding all over the country looking for you, and your mother has been frightened to death. You must never play these practical jokes any more.'

'Except on the Ghost! except on the Ghost!' shrieked the twins, as they capered about.

'My own darling, thank God you are found; you must never leave my side again,' murmured Mrs. Otis, as she kissed the trembling child, and smoothed the tangled gold of her hair.

'Papa,' said Virginia quietly, 'I have been with the Ghost. He is dead, and you must come and see him. He had been very wicked, but he was really sorry for all that he had done, and he gave me this box of beautiful jewels before he died.'

The whole family gazed at her in mute amazement, but she was quite grave and serious; and, turning round, she led them through the opening in the wainscoting down a narrow secret corridor, Washington following with a lighted candle, which he had caught up from the table. Finally, they came to a great oak door, studded with rusty nails. When Virginia touched it, it swung back on its heavy hinges, and they found themselves in a little low room, with a vaulted ceiling, and one tiny grated window. Embedded in the wall was a huge iron ring, and chained to it was a gaunt skeleton, that was stretched out at full length on the stone floor, and seemed to be trying to grasp with its long fleshless fingers an old-fashioned trencher and ewer, that were placed just out of its reach. The jug had evidently been once filled with water, as it was covered inside with green mould. There was nothing on the trencher but a pile of dust. Virginia knelt down beside the skeleton, and, folding her little hands together, began to pray silently, while the rest of the party looked on in wonder at the terrible tragedy whose secret was now disclosed to them.'

'Hallo!' suddenly exclaimed one of the twins, who had been looking out of the window to try and discover in what wing of the house the room was situated. 'Hallo! the old withered almond tree has blossomed. I can see the flowers quite plainly in the moonlight.'

'God has forgiven him,' said Virginia gravely, as she rose to her feet, and a beautiful light seemed to illumine her face.

'What an angel you are!' cried the young Duke, and he put his arm round her neck, and kissed her.

VII

Four days after these curious incidents a funeral started from Canterville Chase at about eleven o'clock at night. The hearse was drawn by eight black horses, each of which carried on its head a great tuft of nodding ostrich-plumes, and the leaden coffin was covered by a rich purple pall, on which was embroidered in gold the Canterville coat-of-arms. By the side of the hearse and the coaches walked the servants with lighted torches, and the whole procession was wonderfully impressive. Lord Canterville was the chief mourner, having come up specially from Wales to attend the funeral, and sat in the first carriage along with little Virginia. Then came the United States Minister and his wife, then Washington and the three boys, and in the last carriage was Mrs. Umney. It was generally felt that, as she had been frightened by the ghost for more than fifty years of her life, she had a right to see the last of him. A deep grave had been dug in the corner of the churchyard, just under the old yew-tree, and the service was read in the most impressive manner by the Rev. Augustus Dampier. When the ceremony was over, the servants, according to an old custom observed in the Canterville family, extinguished their torches, and, as the coffin was being lowered into the grave, Virginia stepped forward, and laid on it a large cross made of white and pink almond-blossoms. As she did so, the moon came out from behind a cloud, and flooded with its silent silver the little churchyard, and from a distant copse a nightingale began to sing. She thought of the ghost's description of the Garden of Death, her eyes became dim with tears, and she hardly spoke a word during the drive home.

The next morning, before Lord Canterville went up to town, Mr. Otis had an interview with him on the subject of the jewels the ghost had given to Virginia. They were perfectly magnificent, especially a certain ruby necklace with old Venetian setting, which was really a superb specimen of sixteenth-century work, and their value was so great that Mr. Otis felt considerable scruples about allowing his daughter to accept them.

'My Lord,' he said, 'I know that in this country mortmain is held to apply to trinkets as well as to land, and it is quite clear to me that these jewels are, or should be, heirlooms in your family. I must beg you, accordingly, to take them to London with you, and to regard them simply as a portion of your property which has been restored to you under certain strange conditions. As for my daughter, she is merely a child, and has as yet, I am glad to say, but little interest in such appurtenances of idle luxury. I am also informed by Mrs. Otis, who, I may say, is no mean authority upon Art - having had the privilege of spending several winters in Boston when she was a girl - that these gems are of great monetary worth, and if offered for sale would fetch a tall price. Under these circumstances, Lord Canterville, I feel sure that you will recognise how impossible it would be for me to allow them to remain in the possession of any member of my family; and, indeed, all such vain gauds and toys, however suitable or necessary to the dignity of the British aristocracy, would be completely out of place among those who have been brought up on the severe, and I believe immortal, principles of Republican

simplicity. Perhaps I should mention that Virginia is very anxious that you should allow her to retain the box, as a memento of your unfortunate but misguided ancestor. As it is extremely old, and consequently a good deal out of repair, you may perhaps think fit to comply with her request. For my own part, I confess I am a good deal surprised to find a child of mine expressing sympathy with mediaevalism in any form, and can only account for it by the fact that Virginia was born in one of your London suburbs shortly after Mrs. Otis had returned from a trip to Athens.

Lord Canterville listened very gravely to the worthy Minister's speech, pulling his grey moustache now and then to hide an involuntary smile, and when Mr. Otis had ended, he shook him cordially by the hand, and said, 'My dear sir, your charming little daughter rendered my unlucky ancestor, Sir Simon, a very important service, and I and my family are much indebted to her for her marvellous courage and pluck. The jewels are clearly hers, and, egad, I believe that if I were heartless enough to take them from her, the wicked old fellow would be out of his grave in a fortnight, leading me the devil of a life. As for their being heirlooms, nothing is an heirloom that is not so mentioned in a will or legal document, and the existence of these jewels has been quite unknown. I assure you I have no more claim on them than your butler, and when Miss Virginia grows up I daresay she will be pleased to have pretty things to wear. Besides, you forget, Mr. Otis, that you took the furniture and the ghost at a valuation, and anything that belonged to the ghost passed at once into your possession, as, whatever activity Sir Simon may have shown in the corridor at night, in point of law he was really dead, and you acquired his property by purchase.'

Mr. Otis was a good deal distressed at Lord Canterville's refusal, and begged him to reconsider his decision, but the good-natured peer was quite firm, and finally induced the Minister to allow his daughter to retain the present the ghost had given her, and when, in the spring of 1890, the young Duchess of Cheshire was presented at the Queen's first drawing-room on the occasion of her marriage, her jewels were the universal theme of admiration. For Virginia received the coronet, which is the reward of all good little American girls, and was married to her boy-lover as soon as he came of age. They were both so charming, and they loved each other so much, that every one was delighted at the match, except the old Marchioness of Dumbleton, who had tried to catch the Duke for one of her seven unmarried daughters, and had given no less than three expensive dinner-parties for that purpose, and, strange to say, Mr. Otis himself. Mr. Otis was extremely fond of the young Duke personally, but, theoretically, he objected to titles, and, to use his own words, 'was not without apprehension lest, amid the enervating influences of a pleasure-loving aristocracy, the true principles of Republican simplicity should be forgotten.' His objections, however, were completely overruled, and I believe that when he walked up the aisle of St. George's, Hanover Square, with his daughter leaning on his arm, there was not a prouder man in the whole length and breadth of England.

The Duke and Duchess, after the honeymoon was over, went down to Canterville Chase, and on the day after their arrival they walked over in the afternoon to the lonely churchyard by the pine-woods. There had been a great deal of difficulty at first about the inscription on Sir Simon's tombstone, but finally it had been decided to engrave on it simply the initials of the old gentleman's name, and the verse from the library window. The Duchess had brought with her some lovely roses, which she strewed upon the grave, and after they had stood by it for some time they strolled into the ruined chancel

of the old abbey. There the Duchess sat down on a fallen pillar, while her husband lay at her feet smoking a cigarette and looking up at her beautiful eyes. Suddenly he threw his cigarette away, took hold of her hand, and said to her, 'Virginia, a wife should have no secrets from her husband.

'Dear Cecil! I have no secrets from you.'

'Yes, you have,' he answered, smiling, 'you have never told me what happened to you when you were locked up with the ghost.'

'I have never told any one, Cecil,' said Virginia gravely.

'I know that, but you might tell me.'

'Please don't ask me, Cecil, I cannot tell you. Poor Sir Simon! I owe him a great deal. Yes, don't laugh, Cecil, I really do. He made me see what Life is, and what Death signifies, and why Love is stronger than both.'

The Duke rose and kissed his wife lovingly.

'You can have your secret as long as I have your heart,' he murmured.

'You have always had that, Cecil.

'And you will tell our children some day, won't you?'

Virginia blushed.

THE CANTERVILLE GHOST

Adapted version

Mr Hiram B. Otis was a rich American from New York. He had come to live and work in England, but he did not want to live in London. He did not want to live in the city. He wanted to live in the countryside outside London.

Canterville Chase was a large and very old house near London. Lord Canterville, the owner, wanted to sell it. So Mr Hiram B. Otis visited Lord Canterville.

'I do not live in Canterville Chase,' Lord Canterville said to Mr Otis. 'I do not want to live there. The house has a ghost - The Canterville Ghost.'

'I come from America,' said Mr Otis. 'America is a modern country. I don't believe in ghosts. Have you seen this Canterville Ghost?'

'No,' said Lord Canterville, 'but I have heard it at night.'

'I don't believe in ghosts,' Mr Otis said again. 'No one has found a ghost. No one has put a ghost in a museum. And you haven't seen this ghost either.'

'But several members of my family have seen it,' said Lord Canterville. 'My aunt saw the ghost. She was so frightened that she was ill for the rest of her life. Also, the servants have seen it so they will not stay in the house at night. Only the housekeeper, Mrs Umney, lives in Canterville Chase. Mrs Umney lives there alone.'

'I want to buy the house,' said Mr Otis. 'I'll buy the ghost as well. Will you sell Canterville Chase? Will you sell the ghost?'

'Yes, I will,' said Lord Canterville. 'But, please remember, I told you about the ghost before you bought the house.'

Mr Hiram B. Otis bought Canterville Chase. Then his family came to England from America. He had a wife called Lucretia, three sons and a daughter.

The eldest son, Washington, was almost twenty years old. He was good-looking and had fair hair. His two young brothers were twins. They were twelve years old. The daughter, Virginia, was fifteen years old. She had large blue eyes and a lovely face.

Mr Otis took his family to live at Canterville Chase.

The old house was in the countryside west of London. Mr Otis and his family travelled from London by train. Then they rode to the house in a wagon pulled by two horses.

Canterville Chase was big and old. Trees grew all around the house. The Otis family wanted to stop and look at the outside of the house, but the sky darkened. A thunderstorm was coming. Rain started to fall, so the family

went inside the house quickly.

Mrs Umney, the housekeeper, was waiting for them by the front door. She was an old woman and wore a black dress and white apron. She lived at Canterville Chase and looked after the house.

'Welcome to Canterville Chase,' said Mrs Umney.

'Would you like some tea?'

'Yes, please,' said Mrs Otis.

The Otis family followed Mrs Umney into the library.

There was a big table in the centre of the room and many chairs. Mrs Umney put teacups on the table, then she brought a pot of tea.

The Otises sat in the library and drank their tea. They looked out of a large window at the rain. The rain was falling heavily and the sky was black. They heard thunder and they saw lightning.

Mrs Otis looked around the room. There were many books on bookshelves. There were paintings on the walls. There was also a red stain on the floor. The red stain was by the fireplace.

'What is this red stain?' Mrs Otis asked Mrs Umney.

'It is blood,' answered the old housekeeper in a quiet voice.

'I don't want a blood-stain in my library,' said Mrs Otis.

'Please remove the stain. Please clean the floor immediately.'

The old woman smiled. 'It is the blood of Lady

Eleanore de Canterville. She was murdered by her husband, Sir Simon de Canterville, in 1575. The blood-stain has been here for over three hundred years. It cannot be removed.'

'Nonsense,' said Washington Otis. 'I have some Pinkerton's Stain Remover from America. It can remove any stain. Watch.'

Washington Otis took the stain remover from a bag.

Pinkerton's Stain Remover looked like a small black stick.

He rubbed the stick on the blood-stain. A minute later the floor was clean. The stick had removed the stain quickly and easily.

Mrs Umney looked at the floor. She was frightened. No one had removed the blood-stain for three hundred years.

Mrs Umney was very frightened.

'Pinkerton's can remove anything,' said Washington Otis. 'The blood-stain has gone.'

Lightning flashed and lit the library. Thunder crashed over the house. Mrs Umney fainted.

Mr and Mrs Otis ran across the library. They helped the old housekeeper who lay on the floor. Mrs Umney's eyes were closed and her face was pale.

'Mrs Umney! Mrs Umney!' cried Mrs Otis. 'Can you speak?'

Mrs Umney opened her eyes. Trouble will come to this house,' she said. 'I have seen the ghost. The ghost will come to you.'

All the Otises helped Mrs Umney to stand up. 'The ghost will come,' she said again. 'You must not remove the blood-stain. You must not clean the library floor. The ghost will be angry.'

Then Mrs Umney went upstairs to her room.

'Let's look for the ghost,' said the Otis boys. 'Let's look round the house.'

The Otises looked round the house together. But they did not see the Canterville Ghost.

That night the family went to bed early. The storm continued all night. Next morning they went into the library. The blood-stain had reappeared on the floor.

'I'll remove this blood-stain once more,' said

Washington Otis. 'Mother doesn't want a blood-stain in the library. I'll clean the floor again.'

He removed the blood-stain with Pinkerton's Stain Remover. The library floor was clean. But the next morning the stain had come back again.

'This is very strange,' said Mr Otis. 'I'll lock the library

door at night. No one can come into the library. No one can put a stain on the floor.'

'I don't think Pinkerton's Stain Remover is bad,' said Washington Otis. 'I think there really is a ghost. The ghost is making the blood-stain. The ghost puts the stain on the floor at night.'

'We must find this ghost,' said Mr Hiram B. Otis. 'It must stop making these stains. Your mother does not like blood on the library floor.'

That day the family went out. They walked around the countryside near Canterville Chase. They went to the nearby village. They looked at the old village houses. Then they walked back to Canterville Chase through the woods. It was a summer evening and the weather was fine.

It was late when they got back to the house. The Otises were hungry and tired. After eating supper they went to bed. The bedrooms were upstairs. There was a long corridor upstairs. The bedroom doors were along this corridor.

Mr Otis woke up after midnight. There was a strange noise outside his room. The sound was like metal chains.

The chains were nibbling together.

Mr Otis got out of bed and opened the bedroom door.

He looked into the corridor.

He saw the Canterville Ghost in the corridor. The ghost was an old man with burning red eyes. He had long grey hair and wore very old-fashioned clothes. There were chains on his hands and feet. He was rubbing the chains together

so they made a noise.

'My dear sir, your chains make a terrible noise,' Mr Otis said to the ghost. 'You must put some oil on those chains. Here is some Tammany Rising Sun Oil from the United States. Please put the oil on your chains.'

Mr Otis put a bottle of oil on a table in the corridor. Then he closed his bedroom door and went back to bed. The Canterville Ghost was very surprised. He had lived in Canterville Chase for three hundred years. Everyone was frightened of him, because everyone was afraid of ghosts. But this American gentleman was not afraid. The Canterville Ghost decided to work harder. He wanted to frighten the American. He made a terrible noise and shone a horrible green light in the corridor. Another door opened at the end of the corridor. Mr Otis's youngest sons came out of their bedroom. The two young boys had the pillows from their beds in their hands. They threw the pillows at the ghost. They laughed at the ghost.

The ghost was amazed and upset. No one had laughed at him before. He was a ghost. Everyone is frightened of ghosts. No one had ever laughed at the Canterville Ghost before.

The Canterville Ghost did not know what to do. He disappeared through the wall and the house became quiet. The ghost went to the secret room where he lived. He sat down on a chair. He thought about what had happened. He had frightened people for three hundred years. He had looked through windows and frightened the servants. He had knocked on bedroom doors. He had frightened people in their beds. He had blown out candles in the night. He had turned green and made noises with his chains. Everyone had always been frightened. No one had given him Rising Sun Oil to put on his chains. No one had thrown pillows at him. He was a very unhappy ghost.

Washington Otis removed the blood-stain in the library every day. Every morning the stain had reappeared. But the stain was no longer the colour of blood. One morning it was brown. Another morning it was purple. Then it became bright green.

The Otises laughed at the blood-stain. They looked for it every morning before breakfast.

'What colour is it today?' asked Washington Otis.

'It's green!' shouted the twins. 'It's green blood today.'

They laughed at the green blood-stain on the library floor.

Virginia Otis did not laugh. The young girl was silent at breakfast. The blood-stain made her feel sad and she almost

cried when she saw the bright green stain. She was sure that the ghost put the stain on the floor. She felt sorry for the ghost.

'The stain has been here for three hundred years,' said Virginia. 'We have been here for three weeks. The poor ghost puts the stain on the floor every night. Can't you leave the stain there?'

But the others did not listen to Virginia.

The second appearance of the ghost was on a Sunday night.

The Otises had all gone to bed. Suddenly they were woken up. They heard a terrible crashing noise downstairs.

The whole family ran out of their bedrooms. They ran downstairs. It was dark but Mr Otis and his eldest son carried candles. They heard another crashing noise in the hallway near the front door.

There was a suit of armour in the hallway. This suit of armour was more than three hundred years old. It had fallen over and made a loud noise. The Canterville Ghost was sitting on the floor next to the armour.

The ghost had tried to put on the suit of armour. He wanted to walk around the house and frighten the Otis family. But the metal suit was too heavy. The suit of armour had fallen onto the floor.

The Canterville Ghost was sitting beside the armour.

He was rubbing his knee. He had hurt himself.

Mr Hiram B. Otis pointed a gun at the ghost.

Washington Otis held his candle high in the air. The Otis twins laughed loudly. Virginia was afraid and stood beside her mother. They all looked at the Canterville Ghost.

The ghost was very angry. He stood up and gave a loud shout. He blew out the candle in Washington Otis's hand.

There was no light in the hall. Then the ghost ran up the stairs in the darkness.

He stopped at the top of the stairs and laughed. He had a frightening laugh. Men's hair had turned grey when they heard him laugh. But the Otises were not afraid.

'Are you in pain?' asked Mrs Otis. 'I have a bottle of Dr Dobell's medicine. It is good for stomach-aches and headaches. Please take the medicine.'

The ghost looked at Mrs Otis angrily. Then he disappeared in a green cloud and went back to his secret room. He was very unhappy. He had tried to put on the suit of armour, but it was too heavy. The armour had fallen over and the ghost had hurt his leg.

The ghost stayed in his room during the day. He came out at night to visit the library. He repainted the blood-stain every night. And every morning, Washington Otis removed the blood-stain with Pinkerton's Stain Remover.

But the ghost had a problem. He had quickly finished all his red paint. Now his brown and purple paints were finished as well. So, sometimes he painted the blood-stain green, sometimes blue.

The ghost made plans. He wanted to frighten the Otis twins. He planned to visit the twins in the night. He planned to turn himself green and make a horrible noise. He planned to visit the twins in their bedroom. He planned to touch them with his ice-cold hands in the dark. He left his secret room at midnight. The house was dark.

He climbed the stairs and walked along the corridor. The twins' bedroom was at the end of the corridor round a corner. He turned the corner. Suddenly he stopped.

In front of him was a round face with a terrible mouth and burning eyes. Fire shone out of the mouth and eyes of this horrible face. It was the face of a ghost!

The Canterville Ghost gave a shout and ran back to his secret room. He had never seen a ghost before and felt very frightened.

Before daylight came, the Canterville Ghost felt better. Were there two ghosts in the house? He must find out. He must meet the second ghost.

He went back upstairs and walked along the corridor towards the twins' room. The second ghost was still there, but its eyes were no longer burning. He went up to it. He touched it. The head of the second ghost fell onto the floor. It was not a ghost at all. It was a head made from a large round vegetable called a pumpkin. The twins had put a candle inside it. There was a card on the floor.

THE OTIS GHOST THE ONLY TRUE CANTERVILLE GHOST

The twins had put the head in the corridor to frighten him. This made the Canterville Ghost very angry. What could he do? He could think of nothing at that moment, so he went back to his room.

The ghost felt very weak and tired. He stayed in his room for five days. He did not repaint the blood-stain in the library. There had been a blood-stain on the library floor for three hundred years. Now the library floor was clean.

After a week the ghost felt better. He decided to try once more to frighten the Otis twins. He planned to make his face look as horrible as possible. He waited until the middle of the night.

Slowly and silently he walked to the twins' bedroom. It was one o'clock in the morning. The house was quiet. The door of the twins' room was slightly open.

The ghost took off his head and carried it under his arm. It is terrifying to see a headless ghost. He wanted to terrify the twins.

He pushed open the door of the twins' bedroom. The door banged against the wall.

He had planned to shout and hold his head in his hands. But a heavy jug of water fell from the top of the door. The twins had played a trick on him. He was soaked with water. The twins shouted and laughed.

The ghost ran back down the corridor. He could not frighten the twins. He could not frighten anyone in the Otis family.

Washington Otis came out of his bedroom. The ghost stopped running. Behind him, the twins ran down the corridor. They shouted - 'Boo!' - in his ears and waved their arms. Washington Otis laughed at him.

The ghost did not know what to do. He ran through the nearest door, went back to the secret room and lay down. He could not frighten anyone. He was a very unhappy ghost.

The Otises did not see the Canterville ghost at night again. The twins waited for him when it was dark. They put a rope across the corridor. They tied metal tins to the rope. But the ghost did not walk into the tins. Only Mr Otis came along the corridor. He fell over the rope and was very angry. Virginia Otis was also angry with the twins. 'Can't you leave the poor ghost alone?' she said. 'Why do you want to hurt him? Why do you want to play tricks on him? He has lived here for a very long time. Leave him alone.'

The twins did not listen, but the ghost heard Virginia's words. The words gave him hope.

One afternoon, Virginia went to the library. The library door was slightly open. She pushed the door wide open and quietly walked into the room.

There was somebody sitting by the window. It was the Canterville Ghost!

He was looking at the library window which was made of coloured glass. There were words painted on the glass. He was wearing his best clothes and had combed his long grey hair.

'I feel very sorry for you,' said Virginia quietly. 'I'm sorry that my brothers were not very kind to you. But you did try to frighten them.'

'Yes I did,' said the ghost. 'It is my job to frighten everyone who comes to Canterville Chase.'

'You are very wicked, I know,' said Virginia, 'Mrs Umney, the housekeeper, told us that you killed your wife.'

'Yes I did,' replied the ghost. 'But she wasn't very kind. And it wasn't very kind of her brothers to starve me to

death.'

'Starve you to death?' said Virginia. 'Oh, poor ghost, are you hungry? Would you like a sandwich?'

'No thank you,' he replied. 'I never eat anything. But you are very kind. You are much kinder than the rest of your family. They are rude, nasty and unkind.'

'Stop!' cried Virginia. 'You are nasty and unkind too. You stole my paint box. You used my paints to make the blood-stain in the library. I never told anyone about it. But now I'm going to fetch my father.'

She turned to go, but the ghost spoke again.

'Please do not go, Miss Virginia,' said the ghost. 'I am so lonely and so unhappy. I do not know what to do. I want to go to sleep and I cannot.'

'It's easy to sleep,' said Virginia. 'You go to bed and close your eyes.'

'I have not slept for three hundred years,' said the ghost. 'I have not slept since I was murdered by my wife's brothers.'

Virginia walked across the library and looked at the old face of the ghost. It was a sad face.

'Poor ghost,' said Virginia, 'how can I help you to sleep?'

'Far away in the woods,' said the ghost, 'there is a little garden. In the little garden the grass grows long and thick. There are many flowers and trees. A nightingale sings all night long. The bird's sweet song is beautiful and sad. The white stars and the pale moon look down on this little garden. It is very peaceful.'

Virginia's eyes were full of tears. She put her hands over her face.

'You mean it is the Garden of Death,' she said quietly.

'Yes, the Garden of Sleep,' said the ghost. 'It is very beautiful. There is peace and silence. There is no yesterday and no tomorrow. But only Love can open the door to the garden. For Love is stronger than Death.'

Virginia did not know what to say. She listened as the ghost spoke again.

'Have you read the writing on the library window?'

'Yes,' said Virginia, 'but I do not understand it.'

'Look,' said the ghost. 'Read the lines on the window.'

Virginia looked at the window and read the lines of poetry:

*When a golden girl shall weep
For the ghost that cannot sleep,
Then the dead at last shall die
And in restful earth may lie.*

'The words mean you must weep for me,' said the unhappy ghost. 'Then the Angel of Death will let me rest.'

'Will you help?'

'What do I have to do?' asked Virginia.

'You must come with me into the darkness. You will see strange things. You will hear strange voices, but nothing will hurt you. You are good and kind. The dark cannot hurt you.'

Virginia did not answer and the ghost waited. He had waited for three hundred years. This was the longest minute of all that time.

'I am not afraid,' said Virginia at last. 'I will come with you into the dark.'

The ghost kissed her hand. His lips were cold like ice, but they burned like fire. The ghost held her hand and they walked to the wall of the library. The wall opened. There was darkness beyond the wall and a cold wind. Voices spoke out of the wind. 'Go back, Virginia. Go back before it is too late.'

Virginia walked into the darkness with the ghost.

Virginia and the ghost disappeared through the library wall.

Virginia did not come downstairs for supper. Mr Otis sent one of the servants to her room. The servant could not find Virginia so everybody searched the house. They looked everywhere but they could not find her. Mr and Mrs Otis were very worried.

It was a summer evening and the sun had not set, so the family and the servants searched the gardens before it was dark. In the garden there were many trees and a deep pond. They looked in the pond. They looked in the trees. Then they asked people at the railway station. But no one

had seen Virginia. Mr Otis went to tell the village policeman that Virginia had disappeared. But, by that time, it was dark and no one could search any more that night.

None of the family wanted to eat or sleep. They sat in the library and waited. They hoped Virginia would return safely. They planned to search for Virginia again in the morning.

It was midnight when the family decided to go to bed. They left the library and started to walk up the stairs together. Suddenly all the clocks in the house struck twelve and they heard a terrible noise. Thunder crashed outside the house and the Otises heard a dreadful cry. Strange music sounded inside the house and a door opened at the top of the stairs.

Virginia stood in the doorway. She looked down the stairs at them. Her face was very pale and she carried a small box in her hand.

'Where have you been?' Mr Otis asked angrily. 'Your mother has been very worried. You have frightened us all. You must never play a trick like this again.'

'Except on the ghost,' said the twins. 'You can play tricks on the ghost!'

'Father,' Virginia said quietly, 'I have been with the ghost. He is dead and now he can rest. He gave me this box of beautiful jewels before he died.'

She showed her father the small box. Inside was a necklace made of red stones.

'Where did you get this?' asked her father. 'Where have you been?'

Mr Otis forgot to be angry. He was so pleased to see that Virginia was safe.

'Come. I'll show you,' said Virginia.

She turned back to the door at the top of the stairs. All of the family followed her. Washington Otis carried a lighted candle.

Virginia led them along a secret corridor. They came to an old wooden door which was open. Beyond the door was a little room with a low ceiling. There was an iron ring in the wall and two chains. At the end of the chains was a body. Only bones remained. It was a skeleton.

'This is the body of Sir Simon de Canterville,' said Virginia. 'He murdered his wife in 1575. Then his wife's brothers shut him in this room. He was given no food. Sir Simon starved to death. His ghost was in this house for three hundred years. But now he has found peace.'

The Otis family looked around the little room and did not know what to say. Virginia knelt on the floor beside the skeleton and began to pray.

There was a funeral four nights later. The Otises buried the body of Sir Simon de Canterville in a grave among the trees.

The Otises, Mrs Umney the housekeeper, and all the servants from Canterville Chase stood near the grave.

Behind them were people from the nearby village. Many people had come to the funeral.

Virginia carried white flowers. She looked up at the stars and the pale moon and the dark trees. She remembered what the ghost had said about the Garden of Death. A nightingale began to sing. The bird's sweet song was beautiful and sad.

Virginia smiled. 'God has forgiven him for murdering his wife,' she said.