

several pairs of once stylish trousers and a soft Derby hat; and after he had shed his old knee-breeches and his patched leggings and his battered felt, and arranged himself in these "modernities," he was, if not exactly a thing of beauty, at least a fleeting joy to his admiring circle. It was not exactly a pure "swap" either, as he had, with the more or less stylish raiment, a certain sum of unlooked-for coin, and a present of a whole pile of "society jour-

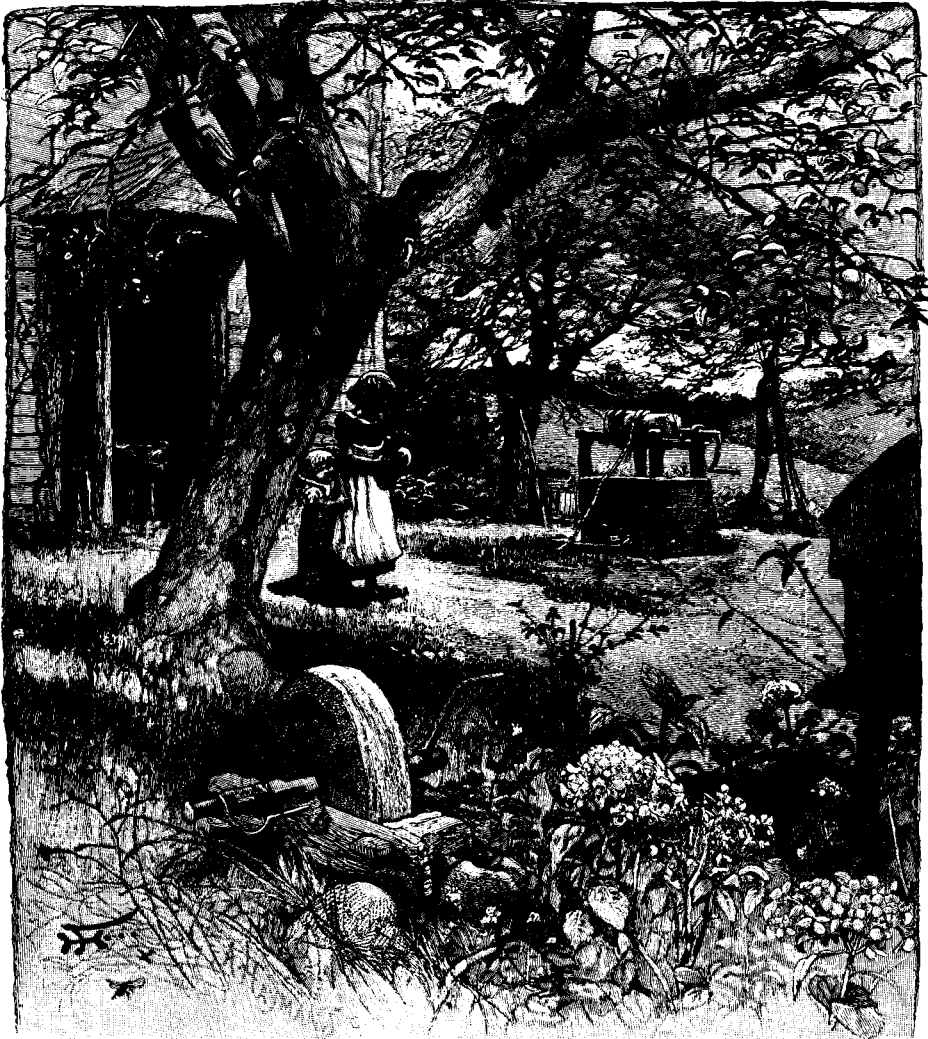
nals" for his "sinister-barred" half-brother, and I hope he enjoyed them. I never dropped in, "in a friendly way," to see, as I soon returned to town. In fact, the last I ever saw of "W, for William, and G, for Grobbyns," was his sadly transformed figure wending homeward along the dusty high-road in the evening light. And even now I sometimes wonder if his half-brother knew him when he reached the shady door-porch in the gloaming.



THE OLD HOMESTEAD.

WELCOME, ye pleasant dales and hills
Where dream-like passed my early days,
Ye cliffs and glens and laughing rills
That sing unconscious hymns of praise;
Welcome, ye woods with tranquil bowers
Embathed in autumn's mellow sheen,
Where careless childhood gathered flowers,
And slept on mossy carpets green.

The same bright sunlight gently plays
About the porch and orchard trees;
The garden sleeps in noontide haze,
Lulled by the murmuring of the bees;
The sloping meadows stretch away
To upland field and wooded hill;
The soft blue sky of peaceful day
Looks down upon the homestead still.



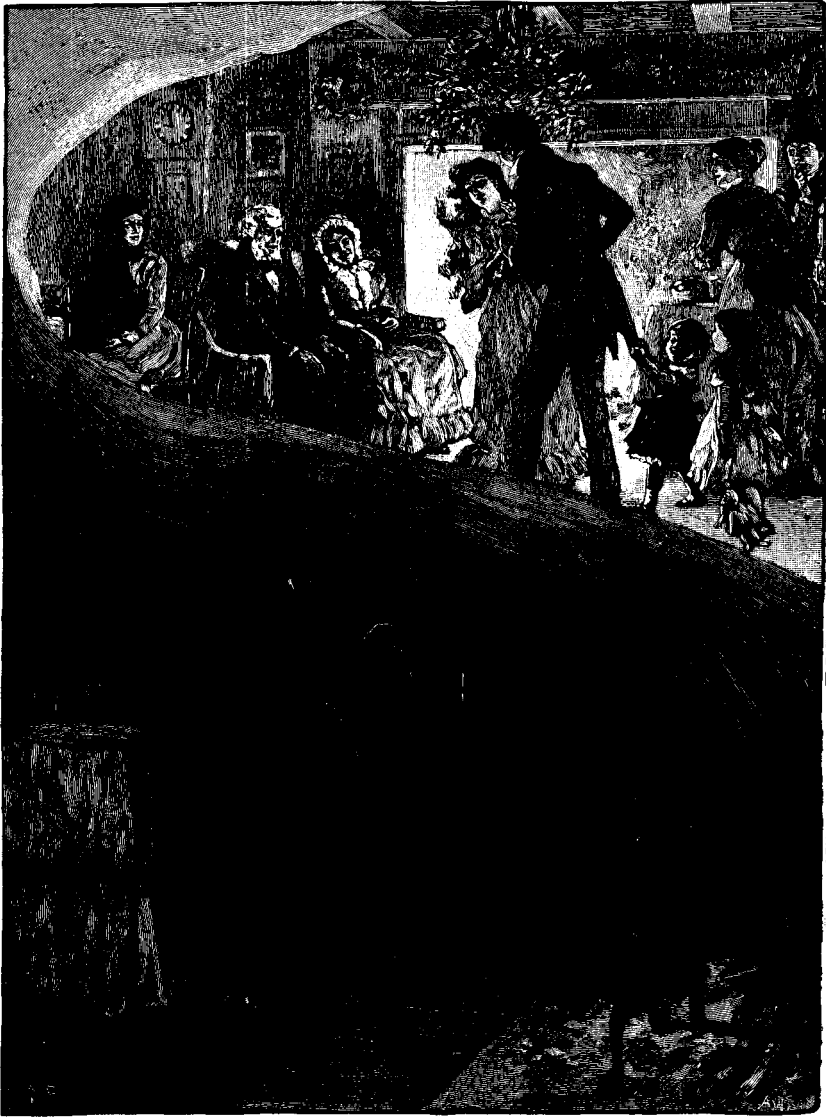
"THE SAME BRIGHT SUNSHINE GENTLY PLAYS ABOUT THE PORCH AND ORCHARD TREES."

I hear the humming of the wheel—
 Strange music of the days gone by—
 I hear the clicking of the reel,
 Once more I see the spindle fly.
 How then I wondered at the thread
 That narrowed from the snowy wool,
 Much more to see the pieces wed,
 And wind upon the whirling spool!

I see the garret once again,
 With rafter, beam, and oaken floor;
 I hear the pattering of the rain
 As summer clouds go drifting o'er.
 The little window toward the west
 Still keeps its webs and buzzing flies,
 And from this cozy childhood nest
 Jack's bean-stalk reaches to the skies.

I see the circle gathered round
 The open fire-place glowing bright,
 While birchen sticks with crackling sound
 Send forth a rich and ruddy light;
 The window-sill is piled with sleet,
 The well-sweep creaks before the blast,
 But warm hearts make the contrast sweet,
 Sheltered from storm, secure and fast.

O loved ones of the long ago,
 Whose memories hang in golden frames,
 Resting beneath the maple's glow,
 Where few e'er read your chiseled names,
 Come back, as in that Christmas night,
 And fill the vacant chairs of mirth!—
 Ah me! the dream is all too bright,
 And ashes lie upon the hearth.



"COME BACK, AS IN THAT CHRISTMAS NIGHT!"

Below the wood, beside the spring,
 Two little children are at play,
 And hope, that bird of viewless wing,
 Sings in their hearts the livelong day;
 The acorns patter at their feet.
 The squirrel chatters 'neath the trees,
 And life and love are all complete—
 They hold Aladdin's lamp and keys.

And, sister, now my children come
 To find the water just as cool,
 To play about our grandsire's home,
 To see our pictures in the pool.
 Their laughter fills the shady glen;
 The fountain gurgles o'er with joy
 That, after years full three times ten,
 It finds its little girl and boy.

No other spring in all the world
 Is half so clear and cool and bright,
 No other leaves by autumn curled
 Reflect for me such golden light.
 Of childhood's faith this is the shrine;
 I kneel beside it now as then,
 And though the spring's no longer mine,
 I kiss its cooling lips again.

Unchanged it greets the changeful years;
 Its life is one unending dream;
 No record here of grief or tears;
 But, like the limpid meadow stream,
 It seems to sympathize with youth,
 Just as the river does with age,
 And ever whispers—sweetest truth
 Is written on life's title-page.

BALLADE OF CHRISTMAS GHOSTS.

BETWEEN the moonlight and the fire,
In winter evenings long ago,
What ghosts I raised at your desire,
To make your leaping blood run slow!
How old, how grave, how wise we grow!
What Christmas ghost can make us chill—
Save these that troop in mournful row.
The ghosts we all can raise at will?

The beasts can talk in barn and byre
On Christmas-eve, old legends know.
As one by one the years retire,
We men fall silent then, I trow—
Such sights has memory to show,
Such voices from the distance thrill.
Ah me! they come with Christmas snow,
The ghosts we all can raise at will.

Oh, children of the village choir,
Your carols on the midnight throw!
Oh, bright across the mist and mire,
Ye ruddy hearths of Christmas glow!
Beat back the shades, beat down the woe,
Renew the strength of mortal will;
Be welcome, all, to come or go,
The ghosts we all can raise at will.

Friend, *sursum corda*, soon or slow
We part, like guests who've joyed their fill;
Forget them not, nor mourn them so,
The ghosts we all can raise at will!

CHRISTMAS VIOLETS.

LAST night I found the violets
You sent me once across the sea;
From gardens that the winter frets,
In summer lands they came to me.

Still fragrant of the English earth,
Still humid from the frozen dew,
To me they spoke of Christmas mirth,
They spoke of England, spoke of you.

The flowers are scentless, black, and sere,
The perfume long has passed away;
The sea whose tides are year by year
Is set between us, chill and gray.

But you have reached a windless age,
The haven of a happy clime; '
You do not dread the winter's rage,
Although we missed the summer-time.

And like the flower's breath over sea,
Across the gulf of time and pain,
To-night returns the memory
Of love that lived not all in vain.