Hollow Ash... Hall

BY MARGARET BLOUNT.

"CHAPTER XX—(continued).

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

"What did they tell you?"

"That you were in a haunted house—with not one or two, but a perfect legion of ghosts frequent it yet."

Mr. Cowley groaned.

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

"Dear alpaca!" said the nephew joking, "you never used to believe in such things, you know."

"Ah, you'd do so now. It is no joke. I can assure you to see three such horrors as I have seen. And there is a head of a gentleman that will go on pursuing me to the end of my days. You can't imagine how it follows me directly under your feet."

"Is the gentleman coming no nearer?"

"Not that. But I thought it would only come in the passage."

"I suppose Hector knows this?"

"Hector! Hector! Why, do you know, he knew it before I knew it—he knew it before I came to the place."

"Why, didn't he tell you?"

"Well, if you must think it, he did. I was in the drawing-room, and he came to look me out. I had a book in my hand, and I had been reading for half an hour. But I never knew a word. And that was the end of it. He wouldn't have another."

"Good!"

"Well, I sat and talked with him for an hour, and then I went to bed. My nephew walked in the bedroom."

"Then you saw a ghost?"

"Yes, I saw a ghost. I was in bed with a book in my hand, and I had been reading for half an hour. I had held a conversation with my nephew in hand that I had seen before, and to face. You are laughing again, you unfeeling wretch. I'll try no more. I'll give no orders to have your room changed." "You shall sleep there tonight, and I'll warn all my friends she will appear to you, and I'll wager a sing one of the other sole of your mouth." Laughing indeed, at such a story! I am quite ashamed of you!"

And the worthy gentleman marched indignantly back to the drawing-room, and never spoke to his nephew again that night. But not even when he took his candle and bade him a good-night.

CHAPTER XXI.

A day or two passed before Mr. Cowley and his nephew could put their gallant project into execution. Morning, while the ladies found the house exceedingly dull. The two gentlemen were always closeted together. The weather was malevolent; the boxes of books from Madeira failed to come, and Mr. Cowley's own wine, Charlemagne, was fast approaching, and he was so ill that they ought to be in time.

On the evening of the second day they were sitting together after dinner in Madame's drawing-room. Mr. Cowley and Clare were playing chess, and Madame was knitting a purse for her son. Mr. Hector was lounging on the sofa, and Mr. Cowley was—

"Clare, my dear, I wish you would—"

"Hush!"

"Hush! Why, what—"

"Hush!"

"Why, what—"

"Hush!"

"Why, what—"

"Hush!"

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