

THE
SPECTRE BRIDEGROOM;


OR,

A GHOST IN SPITE OF HIMSELF.

A Farce,
IN TWO ACTS.

BY

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" *Monsieur Tonson*," " *Giselle*," " *Cataract of the Ganges*"
" *Borrowing a Husband*" " *Giovanni in London*" &c

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THE SPECTRE BRIDEGROOM.

*First performed at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane.
July 2nd, 1821.*

Characters.

MR NICODEMUS.....	MR. COOPER.
SQUIRE ALDWINKLE.....	MR. GATTIE.
CAPTAIN VAUNTINGTON	MR. BARNARD.
DICKORY.....	MR. KNIGHT.
PAUL	MR. SMITH.
TWO SERVANTS	
GEORGIANA ALDWINKLE.....	MRS. ORGER.
LAVINIA (<i>her cousin</i>)	Miss SMITHSON.

SCENE—*A Country Village.*

Costumes.

NICODEMOS.—Black suit, shoes, and clerical hat
ALDWINKLE.—Plain dark suit.
VAUNTINGTON.—Modern suit.
DICKORY.—Suit of yellow livery.
PAUL.—*First Dress*; drab suit, worsted stockings, and shoes.
Second Dress; black suit, mourning cloak, and hat with crape hat band.
GEORGIANA & LAVINIA.—Fashionable modern costumes.

There is no charge for the performance of this Farce.

THE SPECTRE BRIDEGROOM.



ACT I.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in Mr. Nicodemus's House.*
(*1st grooves.*)

Enter SERVANT and NICODEMUS, R.

NIC. My cousin's servant, Paul, inquiring for me! What can he possibly want with me? Let him come in.

Exit SERVANT, L

It must certainly be some business of life and death, to make my gay thoughtless cousin send to me ; for, though every one allows we are like as two peas in person, no one has ever discovered the slightest similarity in our minds: he has none of my solidity, none of my depth and gravity;—he's all volatility,—wild, uncertain,—Hey, oh! here Paul comes.

Enter PAUL, L.

Well, Paul, what brings you here ?

PAUL, (*crying*) Oh, sir, such a relation ! your poor cousin-----

Nic. Poor cousin? Why, he hasn't, surely, gambled away all his estates on a cast of the die?

PAUL. Worse than that, sir; though, to be sure, it is through the die he has lost every thing. Ah, sir, when I look at you, it renews all my grief; poor gentleman, I fancy I see him still—oh, oh ! (*crying*)

NIC. What mean you? Explain, good Paul; what horrible event are you going to relate ?

PAUL. My poor master, sir—unfortunate Gentleman, he

was just going to sow all his wild oats in a marriage with the young and beautiful Miss Aldwinkle, daughter of the rich Squire Aldwinkle, of Aldwinkle Hall—oh! oh! oh!

NIC. Well!—what was there so very shocking in that?

PAUL. You shall hear, sir: they had never seen one another ; but my master had sent his portrait, which was approved of both by the young lady and her father,

NIC. NO doubt, if he remained as like me as he used to be.

PAUL. Very true, sir. It was settled that my poor master was to go to Aldwinkle Hall this very evening, that the ceremony might take place out of hand.

NIC. Well, and why didn't he go?-----

PAUL. He did go, sir; but going and coming are two different things; and it will be long enough before they find him come to Aldwinkle Hall—oh! oh!

NIC. Why?

PAUL. A slight impediment, sir.—We set out, the first thing this morning, on our way there ; but had scarcely performed a third part of the journey, when my poor master fell down in an apoplectic fit!—oh ! oh! oh !

NIC. Unhappy Gaspar! but what could he expect, living as he did?

PAUL. He expected to be married, sir, and repent; but the Fates ordered it otherwise. Atropos came with her fatal shears, and cut his vital thread, as close as any tailor in the kingdom could have done. Just before he gave his last kick, he called me to him, and squeezing my hand, exclaimed, " Paul, my dear Paul, as soon as it's all over, send my body to the half-way-house, where dinner will be waiting for me; then hasten to my cousin, Abraham, (that's you, sir;) bid him set off immediately to Aldwinkle Hall, break out the melancholy news to the Old Squire and my dear Georgiana; return, bury me decently, write an epitaph to my memory, take all I'm worth for his pains, and I shall rest in peace!—oh, oh !

NIC. Poor fellow! Did he die rich?

PAUL. Pretty well for that, sir.

NIC. Then his wishes shall be complied with. I'll lock up my grand Treatise on Vampires, hasten to Aldwinkle Hall this very moment, and return here the first thing to-

morrow morning, to make preparations for the funeral. Unhappy Gaspar! he was the last of the Nicodenus family, except myself. What a pity he wasn't as like me in other things as he was in person. But drink! drink was the ruin of him. I'll go directly, and break the melancholy news to Miss and the Old Gentleman; while you, Paul, you-----

PAUL. I'll go to the half-way-house, and watch over my poor master's remains. Poor gentleman I drink was, as you say, sir, the ruin of him. Heigho ! sorrow is dry! I must get a little drop of something to comfort me for his loss. Good bye, sir !—Oh ! oh! . *Exit PAUL, L.*

NIC. (*L.*) Farewell, Paul. Heu, fugaces! What frail creatures we are ! *Exit NICODEMUS, R.*

SCENE II.—*An Apartment in Aldwinkle Hall*
(*2nd grooves.*)

Enter GEORGIANA and LAVINIA, R.

LAVIN. (*C.*) If you ask my advice, my dear Georgiana, I must candidly express my opinion, that, as you wish to marry Captain Vauntington, who has no money; and Mr. Nicodemus, who has plenty, wishes to marry you ; you having plenty, ought to take pity on the Captain's poverty, and leave me, who have nothing, to make love, if I like, to Mr. Nicodemus's abundance. It's quite enough for one party to be rich in marriage.

GEORG. (*L.*) What you say, coz, is, as it always is, full of excellent sense; the only question is, how is it to be accomplished ? You know my father's obstinacy; his engagement with Mr. Nicodemus; and—eh, here comes my father, and my dear Captain Vauntington too, as I live; they are discussing a subject too interesting to my feelings to permit my being an auditor. Let us retire, my dear cousin, and await, in hope, the end of their conference.

Exeunt GEORGIANA and LAVINIA, R.

Enter ALDWINKLE and VAUNTINGTON, L.

ALDWINK. (*C.*) 'Tis no use talking, Mr. Vauntington — if you are a captain, you are only a South American cap-

tain; they spring up like mushrooms, now o'days, and, agad, are worth about as much.

VAUNT. (L.) But, my dear sir, my family-----

ALDWINK. Ah ! there's the thing—if you get a family, how the devil are you to support them! Besides, I've solemnly engaged my daughter to Mr. Nicodemus; he has in under my hand and seal—sent it him, by post, above a month ago. To be sure, I've never seen the gentleman; but his character is unexceptionable.

VAUNT. It is not too late to retract, sir.

ALDWINK. Indeed, but it is. sir; for I expect him to arrive every moment. He sent me word he was coming express, though there was no occasion for that; I knew it, for, independently of an amazing bright letter in the candle last night, that pointed directly towards me, my man Dickory saw a stranger on the bars this morning; that, immediately he clapped his hands, flew into the fire—a sure sign he was a good friend.

VAUNT. Ridiculous, childish superstition!

ALDWINK. So you may think; but I'm of a different opinion. You're one of those heedless fellows, now, who'd walk twenty times under a ladder and never once look behind you; and, if you were to see fifty piebald horses, would'nt pull a hair out of the tail of any of them, though you might get any thing you choose to wish for, for your pains.

VAUNT. But allow me to say, sir, that my passion for your daughter-----

ALDWINK. Zounds, sir, you'll put me in a passion, if you go on in this way. Hav'nt I sent Dickory off to meet Mr. Nicodemus, at the half-way-house,—where he wrote me word, he should stop and dine,—on purpose to conduct him here all the sooner. I wonder they haven't arrived, for it's getting rather late.

VAUNT. But early impressions,—first love, sir-----

ALDWINK. Second thoughts are best—hey, surely, I hear the sound of visitors without. It must be Mr. Nicodemus. Now do, my good sir, oblige me by taking an answer, and going. Mr. Nicodemus has put your nose so completely out of joint, that-----

VAUNT. Vulgar rascal! (*aside*) But your former kindness.

ALDWINK. NOW do go.

VAUNT. My high expectations-----

ALDWINK. Lower your tone, my good friend, I beg; zounds ! do you think you're giving the word of command ? It's time I turn general:—come—march !

VAUNT. I must submit to fate. You'll repent this, old Aldwinkle; take my word for it; the loss is as much yours as mine ; so, good night! Poor Georgiana !

Exit VAUNTINGTON, L.

ALDWINK. Thank heaven! he's off.—Now then for-----

Enter SERVANT, preceding NICODEMUS, L.

SERVANT. Mr. Nicodemus—Sir----- (*bows and retires*)

ALDWINK. Welcome, my dear, dear sir! ten thousand welcomes! You need no introduction: from the strong resemblance you bear to your likeness, I should have known you any where.

Nic. (L.) That is fortunate. I can proceed to the business at once. I knew if he had once seen my cousin, he would recognize me. (*aside*) I am extremely obliged by your kindness, sir—I regret that I should be the-----

ALDWINK. Make no apology, my dear boy, I beg.

NIC. The abruptness of this visit-----

ALDWINK. Not at all.

NIC. My precipitate appearance-----

ALDWINK. You do excellently well—make no apologies, pray.

NIC. Can only be excused by the urgency-----

ALDWINK. I won't hear another word, till you've taken some refreshment.

NIC. The uncertainty of-----

ALDWINK. Aye, aye, travelling is uncertain.

NIC. We are but too liable to be cut short in——

ALDWINK. True, true, I must cut you short now; for supper is just ready—and you must needs want something, travelling so far.

NIC. Nay, my dear sir, but you must prepare yourself for—

ALDWINK. Take no care about that; I have prepared every thing.

NIC. But, my dear sir,—my late—lamented——

ALDWINK. Better late than never—you're here, and that's sufficient. I did lament you hadn't come sooner, certainly—Georgiana is dying with impatience to see you—I'll call her here. Why, Georgiana! Georgiana! I say-----

NIC. Zounds, he won't let me edge in a word any way; (*aside*) but, my dear sir, allow me a few serious words with you-----

ALDWINK. Not another word, till you've supp'd—we'll have no serious words together, if I know it. To-morrow is time enough for business—to-night we'll devote to mirth and love, you dog. (*pokes him*) Oh, here Georgiana comes.

NIC. What shall I do now ? I can't mention my cousin's death before the young lady; she'd be going into hystericks. I must let the old gentleman have his way, and get him to let me relate the particulars bye-and-bye-----

Enter GEORGIANA, R.

A fine girl, faith.

GEORG. Did you want me, Papa ?

ALDWINK. NO, hussey ; but Mr. Nicodemus does—Mr. Nicodemus, my daughter Georgiana!

GEORG. (R., *aside*)—what a solemn-looking fright! I'm sure I can never bring myself to love him.

ALDWINK. Country bred, Mr. Nicodemus—unformed at present—so much the better, you can mould her to your liking ; she's bashful, but sincere. Come, Georgiana, why don't you say something inspiring to Mr. Nicodemus, hussey, after his long journey ?

GEORG. Something inspiring, after a long journey, pa? "Well, then, if I must say something, perhaps I can't say better than-----

ALDWINK. Aye, aye, come, out with it.

GEORG. Supper's ready, sir.

ALDWINK. Psha !—but egad it's a-propos enough; a wag, Mr. Nicodemus—a wag—takes after me.

NIC. I am as much at a loss what to say as the young lady can be; supper's a timely relief, faith—(*aside-crossing to R.*) allow me to offer my arm, madam.

GEORG. YOU are very polite, sir—this way, if you please.

Exeunt NICODEMUS and GEORGIANA, R.

ALDWINK. I'll follow you the moment I have given some orders to the butler. I'm so rejoiced that-----

Enter SERVANT, L.

Well, sirrah, what do you want ?

SERVANT. I don't want anything, your honor—but here's Dickory—he's come back, and wants to see you in private, he says-----

ALDWINK. Wants to see me in private !—what can the blockhead want with me in private ? Well, let him come in. *Exit* SERVANT, L.

I suppose he had idled his time away so, that Mr. Nicodemus was gone before he arrived, and now he's coming, with some cock-and-a-bull story, to excuse himself.

Enter DICKORY, *crying*, L.

Well, what the devil is that cursed long face for?

DICK. Oh, master!—oh, Mr. Aldwinkle, such a misfortune ! Oh, oh !

ALDWINK. What! I suppose, when you got to the half-way-house, you found Mr. Nicodemus had just departed ?

DICK. Yeas, poor gentleman, he'd been quite gone above an hour afore I'd got there. I helped to lay him out, when I found how things were.

ALDWINK. Lay him out. Zounds, I hope you didn't speak anything ill of him.

DICK. Oh, no, master, we never do speak ill of those who are gone.

ALDWINK. Gone!—well, but he's come.

DICK. Come—what!—ha' they brought his body here?

ALDWINK. NO, he brought his body here himself.

DICK. What!—in a hearse?

ALDWINK. NO—on a horse; and you must go and wait on him.

DICK. What—sit up all night wi' him ?

ALDWINK. NO ; only till he's finished his supper.

DICK. His supper?

ALDWINK. His supper—yes, blockhead—his supper; he's just sat down with my daughter.

DICK. Dang it, this be the first time I ever heard of

dead men sitting down to supper wi' young ladies—he be quite mad ; How his eyes do roll! surely-----(*aside*)

ALDWINK. Zounds, scoundrel, Dickory, what are you talking about? Though I did give you five shillings to drink, I didn't tell you to make a beast of yourself—he's quite drunk!—Go, rascal, and wait on Mr, Nicodemus, directly.

DICK. He be quite cracked, (*aside*)

ALDWINK. Dreadfully drunk—will you do what I tell you, villain ? Will you go in and see that Mr. Nicodemus wants for nothing? Take care that he has plenty of the turtle soup.

DICK. Turtle soup ! what be the good of turtle soup when a man be dead ? To think, now, that he should die just when he were going to be married !

ALDWINK. Why, you sottish brazen rascal, you haven't the consummate impudence to pronounce an honest gentleman dead, who is at this moment eating and drinking, and making love to my daughter, in the very next room; but your own eyes shall convince you how richly you deserve a ducking;—you say you saw the gentleman?

DICK. E'es, sure; I were wi' his poor body above an hour and a half.

ALDWINK. Then you'd know him again, if you see him?

DICK. Aye, out o' ten thousand.

ALDWINK. Then, see him you shall, and that this very moment; the sight of him may bring you to your sober senses again. Please just to walk this way, sir,—that is, if you are able to walk.

DICK. He's as mad as a March hare;—but I mun humour the old man, or he may do me a mischief. Poor fellow, how mad he be ! (*aside*) I'm coming, sir.

Exeunt ALDWINKLE and DICKORY, R.

SCENE III.—*Handsome Apartment in Aldwinkle Hall, (4th grooves) supper table laid out—candles burning ; a screen at the back.*

NICODEMUS, L. C, GEORGIANA, R. C., and LAVINIA, C., *discovered sitting at supper**

NIC.(*aside*) Methinks, that I cut but a very foolish

figure here; I neither know what to do or say; I believe, my best refuge is in silence—Heigho! would I were at home, continuing my treatise on Vampires.

LAVIN. Your Papa does not seem to be coming, coz; had we not better proceed to supper ?

GEORG. Anything, to enliven us a little. We have been as dull and as silent, for the last half hour, as a Quaker's meeting. Will you allow me to assist you, sir?

NIC. (*solemnly*) I thank you, but I have no appetite.

LAVIN. YOU feed upon meditation, it should seem, sir ?

NIC. I must own, madam, I am partial to the grave.

GEORG. I hope it isn't love that disturbs the gentleman ;—shall I help you to some cold pudding, sir ?

NIC. I never eat cold pudding;—[*he starts from his seat*] but my time is come : I have to set off at daybreak, and must retire at once—a solemn duty impels me to be absent. To-morrow night I shall return again:—present my regards to your worthy father ; an important secret remains to be revealed to him, in which you are all deeply interested. I am too wandering and disturbed for the task now—but to-morrow night! Heigho! life is very uncertain. Vale !
Vale !

Exit NICODEMUS, R.

LAVIN. Bless me ! what an amazingly odd man! I should as soon think of linking myself to the parish pump as a Don Saltero.

GEOR. There is certainly something very mysterious in his manner, (*mocking him*) Vale! Vale !

LAVIN. Hush ! here's your father.

Enter ALDWINKLE, *dragging in* DICKORY, L.

ALDWIN. NOW, villain, Dickory—look—convince yourself that----- why, the gentleman's gone !

DICK. E'es, to be sure he be—didn't I tell you he were departed ? but you wouldn't believe me ;—his madness be going away—he ha' got a losing interval, (*aside*)

GEORG. (R.) IS it Mr. Nicodemus you want, Pa? He has retired to his apartment, and-----

ALDWIN. Eh? gone to bed, has he? and without his supper! how is he to find out the room ? Run, Dickory, and light him—take him my night-cap and slippers—make haste, rogue

GEORG. Aye, do, Dickory, or the poor gentleman may break his neck over the banisters.

DICK. They all humour him, I see ; well, I mustn't be particular. I'll go, sir—*(takes a candle from the table)*—but if Mr. Nicodemus be there, dang me if I don't first eat him, and then gi' you leave to eat me afterwards.

Exit DICKORY, R,

ALDWINK. I am sorry, Dickory's drunken folly, in persisting that Mr. Nicodemus was dead, prevented my paying my respects to him before he retired. Poor fellow, I forgot how far he had travelled to-day !

Enter DICKORY, *very pale and frightened*, R.—*the candle is broken.*

DICK. *(trembling violently)* Oh lord! Oh lord ! Oh lord!

ALDWINK. Eh ! "why, Dickory! Zounds, blockhead, what's the matter with you ? you look as scared as if you had seen a ghost ?

DICK. That be it; you've hit it, 'squire, by gosh.—It be he! I'll swear to un—I knows un by the turn o' his nose. Oh dear! oh dear! that ever I should ha' lived to see a ghost!

ALDWINK. See a ghost, dolt! he's at it again—he's breaking out in fresh places—have you seen Mr. Nicodemus, sirrah ?

DICK. Na, but I *ha* seen his apparition. It be quite indecent and unnatural in un not to rest quiet, now he's dead, like a proper Christian gentleman.

ALDWINK. Can the fellow really be serious? I am confounded.

GEORG. A ghost! is the gentleman a ghost ? Oh dear, I am sure I can never bring my myself to marry a ghost, Pa.

LAVIN. I may profit by this, *(aside)* Well, I declare I thought he was something he shouldn't be, by his mysterious ways; didn't you remark, coz, that, all the time he sat with us, he never opened his mouth till we forced him to it ?

DICK. Na, ghosts never do speak but when they be forced to speak.

LAVIN. And then, didn't you remark, Gcorgy dear, that he would neither eat nor drink ?

ALDWINK. Ghosts never do—I don't know what to think. Stop, Dickory, what's that on the side of the candle ?

DICK. Why, a large lump of tallow, to be sure; what should it be?

ALDWINK. A lump of tallow, dog?—it's a winding-sheet ! I never saw a more perfect one in my life. (DICKORY *puts down the candle in terror*) We'll not go to bed to-night,

LAVIN. But what we have already told you, is not all, sir; he openly confessed he was addicted to the grave.

ALDWINK. Addicted to the grave! my back fairly opens and shuts.

DICK. Depend upon it, he has summat on his mind. I shouldn't wonder if he hadn't been privately murdered by somebody, and be come here to get him hung.

GEORG. Something on his mind! Talking of that, just before he vanished up stairs, he groaned out, that he had a dreadful secret to disclose to you.

ALDWINK. TO me ! mercy on me, you put me all in a cold shiver, girl.

GEORG. And don't you remember, Lavinia, he said he was obliged to disappear at day-break ?

DICK. Disappear at day-break! I warrant him. The moment the cock crows, he mun go bang through the key-hole.

LAVIN. But he left his compliments, and said, he should be sure to come again to-morrow night.

ALDWINK. Hang him! I'll have him laid in the Red Sea—I'll stop up all the key-holes—I'll exorcise him. Oh, that I did but understand Latin !

DICK. It would be o' no use, 'squire; he'd come down the chimney, dress'd all in white. Ah! I knew it warn't for nothing I see'd those three black ravens sitting cawing by the hedge-side to-day—caw, caw, caw ! Besides that, this very morning, just as I stepped into the cellar, to get a cup of your honor's own particular October-----

ALDWINK. Ah, when I was looking all over the house after you, and wanted you so?

DICK. Yeas, sir—I heard a loud voice cry, Dickory—Dickory—Dick—three times.

ALDWINK. Bless us, and save us! It wasn't my voice, was it, Dickory?

DICK. Na, squire, it were likerer to a trumpet: and just about the time the poor gentleman left off living, our great kitchen jack stopped.

ALDWINK. It's past all doubt. Mrs. Veal's ghost itself wasn't more sure. What o'clock was it when Mr. Nic—that is, when the gho-----Lord bless me! that is, when it, you know who, arrived?

LAVIN. Exactly twelve; midnight, sir.

GEORG. Just twelve!

ALDWINK. The very hour; they mustn't come out before twelve.

GEORG. Oh, dear Papa, I never can sleep alone after this. If Mr. Nicodemus comes haunting us at nights, in this manner, I really must marry the captain, if it's only to take care of me; so you'd better let me have him at once, Pa.

ALDWINK. Eh, what noise is that?—Mercy on me, I hope it isn't-----

DICK. He be coming—He be coming, squire! [*looking off*]

ALDWINK. Who, Dickory?

DICK. The ghost, sir.

ALDWINK. Let me go out of the way. What's to be done?

DICK. Get behind this screen, and I'll hide under the table. Oh, gemini! here he be—(*peeps under the table*)

ALDWINK. Oh dear! oh dear! make haste! make haste! I tremble at every joint.

**(ALDWINKLE, GEORGIANA, and LAVINIA hide behind the screen—ALDWINKLE peeps over the top, GEORGIANA and LAVINIA at each side—DICKORY peeps under the table-doth)*

Enter NICODEMUS, R.

NIC. I cannot rest.

ALDWINK (*looking over the screen, aside*) No, I'll be bound you can't.

* This Farce can be performed in One Act, by allowing the ladies, to run off and passing to Nicodemus' entrance at page 16.

DICK. Poor soul! (*aside*)

NIC. It must be near day-break. I smell the morning air quite fresh—hark !—there's a cock crowing. 'Tis time for me to depart.

ALDWINK. (*aside*) Mark that.—Poor devil!

NIC. I shall not be at peace till the burial's over, and I have revealed this important secret to the family. Hark! the cock crows again. I must depart. Paul will be waiting for me. Heigho!

Exit NICODEMUS, L.—they all creep out watching him off with fear and wonder—He suddenly re-enters—they fearfully conceal themselves—he appears to have missed his hat—but after some thought—finds it on his head and stalks off, L.—ALDWINKLE and DICKORY watch him in great terror.

END OF ACT I.

Twenty-four hours elapse between the Acts.

ACT II.

SCENE I,—*Same as the last Scene—lighted candles—the supper removed.*

Enter ALDWINKLE and DICKORY, L.

ALDWINK. What a state of mind have I been in, for the last twenty-four hours : but, having been to the half-way-house, and convinced myself of the truth of your story, I confess I was wrong, when I suspected you of attempting to deceive me; I was wrong—very wrong.

DICK. E'es, sur, you were.

ALDWINK. But I really thought you had been drinking;—you know you do drink sometimes, Dickory.

DICK. E'es. sur, when I be dry.

ALDWINK. However, I must endeavour to make you amends, Dickory, some of these days.

DICK. E'es, sur, you must. Dickens, how my hand do itch!—that be a sure sign I shall ha' some money soon; I shouldn't wonder if your honor wasn't going to give me a guinea.

ALDWINK. Eh ? a guinea—hum—there's no guineas,

now-a-days, Dickory: however, you shall have a sovereign; that will *do* as well, (*gives him a sovereign*)

DICK. E'es, sur, better—I'm a loyal subject, and wish very much for a sovereign. He! he! he! (*looks at the sovereign*)

ALDWINK. Why what are you grinning at now?

DICK. Won't you crown him, sir?

ALDWINK. Crown what?

DICK. Why, sovereign, to be sure, (*holds out his hand to Aldwinkle with a sovereign in it*)

ALDWINK. The scoundrel; but, however, the sovereign must not remain uncrowned, for want of five shillings. I'm glad to learn from the landlord, that poor Mr. Nicodemus's relations are going to attend to the funeral themselves; it will save me a world of trouble, for I couldn't have refused to put his body under ground. I hope he'll keep there, when he is there, and not pay us anymore of his visits.

DICK. He'll be sure to come again to-night, squire; you know he said he would.

ALDWINK. Lord bless me! so he did.

DICK. He hasn't told you the secret, yet; and he won't rest till that be out, depend upon it;—none of them can.

ALDWINK. True, true—mercy on me—what is it o'clock now, Dickory?

DICK. Just twelve: the time he came last night.

ALDWINK. Oh, my poor wits, they are nearly all frightened away; the unhappy gentleman must have been a terrible wicked reprobate in his time, for his poor soul to be wandering about in this manner, Dickory.

DICK. Yeas, he mun, indeed: but he be paying for it now. Eh! what's that? There he be again, sir.

ALDWINK. Oh dear! oh dear! Stand back and let us observe him. (*DICKORY retires with him to the back, R.*)

Enter NICODEMUS, L.

NIC. Very odd, they should leave all the doors open a this time o' night. I'm glad one melancholy day is over and that I have gone through so much of the painful duty imposed upon me. Night's the only time I have left to myself now. But where can this Aldwinkle be? I must not any longer delay revealing the important secret to

him. I shall not be easy till then, solemnly enjoined to it, as I was, in the immediate moments of death. He little suspects who I am.

ALDWINK. (*aside*) Don't be too sure of that.

NIC. But where can he be ?

ALDWINK. (*advances, R.*) NOW for it.

NIC. (*seeing ALDWINKLE*) Eh!—here? this is very odd—Your servant, Mr. Aldwinkle.

ALDWINK. (*fearfully*) What can I do to give peace to your poor unhappy soul! If you've anything to unfold, I conjure you to disclose it at once.

NIC. I will—I am not what I seem, nor what you take me to be.

ALDWINK. I know it, poor miserable wretch!

DICK. The murder be all coming out now. (*aside, R.*)

NIC. Though I bear the name of Nicodemus, and exactly resemble him in every particular, I-----prepare yourself.

ALDWINK. (R. C.) I am prepared. Lord bless me !

NIC. I—I am merely the representative of that unhappy man—he is no longer in this world.

ALDWINK. I know it, Mr. G ho—that is, Mr. Representative.

NIC. Unfortunate Gaspar—excuse my being overcome; I have had a long journey.

DICK. (*aside*) Yeas, it be a good way, I dare say, from the other world.

NIC. I had a pleasant walk through the church yard, though.

ALDWINK. Oh, no doubt, you find yourself quite at home there.

NIC. Shall I relate to you the particulars of the unhappy event ?

ALDWINK. Oh, no: pray don't trouble yourself, Mr. Representative. I am fully acquainted with all.

NIC. I am happy you are. You communicated the melancholy fact to your daughter ?

ALDWINK. I did.

NIC. IS she resigned?

ALDWINK. Perfectly.

NIC. 'Tis fortunate! Though her destined bridegroom

be no longer in the land of the living, she can still b\$ Mrs. Nicodemus. I offer her my hand.

ALDWINK. (*starts back alarmed*) Eh—you?

NIC. I shall provide suitable apartments.

DICK. (*aside*) Yeas! or the ground floor, I suppose.

NIC. But we will settle these things hereafter; I have business to-night. I expect a messenger, every moment, from the sexton and undertaker.

ALDWINK. Lord ha'mercy on us! I wouldn't intrude for the world!—No doubt, another ghost, like himself. Come along, Dickory.

Die. Wi' all my heart. I don't want bidding twice!

Exeunt DICKORY and ALDWINKLE, R.—when PAUL enters, they steal on and hide behind the screen,

NIC. (C.) That's a very strange old fellow : in fact, they seem a very strange family, all together—a little touched, I think. Where can Paul be ? I desired him to meet me here, let it be ever so late.—Eh, I am blaming him without cause; he is true to his appointment!

Enter PAUL, in a mourning cloak, hatband, &c, L.

I was just wishing for you, Paul.

PAUL. (L.) I couldn't possibly be here before, sir: to settle every thing, I've flown like lightning, as it is.

ALDWINK. (*aside to DICKORY, peeping*) Who can this terrible looking figure be, all in black ?

DICK. (*aside to ALDWINKLE, peeping*) Depend upon it, squire, as Mr. Nicodemus be young Nick, that this be Old Nick.

NIC. (*to PAUL*) Have you settled with the sexton, about the grave ?

PAUL. Make your mind easy, sir; I have got as nice a grave as you can possibly desire ; roomy, dry, and eight feet deep.

ALDWINK. (*aside*) Curse him ! I wish he was now in it.

NIC. That's comfortable.

PAUL. I have brought you a specimen of the cloaks and hatbands. See, 'ent they quite *degagee* ?—just the thing—Eh!

NIC. They cannot be better.

PAUL. YOU shall have as handsome a funeral as your

heart can wish for. The landlord, and his two waiters, have promised to be mourners over the bier—the mutes spoke to me last night about attending—and as for the pall-bearers, leave Paul alone for them ; so, you see, there'll be nothing wanting.

NIC. Will the bells toll before and after, as I wished them?

PAUL. Your own cars shall convince you, sir, that they have not been forgotten.

NIC. Good, good, good!

PAUL. I have settled for the funeral to take place to-morrow; you'll be quite ready then?

NIC. Yes, I shall keep myself on purpose.

PAUL. It can be put off, if you wish it.

NIC. By no means! the sooner the better. When once the burial has taken place I shall be at rest; I shan't have a quiet night till then.

PAUL. YOU will, of course, move the first in the procession ; it couldn't take place without you ; and you'll like a ride.

ALDWINK.(*aside*) The devil take such rides, say I!

NIC. But, the epitaph—you've forgotten the epitaph.

PAUL. NO, I haven't, sir ; I've written one for you myself—but you shall hear, [*reads*])

" Here, taken one day by surprise,
Mister Nicodemus lies.

Had he a little longer tarried,
To Miss Aldwinkle he'd been married;
But Death, to spare a late repentance,
Cried, 'Come, Nick, come,' so straight he went hence,
And now awaits his final sentence,"

For which I charge you only tenpence.

There, how d'ye like it ? —you must admire the "final sentence," if you don't any other part of it.

NIC. The matter is better than the manner, but it will do : let me have it neatly engraved.

PAUL. Set your mind at ease; it shall be done by one of the first lapidaries we have.

NIC. But you must need refreshment. Come this way, and I will get you one of our worthy host's bones to pick. I will go and continue my researches in the Domestic History of Vampires, that I may be completely *au fait* to

my task, and not prove myself a novice; and by the time I've married old Aldwinkle's daughter, I shall be able to put my theory in practice. Come, Paul, come.

Exeunt PAUL and NICODEMUS, L., ALDWINKLE and DICKORY come forward.

DICK. (L.) Dang me, if this bain't the first time I ever heard of a dead man being asked when he liked to be buried.

ALDWINK. (R.) I am perfectly perforated in every part with horror—going to marry my daughter to a vampire—ah! no doubt to practise on her. But, thank heaven! he'll be buried to-morrow. Dickory, go you the first thing to-morrow, and see him boxed up ; and, d'ye hear, bribe the sexton to dig his grave a foot or two deeper, and put one of the heaviest and largest stones he can get upon it.

DICK. I will, sir; anything to keep him down and prevent his coming up.

ALDWINK. And, in the meantime, we'll go and hide ourselves till daybreak in the cellar. When ghosts are abroad, the only safe place is under ground.

DICK. YOU be right, squire—and if he do dare to come there, dang me if we don't lay un in the Red Sea, or one o' your pipes o' port.

Exeunt ALDWINKLE and DICKORY, R.

Enter GEORGIANA and VAUNTINGTON, L. 'arm in arm.

LAVINIA following.

LAVIN. (L.) Why, my dear Georgiana, if I could be weak enough to bend my mind to superstition, I must own, there are corroborating circumstances enough to prove the poor gentleman a ghost, even to the most sceptical. But the reign of the invisible world has passed away with the ages of chivalry and ignorance ; the establishment of Sunday schools, my dear, has signed the death-warrant of all ghosts, past, present, and to come ; so you will excuse me, if I remain incredulous.

GEORG. (R.) I am convinced Mr. Nicodemus is a ghost, a veritable ghost, and nothing but a ghost.

VAUNT. (C.) A ghost my rival?—then Othello's occupation's gone. To run him through will only be thrusting

at the air—with such an antagonist as him, the best way will be to cut and run.

Enter NICODEMUS, L. 2 E., unperceived.

Nic. Eh! engaged in secret conversation. I'll not break in upon their privacy, (*aside*)

VAUNT. (C.) If we can but once get this Mr. Nicodemus under ground, we'll manage to keep him there, if we heap a mountain upon him. I'll teach him how to rival me, a marrowless rascal!

Nic. (*aside*) What's that they are saying about burying me under a mountain. I must hear farther.

GEORG. (C.) If he does force me to marry him, you must come at night, captain, and knock him on the head.

VAUNT. Aye, fumigate him.

Nic. (*aside*) Knock me on the head, and fumigate me? here's atrocity!

GEORG. Or get him between two feather beds, and smother him.

Nic. (*aside*) Here's a she-devil.—What an escape !

GEORG. Any thing, to get rid of the monster.

Nic. A very affectionate wife, upon my honour.

VAUNT. I'm getting strangely valiant. I only wish could face this wandering gentleman now—I'd teach him how to rest at night.—Damme, I'd-----

(NICODEMUS *coming forward*, C.)

GEORG. (*screams—rushes out*, R.) Ah !

VAUNT. Oh ! the devil. Take care. *Exit hastily*, u

LAVIN. (R.) Shall I follow their example?—No, why should I?—I never was afraid of a man yet. and I'm sure I won't be of the ghost of one. (*aside*) " Angels and ministers of grace defend me!—Art thou a spirit of health, cr-

NIC. (L.) I fear I have alarmed you, madam.—'Twas unintentionally ; I trust my interruption is not material.

LAVIN. NO, sir. 'Tis immaterial—If I'm to believe what I'm told.—Do you bring any news from the other world, pray ?

NIC. From the other world! She means the New World, suppose, (*aside*) I know of no other news, madam, than that the glorious cause of liberty is making rapid way there.

LAVIN, (*aside*) Hum !—that accounts for his being at liberty here-----

Nic. If I may trust the promise of those eyes, they own a nature kinder than your cousin. Were my fate linked to thine, methinks you would not nurse that fierce exterminating spirit to which I was unwillingly and invisibly obliged to bear witness, erewhile, in Miss Aldwinkle.

LAVIN. I certainly should not wish to disturb your existence, so long as you remained harmless.

Nic. My researches, madam, among beings of another world, necessarily keep me secluded from this, during the day; but, at night, I invariably revisit and mingle with society. Could I but meet with a congenial spirit in wedlock, who would take a part in my supernatural studies, it might wonderfully change my nature and habits. Such a spirit, I would fain hope, I have found in you, lovely girl----- (*kisses her hand*)

LAVIN. A very gallant ghost, upon my honour.

Nic. But I must tear myself away, or I shall be too late for the funeral.

LAVIN. Bless me! here's a sudden change—this is from gay to grave with a witness to it.

Nic. Farewell, I regret I am obliged to leave you—a fatal necessity.—Hoigho, farewell!

Exit NICODEMUS, L.

LAVIN. HOW extraordinary! If he is a ghost, I don't see any difference between ghosts and men, for my part. He looks like a man, and, i'faith, kisses like one too. Really, if he should ask me to marry him, I don't know what I should say to it. I suppose, he won't insist upon my being a ghostess.—No, no, if he marries me, he'll like me to be a woman—and faith, a woman he shall find me.

Exit LAVINIA, R.

Enter ALDWINKLE and VAUNTINGTON, L.

ALDWINK. (R. C.) I have said it, captain. If your valour gives you stoutness of stomach sufficient to enable you to sit up in the haunted room, all night, to-night—and lay this ghost if he should come, you have my full permission to marry my daughter.

VAUNT. (L. C.) It's a bargain, 'squire; for my dear

Georgiana's sake, I've spirit enough in me to face ten thousand ghosts.

ALDWINK. YOU shall have a bottle of brandy, a pair of pistols, Friar Bacon, and Doctor Faustus ; so you cannot fail.

VAUNT. I only want a good heart, sir, and that I've got already.

ALDWINK. I can tell you one thing in your favour. He was to be buried to day; so I dont think he'll trouble us any more—I've sent Dickory to see, and expect him back every moment; but away with you to your post—it's past eleven already, and you musn't let the ghost come and catch you unprepared.

VAUNT. Oh, never fear, 'squire. "Omnia vincit amor."

Exit VAUNTINGTON, R.

DICK. (*without*) Tol de dol, de dol, lol.

ALDWINK. That's Dickory's voice.

Enter DICKORY, dancing and singing, L.

Well, Dickory ?

DICK. It be all over, 'squire.—He be earth'd d down, safe enough now, sur. I didn't come away till I'd seen sexton fill up every crack there were—he'll be cunning, to get out this time.

ALDWINK. Bravo ! Egad, I'm so rejoiced that-----Tell Thomas to bring in the punch I ordered him to get ready ; and, d'ye hear, bid him put a pint of brandy additional into it. We shall be sure to lack spirits, now we've got rid of the ghosts.—'Fore heaven, we'll have a night on't, Dickory.

DICK. Here be Thomas, 'squire; and the punch too.—Tol de dol, de dol lol.

Enter SERVANT, with punch, and two glasses on a tray, L.

ALDWINK. Put it down, Thomas; put it down. (SERVANT *puts down the punch and retires, L.*) NOW, Dickory, fill up your glass—(*fills*)—and our first toast shall be peace to Mr. Nicodemus's manes, *{they draw chairs forward and sit—drinks}*

DICK. Wi' all my heart—(*fills*)—Here be peace to Mr. Nicodemus's remainders, (*drinks*)

ALDWINK. (R. C.) Fill up again, Dickory. (*fills*) And now I'll give you-----

Enter NICODEMUS, L.

Confusion to all midnight intruders ! (*drinks*)

NIC. (*unobserved*) Zounds ! do they mean to insult me?

DICK. (*filling L. C.*) Confusion to all midnight excluders !—(*drinks*)

ALDWINK. Come, here's wishing the surgeons mayn't get hold of him—(*going to fill*)

NIC. (*coming between them, strikes his stick on the ground*)
Sir ! (DICKORY and ALDWINKLE run off hastily, the former L, the latter R.)

NIC. Zounds ! one would think I was a spectre; wherever I go, I frighten everybody away. Surely it can't be this suit of black—no matter, the melancholy ceremony over, I have now time to return to the soft duties of love and my grand work on vampires. I am somewhat fatigued by my day's exertions, and shall retire to my room, without disturbing the family. Thanks to Paul's assistance, every thing went off admirably well. My poor cousin must have been highly gratified, in being buried so tastefully and comfortably,—Heigho!

Exit NICODEMUS, R.

SCENE II.—*Same as Scene I., Act II, tables, chairs, &c.*

VAUNTINGTON *discovered sitting at a table, R. Brandy, pistols, candles, books, &c. before him.*

VAUNT. (*looking at his watch*) 'Tis very near twelve—I don't half like this job. I must take a little more brandy, (*drinks*)—It would be no use firing at him ; he'd no more mind having the contents of a pistol in his body than if they were only so many force-meat balls; I must take another bumper, (*drinks*)—'Tis the only thing I have to support me—what an awful silence! I wish I could break it, somehow—I'll sing—Tol lol de—No, I'm in no humour for singing, suppose I try and whistle, *pho, pher, phe.* (*whistles*)—Whistling's ominous—and, besides, my throat's so dry that—I must take a little more brandy.—(*drinks*)—I can't be wrong—it's a spiritual service and more fit for the chaplain of our regiment than me. I've a great mind to sound a retreat—but then, Georgiana and her fortune.—I cant afford to lose her fortune so—I'll take another glass of brandy (*drinks*)—then—yaw aw ! I

feel growing amazingly sleepy, so—I'll just finish the bottle (*drinks*)—and, yaw aw !—defy the devil and—yaw aw !—
(*sleeps'*)

Enter NICODEMUS, R. *walks up to the table.*

NIC. Hey-day! a stranger in my room ! and—Eh, pistols! and—what's here?—a bottle—brandy—a Vulgate. What shall I do? Poor gentleman, he has mistaken the way ; I'd bettor wake him and set him right. Sir ! sir !—(*tries to wake VAUNTINGTON*) Zounds, how fast he is. Ulloa! what's your name?—Mister! I'll bawl no more—what shall I do ? I have it—I'll try if the report of one of these pistols will wake him.

{fires one of the pistols— VAUNTINGTON starts up in terror—sees NICODEMUS}

VAUNT. The ghost himself, by all that's horrible!

Exit hastily, R.

NIC. Stop, sir—Mister—Ulloa—he's off—very odd—what did he mean by a ghost ? I must seek Mr. Aldwinkle, and obtain an explanation of these mysteries. Oh, that they would let me have a little rest!—Heigho!

Exit NICODEMUS, R.

SCENE III.—*Same as Scene II., Act II.*

Enter ALDWINKLE *and* DICKORY, L.

ALDWINK. Dickory! Dickory! they are at it, ding dong; I heard the pistols go off just this moment.

DICK. Iley, dang it, here be he again!

AUTWINK. Who? The ghost!

DICK. Na, only the captain.

Enter VAUNTINGTON, R.

ALD. Well, my dear boy, how have you got on?

Enter GEORGIANA *and* LAVINIA, L.

GEORG. (L) Ah? how have you got on? I'm dying to know.

VAUNT. (C.) What the deuce shall I say ? If I confess my defeat, I lose my Georgiana I must brazen it out. (*aside*) Oh ! I've had desperate work—we've been at it tooth and nail for the last half hour: but I think the business is settled now. Firing was of no use; one might as

well have shot at the air, for all the wounds it created; so I had at him with the Latin, Friar Bacon, Doctor Faustus, and Agrippa.

DICK. Ay, he be a gripper, indeed.

ALD. That's right. I could have laid him myself, if I had but understood Latin.

VAUNT. I fumigated him, exorcised him.

DICK. (R.) Dang me, but I should ha' liked to ha seen un done his exercise.

ALD. Be quiet, Dickory, scoundrel!

VAUNT. And, at length, I pressed him so hard, that he took himself off through the key-hole in a clap of thunder, and I dare say will never shew his face here again.

DICK. Na, not till the next time.

ALD. My dear, dear boy, you shall marry Georgiana directly. I suppose the foolish phantom thought he had children to deal with.

Enter NICODEMUS, R.

NIC. Mr. Aldwinkle, what is the reason, sir—(*the women scream—all exeunt hastily, L. in great terror*)

NIC. This is more and more extraordinary. Surely, I must have been metamorphosed, unknown to myself; transmogrified into some monster, or—but I have more important things to occupy my mind. (ALDWINKLE, LAVINIA, &c, *appear listening*) The great and conclusive truth, at which I have arrived in my grand work, renders my mind sufficiently disengaged to think of love. There is no doubt that vampires seek a union with mortal beings expressly to prolong their existence on this earth. I shall instantly, therefore, seek the fair Aldwinkle, and achieve our marriage. After what I have endured meanwhile, a walk in the soft moonlight will revive me.

Exit NICODEMUS, R.

Enter ALDWINKLE, GEORGIANA, LAVINIA, VAUNTINGTON, and DICKORY, *creeping in, L.*

LAV. There, sir; you hear what he said. He is a vampire, and merely seeks a union with my cousin, to prolong his existence.

GEORG. Oh, I am sure I'll never marry a vampire, pa, He'd eat me up.

DICK. Ay, kill you wi' kindness.

LAV. YOU see, he's gone into the garden, to bring himself to life again, in the moon beams, from the wounds of the captain.

VAUNT. Why, I did kill him half a dozen times, certainly.

DICK. Dang it! I didn't know the moon were a doctor, afore—they be all mad. (*aside*)

ALD. What a persecuted old man I am—what's to be done?—how can we get rid of him?

LAV. Listen to me, sir—guarantee that the captain shall have my cousin, and settle a small fortune on me, and I undertake to keep Mr. Nicodemus from ever troubling you at night again; I'll make him rest, I'll warrant him.

ALD. DO that, and I'll make your fortune equal to my daughter's.

LAV. I pledge my life on the result; join me a few minutes hence, in the garden, and let the performance of your promise follow that of mine. *Exit LAVINIA, R.*

ALD. An odd wench, i'faith—I should'nt at all wonder if the jade was to keep her word. Let us walk slowly on, for I long to ascertain the truth. *They exeunt, R.*

SCENE IV.—*Garden of Aldwinkle Hall, by moonlight.*

NICODEMUS *discovered.*

NIC. (C.) Can it be possible, that the moon, beaming such cool pure lustre, can entrance men's minds to madness?—She bathes me in her filmy light, like dew, refreshing and allaying—melting me into softness, and attuning each sterner chord of the heart to love and harmony—heigho!

Enter LAVINIA, R.

By heavens! responsive to my feelings, comes this angelic girl, to captivate and charm!

LAVIN. My good sir, if you have no particular wish to be knocked o' the head for an evil spirit, you will give over these nightly wanderings; hit upon some decisive method of proving yourself an *ipso facto* man, and rest quietly in your bed at night.

NIC. HOW admirably she will assist me in my learned labours!

LAVIN. (*aside*) I fear, I am more likely to disturb his learned labours, than to assist him in them.

NIC. An evil spirit—nightly wanderings—knock me or the head! A light begins to break in upon me—fair creature, how better can I prove myself a man, than by uniting my life's fate with thine? Thus on my knees-----
(*kneels*)

Enter ALDWINKLE, GEORGIANA, VAULTINGTON, *and*
DICKORY,R.

ALDWINK. He's laid, at last—see, he's on his knees, begging for mercy.

LAVIN. Rise, sir; I know all you are going to say—and, as I've no very particular objection, there's my hand.

NIC. Upon my word—a very sensible girl— she saves one a world of trouble.

LAVIN. And now, sir. (*to* ALDWINKLE) I claim the performance of your promise. To rid your house of the nightly visits of this terrible being, mid to make him rest quietly, as other Christians do, I have heroically resolved to sacrifice myself, and marry him.

ALDWINK. What! marry a ghost—a vampire— a spirit?

NIC. I see it all. Here has been a grand mistake; you have confounded me with my cousin.

ALDWINK. Egad ! it seems we've all been cozened and confounded too—however, I'm heartily glad things have turned out as they have; but you, Dickory, how came you to take it into your head this gentleman was a ghost ?

DICK. Why, sir, if he warn't a ghost, he was a spirit: and spirits very often get into my head.

LAVIN. I will explain everything, and rid you of all further cause of fear. This gentleman will like me none the worse for having a fortune ; my cousin will like him none the worse for having been the menus of uniting her to the captain; and, if our friends permit our harmless ghost to walk a few nights longer, for their amusement, we shall like them none the worse ; but receive a zest to act with additional spirit for the future.

VAUNT., GEORGIANA, NICODEMUS, LAVINIA, ALDWINKLE, DICKORY

Curtain.