

IN THE GRAVEYARD ON THE HILL

BY PAUL M. RUSSELL.

I am sad at heart to-night,
And my heart finds no rest.
For in the gloom of the scene
To the region of the blast.
And when I am all alone,
I think of her who lies still.
Then I think of her who lies
In the graveyard on the hill.

When amid the festive throng
I performed my chosen part,
Then I was sad and alone,
I was sad, indeed, at heart;
For my trusty thoughts would go,
With me to the region of the hill.

To that little grassy mound
In the graveyard on the hill.

I was young when first the sod
I artfully form was laid;

“I artfully form was laid;
Ere that lowly grave was made.

But my hopes of life are gone,

And my heart is sad and still.

To that little grassy mound
In the graveyard on the hill.

Often when the evening shade
Has dimmed the scene of the ground,

And the weary types made.

Their last solitary sound;

With a mournful note the phone

Over vale and wood and rill,

I have heard that mournful sound
In the graveyard on the hill.

But I know that there's an end
To these many years of pain,

And I know that this sun never again.

But contented I will rest.

Where is peace and all is still,

By the little grassy mound

In the graveyard on the hill.

CHRISTOPHER CRINGER.

A Christmas Story of a Miser and His Turkey.

BY MARGARET G. H. REYNOLDS.

Christopher was a miser.

We all know what that means, for this

little planet of ours is prodigal of the animal.

He had the identical tight lips you would expect to see on a man of his type. His nose was generous only in size, for speculation and hard-bargaining were written all over it. His small, greedy eyes were always stealing side looks, as if on the alert for unwary game.

He was a mean little shanty standing bare and cheerless on one of the bleak heights of the town, he lived quite alone, with no companion but his money and his thoughts. He had never married, being possessed of a mortal dread of matrimonial expenses; his days were invariably passed in cheating whom he could, and planning how, "hook or crook," to increase his gains; his evenings in counting the costs and gloating over his possessions, and his nights in dreaming that he was robbed or the bank had failed. No one of his acquaintances could afford to give him Cringer for a penny; they would as soon think of scaling the moon as overcomes his shrunken hearted aversion. Strangers might innocently alight on him with a charitable subscription list, and Cringer, bound not to lose the opportunity of saying a good thing for himself, would declare, with the look of a martyr, that he had half the poor of the neighborhood on his hands, not to mention the small fortunes customarily paid in at the church gatherings, whereupon the stranger in question would take his leave, scrupulously refraining from pressing such a charitable soul.

It was coming panic time; never were there promises of a harder winter. The poor went about the street with scared faces, and the rich held fast to their income, and tried to make it do double service.

Stowed away in a miserable attic lived one of Cringer's tenants, a poor widow, with an only child. Her hands were worn thin from the washboard, and her face, once, no doubt, robust and gay, was now emaciated, drooping, and covered with scanty hair.

"Poor creature! here is a bitter lot," sighed the neighbors as she passed. "May the good God look to her needs."

Cringer was this woman's brother, and she his only living relative. Nevertheless, if she failed in promptly paying her rent no more mercy was likely to be shown her than to any other of the struggling tenants. So the sad time came when she began to tremble for consequences. There was no use in looking around the room for anything to sell. Not a bit. A pittance would bring a straw, the broken stool, and the cup and saucer. As for lamps or oil, those were luxuries of the past long ago.

"Come, Wilhelm," she half wailed, pinning a blanket fragment over the child's shoulders and lifting him in her arms; "we'll go to Cringer; there's nothing else to be done; and, after I tell him it is, if he wants to turn us out to die in the snow, why, let him; adding in an undertone, "I don't know but it would be all right, after all."

Down went the shanty form, step after step, descending, fully conscious of narrow stairs, the little hungry child clinging frail and hot to her neck.

Cringer was just sitting down to his grub when the rap sounded on the door, and echoed with startling clearness through the silent house.

"Save the mark!" said he, "this may be some forward beggars wanting something to eat, which, thanks to my good sense, I have no notion of obliging them with," and scowling his brows together, closed the door with an angry snap.

When he saw his sister and the pinched-visaged little child crouched shivering on the threshold his jaw fell, and threatened never to take its proper shape again, for he half guessed the cause of her visit.

"Well!" he said, in a voice like crackling thorns, "what's the matter now?"

"I can't walk another step, Christopher," panted the freezing sister, "you'll have to help me up the stairs. I walked the last against a cutting wind; I shouldn't wonder if I were going to die; and her teeth chattered dolefully as she looked despairingly around her and tried to rise.

"Christopher, you must carry Wilhelm; I'm all kind of numb and feeble," she said. "I'm not fit to go home, for I'm barely living; she had another tan fit, to life. On hearing this, Cringer, after delivering a small volley of grumbling epithets, and consigning the child to foreign regions, hoisted it under his arm, mad-bag fashion, and proceeded to push it mother on before him, with a grip that made her bones of him to be gentle.

The heat of the room wasn't much to boast of, it revived the mother and child while Cringer, seemingly utterly indifferent to their presence, sat in dogged silence, his hands over the grates, which contained a few coals, carefully surrounded with ashes to prolong their life.

The clock ticked lonesomely through the cheerless room, and the gnarled branches of a tree, that seemed to straggle over the dismal roof in sheer pity, tapped perceptibly on the frosty pane.

Cringer looked up startled, and met Gretchen's joyless eyes.

"I wish you'd come to me, Christopher," she said at last. "I've come to tell you that it isn't my fault, I've eloped many a weary journey, my brother, in search of work, but always, always in vain;" and here her voice faltered, and a convulsive sob stifled her utterance.

"Well," said the gobblor, taking

breath and balancing himself in the air, "how do you feel, Cringer?"

"Oh, what an uncharitable question!" gasped Christopher, convulsed in voice and limb with the cold.

"Then you wouldn't like to be without a fire, eh?" and the gobblor lifted his foot and gave Cringer's whisker an insinuating pull. It had frozen at the mouth into bristling icicles.

"Of course, I don't like the cold," whined the miser, getting as angry as he dared; "don't you see the state I am in? Is all this torture because I eat you, 'cordin' to the custom of my country?"

He began to tremble with such violent chills that his cocked hat and blouse flew off, until quite shelterless he stood in the blast, and then, seized with new wonder, exclaimed:

"It strikes me your Eminence bears this cold quite stoically!"

"Oh, I don't feel it," said the gobblor, with a complacent look of comfort that caused the miser a pang of envy; "I have expense. You're sure you are all right, eh? That is, you don't feel particularly sick or anything of that sort?"

"Indeed," said Cringer, with as faltered a look as his shivering visage could command, "that is to me a new idea;" but his meditations were soon broken in upon by a sudden flight of the gobblor's, who plunged him through the elements, circled over a range of buildings, and, like a flash, flew down a chimney, through which another smoke or heat was emitting.

What if it should be so after all?" he gasped. "and she dead, and the little one still and cold beside her, and I, wretched man, the cause of it!"

Snatching his cooked hat and slipping himself into a great shaggy coat, he rushed precipitately from the house, and those who knew his slow, calculating step paused to wonder at look after him as he hurried breathlessly on his way.

Gretchen had managed to gather a few cinders from a neighboring ash heap, and, with a few sticks, to make them glow on the hearth over which little Wilhelm crouched, when Cringer softly opened the door and stood in their midst.

The sister, on seeing him, gave a desolate shriek, and ran toward him with outstretched, gesticulating arms, crying:

"I can't," said Cringer; "every one of my whiskers are turned into sticks of ice."

"Well, I won't press you for the rent at present, but of course you must expect to pay it soon; you can, to help me along with my taxes; good by; good by," Gretchen, and in closed the door upon her, with a smile that frightened her, and peeped after her through the half-closed back, catching at the old arm-chair for support.

"Listen awhile, and tell me what you see?"

"Mine, sure enough!" gasped Cringer, growing interested; "my tenement block, I'm alive."

"Listen awhile, and tell me what you see?"

Cringer pressed his face so close to the firebox that his sharp nose protruded through the crack, and he had hard eyes, wild with the hollowness of hunger, haunted him, and the little

Wilhelm's wail seemed to fill the lonely room. He rose from his chair and shook his shoulders and paced the crumpled, jagged apartments restlessly.

A long, dark mahogany cupboard stood in one corner, and by way of escaping from his present guilty state of mind he unlocked it, and lifting from its shelf a strong-looking vase raised it to his mouth, and took from thence a draught of beer.

"They are every bit as cold as you, Cringer," said the gobblor, drawing his formidable bill uncomfortably near Christopher's nose, as if dying for a peek at it.

"They're cold for all that," said his companion, irritably.

"As you please, my Lord," accompanied with protestations of obedience to whatever opinion his gobblorship might think proper to venture.

"Listen to what they say," was the next command, delivered with terrible emphasis, and this is what Cringer heard.

"It is a gloomy prospect for us, Marcell," the wife exclaimed in a trembling voice. "I expect every minute to see Cringer after his rent; 'tis due to-day, but if he has got out of town, we'll be in trouble."

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"It was many weeks before Gretchen again awoke to consciousness. But when she did, at last, she found it was to her herself she was surrounded with every luxury, and to meet in Christopher's tenement, whereupon the stranger in question would take his leave, scrupulously refraining from pressing such a charitable soul.

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