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VNIVERSITAS
STVDII
SALAMANTINI

A CORNISH
GHOST STORY,
A NIGHT'S ADVENTURES AT THE DEVIL'S STILE

OR,
JACKY TREVOZE AND MARY TREVEAN

BY "ELFIN"

SECOND EDITION

TRURO:

JAMES R. NETHERTON, LEMON STREET

M DCCC LXII

[NP]

A CORNISH GHOST STORY

PART FIRST

“Love’s a malady without a cure”

ONE foggy night, a year ago,
Ere yet had fallen December’s snow,
A Cornish miner, half afraid,
Stroll’d down Tremaine to meet his maid;
For though he loved in open day,
Through shady lanes and fields to stray,
Yet, strange to tell, as night drew on,
His love of wandering all was gone.
No smiling moon not twinkling star,
Could lure him from his home afar,
Unless, intent upon some spree,
His comrades bore him company;
And even then, if cruel fate
E’er led them past the church-yard gate,

[4]

Poor Cousin Jack felt ill at ease
And totter’d on with the trembling knees.
In short, dear reader, you may see,
Jack had his failings,—so have we.
Perfection, since the world began,
Was ne’er attained by mortal man.
Hence we poor Jack must not condemn,
For being just like other men.

Faults vary.— A Philosopher
On reason's side will rarely err.
No large black cat nor painted post
Will be the devil or a ghost,
And yet his errors be as great,
As those that trouble Jacky's pate.

I've said no moon nor twinkling star
Could lure Jack from his home afar;
And true it was—but ah! full soon
A mightier spell than star or moon
Drew Jack from home whene'er it could,
O'er hill or moor, though lane or wood,
And bade him all his fears forget,
When welcomed by the maid he met.
That mystic spell which all must own,
E'en monarchs seated on a throne,
Which once drew angels from above,—
(At least I've read so)—it was Love.

In Mary's laughing eye of blue
Lay far more danger than Jack knew.

[5]

Better, far better, had he seen
A host of wicked sprites, I ween,
Than look, for one brief moment's space,
Within a saucy maiden's face,
A smile—a look—a tender tone—
Hey! Presto! and his heart was gone.

Now on the night from whence my tale

Commences, Jacky without fail,
Had promised by Tremaine¹ to stay,
Till his dear maid could get away.
And so no sooner home from mine,
Than he, just as the clock struck nine,
Drank up his “dish of tay” and started,
Brimful of love and quite light-hearted.

Now cousing Jacky was, no doubt,
A comely youth when “oal trick’d out;”²

To use his own expression, he
A “clain-off³ man” was said to be,
And many a maiden inly sighted

To be the handsome miner’s bride:
But Jack knew better than to rove,
And never wander’d from his love.

Well, off he went, yet half afraid,
As he the fog and gloom surveyed,
But stoutly marching on the while
Determined at his fears to smile,

1 A Farm near Praze.

2 Dressed in his best.

3 Complete,—Perfect.

[6]

And whistling all the hymns he knew,
The last lone field was soon pass’d through.
He reach’d the lane—their trysting-place,
And waited with an anxious face,
Till Mary should appear in sight,

His best reward for any fright.

‘Twas very still—scarce one faint sound
Disturb’d the silence all around;
Within the village too, close by,
‘Twas darkness all—Jack heaved a sigh,
But turning round to look at Praze,¹
Mary herself there met his gaze,
“My awn *dear* maid,” he fondly cried,
And drew her blushing to his side,
“How ded ee heed² away up theear?
Hast a ben waitin’ fro me here?
I work’d like fire to Bal³ to-day,
I ded, plaise sure, to git away.
Come, ar’n’t ee goin’ to kiss me ‘un?
Aw! do ee dear; I must have waun.”⁴
And Jacky, growing fond and bold,
Stole something worth its weight in gold.
Yet one kiss made him long for more,
And so he tried to score,

1 A Village near Camborne

2 How did you hide. (*How* is locally used instead of *Why*.)

3 A Mine.

4 One.

[7]

Till Mary—saucy little flirt—
Exclaimed, “Law, Jack! Thee’st braave and pert,
But aw fie! doan’t ee stail um,¹ Jack,
‘Taant fitty,² ‘cept you put um back,

The Salamanca Corpus: *Cornish Ghost Story* (1862)

But now thee'st got um, taake um to ee.”

“Aw, Mary! do ee love me, *do ee?*”

Jack interrumped with a sigh,

“For you do know how ‘tes weth I,

You know how ‘tes weth I,

You know I love ee dear, now doan't ee?

You'll be my little ‘umman, waant ee?”

“You're ‘pon your jokes now, Jack Trevoze,”

Said Mary, looking at her shoes,

‘Taan't feer³ to trait me thicky⁴ way,

I waan't be laugh'd upon, I say,

‘Tes lies, oal that braave taelk an' stuff,

A pass'l o' great lies, sure 'nough.

I seed ee when you com'd from mittin'⁵

Laast Sunday, so ‘tes no use chaitin'.

You thoft,⁶ I s'poase, I shouldn't come,

And see ee put Jaane Jenkins hum!

Aw! I do know mun—iss I do—

She wor trick'd out so putty⁷ too,

A braave new dress and sich a bunnet,

Weth flowers an' oal like that upon it,

So doan't ee think to tell *me* lies.—

Aw! I could scat⁸ her faace an' eyes!

1 Them.

2 It is not proper.

3 Fair.

4 That.

5 Chapel.

6 Thought.

7 Pretty.

8 Slap.

[8]

I'd jist a great mind to have tried it,
Such goin's on, I caan't abide it."

Here Mary paus'd and look'd at Jack,
But he felt taken quite aback,
And stood with open mouth and eyes,
Replying only with sighs.

He *had* met Jenny—it was true,
And "put her hum from mittin' too,"
But then 'twas only on his part
A deed of gallantry—not art,
The polar star might haply move,
But not our hero from his love.
And so his tongue, once more unstopp'd—
The all important question popp'd.
He pleaded with such honest truth,
And looked withal so fine a young,
That Mary, though professing still,
(As every jealous woman will)
To doubt his faith—yet half consented
To tie the knot if nought prevented,
At Easter or at Whitsuntide,
And be his happy little bride.

[9]

PART SECOND.

"Its cold eyes did not move,
And mine moved not, but only stared on them,

The Salamanca Corpus: Cornish Ghost Story (1862)

Their fixed awe went through my brain like ice,
A skeleton hand seemed clutching at my heart;
And a sharp chill, as of a damp night fog,
Suddenly closed me in.”

Dark and darker grew the night,
Star by star sunk out of sight,
Deep and deeper like a pall,
Hung the black gof over all.

Wild and wilder blew the wind,
Scattering autumn leaves behind,
Fierce and fiercer howled the blast.
Leaving heaven and earth o’ercast.

Hearst thou that dirge-like tone?
Surely hell hath loos’d its own,
Roused the dooméd souls from death,
Sighing in the night wind’s breath.

[10]

Shadows flitting to and fro,
Undefined and hideous grow,
Bravest hearts shrink back in fear,
Storm and darknedd reigneth here.

The clock in Clowance Park¹ struck ten,
As Jack, the happiest of men,
Towards Tremaine with Mary walked,
And of their future fondly talked.
Unconscious of the time, they strayed

The Salamanca Corpus: *Cornish Ghost Story* (1862)

Through one dull field all undismayed,
Until at length they stood awhile,
Beside the well known "Devil Stile."²
The stream which winter time reveal'd,
Beneath the trees and shrubs concealed,
Now trickled with a bolder sound
Along the treach'rous looking ground,
Yet as the footpath wide extended,
No danger could be apprehended;
The stiles were close together too,
And in a moment you'd pass through.
Yet on a dark December night,
Jack thought, and I think Jack was right,
The place look'd "*wisht*" that is in writing.
The spot by no means seem'd inviting.

1 The seat of the St. Aubyns.

2 There is no local name attached at the spot which, for the sake of mystery, I have called the "Devil's Stile," but its locality will be easily recognized by any one familiar with the spot.

[11]

"Aw! 'tes a desmal night," he said,
And to confirm it shook his head,
"I s'poase now, ef ghoats do appeer,
'Twould be 'pon ev'nin's like this heer."
"Aw! iss, sure 'nough," the maid replied,
And crept up closer to his side,
"Aw! iss, and I *have* seed waun, Jack,
'Twas 'zackly here, soas,¹ and so black,
The faace an' eyes of un—aw dear!

The Salamanca Corpus: *Cornish Ghost Story* (1862)

I tremble now a'moast weth feer,
To think upon the sight I saw,
It was the devil I do know,
For I ded hear the folks at Praze
Tell, that they seed un in a chaise,
He com'd somewhere 'bout twelve o'clock,
And at the chapel door ded knock,
But as he couldn't heer 'um pray,
I s'poase he thoft he go away,
And wait till he could catch 'um chaittin'
Some day when they were oal at mittin'."

"Aw! iss, 'twor he sure 'nough," cried Jack,

But *ghoasts* I've heerd es whit not black,
Yet I do think 'tes like this here,
They can be any colour, dear,
And any shaape too, for you see,
They caan't be reckon'd up like we.

1 A familiar term of address.

[12]

I've seed, I deer say, scores an' scores,
When I ben laate of nights out doors;
And aw! you never! it do maake
Me feel all ovvur in a shaake,
To taelk upon a buck-a-boo;
I've never seed the devil though."

"Hush! Jacky," Mary cried in feae,

"Now do ee hush, for s'poase he's here;

‘Twor zackly right afoore that bush
He glaazed¹ upon me, soas,—an’ hush!—
I feel quite fainty,—iss I do,
An’ think I see un up long too;
An’ look,—aw! do ee look there, Jack,
I *can* see somethin’, an’ ‘tes *black!*’

“Aw, my dear maid! Aw, Maary! Wheere?”

Cried Jack, in agonies of fear;
And, starting forth, he fell almost
Upon (O heaven and earth!) the Ghost!
‘Twas black, all black, from top to toe,
And big and bigger seemed to grow,
So tall and gaunt; and O those eyes!
Jack tried, but felt he could not rise;
They held him spell-bound where he lay,
And though he turned his own away,
He knew they glared upon him still,
And followed his about at will.

1 Stared.

[13]

Once on his cheek he felt its breath,
And thought ‘twould surely be his death;
The cloven hoof too on his breast
And frightful horns the monster press’d;
Then in his horror and despair,
While falling, he had clutched its hair,
And felt the long and shaggy beard,
Which on that hideous face appeared.

The Salamanca Corpus: Cornish Ghost Story (1862)

O what a time it seemed to Jack,
That he lay speechless on his back;
His throbbing heart and fever'd brain,
Half hoped for succour, but in vain;
No friendly voice fell on his ear,
He was alone, and no one near;
No one, ah! worse, far worse,—poor Jack,
None with him but a friend in black.

At last his accents mildly civil,
He thus address'd the dreaded devil:—
“Aw! my dear man, now doan't ee stay,
Aw! do ee, do ee, go away;
I doan't tell lies,—I doan't, plaise sure;
Or you'd have found I out afoore.¹
'Taant² me thee wants at all, it aant;
Nor Maary nuther, no it baent.
There's scores an' hunderds wuss than we,
Aw iss there es! For doan't ee see,

1 Before.

2 It is not.

[14]

Though I belong to go to mittin',
I doan't mix praying' up weth chaiten';¹
An' ef I sometimes sweer and cuss,
An' git quite taizy,—'taant no wuss.
Our cappun's² better gaame than me,
Why doan't ee go up long to he?
An' I do knaw, soas, iss I do,

The Salamanca Corpus: *Cornish Ghost Story* (1862)

Where there's a lot of sinners too;
I'm sartin thee doan't want me fust,
'Cause I do *knaw* I ar'n't the wust.
Joe Sm-th-rs³ said to me waun day
When he wor praichin', 'Now I say.
Do you, Jack, want to go to bliss?'
An' I roase up an' hollar'd, 'Iss.'"

Jack ceased, and sighed with inward dread,
To hear whatever might be said,
For though he thought he'd best be civil,
He lik'd not talking to the devil,
And fear'd, whene'er the answer came,
To see his mouth all fire and flame.
In vain he waited, no one spoke,
Not the least sound the silence broke;
And so, still hearing no reply,
Our hero half unclosed one eye,

1 Cheating.

2 Captain of a Mine.

3 A Local Preacher well known in this part by the *very peculiar* style of his sermons.

[15]

Look'd up and down, and still look'd on,
Amazed to find the devil—gone.
With cautious movements up he rose,
And, once more safe upon his toes,
Look'd round again, still faint with fear,
To see if all the coast was clear;

The Salamanca Corpus: *Cornish Ghost Story* (1862)

His first thought being, selfish elf,
Not of his Mary, but *himself*.
However, it would be unfair
To hint he did not really care;
For ere he'd moved one foot to go,
He thought, "But wheere es Maary, though?
Thee caan't run off wethout her, Jack,
No, ef the devil should come back—
She's quelled¹ up somewheere, I doan't doubt,
An' waitin' too, till I do shout;
An' I must do it, iss I must,
I hop' the devil waan't hear fust."
And here Jack gave his lungs full course,
And shouted "Ma-a-ry," till quite hoarse.

A dreadful thought now cross'd his mind,
Suppose, though he was left behind,
The fiend had chosen fairer prey,
And spirited his maid away.
Ah! fearful thought, with grief profound,
Jack once more sunk upon the ground,

¹ Squeezed.

[16]

And wildly cried (so true was he),
"Ef thee'st got Maary, aw, taake me!
I caan't, I waan't, go hum¹ wethout her,
Though scores of buccas swarm about her.
Aw, Maaster Devil! Pity Jack,
An' give me my dear maiden back.

The Salamanca Corpus: Cornish Ghost Story (1862)

How doan't ee come to me, my dear?

Aw Maary! Maary! caan't ee hear?

I'm dyin', iss, sure 'nough, I be."

"Law! Jacky, doan't ee be a g—

Rise up, my deary man, aw do!

I baen't no ugly buck-a-boo."

Yes, there stood Mary safe and sound,

And smiling too. Jack gave a bound,

And gravely wished himself a bear,

That he, to death, might hug her there;

But all the antics he went through,

My pen can ne'er do justice to.

The wondering Mary on him gazed,

And thought, "plaise sure! He must be maazed;"

And, frightened at the deed she'd done,

Confess'd the whole, and thus begun,—

"Now come, thee wust, come jack Trevoze,

I must be goin' home, I s'poase,

Doan't glaaze so will'd² un, doan't ee, dear,

'Tworn't norry³ ghoast thee seed up there,

1 Home.

2 Wild.

3 It was not any.

[17]

I ded it all, an' brother Jan,

Thee knaw'st he be a jokin' man;

He seed me taizy 'bout ee, Jack,

When thee an' Jaane went waakin' back

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From mittin', hitched up¹ cloase together;
An' so, says he, 'Doan't care a feather,
We'll have some fun, soas, iss we will,
Ef thee will keep thy dear tongue still.'
An' so I thoft of Jaane an' you,
An' dedn't knaw, Jack, what to do;
I dedn't want to hurt ee, no,
But I ded *haate* Jaane Jenkins so;
An' so his plans I' greed to 'dopt;
But aw! I thoft I should have dropt,
When I ded see un in such trim,
An' seed ee fall too right 'pon him,
I runn'd away, I ded, plaise sure!
I couldn't 'bide to see no more;
An' Jan, he soon come up long too,
Jist stiff weth loffin',² soas, 'pon you;
So I got taizy, an' com'd back,
To tell my awn dear man, my Jack,
'Twor all a jealous 'umman's³ folly,
An' not to haate his little Polly."

Jack listen'd in extreme surprise,
Scratch'd his hot head and shut his eyes,

1 Arm in arm.

2 Laughing.

3 Woman.

[18]

Look'd at his fingers, then his toes,
Cough'd, spit, and lastly blew his nose;

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Some minutes thus he stood perplexed,
Feeling himself most sorely vexed,
“To be maade such a fool,” thought he,
“I wish now I ded never see
The maiden.” Here he look’d at Mary,
(He should have done just the contrary),
She stood, poor maid, before him sighing,
And very penitently crying;
It touch’d Jack’s heart; “Come here un, dear,
I s’poase I must forgive ee,—there!”
And, giving her the kiss of peace,
His troubled soul felt some release.
“I’ll be,” he said, “more like a man
Next time; now where’s thy brother Jan?
I’ll go long home weth ee, my dear,
An’ taelk to un upon it there;
But doan’t ee be afeerd for he,
‘Cause he’s a brother to boath we;
An’ I do knaw he love his fun,
Although I doan’t haafe¹ like it un.
Wekk, come thee wust, let’s maake haaste back.”
Here some one shouted out, “Stop, Jack.”
‘Twas Jan;—he came with hanging head,
And shyly to our hero said,

1 Half.

[19]

“We’re cumraades,¹ baen’t us?—iss we be,
An’ noane were such good frends as we;
An’ I do feel all shaamdy² now,

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At maaking such a por³ an' row
I'll never tell upon ee, Jack,
Ef I ded laugh behind thy back,
I'm jist a gashly⁴ desmal man."
"We'll maake it up and be friends, Jan,"
Exclaimed the open-hearted Jack.
"Aw! soas, though thee wast braave an' black,
I thoft, sure 'nough, I must be civil,
Thee look'd jist 'zackly like the devil;
But where's thy head, an' horns, an' beard,
An' hoof, an' tail,—all them appear'd;
Iss, iss, I reckon, I can sweer,
I seed un all, Jan, up long theree."

"Haw! haw!" laughed Jan, "I catch'd our gooat,
An' trick'd un out in faether's cooat,⁵
An' muzzled un for fear he'd blait,
An' let all out our ugly chait.
Well, soas, an' then to maake un tall,
I carr'd in my arms, that's all;
An' when taelk'd about a ghoast,
I wor jist dead with laughing 'most;
But I worn't haafe so bould as thee,
For I thoft, s'poase he come to me,

1 Comrades.

2 Ashamed.

3 Fuss.

4 Unsightly.

5 Coat.

Ef I doan't mind what I'm about,
He will, sure 'nough, to sarve me out."

Thus talking, Mary, Jan, and Jack,
Reached home, rejoiced to get safe back,
And what with Mary, love, and ale,
Our hero look'd no longer pale,
But, laughing at his recent fears,
Charm'd his attentive listeners' ears
With all the misadventures he
That night experiences. "An' you see,"
He finally remarked, "almoast
'Tes my belief there's norry ghoast."

My story ends; perchance I may
(If Jack permit) relate some day
His further acts. I pause awhile
Till you digest "THE DEVIL'S STILE"

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