The Spectre Cook of Bangletop

John Kendrick Bangs

Table of Contents

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I

For the purposes of this bit of history, Bangletop Hall stands upon a grassy knoll on the left bank of the River Dee, about eighteen miles from the quaint old city of Chester. It does not in reality stand there, nor has it ever done so, but consideration for the interests of the living compels me to conceal its exact location, and so to befog the public as to its whereabouts that its identity may never be revealed to its disadvantage. It is a rentable property, and were it known that it has had a mystery connected with it of so deep, dark, and eerie a nature as that about to be related, I fear that its usefulness, save as an accessory to romance, would be seriously impaired, and that as an investment it would become practically worthless.

The hall is a fair specimen of the architecture which prevailed at the time of Edward the Confessor; that is to say, the main portion of the structure, erected in Edward's time by the first Baron Bangletop, has that square, substantial, stony aspect which to the eye versed in architecture identifies it at once as a product of that enlightened era. Later owners, the successive Barons Bangletop, have added to its original dimensions, putting Queen Anne wings here, Elizabethan ells there, and an Italian−Renaissance façade on the river front. A Wisconsin water tower, connected with the main building by a low Gothic alleyway, stands to the south; while toward the east is a Greek chapel, used by the present occupant as a store−room for his wife's trunks, she having lately returned from Paris with a wardrobe calculated to last through the first half of the coming London season. Altogether Bangletop Hall is an impressive structure, and at first sight gives rise to various emotions in the æsthetic breast; some cavil, others admire. One leading architect of Berlin travelled all the way from his German home to Bangletop Hall to show that famous structure to his son, a student in the profession which his father adorned; to whom he is said to have observed that, architecturally, Bangletop Hall was "cosmopolitan and omniperiodic, and therefore a liberal education to all who should come to study and master its details." In short, Bangletop Hall was an object−lesson to young architects, and showed them at a glance that which they should ever strive to avoid.

Strange to say, for quite two centuries had Bangletop Hall remained without a tenant, and for nearly seventy−five years it had been in the market for rent, the barons, father and son, for many generations having found it impossible to dwell within its walls, and for a very good reason: no cook could ever be induced to live at Bangletop for a longer period than two weeks. Why the queens of the kitchen invariably took what is commonly known as French leave no occupant could ever learn, because, male or female, the departed domestics never returned to tell, and even had they done so, the pride of the Bangletops would not have permitted them to listen to the explanation. The Bangletop escutcheon was clear of blots, no suspicion even of a conversational blemish appearing thereon, and it was always a matter of extreme satisfaction to the family that no one of its scions since the title was created had ever been known to speak directly to any one of lesser rank than himself, communication with inferiors being always had through the medium of a private secretary, himself a baron, or better, in reduced circumstances.

The first cook to leave Bangletop under circumstances of a Gallic nature—that is, without known cause, wages, or luggage—had been employed by Fitzherbert Alexander, seventeenth.Baron of Bangletop, through Charles Mortimor de Herbert, Baron Peddlington, formerly of Peddlington Manor at Dunwoodie−on−the−Hike, his private secretary, a handsome old gentleman of sixty−five, who had been deprived of his estates by the crown in 1629 because he was suspected of having inspired a comic broadside published in those troublous days, and directed against Charles the First, which had set all London in a roar.

This broadside, one of very few which are not preserved in the British Museum—and a greater tribute to its rarity could not be devised—was called, "A Good Suggestion as to ye Proper Use of ye Chinne Whisker," and consisted of a few lines of doggerel printed beneath a caricature of the king, with the crown hanging from his goatee, reading as follows:

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"Ye King doth sporte a gallous grey goatee
Uponne ye chinne, where evey one may see.
And since ye Monarch's head's too small to holde
With comfort to himselfe ye crowne of gold,
Why not enwax and hooke ye goatee rare,
And lette ye British crown hang down from there?"
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Whether or no the Baron of Peddlington was guilty of this traitorous effusion no one, not even the king, could ever really make up his mind. The charge was never fully proven, nor was De Herbert ever able to refute it successfully, although he made frantic efforts to do so. The king, eminently just in such matters, gave the baron the benefit of the doubt, and inflicted only half the penalty prescribed, confiscating his estates, and letting him keep his head and liberty. De Herbert's family begged the crown to reverse the sentence, permitting them to keep the estates, the king taking their uncle's head in lieu thereof, he being unmarried and having no children who would mourn his loss. But Charles was poor rather than vindictive at this period, and preferring to adopt the other course, turned a deaf ear to the petitioners. This was probably one of the earliest factors in the decadence of literature as a pastime for men of high station.

De Herbert would have starved had it not been for his old friend Baron Bangletop, who offered him the post of private secretary, lately made vacant by the death of the Duke of Algeria, who had been the incumbent of that office for ten years, and in a short time the Baron of Peddlington was in full charge of the domestic arrangements of his friend. It was far from easy, the work that devolved upon him. He was a proud, haughty man, used to luxury of every sort, to whom contact with those who serve was truly distasteful; to whom the necessity of himself serving was most galling; but he had the manliness to face the hardships Fate had put upon him, particularly when he realized that Baron Bangle−top's attitude towards servants was such that he could with impunity impose on the latter seven indignities for every one that was imposed on him. Misery loves company, particularly when she is herself the hostess, and can give generously of her stores to others.

Desiring to retrieve his fallen fortunes, the Baron of Peddlington offered large salaries to all those whom he employed to serve in the Bangletop menage, and on payday, through an ingenious system of fines, managed to retain almost seventy−five per cent of the funds for his own use. Of this Baron Bangletop, of course, could know nothing. He was aware that under De Herbert the running expenses of his house−hold were nearly twice what they had been under the dusky Duke of Algeria; but he also observed that repairs to the property, for which the late duke had annually paid out several thousands of pounds sterling, with very little to show for it, now cost him as many hundreds with no fewer tangible results. So he winked his eye—the only.unaristocratic habit he had, by−the−way—and said nothing. The revenue was large enough, he had been known to say, to support himself and all his relatives in state, with enough left over to satisfy even Ali Baba and the forty thieves.

Had he foreseen the results of his complacency in financial matters, I doubt if he would have persisted therein.

For some ten years under De Herbert's management everything went smoothly and expensively for the Bangletop Hall people, and then there came a change. The Baron Bangletop rang for his breakfast one morning, and his breakfast was not. The cook had disappeared.

Whither or why she had gone, the private secretary professed to be unable to say. That she could easily be replaced, he was certain. Equally certain was it that Baron Bangletop stormed and raved for two hours, ate a cold breakfast—a thing he never had been known to do before—and then departed for London to dine at the club until Peddlington had secured a successor to the departed cook, which the private secretary succeeded in doing within three days. The baron was informed of his manager's success, and at the end of a week returned to Bangletop Hall, arriving there late on a Saturday night, hungry as a bear, and not too amiable, the king having negotiated a forcible loan with him during his sojourn in the metropolis.

"Welcome to Bangletop, Baron," said De Herbert, uneasily, as his employer alighted from his coach.

"Blast your welcome, and serve the dinner," returned the baron, with a somewhat ill grace.

At this the private secretary seemed much embarrassed. "Ahem!" he said. "I'll be very glad to have the dinner served, my dear Baron; but the fact is I—er—I have been unable to provide anything but canned lobster and apples."

"What, in the name of Chaucer, does this mean?" roared Bangletop, who was a great admirer of the father of English poetry; chiefly because, as he was wont to say, Chaucer showed that a bad speller could be a great man, which was a condition of affairs exactly suited to his mind, since in the science of orthography he was weak, like most of the aristocrats of his day. "I thought you sent me word you had a cook?"

"Yes, Baron, I did; but the fact of the matter is, sir, she left us last night, or, rather, early this morning."

"Another one of your beautiful Parisian exits, I presume?" sneered the baron, tapping the floor angrily with his toe.

"Well, yes, somewhat so; only she got her money first."

"Money!" shrieked the baron. "Money! Why in Liverpool did she get her money? What did we owe her money for? Rent?"

"No, Baron; for services. She cooked three dinners."

"Well, you'll pay the bill out of your perquisites, that's all. She's done no cooking for me, and she gets no pay from me. Why do you think she left?"

"She said—"

"Never mind what she said, sir," cried Bangletop cutting De Herbert short. "When I am interested in the table−talk of cooks, I'll let you know. What I wish to hear is what do you think was the cause of her leaving?"

"I have no opinion on the subject," replied the private secretary, with becoming dignity. "I only know that at four o'clock this morning she knocked at my door, and demanded her wages for four days, and vowed she'd stay no longer in the house."

"And why, pray, did you not inform me of the fact, instead of having me travel away down here from London?" queried Bangletop.

"You forget, Baron," replied De Herbert, with a deprecatory gesture—"you forget that there is no system of telegraphy by which you could be reached. I may be poor, sir, but I'm just as much of a baron as you are, and I will take the liberty of saying right here, in what would be the shadow of your beard, if you had one, sir, that a man who insists on receiving cable messages when no such things exist is rather rushing business."

"Pardon my haste, Peddlington, old chap," returned the baron, softening. "You are quite right.

My desire was unreasonable; but I swear to you, by all my ancestral Bangletops, that I am hungry as a pit full of bears, and if there's one thing I can't eat, it is lobster and apples. Can't you scare up a snack of bread and cheese and a little cold larded fillet? If you'll supply the fillet, I'll provide the cold."

At this sally the Baron of Peddlington laughed and the quarrel was over. But none the less the master of Bangletop went to bed hungry; nor could he do any better in the morning at breakfast−time.

The butler had not been trained to cook, and the coachman's art had once been tried on a boiled egg, which no one had been able to open, much less eat, and as it was the parlor−maid's Sunday off, there was absolutely no one in the house who could prepare a meal. The Baron of Bangletop had a sort of sneaking notion that if there were nobody around he could have managed the spit or gridiron himself; but, of course, in view of his position, he could not make the attempt.

And so he once more returned to London, and vowed never to set his foot within the walls of Bangletop hall again until his ancestral home was provided with a cook "copper−fastened and riveted to her position."

And Bangletop Hall from that time was as a place deserted. The baron never returned, because lie could not return without violating his oath; for De Herbert was not able to obtain a cook for the Bangletop cuisine who would stay, nor was any one able to discover why. Cook after cook came, stayed a day, a week, and one or two held on for two weeks, but never longer. Their course was invariably the same—they would leave without notice; nor could any inducement be offered which would persuade them to remain. The Baron of Peddlington became, first round−shouldered, then deaf, an then insane in his search for a permanent cook, landing finally in an asylum, where he died, four years after the demise of his employer in London, of softening of the brain. His last words were, "Why did you leave your last place?"

And so time went on. Barons of Bangle−top were born, educated, and died. Dynasties rose and fell, but Bangletop Hall remained uninhabited, although it was not until 1799 that the family gave up all hopes of being able to use their ancestral home. Tremendous alterations, as I have already hinted, were made. The drainage was carefully inspected, and a special apartment connected with the kitchen, finished in hardwood, handsomely decorated, and hung with rich tapestries, was provided for the cook, in the vain hope that she might be induced permanently to occupy her position. The Queen Anne wing and Elizabethan ell were constructed, the latter to provide bowling−alleys and smoking−rooms for the probable cousins of possible culinary queens, and many there were who accepted the office with alacrity, throwing it up with still greater alacrity before the usual fortnight passed. Then the Bangletops saw clearly that it was impossible for them to live there, and moving away, the house was announced to be "for rent, with all modern improvements, conveniently located, spacious grounds, especially adapted to the use of those who do their own cooking." The last clause of the announcement puzzled a great many people, who went to see the mansion for no other reason than to ascertain just what the an−nouncement meant,

and the line, which was inserted in a pure spirit of facetious bravado, was probably the cause of the mansion's quickly renting, as hardly a month had passed before it was leased for one year by a retired London brewer, whose wife's curiosity had been so excited by.the strange wording of the advertisement that she travelled out to Bangletop to gratify it, fell in love with the place, and insisted upon her husband's taking it for a season. The luck of the brewer and his wife was no better than that of the Bangletops. Their cooks—and they had fourteen during their stay there—fled after an average service of four days apiece, and later the tenants themselves were forced to give up and return to London, where they told their friends that the " 'all was 'aunted," which might have filled the Bangletops with concern had they heard of it. They did not hear of it, however, for they and their friends did not know the brewer and the brewers friends, and as for complaining to the Bangletop agent in the matter, the worthy beer−maker thought he would better not do that, because he had hopes of being knighted some day, and he did not wish to antagonize so illustrious a family as the Bangletops by running down their famous hall—an antagonism which might materially affect the chances of himself and his good wife when they came to knock at the doors of London society. The lease was allowed to run its course, the rent was paid when due, and at the end of the stipulated term Bangletop Hall was once more on the lists as for rent.

II

For fourscore years and ten did the same hard fortune pursue the owners of Bangletop. Additions to the property were made immediately upon request of possible lessees. The Greek chapel was constructed in 1868 at the mere suggestion of a Hellenic prince, who came to England to write a history of the American rebellion, finding the information in back files of British newspapers ex−actly suited to the purposes of picturesque narrative, and no more misleading than most home−made history. Bangletop was retired, "far from the gadding crowd," as the prince put it, and therefore just the place in which a historian of the romantic school might produce his magnum opus without disturbance; the only objection being that there was no place whither the eminently Christian sojourner could go to worship according to his faith, he being a communicant in the Greek Church. This defect Baron Bangletop immediately remedied by erecting and endowing the chapel; and his youngest son, having been found too delicate morally for the army, was appointed to the living and placed in charge of the chapel, having first embraced with considerable ardor the faith upon which the soul of the princely tenant was wont to feed. All of these improvements—chapel, priest, the latter's change of faith, and all— the Bangletop agent put at the exceedingly low sum of forty−two guineas per annum and board for the priest; an offer which the prince at once accepted, stipulating, however, that the lease should be terminable at any time he or his landlord should see fit. Against this the agent fought nobly, but without avail. The prince had heard rumors about the cooks of Bangletop, and he was wary. Finally the stipulation was accepted by the baron, with what result the reader need hardly be told. The prince stayed two weeks, listened to one sermon in classic university Greek by the youthful Bangletop, was deserted by his cook, and moved away.

After the departure of the prince the estate was neglected for nearly twenty−two years, the owner having made up his mind that the case was hopeless. At the end of that period there came from the United States a wealthy shoemaker, Hankinson J. Terwilliger by name, chief owner of the Terwilliger Three−dollar Shoe Company (Limited), of Soleton, Massachusetts, and to him was leased Bangletop Hall, with all its rights and appurtenances, for a term of five years. Mr.

Terwilliger was the first applicant for the hall as a dwelling to whom the agent, at the instance of the baron, spoke in a spirit of absolute candor. The baron was well on in years, and he did not feel like getting into trouble with a Yankee, so he said, at his time of life. The hall had been a.thorn in his flesh all his days, and he didn't care if it was never occupied, and therefore he wished nothing concealed from a prospective tenant. It was the agent's candor more than anything else that induced Mr. Terwilliger to close with him for the term of five years. He suspected that the Bangletops did not want him for a tenant, and from the moment that notion entered his head, he was resolved that he would be a tenant.

"I'm as good a man as any baron that ever lived," he said; "and if it pleases Hankinson J.

Terwilliger to live in a baronial hail, a baronial hall is where Hankinson J. Terwilliger puts up."

"We certainly have none of the feeling which your words seem to attribute to us, my dear sir,"

the agent had answered. "Baron Bangletop would feel highly honored to have so distinguished a sojourner in England as yourself occupy his estate, but he does not wish you to take it without fully understanding the circumstances. Desirable as Bangletop Hall is, it seems fated to be unoccupied because it is thought to he haunted, or something of that sort, the effect of which is to drive away cooks, and without cooks life is hardly an ideal."

Mr. Terwilliger laughed. "Ghosts and me are not afraid of each other," he said. " 'Let 'em haunt,' I say; and as for cooks, Mrs. H. J. T. hasn't had a liberal education for nothing. We could live if all the cooks in creation were to go off in a whiff. We have daughters too, we have. Good smart American girls, who can adorn a palace or grace a hut on demand, not afraid of poverty, and able to take care of good round dollars. They can play the piano all the morning and cook dinner all the afternoon if they're called on to do it; so your difficulties ain't my difficulties. I'll take the hall at your figures; term, five years; and if the baron 'll come down and spend a month with us at any time, I don't care when, we'll show him what a big lap Luxury can get up when she tries."

And so it happened. The New York papers announced that Hankinson J. Terwilliger, Mrs.

Terwilliger, the Misses Terwilliger, and Master Hankinson J. Terwilliger, Jun., of Soleton, Massachusetts, had plunged into the dizzy whirl of English society, and that the sole of the three−dollar shoe now trod the baronial halls of the Bangletops. Later it was announced that the Misses Terwilliger, of Bangletop Hall, had been

presented to the queen; that the Terwilligers had entertained the Prince of Wales at Bangletop; in fact, the Terwilligers became an important factor in the letters of all foreign correspondents of American papers, for the president of the Terwilliger Three−dollar Shoe Company, of Soleton, Massachusetts (Limited), was now in full possession of the historic mansion, and was living up to his surroundings.

For a time everything was plain sailing for the Americans at Bangle top. The dire forebodings of the agent did not seem to be fulfilled, and Mr. Terwilliger was beginning to feel aggrieved. He had hired a house with a ghost, and he wanted the use of it; but when he reflected upon the consequences below stairs, he held his peace. He was not so sure, after he had stayed at Bangletop awhile, and had had his daughters presented to the queen, that he could be so independent of cooks as he had at first supposed. Several times he had hinted rather broadly that some of the old New England homemade flap−jacks would be most pleasing to his palate; but since the prince had spent an afternoon on the lawn of Bangletop, the young ladies seemed deeply pained at the mere mention of their accomplishments in the line of griddles and batter; nor could Mrs. Terwilliger, after having tasted the joys of aristocratic life, bring herself to don the apron which so became her portly person in the early American days, and prepare for her lord and master one of those delicious platters of poached eggs and breakfast bacon, the mere memory of which made his mouth water. In short, palatial surroundings had too obviously destroyed in his wife and daughters all that capacity for happiness in a hovel of which Mr.

Terwilliger had been so proud, and concerning which he had so eloquently spoken to Baron.Bangletop's agent, and he now found himself in the position of Damocles. The hall was leased for a term, entertainment had been provided for the county with lavish hand; but success was dependent entirely upon his ability to keep a cook, his family having departed from their republican principles, and the history of the house was dead against a successful issue. So he decided that, after all, it was better that the ghost should he allowed to remain quiescent, and he uttered no word of complaint.

It was just as well, too, that Mr. Terwilliger held his peace, and refrained from addressing a complaining missive to the agent of Bangletop Hall; for before a message of that nature could have reached the person addressed, its contents would have been misleading, for at a quarter after midnight on the morning of the date set for the first of a series of grand banquets to the county folk, there came from the kitchen of Bangletop Hall a quick succession of shrieks that sent the three Misses Terwilliger into hysterics, and caused Hankinson J. Terwilliger's sole remaining lock to stand erect. Mrs. Terwilliger did not hear the shrieks, owing to a lately acquired habit of hearing nothing that proceeded from below stairs.

The first impulse of Terwilliger père was to dive down under the bedclothes, and endeavor to drown the fearful sound by his own labored breathing, but he never yielded to first impulses. So he awaited the second, which came simultaneously with a second series of shrieks and a cry for help in the unmistakable voice of the cook; a lady, by−the−way, who had followed the Terwilliger fortunes ever since the Terwilligers began to have fortunes, and whose first capacity in the family had been the dual one of mistress of the kitchen and confidante of madame. The second impulse was to arise in his might, put on a stout pair of the Terwilliger three−dollar brogans—the strongest shoe made, having been especially devised for the British Infantry in the Soudan—and garments suitable to the occasion, namely, a mackintosh and pair of broadcloth trousers, and go to the rescue of the distressed domestic. This Hankinson J. Terwilliger at once proceeded to do, arming himself with a pair of horse−pistols, murmuring on the way below a soft prayer, the only one he knew, and which, with singular inappropriateness on this occasion, began with the words, "Now I lay me down to sleep."

"What's the matter, Judson?" queried Mrs. Terwilliger, drowsily, as she opened her eyes and saw her husband preparing for the fray.

She no longer called him Hankinson, not because she did not think it a good name, nor was it less euphonious to her ear than Judson, but Judson was Mr. Terwilliger's middle name, and middle names were quite the thing, she had observed, in the best circles. It was doubtless due to this discovery that her visiting cards had been engraved to read "Mrs. H. Judson−Terwilliger."

the hyphen presumably being a typographical error, for which the engraver was responsible.

"Matter enough," growled Hankinson. "I have reason to believe that that jackass of a ghost is on duty to−night."

At the word ghost a pseudo−aristocratic shriek pervaded the atmosphere, and Mrs. Terwilliger, forgetting her social position for a moment, groaned "Oh, Hank!" and swooned away. And then the president of the Terwilliger

Three−dollar Shoe Company of Soleton, Massachusetts (Limited), descended to the kitchen.

Across the sill of the kitchen door lay the culinary treasure whose lobster croquettes the Prince of Wales had likened unto a dream of Lucullus. Within the kitchen were signs of disorder. Chairs were upset the table was lying flat on its back, with its four legs held rigidly up in the air; the kitchen library, consisting of a copy of Marie Antoinette's Dream−Book; a yellow−covered novel bearing the title Little Lucy: or, The Kitchen−maid who Became a Marchioness; and Sixty Soups, by One who Knows, lay strewn about the room, the Dream−Book sadly torn, and Little Lucy.disfigured forever with batter. Even to the unpractised eve it was evident that something had happened, and Mr. Terwilliger felt a cold chill mounting his spine three sections at a time.

Whether it was the chill or his concern for the prostrate cook that was responsible or not I cannot say, but for some cause or other Mr. Terwilliger immediately got down on his knees, in which position he gazed fearfully about him for a few minutes, and then timidly remarked, "Cook!"

There was no answer.

"Mary, I say. Cook," he whispered, "what the deuce is the meaning of all this?"

A low moan was all that came from the cook, nor would Hankinson have listened to more had there been more to hear, for simultaneously with the moan he became uncomfortably conscious of a presence. In trying to describe it afterwards, Hankinson said that at first he thought a cold draught from a dank cavern filled with a million eels, and a rattlesnake or two thrown in for luck, was blowing over him, and he avowed that it was anything but pleasant; and then it seemed to change into a mist drawn largely from a stagnant pool in a malarial country, floating through which were great quantities of finely chopped sea−weed, wet hair, and an indescribable atmosphere of something the chief quality of which was a sort of stale clamminess that was awful in its intensity.

"I'm glad," Mr. Terwilliger murmured to himself, "that I ain't one of those delicately reared nobles. If I had anything less than a right−down regular republican constitution I'd die of fright."

And then his natural grit came to his rescue, and it was well it did, for the presence had assumed shape, and now sat on the window−ledge in the form of a hag, glaring at him from out of the depths of her unfathomable eyes, in which, despite their deadly greenness, there lurked a tinge of red caused by small specks of that hue semi−occasionally seen floating across her dilated pupils.

"You are the Bangletop ghost, I presume?" said Terwilliger, rising and standing near the fire to thaw out his system.

The spectre made no reply, but pointed to the door.

"Yes," Terwilliger said, as if answering a question. That's the way out, madame. It's a beautiful exit, too. Just try it."

"H'I knows the wi out," returned the spectre, rising and approaching the tenant of Bangletop, whose solitary lock also rose, being too polite to remain seated while the ghost walked. "H'I also knows the wi in, 'Ankinson Judson Terwilliger."

"That's very evident, madame, and between you and me I wish you didn't," returned Hankinson, somewhat relieved to hear the ghost talk, even if her voice did sound like the roar of a conch−shell with a bad case of grip. "I may say to von that, aside from a certain uncanny satisfaction which I feel at being permitted for the first time in my life to gaze upon the linaments of a real live misty musty spook, I regard your coming here as an invasion of the sacred rights of privacy which is, as you might say, 'hinexcusable.' "

"Hinvaision?" retorted the ghost, snapping her fingers in his face with such effect that his chin dropped until Terwilliger began to fear it might never resume its normal position. "Hinvaision?p

H'I'd like to know 'oo's the hinvaider. H'I've occupied hese 'ere 'alls for hover two 'undred years."

"Then its time you moved, unless per chance you are the ghost of a mediæval porker,"

Hankinson said, his calmness returning now that he had succeeded in plastering his iron−gray lock across the top of his otherwise bald head. "Of course, if you are a spook of that kind you want the earth, and maybe you'll get it."

"H'I'm no porker," returned the spectre. "H'I'm simply the shide of a poor abused cook which is hafter revenge."

"Ah!" ejaculated Terwilliger, raising his eyebrows, "this is getting interesting. You're a spook with a grievance, eh? Against me? I've never wronged a ghost that I know of."

"No, h'I've no 'ard feelinks against you, sir," answered the ghost. "Hin fact h'I don't know nothink about you.

My trouble's with them Baingletops, and h'I'm a−pursuin' of 'em. H'I've cut 'em out of two 'undred years of rent 'ere. They might better 'ave pide me me waiges hin full."

"Oho!" cried Terwilliger; "it's a question of wages, is it? The Bangletops were hard up?"

"'Ard up? The Baingletops?" laughed the ghost. "When they gets 'ard up the Baink o' Hengland will be in all the sixty soups mentioned in that there book."

"You seem to be up in the vernacular," returned Terwilliger, with a smile. "I'll bet you are an old fraud of a modern ghost."

Here he discharged all six chambers of his pistol into the body of the spectre.

"No taikers," retorted the ghost, as the bullets whistled through her chest, and struck deep into the wall on the other side of the kitchen. "That's a noisy gun you've got, but you carn't ly a ghost with cold lead hany more than you can ly a corner−stone with a chicken. H'I'm 'ere to sty until I gets me waiges."

"What was the amount of your wages due at the time of your discharge?" asked Hankinson.

"Hi was gettin' ten pounds a month," returned the spectre.

"Geewhittaker!" cried Terwilliger, "you must have been an all−fired fine cook."

"H'I was," assented the ghost, with a proud smile. "H'I cooked a boar's 'ead for 'is Royal 'Ighness King Charles when 'e visited Baingletop 'All as which was the finest 'e hever taisted, so 'e said, hand 'e'd 'ave knighted me hon the spot honly me sex wasn't suited to the title. 'You carn't make a knight out of a woman,' says the king, 'but give 'er my compliments, and tell 'er 'er monarch says as 'ow she's a cook as is too good for 'er staition.' "

"That was very nice," said Terwilliger. "No one could have desired a higher recommendation than that."

"My words hexackly when the baron's privit secretary told me two dys laiter as 'ow the baron's heggs wasn't done proper," said the ghost. "H'I says to 'im, says I: 'The baron's heggs be blowed. My monarch's hopinion is worth two of any ten barons's livin', and Mister Baingletop,' (h'I allus called 'im mister when 'e was ugly,) 'can get 'is heggs cooked helsewhere if 'e don't like the wy h'I boils 'em.' Hand what do you suppose the secretary said then?"

"I give it up," replied Terwilliger. "What?"

"'E said as 'ow h'I 'ad the big 'eadl."

"How disgusting of him!" murmured Terwilliger. "That was simply low."

"Hand then 'e accuged me of bein' himpudent."

"No!"

"'E did, hindeed; hand then 'e discharged me without me waiges. Hof course h'I wouldn't sty after that; but h'I says to 'im, 'Hif I don't get me py, h'I'll 'aunt this place from the dy of me death;' hand 'e says, "Aunt awy.'

"And you have kept your word."

"H'I 'ave that! HI've made it 'ot for 'em, too.

"Well, now, look here," said Terwilliger, "I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll pay you your wages if you'll go back to Spookland and mind your own business. Ten pounds isn't much when three−dollar shoes cost fifteen cents a pair and sell like hot waffles. Is it a bargain?"

"H'I was sent off with three months' money owin' me," said the ghost.

"Well, call it thirty pounds, then," replied Terwilliger.

"With hinterest—compound hinterest at six per cent.—for two 'undlred and thirty years," said the ghost.

"Phew!" whistled Terwilliger. "Have you any idea how much money that is?"

"Certingly," replied the ghost. "Hit's just 63,609,609 pounds 6 shillings 4 ½ pence. Whe n h'I gets that, h'I flies; huntil I gets it h'I stys 'ere an' I 'aunts."

"Say," said Terwilliger, "haven't you been chumming with an Italian ghost named Shylock over on the other shore?"

"Shylock!" said the ghost. "No, h'I've never 'eard the naime. Perhaps 'e's stoppin' at the hother place."

"Very likely," said Terwilliger. " He is an eminent saint alongside of you. But I say now, Mrs.

Spook, or whatever your name is, this is rubbing it in, to try to collect as much money as that, particularly from me, who wasn't to blame in any way, and on whom you haven't the spook of a claim."

"H'I'm very sorry for you, Mr. Terwilliger," said the ghost. "But my vow must be kept sacrid."

"But why don't you come down on the Bangletops up in London, and squeeze it out of them?"

"H'I carn't. H'I'm bound to 'aunt this 'all, an' that's hall there is about it. H'I carn't find a better wy to ly them

Baingletops low than by attachin' of their hincome, hand the rent of this 'all is the honly bit of hincome within my reach."

"But I've leased the place for five years," said Terwilliger, in despair; "and I've paid the rent in advance."

"Carn't 'elp it," returned the ghost. "Hif you did that, hit's your own fault."

"I wouldn't have done it, except to advertise my shoe business," said Terwilliger, ruefully.

"The items in the papers at home that arise from my occupancy of this house, together with the social cinch it gives me, are worth the money; but I'm hanged if it's worth my while to pay back salaries to every grasping apparition that chooses to rise up out of the moat and dip his or her clammy hand into my surplus. The shoe trade is a blooming big thing, but the profits aren't big enough to divide with tramp ghosts."

"Your tone is very 'aughty, 'Ankinson J. Terwilliger, but it don't haffeck me. H'I don't care 'oo pys the money, an' h'I 'aven't got you into this scripe. You've done that yourself. Hon the other 'and, sir, h'I've showed you 'ow to get out of it."

"Well, perhaps you're right," returned Hankinson. "I can't say I blame you for not perjuring yourself, particularly since you've been dead long enough to have discovered what the probable consequences would be. But I do wish there was some other way out of it. I couldn't pay you all that money without losing a controlling interest in the shoe company, and that's hardly worth my while, now is it?"

"No, Mr. Terwilliger; hit is not."

"I have a scheme," said Hankinson, after a moment or two of deep thought. "Why don't you go back to the spirit world and expose the Bangletops there? They have spooks, havent they?"

"Yes," replied the ghost, sadlly. "But the spirit world his as bad as this 'ere. The spook of a cook carn't reach the spook of a baron there hany more than a scullery−maid can reach a markis 'ere. H'I tried that when the baron died and came over to the hother world, but 'e 'ad 'is spook flunkies on 'and to tell me 'e was hout drivin' with the ghost of William the Conqueror and the shide of Solomon. H'I knew 'e wasn't, but what could h'1 do?"

"It was a mean game of bluff," said Terwilliger. "I suppose, though, if you were the shade of a duchess, you could simply knock Bangletop silly?"

"Yes, and the Baron of Peddlington too. 'E was the private secretary as said h'I 'ad the big 'ead."

"H'm!" said Terwilliger, meditatively. "Would you—er—would you consent to retire from this haunting business of yours, and give me a receipt for that bill for wages, interest and all, if I had you made over into the spook of a duchess? Revenge is sweet, you know, and there are some revenges that are simply a thousand times more balmy than riches."

"Would h'I?" ejaculated the ghost, rising and looking at the clock. "Would h'I?" she repeated.

"Well, rather. If h'I could enter spook society as a duchess, you can wager a year's hincome them Bangletops wouldn't be hin it."

"Good I am glad to see that you are a spook of spirit. If you had veins, I believe there'd be sporting blood in them."

"Thainks," said the ghost, dryly. " But 'ow can it hever be did?"

"Leave that to me," Terwilliger answered. "We'll call a truce for two weeks, at the end of which time you must come back here, and we'll settle on the final arrangements. Keep your own counsel in the matter, and don't breathe a word about your intentions to anybody. Above all, keep sober."

"H'I'm no cannibal," retorted the ghost.

"Who said you were?" asked Terwilliger.

"You intimated as much," said the ghost, with a smile. "You said as 'ow I must keep sober, and 'ow could I do hotherwise hunless I swallered some spirits?"

Terwilliger laughed. He thought it was a pretty good joke For a ghost—especially a cook's ghost—and then, having agreed on the hour of midnight one fortnight thence for the next meeting, they shook hands and parted.

"What was it, Hankinson?" asked Mrs. Terwilliger, as her husband crawled back into bed.

"Burglars?"

"Not a burglar," returned Hankinson. "Nothing but a ghost—a poor, old, female ghost."

"Ghost!" cried Mrs. Terwilliger, trembling with fright. "In this house?"

"Yes, my dear. Haunted us by mistake, that's all. Belongs to another place entirely; got a little befogged, and came here without intending to, that's all. When she found out her mistake, she apologized, and left."

"What did she have on?" asked Mrs. Terwilliger, with a sigh of relief.

But the president of the Three−dollar Shoe Company, of Soleton, Massachusetts (Limited), said nothing. He had dropped off into a profound slumber.

III

For the next two weeks Terwilliger lived in a state of preoccupation that worried his wife and daughters to a very considerable extent. They were afraid that something had happened, or was about to happen, in connection with the shoe corporation; and this deprived them of sleep, particularly the elder Miss Terwilliger, who had danced four times at a recent ball with an impecunious young earl, whom she suspected of having intentions. Ariadne was in a state of grave apprehension, because she knew that much as the earl might love her, it would be difficult for them to marry on his income, which was literally too small to keep the roof over his head in decent repair.

But it was not business troubles that occupied every sleeping and waking thought of Hankinson Judson Terwilliger. His mind was now set upon the hardest problem it had ever had to cope with,.that problem being how to so ennoble the spectre cook of Bangletop that she might outrank the ancestors of his landlord in the other world—the shady world, he called it. The living cook had been induced to remain partly by threats and partly by promises of increased pay; the threats consisting largely of expressions of determination to leave her in England, thousands of miles from her home in Massachusetts, deserted and forlorn, the poor woman being insufficiently provided with funds to get back to America, and holding in her veins a strain of Celtic blood quite large enough to make the idea of remaining an outcast in England absolutely intolerable to her. At the end of seven days Terwilliger was seemingly as far from the solution of his problem as ever, and at the grand fête given by himself and wife on the afternoon of the seventh day of his trial, to the Earl of Mugley, the one in whom Ariadne was interested, he seemed almost rude to his guests, which the latter overlooked, taking it for the American way of entertaining. It is very hard for a shoemaker to entertain earls, dukes, and the plainest kind of every−day lords under ordinary circumstances; but when, in addition to the duties of host, the maker of soles has to think out a recipe for the making of an aristocrat out of a deceased plebe, a polite drawing−room manner is hardly to be expected. Mr. Terwilliger's manner remained of the kind to be expected under the circumstances, neither better nor worse, until the flunky at the door announced, in stentorian tones, "'The Hearl of Mugley."

The "Hearl" of Mugley seemed to be the open sesame to the door betwixt Terwilliger and success. Simultaneously with the entrance of the earl the solution of his problem flashed across the mind of the master of Bangletop, and his affronting demeanor, his preoccupation and all disappeared in an instant. Indeed, so elegantly enthusiastic was his reception of the earl that Lady Maud Sniffles, on the other side of the room, whispered in the ear of the Hon. Miss Pottleton that Mugley's creditors were in luck; to which the Hon. Miss Pottleton, whose smiles upon the nobleman had been returned unopened, curved her upper lip spitefully, and replied that they were indeed, but she didn't envy Ariadne that pompous little error of nature's, the earl.

"Howdy do, Earl?" said Terwilliger. "Glad to see you looking so well. How's your mamma?"

"The countess is in her usual state of health, Mr. Terwilliger," returned the earl.

"Ain't she coming this afternoon?"

"I really can't say," answered Mugley. "I asked her if she was coming, and all she did was to call for her salts. She's a little given to fainting−spells, and the slightest shock rather upsets her."

And then the earl turned on his heel and sought out the fair Ariadne, while Terwilliger, excusing himself, left the assemblage, and went directly to his private office in the crypt of the Greek chapel. Arrived there, he seated himself at his desk and wrote the following formal card, which he put in an envelope and addressed to the Earl of Mugley "If the Earl of Mugley will call at the private office of Mr. H. Judson Terwilliger at once, he will not only greatly oblige Mr. H. Judson Terwilliger, but may also hear of something to his advantage."

The card written, Terwilliger summoned an attendant, ordered a quantity of liqueurs, whiskey, sherry, port, and lemon squash for two to be brought to the office, and then sent his communication to the earl.

Now the earl was a great stickler for etiquette, and he did not at all like the idea of one in his position waiting upon one of Mr. Terwilliger's rank or lack of rank, and, at first thought, he was inclined to ignore the request of his host, but a combination of circumstances served to change his resolution. He so seldom heard anything to his advantage that, for mere novelty's sake, he thought he would do as he was asked; but the question of his dignity rose up again, and shoving the note into his pocket he tried to forget it. After five minutes he found he could not forget it,.and putting his hand into the pocket for the missive, meaning to give it a second reading, he drew out another paper by mistake, which was, in brief, a reminder from a firm of London lawyers that he owed certain

clients of theirs a few thousands of pounds for the clothing that had adorned his back for the last two years, and stating that proceedings would be begun if at the expiration of three months the account was not paid in full. The reminder settled it. The Earl of Mugley graciously concluded to grant Mr. H. Judson Terwilliger an audience in the private office under the Greek chapel.

"Sit down, Earl, and have a cream de mint with me," said Terwilliger, as the earl, four minutes later, entered the apartment.

"Thanks," returned the earl. "Beautiful color that," he added, pleasantly, smacking his lips with satisfaction as the soft green fluid disappeared from the glass into his inner earl.

"Fine," said Terwilliger. "Little unripe, perhaps, but pleasant to the eye. I prefer the hue of the Maraschino, myself. Just taste that Maraschino, Earl. It's A1; thirty−six dollars a case."

"You wanted to see me about some matter of interest to both of us, I believe, Mr. Terwilliger,"

said the earl, declining the proffered Maraschino.

"Well, yes," returned Terwilliger. "More of interest to you, perhaps, than to me. The fact is, Earl, I've taken quite a shine to you, so much of a one in fact, that I've looked you up at a commercial agency, and H. J. Terwilliger never does that unless he's mightily interested in a man."

"I—er—I hope you are not to be prejudiced against me," the earl said, uneasily, "by—er—by what those cads of tradesmen say about me."

"Not a bit," returned Terwilliger—"not a bit. In fact, what I've discovered has prejudiced me in your favor. You are just the man I've been looking for for some days. I've wanted a man with three A blood and three Z finances for 'most a week now, and from what I gather from Burke and Bradstreet, you fill the bill. You owe pretty much everybody from your tailor to the collector of pew rents at your church, eh?"

"I've been unfortunate in financial matters," returned the earl; "but I have left the family name untarnished."

"So I believe, Earl. That's what I admire about you. Some men with your debts would be driven to drink or other pastimes of a more or less tarnishing nature, and I admire you for the admirable restraint you have put upon yourself. You owe, I am told, about twenty−seven thousand pounds."

"My secretary has the figures I believe," said the earl, slightly bored.

"Well, we'll say thirty thousand in round figures. Now what hope have you of ever paying that sum off?"

"None—unless I— er—well, unless I should be fortunate enough to secure a rich wife."

"Precisely; that is exactly what I thought," rejoined Terwilliger. "Marriage is your only asset, and as yet that is hardly negotiable. Now I have called you here this afternoon to make a proposition to you. If you will marry according to my wishes I will give you an income of five thousand pounds a year for the next five years."

"I don't quite understand you," the earl replied, in a disappointed tone. It was evident that five thousand pounds per annum was too small a figure for his tastes.

"I think I was quite plain," said Terwilliger, and he repeated his offer.

"I certainly admire the lady very much," said the earl; "but the settlement of income seems very small.".Terwilliger opened his eyes wide with astonishment. "Oh, you admire the lady, eh?" he said.

"Well, there is no accounting for tastes."

"You surprise me slightly," said the earl, in response to this remark. "The lady is certainly worthy of any man's admiration. She is refined, cultivated, beautiful, and—"

Ahem!" said Terwilliger. " May I ask, my dear Earl, to whom you refer?"

"To Ariadne, of course. I thought your course somewhat unusual, but we do not pretend to comprehend you Americans over here. Your proposition is that I shall marry Ariadne?"

I hesitate to place on record what Terwilliger said in answer to this statement. It was forcible rather than polite, and the earl from that moment adopted a new simile for degrees of profanity, substituting "to swear like an American" for the old forms having to do with pirates and troopers.

The string of expletives was about five minutes in length, at the end of which time Terwilliger managed to say:

"No such d— proposition ever entered my mind. I want you to marry a cold, misty, musty spectre, nothing more or less, and I'll tell you why."

And then he proceeded to tell the Earl of Mugley all that he knew of the history of Bangletop Hall, concluding with a narration of his experiences with the ghost cook.

"My rent here," he said, in conclusion, "is five thousand pounds per annum. The advertising I get out of the fact of my being here and swelling it with you nabobs is worth twenty−five thousand pounds a year, and I'm willing to pay, in good hard cash, twenty per cent. of that amount rather than he forced to give up. Now here's your chance to get an income without an encumbrance and stave off your creditors. Marry the spook, so that she can go back to the spirit land a countess and make it hot for the Bangletops, and don't be so allfired proud. She'll be disappointed enough I can tell you, when I inform her that an earl was the best I could do, the promised duke not being within reach. If she says earls are drugs in the market, I won't be able to deny it; and, after all, my lad, a good cook is a greater blessing in this world than any earl that ever lived, and a blamed sight rarer."

"Your proposition is absolutely ridiculous, Mr. Terwilliger," replied the earl.

"I'd look well marrying a draught from a dark cavern, as you call it, now wouldn't I? To say nothing of the impossibility of a Mugley marrying a cook. I cannot entertain the proposition."

"You'll find you can't entertain anything if you don't watch out," fumed Terwilliger, in return.

"I'm not so sure about that," replied the earl, haughtily, sipping his lemon squash. "I fancy Miss Ariadne is not entirely indifferent to me."

"Well, you might just as well understand on this 18 th day of July, 18—, as any other time, that my daughter Ariadne never becomes the Earless of Mugley," said Terwilliger, in a tone of exasperation.

"Not even when her father considers the commercial value of such an alliance for his daughter?" retorted the earl, shaking his tinger in Terwilliger's face. "Not even when the President of the Three−dollar Shoe Company, of Soleton, Massachusetts (Limited), considers the advertising sure to result from a marriage between his house and that of Mugley, with presents from her majesty the queen, the Duke of York acting as best man, and telegrams of congratulation from the crowned heads of Europe pouring in at the rate of two an hour for half as many hours as there are thrones?"

Terwilliger turned pale.

The picture painted by the earl was terribly alluring.

He hesitated.

He was lost.

"Mugley," he whispered, hoarsely—"Mugley, I have wronged you. I thought you were a fortune−hunter. I see you love her. Take her, my boy, and pass me the brandy."

"Certainly, Mr. Terwilliger," replied the earl, affably. "And then, if you've no objection, you may pass it back, and I'll join you in a thimbleful myself."

And then the two men drank each other's health in silence, which was prolonged for at least five minutes, during which time the earl and his host both appeared to be immersed in deep thought.

"Come," said Terwilliger at last. "Let us go back to the drawing−room, or they'll miss us, and, by−the−way, you might speak of that little matter to Ariadlne to−night. It'll help the fall trade to have the engagement announced.

"I will, Mr. Terwilliger," returned the earl, as they started to leave the room; "but I say, father−in− law elect," he whispered, catching Terwilliger's coat sleeve and drawing him back into the office for an instant, "you couldn't let me have five pounds on account this evening, could you?"

Two minutes later Terwilliger and the earl appeared in the drawing−room, the former looking haggard and worn, his eyes feverishly bright, and his manner betraying the presence of disturbing elements in his nerve centres; the latter smiling more affably than was consistent with his title, and jingling a number of gold coins in his pocket, which his intimate friend and old college chum, Lord Dufferton, on the other side of the room, marvelled at greatly, for he knew well that upon the earl's arrival at Bangle−top Hall an hour before his pockets were as empty as a flunky's head.

IV

Terwilliger's time was almost up. The hour for his interview with the spectre cook of Bangletop was hardly forty−eight hours distant, and he was wellnigh distracted. No solution of the problem seemed possible since the earl had so peremptorily declined to fall in with his plan. He was glad the earl had done so, for otherwise he would have been denied the tremendous satisfaction which the consummation of an alliance between his own and one of the oldest and noblest houses of England was about to give him, not to mention the commercial phase of the situation, which had been so potent a factor in bringing the engagement about; for Ariadne had said yes to the earl that same nights and the betrothal was shortly to be announced. It would have been announced at once, only the earl felt that he should break the news himself first to his mother, the countess— an operation which he dreaded, and for which he believed some eight or ten weeks of time were necessary.

"What is the matter, Judson?" Mrs. Terwilliger asked finally, her husband was growing so careworn of aspect.

"Nothing, my dear, nothing."

"But there is something, Judson, and as your wife I demand to know what it is. Perhaps I can help you."

And then Mr. Terwilliger broke down, and told the whole story to Mrs. Terwilliger, omitting no detail, stopping only to bring that worthy lady to on the half−dozen or more occasions when her emotions were too strong for her nerves, causing her to swoon. When he had quite done, she looked him reproachfully in the eye, and said that if he had told her the truth instead of deceiving her on the night of the spectral visitation, he might have been spared all his trouble.

"For you know, Judson," she said, "I have made a study of the art of acquiring titles. Since I read the story of the girl who started in life as an innkeeper's daughter and died a duchess, by Elizabeth Harley Hicks, of Salem, and realized how one might be lowly born and yet rise to lofty heights, it has been my dearest wish that my girls might become noblewomen, and at times, Judson, I have even hoped that you might yet become a duke."

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Terwilliger. "That would be awful. Hankinson, Duke of Terwilliger!

Why, Molly, I'd never be able to hold up my head in shoe circles with a name on me like that."

"Is there nothing in the world but shoes, Judson?" asked his wife, seriously.

"You'll find shoes are the foundation upon which society stands," chuckled Terwilliger in return.

"You are never serious," returned Mrs. Terwilliger; "but now you must be. You are coping with the supernatural. Now I have discovered," continued the lady, "that there are three methods by which titles are acquired—birth, marriage, and purchase."

"You forget the fourth—achievement," suggested Terwilliger.

"Not these days, Judson. It used to be so, but it is not so now. Now the spectre hasn't birth, we can't get any living duke to marry her, dead dukes are hard to find, so there's nothing to do but to buy her a title."

"But where?"

"In Italy. You can get 'em by the dozen. Every hand−organ grinder in America grinds away in the hope of going back to Italy and purchasing a title. Why can't you do the same?"

"Me? Me grind a hand−organ in America?" cried Jlankinson.

"No, no; purchase a dukedom."

"I don't want a dukedom; I want a duchessdom."

"That's all right. Buy the title, give it to the cook, and let her marry some spectre of her own rank; she can give him the title; and there you are!"

"Good scheme!" cried Terwilliger. "But I say, Molly, don't you think it would be better to get her to bring the spectre over here, and have me give him the title, and then let him marry her here?"

"No, I don't. If you give it to him first, the chances are he would go back on his bargain. He'd say that, being a duke, he couldn't marry a cook."

"You have a large mind, Molly," said Terwilliger.

"I know men!" snapped Mrs. Terwilliger.

And so it happened. Hankinson Judson Terwilliger applied by wire to the authorities in Rome for all right, title, and interest in one dukedom, free from encumbrances irrevocable, and duly witnessed by the proper dignitaries of the Italian government, and at the second interview with the spectre cook of Bangletop, he was able

to show her a cablegram received from the Eternal City stating that the papers would be sent upon receipt of the applicant's check for one hundred lire.

"'Ow much his that?" asked the ghost.

"One hundred lire?" returned Terwilliger, repeating the sum to gain time to think. He was himself surprised at the cheapness of the duchy, and he was afraid that if the ghost knew its real value she would decline to take it. "One hundred lire? Why, that's about 750,000 dollars— 150,000 pounds. They charge high for their titles," he added, blushing slightly.

"Pretty 'igh," returned the ghost. "But h'I carn't be a duke, ye know. 'Ow'll I manidge that?"

Hankinson explained his wife's scheme to the spectre.

"That's helegant," said she. "H'I've loved a butler o' the Bangletops for nigh hon to two 'undred years, but, some 'ow or hother, he's kep' shy o' me. This 'll fix 'im. But h'I say, Mr.

Terwilliger, his one o' them Heyetalian dukes as good as a Henglish one?"

"Every bit," said Terwilliger. "A duke's a duke the world over. Don't you know the lines of Burns, 'A duke's a duke for a' that'?"

"Never 'eard of 'im," replied the ghost.

"Well, you look him up when you get settled down at home. He was a smart man here, and, if his ghost does him justice, you'll be mighty glad to know him," Terwilliger answered.

And thus was Bangletop Hall delivered of its uncanny visitor. The ducal appointment, entitling its owner to call himself "Duke of Cavalcadi," was received in due time, and handed over to the curse of the kitchen, who immediately disappeared, and permanently, from the haunts that had known her for so long and so disadvantageously. Bangletop Hall is now the home of a happy family, to whom all are devoted, and from whose ménage no cook has ever been known to depart, save for natural causes, despite all that has gone before.

Ariadne has become Countess of MugIcy, and Mrs. Terwilliger is content with her Judson, whom, however, she occasionally calls Duke of Cavalcadi, claiming that he is the representative of that ancient and noble family on earth. As for Judson, he always smiles when his wife calls him Duke, but denies the titular impeachment, for he is on good terms with his landlord, whose admiration for his tenant's wholly unexpected ability to retain his cook causes him to regard him as a supernatural being, and therefore worthy of a Bangletop's regard.

"All of which," Terwilliger says to Mrs. Terwilliger, "might not be so, my dear, were I really the duke, for I honestly believe that if there is a feud of long standing anywhere in the universe, it is between the noble families of Bangletop and Cavalcadi over on the other shore."