

The Ghost Bereft

By E. Nesbit

THE poor ghost came through the wind and rain
And passed down the old dear road again ;

Thin covered the hedges, the tall trees swayed
Like little children that shrink afraid.

The wind was wild and the night was late
When the poor ghost came to the garden gate ;

Dank were the flower-beds, heavy and wet,
The weeds stood up where the rose was set.

The wind was angry, the rain beat sore
When the poor ghost came to its own house-door :

“ And shall I find her a-weeping still
To think how alone I lie, and chill ?

“ Or shall I find her happy and warm
With her dear head laid on a new love’s arm ?

“ Or

“Or shall I find she has learned to pine
For another’s love and not for mine?”

“Whatever chance, I have this to my store—
She is mine—my own for evermore.”

So the poor ghost came through the wind and rain
Till it reached the square bright window pane.

“Oh! what is here in the room so bright—
Roses and love and a hid delight?”

“What lurks in the silence that fills the room?
A cypress wreath from a dead man’s tomb?”

“What wakes, what sleeps? Ah! can it be
Her heart that is breaking—and not for me?”

Then the poor ghost looked through the window pane,
Though all the glass was wrinkled with rain.

“Oh, there is light—at the feet and head
Twelve tall tapers about the bed.

“Oh, there are flowers, white flowers and rare,
But not the garland a bride may wear.

“Jasmine white, and a white, white rose—
But its scent is gone where the lost dream goes.

“Lilies laid on the straight white bier,
But the room is empty—she is not here.

“Her

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“ Her body lies here deserted, cold ;
And the body that loved it creeps in the mould.

“ Was there ever an hour when my love, set free,
Would not have hastened and come to me ?

“ Can the soul that loved mine long ago
Be hence and away and I not know ?

“ Oh, then, God’s judgment is on me sore
For I have lost her for evermore !”

And the poor ghost fared through the wind and the rain
To its own appointed place again.

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But up in Heaven, where memories cease
Because the blessed have won to peace,

One pale saint shivered, and closer wound
The shining raiment that wrapped her round :

“ Oh glad is Heaven, and glad am I,
Yet I fain would remember the days gone by :

“ The past is hid and I may not know—
But I think there was sorrow long ago.

“ The sun of Heaven is warm and bright,
But I think there is rain on the earth to-night :

“ O Christ, because of thine own sore pain,
Help all poor souls in the wind and rain !”