

**THE CONTINENTAL
CLASSICS. VOLUME
XV. MODERN GHOSTS**

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The continental classics. Volume XV. Modern ghosts by Various

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VARIOUS

**THE CONTINENTAL
CLASSICS. VOLUME
XV. MODERN GHOSTS**



[See page 6]

I DINE QUICKLY, THEN TRY TO READ, BUT I DO NOT
COMPREHEND THE WORDS

THE CONTINENTAL CLASSICS

VOLUME XV

MODERN GHOSTS

SELECTED AND TRANSLATED FROM THE WORKS
OF GUY DE MAUPASSANT, PEDRO ANTONIO
DE ALARCÓN, ALEXANDER L. KIELLAND, LEO-
POLD KOMPERT, GUSTAVO ADOLFO BEC-
QUER, AND GIOVANNI MAGHERINI-GRAZIANI

WITH INTRODUCTION BY
GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS



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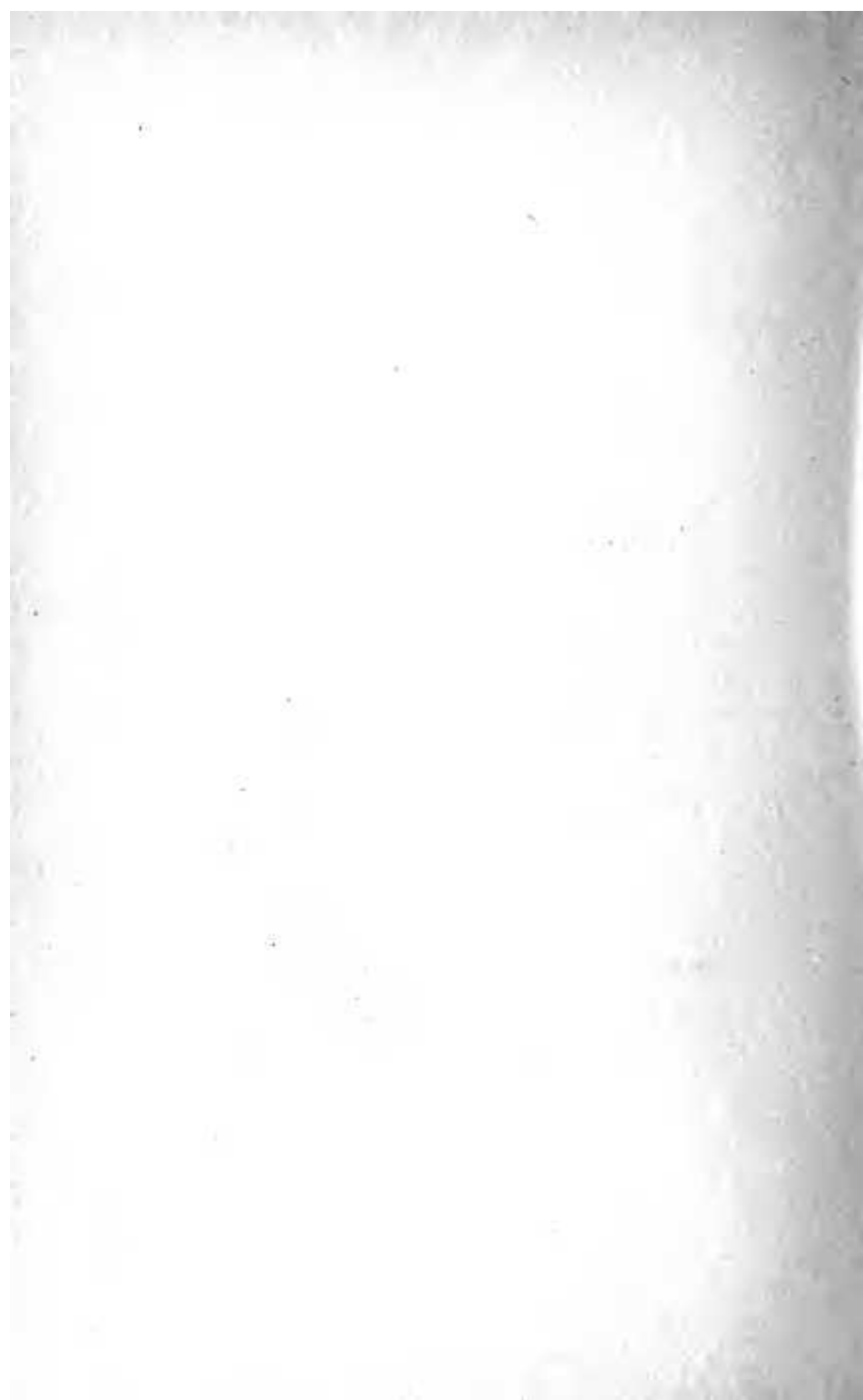
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INTRODUCTION.

IN the first paper of the *Sketch-Book*, which describes the Atlantic voyage, Irving says that when the weather, which had been fair, changed to a wild and threatening aspect, the passengers gathered towards evening in the cabin, where the gloom was made ghastlier by the dull light of a lamp, and every one told his tale of shipwreck and disaster. On the longer voyage, on which we are embarked, when our thoughts are turned to the night side of nature, as Robert Dale Owen called it, we likewise are all apt to fall to telling the grewsome tales which are known as ghost stories. They have a strange and subtle fascination. The imagination, quickened by suggestions of mysterious sounds and supernatural presences, fills the young listener with horror, and his older

companions with a sense of mystery and awe. For the child the upward path to bed through darkened passages and solitary halls is peopled with terrors worse than dragons and visible monsters, for they are phantoms of dread against whose malign power there is no sovereign amulet.

The sufferings of the child sent severely to encounter all alone such fears and figments of the fancy are indescribable. They are recalled through the actual trials of later years as more grievous and appalling than they, and many a man and woman pities the forlorn little figures that once they were, cowering and shivering in that early purgatory of terror which the ghost story created. Later they begin to ask whether those harrowing apprehensions, that inexplicable awe, were, after all, only fanciful. The man, of whom the child is father, as he grows wiser comes to learn that all he knows is that he knows little. He sees the succession of the seasons, the systole and diastole of the visible heart of beauty, but the secret of its life still hides from his gaze. If one enlightenment conceives the tortoise on which the elephant stands, another advances to protoplasm, but no further.

"Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting."