

**THE  
SPOOK BALLADS**

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The Spook Ballads by Wm. Theodore Parkes

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**WM. THEODORE PARKES**

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SPOOK BALLADS**



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BY

WM. THEODORE PARKES

*Author of "THE BARNEY BRADEY BROCHURES"*

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ILLUSTRATED BY THE AUTHOR

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daylight dreams of many a time,  
When song, and rhythmic story,  
Were tuned, and voiced for Bigot, and in gay Bohemian  
ears,  
Bring welcome wraiths of joyous nights, thro' whirling clouds  
of glory ;  
The incense of the social weed, o'er spirit cup that cheers.  
With hail ! to Cycle speedmen, and the boaters of Dunleary,  
Clontarf, and the Harmonic, where we sang with  
midnight chimes,  
The smokers of Conservatives, and Liberal Unions cheery,  
I weave regretful tribute to their jovial social times ;  
For autumn gales of life have blown those festal hours  
asunder,  
And scattered far by land and sea, the steps of many a  
one,  
And some alas ! beneath the sod, for evermore gone under,  
Have left a rainbow thro' the mist of grief that they  
have won,



His voice is of such convincing suasion, that it is a novel and interesting experience to hear him relate with circumstantial enthusiasm, the ghostly interview afforded him by a fortuitous chance within the interesting grounds of Hampton Court. His is a testimony most reliable, and calculated to establish as a fact the actual presence of supernatural shadows in that historic locality.

It also hints at the necessity, and use, of making the ghost a more familiar study, whereby the belated world would rid itself of much unnecessary fright, consequent on the invariable habit of spasmodically avoiding the familiar advances of the common or bedroom spook.

I  
 IN Hampton Court I wandered on a twilight evening grey,  
 Amidst its mazy precincts I had lost my tourist way,  
 And while I cogitated, on a seat of carven stone,  
 I heard beneath an orange tree, an elongated groan !  
 I crinkled with astonishment, 'twas not a fit of fright,  
 For loud elastic wailings, I have heard at twelve at night,  
 The midnight peace disturbing in the lamplit streets below,  
 But this was uttered in an unfamiliar groan of woe,  
 And Hampton Court I wot had got some questionable nooks,  
 In which it harboured spectres, and disreputable spooks,  
 In which it shrouded headless Queens, and shades of evil  
 Kings  
 With ill-conditioned titled knaves, in lemans leading strings.

I listened ! 'twas a voice that cried as 'twere from out the dust  
 Of time, that clogged its music, with a husk of mould and  
 rust,

A voice that once as tenor, might have won a slight repute,  
 But combination now of asthma, whooping cough, and flute.

I sauntered towards the orange tree, and lo! the gloaming  
 thro'

I saw a man in trunk and hose, and silver buckled shoe,  
 With ruffles and embroidered vest, in wig without a hat,  
 Inclining to the contour, which is designated fat.



Just then the waxing moonlight bloomed  
 behind, and lifed the stain  
 Of color thro' him, like a Saint  
   upon a window pane,  
 I could not spare such noted chance; so  
 stepping from the gloom,  
 I bowed politely and exclaimed  
   " A Spectre I presume ? "

With glad pathetic wondered look, but still in  
 tones of woe,

He answered thus, " Alack! ah me I am exactly so "  
 And confidential gleam of hope across his features grew,  
 Which gave me courage thus to start a social interview.  
 "I pray of thee to speak, alas! why grims it so with thee?  
 Some evil canker nips thy peace, divulge thy wrongs to me,  
 That I may give thee hope, for I am one to sympathize  
 With manhood's lamentation, as with womanhood, her sighs,  
 But ha! Mayhap it fits your jest, with elongated groan,  
 To seek to fright me, as I'm here in Hampton Court alone,  
 To wreck myspirits  
 as of old has  
 been the game of  
 spook,"

The spectre turned  
 upon me with a  
 sad reproachful  
 look.

And cried, " Alack!  
 that living men,  
 so long have held  
 it good,



To flee from Ghosts, and hence the Ghost is not yet understood,  
 Now as for me, I moan it not, for jest of idle sport,  
 My task, it is as murdered Ghost, to haunt in Hampton Court!  
 I play the victim to a spook, who chucked me down a stair,  
 Thro' being caught too near my lady's bedroom unaware."

"Poor shade of ill mischance!" I sobbed, the while a way-  
 ward tear,  
 Tricked out along my nose, and lodged upon my tunic here,  
 "I pray that thou would'st tell me all, withholding ne'er a jot,  
 For I might do thee service, in some most unlikely spot,"

"O blessed chance!" the Ghost exclaimed, "Thou art the  
 only one  
 Of all men else, who spoke me so, they always turn and run!  
 Thou art the first, that I have seen drop sympathetic tears,  
 Responsive to my moanings, aye for full one hundred years!  
 And so I feel that I can speak in unreserving tone,  
 And give thee cause for this alack! my chronic nightly groan!"

When I was in my thirties, I engaged to mind the spoons,  
 Of Colonel Sir John Bouncer, of the Sixty-fifth Dragoons,  
 And tho' of lowly stature, I am proud I was by half,  
 More manly than the footman, by step, and chest, and calf.  
 With frontispiece well favored, in a frame of powdered wig,  
 I wot amongst the female sex, I joyed a game of tig,  
 I played the captivating spark, till Colonel Bouncer caught  
 Me jesting with my Mistress, and he spake with furious  
 haught,