

## ***CANTO II--Hys Fyve Rules***

"My First--but don't suppose," he said, "I'm setting you a riddle - Is--if your Victim be in bed, Don't touch the curtains at his head, But take them in the middle,

"And wave them slowly in and out, While drawing them asunder; And in a minute's time, no doubt, He'll raise his head and look about With eyes of wrath and wonder.

"And here you must on no pretence Make the first observation. Wait for the Victim to commence: No Ghost of any common sense Begins a conversation.

"If he should say 'HOW CAME YOU HERE?' (The way that YOU began, Sir,) In such a case your course is clear - 'ON THE BAT'S BACK, MY LITTLE DEAR!' Is the appropriate answer.

"If after this he says no more, You'd best perhaps curtail your Exertions--go and shake the door, And then, if he begins to snore, You'll know the thing's a failure.

"By day, if he should be alone - At home or on a walk - You merely give a hollow groan, To indicate the kind of tone In which you mean to talk.

"But if you find him with his friends, The thing is rather harder. In such a case success depends On picking up some candle-ends, Or butter, in the larder.

"With this you make a kind of slide (It answers best with suet), On which you must contrive to glide, And swing yourself from side to side - One soon learns how to do it.

"The Second tells us what is right In ceremonious calls:- 'FIRST BURN A BLUE OR CRIMSON LIGHT' (A thing I quite forgot to-night), 'THEN SCRATCH THE DOOR OR WALLS.'"

I said "You'll visit HERE no more, If you attempt the Guy. I'll have no bonfires on MY floor - And, as for scratching at the door, I'd like to see you try!"

"The Third was written to protect The interests of the Victim, And tells us, as I recollect, TO TREAT HIM WITH A GRAVE RESPECT, AND NOT TO CONTRADICT HIM."

"That's plain," said I, "as Tare and Tret, To any comprehension: I only wish SOME Ghosts I've met Would not so CONSTANTLY forget The maxim that you mention!"

"Perhaps," he said, "YOU first transgressed The laws of hospitality: All Ghosts instinctively detest The Man that fails to treat his guest With proper cordiality.

"If you address a Ghost as 'Thing!' Or strike him with a hatchet, He is permitted by the King To drop all FORMAL parleying - And then you're SURE to catchit!

"The Fourth prohibits trespassing Where other Ghosts are quartered: And those convicted of the thing (Unless when pardoned by the King) Must instantly be slaughtered.

"That simply means 'be cut up small': Ghosts soon unite anew. The process scarcely hurts at all - Not more than when YOU're what you call 'Cut up' by a Review.

"The Fifth is one you may prefer That I should quote entire:- THE KING MUST BE ADDRESSED AS 'SIR.' THIS, FROM A SIMPLE COURTIER, IS ALL THE LAWS REQUIRE:

"BUT, SHOULD YOU WISH TO DO THE THING WITH OUT-AND-OUT POLITENESS, ACCOST HIM AS 'MY GOBLIN KING! AND ALWAYS USE, IN ANSWERING, THE PHRASE 'YOUR ROYAL WHITENESS!'

"I'm getting rather hoarse, I fear, After so much reciting : So, if you don't object, my dear, We'll try a glass of bitter beer - I think it looks inviting."