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An' little Orphant Annie says, when the blaze is blue,
An' the lampwick sputters, an' the wind goes woo-oo!
An' you hear the crickets quiet, an' the mwicngc8uray,
You better mind yer parents, and yer teachers fond and dear,
An' churish them 'at loves you, an' dry the orphant's tear,
An' he'p the pore an' needy ones 'at clusters all about,
Er the Gobble-uns 'll git you
Ef you
Dont
Watch
Out!

4 THE 'OBLINS 7ILL 'ET 9OU

Conceiving that a well selected collection of the best specimens of the legendary writers of all countries would be an acceptable present to those who read for amusement, the following little compilation has been undertaken; at the same time it will be perceived that every thing of a pernicious tendency has been carefully expunged and every tale points forth the moral, that virtue has a sure, albeit a slow reward, and that vice as sure and as swift a punishment.⁴

Children of the nineteenth century were expected to use their time wisely and to limit their leisure hours to activities that would expand their minds and intellects. In *The Importance of Time*, the author writes,

There are very few children who have not heard silly stories of drarfs (sic), and giants, and giant-killers; as well as of dragons with forked tongues and tails, and monsters, sometimes with one head, and sometimes with two. But the time children spend in hearing, or in reading such silly stories, is not only thrown away, but misspent. It is thrown away, because no good is to be got from such silly stories; and it is misspent, because it increased a love of folly and falsehood, and lessens the desire for wisdom and truth.⁵

In nineteenth-century England and America, most scary stories written and published for the young had two purposes—to indoctrinate youngsters with the morals of the day and to expose superstition as a false belief system perpetuated by the foolish and the wicked.

In *Happy Hours at Hazel Nook; or, Cottage Stories*, English author Harriet Farley explains through her character's dialogue the prevailing viewpoint on horror stories during her time, the mid-1800s. The book is a series of stories told by each member of a family during the twelve nights following Christmas. Papa tells two scary stories on the tenth night. Before telling his first story through3teloctr

Upon the gloomy plain!

But, as she strove the sprite to see,

She heard the same again!¹¹

No Goblin he; no imp of sin:

No crimes had ever known.

Suddenly, she can make out a shadowy figure in the gloom:

Now terror seiz'd her quaking frame

For, where the path was bare,

The trotting Ghost kept up the same!

Yet once again, amidst her fright,

She tried what sight could do;

When through the cheating glooms of night,

A MONSTER stood in view!¹²

The old woman hurries faster toward the gate to her home:

Loud fell the gate against the post!

Her heart-strings like to crack:

For much she fear'd the grisly ghost

Would leap upon her back.

Still on, pat, pat, the Goblin went,

As it had done before . . .

Her strength and resolution spent,

She fainted at the door.¹³

Her husband and daughter, hearing strange noises, rush out of the house to find the old woman fainted dead away and the cause of all the commotion:

The Candle's gleam pierc'd through the night,

Some short space o'er the green;

And there the little trotting Sprite

Distinctly might be seen.

An ASS'S FOAL had lost its Dam

Within the spacious Park;

And simple as the playful lamb,

Had follow'd in the dark.

a little girl sometimes says, who tells me the most astonishing stories, but who never told an untruth in her life), and that deliberate inventing or falsifying of facts which we stigmatise (sic) and abhor as lying.

Therefore, I do not think any child will be the worse for reading these tales. They have been collected out of the folk-lore of various countries, and written, at my suggestion, by various hands. I have written none myself, but I have revised the whole; and with as much pleasure as if I were again a child, and believed in fairies as earnestly as I once did, and as the little person before named does now. But it is only with her imagination: not to use her own phrase, "really and truly." She quite understands the difference; and never expects to meet a fairy in every-day life; though I dare say she would like it very much—and so would many of my readers—and so should I. ¹⁸

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