

W. Harrison Ainsworth (1805-82)

1 *The Barber of Ripon and the Ghostly Basin*

A Tale of the Charnel House

I.

Since Ghost-Stories you want, there is one I can tell
Of a wonderful thing that Bat Pigeon befel:
A Barber, at Ripon, in Yorkshire was he,
And as keen in his craft as his best blade could be.

II.

Now Bat had a fancy, — a strange one, you'll own, — 5
Instead of a brass bowl to have one of bone:
To the Charnel-house 'neath the old Minster he'd been,
And there, 'mongst the relics, a treasure had seen.

III.

'Mid the pile of dry bones that encumber'd the ground,
One pumpkin-like skull with a mazard he found; 10
If home that enormous old sponce he could take,
What a capital basin for shaving 'twould make!

IV.

Well! he got it, at last, from the Sexton, his friend,
Little dreaming how queerly the business would end:
Next, he saw'd off the cranium close to the eyes; 15
And behold then! a basin capacious in size.

V.

As the big bowl is balanced 'twixt finger and thumb,
Bat's customers all with amazement are dumb;
At the strange yellow object they blink and they stare,
But what it can be not a soul is aware! 20

VI.

Bat Pigeon, as usual to rest went that night:
But he soon started up in a terrible fright:
Lo! giving the curtains and bedclothes a pull,

