### W. Harrison Ainsworth (1805-82)

# The Barber of Ripon and the Ghostly Basin

A Tale of the Charnel House

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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, — 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 sconce 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; And behold then! a basin capacious in size.

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#### 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!

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### 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,

### A Ghost he beheld — wanting half of its skull!

### VII.

"Unmannerly barber!" the Spectre exclaimed; "To desecrate bonehouses art not ashamed? Thy crown into shivers, base varlet, I'll crack, Unless, on the instant, my own I get back!"

### VIII.

"There it lies on the table!" Bat quakingly said; "Sure a skull cannot matter when once one is dead." — 30 "Such a skull as thine may not, thou addlepate fool! But a shaver of clowns for a Knight is no rule!"

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## IX.

With this, the wroth Spectre its brainpan clapp'd on, And holding it fast, in a twinkling was gone; But ere through the keyhole the Phantom could rush, 35 Bat perceived it had taken the soap and the brush.

## X.

When the Sexton next morn went the Charnel-house round,The great Yellow Skull in its old place he found:And 'twixt its lank jaws, while they grinningly ope,As in mockery stuck, are the Brush and the Soap! 40

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