## Footprints without feet

The two boys started in surprise at the fresh muddy imprints of a pair of bare feet. What was a barefooted man doing on the steps of a house in the middle of London?

As they gazed , a remarkable sight met their eyes. A fresh footmark appeared from nowhere.

Further footprints followed, one after another , descending the steps and progressing down the street. The boys followed , fascinated, until the muddy impression became fainter , and at last disappeared altogether.

The explanation of the mystery was really simple enough. The bewildered boys had been following a scientist who had just discovered how to make the human body transparent .

Griffin, the scientist, had carried out experiment after experiment to prove that the human body could become invisible. Finally he swallowed certain rare drugs and his body become as transparent as a sheet of glass though it also remained as solid as glass.

Brilliant scientist though he was. Griffin was rather a lawless person. His landlord dislike him and tired to eject him. In revenge griffin set fire to the house. To get away without being seen he had to remove his clothes. Thus it was that he became a homeless wanderer without clothes, without money, and quite invisible until he happened to step in some mud, and left footprints as he walked.

He escaped easily enough from the boys who followed his footprints in London. But his adventures were by no means over. He had chosen a bad time of the year to wonder about London without clothes. It was mid-winter. The air was bitterly cold and he could not do without clothes. Instead of walking about the streets he decided to slip into a big London store foe warmth.

Closing time arrived, and as the doors were shut Griffin was able to give himself the pleasure of clothing and feeding himself without regard to expense. He broke open boxes and wrappers and fitted himself out with warm clothes. Soon, with shoes, an overcoat and a wide – brimmed hat, he became a fully dressed and visible person. In the kitchen of the restaurants he found cold meat and coffee, and he followed up the meal with sweets and wine taken from the grocery store. Finally he settled down to sleep on a pile of quilts.

If only Griffin had managed to wake up in until the assistants were been well. As it was , he did not wake up already arriving next morning . when he saw a couple of them approaching, he panicked and began to run. They naturally gave chase. In the end he was able to escape only by quickly taking off his newly- found clothes. So once more he found himself invisible but naked in the chill January air.

This time he decided to try the stock of a theatrical company in the hope of finding not only clothes but also something that would hide he empty space above his shoulders. Shivering with cold he hurried to Drury Lane, the center of the theater world.

He soon found a suitable shop. He made his way, invisible , upstairs and came out a little later wearing bandages round his forehead, dark glasses, false nose, big bushy side-whiskers, and a large hat. To escape without being seen, he callously attacked the shopkeeper from behind, after which he robbed him of all the money he could find.

Eager to get away from crowded London he took a train to the village of Iping , where he booked two rooms at the local inn.

The arrival of a stranger at an inn in winter was in any case an unusual event. A stranger of such uncommon appearance set all tongues wagging. Mrs Hall , the landlord’s wife, made every effort to be friendly. But Griffin had no desire to talk , and told her, “my reason for coming to Iping is a desire for solitude. I do not wish to be disturbed in my work. Besides, an accident has affected my face.