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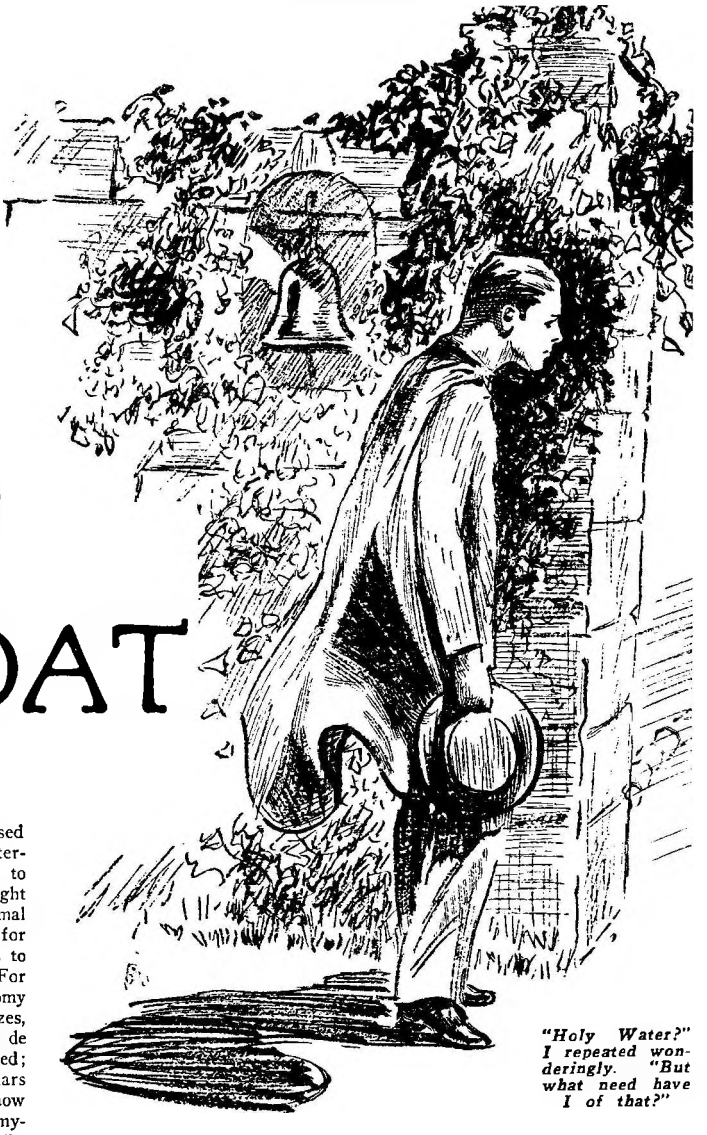
When young Holt set foot inside his of Hell rejoiced—and

The SIGN on the THROAT



"Holy Water?" I repeated wonderingly. "But what need have I of that?"

WAS it a demon that possessed my soul, or was it simply a terrible idea, driving me on to commit crimes the very thought of which would cause a normal man to shudder? That is a question for doctors, psychologists and demonologists to argue and decide among themselves. For my part, I know only this: that in a gloomy chateau, in the dismal Valley of Menezes, eastern Portugal, lies the body of Luiz de Menezes, my cousin, whom I murdered; and that far below the castle's musty cellars is the corpse of a charming girl. I know her body lies there, because I buried it myself by the light of a flickering candle, buried it deep in the time-hardened earth, after I killed her—I, whom Dolores Benares once called the gentlest man she had ever met!

It all started shortly after my cousin, Luiz de Menezes, visited me in my home in Lisbon. Luiz was really my half-cousin, the grandson of our grandfather, Alfredo de Menezes, by his first wife; whereas I was descended from his second wife, an American. As my mother married an American merchant in Lisbon, I am three-quarters American, while my cousin was completely Latin, and heir to the ancient Menezes estate in the mountains of eastern Portugal.

It had been many years since I last saw Luiz, for, after the death of his parents he had never left his gloomy mountain home, and I had never been invited to visit him there. So now I eagerly looked forward to his coming; and when at last he arrived, I saw in him a young man with the same charm and generosity and gaiety which had attracted me to him as a boy. Nor was I the only one who was pleased with this handsome young cousin of mine.

HELEN HOLT, my cousin on my father's side, who had lived with me ever since the death of my own parents, was immediately attracted by her cousin-in-law. And Luiz, for his part, was so taken with her flowering beauty that at the end of three days I realized that soon I must lose my

cousin's accursed château, the fiends marked him for their own

By JENNINGS HOLT

"Ah, Senhor," she said softly, "take it, I beg. Where you are going — God be with you!"

dear companion. I say "at the end of three days" because it was on the morning of the fourth that I received the first warning of the unbelievable tragedy that was to wreck our lives and those of many others—an unheeded warning of nights of dark terror to come and weeks of indescribable horror to follow them.

I SAT that morning, together with my cousins, about the breakfast table. I had finished my own coffee, while they, enwrapped in each other, had not touched theirs. I gave up trying to claim their attention, and picking up my newspaper, *O Journale,* I opened it, to see staring at me the following headline:

FIEND SPREADS TERROR THROUGH CITY

Murderer of Nine Still Uncaptured; Police Mystified

I read the article, which told of the brutal murder of men, women and children in the last few days, by some undiscovered lunatic. The description of the murderer as being a crazy man, however, was questioned toward the end of the column. I read eagerly:

> On none of the bodies was there the slightest sign of maltreatment, save at the throat, where investigation showed several ugly scratches. These are insufficient to cause death, unless some unknown poison, which several autopsies have failed to reveal, had been injected. Although reason and science point to the existence of no such monstrous animal; yet there is something unhuman, something almost brutish about these marks; and the dread question arises: was some crazed individual responsible for this havoc, or is there some other answer—something the investigators hesitate to mention even to themselves?

WITH a little whistle I lowered my paper.

"Did you people read about this wholesale murderer?" I demanded of my cousins. "He's killed nine people so far!"

Helen jerked her hand away from Luiz' and looked at me in confusion.

"How nice," she murmured. "I mean—of course—how terrible!"

And Luiz, unable to take his eyes from his beloved, murmured dreamily:

"What's terrible?"

With a laugh I threw down my paper and arose.

"You people make charming companions," I remarked, (which remark they did not hear) and I took my hat and left for town.

I might have completely forgotten the story of the murders if it had not been for the queer and revolting experience I had that night. As I was busy these days closing out my father's business, preparatory to my going to America to live, it was long past midnight when I left my office in the neighborhood of the Rocio and jumped into a passing hack. I wondered whether my cousins would be up, awaiting me, or whether Luiz would be out on one of those soli-

tary midnight rambles he often took. In that case I might pass him and give him a lift home, I thought.

But we passed no one and the cab delivered me, an hour later, at the foot of the bleak windswept hill on which stands the old palace, and a few residences, including our own. It being late and the hill steep for the poor old nag, I paid the driver and started up myself.

Half way up, I took a short cut through the high grass of an unkempt meadow. It was fairly hard going, and fifteen minutes passed before I reached a clump of trees near the broken stone wall. And here I suddenly halted.

A child of seven or eight stood before me, staring rigidly ahead of her. She was extremely beautiful, and yet there was something eerie and almost repulsive about her white face and glittering eyes, bright even in the starlight. There was, too, something lonely and puzzled about her, as if she were in a strange world and knew not where to turn.

"Are you lost, little girl?" I asked.

She whirled about with a sharp cry—and at that moment I saw on her throat three long, deep scratches. Then, with incredible speed, she ran across the meadow and climbed the stone wall.

SCARCELY knowing why I did it, I started after her; but when I reached the wall, I suddenly dropped to my knees. Another person was standing beside her, a tall man, dressed completely in black; and although he did not see me and my glimpse of him was fleeting, the impression of those evil eyes and those bared dazzling teeth in his repulsive but handsome face was enough to make me shudder.

"Go back!" I heard him whisper, and there was that in his voice that caused a quiver to run up and down my spine. "Go back to your coffin! Tonight is your last night of wandering; tomorrow you rest in peace in your damnable holy ground!"

I waited a moment for her response, but it did not come. And finally, shamed by my sudden hiding, which was more an act of instinct than of cowardice, I stood upright.

As far as I could see—and there were no houses or trees for some distance—the street beyond the stone wall was empty.

Next day, as I passed a church near our home, a funeral was taking place within. Prompted by some unknown impulse, I entered.

The mourners were filing slowly by the casket at the altar for a last look at the deceased, and, caught in the line, I went along with it. As we approached, I noticed the small coffin was white—a child's—and finally I reached its side and glanced in. Immediately I repressed a startled cry.

Lying before me was the beautiful little girl I had seen the night before; only now her eyes were closed in the sweet sleep of death! The man ahead of me turned at my exclamation.

"Is she—she is dead?" I asked, stupidly.

"Of course she is dead," replied the man. "She was killed three days ago by that animal or fiend or whatever it is—may its soul burn in hell!" And the man crossed himself.

That same day occurred another event of quite a different nature, but which served to make me forget this strange episode for some little time. This was the sudden announcement of my cousins at lunch that noon, that they had been quietly married by the civil authorities that morning, and were leaving for the chateau of Menezes that afternoon.

"We would have waited for you, Jennings," said Helen, squeezing my hand. "But Luiz learns he must go home right away."

"A—a sudden call," stammered Luiz, gazing gloomily at the table. "I wish I didn't have to go back. I wish," he added, raising his head, and his delicate face was a picture of resigned sorrow, "I wish I never had to see that dismal valley again!"

Helen released my hand to take his affectionately.

"Will it be so dismal, Luiz, dear—now?" she whispered: and the young man stooped to kiss the hand in his, a wistful smile flickering on his lips.

And so they departed, and I was left alone in my old home. I hurried my job of closing up the business, determined more than ever to go to America. And finally, a month later, all was ready, and I secured passage on a steamer for the following Saturday. If only that boat had sailed one day sooner!

Friday night, shortly after midnight, an errand took me to a disreputable part of town, the old hill just behind the Rocio. I walked through its narrow lanes above the Cathedral, those twisting alleys, illuminated only by the light of occasional dim lamps that shone through the square, paneless windows—alleys so narrow one could touch the ancient stucco housewalls on either side of them. As I walked, I was haunted by a curious uneasiness.

For some time I had felt that somebody was following me, and I kept whirling around and gazing behind me; an act on my part that puzzled me, since I am not ordinarily frightened by shadows.

Finally, reaching a sudden turn in the winding lane, I stepped inside a grilled gateway, opposite the low window of an empty, cheaply furnished room in which shone a deep yellow lamp; and here I waited.

A minute passed; then another. I cursed myself for a coward, and was about to step out and continue my journey, when suddenly an old woman came hobbling around the bend with incredible speed. She stopped short when she saw me, and resting on her knotted stick, she raised to the light of the lamp opposite, the most repulsive face I have ever seen on a woman. Across her throat were three burning red scratches.

"Senhor Holt?" Her cracked voice cut the ear with a keen, inhuman quality, and she peered at me with sharp rheumy eyes.

I nodded.

"I bring a message from one dear to you—from Donna Helen, the wife of Don Luiz de Menezes, *power be to his name!*" She raised herself erect as she spoke of him, and then bent over on her crutch again. "These," she croaked, "are the words of Donna Helen to Senhor Holt: *Come to me quickly, in the name of—*" The old woman coughed suddenly, without finishing.

"'In the name of—' what?" I asked, without knowing why.

The haggard old face twisted in a horrible grimace.

"It does not matter," she muttered.

NOR did it matter to me then. For at last the import of her words had overcome my surprise.

"You mean that Helen Holt—Helen de Menezes—has sent you to me with this message? But what does it mean?"

The old woman shook her head.

"I know nothing," she growled. "I am a messenger."

"But—but why didn't she write?" I asked in bewilderment.

"Menezes is far from the world, far from human beings."

"And you?" I went on. "You mean to say you have come all this distance, an old woman on a cane like yourself?"

The woman laughed. It was not a pleasant laugh to hear.

"I travel fast," she said. "Fast and far . . . like bad news." And she laughed again.

For a moment longer I stared at her in bewilderment. Then, mechanically, my hand went to my pocket, seeking money. When I brought it out, the woman greedily reached her bony fingers under the gateway where I stood—and as quickly she withdrew her hand with a hideous shriek of pain.

I whirled around to see what could have caused her outcry, and when I looked back, she was gone. For a moment I stood there, too astonished to move. Then once again I

examined the curiously wrought gateway in which I stood. It proved to be the entrance to an old Franciscan monastery. Still, I could see nothing that might have disturbed her, other than the heavy wooden door and the ancient, unused bellpull. Finally, however, by craning my neck I did see something. . . .

Over the vaulted arch above my head, directly over the spot where she had reached her hand, there stood an iron cross, shining in the light of the lamp across the alley.

THERE is a little train running from the main Oporto-Medina del Campo line to the small town of Roca; and here I was obliged to hire a carriage to take me to the village of Mina, thirty kilometers away where, upon my arrival, I foolishly paid the driver and sent him back.

I say "foolishly," because in all that gloomy village of Mina, I was unable to find a person willing to drive me the remaining five kilometers to the chateau in the Valley of Menezes. When I approached a group of villagers with my demand, their friendly faces were immediately transformed by sullen looks, and muttering to themselves, they drifted away. Puzzled, I walked along the street until I came upon the village teamster who stood washing his wagon in the yard.

"Can you drive me a distance of five kilometers?" I asked him, as I entered the yard.

He looked up, touching his hat.

"Si, senhor!" he replied. "Where?"

"To the chateau of Menezes. I——" But the man had turned away.

"I—I am busy," he muttered, uneasily; and no further word of mine could even coax a reply from him.

So, after an unsuccessful hunt through the village, I started at last down the road toward the sharply-rising mountains, determined to walk the distance myself. My bag grew heavier at every step until finally, at a handsome villa, the largest in town and at the end of the road, I halted and rang the bell.

A minute passed, and at last the gate was opened by a pleasant-looking, buxom housekeeper. I touched my hat.

"Which is the direction to the Chateau de Menezes?" I demanded.

For a moment she stared at me, her mouth open. Then suddenly she repeated *Menezes* in a terrified whisper, crossed herself, and slammed the gate. Angry now, I raised my fist with a curse to knock again; but before I touched the gate, I stopped short with a catch of my breath. Once again it was opened; but this time by a girl.

I have seen beautiful women in my life, but never have I seen anybody so exquisite as that girl. She had dark red hair that the setting sun caught and changed to fire. Her skin was a whiteness and smoothness that suggested the marble of a sculptor, while her clearly-cut red lips and large brown oval eyes gave to her a quality at once alluring and ethereal.

"Sorry for him? You!" And the old hag laughed—a sound so terrible that I shuddered even in my sleep

She smiled and nodded as I stood there, speechless.

"Senhor wishes to know the way to Menezes?" she asked.

I mumbled something in reply.

"MY maid is slightly superstitious, and of course Menezes for centuries——" She checked herself with a sharp look at me, and continued hurriedly. "Follow this road to the turn in the foothills," she said. "Keep always to the right, down through the gully. It is an hour's walk . . . at least, so my father was told when he was a boy."

I thanked her haltingly, and as she closed the gate I started off. But I had not taken ten steps when I heard her

calling after me. I turned back in pleased surprise.

She was standing in the half-open gate, and there was an odd wistful look in her large brown eyes, despite the timid smile with which she addressed me.

"Senhor," she said, softly and hesitatingly, "will you consider it presuming if I offer you this?" She held up a tiny vial made of exquisitely cut glass. "In it," she explained, "are a few drops of Holy Water."

"Holy Water?" I repeated. "But what need have I of that?"

"Ah, Senhor," she said softly, "take it, I beg. Where you are going—God be with you!" She passed it to me and shut the gate.

The sun had long since set behind the ragged peaks when at last I stepped through the trees into the open Valley of Menezes. It was a queerly shaped place, that valley, being really a deep cup in the surrounding mountains, and less than a mile square. But it was not its formation that startled me; it was rather the atmosphere of the place.

The valley was bare, save for clumps of scraggly bushes and a few dead trees. Covering the even ground were marshes of a shining deep bilious yellow, while over them rose a haze that had a revolting poisonous appearance. Insects, large, and some of species unknown to me, drifted lazily about, as if intoxicated by the noxious dead air, and their incessant humming gave me a most unpleasant sense.

IN the middle of the valley rose the chateau. It was a large and rather imposing structure of the flamboyant period of Portugal's greatness—square, time-darkened, turretted, and covered with grotesque geegaws. This was the house in which my grandfather had been born, and his ancestors before him, for many centuries!

For a moment the memory of the beautiful face that had been haunting me throughout my walk was replaced by a compassionate thought for my cousin Helen.

"Poor child," I thought. "That such a pretty gay creature should be doomed to pass a lifetime in these surroundings!" And with a sudden depression of spirits, I threaded my way along the narrow path between the high marsh reeds and finally crossed the dried-up moat. As I lifted the iron knocker on the great door, I remembered well that my thoughts at the time were still pityingly concerned with my pretty cousin . . . But I was far from realizing, on the threshold of the ancient chateau, how deserving of pity the girl was—and what horrible events I myself faced.

The sound of my knock echoed through the courtyard beyond the door in the high wall; re-echoed hollowly across the marshlands, and died away against the steep mountainsides. A minute passed . . . And suddenly, though I had heard no sound of feet in the court, the door was flung open, and a tremendously tall, unpleasant-looking young man, with a long nose and a dark skin scowled out at me.

"What do you want?" he growled; and beneath his sullenness, I could see he was concealing a tremendous astonishment at discovering a stranger who dared venture into the valley.

"I wish to see my cousins, Don Luiz de Menezes and his wife, Helen," I replied. "My name is Jennings Holt."

At my words, his scowl grew deeper, and I could see he sought some excuse for refusing me entrance. But at that moment there was the sound of feet hurrying across the court, and my cousin, Luiz, appeared.

"Jennings!" he cried. "Good old Jennings!" He grasped my hand and then clasped me to him, thumping my back in the conventional Portuguese style of greeting intimates. "Here, give José your bag."

But, despite his fervor—maybe because of it—I felt a curious restraint in his attitude; and as we crossed the court itself, an unaccountable shudder passed over me. Instinctively, I glanced behind me.

The tall sullen servant was shutting and locking the gate.

After long and anxious inquiries concerning my health, while we drank our *aperitifs* in the great gloomy salon before the roaring fire, (in all my stay there I found the Valley exceptionally cold after sundown, despite its protection by the mountains) my host led me into the equally grand and gloomy dining hall, where, by the light of many candles, we sat down to dinner.

"And where," I asked, since Luiz had offered no explanation, "is Helen? I hoped to see her before this."

My cousin's face immediately saddened.

"Helen is ill," he replied in a weary unhappy voice, "very ill." And he explained how, for fear of contagion, she was confined in her apartments, where she must remain for some time.

The result of this news, of course, was a heavy gloom cast over our meal. For a moment a suspicion flashed across my mind as I recalled the words of the old woman in Lisbon. Was Helen in danger? Did she really need my help?

One glance at my cousin's delicate handsome face, a picture of sincere sorrow, served to dispel that suspicion, however. I would not, it appeared, see Helen for some days. I determined, nevertheless, to remain at the chateau until I did see her.

If only I had demanded to be led to her then, what a tremendous difference it would have made in my life! If only I could have known then the circumstances under which I next *would* see her— God! how terrible that occasion proved to be!

One thing puzzled me as we sat at table. So far as I could see, in all that great chateau, there was but one servant—the silent José, who served us with a sort of feline grace and stealth.

After dinner, we returned to the salon, where, before the big fire, we drank our coffee and liqueurs. Hour after hour slipped by while we exchanged news—carefully avoiding the subject of the sick girl, since it obviously so overwhelmed Luiz with sorrow. Besides that sadness, however, I noted an uneasy expression on my cousin's face, which, as time passed, became more and more noticeable. At last, as the fire died down, the servant appeared with his catlike tread.

"The hour is late Don Luiz," he said.

Luiz jumped up.

"So it is, so it is," he exclaimed, hurriedly. He turned to me. "Just a little duty I must perform," he said, his eyes avoiding mine. "But—well, perhaps it is better that you do not wait up for me. José," he added, "will return shortly to show you your room, and I hope you spend a comfortable night in sound sleep." There was something queer about the manner in which he wished me a sound sleep, but before I could say anything, he bowed and was gone.

I stared after the two men, puzzled by their actions, and when at last they disappeared, I turned once more to the flickering flames before me. I found myself wondering uneasily about the silent repressed atmosphere of the whole chateau; wondering about the old woman I had met and her cryptic message; wondering, too, about the attitude of the villagers up above the valley, their obvious fear at the very mention of Menezes.

MY meditations, however, were interrupted by the sudden appearance of José.

"Senhor wishes to retire?" he asked respectfully, standing beside my chair. "The hour is late."

I swung around and glared at him, hating his stealthy approach and his general manner. But now his attitude was extremely respectful, and as I saw in it nothing at which I could take offense, I finally muttered I was willing to go to bed, and followed him from the room. Silently he led the way to the long hall and the grand staircase, holding high his candle.

We went up the first flight, and then, to my surprise, instead of turning into one of the many empty rooms around us, we continued up another flight, through a small door, and on, around a winding iron staircase inside one of the low turrets.

"Don Luiz recommended this chamber," murmured the servant with averted eyes as finally he placed the candle on a table in the circular room at the top. "He is sure Senhor will be pleased with the magnificent view in the morning."

I glanced around at the odd-shaped room. It was large, and, as I say, circular, with a low ceiling from which hung masses of cobwebs, undisturbed through the ages. One large canopied bed, one rickety table, on which burned the candle, and a broken-legged chair holding my bag comprised the furnishings. I turned with a satirical remark on my lips to the servant; but he stood at the door, bowing, and before I could speak he was gone.

Alone in that gloomy tower, I was far from any wish to sleep, but the only comfortable thing in the room was the bed, so, taking off my shoes, I stretched out on it, the better to think. I really was tired from my journey, though, and my mind was slightly sluggish from the evening's wine, so that before I knew it I was asleep.

I DREAMED that two women stood whispering in the darkness of my room. I say I dreamed it—and yet I was as aware of my own self, lying there with closed eyes, as I was of those two low voices. I was aware of those two forms leaning over my bed, watching me with unnaturally sharp eyes, whispering with unnaturally sharp voices. One was my cousin Helen, while the other woman's voice, though I did not recognize it, had a strangely familiar sound.

"Tomorrow will be the end," whispered my cousin.

"Why not tonight?" hissed the other, and the voice made my blood turn cold. "Why not try to wake him now?"

"No, no!" cried Helen, and her cry was like some bloodless animal at night. "I must see Luiz once more! Once more I must feel him lean over me and kiss me! Even in my sleep I forget my hell when I feel his warm tears fall on my face!"

"You are weak, sister!" said the other. "This one might escape!"

"He will not escape. I have seen the future, and he will not escape. Poor Jennings! I wish I could feel sorry for you!"

"Feel sorry for him! *You?*" The other broke into a laugh that was the most horrible sound I had ever heard, and which caused me, even in my sleep, to shudder. "See!" she cried. "He shudders! He hears us and he shudders!" And once again I heard her laughter, first loud and directly above me and then growing fainter and farther away.

I sat up in bed with a bound, gazing around me in the darkness. The room was empty, and slowly the feeling of horror that had come over me passed away, leaving me to grin, ashamed at my fear of a nightmare. I glanced at my watch, and its illuminated dial pointed to 3:45. Then, as I started to lie back on my pillow, I suddenly stopped short.

Far, far below me I heard a hollow metallic clank, followed by an unearthly muffled groan!

I sat very still, scarcely breathing . . . The entire chateau was as silent as the grave. Was I still dreaming? But as that thought flashed through my brain, I heard the noise again. I jumped out of bed, lit a candle and tiptoed to the door.

It was scarcely louder here. It sounded so soft that it seemed unreal—a ghastly moaning sound and a clanking, as if somebody rattled an iron door.

I slipped back in my room, pulled on my shoes, and hurried down the iron circular staircase toward the main corridor of the third floor. I opened the door—and stopped with a low exclamation.

Way down the corridor, just beyond the rays of my candle, it seemed as though the dark figure of a man flitted through the shadows and was swallowed in the darkness. I ran down, and when I reached the head of the stairs I held my candle high.

The hall and the stairway were empty and desolate.

"Hello!" I called. "Is there somebody here?"

I listened a moment. There was no answer . . . But now, once again, I heard that hollow clanking, followed by the hideous groan. Quickly I ran downstairs, hurried along the larger hall, and went on down to the ground floor.

The noise was louder here, though still muffled; and suddenly I realized why I had been given a room far up in the turret. I was not meant to hear it. The clanking sent a shiver up my spine, it was so doleful on the still night air, while the quality of that groan seemed more unearthly as it grew louder!

I hesitated in the immense hall, whose walls were so far away and whose ceiling was so high that the flickering yellow light of my candle scarcely touched them. The sound still came from far below me; but how was I to descend to it?

And while I stood there, listening to my heartbeats and to that terrible sound, suddenly my candle was extinguished, although there was not a breath of air stirring. And at the same moment I was conscious of a presence standing beside me.

I had heard nothing; a second before I could see the bare stone floor for yards around, and it had been empty. But now I knew somebody was there, not two feet away! I wet my parched lips.

"Who's there?" I whispered.

My whisper echoed around the empty hall. The groaning and clanking continued far beneath me. But that was all.

Once again I spoke.

"Who are you?" I demanded, "and what do you want?"

And then came the answer.

Suddenly, in that darkness and silence, a hand reached out and touched mine—a hand that was fleshless and cold, sending icy stabs to my heart. And then a hoarse, unearthly voice spoke.

"This way," it whispered.

The hand closed on my wrist, and though it was extraordinarily skinny, its grip was like iron. For a moment I hesitated; but I had no alternative; I must follow.

Through the black hallway we hurried, my footsteps echoing against the walls and grand staircase down which I had come, while my companion's feet were absolutely noiseless. On and on, down long corridors; and at last we halted.

"Open the door," commanded the voice beside me.

I felt around, found a knob, and pulled it open. Immediately the terrible sound below became louder.

Together we went down a long winding stairway . . . across a dark cellar . . . through another door and down a second narrow flight of stairs. And now we were standing on dirt, packed hard through centuries past.

"This way," whispered my companion again. "Hurry! it is late!" And I was led along an invisible corridor toward the mad clanking and that terrible voice that had now become a roar. Then, suddenly, I was jerked to a halt.

COMING from behind me I could hear the sound of footsteps that reached the bottom of the steps and ran swiftly along the corridor toward us. My companion broke into a laugh—a ghastly, hoarse laugh that woke a thousand echoes around us and made me shudder.

"Too late! too late!" And now, with a feeling of horror I recognized it as a woman's voice—if such it could be called—the voice of the old hag in Lisbon; and it was she whom I had heard in my dream, talking to Helen! "Too late, man!" she screamed again. "I have led him here, and now we will——"

Suddenly her voice broke off and her hand loosened its grip on my arm. At the same moment the deafening *clank* . . . *clank* beyond me ceased. Everything was still; it was as if all life, throughout the world, had suddenly ceased, save my own . . . And at that instant, through some crack

high up in the wall, I saw the first faint streak of dawn.

I felt around through the darkness, took a few steps forward and turned back. Then, suddenly, I tripped over something soft at my feet.

I dropped to my knees and gingerly reached out my hand. My fingers touched a body, the body of a dead woman. Running my hand up, I finally reached the face.

It was cold, as cold as if its owner had been dead a month!

I sank back on my haunches, frankly upset and bewildered. What was the mystery of this chateau? What terrible thing screamed and struggled beyond some door in the corridor behind me? Why had the old hag led me here, and what had become of her? Were the body at my feet not so cold, so obviously long dead, I would have guessed that she had suddenly slumped, lifeless, to the floor.

I straightened, clenching my fists at my side.

"By God," I muttered, half aloud, "I'm going to find the answer to all this if I have to face death—or worse!"

I have often wondered since why I added those words: "or worse." Was it a premonition of the terrible fate that awaited me—a fate which was far, far worse than merely dying? However, at the moment, my thoughts were occupied with other things.

For, while I knelt there beside that body, staring through the gray gloom of dawn, I could see, far along by the staircase down which I had come, two sharp eyes, quietly watching me.

BUT by the time I had jumped to my feet, those eyes had disappeared; and though I raced down the corridor and up both flights of stairs, I could find no trace of the person who had watched me. Tired and bewildered, I threw myself into an easy chair in the grand salon, to determine upon a course of action . . . only, unfortunately, to fall asleep almost as soon as I sat down.

"Well, well! up so early?"

I opened my eyes, to see Luiz' charming friendly face above mine. Repressing a start as the memory of the night's events rushed over me, I forced a smile to my lips.

"This is too interesting a place for much sleeping, Luiz," I replied lightly. "Late to bed and early to rise is my motto—*here.*"

With a laugh he led the way into the dining-room, where the sullen José awaited us with coffee and rolls; and there we seated ourselves for our breakfast and a pleasant chat.

Despite our easy conversation, however, I was carefully turning the whole situation over in my mind.

Whose eyes had watched me down below the chateau the night before? Were they Luiz' or José's—or did they belong to some mysterious person? Whoever he was, he had seen me, and he knew I was aware of something unusual afoot here. I turned to speak of the whole business to my cousin, and then, for some reason, I changed my mind. It would be better, I thought, to say nothing and to try to get at the bottom of the hideous affair myself.

If only I had not been so cocksure of my ability to investigate unnoticed! If only, instead of trying to solve the mystery, I had dismissed everything and departed forever from that doomed chateau, how much better it would have been for others! Had I only known what a terrible fate awaited my own self for my interference!

However, while Luiz and I carried on our light conversation over our coffee and cigarettes, I decided upon my course of action. After breakfast, when nobody was in sight, I would steal down to the cave beneath the cellar and try to find some trace of the body I had stumbled over last night. If I succeeded in that, tonight I would watch the actions of my cousin and his servant; and if again they slipped away at midnight, I would follow them and try to discover where they went.

Our breakfast was soon finished, and Luiz arose.

"Wouldn't you like to take a walk around the garden, Jennings?" he asked with a pleasant smile.

I excused myself, explaining I was a bit tired, and watched him as he left the room. Then I arose and quickly looked around.

José was in the kitchen. The front part of the house was empty.

Tiptoeing to the hall, I started along the corridor in the direction I had been led the night before. On and on I felt my way—it was almost as dark as night—until at last I reached a heavy oak door. I turned the handle and pulled.

It yielded, though with much creaking that sounded doubly loud in the stillness, and showed me a long flight of stairs, leading to the ancient cellar. Lighting a match, I held it high and descended.

This was a wine cellar, with barrels piled high under the vaulted arches and stretching as far as my flickering light would carry. I moved along until I discovered a smaller door, pulled this open, and descended another long flight of stairs, much narrower, and leading to a dirt sub-cellar. Here I lighted a second match.

The deep yellow light showed another long corridor, cut centuries before in the roughly hewn stone. At the end of this was an iron door, and I hurried down toward it, searching vainly right and left as I moved, for signs of the body I had touched.

Finally I reached the door and was delighted to find that it opened readily—a delight which, however, was transformed to horrified surprise when I crossed the threshold and looked about me.

I was in a long narrow room, at the far end of which was a simple old altar, before which flickered a tiny red lamp. On either side of me, reaching to the high ceiling, was line upon line of vaults; and nearly every vault contained a casket. I was in the family chapel and tomb of the Menezes—the last resting-place of my own ancestors for many hundred years!

Forgetting my caution, I eagerly glanced up and down the long line of gloomy boxes. Although, of course, they sheltered many generations of the Menezes, there seemed far too many caskets for just the dead of one family. Lighting match after match, I hurriedly moved from one tier to another—and then suddenly stopped short. Down the corridor behind me, I heard a light footstep. And it was coming my way!

Glancing quickly around by the light of my dying match, I finally darted up the three steps and concealed myself behind the altar. And here I waited, listening to the approaching footstep and wondering whose it could be.

It came on, finally halting beyond the iron door that had swung shut after me. The door opened, and the cavern was flooded with the light of a lantern. And the lantern was held in the hand of the servant, José!

HE came toward me, and I held my breath, wondering what explanation I should give when he discovered me. But half way down he halted.

Setting his lantern on one casket, he shoved aside the unnailed cover of another. I peered around one side of the altar and could just make out a form, lying stiff and motionless in the long box. For some time the servant contemplated the body, chuckling to himself at intervals. Then, to my astonishment and horror, he shook his fist fiercely in front of the lifeless face.

"So, old hag!" he muttered, "you sleep peacefully, eh? One more night of your wanderings, and then you and one other will lie still forever, whether my master wishes it or not!" And with another chuckle of triumph, the young man picked up his lantern, recovered the casket, and departed.

Waiting until he was out of earshot, I slipped from behind the altar, and, lighting a match, I approached the casket, my brain whirling in horrified bewilderment. Reaching the long box, I slipped off the cover and looked within. Immediately I stepped back with a cry of astonishment.

Inside lay the old woman who had accosted me in the streets of Lisbon. And across her throat were three long deep scratches, as red as if the blood still flowed beneath them!

For a long time I stared at her, while her own fixed eyes glared back into mine, almost—it suddenly seemed—as if she were alive! Quickly I felt her heart and pulse; but there were no signs of life in her.

This, then, was the woman who had led me down here so hurriedly last night—only to sink suddenly in her tracks before the very door of mystery. But what had she been so anxious for me to see, and why had life so quickly slipped from her?

And then, all at once, I remembered the affair that had so disturbed Lisbon a month before—the mysterious fiend, who always left his demoniacal sign of three ugly marks clawed across his victim's throat. Had this woman been killed by that same fiend? And was I now in his very haunts?

AS I stood there, staring at the tiny red flame on the altar, a shudder convulsed my body, as if, in the silence and the darkness, the hand of death had passed over me. My first impulse was to find some polite excuse and depart from the chateau. . . . And then I thought of my pretty cousin Helen, who had always looked up to me as a brother and protector. I could not leave without her, I told myself; and a moment later I was running quietly up the stairs, determined to discover in what part of the chateau she lay.

Luiz, however, met me in the salon, and when I blurted out my request to see her, that lonely sad expression filled his eyes.

"If you insist, Jennings," he said, after a moment. "But I beg of you not to; not only for fear of contagion, but because she has been ordered complete rest. The least excitement, I have been warned, may be the end."

And so, despite the fact that his voice did not ring true, the young man's evident sorrow once more lulled my suspicions, and I decided to wait—until, at least, I discovered what business called him away at night.

If only I had not decided to wait! If I had departed at once, instead of trying to spy upon his actions! But I did wait, and I spent the day wandering around with him and playing chess with ancient pieces on the old terrace of the chateau . . . And then, at last, darkness fell.

After dinner, Luiz brought out some of his best old wines, and we sat before the blazing hearth, drinking bottle after bottle . . . At least, Luiz drank while I encouraged him; for my part, I scarcely touched the excellent old Port. After two bottles had been killed, I sent for José.

"José," I said, "join us in a drink. I'm sure Don Luiz will not object."

But before Luiz had a chance to speak, the tall servant bowed low.

"Muit' obrigado, Senhor," he replied. "I never drink." And he departed, leaving me to bite my lip in vexation, for I had hoped to get both of them drunk. However, after a moment I brightened, for it seemed to me then that with Luiz so intoxicated, it would be simple enough to follow the two men unobserved.

By the end of the third bottle he was mellow and thick-tongued. By the time he, alone, had consumed a fourth he was roaring drunk. The minutes passed into hours, while he talked and shouted and sang, and while the darkness and silence beyond our firelit chamber seemed to become deeper and more portentous. Suddenly José appeared.

"Don Luiz," he said, sharply, "it is late!"

Luiz waved his arm, drunkenly.

"Never too late for another drink, José!" he cried, and laughed stupidly.

But José approached and shook him.

"Master!" he said through his teeth. "It is late! It is quarter to twelve!"

Luiz had started to push him away. But now a sober frightened look came into his eyes.

"One more drink, José!" I said, hastily, "and then to bed!"

José glared at me, and to allay his suspicions, I pretended to be drunk. My hands were in my pockets at the time, and pulling them out with the intention of reaching in a drunken manner for the wine, my ring caught on something in my pocket, jerking it out and sending it to the floor with a crash.

It was the tiny bottle given me by the beautiful girl in the village, and the holy water it contained poured out through the cracks in the glass, darkening the rug around my chair. While I stared at the widening stain, regretting the loss of the bottle, more because of the thought of her who had given it to me than because of the liquid it contained, I heard José mutter:

"Very well; I will pour you both one little drink more."

He passed me a glass, and I, too busy thinking of the broken vial to suspect the quality of the little drink he gave me, tossed it off along with my cousin. Then, pretending to fall back in a stupor, I watched through half-closed lids while José put his arm around the drunken lord of the chateau, and led him with feverish haste out of the room and into the black corridor beyond the door.

I slouched there, listening breathlessly to the departing footsteps; and finally, when I considered it safe, I quietly arose and tiptoed out to the corridor.

Master and servant were some distance away now, but I could still hear the shuffle of my cousin's feet. Then a door closed, and all was silent; they had reached the stairway leading down to the first cellar.

Swiftly, but noiselessly, I made my way through the darkness, feeling for the walls with my outstretched hand. And at last I reached the door I had passed through the night before. With tense hands I softly opened it.

They were just descending the lower flight of stairs, and in a moment I was behind them, so eager that I forgot all caution. When I reached the dirt sub-cellar, I peered down the corridor.

They had lighted an ancient lantern now, and its faint rays were thrown upon the great iron door leading to the vaults. Peering ahead, I watched them.

José took from his belt a medieval iron key ring, and while my cousin leaned sleepily against the wall, he pushed open the door. Then he selected three huge keys from the ring, as if intending to insert them in the three locks I now noticed in the oaken panel. Was he planning to triple lock that heavy door—and if so, why?

FURIOUS beyond all bounds, I leaned far forward. José took my cousin's arm, and with feverish haste, propelled him into the darkness ahead, where the lone red light glowed on the altar at the far end. Just then, stepping recklessly forward to see better, I kicked against a loose stone and sent it rolling noisily ahead of me!

With a curse, José swung around . . . But I had slipped back in the darkness of the stairway. I heard him grab up the lantern and, leaving the iron door unlocked, he started running in my direction. But before he had reached the foot of the stairs, I was out of sight and out of hearing.

Closing the door at the top of the two flights, I headed for the room where the fire still glowed, and there I sank into my old chair, intending to attempt to puzzle it all out before searching further. But no sooner was I seated, than a numbing heaviness stole over my brain; and as I suddenly realized the servant had drugged my last glass of wine, I fell back and lay inert, in a state of semi-consciousness. . . .

Minutes passed—perhaps they were but seconds, perhaps hours; I do not know. I know only that I sprawled there, unable to move, but conscious, for all my closed eyes, of the darkening room around me, of the great silent house beyond the doorway. (*Continued on page* 90)

Perhaps, if it hadn't been Hallowe'en . . . But it was, and that's how a little frightened piccaninny happened to find out

By ELLIS PARKER BUTLER

"Dey Ain't NO

ONCE 'pon a time dey was a li'l black boy whut he name was Mose. An' whin he come erlong to be 'bout knee-high to a mewel, he 'gin to git powerful 'fraid ob ghosts, 'ca'se dat am sure a mighty ghostly location whut he lib' in. 'ca'se dey's a grabeyard in de hollow an' a buryin'-ground on de hill, an' a cemuntary in betwixt an' between, an' dey ain't nuffin' but trees nowhar excipt in de clearin' by de shanty an' down de hollow whar de pumpkin-patch am.

An' whin de night come erlong, dey ain't no sounds *at* all whut kin be heard in dat locality but de rain-doves, whut mourn out, "Oo-*oo*-o-o-o!" jes dat trembulous *an'* scary, an' de owls, whut mourn out, "Whut-*whoo*-o-o-o!" more trembulous an' scary dan dat, an' de wind, whut mourn out, "You-*you*-o-o-o!" mos' scandalous' trembulous an' scary ob all. Dat a powerful onpleasant locality for a li'l black boy whut he name was Mose.

'Ca'se dat li'l black boy he so specially black he can't be seen in de dark *at* all 'cept by de whites ob he eyes. So whin he go outen de house *at* night, he ain't dast shut he eyes, 'ca'se den ain't nobody can see him in de least. He jest as invidsible as nuffin'. An' who know but whut a great, big ghost bump right into him 'ca'se it can't see him? An' dat shore w'u'd scare dat li'l black boy powerful bad, 'ca'se yever'body knows whut a cold, damp pussonality a ghost is.

So whin dat li'l black Mose go outen de shanty at night, he keep he eyes wide open, you may be shore. By day he eyes 'bout de size of butter-pats, an' come sundown he eyes 'bout de size of saucers; but whin he go outen de shanty at night, he eyes am de size ob de white chiny plate whut set on de mantel; an' it powerful hard to keep eyes whut am de size ob dat from a-winkin' an' a-blinkin'.

SO whin Hallowe'en come erlong, dat li'l black Mose he jes mek' up he mind he ain't gwine outen he shack *at* all. He cogitate he gwine stay right snug in de shack wid he pa an' he ma, 'ca'se de rain-doves tek notice dat de ghosts are philanderin' roun' de country, 'ca'se dey mourn out, "Oo-*oo*-o-o-o!" an' de owls dey mourn out, "Whut-*whoo*-o-o-o!" and de wind mourn out, "You-*you*-o-o-o!" De eyes ob dat li'l black Mose dey as big as de white chiny plate whut set on de mantel by side de clock, an' de sun jes a-settin'.

So dat all right. Li'l black Mose he scrooge back in de corner by de fireplace, an' he 'low he gwine stay dere till he

"Ah got somefin' powerful important to say unto yo', an' if yo' pick up dat pumpkin an' sot it on de place whar my head ought to be, Ah'll let you off dis time . . ."

GHOSTS"

gwine *to* bed. But byme-by Sally Ann, whut live up de road, draps in, an' Mistah Sally Ann, whut is her husban', he draps in, an' Zack Badget an' de school-teacher whut board at Unc' Silas Diggs's house drap in, an' a powerful lot ob folks drap in. An' li'l black Mose he seen dat gwine be one s'prise-party, an' he right down cheerful 'bout dat.

So all dem folks shake dere hands an' 'low, "Howdy," an' some ob dem say: "Why, dere's li'l Mose! Howdy, li'l Mose?" An' he so please' he jes grin an' grin, 'ca'se he ain't reckon whut gwine happen. So byme-by Sally Ann, whut live up de road, she say, "Ain't no sort o' Hallowe'en lest we got a jack-o'-lantern." An' de school-teacher, whut board at Unc' Silas Diggs's house, she 'low, "Hallowe'en jes no Hallowe'en *at* all 'thout we got a jack-o'-lantern." An' li'l black Mose he stop a-grinnin', an' he scrooge so far back in de corner he 'mos' scrooge frough de wall. But dat ain't no use, 'ca'se he ma say, "Mose, go on down to de pumpkin-patch an' fotch a pumpkin."

"I ain't want to go," say li'l black Mose.

"Go on erlong wid you," say he ma, right commandin'.

"I ain't want to go," say Mose ag'in.

"Why ain't yo' want to go?" he ma ask.

"'Ca'se I's afraid ob de ghosts," say li'l black Mose, an' dat de particular truth an' no mistake.

"Dey ain't no ghosts," say' de school-teacher, whut board at Unc' Silas Diggs's house, right peart.

"'Co'se dey ain't no ghosts," say Zack Badget, whut dat 'fear'd ob ghosts he ain't dar' come to li'l black Mose's house ef de school-teacher ain't ercompany him.

"Go 'long wid your ghosts!" say' li'l black Mose's ma.

"Whar' yo' pick up dat nomsense?" say he pa. "Dey ain't no ghosts."

AN' dat whut all dat s'prise-party 'low: dey ain't no ghosts. An' dey 'low dey mus' hab a jack-o'-lantern or de fun all sp'iled. So dat li'l black boy whut he name is Mose he done got to fotch a pumpkin from de pumpkin-patch down de hollow. So he step outen de shanty an' he stan' on de door-step twell he get he eyes pried open as big as de bottom ob he ma's wash-tub, mostly, an' he say, "Dey ain't no ghosts." An' he put one foot on de ground, an' dat was de fust step.

An' de rain-dove say, "Oo-*oo*-o-o-o!"

An' li'l black Mose he tuck anudder step.

An' de owl mourn out, "Whut-*whoo*-o-o-o!" jes like dat. An' li'l black Mose he tuck anudder step.

An' de wind sob out, "You-*you*-o-o-o!" an' dat de scaries' soun' in de world.

Den li'l black Mose he tuck one look ober de shoulder, an' he shut he eyes so tight dey hurt round de aidges, an' he pick up he foots an' run. Yas, sah, he run right peart fast. An' he say: "Dey ain't no ghosts. Dey ain't no ghosts." An' he run erlong de paff whut lead by de buryin'-ground on de hill, 'ca'se dey ain't no fince eround dat buryin'-ground *at* all.

No fince; jes de big trees whut de owls an' de rain-doves sot in an' mourn an' sob, an' whut de wind sigh and cry frough. An' byme-by somefin' jes *brush'* li'l Mose on de arm, which mek' him run jes a bit more faster. An' byme-by somefin' jes *brush'* li'l Mose on de cheek, which mek' him run erbout as fast as he can. An' byme-by somefin' *grab* li'l Mose by de aidge of he coat, an' he fight an' struggle an' cry out: "Dey ain't no ghosts. Dey ain't no ghosts." An' dat ain't nuffin' but de wild brier whut grab him, an' dat ain't nuffin' but de leaf ob a tree whut brush he cheek, an' dat ain't nuffin' but de branch of a hazel-bush whut brush he arm. But he downright scared jes de same, an' he ain't lose no time, 'ca'se de wind and de owls an' de rain-doves dey signerfy whut ain't no good. So he scoot past dat buryin'-ground whut on de hill, an' dat cemuntary whut betwixt an' between, an' dat grabeyard in de hollow, twell he come to de pumpkin-patch, an' he rotch down an' tek erhold ob de bestest pumpkin whut in de patch. An' he right smart scared. He jes de mostest scared li'l black boy whut yever was. He ain't gwine open he eyes fo' nuffin', 'ca'se de wind go, "You-*you*-o-o-o!" an' de owls go, "Whut-*whoo*-o-o-o!" an' de rain-doves go, "Oo-*oo*-o-o-o!"

HE jes speculate, "Dey ain't no ghosts," an' wish he hair don't stand on ind dat way. An' he jes cogitate, "Dey ain't no ghosts," an' wish he goose-pimples don't rise up dat way. An' he jes 'low, "Dey ain't no ghosts," an' wish he backbone ain't all trembulous wid chills dat way. So he rotch down, an' he rotch down, twell he git a good hold on dat pricklesome stem of dat bestest pumpkin whut in de patch, an' he jes yank dat stem wid all he might.

"*Let loosen my head!*" say a big voice all on a suddent.

Dat li'l black boy whut he name is Mose he jump 'most outen he skin. He open he eyes, an' he 'gin to shake like de aspen-tree, 'ca'se whut dat a-standin' right dar befo' him but a 'mendjous big ghost! Yas, sah, dat de bigges', whites' ghost whut yever was. An' it ain't got no head. Ain't got no head *at* all! Li'l black Mose he jes drap on he knees an' he beg an' pray:

"Oh, 'scuse me! 'Scuse me, Mistah Ghost!" he beg. "Ah ain't mean no harm *at* all."

"Whut for you try to take my head?" ask de ghost in dat fearsome voice whut like de damp wind outen de cellar.

"'Scuse me! 'Scuse me!" beg li'l Mose. "Ah ain't know dat was yo' head, an' I ain't know you was dar *at* all. 'Scuse me!"

"Ah 'scuse you ef you do me dis favor," say de ghost. "Ah got somefin' powerful *im*portant to say unto you, an' Ah cain't say hit 'ca'se Ah ain't got no head; an' when Ah ain't got no head, Ah ain't go no mouf, an' whin Ah ain't got no mouf, Ah can't talk *at* all."

An' dat right logical fo' shore. Can't nobody talk whin he ain't got no mouf, an' can't nobody have no mouf whin he ain't got no head, an' whin li'l black Mose he look, he see dat ghost ain't got no head *at* all. Nary head.

So de ghost say:

"Ah come on down yere fo' to git a pumpkin fo' a head, an' Ah pick' dat *ix*act pumpkin whut yo' gwine tek, an' Ah don't like dat one bit. No, sah. Ah feel like Ah pick yo' up an' carry yo' away, an' nobody see you no more for yever. But Ah got somefin' powerful *im*portant to say unto yo', an' if yo' pick up dat pumpkin an' sot in on de place whar my head ought to be, Ah'll let you off dis time, 'ca'se Ah ain't been able to talk fo' so long Ah right hongry to say somefin'."

So li'l black Mose he heft up dat pumpkin, an' de ghost he bend' down, an' li'l black Mose he sot dat pumpkin on dat ghostes's neck. An' right off dat pumpkin head 'gin to wink an' blink like a jack-o'-lantern, an' right off dat pumpkin head 'gin' to glimmer an' glow frough de mouf like a jack-o'-lantern, an' right off dat ghost start to speak. Yas, sah, dass so.

"Whut yo' want to say unto me?" *in*quire' li'l black Mose.

"Ah want to tell yo'," say de ghost, "dat yo' ain't need yever be skeered of ghosts, ca'se dey ain't no ghosts."

An' whin he say dat, de ghost jes vanish away like de smoke in July. He ain't even linger round dat locality like de smoke in Yoctober. He jes dissipate outen de air, an' he gone *in*tirely.

SO li'l Mose he grab up de nex' bestest pumpkin an' he scoot. An' whin he come to de grabeyard in de hollow, he goin' erlong same as yever, on'y faster, whin he reckon' he'll pick up a club *in* case he gwine have trouble. An' he rotch down an' rotch down an' tek hold of a likely appearin' hunk o' wood whut right dar. An' whin he grab dat hunk of wood——

"*Let loosen my leg!*" say a big voice all on a suddent.

Dat li'l black boy 'most jump' outen he skin, 'ca'se right dar in de paff is six 'mendjus big ghostes, an' de bigges' ain't got but one leg. So li'l black Mose jes natchully handed dat hunk of wood to dat bigges' ghost, an' he say:

"'Scuse me, Mistah Ghost; Ah ain't know dis your leg."

An' whut dem six ghostes do but stand round an' confabulate? Yes, sah, dass so. An' whin dey do so, one say:

"'Pears like dis a mighty likely li'l black boy. Whut we gwine do to' to *re*ward him fo' he politeness?"

An' anudder say:

"Tell him whut de truth is 'bout ghostes."

So de bigges' ghost he say':

"Ah gwine tell yo' somefin' *im*portant whut yever'body don't know: Dey *ain't* no ghosts."

An' whin he say dat, de ghostes jes natchully vanish away, an' li'l black Mose he proceed up de paff. He so scared he hair jes yank at de roots, an' whin de wind go, "Oo-*oo*-o-o-o!" an' de owl go, "Whut-*whoo*-o-o-o!" an' de rain-doves go, "you-*you*-o-o-o!" he tremble an' shake. An' byme-by he come to de cemuntary whut betwixt an' between, an' he shore is mighty skeered, 'ca'se dey is a whole comp'ny of ghostes lined up along de road, an' he 'low he ain't gwine spind no more time palaverin' wid ghostes. So he step' offen de road fo' to go round erbout, an' he step' on a pine-stump whut lay right dar.

"*Git offen my chest!*" say a big voice all on a suddent, 'ca'se dat stump am been selected by de captain ob de ghosts for to be he chest, 'ca'se he ain't got no chest betwixt he shoulders an' he legs. An' li'l black Mose he hop offen dat stump right peart. Yes, *sah;* right peart.

"'Scuse me! 'Scuse me!" dat li'l black Mose beg an' plead, an' de ghostes ain't know whuther to eat him all up or not, 'ca'se he step on de boss ghostes's chest data-way. But byme-by dey 'low dey let him go 'ca'se dat was an accident, an' de captain ghost he say, "Mose, you Mose, Ah gwine let you off dis time, 'ca'se you ain't nuffin' but a misabul li'l tremblin' nigger; but Ah want you should *re*mimber one thing mos' particular."

"Ya-yas, sah," say dat li'l black boy, "Ah'll remimber. Whut is dat Ah got to remimber?"

De captain ghost he swell up, an' he swell up, twell he as big as a house, an' he say in a voice whut shake de ground:

"Dey ain't no ghosts."

So li'l black Mose he bound to remimber dat, an' he rise up an' mek a bow, an' he proceed toward home right libely.

He do, indeed, 'ca'se mebbe dem ghostes wuz wrong!

An' he gwine along jes as fast as he kin whin he come to de aidge ob de buryin'-ground whut on de hill, an' right dar he bound to stop, 'ca'se de kentry round about am so populate' he ain't able to go frough. Yas, sah, seem like all de ghostes in de world habin' a conferince right dar. Seem like all dc ghostes whut yever was am havin' a convintion on dat spot. An' dat li'l black Mose so skeered he jes fall down on a' old log whut dar an' screech an' moan. An' all on a suddent de log up and spoke to li'l Mose:

"Get offen me! Get offen me!" yell dat log.

So li'l black Mose he git offen dat log, an' no mistake.

AN' soon as he git offen de log, de log uprise, an' li'l black Mose he see dat dat log am de king ob all de ghostes. An' whin de king uprise, all de congregation crowd round li'l black Mose, an' dey am about leben millium an' a few left over. Yas, sah; dat de reg'lar annyul Hallowe'en convintion whut li'l black Mose interrup'. Right dar am all de spirits in de world, an' all de ha'nts in de world, an' all de hobgoblins in de world, an' all de ghouls in de world, an' all de spicters in de world, an' all de ghostes in de world. An' whin dey see li'l black Mose, dey all gnash dey teef an' grin 'ca'se it gettin' erlong toward dey-alls lunchtime. So de king, whut he name old Skull-an'-Bones, he step on top ob li'l black Mose's head, an' he say:

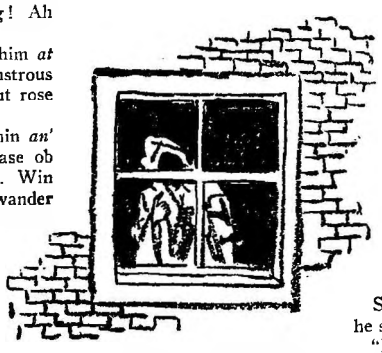
"Gin'l'min, de convintion will come to order. De sicretary please note who is prisint. De firs' business whut come before de convintion am: whut we gwine do to a li'l black boy whut stip on de king an' maul all ober de king an' treat de king dat disrespictful."

An' li'l black Mose jes moan an' sob:

"'Scuse me! 'Scuse me, Mistah King! Ah ain't mean no harm *at* all."

But nobody ain't pay no *at*tintion to him *at* all, 'ca'se yevery one lookin' at a monstrous big ha'nt whut name Bloody Bones, whut rose up an' spoke.

"Your honor, Mistah King, an gin'l'min *an'* ladies," he say, "dis am a right bad case ob *lazy majesty*, 'ca'se de king been step on. Win yivery li'l black boy whut choose gwine wander round *at* night an' stip on de king ob ghostes, it ain't no time for to palaver, it ain't no time for to prevaricate, it ain't no time for to cogitate, it ain't no time do nuffin' but tell de truth, an' de whole truth, an' nuffin' but de truth."



An' all dem ghostes sicond de motion, an' dey confabulate out loud erbout dat, an' de noise soun' like de rain-doves goin', "Oo-*oo*-o-o-o!" and de owls goin', "Whut-*whoo*-o-o-o!" an' de wind goin', "You-*you*-o-o-o!" So dat risolution am passed unanermous, an' no mistake.

So de king ob de ghostes, whut name old Skull-an'-Bones, he place he hand on de head ob li'l black Mose, an' he hand feel like a wet rag, an' he say:

"Dey ain't no ghosts."

An' one ob de hairs whut on de head ob li'l black Mose turn white.

An' de monstrous big ha'nt whut he name Bloody Bones he lay he hand on de head ob li'l black Mose, an' he hand feel like a toadstool in de cool ob de day, an' he say:

"Dey ain't no ghosts."

An' annudder ob de hairs whut on de head ob li'l black Mose turn' white.

An' a heejus sperit whut he name Moldy Pa'm place he hand on de head ob li'l black Mose, an' he hand feel like de yunner side ob a lizard, an' he say:

"Dey ain't no ghosts."

An' anudder ob de hairs whut on de head ob li'l black Mose turn white *as* snow.

An' a pertickler bent-up hobgoblin he put he hand on de head ob li'l black Mose, an' he mek dat same *re*mark, an' dat whole convintion ob ghosts an' spicters an' ha'nts an' yiver-thing, which am more 'n a millium, pass by so quick dey-all's hands feel lak de wind whut blow outen de cellar whin de day am hot, an' dey-all say, "Dey ain't no ghosts." Yas, sah, dey-all say dem wo'ds so fas' it soun' like de wind whin it moan frough de turkentine-trees whut behind de ciderpriss. An' yivery hair whut on li'l black Mose's head turn white. Dat what happen whin a li'l black boy gwine meet a ghost convintion dat-a-way. Dat's so he ain't gwine forgit to remimber dey ain't no ghosts. 'Ca'se ef a li'l black boy gwine imaginate dey *is* ghostes, he gwine be skeered in de dark. An' dat a foolish thing for to imaginate.

So prisintly all de ghosts am whiff away, like de fog outen de holler whin de wind blow on it, an' li'l black Mose he ain't see no ca'se for to remain in dat locality no longer. He rotch down, an' he raise up de pumpkin, an' he perambulate right quick to he ma's shack, an' he lift up de latch, an' he open de do', an' he yenter in. An' he say:

"Yere's de pumpkin."

An' he ma an' he pa, an' Sally Ann, whut live up de road, an' Mistah Sally Ann, whut her husban', an' Zack Badget, an' de school-teacher whut board at Unc' Silas Diggs's house, an' all de powerful lot of folks whut come to de doin's, dey all scrooged back in de corner ob de shack 'ca'se Zack Badget he been done tell a ghost-tale, an' de raindoves gwine, "Oo-*oo*-o-o-o!" an' de owls am gwine, "Whut-*whoo*-o-o-o" and de wind it gwine, "You-*you*-o-o-o!" an' yiver'body powerful skeered. 'Ca'se li'l black Mose he come a-fumblin' an' a-rattlin' at de do' jes whin dat ghost-tale mos' skeery, an' yiver'body gwine imaginate dat he a ghost a-fumblin' an' a-rattlin' at de do'. Yas, sah. So li'l black Mose he turn he white head, an' he look roun' an' peer roun', an' he say:

"Whut you all skeered fo'?"

'Ca'se ef anybody skeered, he want' to be skeered, too. Dat's natural. But de school-teacher, whut live at Unc' Silas Diggs's house, she say:

"Fo' de lan's sake, we fought you was a ghost!"

So li'l black Mose he sort ob sniff an' he sort ob sneer, an' he 'low:

"Huh! dey ain't no ghosts."

Den he ma she powerful took back dat li'l black Mose he gwine be so uppetish an' contrydict folks whut know 'rifmeticks an' algebricks an' gin'ral countin' widout fingers, like de school-teacher whut board at Unc' Silas Diggs's house knows, an' she say:

"Huh! whut you know 'bout ghosts, annerways?"

An' li'l black Mose he jes kinder stan' on one foot, an' he jes kinder suck he thumb, an' he jes kinder 'low:

"I don't know nuffin' erbout ghosts, 'ca'se dey ain't no ghosts."

SO he pa gwine whop him fo' tellin' a fib 'bout dey ain't no ghosts whin yiver'body know dey is ghosts; but de school-teacher, whut board at Unc' Silas Diggs's house, she tek note de hair ob li'l black Mose's haid am plumb white, an' she tek note li'l black Mose's face am de color ob wood-ash, so she jes retch one arm round dat li'l black boy, an' she jes snuggle him up, an' she say:

"Honey lamb, don't you be skeered; ain't nobody gwine hurt you. How you know dey ain't no ghosts?"

An' li'l black Mose he kinder lean' up 'ginst de school-teacher whut board at Unc' Silas Diggs's house, an' he 'low:

"'Ca'se—'ca'se—'ca'se I met de Cap'n ghost, an' I met de Gin'ral ghost, an' I met de (*Continued on page* 88)

The PHANTOM

Happiness for two hung in the balance— when a specter stalked beneath the Big Top and horror froze the crowds

"She stays—and you, too!" barked Sylvester. "If you think you can quit my show——"

THERE is a saying in the show business that circus people, as a class, are the most superstitious folk in the world. And, as one who has spent most of his thirty-five years in the sawdust ring, I cannot but admit the truth of the assertion.

However, my own belief in the unusual is not confined to the signs and omens of the show business. I believe, not because of what I have read or heard, but because I have seen with my own eyes; have passed through experiences which cannot be explained away by any human laws.

In 19—, after many years of association with various American tent shows, I went to England to become the star high-wire walker with Seldon's All-British Circus. After three years the show was sold to a rival outfit which was scheduled to travel through Central Europe, and then to make a jump to India for a considerable stay.

I was offered a contract by the new owner and was inclined to accept it, for I was very anxious to visit India, the most inexplicable country of the mysterious Far East.

However, while I was considering the matter I received a most unexpected cable from America. It was from Mack Archer, a circus boss whom I considered one of my staunchest friends. He had read of the sale of the Seldon show, offered me a job as a star at a sizeable advance in salary and asked me to sail at once and join him with Sylvester's Monster Shows, a big-time circus with which I had previously been connected. The final line read, "Your brother and Daddy De Silva still with us."

For some days thereafter I debated the question. The increased salary was a matter worth considering! But more appealing was the thought that I would be able to travel with my youngest brother, of whom I was very fond, and with Joie De Silva, the famous old acrobat and clown. The latter had been the star performer with the first circus I ever worked for.

AT that time he was doing the best high wire act I ever saw and I was a penniless boy-of-all-work. For some reason he took a liking to me and taught me my line. Later he became too heavy to go into the air and switched to clowning, doing his most amusing stunts in connection with the trained elephant acts.

Against the inducements Mack offered was the opportunity to investigate the mysteries of the Orient and time and again I was tempted to put off joining those I loved for a year.

of the SAWDUST RING

By JAMES HALLIDAY
As told to
Edwin A. Goewey

"I'm through, I tell you!" Feretti yelled. "Do you want me to go crazy, seeing things all the time——"

It was Daddy De Silva who finally influenced my choice; though not by direct appeal, as he had so often in the past.

One night I went to bed late, determined to fix upon a definite decision the following morning. I was tired and fell asleep almost upon the instant. I must have been dreaming about the far-away American circus, for suddenly, with startling vividness, I saw Joie De Silva standing directly before me. There could be no mistaking his wrinkled chalked face or his familiar baggy white costume. But, instead of his customary grin, his features were twisted into a troubled scowl.

When he had caught my glance, he slowly lifted his right arm. I reached out to shake hands. But, ignoring my gesture, his arm went higher and upon the blackness which surrounded him he traced the words, *Go home.* Then he seemed to fade into nothingness.

I made as if to rouse myself from this seeming nightmare, when, to my utter bewilderment, I realized I was awake! My eyes were wide open, and I was sitting bolt upright. I could feel the blankets and the bed. Half numb with a sudden fear, I sprang out, staggered to the switch and turned on the light. Everything in the room was as I had left it.

I shuddered in the draft from the open window and tottered back to the bed. But I couldn't stop thinking. What did that vision mean? Was something amiss in America, perhaps with my brother Will? Had De Silva actually been able to send his spiritual self across thousands of miles to give me a warning?

I dropped into a doze while these queries were tumbling over and over in my brain. When I awoke my nerves were again steady and I was able to reason more clearly. Were Daddy dead, I should have been certain I had seen his ghost. But he was not dead. Mack's cable reassured me on that score. Finally I became convinced I had seen Daddy only in a dream and had been mistaken when I thought I was awake. The dream had been so vivid that it had aroused me, and that was all there was to it.

HOWEVER, I decided then and there to return to America. Probably it was superstition, but I felt that the words I had seen in my sleep carried some special significance and must be obeyed.

The first thing I did that morning was to send a message to Mack that I would be with him within two weeks. Later in the day I settled my business with the purchaser of the Seldon show and came back to pack all my traps and props.

The next morning I left Southampton aboard the *Victoria* headed for the United States.

Ten days later I reached the end of my journey—at Connelsville—where the Sylvester Shows were pitched for the day. It was early evening as I stepped off the train, and I chartered a cab to drive me straight to the grounds.

I wanted to get a good look at one of the well-remembered home outfits, to which I had so long been a stranger, before locating anyone I knew. And as I gazed I laughed happily. It was just like old times! Great flares burned on all sides, illuminating the principal spots with almost daytime brilliance. A line of men and women and excited children were filing through the canvas drops on their way to the big top. The roar of caged animals rang out above the blare of hidden bands, while from all about me came the raucous cries of the proprietors of the catch-penny booths which offered for sale everything from lemonade and popcorn to toy balloons and dolls.

Finally, satisfied with the thrill of my first survey, I pushed cross lots to catch a glimpse of the sideshow. A leather-lunged ballyhoo spieler, standing before a row of gaudy banners hanging limply in the still air, was trying to entice a few more dimes from the stragglers. But as I looked at the freaks lined up on the platform, I recognized none of them. Surely three years had brought many changes in the personnel of the show.

AS I turned away I heard the bugle call announcing the grand opening procession. The show was on. That meant that it would be infinitely harder, now, to locate Mack and my brother and Daddy De Silva. Well, at least I knew my way around!

First I looked into a tent whose lifted sides revealed a gang of bull men and pony punks standing ready to strip their charges of their trappings as they came from the ring. Mack was not there. Next I crossed to where a row of empty canvas wagons partly concealed what I guessed were the dressing tents.

I was still in the shadow of a wagon when a youth in bareback riding costume hurried from one of the tents to another and uttered a low whistle. By the near-by flares I recognized him as my brother, Will. Just as I was about to shout to him, a girl in the abbreviated skirts of a rider slipped through the canvas-draped opening he faced, rushed into his extended arms and kissed him. Amazement held me mute. For the girl was Edna Karl who, when I had last been with the show, had seemed but little more than a child and was being taught to ride by her mother, a finished equestrienne. Odd, that Will had never mentioned Edna in his letters.

Grinning over having accidentally discovered their secret, I finally started forward again, prepared to give the pair a surprise. But I never reached them. For, creeping toward the couple and concealed by a pile of props, I spied Gilo Feretti, the girl's step-father and the circus's star animal trainer. The flash I caught of his face revealed a look of bitter anger. But more significant still was the bale-stake clutched menacingly in his upraised hand.

Seeing that he meant to attack Will, I tossed my coat aside, ready to rush him. But before I could make another move the familiar figure of Daddy De Silva stepped from among the props before Feretti and shook a threatening hand at the trainer. The latter, for a full minute, stood as if turned to stone. Then he hurled the stake aside and raced away. Edna and my brother caught sight of Feretti and immediately separated, the girl disappearing within the canvas flap and my brother running toward the main top.

Then I looked for the old clown. But he had vanished.

The situation I had just witnessed puzzled me; but it also brought back certain recollections of the past. Two years before I departed for England, Edna's mother, a widow, had joined the circus, bringing her daughter with her. For some unaccountable reason Mrs. Karl had fallen in love with Feretti, then the principal performer of the Sylvester show. And, though Joie De Silva, who had known her and her family in Europe, warned the woman against the trainer's brutal nature, she had gone ahead and married him. At the same time she signed a contract which stipulated that the girl must work for Feretti for the next five years and Gilo further clinched this by legally adopting Edna as his daughter.

The poor woman soon learned her mistake, for the trainer abused her shamefully. He would have beaten the girl, too, had not Daddy constituted himself Edna's protector and threatened to kill Feretti if he struck her. What I had just seen indicated that, despite his years, the clown still was able to protect the girl.

Just before I left the show Mrs. Feretti died and her daughter practically became the undisputed property of her step-father.

At that point in my reverie I came to the center of the lot and at the entrance to the menagerie tent Mack and I all but bumped into each other. Joyously we gave ourselves up to an exchange of greetings and expression of mutual satisfaction at being together again.

"Come on over to the men's tent," he said finally. "I know you're anxious to meet Will and the few other old-timers who are still with us."

"Just a moment, Mack," I answered, glancing about cautiously. "I want some information first." Then I told him what I had seen: Will and Edna's affectionate greeting; Feretti stealing upon them with a club, and the sudden appearance of Daddy De Silva.

My friend's eyes became wider as I talked. When I had finished, his expression baffled me.

"You're certain it was old Daddy you saw?" he gasped.

"I'm positive. Why, I've known him since I was knee-high. What's the matter with you?"

"It's too long a story to tell here. I'll explain everything when we're loading the cars tonight. But you might as well know this much now. Joie De Silva is dead. The night of the day I cabled you, one of the trick elephants became angry in the ring, knocked Daddy down and crushed him before we could master the beast."

"DADDY DE SILVA dead!" I whispered hoarsely. "Then what did I see——" The words froze in my throat and a sudden fear gripped me.

"Pull yourself together, Jimmy," said Mack, slapping me sharply upon the shoulders. "I'll explain later. In the meantime not a word to anyone. We can't have you spreading a story about having seen Joie. It would ruin us. Find Will and make yourself happy with him until I'm ready for you."

Mack hurried away to his duties, leaving me more at sea than ever. Most certainly a counterpart of Joie had kept Feretti from attacking Will and Edna. Had I been right then, in thinking that Daddy De Silva had really appeared to me in spirit that memorable night in London? The more I thought about it, the more I became convinced that I actually had seen the phantom of my old friend on two occasions.

Finally I recovered my nerve sufficiently to meet and question Will without betraying the agitation which gripped me. He had completed his riding act when I entered the men's tent and, dressed in jockey costume, was waiting for his call to ride in the hippodrome races. Our greetings over,

he introduced me to several of the other performers who gave me a warm welcome. I was delighted that Feretti was not there; he dressed in a small tent of his own.

After a time I motioned Will outside, where I informed him that I had heard he and Edna were engaged and asked why he had not confided in me.

"Yes, we are engaged," he said, "but Feretti has been so vicious because we are even friendly, that I didn't write the facts lest I worry you. However, now that you're here and know the truth, you may be able to help us fix upon some plan to outwit him."

"I'll do my best," I answered. "But don't come to an open clash with him or you may be fired. Remember, he's the big attraction of the outfit and Sylvester wouldn't hesitate a second if Feretti demanded that you be let out. The surest way to avoid trouble until you're ready to make a decided move is not to let him catch you alone with Edna."

Will promised to be on his guard and I left him. The next hour I spent in reporting to Sylvester and renewing old acquaintanceships. Then I went in search of Mack, locating him at the siding where the circus train was being loaded. His was a big job and he had little time for conversation. He advised me to lie on the turf and rest until the last car had been loaded.

I was dead tired and soon fell asleep. When Mack awakened me I leaped to my feet with a low cry, not comprehending my surroundings. Then I noted that the tents—nearly everything—had been placed aboard the train, and that the elephants, which had been pushing cages upon the flat trucks, were standing near, trunks and bodies swaying, while they waited to be marched into their cars.

"Watch closely now," Mack said, grasping my wrist with a grip that hurt. "And keep your nerve, no matter what you may see!"

One by one the elephants were loaded, Sam Shields, the head bull man, superintending the job. Finally only Hero, the smallest of the herd, remained near us. Then Sam sent his men to their bunks, leaving only the three of us standing beside the train.

Mack gave the word for Hero to go up the incline. On the second, and with a suddenness which caused me to give a frightened gasp, Daddy De Silva, in his familiar baggy white suit, appeared from the shadows and with a running jump was astride the little elephant's back! That was just the way he had always come into the big top. I wanted to call to him, to say something, but Hero and his rider had passed up the incline and disappeared inside the car.

WHILE I stood petrified, Mack and Sam pushed the platform up after the animal, slammed and fastened the door. Then Mack blew a whistle, the signal for departure.

I remained too stunned to move of my own volition. But the others seized me and literally lifted me aboard the rear caboose—their sleeping quarters—just as the train began moving. Slumped upon a bunk beneath a swinging lamp, I studied the features of the two men who faced me.

"Well, you saw it, didn't you?" questioned Mack.

"Good God, it was Daddy!" I cried.

"No, but it was his ghost—the ghost you saw tonight near the dressing tents—and the one Sam and I have seen doing this same thing nightly since Joie was killed."

I covered my eyes, trying to collect my thoughts. Mack placed a hand upon my shoulder. "You believe me, don't you?"

"Yes, absolutely. Now listen——" and I related what had happened in my bedroom in London.

"I see it all now," said Mack. "Daddy's spirit has returned from the other world to try to continue his protection of Edna— and of Will also, for that matter. But, realizing its limitations, the ghost urged you to join the circus so that you could keep Feretti in his place if it became necessary to resort to physical force."

"I don't get you, Mack."

"Then I'll explain further. Besides us three, De Silva's ghost has been seen by but one other person—Feretti. And as far as I know he has told only one person about it, which is lucky for the show. We don't want this to become known as a haunted circus, because then half of our people would quit."

"In whom has Gilo confided?"

"In Madam Consini, our new sideshow fortune teller, who is making up to Feretti, hoping he'll marry her. I overheard them talking. He told her Joie's spirit had appeared to him and threatened him. The woman is clever, fearless and respects nothing. She laughed at Feretti and tried to persuade him that even if he did see a ghost, it couldn't harm him."

"But tonight he ran from Daddy's specter like a frightened rabbit!"

"Tonight and previously—yes. You see, she can't persuade Feretti that he didn't see the specter, for he knows different. But she may be able, because of her greater intelligence, to convince him that Joie's ghost can't hurt him. And if she does that he'll give his temper free rein and——"

"Yes," I nodded, "and then God help Edna and Will if he catches them together and we're not near enough to help."

"RIGHT! However, I don't think you understand the girl's worst peril. Unless I'm mistaken, Feretti's intention is to marry Edna himself. That's the reason he hates Will so."

"But Edna must despise him," I answered.

"I'm certain she does. But that will mean nothing to Gilo. Sooner or later he'll take her to Europe with him—perhaps this winter. He's her guardian, remember."

"Then," I said, "why not tell Consini of Feretti's real interest in his step-daughter and get her to help Edna run away with Will? That would leave the coast clear for her and——"

"You don't know the woman or you wouldn't suggest such a thing," interrupted Mack. "She'd be more likely to do something which would mar the girl's beauty forever or cripple her for life."

"Don't say any more tonight, Mack. I'm too upset to think clearly. Let's try to get some rest, for I have a hunch we're going to face serious trouble in the near future."

After what seemed an almost endless night in which I lay awake thinking most of the time, I left my bunk early and was among the first to drop from the train when it reached the day's stop.

I immediately located Will and took him to one of the town's hotels for breakfast. There we would be able to discuss matters without encountering any of the circus folk.

Of course I didn't tell him that Mack believed Feretti intended to marry Edna, for that would have prompted him to do something rash and probably disastrous. After a long argument, in which I repeatedly urged patience on his part, he finally agreed to follow a plan of my suggesting. This, had we been able to carry it out, would have enabled him and the girl to trick the trainer before he could have harmed her.

Fate, however, had decided otherwise. My brother and I had no sooner reached the lot than we encountered Feretti in earnest conversation with a woman whom I guessed rightly was Madam Consini. The two arose and faced us as we approached and one look at Madam's features convinced me she was as hard as Mack had said.

But it was Gilo's expression which held and frightened me. For his old arrogant leer had returned and he squared his shoulders and held himself in a manner which indicated he had reached a momentous decision. I guessed what the change meant. The woman's arguments had triumphed. She had talked him out of all fear of Daddy's ghost. Henceforth he would be as ruthless as ever.

"Listen to me, you young whelp!" he snarled, moving close to Will, his eyes flashing evilly. "I've given you my

last warning to keep away from my girl. If ever I catch you two together I'll give you such a beating you'll never be able to ride again. Then I'll whip her until she realizes once and for all that I'm her master."

Will, beside himself with rage, attempted to attack Feretti. But I was prepared for that and hurled myself upon him, pinioning his arms. For a moment the trainer watched us, his great fists clenched. Then he laughed sardonically and walked away with the grinning woman.

I remained near Will throughout the day and prevented him from attempting to approach Edna. But I knew this was only postponing trouble, for he was determined to attempt to talk with her alone, irrespective of consequences.

And he did, that very night, while I was in the big top doing my act. Mack had agreed to watch him until I returned. But unfortunately he was summoned away just before I concluded my turn with a slide for life from the top of the tent, and Will took advantage of his absence to slip outside, hasten to the women's quarters and give Edna the signal.

AS I hurried into the exit runway I received an amazing hint that the worst of my fears were about to be realized. For at the far end I saw the familiar ghostly form of Daddy De Silva beckoning frantically to me. For some reason I was not afraid this time; I sensed only that Will and Feretti probably had come to grips and that, for the first time, the specter had failed to frighten the trainer.

Jerking up the canvas side, I dashed into the open and raced toward the dressing tents, whence I could hear angry shouts and the cries of a woman. In no time I was on the spot to find Gilo lashing my brother with a great bull whip, while Edna was trying unsuccessfully to hold back his arm.

As I reached Feretti's side I sent him sprawling with a full arm blow, then snatched the whip from him and hurled it aside. The next moment, as Edna flung herself into Will's arms, I looked around to see Mack and Sylvester running up.

The latter pulled the trainer to his feet, then snatched the girl from my brother and pushed her toward her step-father who grasped her wrist and held her close.

"I've had enough of this nonsense!" shouted Sylvester, stepping close to my brother and shaking his fist in his face. "You're fired. Get off the lot and never come near this circus again!"

"Wait!" It was Feretti speaking, while he pointed a trembling finger at the show's owner. "Don't fire anybody on my account. We're quitting this outfit on Saturday night. This girl belongs to me and I'm going to take her where she'll do as I tell her or——"

"She stays—and you, too!" barked Sylvester. "If you think you can quit my show——"

"I'm through I tell you!" Feretti yelled. "Sue me if you want to; I don't care. It's bad enough having this fellow hanging around Edna, but—do you want me to go crazy, seeing things all the time——"

He broke off suddenly and hurried away toward his private dressing quarters, dragging the girl with him. Sylvester motioned the rest of us to resume our tasks, and then followed the trainer. Will started in the same direction but Mack and I held him firmly, until we could get him to see reason.

The rest of that night and the next day were filled with action and argument. Feretti, despite Sylvester's repeated pleas, absolutely refused to reconsider his decision.

He was going to quit the circus at the end of the week and take Edna with him. They would proceed directly to New York and from there sail for Europe, where they would remain for a considerable time. Of course Will, Mack and I understood what this meant, even if the others in the outfit didn't. While on the other side he would force the girl to marry him, and then she would be beyond help. . . .

Realizing finally that Feretti would have his way, Sylvester informed Will he might remain with the show. From gossip we learned that the trainer had told Consini that as soon as he reached Europe he would obtain engagements for all of them for the remainder of the season and would then send for her. And, despite her natural shrewdness, she must have believed him for they continued on the most friendly terms.

It was not until I learned definitely that Feretti intended to take Edna away that I confided to Mack that I had seen Daddy's ghost beckoning to me in the runway at the time the trainer had attacked Will. He agreed that Gilo probably had encountered the specter and, for the first time, defied it; in that case, the phantom could do no more to help us.

"It's a calamity for Will," he said, "but it puts it squarely up to us to try to outwit Feretti. Maybe, before Saturday, we can arrange some plan to save Edna."

But we soon found ourselves up against a stone wall. For not only did the trainer place the girl in charge of Consini, who remained with her every minute her step-father was not watching her, but he set one of his helpers to watch Will. And so closely was the guard maintained that we were unable to communicate with the girl in any way.

Finally, when it became evident that we could no nothing to stop Gilo from taking Edna, I turned my savings over to my brother and advised him to trail the pair and do his utmost to keep his movements concealed from the trainer. If, by some trick, he could get Edna away from her step-father while they still were in America, he could follow our original plan of taking her to Chicago and hiding there until Feretti had left the country.

After that we marked time until the night when Gilo was to make his final performances. Naturally, considering the week's happenings, the circus personnel was upset, for practically everyone sympathized with Will and Edna and had been open in denouncing the trainer.

When I went into the main top around nine o'clock for my act, my nerves were jumping. I had to steel myself to go through with my performance, and I was never more relieved in my life than when I had completed my turn and was safely on the ground.

THROWING a robe about my shoulders, I raced into the exit runway, almost bumping into Feretti who was headed for the arena to put his stallions through their paces in the first of his two acts. He gave me an evil look, but neither of us spoke.

Reaching my make-up table, I hurriedly changed to street clothes, jammed my possessions into my trunks and locked them for removal to the train. Then I went in search of Will, whom I expected to meet somewhere outside, ready for his big adventure. However, just as I reached the open, I encountered Mack, who halted me with, "Listen, Jimmy, I'm so nervous I'm nearly jumping out of my skin. I have no particular reason to be, but something inside me warns that trouble is brewing and I want you near in case I need help."

"Maybe it's Will. He may do something desperate at the last moment."

"No, that's not it. I've got two huskies watching him and they won't let him leave the box-car until you and I escort him to the train that Feretti and Edna are taking East."

"All right, I'll stick close. But where are you going?"

"No place in particular," Mack replied. "Let's watch Feretti. Two of his men and Consini are guarding Edna, so there's no use of us trailing her."

Circling the men's dressing tent and keeping in the shadows, we moved to within a short distance of Gilo's quarters; the side toward us was up. As the trainer was still with his horses in the big top, the only person in the place was his dresser. As we watched, he took out the elaborate

uniform and trappings Feretti wore in his finale—the sensational tiger act—and placed them on a table.

Glancing about to make certain he had neglected nothing, the dresser left the tent, pulled down the flap, and hurried away.

The man had scarcely disappeared when Mack and I saw something which caused us to gasp in unison and clutch each other. For, out of the surrounding blackness, the ghost of Daddy De Silva appeared suddenly, and then as quickly vanished, passing right through the canvas into Feretti's tent! I don't know how long we stood, shaken and amazed. But finally, moved by a common impulse, we hurried forward, dropped to our knees and peered inside.

But the tent was empty.

"YOU saw it, Jimmy, didn't you?" whispered Mack hoarsely.

"Yes."

"In God's name, what was it doing in there?"

Before I could reply we heard the dresser returning, so we slipped around to the other side, where we again peered into the interior. A moment later Feretti entered, hurled his whip aside and began changing to his other costume, giving his man snarling orders which indicated he was in a bad humor. I watched with pulses pounding and eyes bulging, expecting the specter of Joie to appear in a last attempt to frighten the trainer. But nothing out of the ordinary happened; the ghost's flitting presence remained a mystery. When Gilo had donned everything but his coat, cap and the belt holding the two revolvers he always carried when he entered the cage with his tigers, he lighted a cigar and sat down to await his cue.

The minutes seemed endless. Finally Mack touched my shoulder and nodded and I followed him noiselessly into the open.

"We might as well go to the big top," he said unsteadily. "When Gilo's through, we can watch him constantly until he starts for the train. Then I'll release Will."

Reaching the main tent, we took our places beside Sylvester who was directing the show from the edge of the center ring. The great cage was already in position and, as the wagons containing the tigers were backed up to it and the animals were forced inside, Feretti appeared, greeted by prolonged applause.

He failed to respond with his customary bow and his look indicated that he was still out of temper. And from the moment he entered the cage he sent his tigers through their tricks at top speed, lashing any that lagged with unnecessary viciousness.

This went on for perhaps ten minutes when suddenly the largest tigress turned and struck at Gilo. With an oath he sprang upon the animal and beat it over the head with the butt of his whip until it roared with pain. But for once his brutality failed him. In a second there was pandemonium in the cage, while the remaining animals leaped from their perches and began to surround him.

Realizing his danger, Gilo leaped back, snatched a revolver from its holster and fired five blanks into the faces of the snarling brutes. But they were too angry to be stopped by reports and flashes, and kept creeping closer, ever closer. Thoroughly frightened at last, Feretti felt behind him for the door which eager hands had opened. He drew the weapon loaded with bullets, prepared to kill every animal that blocked his way.

But Feretti never got as far as the exit. Suddenly a great beast fairly catapulted itself across the cage and landed against the trainer's chest, knocking him down. Instinctively, Gilo rolled to one side, leveled the revolver and pulled the trigger—once, twice . . . five times. But no report followed.

The next instant it seemed as if every brute was upon him, clawing him to death, while the onlookers on every side shrieked with terror. People trampled on each other in an effort to get out of the tent.

As I stood bewildered, watching Sylvester and a dozen of his men trying to beat the tigers into submission with iron bars and at the same time drag Feretti's body to the ring, Mack shook some life into me and whispered, "Come with me and run if you ever did in your life."

He started away and I followed, slipping, stumbling, but keeping up with him. Before I knew it we were in Gilo's tent. Mack dashed to the table, whipped off the covering and bent close. There was nothing there. He glanced about and I did the same, wondering what he was seeking. All the trunks had been removed except the one in which Feretti's uniform was to have been packed. That was empty.

FOR a moment Mack rubbed his forehead in bewilderment. Then he fell upon his knees and began feeling along the edge of the platform which constituted the floor of the tent.

His search ended quickly. Suddenly he rose and held one hand toward me. In his palm lay five unexploded ball cartridges. I looked at them, too bewildered to immediately see their significance.

"Now we know why Daddy's ghost went in here," he gasped.

"You mean——"

"I mean that Joie's spirit took them from Gilo's revolver. It found a way to save Edna—after we had failed."

Then he thrust the tell-tale bullets into his pocket, just as several ring hands staggered into the tent, bearing Feretti's mutilated body.

The conclusion generally accepted, however, was that the tragedy was the result of carelessness on Gilo's part; that, after cleaning the weapon, he had neglected to reload it. It was a plausible explanation, considering how out of sorts he'd been all week.

The tragedy affected Sylvester, the show's owner, more perhaps than anyone else, for Feretti had been a big drawing card and would not be easily replaced.

Yes, Edna and Will were married. But not until Madam Consini had left us to take Feretti's body to his relatives in Europe and the circus had again settled down to its customary routine.

Daddy De Silva's ghost was never again seen about the show, but we, his friends, will not soon forget the old clown's loyalty in our hour of need.

A BARGAIN

Never did mortal man make a stranger pact than this— and the strangest part about it is, it's true!

Editor's Note: We take pleasure in offering to all lovers of TRUE ghost stories the following account of a personal experience as set down by "Cheiro", the celebrated English mystic. The documents and evidence herein referred to have been carefully examined and fully verified.

"Did — did you hear?" I gasped. "IT switched on the light in the hall!"

I AM prevented from giving the name and address of the house in which the following story was enacted by an old English law which provides severe penalties for any person who may in any way damage "the reputation of property."

After I gave up the house in question I was warned that if I put in print the address in recounting the strange occurrences that took place, I would be sued for heavy damages.

As I have every reason for believing this threat would be carried into effect, I am compelled to not even mention the street in which this house is situated, but as a proof that this story is a true one, I have lodged with the editor of the *London Publishing Company* full particulars and evidence to prove that what I relate is exact in every particular.

After one of my long world journeys, I decided to settle down in London and remain in the heart of the great metropolis for at least some time.

A suitable house was, however, difficult to find. I wanted trees and a garden. I also wished to be in the center of active life, and such a combination was not an easy one to find.

One afternoon, at the end of an unusually warm summer, by a mere chance I came across exactly the type of place I required.

It was an old-fashioned house, standing back from the main thoroughfare, with quite a large garden and several high trees that sheltered and concealed it from the passing traffic.

No agent had given me the address. There were no bills up, "To Let" or "For Sale," yet I intuitively felt that I should make some attempt to get possession of this house which so attracted me.

AS I have all my life tried to follow my intuitions, I at once determined to make an effort to get particulars about the property.

There would be no harm to make inquiries, I thought.

I pushed open the high, old-fashioned, heavy oak door that cut the place off from the street, and as it closed behind me, I found myself in an instant in quite another world.

with a SPIRIT

By "CHEIRO"

"Great God! That can't be a ghost," Perkins cried.

Outside, the roar of omnibuses and traffic; inside the high walls peace, quiet, and a strange feeling of old-world isolation.

In the center of a badly kept garden a quaint fountain splashed and dripped as if Time, for it, had ceased to exist. By its side grew some bedraggled wallflowers and wandering nasturtiums, and further back was an old wooden seat in the last stages of decay.

The house itself, with its low diamond-shaped windows, looked gloomy and foreboding; yet there was something about it that appealed to me so strongly, that, without hesitation, I went up to the porch and pulled the chain of a heavy iron bell.

Instead of a servant answering, as I expected, an elderly gentleman opened the door. For a moment I was completely nonplussed, and hardly knew what to say. Then I rattled off some excuse about having heard that the house might be let.

The old gentleman, although rather deaf, was very courteous, but firmly replied that I had made a mistake. I was turning to leave when his wife came out of the hall.

"My dear," he turned to her, "just imagine this gentleman calling to ask if this house is to let."

I again attempted to apologize for my intrusion, but was cut short by the lady saying:

"How you could have heard such a thing, sir, I do not know, but although I have not mentioned it to my husband, I have been thinking of putting the house in some agent's hands. Will you come in?"

With a happy smile I gladly assented. We entered an oblong, quaint-looking lounge hall. I glanced at the wooden beams across the ceiling, at the dark oak panelling nearly black with age, at the wide open hearth and Tudor-shaped fireplace—then, rather hesitatingly, the lady pulled aside some curtains and disclosed at the farther end, a small chancel or chapel with a stained glass window.

"How delightful, how reposeful!" I instinctively exclaimed.

"I am glad you think so," she said. "We don't like the idea of the chapel so we keep it curtained off, but come and see the rest of the rooms."

Before we had gone very far I had mentally decided that I would take the house if the terms were at all suitable.

"Why do you want to get rid of the place?" I asked.

There was a curiously questioning look in her eyes as she replied.

"THE trouble is, no servant will stay, no matter what I pay them. I will not try to deceive you. The servants' rooms are in the back, the old part; they hear noises, queer knocks and sometimes they think they see things; lately the knocks have begun in the other rooms. My husband is so deaf he does not hear them, but it has got on my nerves, and I will be glad to go if I can get anyone to take

over the lease." She paused, as if weighing her words.

Then she added: "We have not been here long. My husband came in for this house on the death of his uncle twelve months ago. He was a very eccentric man and lived alone for many years with his old butler in the front part. The back rooms he would never allow anyone to use."

To make a long story short, within less than half an hour we had come to terms, but with the stipulation that the house would be handed over to me empty at the end of a fortnight.

The day came for me to take possession. I was as happy as a child with a new toy. There was something about the place that appealed to me in an extraordinary way. I walked through the dusty rooms and told them out loud how I would have them done up, how the old oak would be taken care of and polished, and the diamond-paned windows cleaned as they had not been for years. I am not the only one who has felt that way over a house, I am quite sure.

There was one room, however, I would not touch. It was in the old part of the building off the stairs below the level of the hall. What there was about this room I could not explain; no suggestion I made seemed to fit in with it, and the decorator I had employed was equally at a loss what should be done, so in the end I turned the key in the door and left it as it was.

AT last the day came when I could begin to send in some furniture, and as quickly as I could I fitted up two rooms, one for my secretary, a man twenty years older than myself, and the other for my own use. By living in the house, I argued, I would be able to get rid of the decorators more quickly than by coming to see them every day.

At this stage I had no occasion to trouble about servants, as we could get our meals outside and simply sleep in the place.

Did I say sleep? From the very first evening such a thing was impossible. The first night my secretary and I got hom about ten o'clock. We went through the basement, saw all doors and windows properly fastened, we groped our way through the decorators' ladders in the hall and little chapel downstairs and, turning off the electric lights, we got up into our rooms.

The place was as quiet and still as if we were in the middle of the country. The hum of the traffic in the distance had a soothing effect on one's nerves, like the sound of waves rising and falling on a sanded shore.

I had an electric light over my bed, so I read for a while, then switched it off and turned over to sleep.

I felt very happy about the house—the decorators were doing their work quickly, and I could see in my mind how everything would look when they had finished.

Suddenly I jumped with a start. Away down in the bottom of the house there was a *noise*—it sounded like the opening and shutting of a door in the basement.

Rapidly my mind went over all the doors and windows we had fastened. It must have been the wind, I thought; then I remembered how still the night was, and how as I passed up the garden I had noticed that there was not a leaf stirring on the trees.

Again I heard a noise—this time I sat up in bed and listened intently!

There could be no mistaking now what I heard; *it was a heavy footstep on the basement stairs leading up to the hall.*

Sitting bolt upright in the dark I listened. The steps entered the hall. I imagined I could see someone walking in and out of the decorators' ladders; then they sounded nearer, *and the footsteps came to the uncarpeted staircase leading to our rooms.*

I could hear my heart beat—and yet I felt I dared not switch on my electric light. Curiously enough, I reasoned that if I did, the gleam under my door might lead the mysterious "steps" directly to my room.

The staircase creaked. I remembered as I came up to bed noticing a loose board in one of the treads—it was on the landing turning toward my door. It seemed ages before the footsteps came nearer—whoever it was did not seem in any particular hurry.

The loose board was reached—it made exactly the same noise as it had done when I walked on it on my way up to bed—a few more steps *and the shuffling feet were at my door!*

How strangely one's mind works in a moment of tension. I knew I had fastened the heavy brass bolt, I knew it would resist a good pressure when the pressure would come, *as I felt sure it must.* I wondered if the man outside were broad-shouldered, what he looked like, if he would wear a mask. . . These and a hundred other things of a like nature passed rapidly through my brain—but never for one moment did the idea come to me that the person outside my door *was not human.*

I hardly dared to breathe. I slipped out of bed, gripped a heavy iron poker from the grate, and with the other hand on the electric switch, waited for the bursting open of the door.

Instead, something came, which, to my excited senses, seemed a thousand times worse.

Suddenly, as if from knuckles made of bone, a sharp rat-a-tat tat, *tat-tat,* rang on the center panel of the door. I could feel my hair stand on end—the fright of the human had passed—in its place came the *terror of the supernatural —the dread of the unknown.*

Again came the heart-chilling knock, rat-a-tat tat, *tat tat.* I switched on the light, I do not know what possessed me. I rushed to the door, I pulled the bolt—threw it wide open and stood facing what . . . *the blank darkness of an empty landing and nothing more.*

I gave a sigh of relief—for answer came something that made my very blood freeze—*by my side in the bright light of the electric lamp on the open door about level with my head,* the rat-a-tat tat was repeated *clearer and sharper than before!*

Jumping back, I slammed the door with a bang that echoed down the empty stairs. I shot in the brass bolt; shivering with fright I sat down on my bed and waited—waited for what I did not know.

Morning came at last, and with it courage. As the first streaks of dawn stole gently through the windows I pulled up the blinds and welcomed the sight of a creaking horse-drawn omnibus passing in the distance.* A hansom cab, with its tinkling bells, came along, looking for a fare. London woke up rapidly; workmen going to their jobs, then clerks, then typists, city men and others—the stream of Life thickened and flowed on rapidly; but how good it all looked, how real, how human, after the horror I had passed through but a few hours before.

Yes! With the light came courage. I put on my clothes, opened the door of my room and stepped out on the landing.

HOW perfectly natural everything seemed; the morning sun was streaming in through the windows, the uncarpeted stairs seemed to welcome me, the loose board made me jump for a moment as it recalled the footfall of the night before—but it was only for a moment; the next I was laughing at myself for having such things as nerves.

I did exactly as so many others would have done under similar circumstances: I told myself, and in very forcible language, that I was nothing more or less than a darned fool to have allowed myself to imagine that I had heard footsteps coming up those stairs, and as for believing that I heard that rat-a-tat tat on my door, I told myself that any man who could work himself into such a state as to think he heard any such thing, was only fit for the nearest lunatic asylum, and that, even, would be too good for such an idiot.

At that moment my secretary opened his door.

"Well, Perkins, did you have a good night?" I asked.

"*Did you?*" he grunted.

*This happened in the days before motor-buses had made their appearance.

"Certainly," I laughed. "I let my nerves run riot; I heard footsteps coming up the stairs; I heard a rat-a-tat tat on my door; I sat up shivering on my bed all night and generally made as big an idiot of myself as a man ever made. Nerves are wonderful things, aren't they?"

"It's easy to laugh now in the bright sunshine," Perkins growled, "but I'm damned if I stay in this house another night for you or anyone else, sir; there's no money in the world would make up for it, that's all I've got to say."

"Well, if you heard so much, why didn't you come to my assistance?" I said, rather sharply, as that moment when I stood at my open door gazing into the blank landing passed like a flash across my memory.

As I looked at Perkins' wizened face, I realized it was no good trying to persuade myself that what I had heard was mere imagination.

HERE was a level-headed man of the world, twenty years my senior, who had heard all I had heard, and who *was honest enough to admit that he was frightened out of his wits.*

"Well, my friend," I said, "what are we going to do about it?"

"There's nothing to do except to give the house up, give the keys back to the people that had it, ask them to return the money you've spent on it; if they don't agree quietly, bring them into Court, and I'll guarantee there are no twelve sane men that won't give a verdict in your favor."

"All very fine, Perkins, but let me point out that the lady told me she could not keep a servant in the place, that they heard knocks and noises; she admitted the place was haunted—I took it at my own risk. Where does your twelve men's verdict come in now?"

"Well, sir, what are *you going to do?*" he asked.

"I'm going to keep the house, whatever happens," was my reply, "and, furthermore, I'm going to keep you, Perkins. Yes, I am, my friend. You've too much good old North of England blood not to fight it out to a finish, even with a ghost."

That night we returned to the house about ten o'clock. We lit a fire in my room, put two easy chairs before it, fortified ourselves with sandwiches, and good strong coffee, and determined to see things out till dawn.

The first few hours passed quietly enough. About one o'clock we were dozing off to sleep in our chairs when suddenly we started up—there was no mistaking what we heard—a shuffling footstep on the landing—it came nearer—it stopped at the door—a pause—it seemed an eternity—then clear and sharp a determined rat-a-tat tat on the middle of the door. It was like a thunderbolt in the tense silence.

We jumped from our chairs—we stood staring at one another like two helpless children, without a word.

A sharp click came from the empty landing—*the electric light had been switched on.*

"Did—did you hear?" I gasped. "It turned on the light in the hall!"

"Great God! That can't be a ghost," Perkins cried.

We each took a heavy iron poker from the grate. I pulled back the bolt and threw the door open as I had the night before . . . once again I looked out into an empty hall.

This time, though, the landing was flooded with light.

Gripping tightly our iron pokers we stepped out on the stairs. Silence everywhere—a deadly silence at that.

I peered over the banisters. "Perkins," I whispered, "the lights are on in the hall. We can't leave them like that, *we must go down and turn them off.*"

Side by side, step by step, we went down together; we went very slowly, our feet seemed like lead—what we expected to find I do not know.

"It can't be a ghost with such a light about," Perkins kept repeating as if to keep up his courage.

We stood on the last step of the stairs. Before us the hall was flooded with light—*every lamp was on!* On our left the dining-room door wide open—the room in black darkness; we looked at the shining brass electric switches in a row just inside the door—something called our attention to them—then click, click, click, *one after the other they were switched on before our eyes,* and the empty room became a blaze of light!

WE felt rooted to the spot, but it was only for a moment. Out there somewhere in the middle of the empty room—yes, out there under that silent gleam of light, we heard a hollow croaking kind of laugh—a sneering laugh that chilled our blood. It came closer to us—we almost felt it—we did not wait for more—with one bound we had reached the landing and were behind the closed door of my room.

When the decorators came to their work, they found all the lights on, even down in the basement: we let them think what they liked about our carelessness, for neither Perkins nor myself was in a talkative mood. We were glad to go to our beds and sleep—and we did sleep as two men never slept before, and chiefly, I think, on account of *the human, exquisite racket painters' ladders made on such an occasion.*

Night came again, and after a good dinner we both felt

quite courageous enough to face anyone—or any*thing*.

"Well, Perkins, are we going to see it through?" I asked.

"I'm game for anything you wish," he nodded. "Only I don't mind telling you that I've smuggled a dog into my room for tonight, and if there's anything human about that ghost, then God help him, that's all I can say."

"What's the breed of this wonderful animal?" I laughed.

"A thoroughbred mongrel, governor, a cross between an Irish wolfhound and a Scotch terrier, and born and reared in Yorkshire."

"Excellent," I said. "But suppose our ghost has no legs, what then?"

"I've never heard of a ghost appearing *in the light* like last night," Perkins went on. "I can't yet believe that it wasn't a human hand that pulled down those electric switches, but you and I were in such a blue funk we couldn't think straight."

"What about the footsteps coming up the stairs?"

"That's just it—they were too real to be those of a ghost," he went on. "Aren't we taught from our cradles that spirits have no substance, that they're intangible things that float on air? No, sir! My belief is that our ghost is a human scoundrel that wants to get you out of the house, and all I wish is that I may be able to get a London 'Bobby' on his track."

"SO that's where your Irish-Scotch mongrel comes in?" I laughed. "He's got to hold the ghost by the leg while you get the policeman—that's the plan, is it?"

Perkins nodded assent. He was quite happy with his scheme. I must admit I was not quite so confident as we closed the garden gate behind us and looked up at the dark windows of the empty house.

I had had experiences with dogs before, when ghost hunting on previous occasions, and I had often noticed that animals showed more terror than even humans when they came in contact with anything that was uncanny or supernatural.

Still, as I put the latch-key in the door, there was something very comforting in hearing a vigorous barking from the room Perkins slept in, which continued while we switched on and off the lights and came up the stairs.

The poor animal went mad with delight to see us. He had been lonely, shut up all those hours—perhaps the sound of our voices was as much music to his ears as his vigorous barking seemed to ours.

We first allowed him to devour the supper we had brought him, and then, boiling over with courage and that "brave Horatius feeling" that men get when they have a dog for a companion, we three proceeded to the basement to see that the doors and windows were closed and fastened.

Our dog friend seemed afraid of nothing. He sniffed and barked in every room. He got smells of cats, rats and painters, but he was so intelligent that, I am quite sure, he did not mix them up.

There was one place, however, where his Irish-Scotch blood got a set-back that puzzled even him. We had been out in the yard seeing that the heavy iron bar was across the door leading into the back alley. We had returned into the passage and had shot the bolt home in the inside door, remarking as we did so, that bolts in the days that house was built, were certainly not made for ornament. We had examined the windows in every part and had reached the threshold of that small room on the half-landing that up to then the painters had left untouched.

Calling the dog to follow, Perkins struck a match. It was the only room in the house that had no electric light. Perkins called again. The dog answered with a whine; he was crouching down on the threshold, *every hair standing up like a bristle, and trembling in every limb.*

The match went out. In the gray moonlight the dog's eyes looked twice their size, as if they were starting out of his head. His joy of life was gone, he was nothing more than a shivering mass of nerveless flesh, that could only answer his master with a whine.

We went up to my room, the dog following close to our heels. He was still trembling. I threw a cushion for him close to the fire; as I patted his head, he licked my hand, as if he wanted to thank me for that human touch.

"What do you think of your dog, Perkins?" I could not help but say.

He did not answer. He poured me out a cup of coffee. I took the hint and did not pursue the subject.

We had been sitting quietly for some time, the distant hum of the streets had died down, a neighboring clock had struck one; the house seemed very still, even the dog at our feet had gone to sleep—I was about to suggest that we should follow his example. Perkins started up.

"What was that?" he whispered.

I shook my head. I had heard nothing. I looked at the dog; he was sitting bolt upright, but with ears lying down at the back of his head; he was evidently remembering the fright he had had a few hours ago.

I was beginning to think I was the bravest of the three—but away downstairs came the ominous sound of feet.

I could hear them entering the dining-room—then the hall—I could hear them stop at the foot of the stairs, then come on with a tread far more heavy and distinct than on the former occasion.

Perkins and I instinctively grabbed the two iron pokers, the dog stood between us, with his head back sniffing the air.

Suddenly a bang on the door—this time, thank God, accompanied by a human voice—and a pretty rough one at that.

"What the Hell's going on in this house?"

The dog was already at the door, barking like fury. He was evidently afraid of nothing that could use such straightforward English. Perkins got him by the collar. A heavy push made the door tremble—the brass bolt flew off, the door shot open—and there stood before us the finest sample of a London "Bobby" that my eyes ever saw.

He certainly looked particularly good to me at such a moment. I could not have greeted a god with greater fervor, but Mr. "Bobby" was not having any sentiment at such an hour. He was decidedly out of temper.

"What the Hell's going on in this house, I'd like to know?" he repeated.

We hardly knew what to say. He went on:

"Five minutes ago your back door was closed and barred. I had just tried it on my first round when I heard the bolt being drawn and the door opened before my very eyes. I entered the yard, found the passage door open, every light in the place on, and you two gentlemen and a dog alone here in an empty house—what's the game, that's what I want to know?"

IT was no use trying to look dignified under such circumstances. I knew it would be still less use to attempt to explain "psychic phenomena" to an angry policeman at such an hour of the night, so I meekly said that my friend and I had not carelessly left the back doors open as he had imagined. We had very carefully bolted them before coming upstairs and there was no explanation that we could offer for their being found open.

"Well, I've got to search the house from top to bottom," he said. "There must be someone concealed on the premises that you don't know about, so come along with me and bring the dog."

We searched the house from the attics to the cellars, the policeman's "bull's-eye" shooting its beams into every corner. The dog followed us all over the house except into the small room off the stairs where he had his previous fright. Into that room he absolutely refused to go. Each time we tried to induce him to enter he lay down crouching on the threshold, trembling in every limb.

Mr. "Bobby" jotted remarks in his notebook as he would

have to make a report about finding the doors open, he said. We finally saw him out into the back alley—put the big bolt back into its place and returned to my room. Nothing more happened that night. When daylight came, Perkins retired with the dog, and I went to bed.

Whether it was the effect of Mr. "Bobby's" visit or the presence of the dog, I cannot say, but for a few weeks after that we had no disturbance of any kind.

One afternoon Henry Hamilton, the dramatist, dropped in to see me.

"I quite envy you having this quaint old house in the heart of London," he said. "But tell me, have you had any queer experiences in it since you have taken it over?"

"What kind of experiences do you mean?" I queried.

"Well," he went on, "when some friends of mine lived here a few years ago, they heard noises and knocks all over the place, and on that account they gave the house up. I will write down and place in an envelope a message once spelled out to me by knocks in this very room. You will lock it up in your desk and not open it until at some time a message is again rapped out—then compare the two and let me know if they are alike."

I promised I would do this, but as some weeks went by without any knocks or disturbances taking place, I had forgotten about this envelope, until one night my attention was drawn to it in a remarkable manner.

I HAD asked a few friends to dinner, a kind of "house warming" party, about a month after I had got settled. After dinner we sat round the fire in the Lounge, having coffee and cigarettes, when for no apparent reason a series of decided knocks commenced on a crystal bowl containing flowers that I always kept before an image of Buddha at the far end of the little chapel.

Someone suggested that we should sit round a table and ask the ghost to spell out his name.

I took a writing-pad and a pencil, and turning to where the knocks had been heard, I said aloud:

"I will call out the letters of the alphabet, please make a knock at the letter you want. At the end I will read out the words. If they are correct rap three times, if not correct, rap once."

The message that came out clearly and distinctly was:

"My name is Karl Clint. I lived here about a hundred and twenty years ago. If you go down to the empty room off the stairs you will hear more."

Taking our chairs we moved to the empty room—the same room which, it will be remembered, the dog that Perkins brought would always refuse to enter.

As there was no electric lamp in this room, we placed a candle on the mantelpiece and sat round a small table we had brought down with us.

We had hardly taken our places before the knocks again commenced, this time much stronger than before, and on the center of the wall immediately above where the candle stood.

The message that came was:

"I am Karl Clint. I own this house. In this room I murdered Liddel. I buried him underneath."

"Who was Liddel?" I asked.

"He was Arthur Liddel."

"Do you want us to do anything about it?"

"No! You can do nothing."

"Do you want any prayers said?" someone asked.

"No!" very emphatically.

"Can we help you in any way?"

"No! I want to be left alone in my own house. Why can't people keep away?"

This was followed by a loud bang on the door, and at the same moment the candle was extinguished. In the darkness we groped our way out and were only too glad to get upstairs.

I opened the sealed envelope in my desk. The message it contained tallied almost *word for word with what I had taken down.*

The next day I looked up the archives and records of the parish. I found that between 1740 and 1800 the old part of the house had been a kind of farm owned by an Austrian or German named Karl Clint. This man had been mixed up with the disappearance of Arthur Liddel, who was last seen in the company of the man Clint. Years later, all trace of Karl Clint had been lost. The farm had become covered with streets and the property had changed hands many times. The records gave me no further information.

Things had gone on quietly in the house for some weeks until the time came when I made plans to make some use of the empty room in question. The first thing I did was to put in electric light. That night I was awakened several times by knocks on my bedroom door. Two of the servants had also heard them and had immediately given notice. I telephoned my friends and asked them to come over that evening at nine o'clock. I had determined to solve the mystery one way or the other, for to continue to live under such conditions appeared to me impossible.

I had had some experience of the results that could be at times obtained by the materialization séances given by a blind medium named Cecil Husk. I determined to have this man with us to see if we could get something more tangible than messages given by knocks. I had some time previously attended séances where this man was the medium, at which forms developed and spirit voices of persons I recognized had spoken to me.

Perhaps, I thought, it will give the ghost who haunts this house an opportunity of showing more definitely what he wants me to do.

I should here explain that from the peculiar life I had led for so many years, and from the hundreds of confessions that men and women had poured into my ears, I had lost all sense of prejudice or the desire to judge or condemn any person, no matter what crime they might have committed.

Sinners and saints had become alike to me. In both there was evil and in both good. The Sinner might have become the Saint if circumstances had been equal, and the Saint might as easily have been the Sinner if he had been exposed to the same temptation.

So it was that I would as gladly have helped the spirit of this self-confessed murderer, Karl Clint, as I would some long dead Bishop struggling to break the chains of Purgatory.

NINE o'clock came, my friends were punctual to the minute. Shortly after, I saw the blind medium being led up the garden path. I went to meet him and helped him into the dining-room where chairs had been placed around the central table.

I put the medium in the middle of the group. I switched off the main lights, leaving a small lamp with a red shade burning at the far end of the room.

I had scarcely reached my seat opposite the medium before manifestations commenced in the shape of very decided knocks on the ceiling, the chandelier and a mirror hanging on the wall. Distinct footsteps were heard *apparently coming from the unused room;* they stopped at the door . . . A gray kind of shadowy cloud formed inside—it grew thicker—it came directly over to where I sat. Then out of it a head and shoulders formed and in another second I was looking into the face of Karl Clint.

I knew it was Karl Clint. He had no need to repeat his name. That weary, haunted, broken look, told me in a flash his loneliness, his heart-weariness; and, murderer though he may have been, my soul went out to him in sympathy and pity.

Everyone could see the face I was looking at. It was decidedly a German or Austrian type of head; as the features developed more clearly one could almost distinguish the texture of the skin and see the reddish color of the

hair and close-cropped beard, the blue of the tired eyes.

In appearance the face was that of a man between forty-five and fifty years of age—an intelligent looking man, but of the peasant or farmer class.

Perhaps on account of the sympathetic look in my eyes the face in a few moments became still clearer. We could see that the lips were making a tremendous effort to speak. Several times they opened, but no sound came. At last, and how it was accomplished I can offer no explanation, *a voice did come!* At first it was only a kind of whisper—we strained every nerve to listen—a few guttural words came, then more, until every person in the room could hear the following conversation:

"Why are these people in my house?"

"They are my friends," I answered. "Won't you tell me something about yourself?"

"I am Karl Clint," the lips said. "I lived here, as far as I can make out, one hundred and twenty years ago, but time makes no difference to me now. It is people who appear to change. Why have you come here?"

"Because I liked your house. Perhaps I can help you by living here," I answered quickly.

"No one can help me," the voice said, in a curiously sad way. "I only want to be left in peace."

"BUT you are not at peace. If you were, you would not come and frighten people as you do."

"I can't get away, *since the night I died I am here all the time.*"

"You told us you murdered Liddel—why did you do it?"

"Liddel would not leave the woman I lived with, alone. I loved Charlotte more than man ever loved a woman. He was always coming here tempting her with his money. One night he went too far. I killed him as I would a mad dog. People call such an act murder, but I would do the same over again if he and I were living. I dug a hole in the earth under the room downstairs. I filled it with quicklime. I put his body in it and what is left of it is there still."

"What became of Charlotte?" I asked.

"She died a few years later. She helped me to get rid of the body, but she never got over the worry and the dread of my being found out—I buried her in the graveyard not far from here."

"And what became of you?"

"After she died I went back to Germany. I never knew a moment's happiness after Charlotte went—life for me was torture—in the end I committed suicide."

There is no describing the utter pathos of that voice.

"And then?" I prompted.

"I can't tell you how it came about, but one day I seemed to wake up in the room downstairs and I've been here ever since."

"But would you not like to leave the place and get away?"

"Why should I? This was the only place I called home. I was happy here with the one woman I ever loved. It was *the only happiness I ever knew,* why should I leave—there is no place else for me to go."

"But Charlotte?" I blurted out.

"Charlotte is here with me. We live the old happy days over and over—till Liddel comes—*and then I kill him again.*"

"But surely there is something I can do to help you," I could not help saying.

"There is *one* thing you *can* do," the voice replied. "Leave the room downstairs untouched. Put two chairs and a table there, and allow no one to enter it after dark. If you will do this, you can have the rest of the place for yourself and I won't give you any trouble."

I pledged my word I would carry out my side of the bargain. That night two chairs and a table were placed in what I now called "his room." I locked the door and put the key in my safe, and from then on I had no more annoyances or noises of any kind.

Some years passed . . . the day came for me to give this house up and live in a different part of London.

A few evenings before I left I thought I ought to have another séance—out of sentiment, perhaps—to say good-by to my ghost friend, who had so faithfully kept to his side of the bargain.

Without much waiting Karl Clint again appeared.

"Karl," I said, "I am moving to another house. I thought I would like to say good-by and thank you for having kept to your side of the arragement. For the last time I am going to ask is there anything I can do to help you?"

To my very great surprise the answer came clearly.

"*I want to go with you.* You are the only one I ever met who has shown sympathy with me. Behind the panelling in my room you will find a painting I had made of Charlotte. I put it there when she died and it has been hidden there ever since. Take it with you, hang it somewhere in your home, and perhaps when the time comes for you to pass into the shadow-land, you will have at least two humble but loyal friends to greet you."

I found Charlotte's picture behind the panelling—it is on the wall over my desk as I write this manuscript.

A Strange Premonition

MRS. EVERIS ANSON HAYES, wife of the former Congressman from California, relates the following:

Mr. Hayes and his brother Jay were to leave our ranch home on a certain day and start for the East. On the evening before their departure, Mr. Hayes said to me:

"I wish I were not going tomorrow, I feel such a depression of spirits, as if something were going to happen."

I urged him to go and talk to his brother and that perhaps, he would cheer up. He went to his brother and found, strange to relate, that his brother shared his forebodings. I left them upstairs talking it over and went to the parlor where I heard my daughter playing the piano. As I entered she dropped her head on the keyboard and burst into tears.

"Why what is the matter?" I asked.

"I don't know but I just feel that he is dead. I know that someone here is going to die."

Just then our maid entered and said, "Have you heard any bad news, Mrs. Hayes?"

I answered in the negative and she continued, "Fred dreamed last night that Mrs. Jay was killed by a train and he has been going around all morning with his hand to this head as if it pained him." Mrs. Jay was my sister-in-law who had been traveling in Canada for some time.

This Fred was an Alsatian who had been in the family for twenty years as furnace and chore man on the ranch.

A little later I saw him pass the window with his wheelbarrow, and before he was out of sight a man called out to one of the stablemen: "Say that was a queer dream that the cook had last night! He said he dreamed that Fred was killed in a railroad accident. He remembered that he went down to the track and that one of the railroad employees rushed up to him and stuck a red flag into his hand and told him to wave it and stop the other trains."

Now the strange part of the whole story is that the cook's dream proved true. Within an hour after this conversation, word was brought back that Fred had been killed while crossing the track at the gate. The cook arriving upon the scene was met by one of the train crew who thrust a red flag in his hand and commanded him to flag the next train.

This remarkable pre-vision affecting five members of the household simultaneously and without their having any knowledge of each other's experience was indeed uncanny.

The Monster in the Cellar

The old German lashed the empty air furiously. "Go!" he shrieked. "Go away once!"

By
STANLEY HORTON

What was the sinister link between lovely Amy Corcoran, desperately ill, and the foul creature that stalked snarling through the house, cloaked in invisibility?

A BITTER wind swooped down through the canyons of Manhattan, whirling torn newspapers across the empty sidewalks. There was the chill feeling of rain in the air, and I quickened my steps. I wished that I had left the party earlier. Fifty-seventh Street is deserted at 3 A. M.

A lone taxi-cab came around the corner, skidding slightly on the wet pavement. I did not see whether or not there was a passenger in the cab, but the driver paid no attention to my hail. I started to walk on, but suddenly I heard my name called. It was Karl Brandt, leaning out of the window of the cab, which had come to a stop some twenty feet away.

"Get in," he said as I came up. "I'll take you where you're going. Or, better still, come along with me. Got a new case."

There is nothing I like better than following Karl on his "ghost-hunting expeditions." Originally he was interested only in the rehabilitation of supposedly haunted houses, with a view to their sale. Later he left the real-estate business to take up the work which I call "ghost-laying," but which he simply terms "investigating." He is a hard-headed practical individual with a strictly scientific outlook.

As we rode along, Karl explained that he knew very little about this particular case. A friend of his by the name of Graham, a doctor, had asked him to look into the state of affairs in Mrs. Murphy's boarding-house. It seemed that the place was in considerable of an uproar, and that the roomers, mostly sailors and retired ship's officers, were convinced that the supernatural was at work.

"Graham goes up there once a week to treat a feeble-minded girl, the daughter of an old seaman named Corcoran," Karl said.

"Why take a look at this time of the morning?" I asked. To tell the truth, I was a little sleepy.

"Because I just got a call from Doctor Graham. He's up at the Murphy place now. He said that if I would come at once, I could see the manifestations for myself. The good doctor seemed a bit shaken, so I dashed into my clothes—and met you before I had gone two blocks."

The cab turned north on Third Avenue, and after winding its way under elevated structures and through a maze of cross-streets, it stopped in front of a building typical of old New York.

THERE was the usual flight of steps turning the second floor into the first, and the first into the basement. All around were new apartment houses and stores, but the old four-story house seemed to hold its ground belligerently. Down the street I caught a glimpse of the East River, and the wind brought a faint though definite smell of the water-front. But Karl hurried me up the steps. The door was open, and we pressed the bell before passing into the dark hall.

After the lights outside, I could hardly see a thing. Suddenly a door opened at the head of the stairs and a faint

yellow glow shone out. A man stood in the open doorway.

"That you, Brandt? Come right up." The speaker used the terse, clipped tones that medical men affect, and I rightly guessed him to be Doctor Graham. The door closed again.

Karl and I made our way toward the foot of the stairs. The hall was cluttered with chairs and tables, it seemed to me, and a faint and unpleasantly musty smell pervaded the place. I thought, too, that I could detect the odor of an animal . . . there was something of the smell that hangs so redolently around the menagerie in a circus.

Karl's eyes are like a cat's, while I, for my part, must wear glasses most of the time. So I was not surprised when he caught my hand as I stumbled against the stairs, and guided me from behind. The stairway was a long one, and was laid with a carpet that was loose and kept tripping me up. If it had not been for Karl's hand helping me, I would have fallen. I thought he was close behind me.

Suddenly I heard the dull sound of a step ahead of me . . . up the stairs. There was a muttered exclamation.

"Who's there?" I called.

"It's only I," said Karl's voice. "Tripped on this torn carpet. Watch your step as you come up. . . ."

The voice came from above me! "Karl, where are you?" The hair on the back of my neck bristled.

"I'm almost to the top . . . where do you suppose?" It *was* Karl!

"If you are almost to the top, what in God's name have I got in my hand?" I shouted.

"What do you mean?"

"Someone or something has got me by the hand!" I cried.

"Hold him!" Karl yelled. "We've caught the trickster already!" I tightened my grasp on the unseen hand. "I'll get my flash. . . ."

But even as he came running down the stairs, I felt a sudden tearing pain in my wrist and I let go the hand, involuntarily. At the same moment something rough and hairy brushed against me.

The stairway was absolutely empty when Karl flashed the light!

"AM I going crazy?" I asked Karl. "I'm cold sober, and yet I swear that I thought you were holding my hand to guide me through the darkness!"

And then, without conscious intent, I looked down at my hand. I gasped involuntarily, for blood was streaming from three long scratches on the back of my hand and wrist!

Karl laid the flashlight on the top banister and reached for the electric switch at the head of the stairs. In a moment the big hall was clear as day. There was no one in sight.

"This *is* a house of mystery," I said, trying to dismiss the strange business with a laugh. "Somebody is trying to put the fear of the devil in us before we have been here three minutes."

Just then the door at the head of the stairs opened again and Doctor Graham stepped out, alarmed by the noise we had made.

"What's the matter?" he asked excitedly. Then, apparently relieved by our appearance, he added, "Come on in and I'll tell you about this place. I have to stay by my patient."

We followed Graham into the room he had just left.

The doctor was a portly man of middle age, slightly dandified in appearance. He motioned us to silence, and opened the door of the inner room. I caught a glimpse of a young girl lying asleep in a tumbled bed. Then he shut the door again, but not before I realized that this patient was beautiful, no matter what ailed her mind.

"Now I will introduce you to the problems with which I am confronted here," began the doctor somewhat pompously.

Karl smiled grimly and raised my lacerated wrist.

"I think we have introduced ourselves," he said, "to whatever is wrong. My friend has suffered the loss of some blood."

Graham started. "Aha! Let me bandage your wrist, Mr. Horton. So it has begun already to work on you two?"

"What has begun?" I asked, as he wound a strip of gauze across my injured hand.

"If I could answer that, there'd be nothing for our friend Mr. Brandt to do here," answered the doctor. "But I'll give you a resumé of matters up to date.

"I have been coming here for nearly a year," went on Graham. "My patient is the daughter of a sea-captain named Corcoran. She has been mentally deranged since the age of eighteen—two years. It was caused by a blow of some kind. I suspect that a bone is pressing against the brain.

"I have long hoped that an operation, a job of what we call trepanning, might release the pressure and make her mentally well again. During the past few months some very odd things have occurred here—and I think that the disturbances have been very bad for my patient.

"THERE have been all sorts of queer noises around the house at night," he continued. "Even in broad daylight things happen. Doors open, and footsteps are heard. There are noises in empty rooms. Something rattles and breaks crockery, and is generally mischievous. I've heard things myself. And then there is a faintly fetid odor, although the plumbing has been looked after time and time again.

"Tonight it has been worse than usual. I've been hearing things, right in this room. A glass of water was tipped from the table while I watched. And I have to be here, because Amy Corcoran is growing worse, and I'm trying to decide whether or not to operate. I'm afraid she'll die either way—for the operation is often fatal. But life is no use to her the way she is—and I have her father's permission to act as I see fit. The Captain has this room when in port, and he is sleeping upstairs tonight so that I can be near my patient."

"What other boarders are in the house?" asked Karl thoughtfully. I could see that as yet he had no clue to the mystery.

Doctor Graham looked at the ceiling. "Let me see. There is the landlady, Mrs. Murphy. She is half-distracted with fear. The house is for sale at any price, although it is all she has in the world.

"Then there is Captain Corcoran, and his daughter Amy, my patient. And old Ludwig Bauman has had the same room in the basement for fifteen years—ever since he left the sea. The rest of the house is empty on account of the noises and accidents which have been happening."

Karl started to speak, but his words seemed to freeze to his lips. At that instant, down the hall came footsteps. They sounded like those of a small child, yet they dragged strangely. Whatever the thing was, it wore no shoes.

Karl was at the door in a bound, and I was not far behind. Anything which could make a sound with its feet was something tangible, I thought.

The slithering, dragging footsteps were just outside the door. Karl threw it open, and we both burst out. I punched the switch, and the hall and stairs were bright with light. But nothing was there! Never before in my life have I experienced such a thrill of uncanny terror. Perhaps the footsteps were an auditory illusion; perhaps they came from overhead or below and were magnified and distorted by the weird acoustics of the building. But I know that in that instant stark, unreasoning fear swept over me for the first time in my life.

Even in that moment of awful suspense I noted the strong animal smell that filled the hallway. It was connected in my

mind with circuses—or the zoo. I could not remember where I had sensed that peculiar taint before.

I was glad to go back into the room where we had left the Doctor. In the meantime he had looked in on his patient and was now noting her condition on a temperature chart. He had seemingly forgotten about the strange phenomena in the house, and his mind was full of his case. He shook his head, and nodded through the open door.

"A LOVELY girl," he remarked. "Twenty years old—and yet she sleeps most of the time, except when she wakes and babbles like an infant. I would give anything to restore her to mental rightness."

Karl went into the sick-room, and I followed. The girl was very pretty, though her smooth face was absolutely expressionless. Curly brown hair lay in a tangle on the pillow. I could not believe that this charmingly attractive girl had the mentality of a six-months-old child, and I said so.

Doctor Graham corrected me. "Yes and no. By that I mean that while now she is as helpless as a baby, her brain is all there. She simply cannot use it. The machinery is all there, but the power is turned off. The operation, I hope, will turn it on. Do you see?"

Karl nodded, and we left the room, although I could not help giving a backward look at the girl on the bed. The tragedy of her condition was intensified to me by her beauty. I inwardly prayed that the knife of the Doctor could restore expression to that lovely face.

"By the way," said Karl, "do these queer things occur every night?"

The Doctor shook his head.

"By no means. But there is no way of gauging them. They happen roughly about once a week. Sometimes more, sometimes less."

Karl was making notes on an old envelope. "Can you remember a few times when manifestations occurred?" The Doctor gave him dates extending back a few weeks.

A clock downstairs struck six, and I noticed that gray dawn was filtering in through the windows. "Well, it's over for the night," I remarked in a relieved tone.

Just then a cuckoo clock over my head started to strike. The little door swung open, and a ridiculous wooden bird vented his note. "Cuckoo . . . cuckoo . . . cucoo. . . ." Suddenly it broke off. We all looked up at the wall. The little bird was somehow snatched from its opening and dropped on the floor! It rolled over once and was still.

None of us moved, for we did not know what malicious doom might touch us. Our eyes were glued on the clock. Then the weights were animated as if something shook them in rage. They swung fiercely back and forth for a moment, the iron cones at the end rattling against the wall. Slowly the motion died out of them, and they hung immobile there. Only the broken little bird of carved and painted wood was there to remind us of what had happened.

"My God!" ejaculated Doctor Graham. "This is impossible. Impossible."

Karl was cooler. He seemed to dismiss the incident as quite an ordinary happening.

He turned to me. "Let's see the other people in the house before we go. It is early to get them up, but the sooner I get started the better it will be for all of us."

Mrs. Murphy was in the upper hall, in a bathrobe and slippers. "So you're the gentlemen the Doctor spoke about? Bless his soul, for he's a good man to tend the poor girl. I've not slept the whole night for the rumpus that was going on." She paused for breath.

"Do you maybe know the cause of it, for it's spoiled my business and driven out all my roomers but three? And me a poor widow woman. Sure, it's Satan's work that breaks my dishes and trips me up in my own hall. Do you maybe know what it is?"

Karl smiled. "No, but I hope to. Tell me about your roomers. I mean the ones you have now."

"Well, old Ludwig is quiet enough. He has had a little room in the basement for years and years, and I guess he'll be keeping it until he dies. He isn't much trouble, poor man. Except when he's drunk, and that hasn't happened in months. Of course, his pigeons make a noise——"

"Pigeons?" Karl looked surprised.

"Yes, he has to have his pets. He's a great one for animals and truck of that sort. That's why he got this basement room—his pets don't disturb anyone but him." Mrs. Murphy pointed toward a door under the main stairway. "He's a bit daft. . . ."

Karl and I went down the dark, narrow steps and pushed open the door at the bottom. It was not yet half-past six in the morning, but Ludwig Bauman was up and dressed. He was huddled in a chair with a crucifix in his hands.

KARL apologized for our walking in on him, but old Bauman only nodded. He seemed very old, and was evidently an eccentric. There were three pigeons loose in the room, one of them perching on the old German's shoulder. Near the window was a small ant-eater in a cage, and in a goldfish bowl I noticed several small lizards.

"You're up early, Mr. Bauman," I said in a casual tone.

The old man looked at me frowningly.

"*Ja*, I'm up early. There's no sleeping for me any more. It's Hans, the bad boy. Always making trouble so I can't sleep."

Karl stiffened. "Hans? Who is Hans? Is he the ant-eater?"

Bauman shook his head. "*Nein.* I haf already said too much. There is no Hans. Good-by, gentlemen."

I noticed that the man was not as old as I had at first thought. He seemed under great strain, and apparently he had not slept for some time.

There was nothing to do but return to the upper floors. "I don't see how he could have done anything to cause all this," mused Karl. "Yet I wish that I knew what he meant when he said 'Hans.' I wonder if anyone by that name is around here."

Mrs. Murphy denied that any Hans lived near. "Don't pay any attention to Ludwig," she said. "The old fellow is getting to dream things all the time. He's not right."

We met the father of the sick girl, Captain Corcoran. He

Here's Proof For You

When you have read this gruesome story, perhaps you can explain the following, reported in the newspapers recently:

The owners of the Newton Garage, in Newton, New Jersey, fled for their lives from a steady rain of buckshot which poured into their office—from no apparent source!

County Prosecutor Vaughn and his aides searched walls, floor and ceiling, without unearthing a clue. Yet they, too, saw the weird manifestation.

"The Monster in the Cellar" is a tale of far more diabolical pranks—but don't read it too late at night!

was a bluff and hearty individual, evidently much cut up over his daughter's misfortune.

"I don't know a thing about the noises here," he declared, "although I've heard them several times. Once I saw my shaving mirror thrown clear across the room, and nobody near me. I'd move if it weren't for Amy. I can't afford a nurse, and Mrs. Murphy helps take care of her. Three times a day she notes the temperature and pulse on the Doctor's chart. I hope he decides to operate."

We turned to go, but Corcoran called us back. "You don't think there could be anything in . . . in what they say? I mean about Amy?"

"What do you mean?" Karl was instantly alert.

"Well, the people who moved out said they thought that Amy's trouble was the cause of the house being haunted. They said that she was bringing bad luck . . . you don't believe that, do you?"

Karl shook his head. "The superstition that sick people and insane people are devil-ridden is no longer believed in."

Slowly we went down the stairs which had been so weird a few hours before. At the bottom Mrs. Murphy was waiting for us.

"DOCTOR GRAHAM says that it's you who would drive the Thing away out of my house. Pray God and the Saints that you can. But it's little that you or any man can do against It. Father Riley himself was here and heard the noises, and he could do nothing. . . ."

Karl gave her a reassuring look. "Don't give up hope, Mrs. Murphy. There's an explanation somewhere, if we can only find it. And that's my business, you know."

We went out into the street, cold and bleak in the November morning. Karl did not speak a word until we had walked nearly to Park Avenue.

"There's more to this than I can see yet. I'm going to spend the day among the newspaper files. You get some sleep, Stan. I'll call you when I need you. It may take days." He patted my shoulder and put me into a cab.

I resented being shelved. "Tell me, Karl. What's it all about? Are you as much in the dark as I am?"

He looked at me, and his face relaxed. "More, old son, more." Then he slammed the cab door and waved good-by. The last thing I heard him say was: "Be near a phone. . . ."

I seemed to see no light anywhere. But I was sleepy, and in a few minutes home and bed claimed me. I dreamed of poor Amy's beautiful, expressionless face.

There was no word from Karl for several days. I called his apartment without any success. Several times I was on the point of going back to the mysterious old boarding-house, and then I changed my mind. I had no heart for the place unless Karl were there.

Since Karl was still absent, I decided to try and apply the same methods as he had used on other cases. I had been with him enough to learn the way he attacked problems.

I listed everything I could remember that might deal with the mystery. In the first place, there were the physical manifestations: the apparently invisible Thing that maliciously destroyed crockery and that had scratched my wrist when I held it.

Then there was the idiot girl. But I could not connect her with the Thing. For there was no trace of wickedness in her beautiful face and, certainly, her trouble had started in a normal manner.

And old Ludwig, with his pets in the basement—how did he fit into the puzzle?

I was wondering over these and other questions when the phone rang. It was Karl's voice, asking me to come at once to the rooming-house. I slipped a revolver and a flashlight into my pocket and jumped in a cab. His voice had sounded as if he were excited, and his last words were: "It will be an all night job."

Karl met me in the lower hall. "Quick," he whispered. "Old Ludwig just went out, and it's the chance we want. Come with me. We're going to do a little sleuthing."

We hurried downstairs to the basement. The light was on in Ludwig's little room, and the pigeons were fussing and murmuring, but it was otherwise empty.

"What are we here for?" I asked.

Karl said nothing, but cast a rapid glance around the room. Soon he found what he sought—a dark corner partially screened with boxes and trunks. We squeezed down behind this miscellaneous heap of lumber, heedless of the thick cobwebs that were everywhere.

"Our best bet is to do a little listening," said Karl. "I have an idea which is about half formed, and which may be a million miles from the truth. But I believe in playing hunches."

"What do you mean? It's all Greek to me. If spirits can return to earth, surely they have a purpose in what they do. There's no sense in what's been going on here."

"Perhaps there are mischievous spirits, immature spirits low in the scale, who are capable of anything. They are the type who play tambourines and pound tables at séances." Karl dragged a box over to make a seat for himself. We were quite hidden from anyone who might come into the room, yet we could see everything.

Karl went on. "I've been reading up on this sort of thing during the past two days. You would be surprised at the amount of evidence that is on file in regard to this type of phenomena.

"The Germans have a term for a ghostly visitor of the mischievous type. They call him a *poltergeist*, or 'rattling ghost.' The Thing may be an elemental, a spirit which has never lived on earth. Then again, it may be a spirit of the departed, usually of a low order. And the oddest thing about the poltergeist is that it——"

Crash! The goldfish bowl which held the three lizards had toppled over to the floor. I seized Karl's arm. Together, we peered into the room.

The strong animal scent was everywhere! And I could hear the light, dragging footsteps. Something was moving about the room, and yet the light was on and we could see nothing except the lizards slowly extricating themselves from the wreckage of the glass bowl.

Together we saw the door-knob turn and the door open. Then the footsteps went slowly out of the room. In a moment old Ludwig came down the stairs. He was talking, partly in German, and in a low voice. I could hear only part.

"So, Hans? Good boy. You come to meet papa, eh?" He walked in and shut the door. Then his eyes fell on the wrecked goldfish bowl.

"*Ach, mein* bad Hans! Must you be always the wicked one? Must I tie you up and whip you again? Bad Hans. . . ."

THE old man was evidently talking to something which he thought was near him. "*Ach,* Hans. What a whipping I would give you if I could get my hands on you! Come by me, Hans, for one minute. I'll teach you——"

Karl looked at me, with a frown between his eyes. "Now, who in the world is Hans supposed to be?" he whispered. "Remember he mentioned the name before as the cause of his not sleeping? Has he named the poltergeist 'Hans'?"

I could not imagine a man who could so come to terms with the Unknown. But, as Mrs. Murphy had said, Ludwig was sadly touched. He went on murmuring to himself.

Finally he sat down in the one easy chair, with the crucifix in his hands. "Come not by me, you *teufel!* Leave poor papa alone—*nein?*" His voice became tearful and pleading. "Leave me be, now. You will kill papa by keeping him awake. It is no sleep I've had this week. Go, or I get the whip!"

I thought it one of the weirdest situations I had ever seen. The old German was so earnestly pleading with Something . . . with absolute invisibility. I should have thought him mad if I had not seen the wrecking of the glass bowl and the events upstairs on that previous strange evening.

Finally there came another crash. The cloth which covered the bureau slid off, and with it a number of bottles and toilet articles. The German leaped to his feet and snatched a small white meerschaum pipe from among the falling articles. Then, muttering and storming, he took a small whip from the bureau drawer and lashed the empty air furiously. "Go!" he shrieked. "Go away once!" and I could have sworn I heard an answering snarl.

At last the old man seated himself in the chair, still caressing the pipe. Evidently he did not use his bed any more, for it had not been made up for some time. Karl and I waited for an hour, stiff and sore, until he was snoring, and then tiptoed from the room. The place was silent, but I smelled the strong beast-like odor.

We stopped in the lower hall. "What do you make of it?" Karl asked me.

I shook my head.

"Old Ludwig could tell us a lot more if he wanted to," I said. "But maybe he isn't able to talk."

"I AGREE with you that the secret of the whole thing lies with the old German sailor," said Karl. "But he wouldn't tell us even if he understood everything—which I greatly doubt. By the way, I'm going to commit a theft before we leave here." Karl motioned me to remain where I was, and he ran upstairs to the sick-room. I heard him in low conversation with Mrs. Murphy, who was sitting up with the sick girl. In a few moments he returned.

"I got what I wanted," he said. "It's a chance in a million, but maybe I'll make something of these." And he showed me the sick-room charts of Amy Corcoran, which ran back over a period of several months. "By the way, the girl seems to be much worse. There appears to be a partial paralysis of the lower limbs. The noises and other manifestations seem to have a strange effect on her."

There was a pay-telephone in the lower hall, and before we left, Karl rang up Doctor Park Graham. A minute later he looked up from the phone, his face shining with excitement.

"Graham is coming up here. He says that if the girl is as badly off as I think, it will have to be an operation now or never. The beginnings of paralysis show that the brain has started to weaken structurally. We'd better wait—we may learn something."

We sat in the lower hall until the Doctor's car pulled up outside, but there were no manifestations. Graham had a small black satchel in his hand when he arrived, and he fairly ran up the stairs. While we were waiting for him to make an examination, Karl took the charts from his pocket and compared them with a list that he had in a notebook.

Finally he nodded and closed the book with a snap, putting the charts away. Then he turned to me. I could tell that for the first time he was really on the track of something.

"I think I have it," he said. "I've been just running around at loose ends. I found a newspaper clipping in the *Times* of a couple of years back that sheds some light. And this is what I think, although it seems unbelievable——"

"Gentlemen, will you come here at once?" Doctor Graham was leaning over the banister. "If I am to save this poor girl's life, I must operate now. There is no time to take her to a hospital, or to send for an assistant. You must help me."

For a few minutes, everything was confusion. We were busy sterilizing bandages and towels, and preparing a table underneath the overhead light. The girl was babbling incoherently, and she could move only the upper part of her body. Soon she was under the ether, and the Doctor had shaved a small circular patch of her hair above the ear. Sure enough, there was a deep indentation and scar there.

Karl and I had no chance to discuss what he had found out. Mrs. Murphy was sent to bring Captain Corcoran, who was spending the night on board his ship. But the Doctor did not dare to wait for his arrival.

At last everything was ready. It was about two-thirty in the morning, and the one bulb cast a dim glow through the large room. Karl stood by the Doctor and handed him the instruments as they were needed, while I played the part of an errand boy.

Everything went well until the operation was about half over. The Doctor was preparing to catch the splinter of bone and lift it back into place, relieving the pressure on the brain. The unconscious girl was breathing regularly, and we were all tense with expectation.

Then, as Karl handed a scalpel to Graham, the instrument fell out of his fingers and clattered on the floor. The Doctor looked up from his work with a frown of annoyance, which changed to a look of horror when he saw Karl's face. Without a word, my friend picked up another similar instrument. Before Graham could take it, the shining knife flew across the room, striking and cracking the window.

"My God, the Thing is in this room!" I had never seen Graham so excited. "I cannot stop now—the girl will die under the knife!"

Karl turned to me. "Stan, run as you never ran before and get the whip that old Ludwig used tonight. In his bureau. Hurry!"

Before he was through talking I was out of the door. Ludwig was still asleep, and I jerked open his bureau drawer and seized the short leather whip. In an instant I was back in the operating room.

Karl and the Doctor were in one end of the room, their eyes dilated with terror. Then I saw what they were staring at. Above the unconscious girl, directly over her beautiful face, there hung a long surgeon's knife! Slowly it wavered, and then started to descend!

I have always been one to strike first and think afterward. Drawing back the whip, I slashed with all my strength at the knife. It flew into a corner, and a loud snarling growl filled the room. Again I snapped the lash, and again it hit—Something. There was another menacing growl! Then something brushed by me, through the door. I smelled the foul animal odor once more, and felt the momentary impact of a squat, hairy body. Then I slammed the door.

Without a word, Doctor Graham leaped to the side of his patient. "Guard the door," he whispered to me. "Perhaps it is not too late to finish the operation. She still breathes."

Then began the worst half hour of my life. Karl joined me outside the door of that room. Inside, Doctor Graham forgot us and everything else in his attempt to save the life and reason of Amy Corcoran.

Again and again those dragging footsteps would come down the hall. Each time either Karl or myself would lash out with the whip—lash out at nothing. And yet we could feel by the touch of the handle that many times it connected with some object!

GROWLS and snarls filled the hallway. Everywhere there was the strong fetid odor of beasts. Perspiration was pouring from my forehead, and even the imperturbable Karl was crouching by my side in an agony of nervous excitement. When the arm of one would become tired, the other would keep up the work. The flickering lash kept a safety zone of perhaps ten feet in front of us.

There was a fierce jabbering in the snarls, and sometimes a shrill squeak. For a moment the noises ceased, and then the small chandelier which hung above the stair was violently agitated. Part of the plaster pulled loose from the ceiling, and bits of it were thrown at us. Then there was silence. Peer up as we would at the old-fashioned fixture, we could see nothing above us.

Then, as we relaxed for a moment, tired with the ceaseless mental resistance that had been necessary, there was a creak of the chandelier. Something whistled through the air and landed on my shoulders, forcing me to the floor. There was a shrill scream of rage, and I found myself in a hand-to-hand battle with some unspeakable beastly Thing! Long hair tangled itself in my hands as I tried to grip it. I was half

smothered by the weight of the Thing. I could not breathe.

"Karl!" I gasped weakly.

He was standing by me, horror-stricken. Then he put out his hand and touched the Thing. Its grip had been around my throat, but between the two of us we managed to get it loose. There we knelt on the Thing, which growled and snarled, tearing at our skin and clothes with sharp fingernails and teeth.

As far as I could feel, the entire creature was covered with long hair, but there was a certain human resemblance. Karl slipped off his belt and wound it around the creature's arms and chest. It was unspeakably weird to see that apparently empty belt hanging in the air. Each of us looked at the other. Were we both mad?

Suddenly, I saw the belt collapse. I leaped on the Thing, but it seemed to melt beneath my grasp. The beast odor was fainter.

"IT'S gone," said Karl. "Or was it ever here——?"

Just then the door behind us opened. We both whirled as if we expected a blow in the back of the head, but it was only the Doctor.

"I have good news." Graham could not resist a little dramatic presentation of his announcement. "The patient has come out of the ether satisfactorily."

Karl seized the Doctor's shoulder. "Tell me, man, is she conscious and sane?"

Graham nodded.

"The operation was an unqualified success. Amy Corcoran has no memory of the past two years, and she is weaker than I would expect her to be, but she is in her right mind." Graham looked at us more intently, noticing our torn clothes and blood-stained hands. "But what—what has happened to you?"

"We'll need a little bandaging, Doctor. That's all."

"But—suppose It returns now?"

Karl shook his head. "If what you say is true, Graham, there will be no return. Whatever spirit, ghost, or devil roamed through this old house, it is gone forever. When Amy Corcoran regained the use of her mind, the Thing went away—forever, I'm sure."

Graham looked puzzled. "Explain it if you can, Karl. I must return to my patient now." He went back into the room.

I was shaking with nervous exhaustion. "Karl, if you know any more than I do about this, tell me! I'm not sure that I'm sane."

He smiled. "I didn't mean to keep you in the dark. But there was no chance to tell you what I'd found, and besides it seemed too incredible to be true. Come here and read these clippings."

He showed me two newspaper clippings yellowed with age. "I found these yesterday."

The first was a brief account of the arrest of a sailor named Bauman for harboring a public nuisance. It seemed that he had been keeping a monkey, a small orang-utan, in his room. The beast often escaped and twice had annoyed children by biting and scratching.

"You remember that Ludwig's last name is Bauman?" asked Karl. "Now, read the next one."

Ludwig Bauman, former A. B. seaman, failed yesterday in an attempt to regain custody of the small ape taken from him last week by police and officers of the S. P. C. A. The animal, by name 'Hans,' proved too surly for a menagerie, and was humanely dispatched by the Society.

I looked up in wonderment.

"What did the charts of Amy Corcoran have to do with an ape that Bauman once owned?" I was still puzzled.

"Simple as ABC, Stan. History is full of evidences of the existence of poltergeists. They are rarely malignant, but always mischievous. And records show that in almost every case they can be found only in a house where there is a person with deficient mentality. From the mentally sick person the spirit draws its strength.

"The reason I wanted the charts was to check up on this. I found that the patient had a decided turn for the worse every time the nocturnal manifestations were noted here. She would have a greatly lowered pulse, and increased respiration, on the mornings after the noises had been noted.

"AT first I had an idea, fantastic as it may sound, that old Ludwig had tricked himself into believing that the strange night prowler was his dead monkey. But when we were in his room I discovered the real truth. The Thing, the poltergeist, *was* the ghost of Ludwig's ape! The old man knew the truth.

"This would account for the increasing malignancy of the things it perpetrated. An ape is naturally destructive. Something of its nature remained with it, and the orang-utan, Hans, returned to earth as the lowest form of spirit life. That is why it still feared and hated the whip, with which Ludwig used to punish it. That is why it was so fierce and angry after it had been lashed."

"But why then did the ghost-ape disappear after we had it bound?" I could not understand why it had melted away under my hand.

"Because Amy Corcoran came out of the ether at that moment. There was no longer any way for the creature to materialize. Amy was an unconscious and unwilling medium. When she regained her mind, the Thing went away. And now, Stanley, I'm going home for some repairs and some sleep. Coming?"

I shook my head. "If you don't mind I'll stay. Somehow, I'd like to see if Amy Corcoran is half as wonderful as she looks. . . ."

Paris Has a Ghostly Monk

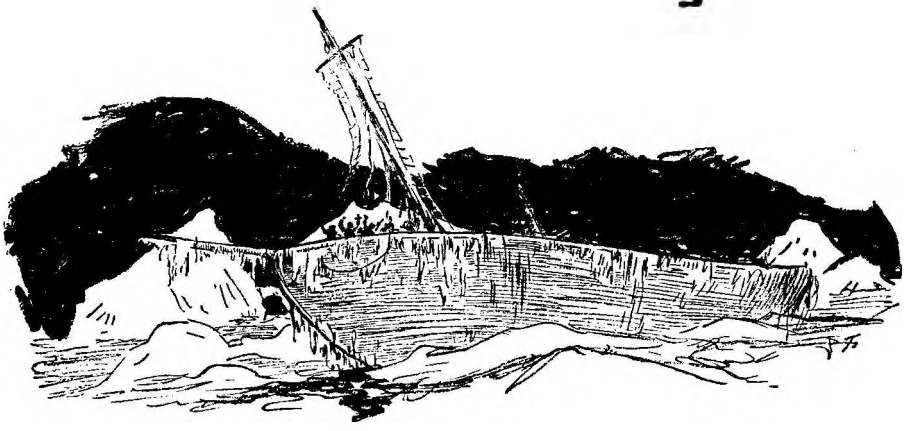
RESIDENTS of Paris who believe in ghosts are much excited over a story that an ecclesiastical specter haunts the old abbey which lies behind the pleasant gardens of the Boulevard Sebastopol. The building has been a museum since the days of the Revolution, when the churches were closed, remodeled, or demolished.

According to legend, the monks to whom the abbey belonged originally were unceremoniously driven from it during the revolutionary régime. The books were ordered stored in the attic and the basement, but when the servants grew tired of transferring the books they dumped the remainder of the in-folios, manuscripts and breviaries from the windows.

The shopkeepers of the neighborhood seized upon this providential supply of wrapping paper and carried away the best of the sheets. However, just as the ragpickers were quarreling over possession of what remained, one of the monks of St. Martin returned to the scene and pleaded to be given the books. One of the ragpickers took up a stone and struck the monk over the head. He died and his body was left in the street a whole week.

Now, according to gossip, the ghost of the slain monk has returned to the abbey to read the moth-eaten and mildewed tomes stored in the cellar and attic. The night guardian of the museum informed the police of the nocturnal marauder, and two inspectors from the Sûreté were detailed to watch with him. For some nights the specter remained away, but before long he returned, not once but several times.

An UNEARTHLY Stowaway



"Steer to the nor'west!" the weird message said. And Captain Bartlett obeyed, guiding his ship toward—WHAT?

By THEODORE ORCHARDS

Note: This is a true story—and can be proved to the satisfaction of any reader of GHOST STORIES. *First Mate Robert Bruce, who figures in this strange narrative, was a direct descendant of Scotland's great hero. The actual names of the persons involved are used throughout the story.*

FIRST MATE ROBERT BRUCE, of the barque *Judith*, came rushing up on deck. His expression was strange, and Captain Bartlett stared in amazement at the normally sedate Scotchman who faced him, unable to speak.

"Calm yourself, Mr. Bruce," ordered Bartlett. "What is the matter?"

Bruce found his voice. "There's a strange laddie in your cabin," he whispered. "A strange laddie with burning eyes. . . ."

"Nonsense!" The captain shook his first officer by the shoulder. "You've been drinking, Mr. Bruce."

"I have not, sir. I saw him, plain as day." The two men moved to the rail, out of earshot of the curious crew, who sensed something unusual in Bruce's manner. Bartlett motioned him to proceed.

"I went below," began the mate, "as soon as we had shot the sun at noon. I could have sworn that you went down with me, although I didn't look up for a while. I was busy at my desk with the calculations for perhaps twenty minutes, and then I stopped writing on the slate. I was surprised to find that our bearings were off—that the dead reckoning and the sun didn't agree by fifty knots or so. And so I called to you, asking how your figures had come out."

"But I wasn't there," said the captain.

"I know that—now. But it looked like you, at your desk across the companionway in the cabin. So I repeated my question, and then the figure raised its head. It had been writing on the slate, but when I spoke the second time it gave me a look that I'll never forget—and that's all. I jumped out into the companionway and came up here." Bruce's face was ashen as he finished.

Bartlett was beginning to wonder, in spite of himself.

"We'll soon settle the matter," he said. And the two of them made for the cabin.

They stopped in the door.

"The room is empty," said Bartlett. "You must have been day-dreaming."

"No, sir, I was not," insisted Bruce. "I saw him, and he was plain as day. It was the face of a thin sort of laddie, with black hair and eyes that burned into me like gimlets."

"If he was writing on the slate, it'll still be there," said Bartlett, and he walked over to the table.

HE held up the slate to the light, and both men read clearly four scrawled words that wound and twisted themselves on the black surface in a strange handwriting, "STEER TO THE NOR'WEST." That was all.

The captain's manner changed. "Mr. Bruce, will you write those words on a piece of paper for me?"

Bruce complied, but his handwriting was unmistakably different from that of the message. The captain's face grew increasingly serious. He had abandoned all idea that this was a hoax or dream on the part of his first mate.

"Mr. Bruce, call every man on deck. Bring them here one at a time, and have them write those four words on a slip of paper."

The captain took a seat in the corner of the room, and from that vantage point scrutinized every member of the crew as he was brought down. The men were surprised, and whispered among themselves at the strangeness of the order, but Bartlett could detect no signs of guilt on the part of any of them. And when the various slips of paper were brought before him, not (*Continued on page* 91)

A SPECTER *that*

Diplomats at the Peace Conference little guessed the astounding identity of the uncanny intruder who baffled their secret agents

"It's a trick!" roared Baron Gerassy. "How did HE get here? He's dead!"

ACCUSTOMED as I am to being retained in connection with the most bizarre cases, I confess that I was startled out of my professional poise by the summons that came to me recently to serve no less an august body than the League of Nations. I am a private detective, with offices in Paris. Before the World War, I was attached to the Paris Prefecture of Police, where I served a long apprenticeship. Then I branched out for myself, and was fortunate in being called in on such sensational affairs as the trapping of Mata Hari, the "Red Dancer," who as all the world knows was executed as a spy; the two Caillaux scandals, and the Bolo Pacha case. On one occasion, I saved Mussolini from an assassin. I can claim to have had a hand in the major European mysteries of this generation.

But they were all crime mysteries. My reputation is that of an avenger of society, of a specialist in the psychology of the evil-doer. I could not imagine what crime—in the crude, blunt meaning of the word—could possibly be threatening the solemn old gentlemen who composed the council of the League of Nations. I was pretty sure that the thing would prove to be remote from police problems. But it never entered my head that it could turn upon a factor so foreign to my type of mind as the occult.

THE occult! There! By using that word, I have to some extent let the cat out of the bag. Yet I am forced to use it in order not to delude my readers into thinking that I

STOPPED a WAR

By EUSTACHE ROPS
Famous French Detective

The grim figure raised its head, and for one awful instant it never moved . . .

have a mere detective story to tell them. I place myself on record in this particular magazine, for the sole reason that I believe I have been through an amazing psychic experience.

The message that started me on the investigation was a telegram from Georges Debroux, of the Secretariat of the League, an old acquaintance. It read as follows:

E ROPS PLACE DE LA MADELEINE PARIS
CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES OF UNKNOWN PERSON AT CONFERENCE OF AMBASSADORS NOW IN SESSION AT ZURICH ENDANGER PEACE OF EUROPE APPEAL TO YOU TO SET ASIDE ALL PRIVATE MATTERS AND COME HERE IMMEDIATELY TO HELP SOLVE MYSTERY
DEBROUX

I felt flattered, of course, at being thought so necessary, and as the intrigues behind world politics have always fascinated me, I lost no time in wiring my acceptance. I was forced to turn over several big cases to my subordinates, in order to clear the decks and get away. But Debroux's phrase about the "peace of Europe" was not to be resisted.

HERE let me say frankly that the conference in question was not one of ambassadors, nor was it being held at Zurich. I am under oath to keep real names secret. But the scene was a large town in Switzerland, and the parley was one of those vastly important post-war meetings of the representatives of the great Powers, at which the mistakes of the Versailles Treaty have been corrected, the figures of the German debt revised, and future amity placed on a sound basis. It was directly sponsored by the League of Nations.

I REPORTED at Zurich within twenty-four hours after receiving the summons, and was at once received at the Hotel Winkelried by Georges Debroux. He is a nervous little man, about sixty years old, who carries his right shoulder a bit higher than his left, and is afflicted with a

"tic" or twitching of the right cheek. His moral courage is enormous, but no one ever accused him of provoking a physical contest. The moment I entered his suite he dismissed his stenographer, closed the door leading into the next room, and plunged into his story.

"Terrible things have been happening here, Rops—the most inexplicable things," he said. "Malefactors have been doing pretty much as they please, and our secret agents have failed even to identify them. The Conference is on the point of becoming demoralized."

"Bolshevist plots against the lives of the delegates, I suppose," I remarked, with a certain malice.

"No, no!" he answered, his cheek twitching furiously. "It's more mysterious than that. Some infernally clever spy is at work, and the privacy of closed sessions has become a farce. I cannot doubt that every feature of the debates is known. Unauthorized, nefarious use of such information could start another war. It will certainly follow, unless we catch the culprits."

"That's a sweeping statement," I said, "and perhaps exaggerated. Why not give me the cold facts? Precisely what has occurred?"

"The sessions are being held in the great audience hall of the *Rathaus*, a Sixteenth Century building designed like a fortress and therefore easy to protect against intruders. With only *three* sentries posted—and there are actually a dozen—I can't see how it would be possible to get by the door at night.

"Yet every morning for the past week, the delegates have found their papers tampered with. Piles of records, printed copies of the minutes and what not, you understand, are left on the central table in front of each man's seat. These have been systematically disarranged. They have been studied, of course, and notes of their contents made."

"Is there no other evidence?"

"There is not. But what I have told you is surely proof enough of underhand work."

"Why are the papers not locked in strong boxes overnight?"

"There is no provision for that. It would be—er—a sort of reflection on the good faith of the city of Zurich, which is acting as host to the Conference and is policing the *Rathaus*. Besides, the most vitally important papers are carried in the brief cases of the delegates. The really devastating fact is, that despite our vigilance the audience hall *can* be entered at night, or at any other time. It suggests that the spies may have a way of listening in on the regular sessions! But we are certain only about the nocturnal visits, and they must be stopped."

"HAVE your secret agents kept watch in the room itself?"

"No. But they have guarded all conceivable approaches."

"Do you mean to say you hold the room as sacred as all that?" I exclaimed. "It's preposterous. Has no one even glanced into it at a likely moment after dark?"

Debroux's jumpy little body went into a minor paroxysm of fidgeting.

"I—I thought I would investigate night before last," he stammered. "I spent a few minutes there, but I saw nothing. It—it seemed a waste of time, with soldiers and detectives all over the building."

His eyes gleamed in a queer way. I could have sworn he was holding something back from me, though that was about the last thing one would expect from a worried guardian of international peace, who was also my personal friend.

"If I am to show results, I must have free access to that room," I declared curtly.

"Oh, certainly! Whatever you say, Rops."

"But I shall do nothing tonight. I want to give the spy—it's probably a one-man job—a chance to meddle with the papers again, and then I shall examine their condition in the morning."

"Perfectly all right, Rops."

I had been seated, and now I rose and swung with a rapid, silent movement toward the door through which Debroux's stenographer had passed. Without warning, I flung the door open. It was a threadbare old trick, but there was just a chance . . .

Somewhat to my own astonishment, there was a gasping cry as the door thudded against a soft human body, pinning it against the side wall of the next room. A moment later, the stenographer, who was a handsome, dark-haired young girl, staggered into view. Her flashing eyes suggested resentment rather than guilt.

Debroux was on his feet.

"You—Louise!" he exclaimed. "Were you listening at the keyhole?"

"No, Monsieur," she replied stiffly. "I was adjusting the calendar which hangs on the back of the door."

She gave me an angry look, but I smiled at her, and again she surprised me by responding promptly with a conciliatory grin.

"The young lady is no doubt trustworthy, and if she *did* hear a few words of what we were saying it doesn't matter in the least," I remarked, "Won't you present me to her?"

Debroux mumbled my name, and then hers—Louise Petitpas. She was from Geneva and had been his secretary for four years, he said. He appeared still to be ruffled, but with a few light jests I restored good feeling between them. I openly made an appointment to be taken to the *Rathaus* at nine o'clock the following morning, saluted Louise and sauntered away.

WHAT I really thought about the girl's actions was another story again. She had surely been eavesdropping, and her interest in the case was manifest. Yet somehow I did not believe her to be in the enemy's camp. As Debroux's secretary, she must already have been informed about my mission and have known exactly what he would tell me. Or was that last supposition correct? Had she known the official facts, but felt uncertain as to how Debroux would pass them on? I had received the definite impression that he was withholding something. Perhaps Louise had suspected he would do just that, and had been unable to resist the temptation to check up on him. *Hm!* In that event, I might be able to worm the full details out of her.

Call it a psychic premonition if you will, or simply the imaginative analysis which is part of the stock in trade of every shrewd detective. I decided that I would hear from Louise Petitpas before I again saw Debroux; and partly for this reason I went straight back to my hotel. It was then late in the afternoon. I was tired after my long journey from Paris, and as hungry as a bear.

Half an hour after I had finished supper I was sitting over a cigarette and a glass of vermouth in the deserted hotel lounge, when I saw Mademoiselle Petitpas enter and come directly toward me. Her face now wore a most sober expression. A faint suspicion that she might merely be flirtatiously inclined was banished by my first glance at her.

As she came up to me I rose, begged her to take my chair and seated myself in another facing her.

"Monsieur, I do not have to pretend with you," she said. "I heard everything that passed between you and Monsieur Debroux. I felt it was my duty to listen."

"That's a strange idea for a private secretary to have," I remarked bitingly.

"Wait until I explain. He left out an important detail—one that concerned me, too. I was afraid he would, and it is something you should know."

"Go on." I was satisfied now that the girl was no fool. She lowered her voice as she began:

"Night before last, when he visited the conference room, he took me along. Ah, Monsieur—he is so helpless when there are practical things to be done, and he has the habit of depending on me! He would not stop to ask himself whether it was right to take a girl to a place where dangerous criminals might be lurking. Not that I minded, you understand. I have strong nerves.

"But we had scarcely stepped into the room when we both were absolutely sure that there was a person quite near to us in the dark. We saw nothing, as he told you, and we heard nothing. But my blood turned to ice in my veins, and I had the most dreadful, dismal sensation, as if death were hanging over my head. Another minute, and the spy who had been making all the trouble would have killed us. I am willing to take an oath on that.

"Monsieur Debroux must have experienced the same feeling. It frightened him terribly, and he turned and ran out of the room, dragging me with him. You can imagine why he did not care to tell you about it. He had not even switched on the electric light, and so he knew of nothing tangible to describe to you. He hated to mention an intuition, a fear. But I am a woman, and I am not ashamed to confess to it. I implore you to take it seriously, and to be on your guard."

I remained silent for several minutes. Contemptuous reflections, I admit, were running through my head. "A timid old man and a girl wandering around a medieval building at night!" I thought. "It would have been a miracle if they had not scared themselves half to death." Yet my imagination was oddly stirred by what the girl had said, and there was no doubting her honesty of purpose.

Rising abruptly, I clasped Louise's hand and looked her in the eyes in the most friendly fashion.

"Thank you for the tip," I said. "If it proves to have any bearing on the case, I'll let you know."

The next morning, I met Georges Debroux at the appointed hour, and he escorted me to the *Rathaus*. The conference chamber had been guarded all night by two special sentries, stationed in the corridor, and the door was still locked. Debroux fairly shook with excitement while it was being opened for us. He ran over to the long central table, and at once let out a cry.

"The papers have been tampered with again. This is fantastic—incredible!"

"It is all that," I agreed ironically. "Now leave the investigation to me, and please do not touch anything on the table until I have examined it."

I SPENT the next hour in noting minutely the condition of each heap of documents, and searching for fingerprints and other clues. The result was baffling. There were no physical signs that would give a detective the least idea of who had been there. The intruder, I concluded, must have worn rubber gloves—a common precaution for a bank burglar to take, but rather astonishing in a political spy.

I made one observation, however, that seemed to point to a logical, consistent purpose and therefore might be of help in spotting my man. In each instance documents had been rummaged out and left open at a page which gave statistics of Germany's heavy losses during the war. The monotonous parade of figures ended by affecting me disagreeably—the dead and wounded in the assaults on Verdun, the casualties of the Battle of the Mazurian Marshes, the price paid in the second drive on Paris!

The most horrible exhibit was the one I found at the seat occupied by the delegate from Rusonia, the Baron Ludovic Gerassy (the names both of the country and the man are necessarily fictitious). On top of his other papers there now lay a printed broadside, which not only listed the numbers of dead and wounded, but offered a realistic photograph of a mound of shell-shattered corpses collected for burial after the Battle of the Somme.

"My Lord!" I muttered. "Our friend is certainly interested in the German death roll, but why the devil does he have to come here to learn about it? The facts have been given in half a dozen books issued by the Republican Government in Berlin."

I regarded the point as being curious, but trivial. If I had only guessed what was awaiting me just around the corner in this connection, I might have handled my job with more finesse. But not in his maddest dreams could a man with a detective's training be expected to forecast the thing that happened.

Debroux had a new attack of nerves when he learned that I could tell him nothing definite after my survey.

"The Conference will break up——" he began.

"Your business is to prevent it from doing so," I interrupted sharply. "Tell the delegates anything you please, to calm their fears. I think the trouble is being caused by a crank rather than a criminal, and I ought to be able to catch him in the next twenty-four hours. I propose to stand guard in this room tonight, and then—why, we shall see what we shall see!"

He agreed to let the matter go at that, and I spent the balance of the day and the early evening in making routine police inquiries. They were quite fruitless, and the details would be of no interest to the reader.

AT about eleven o'clock that night I returned to the *Rathaus*, where the Swiss military officer in charge let me into the conference room in a special and secret manner. There existed, it seemed, a private passageway leading from the room to the municipal library at the rear of the building. This corridor was built of solid stone, without windows. Its only egress had been carefully watched, and there was no possibility that the supposed spy had used it. My object in entering through it was to prevent even the sentries and international agents on duty that night from knowing where I had posted myself.

Left alone, I went about my task as if it were the most commonplace case imaginable. I first glanced at the papers on the table, and saw that they had not as yet been disturbed. I then made a thorough search of the room. No one was hiding there. I satisfied myself that there was not a nook or cranny capable of concealing a human being, and not a crack in the walls or ceiling through which a person could peer from an adjoining apartment. The windows were closed with iron shutters. The protection was so complete, in fact, that I was ready to pooh-pooh the theory that the documents had ever been tampered with at night. Either just before or just after the sessions, some secretary must have rearranged them with the object of perpetrating a hoax, I thought.

Finally I extinguished the lights, and took a seat in a deep leather armchair against the wall. I was opposite the middle of the long table, and beyond, straight ahead, was the fireplace with its massive andirons and its stone mantel-shelf. To the left was an ancient Swiss clock, at least six feet tall, which struck the hours and half hours with a perfectly appalling resonance.

I could not see any of these things, of course, as I sat there in the dark; but I have a vivid memory of the clock. It clanged out twelve strokes for midnight, and left the air vibrating for a full minute afterward. The silence that followed was as oppressive as that of the grave. I found it rather unbearable, somehow, and cautiously changed my position in the chair. My eyes burned from staring into the inky gloom, then suddenly grew rebellious. The lids fluttered, and I had difficulty in preventing them from closing. I tried to believe that this was caused by bodily fatigue and an overpowering need for sleep. But down in my heart I knew better. The skin on the back of my neck and between the shoulder blades had become cold. I experienced that bristling sensation of the scalp which has given rise to the expression that one's hair stands (*Continued on page* 88)

The VARSITY

With the girl he loves under suspicion, Dick consults the Spirit World—and staggering complications ensue

Professor Cormier sprang to his feet in alarm. . . .

ON the eve of my initiation into the Alpha Rho fraternity at Corfield College, I called on Professor Cormier, a distinguished psychologist and student of the occult. From him I learned some amazing truths regarding the spirit world.

Next door to the "Prof." lived Avis Brent, daughter of the Dean of the Faculty. I had fallen in love with her the preceding summer and had transferred to Corfield on her account. But when I stopped in to see her she made light of the coming hazing and soon left for a mysterious appointment. I was convinced her date was with Bob Harter, a good friend of mine, and the adored football star of the college.

The initiation took place at Bell's Undertaking Parlors in the village, and when Bob, an Alpha Rho, did not show up there, I was sure he was with Avis. Consumed with jealousy, I paid little heed to my orders—to go down to Bell's morgue in the cellar, and bring back the tie from a corpse. Besides, Avis had told me there would be no corpse. I was midway along the inky corridor, when suddenly I was jerked back by an unseen hand, my head just missing a club which swung down before my face. Unnerved, I entered the morgue, lit my match—and saw Bob Harter laid out on a slab!

I touched him, but my hand went through to the stone. Then the form became luminous, rose slowly and floated through the closed door. In terror, I grabbed the tie which had been laid on the slab and saw a spectral hand—Bob's—beckoning me outside. I followed his misty form, and again barely escaped injury from an unknown foe. At the foot of the stairs Bob's ghost left me, but not before I saw some bruises on his forehead.

I had little heart for the subsequent celebration staged in my honor at the ice cream parlor—even though Avis was there. And when suddenly Chief of Police Quigley entered, I knew what had brought him. He summoned Avis to his office for questioning. Bob Harter had been found—dead!

OF the consternation and excitement in Corfield, following the announcement of Bob Harter's death, I can give but a slight idea. Even an unimportant piece of gossip travels with incredible swiftness in such a community. And news of this magnitude—violent death, possibly the murder, of a well-loved figure—caused an unprecedented furore.

By eleven o'clock, an hour when most of Corfield was usually asleep, there was a great crowd outside of Bell's Undertaking Parlors where the body had been brought. There were scores of students, including every member of the Corfield Chapter of Alpha Rho, and there were many

MURDER

By
RICHARD LEE
FOSTER, Jr.
As told to
Ben Conlon

Instantly the table crashed . . . and I slumped in my chair, grimly holding on to the pencil

townsfolk who had known, or heard of, Bob. The crowd milled about the sidewalk, the stricken faces seeming at odd variance with the brilliant collegiate togs. But the coroner insisted that no one could view the body until the following morning, and Police Chief Quigley's assistants soon dispersed the crowd, the members of which re-gathered for the most part in the lobbies of the Corfield House and the College Inn, the town's two hotels.

As I waited in Chief Quigley's outer office, I learned of the details surrounding the discovery of Bob Harter's body. The police chief had received a telephone call shortly after nine o'clock from a farmhouse over near Latham's Corners, a crossroads settlement about a mile from Corfield. A farmer's hired man had stumbled over a body in a field, and on the receipt of this news, Quigley had picked up the coroner and had motored to the scene.

They had remained there just long enough to search and identify the corpse, examine the bruises on the forehead and to ask a few questions of the man who had telephoned. Quigley had then called up the sheriff's office at Manchester, giving the description of a suspicious-looking tramp seen in the vicinity earlier that evening, and had speeded back to Corfield to start his inquiry as to who had last seen Harter, and, if possible, to learn if Harter had mentioned any special appointment. The boy's body had been brought to town in the undertaker's wagon soon after.

I heard the pieces of news jerkily, somehow or other, while my brain struggled in vain to think connectedly. Before my eyes flashed swift pictures of Bob Harter as I had known him in our brief but intense friendship. And always there was the memory of that spirit face on which I had hardly dared to look, down in Bell's forbidden cellar. It seemed to be before me again—with that irregular streak of blood running down from the bruised forehead.

I was thinking, too, about Avis. Why had Chief Quigley singled her out for questioning? Did he suspect that Avis knew something about Bob's untimely death? His action could hardly be based on the mere fact that Avis and Bob Harter were known to have been a great deal together during the previous semester. No, there must be some reason stronger than just this; otherwise Quigley would not have presumed to subject the daughter of the Dean of Corfield's faculty to such an indignity.

COULD Avis's laughter and gaiety have been feigned back there in the confectionery store where I had seen her chatting with some girls before Quigley entered? Had there not been something decidedly queer in her expression when she had looked at me after Quigley had told his terrible news? Had the "appointment" she had said she was to keep before nine o'clock been with Bob? These and a hundred other

disturbing thoughts fairly hurtled through my brain. And yet, even more distinct than these, was the memory of that transparent form on the undertaker's slab; that ashy luminescence as the spirit form continued rising slowly; that luminous hand that came through the solid door of the morgue.

It was while I was waiting here that I first made the discovery that my left forefinger had been burned and was now beginning to throb badly. That last match in the morgue had scorched it, but I had not even felt it then.

AVIS was still in Quigley's sanctum when I noticed the dignified form of Avis's father, Doctor Wycliff Brent, emerging from a car that had just drawn up at the curb. Doctor Brent bowed to me as he entered the building. "I was delivering a lecture over at Manchester," he said, "when I heard this tragic news. I wonder what Chief Quigley can be thinking of, to drag my daughter's name into this!"

A moment later he was admitted to Quigley's inner office. I heard loud but indistinct voices inside, and then, as the door opened and the coroner came out to get some document, I caught Doctor Brent's words: "Simply ridiculous, the whole thing! I warn you, Chief Quigley, that it is your job to find the *particular* girl and not be subjecting my family to this sort of publicity."

"I'm sorry, Doctor Brent," I heard Quigley say. "This has been a matter of duty with me. As I told you, I had no choice when the evidence arose, but now——"

The coroner re-entered the inner office and shut the door, and I heard no more. Soon after, Avis, tearful and pale, came out of the inner office, followed by her parent. Then I was called in.

"And now, Mr. Foster," said Quigley, "the coroner and I would like a few words with you."

The few words extended into many. Quigley was a typical small-town police official, inclined to be domineering, and refusing to see anything but the obvious. He was, however, sincere and direct, and a keen hound of the law. The light in his blue eyes told me that though he might bungle at times, he would eventually get back on the right trail and find out who committed the Harter murder, if murder it was. I liked this in Quigley. What I did *not* like, though, was the inference in his voice when he said:

"Now, Foster, you were regarded as a rival of Harter on the football field, and you and he were interested in the same girl. When I came into the ice cream store tonight, it seemed to me that you knew what I was going to say. You almost took the words out of my mouth when I was saying Harter was dead. How did that happen? Where were you between eight-thirty and ten o'clock?"

"The reason I acted that way," I started to say, "was that——"

"Answer the question!" Quigley snapped. "Where were you between eight-thirty and ten o'clock tonight?"

I told of having been with Avis on her porch when the chapel clock chimed eight-thirty, and of leaving a few minutes later, since I had to meet the fellows at Bell's Undertaking Parlors, and Avis had an appointment. Quigley pounced upon this like a hawk upon a helpless bird. He made much of the fact that Avis had not told me whom her appointment was with, and the fact that she preferred to walk down the hill unaccompanied; and somehow I felt that my unwilling evidence was getting Avis in more deeply. After several questions, Quigley allowed me to tell of leaving the dormitory about nine o'clock, of looking in at Stocker's billiard parlor, and then continuing on to the initiation which kept me until practically ten o'clock.

When I related having seen Bob Harter's ghost in Bell's cellar, and noticed the forehead bruises, the coroner had an incredulous look on his face, and Quigley laughed outright. He chose to regard the whole thing as a hallucination of a badly-scared college boy. Finally, seeing that I was telling a story difficult for anyone—let alone the hardboiled Quigley—to believe, I lapsed into sullen silence, giving only curt answers. Quigley made a note of each of these, and then told me that he was through with me for the night.

Immediately, I made for College Hill. The town was almost deserted now. Most of the students had gone back uphill. I wanted to get up to the campus and talk with the fellows, and, if possible, find out why Avis Brent had been questioned by Quigley. I knew that no one in the dormitories or the chapter-houses would close an eye before dawn.

Nearing the top of the hill, I ran into Professor Cormier. He had just returned from a long walk out into the country, he said, but had heard the terrible news. I knew that I would find a sympathetic listener here, and I told him what had happened in Bell's cellar.

Professor Cormier's eager interest in my story fairly set him a-tremble. His weird-looking eyes were glowing.

"I just know it couldn't have been a hallucination, professor," I said.

He shook his head emphatically. "Of course not, Foster!" he agreed. "I have no wish to boast, but I must remind you that I judged you to be highly psychic. There is not the slightest question that you saw the aura or etheric counterpart of Harter, some time after Harter had been killed. Someone, or something, was lurking in that cellar to harm you. From your description, I should say it was a physical something rather than an evil spirit. But whatever it was, the spirit of Bob Harter protected you from it. What you experienced tonight, Foster, may prove to be the most important element in the solution of the Harter case. I have a theory that this sort of thing will one day become a most important method in determining the guilt of murderers."

WE had reached the professor's house near the top of the hill. I could see that there was something on my companion's mind. He paused a moment, and then said: "Foster, it was the discarnate entity of your friend Harter which saved you from injury tonight. I hardly think I need ask you this—but is it not true that you would be willing to go to any lengths to discover who murdered your friend?"

"Of course, sir," I replied. "Bob was loyal to me, even after death. And I'd do anything to help clear up this mystery and bring the slayer to justice!"

"I'm going to ask you to step inside a little while," said the professor, his eyes growing brilliant. "I may be able to suggest a way to help you achieve your desire."

We entered the queer little house, and Professor Cormier snapped on the lights in the living-room.

"Foster," he said, "you were the only living person, so far as we know, to whom the spirit of Bob Harter chose to appear. You were kindred spirits in life—interested in the same things, largely. Might it not be possible that Harter's spirit would appear to you again tonight—if it were made known in the world beyond that you urgently desired this re-appearance?"

A new feeling of dread came over me. It was clear that Professor Cormier was planning to set the scene for a séance. I had never attended a sitting, and, in fact, had developed a decided distaste for such things, for I knew that they were often fraudulent. But "Prof" Cormier seemed to me to be the exact reverse of an impostor. I could read sincerity in every line of his student's face.

"We can attempt it, at least?" suggested "Prof" Cormier, in that odd, half-interrogative tone of his. "I have had some

success within these very walls. This is where I made two of the spirit photographs which I showed you earlier this evening. This photographic apparatus which you notice here, I use only for this special work. I treat the films with dicyanine to increase their sensitiveness."

The professor was lifting a little light table which he carried over and placed in front of me.

"This is often a good way to start," he said. Then he walked back to the wall and snapped off the lights.

Out through the window which "Prof" always kept wide open, I could see a brilliant autumn moon just peeping over the bell-tower of the college chapel. It sent a soft silver light into the room, but it was not sufficient to show me the face of "Prof" Cormier, who had seated himself perhaps two feet from me, on the opposite side of the table. His form was just an inky smudge in the gloom.

Now, with the familiar campus landmarks visible through the window, bathed in soft midnight moonlight, my first feeling of dread was gradually leaving me. We sat there, "Prof" and I, perhaps three minutes, perhaps ten. I had no way of measuring the time. No sound came except the persistent ticking of the little Victorian ormolu clock above the fireplace. Then "Prof's" voice came out of the darkness: "I think you are a little too tense; you are clutching the table too tightly. Just let your fingers rest very lightly upon it."

I followed instructions. We waited what seemed like another long five minutes. And then slowly, very slowly, the table began to tilt away from me. It was like something alive beneath my fingers. A few seconds, and its tempo quickened. I feared the table would tip completely over, and tried to press down upon its top. But my hands refused to obey my will. I thought I noticed the room growing lighter, or it may have been that my eyes were becoming accustomed to the darkness. Then I felt my whole body stiffen.

The next thing I could recall was "Prof" Cormier bending over me as I lay on a settee near the fireplace. There was an expression of deep concern on his face; the room lights had been snapped on, and I could see the alarm in his mystic's eyes. I blinked and looked about me. The little ormolu clock on the mantel showed twenty-five minutes to two.

"You feel all right?" Professor Cormier asked.

I stared up at him. He was holding several sheets of paper in his hand.

"I feel a little weak, but I guess I'm all right," I answered, and my companion looked his relief.

"You're certain you can stand a little more excitement?" he said. "Or perhaps we had better wait till morning?"

"What happened?" I asked.

"PROF" seemed to be considering whether he should tell me or not. But finally his own eagerness proved too much for him!

"Foster," he said, impressively, tapping the sheets in his hand, "look here!" He tilted the sheets up, and I noticed that they were covered with writing in pencil. "These notes are *yours!*" he announced. "At least, yours was the hand that held the pencil. We have been in communication with the spirit of Robert Harter tonight! I am convinced now that Harter was murdered!"

"But—how?" I asked, raising myself from the settee. "I haven't the slightest memory of what happened."

"You went into a trance," the professor told me. "I suppose you didn't hear anything—not even when the table went over? Look at it!"

I followed his gaze. The table was lying on its side on the floor, and a small piece was freshly chipped from its edge.

"For some moments I received nothing but knocking, which could not be interpreted intelligently," the professor explained. "I was about to abandon our séance. But just then the etheric counterpart of Harter appeared in this room. At times I could see it quite distinctly. At others, when I tried to question it, it seemed to fade. Finally, I decided upon trying the pad and pencil. You answered me when I asked you about it—took the pad and followed instructions to the letter. It was only after several minutes that I realized you were writing while in a mediumistic trance."

The professor smiled reassuringly at the unbelief in my wondering eyes. He explained that as I wrote, some invisible presence suddenly seemed to be trying to interfere. He sprang to his feet in alarm—but instantly the table crashed to the floor and I slumped in my chair, grimly holding on to the pencil. Professor Cormier switched on the light, lifted me to the settee and the séance was over.

ASTONISHED at what I had been told, I looked at the penciled sheets of paper. That handwriting certainly looked like my own, though some of it was up-slanting and wavering. There were several questions, and almost as many answers. In places, the answers had been started, and then ended abruptly in the middle of a word. And some of them did not make sense when compared with the questions. But two particular sets of questions and answers fairly leaped from the page:

"Were you accidentally killed or murdered?"

"Mur——"

"Who is your murderer?"

Beneath this was a labored line absolutely undecipherable. I tried to form the meaningless symbols into letters, but neither "Prof" or I could be sure of any of them. Beneath this wavering line, in perfectly legible handwriting, was the phrase:

Not strong enough. Impeded.

Still another line, or, rather, a half-line, proved of consuming interest for me:

I can *RECIEVE* you, but——

And then a jumbled mass of meaningless marks.

But the spelling of "receive"—the misspelling, I should say—brought me up short. I had always been an excellent speller, and I knew that it could not have been I who misspelled this particular word, even if the handwriting was mine. Besides, I recalled that when I had loaned Bob Harter the fifty dollars with which he had bought his used flivver, he had given me a receipt which I had put in my desk. And Bob, who had a keen mind, but was not a good speller, had written on that receipt:

Recieved of R. L. Foster, loan of fifty dollars on above date, repayable before winter semester.

And now, in the spirit answer, the word was misspelled in exactly the same way!

"Prof" Cormier appeared highly excited when I told him about this.

"A perfect point!" he almost shouted. "I wish we might have had authentic witnesses tonight, Foster. We should have been able to prove to the skeptical, as we have to ourselves, that though Harter's body was killed, his intelligence, which was not destroyed, continues to function, in some ways at least, just as it did when the body was alive. And yet," he added, a little wearily, "the presence of a doubter might have interfered with our communication. Ah! An unending task, this attempt to educate the public in metapsychical matters! But let us drop that for the present. Foster, I am certain I can tell you just how Harter was murdered!"

And then, as I sat there in the early morning, Professor Cormier told me that with the appearance of the aura of Bob Harter in that room, he had seen more than I had during its appearance in Bell's cellar. I had hardly dared to look at the ghostly face of my dead friend, and had noticed only the forehead bruises. But "Prof" Cormier told me that in addition to these he had seen evidence of a small wound in the back of the head. The professor, in his psychological research, had become (*Continued on page* 93)

"The next minute I thought I was done for! I couldn't budge—couldn't get out of the way."

GHOST PATROL

By JAMES A. BELFLOWER

Police Reporter on
the Atlanta *Georgian*

And
GUY FOWLER

No policeman worthy the name was ever afraid of a graveyard. Then why did the bluecoats who guarded Atlanta's Confederate dead go mad with fear?

MIDNIGHT lay like a pall over the graves of the Confederate dead in Oakland cemetery. Atlanta, proudest city of the South, lay silent, slumbering under the coldly distant stars. Suddenly, in the deathly stillness, came a jangling sound that woke a thousand shuddering echoes——

A police patrol clattered heedlessly around a corner, past the sleeping graveyard, on its way to the station house after a false call. At the wheel sat Patrolman W. H. Dodd, and beside him, Patrolman Luther Shumate, a hearty optimist, was speculating on the outcome of the pinochle game he had left unfinished at the station.

A pistol shot split the air. Dodd reached for the emergency brake and the patrol jerked to a halt beside the cemetery wall.

"It's inside!" exclaimed Shumate, springing to the walk. Dodd leaped out beside him and together, revolvers in hand, they went over the ancient brick wall.

Another shot spat smartly, and then a third. Their flashlights searched this way and that in the deep gloom, sweeping graceful willows, pausing now and again on the smooth mound of a grave.

"*Oh, my God!*"

The cry came piercingly in a man's voice, strained and hollow. Dodd and his companion plunged on. The narrow gravel path wound between oaks and headstones that rose up gray and indistinct. Again came the agonized cry—almost in front of them.

The officers halted abruptly, steadied their flashlights—and there, at their feet, was another bluecoat! They recognized him instantly as Patrolman William Cason, detailed to duty in the cemetery. He was crouching in the center of the path. In the pencil rays of their lights they saw his big body quivering. His face was contorted and the hand which held his smoking gun trembled.

"All right, Cason! What's up?"

Dodd spoke, still searching the blackness ahead. Cason slowly wheeled. His staring eyes blinked in the glare and his face was ghastly. His mouth hung open and his jaws twitched in the involuntary paroxysms of terror. Dodd and Shumate looked on in a daze. They knew the man to be a courageous fighter, cited for bravery on several occasions. His record on the force was without a blemish.

Still he did not reply. Instead his throat moved convulsively, but no sound came. His nerveless fingers opened and the pistol fell upon the gravel walk.

"Speak, man! What the hell's ailing you?"

BUT Cason merely struggled to brace himself on unsteady legs. The effort was futile and he sprawled awkwardly in a silent, quivering heap.

"They got him!" exclaimed Shumate, springing forward.

Dodd passed him and the prostrate Cason and went deeper into the cemetery. There was no sound. His light revealed no tracks either in the gravel, or on the ground beside it. He searched for a time and returned. Cason was sitting up, braced against Shumate's broad shoulder. Shumate stared up into Dodd's eyes with an expression of bewilderment mingled with a strange fear.

"On they came in a furious charge —that devilish horse and its rider."

A True Story

"Bill," he said thinly, "Cason saw a ghost!"

"Applejack!" retorted the practical Dodd.

But something in those strained faces stayed his sardonic humor. He straightened suddenly and returned their gaze. These men were in earnest.

With a supreme effort Cason composed himself. He made no attempt to conceal his dread. Instead, he launched out into the details of his uncanny experience.

"It wasn't the first time, boys," he said. "That's one reason why I'm so dead certain. For weeks I've been patrolling this beat with a gun in one hand and my nightstick in the other. But this—thing—hasn't any fear. It——"

"What's it like?" demanded Dodd.

The three bluecoats stood together in the gravel path now, and beyond them lay the Confederate plot. The memorial shaft cast its long slender shadow in a weird futuristic design upon the tombstones.

"He's—it's a Rebel soldier!"

Cason spoke with definite authority.

"It has a gray uniform—it's all gray—face and beard and all."

"Did he—did it say anything?" Dodd asked.

Cason slowly shook his head.

"Not tonight. He—it carried a rifle—one of those old long-barreled kind, with a bayonet. I saw him coming from behind a tree yonder. I stopped and put the gun on him. He stood right out in the open and seemed to be staring at—my uniform. Then he threw back his head and grinned like a death mask and came at me with the bayonet!"

"You fired?"

Cason nodded and his eyes grew wild again.

"Right straight into his middle—and he didn't even stop!"

They were silent for a moment. Shumate fixed his slow gaze on each of the others in turn.

"It must have been the uniform," he suggested softly. "Blue. He figured you were a Yank officer, Bill."

Cason considered thoughtfully and nodded.

"That might be it," he admitted. "He sure was a Johnny, boys. I've seen too many of the old fellows. I remember my father in his uniform on special occasions when I was a kid. This—this Thing was a Rebel, all right."

The trio moved slowly toward the sexton's building.

"I've heard sounds like bugle calls," Cason went on. "I've heard something like roll call—muffled and far away, but distinct enough so that I recognized it—as though a whole company was drawn up for inspection."

"Did you ever see 'em?" asked Dodd.

"No . . . Until this Thing tonight, I never saw any of them."

When Cason was completely recovered from the effects of his shock the three patrolmen returned to the station house and reported to Lieutenant C. R. Jones. He listened gravely, without interruption. At length, when Cason's report was complete, he nodded.

"I've heard something of this matter before, boys. We'll look into it."

Cason refused to accept a transfer to another patrol. Instead, he chose to return alone to his beat in the cemetery.

"Before this," he told his mates, "I've always doubted anything supernatural. I believe it now, but I'm going to make certain. The chances are, they—well those things can't hurt you, anyhow."

UNFORTUNATELY, however, Cason apparently repeated his devastating experience of the first night, for he was brought into the station raving mad.

The plucky lad's condition was indeed pitiable. The police medical examiner was thorough. When he finished his observation he nodded abruptly.

"You'll have to send him away." He pronounced the ultimatum with regretful finality. "He'll never get over this."

Cason was taken to the home of his people in the suburbs and kept under close observation. Yet the grost or hallucination pursued him even into the peaceful walls of his house, for in his mad delirium he lived in constant terror of the

"Rebel" of Oakland cemetery. To this day he dwells in absolute seclusion, and has never recovered his reason.

Meanwhile, the police investigation continued. Blue uniforms moved in the shadows of the cemetery shrubbery and there were new and strange adventures reported to Lieutenant Jones. Yet another man was destined to be driven to insanity by the gray horde who, even in death, seemed to be standing out against the blue.

Patrolman Patrick Rumph suffered an experience that was a duplicate of that which closed the career of Cason. Like his brother officer, Rumph, too, went out of his mind, and shortly afterward came to a violent end, at the Georgia State Hospital for the Insane. And again, like Cason, he protested to the last that he was the victim of a Rebel ghost.

It remained for Turnkey W. H. Bone to face the spectral hauteur of a Confederate officer. His experience, like those of the others, was duly recorded in the police reports, to be followed by a painstaking investigation that brought forth still other and equally strange adventures on the "ghost patrol."

Bone's presence was the first to produce a whole column of gray-clad troops marching behind a general on a white charger. The rider was none other than General John B. Gordon, who was with Lee at Appomatox.

"I RECOGNIZED his face from pictures," said Bone. "He rode straight in the saddle and his sword was lifted in the signal to charge. It seemed that I could hear the faint sound of shuffling feet and the muffled rattle of artillery, but there were no voices. I waited for a moment, thinking that I was the victim of some sort of madness. But I was convinced soon enough. . . ."

The memory of the night brought an involuntary twitch of terror to his stern features. He passed a hand nervously across his eyes and continued:

"The next minute I thought I was done for! I couldn't budge—couldn't get out of the way. On they came in a furious charge—that devilish horse and its rider. Gordon rose up in his stirrups and that horse lifted on his hind legs almost over me. I fired twice and ran. No man could face that Thing!"

When he reached the sexton's house Bone turned. The gray column had melted into the shadows of the oaks. The tombstones lifted their grim shapes against the darker background of the shrubbery and there was not a sound to be heard.

Bluecoats were detailed to patrol the cemetery night and day and, one by one, those on the night shift reported their awful experiences. By no possible stretch of the imagination could it have been a hoax perpetrated on the valiant officers. The thing ceased to be humorous when Rumph met his hideous death, and thereafter it became stark tragedy. The gray forces held the cemetery grounds and the blue invaders were baffled.

Patrolman W. H. Swords was a practical, hard-bitten police officer totally without superstition and equally lacking in fear of the supernatural. To him in turn fell the duty of the "ghost patrol."

"I walked the cemetery for two nights without experiencing anything more than an ordinary creepiness at some strange sound," he told Lieutenant Jones.

But on the third night. . . .

At two o'clock in the morning—about the same hour that the unfortunate Cason had met his doom—Swords walked slowly along the gravel path that circled the Confederate burial grounds. He saw the memorial shaft pointing up to the thin band of the new moon. A brooding silence hung over the white frozen graveyard.

Suddenly the patrolman halted rigidly. Thin and clear came the notes of a bugle sounding reveille. Swords whipped out his revolver and moved cautiously ahead in the direction of the sound. Still he saw nothing. He halted again, straining eyes and ears. Now he heard muffled voices in the staccato routine of roll call. An officer, apparently Company Sergeant, seemed to be snapping out names and the replies came swiftly in the military fashion.

"Altman!"

"Here!"

"Arnold!"

"Humph!"

On down the line in alphabetical order the officer snarled names and the men replied, each in his own peculiar manner.

"I couldn't move," Swords explained later, "because I was—well, I was sort of hypnotized. You see—I'd been through the grounds so often that I knew those names. *Every one of them was on a tombstone right there in front of me!*"

But when he sprang boldly into the open, determined to face the mystery out, Swords found that the ghost company had been dismissed and he was absolutely alone.

"I waited for a long time," he said, "but they didn't come back. I was in full possession of my senses. In fact, I wasn't exactly frightened. It was more a bewilderment. I went so far as to plan what I'd say if any of the—the ghosts approached me. I came from a Georgia family. My own father was killed at Shiloh and two of his brothers were with Morgan's raiders. I felt that I was Confederate enough."

But the spectral company had disbanded and Swords was to hear the strange cries no more.

On another night Patrolman Howard Bentley had the ghost watch. Like Swords, and in fact, all the others, he too, was descended from a family of southerners with all the traditions of the Calhouns and the Lees. The Rebel yell was familiar to his ears, for he had heard his father sound it at camp reunions in his boyhood.

Bentley, on this night, was in the sexton's office, not far from the west gate. The two-story building was literally hidden among the tall shafts and shrubbery. Entrance to the second floor was gained by way of a door with a spring lock which made it impossible to gain the interior without a key. There was a stairway with a landing at the turn.

At the head of the first flight of stairs a second door opened into the little room which the police use as a place of refuge from heavy weather. Bentley was seated here at a table eating a midnight lunch. He had removed his blue tunic and overcoat, so that he sat bareheaded in a gray flannel shirt.

Suddenly a knock sounded at the door of the room. He had heard nothing from below and presumed that some brother officer had come to inquire about something. Only an official could have had the keys to the outer door of the sexton's lodge.

"Come in!" called Bentley, cheerfully.

NO one entered and he gave a second invitation. There was the dull sound of footfalls on the floor of the hall. Bentley sprang to his feet and bounded to the door. He jerked it open and presented his revolver at the blank gloom of the corridor. Not satisfied, he started down the stairs. At the foot he again heard the indistinct shuffle of steps and wheeled.

In the heavy darkness of the staircase he saw a shadowy figure slowly descending toward him. Bentley braced himself against the door, determined to solve the mystery once and for all. But the visitor seemed to gaze at him calmly enough, paused for an instant and oddly vanished as though he had passed through the wall.

"He was a—a Confederate soldier," Bentley said. "I know that. And he kept looking at my gray shirt. I thought afterward that perhaps the shirt had something to do with the way he looked at me."

As his brother officers had done before him, Bentley straightway made a detailed report to his superior officer, Lieutenant Jones.

Jones heard it in silence, as was his custom, but this time there was a trace of understanding in his eyes. He nodded and made a rapid note on the desk pad.

"All right, Bentley. We'll look into it."

Jones himself had spent several nights on the cemetery grounds and had himself experienced the almost unbelievable phenomena, although he had no direct first-hand encounter.

Before the lieutenant could carry his investigation to a final stage, there was yet one more grim episode to be added to the list. Not long after Bentley's experience, Patrolman Edward Cason, a bicycle man, and brother to the first victim, was detailed to the cemetery to relieve another officer. He went on duty at midnight. At four o'clock he was carried into Grady Memorial Hospital with a deep scalp wound.

When Cason recovered consciousness, he found his superior, Captain W. F. Terry, bending over him.

"What happened?"

Cason stared up dully.

"Something," he replied brokenly, "started after me. It looked like a—a man, but—it wasn't. I was on the bike and I had to watch the—the ghost, Captain. I was pedaling—hard. I must have run right into the gate."

Captain Terry, familiar with the specters of Oakland, nodded and went to seek Lieutenant Jones.

"We've got to do something about this business," he said abruptly. "It's getting on my nerves."

Jones observed him levelly.

"I've done something, Captain."

Terry returned his gaze with a question in his eyes.

"I don't pretend to understand it," Lieutenant Jones resumed. "I certainly believe the whole thing is supernatural. I've seen enough to convince me."

"Yes, yes, of course," cut in Captain Terry. "But what have you done about it?"

Jones smiled mysteriously.

"In every report," he replied, "perhaps you've noticed that these—er—ghosts. were Confederate soldiers."

"Yes."

"Well," said Jones, "it occurred to me that maybe the old fellows can't rest in peace while blue uniforms are patrolling their graves. So I sent plainclothes men in last night and there wasn't a ripple. I'm going to keep it up, too."

Captain Terry's eyes lighted.

"Lieutenant," he exclaimed, "you've solved it! By George, I believe you have, sir."

The fact remains that since the ghost patrol no longer wears the blue, there is peace in the Confederate cemetery.

Other World Encounters

By a Senator's Wife

I HAVE been deeply interested in psychic phenomena for some time and am an enthusiastic member of a psychical research society. Years ago, I received my first thirst for this knowledge through the manifestations of my mother.

At one time, a young artist had joined the circle in which my mother was interested and for some reason or other, it was thought that his hand would be controlled to write if he would but try. At last he was persuaded to take up a pencil. Each one of the circle of young people would ask mental questions and see if this young man would answer any of their questions intelligently. His hand began to move and the pencil wrote rapidly—"Heaven is a happy place, come to me my child."

No one understood the message and the artist said he would never try it again. A few days later, the landlady's daughter who had been present at this meeting rapped at the artist's door.

"I want you to do me a favor," she began. "You answered my question the other night and I hadn't the courage to tell you. I want you to promise me that you will sit down and write again under spirit directions."

He refused. She begged him so piteously that at last he consented to try. He did not know what he wrote this time, as he did not read the message but he folded it up and handed it to her and she left the room without reading it. Three days later she committed suicide. No one of her acquaintances knew that she had married and was living unhappily and no one ever read that last message.

Mother had an experience of her own that has always been an interesting psychic problem. Just before my grandfather's death, my mother had taken her turn to watch by the sick bed while the other members of the family were resting. She sat quietly beside her father while he appeared to be asleep. Suddenly she heard the appeal: "Up! Up! Up!"

She jumped to her feet and ran to the window and looked out. It was not yet daylight and no one was in sight.

There was no explanation for what she had heard until a few years later when the family was gathered at Greenwood cemetery where some bodies were being moved from the country for interment near grandfather's grave. One of these bodies was that of her little nephew, a child of five years who had died before my grandfather. The tombstone which had marked his grave in the other cemetery had been brought to Greenwood and suddenly it attracted my mother's attention as it bore an extraordinary epitaph.

"Up, Up, Up!" was the simple inscription and it set in motion a train of memories that my mother had almost forgotten.

"What does this mean?" she asked her sister (the mother of the boy).

"Why," answered her sister, "when we were visiting father, the child used to go to his grandfather's door early in the morning and as he knocked upon the panel he would say, 'Up, up, up,' until his grandfather would answer him, and somehow, I thought of that when trying to decide upon an inscription for the tombstone and so I selected the only words the child knew how to utter at that time."

Mother felt then that this child's spirit voice was calling my grandfather at the time she was so mystified the night of his death and had used the command with which he familiarly awakened him when he was here.

"Horrible! Horrible!" The words kept ringing in my ears — yet I couldn't tear my eyes away

Should a "haunted" woman plight of pretty Mildred nearly wrecked her

"MILDRED has changed so since they moved into that new house; she seems a different girl!" George Willoughby's good-looking face was troubled as he looked up at me from where he sat on my front door-step that June evening.

"Why I didn't think Mildred was the changeable kind," I replied. I stopped rocking baby Nell, shocked by the suffering so plainly written on the face of my friend. "She's always been so sweet, and bright and steady. I can't believe that because her father's taken that lovely house the rich Northerners built, it could make any difference in her. It's just your imagination, George," I smiled down at him, as my baby stirred and I began rocking again.

"I wish it was imagination." George took off his hat and rubbed his curly head. "But I can't fool myself, Elise. She wasn't even glad to see me last night, and she burst out crying when I began talking about our wedding. You know we had everything planned for August fifth—" his voice shook—"I never saw Mildred cry before!"

Something in my throat kept me from speaking for a moment. George was a special friend of ours. He went through school with Arthur and me, and a month after he finished High School there in Wimbleton, he lost both his

"Don't you see him?" Mildred shrieked. "If you don't I'm insane! Insane!"

The TREE with a Human Shadow

By MARY TARVER CARROLL

marry? Read the fantastic Ardwell—and how she own life and her lover's

parents in a bad influenza epidemic. He went away to college and then took a law course, and when he came back to Wimbleton and opened up his law office, he came to stay with us.

We treated him like one of the family, and baby Nell, our little two-year-old daughter, loved him almost as well as she did her daddy. He had been with us six months when he fell in love with Mildred Ardwell, the daughter of a prosperous farmer who lived five miles from Wimbleton.

Tom Ardwell was an erect, grim-looking man, his wife a round, chatty creature—and their daughter was a beauty. She was as straight as her father and had her mother's dimples and sunny disposition, a wealth of golden hair which she had not bobbed and soft brown eyes.

Arthur and I were delighted at the young couple's happiness. George had nothing much financially yet except prospects, but old Ardwell was well-to-do, and though he was too grim to unbend, we knew he was pleased at the engagement. Mildred confided to me that her father had bought the new house and moved three miles away from his old home, just so she could have a pretty setting for her wedding. The Ardwells even wanted the young couple to live with them for awhile after the marriage.

And now Mildred's folks had been in the new house but four weeks and George was miserable over the change in his sweetheart.

"How has Mildred changed, George?" I asked. "Maybe she just wasn't feeling well last night and you imagined——"

"No, Elise," he interrupted, "I know you're trying to comfort me, but I might as well face the truth. Mildred has discovered that she doesn't love me, and there's nothing for me to do," he groaned, "but give her up!"

"George Willoughby, you're talking nonsense! Mildred Ardwell is just as much in love with you as you are with her—and you ought to know how much that is. Arthur and

I often speak of it, so I'm not the only one that thinks so."

His head bowed lower, but he did not answer.

"It's such a lovely night—" I looked up at the big moon riding majestically over the tops of the magnolia trees, whose wide-open, snowy blossoms were perfuming the breeze. "Why don't you drive over there again tonight? It was raining last night; maybe that made her blue. No girl in love could resist such moonlight as this!"

"I—I," George began; then, turning his face toward me, he burst out, "I can't go, Elise. If you want to know the whole truth, I'm afraid to!"

"Afraid!" I echoed. "What are you afraid of?"

"I'm afraid she'll say positively that she won't marry me! I'd rather things would stay like they are than have her say that."

"George Willoughby," I cried, "that's what's the matter! Mildred sees you are hesitating, and she's afraid of the same thing about you that you fear about her! It's a good thing you have a woman friend to talk things over with." I laughed and the sleeping baby started. "Now, you've made me wake Nell, and here comes Arthur." My husband's tall figure strode up the path.

"Hello, there," he greeted us, and bent to kiss me. "Baby asleep?"

"Yes, at last. Take her up to bed, will you, Arthur? Hurry right down and we'll have supper. George wants to drive over to see Mildred."

Arthur nodded, took the baby away in his arms, and I stood up.

"What made you say that? I told you that I can't go!"

"You *are* going," I insisted. "I'm a woman and I know she wants you to come."

GEORGE left in his roadster immediately after supper and I told Arthur all about it.

"Just a lover's spat," he laughed. "We used to have them every now and then ourselves. Believe you did it to make me bring you something pretty," he teased. "No wonder you can give George such fine advice. Did you tell him to stop down town and buy something for Mildred?"

I shook my fist at him playfully as I went to turn on the radio.

Arthur was reading the paper and I was still listening to the music, when George's car rolled into the garage. Presently we heard a dragging step.

"That doesn't sound like George!" I exclaimed; but as we both turned, he stood in the doorway.

"What's the matter, old man?" Arthur sprang up and went toward him, leading him by the arm to an easy chair.

"Call Dr. Spokeman, Elise," Arthur spoke quickly.

"No, no!" George roused. "I'm not sick. The doctor can't do me any good."

I ran out to the kitchen, made a cup of tea and hurried back with it. "Drink this," I ordered.

He looked at me dazedly, but he drank it.

"Sit down, Arthur." I looked up at my husband. "I told you to go out to the Ardwell's, George, so it's my fault if things turned out wrong. Can you tell us about it? Or would you rather go right up to bed?"

"I want to tell you, Elise—you and Arthur. I've got to tell somebody; I don't know what to think——" His blue eyes stared dazedly in front of him, with a sort of sleep-walker's look. Then, stimulated by the tea, he began to appear more natural.

"I told Elise," he turned to Arthur, "that something was wrong with Mildred, that I feared she wanted to break our engagement because she didn't love me—" He covered his eyes with his hand. "That would be hard enough, but it's worse than that. Poor Mildred, my poor, little girl——"

"What's wrong with Mildred?" Arthur demanded. "I haven't heard anything. She's always been the brightest, prettiest, most cheerful little thing. And such an even temperament! I've spoken of it many times."

"That's what I told George," I put in. "And I told him, too, that Mildred is as much in love with him as he is with her. She must have been feeling badly last night."

"Yes, that's what Elise said, Arthur. And I thought she ought to know. I let her talk me into going back there tonight and—and seeing Mildred. . . ."

"Good advice, I call it." Arthur nodded.

"But Good Lord, man, you don't know anything about it!" George flung out his hands. "It is just as I feared—only worse!"

"What *do* you mean?" I sat down beside him. "You might as well tell us, George. Maybe we can help."

"Help? No, there's no help for a thing like this. But I'll tell you—I'll *make* you see!" He grasped the arms of his chair, and I saw his knuckles whiten.

"I told Elise, Arthur," George began, "that last night Mildred seemed strange. She had dark circles under her eyes, and although she said she wasn't sick, she said she had slept very little since they moved. I teased her about being so accustomed to one room in one house that she couldn't sleep anywhere else. She tried to join in the joke—but she couldn't. She kept breaking off in the midst of a sentence, as if she was listening. I'd listen too, instinctively, but I couldn't hear a thing except the high wind blowing outside, and one of the limbs of that great oak brushing across the side of the house every few moments. Mildred would clutch my arm and make me hush and listen.

"'What in the world is the matter?' I begged. Then she'd insist that she wasn't listening and that there was nothing the matter—when I could see so plainly that there was! I tried to talk about our marriage, and Mildred burst out crying and begged me not to speak of it—that she couldn't bear it! Now, Arthur, you know what you'd have thought. But when I told Elise, she said maybe Mildred just wasn't feeling well, and that if I'd go back tonight while the moon was shining so brightly, we'd make up and everything would be all right."

"Well, wasn't it, old fellow?" Arthur asked with a smile.

"This is how 'all right' it is!" George thrust his fingers in his vest-pocket and pulled out a ring. "She heard my car coming and met me on the steps—wouldn't even let me go in—gave me back my ring, and told me she'd never marry me——" His voice broke.

"But she didn't give any reason," I cried hotly. "That's not fair and it's not like Mildred."

"DO you suppose I don't know that?" George looked miserably from one to the other of us. "Most men would say she doesn't care for me—that's what I thought at first. And if that's what it was I—I'd take my medicine like a man. But—" He drew his breath sharply; "it's more than that. Mildred is in some sort of terrible trouble. I know. I *feel* it—but she won't tell me what it is!"

"I'll go to see her tomorrow, George," I offered quickly. "Go on to bed and get some rest. I promise I'll talk to Mildred tomorrow."

He wrung my hand with silent gratitude, and Arthur went with him to his room.

"I'll find out about this thing," I told Arthur when he came back. And I tried to assure him as well as myself, that the lovers only needed a sympathetic friend to mend matters between them.

Leaving little Nell with old Aunt Abby, my cook, I took George's roadster, which he put at my service, and drove out to the Ardwell's place. Their new house was five miles out and I thought, as I always did when I came in sight of it, that it was a most beautiful situation. It stood on a green knoll overlooking the highway in front, while down on the left wound the silvery Chattahoochie River. The hill was crowned with a solitary tree, a glorious live-oak, and nestling beside it was the lovely modern home the two northerners had built.

As I looked up at the cheerful white painted clapboards,

at the green shutters and green window boxes trailing vines and blooming red geraniums, I thought how queer it was that those northern folk went to the trouble and expense of building the place and then lived in it only two months—and sold it, for half what it cost them, to Mr. Ardwell. As I turned up the winding drive, I decided it was the prettiest place in Daleton County. I told Mrs. Ardwell so when she met me at the door.

"That's what I think, Elise," she beamed, "and Tom thinks so, too, but you couldn't drag it out of him! Take this chair, it's the most comfortable. Why didn't you bring the baby with you? I felt sure you would. Why not?"

"I couldn't bring her this time, Mrs. Ardwell, because I want to see Mildred about something important."

"Mildred—" The smile faded from her jolly, round face. "I'm put out about Mildred. She don't seem to like it here, and I can't understand why. Tom and I thought she'd be delighted. That's why we left the old home. But she won't eat and says she can't sleep."

"Where is Mildred?"

"Down by the river. She seems to stay in the house as little as she can. It's hard, Elise," and the woman's face puckered; "we did this for her sake, and she acts like she's unhappy."

"That's what I came to see her about. George is afraid she doesn't love him any longer and he's heartbroken over it."

"WHY, she's devoted to George! That's why her father and I gave in about having the wedding this summer. Seemed she couldn't be happy without George, and didn't want a long engagement."

"Oh, it's just a little quarrel, I guess. Don't bother, I'm going to find Mildred, and we'll talk it over." I ran down the steps.

The overarching branches of the live-oak seemed to embrace me in their shadow as I hurried around the left side of the house and followed the little path to the river. On the warm June morning, I found my teeth chattering as I came out from the dense shade. "Cool enough under there," I shivered. "Funny, when I'd been so warm." Automatically, I hurried along.

I followed the path, looking first in one direction, then the other. There she was, sitting on a log, her hands clasping her knees, her eyes looking fixedly down at the water.

"Mildred!" I spoke gently, for I was afraid to startle her.

She turned, her expression as blank as if she did not see me. Then, as if she pushed aside a veil, recognition dawned in her eyes.

"Elise, did George send you?" Her voice was low, troubled, different from the clear, lilting tone of the old Mildred Ardwell whom I knew and admired so much.

"He didn't send me," I said as I sat beside her, "but he did tell me about things, Mildred, and I begged him to let me come and talk to you." I was relieved that she had plunged right into things. . . .

"There's nothing to talk about." The words seemed dragged from her. "I'm not going to marry, and that's all there is to it."

"But George loves you so, Mildred!" I laid my hand on hers. It was cold and unresponsive, and I was shocked at the change in the girl's face. She had been dimpled and blooming, sunny and sweet. Now the bloom was wiped off; the dimples were only deep marks in her cheeks; there were purple shadows under her brown eyes that made them look enormous, and her lips were white and bitten and trembling.

"He'll have to get over it—just as I will!"

"But I told him you loved him still!" I squeezed her hand. "I told George that I knew you loved him as much as he loves you."

"I love him more—more than he can ever love me!"

"Then why in the world—" I was half laughing, half crying, "are you treating him so cruelly? The poor fellow came to our house last night crushed, because you said you wouldn't marry him!"

"*Marry him!*" She tore her hand from mine. "Of course, I won't marry him—didn't I tell you that I love him?"

"But Mildred, that doesn't make sense! I married Arthur because I loved him. That's the only reason for marrying!"

"Oh, Arthur, that's different——"

"But what's wrong with George? We've never heard anyone say anything against George."

"George?" She stared at me. "Who said there was anything wrong with George? He's the finest man in the world! The trouble is with me, Elise! *Me!*" She struck her breast.

"Now, Mildred," I consoled, slipping my arm about her, "I've known you even longer than I have George, and nobody would think of saying anything against you! They'd better not, where I am!"

Suddenly the taut little figure relaxed, and the overwrought girl burst into a storm of sobs.

"Oh, Elise! Elise!" She clung to me. "It's killing me! Killing me!"

"*What* is, Mildred? What?"

"I—I'm losing my mind, Elise," she whispered in a low terrified tone, "*I'm going crazy*—that's why I can't marry—ever!"

"You're doing nothing of the sort!" I retorted. "Tell me

all about it—you must!" I tightened my arms about her.

"But—it sounds so foolish—so insane—I don't know what you'll think—" she faltered.

"Go on, Mildred."

"It began the first night we came to the new house. Mother and Dad had gone to bed in their room downstairs; George had just left, and I'd come up to my room which is this front corner. I chose it because I could have one window looking toward the highway and another toward the river." She stopped and a queer look came into her eyes. "I didn't think about the tree. It's on this side, too.

"I had just climbed into bed and put out the light when I heard a sort of scraping noise. I thought it might be a branch of that tree rubbing against the house. I tried not to listen, but the sound kept getting clearer and louder, until finally I got up and went to the window.

"IT was a starry night, but there was no moon—and it was dark as pitch under the tree." She shuddered. "But as I looked, there came a curious unearthly light under the branches, and I saw—a man, hanging to a limb of the tree, Elise! He was a tall man; the toe of one of his shoes just touched the ground, and he seemed to be straining with all his might to stretch a little further so as to keep the rope about his neck from strangling him. Then, as his foot scraped back and forth, it finally dug a small trench, and he couldn't reach the ground at all. Then his foot scraped madly against the tree, trying to dig into the bark—do anything to get a foothold! I tried to scream—but I couldn't make a sound—and after a few moments—the queer light faded—and it was pitch dark again under the tree!"

"Oh, Mildred, that was just a sort of nightmare. Surely you aren't going to let a bad dream upset you like this!"

"It isn't a dream, Elise; it's true. I see the long man hanging there every night. If I go to the window at dusk I see him; if I go there any time during the night I see him. Even though it's inky dark under the tree—I see him!"

"But why go to the window? Why not put the thing out of your mind and go to sleep?"

"Sleep?" She laughed hysterically. "Whenever I close my eyes I hear the scraping, that mad fumbling for a foothold on the tree—and—I struggle, too, Elise. I get tense and my foot feels frantically for something to hold on to. I have to get up—and something draws me to the window. It pulls me so I *have* to go! I have to stand there looking out, going through that struggle with the man hanging there—choking, dying—but not quite! Always his foot scrapes——"

"Mildred, look at me!"

Her soft brown eyes met mine with piteous appeal.

"I'm not going to let any such nonsense break up the marriage of my two dear friends. You're not losing your mind. It's something else, and I'm going to find out what."

Mildred shook her head sadly.

"You needn't look so glum—" I was thinking fast—"Where did those people go—the ones who sold this house to your father? The Heatheringtons—do you know if he has their address?"

"I—I—think so, but what good——"

"Never mind," I interrupted. "I'm going to the house now to find Mr. Ardwell."

Mildred went with me; but when we neared the grounds, she would not walk under the tree. Instead, she ran out off the path, treading on the flowers so as to avoid that shadow.

But Mr. Ardwell did not have the Heatheringtons' address.

"They seemed in a hurry to get away," he said, "as if they didn't like the place, after they had spent so much money on it. Just a rich folks' whim, I suppose."

"Well, I'm sorry," I shrugged. "Mildred's not well, Mr. Ardwell, and I want her to come home with me for a little visit, but I can't persuade her. So I'm coming out here and spend the night with her—if you and Mrs. Ardwell will have baby Nell and me. I'll leave Arthur at home to look after George. Arthur won't mind that a bit."

"We'll be ever so glad to have you and the baby, Elise." Mrs. Ardwell tried to smile, but her eyes widened with worry as she looked from me to her daughter sitting there so listless and dull, paying no heed to what we were saying.

I went home to get things ready for my little visit later in the day. At lunch, I told Arthur and George that I was going out to spend the night with Mildred to try to cheer her up.

"That's awfully kind of you, Elise," George ejaculated.

I didn't say one word about the story she had told me. It was too fantastic, too weird, and, to tell the truth, it did sound crazy. It sounded as if the poor girl *had* lost her mind. But I wouldn't betray her to anyone, not even to my own husband or to the man she loved, unless it should prove absolutely necessary.

Aunt Abby, my old negro cook, heard us talking at lunch, and after the two men had gone, she came to my room where I was packing a small bag.

"It ain't out ter dat house whut dem Yankees builted, dat you is gwine, is hit, Mis' Elise?"

"That's the place, Aunt Abby," I replied, nonchalantly. "Where did you put the baby's socks?"

"I wouldn't go out dere, Miss Elise. I sho' wouldn't!" She put her arms akimbo on her wide hips, and paid no heed to my question.

"But I want to. I'm going to spend the night with my friend Miss Mildred Ardwell."

"Honey—" The black hand caught my arm—"Honey," she repeated the word persuasively, "you let Mis' Mildred cum in yere and stay de night wid us. I'll make some custard pie an——"

"Mildred won't come, and I'm going, Aunt Abby. Now get the baby's socks for me, please."

Aunt Abby got them and helped me bathe and dress Nell, but she muttered and rolled her eyes all the time. Finally, when we were ready and I started out to the car carrying the small bag, while she followed with the baby, I turned and asked her if she would like to go with us.

"You could look after the baby, and then she'd not be on my mind at all. I could 'phone Arthur. . . ."

"No'm! Not me!" The black wooly head shook decidedly. "I wouldn't spend de night in dat place ef you wus ter giv' me a new purple dress *an'* a hat!"

I stopped and looked at the old negress' troubled face, but it was late; there was no time to stop to argue.

"Well, take good care of Arthur and George. Cook something nice for them!"

MRS. ARDWELL was delighted to welcome us, and Mr. Ardwell thawed a bit as we sat at the supper table eating the delicious meal prepared by my hostess. Only Mildred seemed not to care that I was there. I thought she had not even noticed the baby, but after supper was over, she suddenly walked over and took the child from Mrs. Ardwell's lap, squeezed Nell tight and burst into tears. The baby cried out with fear at the storm of emotion and I went hastily toward her.

"Take her! Take her!" Mildred pushed the little figure into my arms. "I ought not to touch her—I can never have a child—a dear little girl like that!" She buried her face in the back of the big chair.

"Mildred! Mildred!" Even Mr. Ardwell's harsh voice was shaken by such suffering. "You're sick! I'm going to have the doctor out to see you the first thing in the morning. I think you'd better go to bed."

And though it was still early, the man helped his daughter up the stairs with clumsy tenderness. Then her mother and I undressed her and put her to bed.

"I'm going to give you and Nell this room." Mrs. Ardwell opened the door to the adjoining bed-chamber.

"I'll pull the bed over to this door between the rooms," I said, and suited the action to the word. "I'll put the baby

to bed here, but I'm going to stay with Mildred."

"That's sweet of you," The motherly face quivered, "I'm afraid, though, you'd not be able to sleep. Mildred says she's restless these nights. She won't let me stay up here with her; I've begged her—but maybe she'll let you."

"I'm going to stay anyhow, Mrs. Ardwell. You go on down and don't worry. I'll look after both of our girls tonight."

"You're so sensible and practical, Elise," she whispered. "Tom and I both feel that if anybody can help our child, you are that person."

"Thank you," I smiled. "Now go to sleep, and don't worry."

Sensible and practical she called me, but I thought I little deserved her description as I went back into the big front bed-room and saw my friend leaning from the window.

"Come here, Elise! Come here!" Her tone was low but imperative. I hurried over to the window.

"See there!" she cried. "There he is!"

"Nonsense, Mildred, I can't see a thing but the shadow——" The words died abruptly on my lips, for I did see it!

THERE was an uncanny sort of light under the tree—a pallid, bluish sort of light—and, in its faint glimmer, I saw a long, lank figure hanging by a rope which was tied about its neck. I could even see the knots in the rope! And there were the outflung groping hands and those madly stretching feet! One toe barely touched the ground, then it swung toward the tree-trunk, scraping—scraping to get a foothold!

"You see it too!" Mildred caught my arm. "Then I'm not going crazy! It's there! It's there!" The words came with hysterical relief.

"I see something, but I expect it's because you told me about it!" My lips and mouth were as dry as if they had been wiped with blotting paper. I rubbed my eyes, tried to think. It was just a little after nine o'clock; Mr. and Mrs. Ardwell were still stirring about downstairs; there was nothing of the eeriness of the still small hours—nor was I the sort to see ghosts!

As I told myself these things the figure faded, the blue light died. There was nothing outside the window but the feeble rays of the rising moon and the dense shadows of the big live-oak. "Of course, I don't see anything," I managed in my natural voice. "You must have had me hypnotized, Mildred. Come back to bed, dear."

"But you did see something at first," she insisted.

"Oh, it was just the way the shadows are grouped and the way you talked!" I made myself laugh. "And you don't see anything either."

I pulled her toward the bed and then undressed. I went over to kiss my sleeping baby, and came back and climbed into bed with Mildred.

But I couldn't sleep. In the first place, it seemed to me that I HAD seen something—the very figure Mildred described. And it had seemed so intensely real that I had been on the point of summoning Mr. and Mrs. Ardwell. Good thing I hadn't; they'd have thought us both crazy!

I tried to relax—to drop off to sleep. . . . Mildred was quiet and I almost drifted into slumber after hours had passed when suddenly I was conscious of a scraping sound. I was wide awake in a moment, and realized that Mildred, who had lain so still, was tense beside me.

"Do you hear it?" she whispered.

"I hear something. Probably a branch of that three scraping against the house."

"Not one limb of that tree touches the house," Mildred returned firmly. "I looked carefully in the daylight. It's that hanged man's foot—I can hear it, and if I go to the window I can see it——" Her foot was kicking wildly at the footboard of the bed. She sprang up.

"I can't lie here another minute. I tried to be still so you could sleep—but I can't, Elise!" She rushed to the window and I followed.

This time I knew it was no figment of Mildred's imagination lodged in my consciousness, no hallucination of my own brain. I *saw* the long, lank figure, the writhing arms, the madly seeking foot. This time I glimpsed his tortured, swollen face, the staring protruding eyes—and as I gazed in cold horror at the frightful scene, the writhing hands were stretched toward us as if imploring mercy!

"Horrible! Horrible!" The words kept ringing in my ears—and yet I couldn't tear my eyes away.

"Don't you see him? Don't you see him?" Mildred shrieked, "If you don't, I'm insane! *Insane!*"

She flung herself into my arms that were trembling so I could scarcely hold her. Her father and mother came panting up the stairs, and baby Nell awoke and added her cries to the confusion.

"Mildred had a terrible nightmare," I tried to explain. "Help me get her back on the bed—she's fainted."

We laid her gently down, and Mr. Ardwell, looking grotesque in his pajamas and with his hair sticking out every way, looked down at his daughter, his grim face working. Mildred's mother knelt beside her, rubbing her hands and begging her to wake up, while I flew to my baby and quickly soothed her to sleep again.

"It's nearly day." I glanced at the little clock on the mantel. "I'm going to stay up and dress."

"*I'm* going for Dr. Spokeman," Mr. Ardwell plunged from the room and hurried down the stairs. The mother still hung over her unconscious daughter.

As I got rapidly into my clothes, I glanced fearfully out of the window. There was nothing there. Nothing, at least, that should not be there. Just the curving paths and the stately tree. It was still shadowy under the tree.

I pressed closer to the window, forgetting for the moment Mildred and her fears in the tenseness of my own. No, there was no dread shape hanging there, no writhing hands, no frantically scraping foot! Of course, there wasn't! It was nonsense. All my common sense ridiculed such a thing—and yet, as I turned and looked down at Mildred lying there prostrated, her engagement broken, her happiness gone—I faltered.

Mrs. Ardwell and I did all we could for the poor girl until her father returned with the doctor. She had regained consciousness and was moaning and shuddering. The kindly physician administered morphine, then turned to us.

"SHE'S been failing ever since we came here, doctor," Mrs. Ardwell quavered, "but we kept hoping she'd be all right. She's never told Tom and me what it is that's troubling her, and she wouldn't tell George Willoughby, the young man she's engaged to." The distressed mother wrung her hands, while the father stood there trying to hide his concern under a grim look.

"She told *me*, Dr. Spokeman," I burst out.

"That's good. Let's get at the bottom of this. There's something radically wrong when a strong, healthy girl goes to pieces in a few weeks."

"I don't see how I can tell you, though. She wouldn't want me to."

"I don't care what she's done," the mother wailed. "She's my darling child and all we want is to get her well. Tell the doctor right out, Elise."

"Oh, Mildred hasn't done anything. She's been having some sort of nightmares. She imagines she sees and hears something every night under that big oak. It has preyed on her mind."

"Change," the physician said sententiously; "that's what the girl needs. Take her to your house in Wimbleton this morning, Mrs. Bradford. I can't answer for her if she has another attack like this." He bent over Mildred, listened to her breathing. "The medicine is taking effect; she's getting some sleep. That's what she needs most—sleep."

He turned, and the mother and father followed him from the room.

I stayed with Mildred and the baby. My conscience reproached me for not having told all the truth. I hadn't said that I, too, had seen the horrid shape and heard the same terrible sounds that were wrecking my friend's sanity. I felt that I couldn't! I knew now what poor Mildred had suffered.

Mrs. Ardwell came back into the room.

"We must get Mildred ready to go to town with me," I told her. "You heard what Dr. Spokeman said."

"But—she's sick and I hate to worry you, Elise."

"The idea!" I exclaimed. "I want her and so does Arthur, not to mention George Willoughby."

She shook her head. "Do you think George still cares for Mildred, Elise?"

"He surely does! Now, Mrs. Ardwell, suppose we get a little breakfast, and then we'll pack the things Mildred will need to take in with her." I knew that to give the woman something to do would help her.

"What am I thinking of?" she bustled out. "I'll have coffee and eggs and toast ready in just a little while," she called back.

I FINISHED my toilet, then bathed and dressed the baby. And when Mildred had roused and managed to swallow a little nourishment, I told her I was taking her home with me.

"I won't go! I can't go!" she objected violently.

"But why not, dear?" her mother soothed. "Elise wants you and the doctor says you must have a change."

"I can't go where George is! I can't!"

"You shall not see George unless you want to," I promised. "And until you do he shall not come near you!"

"I couldn't let him see me like this," she whispered, "I couldn't."

I didn't blame her. For the broken creature I put to bed a short time later in my guest room bore scant resemblance to the beautiful, dimpled, smiling girl with whom George Willoughby had fallen in love.

George was so grateful to me, he wrung my hand until it hurt. He wanted to rush upstairs to see her, but, when I told him of my promise, he gave in. Then he wanted to hire a nurse. But I told him just what I had told the Ardwells—that I'd have old Aunt Abby help me all day and could manage all right.

George hurried out after lunch and bought a box of candy for me and a lovely bouquet of roses for Mildred. I put them in her room, looking down at her a moment as she slept peacefully, doubtless still somewhat under the opiate. The baby was asleep, too, and I felt like following their example. My eyes were heavy from staying awake all night, but I couldn't lie down. I made my way to the kitchen where Aunt Abby was nodding by the stove. She awoke as I entered.

"Aunt Abby, don't you think we can soon get Mildred well with your good cooking?"

"She'll git all right, honey," the old woman said as she nodded her woolly head, "soon as she gits over dat skeer. But she ain't fitten ter go back out ter dat place—no time!"

"Have you ever been out to the Ardwell's new home, Aunt Abby?"

"No'm, an I ain't er gwine nuther. You looks peaked yo'self, Miss Elise. I spec' you didn't res' out dar?"

"No." I rubbed my tired head. "I didn't sleep last night. What's the matter with the Ardwell's house? It's new and fine, and the prettiest place in the whole county."

"Huh, purty is ez purty does! Dat place ain't fitten for nobody's house. Dem Yankee folks didn't know 'bout hit."

"What is there about it, Aunt Abby?" I sat down and leaned forward on the kitchen table. "You said something yesterday when I asked you to go with me that made me wonder, and now I've got to know."

"Huh, chile, t'aint nothin' de matter wid de *house*, but all de colored folks knows dat dat tree whut is right up by de side ob hit is *hanted!*"

"Now, Aunt Abby, you know there's no such thing as a haunt or a ghost!"

"How come dey ain't? 'Co'se dey is, honey! Seems lak you'd kno' it now wif lil' Mis' Mildred all ter pieces. De docter kin talk 'bout nervus breakdown—but I knows de po' lil' thing is done seed a hant!"

"What are you talking about, Aunt Abby?" I insisted. "Tell me the story."

"Huh, chile!" The old woman pulled a bright bandanna from her capacious pocket and twisted it deftly about her head. "Hit wus endurin' ob de war, back en my mammy's days, dat de white folks cotched a feller whut had runned de wrong way in de fight. They stringed him up on a limb er dat bery tree out dar. Dey say he wus a powerful long feller, en some mo' soljers cum erlong jes es dey got de rope tied—en dem whut wus hangin' him had ter run. De Yanks run atter dem, an' de whole passel left dat feller hangin' dar mos' dead—but not quite—'case one foot jest tetched de ground. Some ob de darky folks cum er peepin' eround, but dey didn't dar go up dere, en hit wus er whole week befo' sum ob de other white folks in Wimbleton went out dar.

"De feller wus dead den, but he hadn't ben dead long 'case he wus still warm, and he had struggled mightily. De dirt wus scraped in er deep trench whar his foot had dug, an' a lot ob de bark wus scraped off de tree whar he'd tried ter git a place ter fit his foot. Dey tuk his body down ter a little thicket ob woods down by de ribber an' wus gitten ready ter bury hit, when ernother passel ob Yanks cum erlong and dey had ter run. An' chile, nobody nebber did burry dat feller! An' dats whut's de matter—his bones is still er layin' out!"

I stared at the old negress as she rocked back and forth relating the superstitious yarn. How absurd it was! And yet I felt a chill as of ice-water running in my veins. So far as I could recall I had never heard the tale, and yet the thing was what Mildred and I both had seen!

"Does everybody know that old tale, Aunty?"

"No'm chile; de white folks don't. Ef dey do dey is done forgot hit. But all de colored folks knows hit. An' dat's why none ob em went wid Mis' Mildred' pa when dey moved. You didn't see no colored folks out dere las' night did yer?"

I SHOOK my head. I hadn't seen a dark face at the new Ardwell place.

"You say, Aunt Abby, that the man who was hung was never buried; then where is his body?"

"Done et by de buzzards," she nodded solemnly. "But de bones is out dere somewhere. . . ."

I stood up. The story had given me something to start on. Wild and fantastic as it was—I must investigate.

"You go upstairs, Aunt Abby, and look after Miss Mildred and little Nell. I'm going out for awhile."

"Dat's de reason, honey," and she waddled toward the back stairs, "dat I didn't lak fer you ter go out dere, and dat's why I didn't go wid yer."

"I understand." I caught up my hat. "Look after those two upstairs!" I whirled out to the garage. We had no car yet but I knew that George's was at my service. I felt I must see George first. I drove directly to his office and found him alone. In as few words as possible I laid the thing before him.

"Poor little thing! My poor little Mildred," he muttered.

"Now do you see why she wouldn't marry you?" I added. "The foolish child thought she was going mad. It's up to us to find out what's behind this—and do away with it. You can imagine how much I believe in ghosts—'it is to laugh', as Arthur would say. This may be just darky talk, but I want you to go with me to see the Ardwells. If I hadn't felt I needed you, I'd never have told you."

"Of course, you ought to have told me, Elise," George in-

sisted. Quickly he closed his office and joined me out in the little car. Soon we reached the beautiful Ardwell place.

"It seems hard to realize that anything sinister could be connected with this pretty spot." I gazed up at the freshly painted house with its vines—but I tried not to look at the tree. I had always loved trees, but not that one . . .

We found Mr. and Mrs. Ardwell in the kitchen. The woman's eyes were red and her husband looked grimmer and more close-mouthed than I had ever seen him. But I understood him now. That was just his way.

"Elise has something to tell you," George said. "She's told me and now wants to tell you."

Swiftly I related my experience of the night before.

"MILDRED had told me what was worrying her, and I determined to see for myself. I think you three know me well enough to believe that I'm not superstitious or over-imaginative; I've always been called practical and matter-of-fact. But I saw that man hanging there as clearly as I see you—and I heard his foot scraping, too. Mildred wouldn't tell any of you about this because she was terribly afraid she was losing her mind. But if she's going crazy—then so am I!"

I hurried on to relate Aunt Abby's tale.

"So that's why the negroes wouldn't come with us, Tom!" Mrs. Ardwell exclaimed. "They pretended they didn't want to leave the places they'd lived so long."

"But—even now that we know the story, what are we to do?" George asked. "Must Mr. Ardwell give up this fine place on account of a tale of something that might or might not have happened fifty years ago?"

"If it takes that——" Mr. Ardwell began.

"First," I interrupted, "let's go down and search that little tangle of swamp near the river. Aunt Abby said——"

The two worried men did not wait to hear more. They both hurried out, Mr. Ardwell taking along a sharp knife and George catching up a pair of hedge clippers. Mrs. Ardwell and I followed because we couldn't stay behind.

After an hour, the men came out of the dense brambles of the jungle-like thicket, their clothes torn, their hands and faces scratched. But George carried what was unmistakably a human skull! I shivered as I looked at it.

"It's in there, all right," George panted, "but it will take time. We've got to rake and scratch aside the leaf-mold."

"If we had a box, Milly—" The older man took his wife's handkerchief and stanched the blood on his cheek.

SWIFTLY, she and I returned to the house, and found a strong wooden box that had been used for packing when they moved. Holding it between us, we returned to the thicket. The two men fought their way back with the box among the tangled branches and were gone for two hours. When they returned the bones were all collected in the box. The sight was too much for me and I turned away. Mr. Ardwell fetched a spade and George dug a hole and then and there the remains were decently interred.

There were few words spoken as we walked back.

"There's one other thing," Mr. Ardwell declared, as George and I climbed in the car to return to town. "Tomorrow that tree comes down, and then I guess there'll be no more of that tale!"

"But it's such a splendid oak," I spoke involuntarily.

"Not now." The man said the two words distinctly, as he shook hands with us both, and we left him and his wife.

When I saw the house again it was still beautiful but it looked a different place. The grassy lawns and the shining white clapboards were drenched in sunlight. There seemed no shadows anywhere, and how the flowers bloomed where the old tree had cast its shade. How the place smiled!

Not any more though, than George and Mildred did when they were married two months later. Oh, yes, Mildred recovered miraculously when we told her that the man who was hung and was never buried, had been buried at last—and that the mysterious old tree had been cut down.

Practical as I am, I have never for one moment doubted that I really saw the ghost of the unfortunate man who met his fate on a limb of the giant live-oak. I *know* I saw him and I'm glad I did. I believe I was granted that awful vision so that I might prevent it from wrecking the life and happiness of my two best friends.

The Flaming Wraith

By CLAUDE FREELAND

WHEN my father was still young it became necessary for his parents to move to a place outside of Kansas City. On reaching this town around seven o'clock in the evening, it was found that the house he had rented had not yet been vacated. The owners of the place, however, suggested a vacant house that might do for a day or two.

There was no alternative, and accordingly my grandfather soon found himself and family ensconced temporarily in the house that had been suggested.

For my two aunts, then girls of twelve and fifteen, a mattress was unrolled and placed on the floor of a room upstairs. The other members of the family slept on the lower floor.

Shortly after all had retired, my aunts declare they heard a peculiar sound of a nature they could not identify. And being alone on the upper floor of a strange house, they were naturally timid. They strained their ears in an effort to catch and identify the sounds. The older of the girls raised up on one elbow, facing, as she could see by the dim moonlight that streamed into the room, a clothes closet. Even as she noted this, the door of the closet opened violently and a young woman, wrapped in flames and holding an exploding kerosene lamp sprang out. The lamp she flung from the window near-by, and then almost completely enveloped in the flames, rushed from the room. During this enactment there was no sound, but immediately on its cessation, both girls sprang to their feet and, clinging to each other, screamed in terror. By the time their father and mother appeared on the scene the girls were almost hysterical and insisted their mother stay with them.

An hour passed, and once more the house was quiet. The mother was tired and long since had fallen asleep, but the memory of their ghostly visitor kept the two girls awake.

Another half hour passed, then the girls again heard the peculiar sound they had previously been unable to identify. Their mother was very promptly awakened, and sleepily she listened. Several minutes passed, and then the mother was brought wide awake as the closet door, previously closed, again banged open and the scene re-enacted exactly as the girls had described it. But she watched alone, for the two girls were buried far beneath the covers. When the apparition had disappeared, she rose, lit a candle, and with the two girls made her way downstairs to her husband. By this time he was genuinely interested. He returned to the upstairs room with them, and with a lighted lamp closely examined the closet. It was empty, but the paint and woodwork were slightly burned and scorched.

Early next morning my grandfather called upon the agent of the place. Quizzically the agent listened while the story of the flaming wraith was recounted. He then admitted that since the wife of one of the former residents of the place had been burned to death in an upstairs room of the house, no family who took the place ever remained more than one night. But, declared he, none had given any tangible reason for so hastily leaving the place, and he had not known.

Needless to say, my grandparents moved out at once.

I would have yelled, if I could—police or no police

The SHADOW

"The Wages of Sin is Death!" Tough Chuck Chilton learned his lesson—too late, but he went the limit to save a pal from paying the awful price

YES, sir, it's going to be known as the Chilton Industrial Institution, and I aim to make it the finest possible kind of a home for boys—youngsters that never had a chance. You can quote me as saying that, son . . . But I don't see what difference it makes to you or your paper or to anybody else *why* I'm calling it the Chilton.

No, it's not named after me. I'm still plain Bill Farrell, and if you want to know where I got the money to endow an outfit like this industrial institution, just look up at a few of these skyscrapers around here. Contracting's my line; but if you think that's the only thing I've ever done, you've got another guess coming!

But say, you wanted to know where I got that name Chilton . . . Funny, I never figured anybody would ask about that! Guess there's no harm in telling you—now—though I've never wanted to talk about it much. It's pretty unbelievable. . . .

First place, would you believe me if I told you that Chilton was the name of a crook? No? Well, I won't ask you to right off, but I'll start back at the beginning.

The story opens about fifty years ago, son, and the scene's laid on the docks along the East River. Most any old time you could have found me around there with my gang, throwing stones or otherwise getting into trouble—you know how boys are . . . But the one place I steered clear of was home. My dad was a longshoreman, and when he came home at night—if he did come home—he was always drunk. Finally I got sick and tired of being licked all the time, and when I was twelve I ran away. I never went back.

You can bet I learned all there was to hopping freights, and I got quite a ways from New York before I got hungry enough to give up my side-door Pullman. Never mind the name of the town. It was good enough for me for the next six years. And it was there I met Chuck Chilton—in a pool-room.

I ran into him in a game of pea-pool. He was thirty years older than me, kind of sad-eyed and quiet; he gave you a different feeling from the others, who were shifty and always keeping one eye on the door. There was good enough reason for them to be nervous; they'd all been on the police blotter and never knew when they'd be wanted again.

Chuck Chilton wasn't that kind. He was more absent-minded than anything else; sitting by himself, or getting into a game now and then without saying much to anyone. When I heard he was the best safe-cracker in town I thought the boys were handing me the razz. Chuck was down on his luck just then, they said: his sidekick had been sent up for a jolt, and he couldn't work alone. He wasn't satisfied to join up with just any ordinary crook; he was particular.

I talked to him a little. I was ambitious. I'd been getting along by working a little, gambling a lot and taking some wide-open chances. Nothing criminal yet; but that's what I was heading for. It looked like an easy enough graft—no regular hours, no hard work, easy come and easy go. All I wanted was a chance.

I spilled all this to Chuck Chilton. He listened to me with a kind of curious expression, as if there was a light of some kind flickering in his eyes. Then he says:

"Forget it, kid. You been on the level this long; leave it alone. I'm 'way past forty, young feller—I'm too old to change. But you——"

I was stubborn.

"You need a partner," I said. "You ain't able to work without one. I know all about Bradish."

"Bradish is up the river," he said solemnly.

"Well, I'll take his place. I'm a square shooter."

He looked me over kind of carefully.

"I can't stake you," he said roughly.

"I don't need staking. I can always get by."

The flicker came back into his eyes.

"BRING your duds over to my place tonight," he said. "There's room for two, and if I take you on, we'll have to bunk together. Remember—I said *if!*"

I was in a regular seventh heaven of glory. To be the partner of Chuck Chilton seemed to me to be everything worth while in life. It meant doing big jobs, getting in with the high class crooks, making a reputation. You can bet I didn't waste any time packing my things.

Chilton lived in a little two-by-four in a quiet enough street. He wasn't the flashy sort, and nobody would ever have suspected him of being the first class cracksman he was. He was evidently up against it: he hadn't pulled a job for some time, and a crook's money doesn't last forever. I was all impatience, but Chilton didn't seem to have any immediate plans.

# of CRIME

By
WILLIAM FARRELL
As told to
Emil Raymond

The hands were clenched tight . . . the Thing came closer . . . Suddenly it reached out

"You can't go out on a job without having the lay of it in advance," he explained. "Something'll turn up pretty soon. Meanwhile, you get yourself a job, so at least one of us'll be working. It'll throw off suspicion."

It wasn't just what I'd counted on, but he was the boss, and he never let me forget it. I'd done bell-hopping before, so I got myself a job in a hotel and managed first rate. From the first Chuck Chilton seemed to be playing father to me. He'd talk to me real serious at times—no religious stuff at all, but just trying to make me change my mind about being a crook.

"It's damn little fun, Bill," he'd say. "Taking your life in your hands most of the time, and the big house always staring you in the face. And unless you get away with clean cash, the fence robs you every time; never a break in the world!"

BUT I wouldn't be convinced. All I ever said was, "Try me on a job."

He'd sit staring at me sometimes, with that peculiar flicker in his eye.

"You're not cut out for that sort of thing," he'd say. "Why don't you get yourself a real job? You've got it in you to make a real success. Big money and a big position and everything. You ain't giving yourself a chance, kid."

Just the same, all I wanted was a chance to work with him, and as time passed I got more and more impatient. But Chuck Chilton said I couldn't start out without knowing some of the tricks, and there wasn't anything doing at present anyhow.

One morning I came in at about two-thirty—I was doing a split shift at the hotel—and Chilton wasn't home. There was nothing unusual about this, for he was often out a good part of the night, but this time I had a presentiment that something had gone wrong. I couldn't get to sleep. My eyes were wide open, and my nerves straining, just as if I was trying to see something in the dark. I tossed around in bed, doing everything to shake off the feeling, but I couldn't. It wasn't that I had any idea of what might be going on; it was just an edginess that got worse and worse until I thought I would scream. The funny part was, when I thought about it afterward, that any other time I'd have gotten up and gone down to the pool-room for a chat with the boys till I got over it. On this particular night it seemed as if I was chained in the room. I couldn't go to sleep; but I couldn't leave, either.

All of a sudden I seemed to relax; all my nervousness disappeared, and, absolutely worn out, I fell asleep.

When I woke in the morning, Chuck was peacefully asleep in his bed. I hadn't heard him come in, but there was nothing strange about that, for he always moved around as silently as a cat; it was a habit with him. When I came back from work that night he was sitting by the window reading a paper.

"You pulled a job by yourself last night!" I cried out, as sore as I had ever been in my life.

"Yeh? Well, why don't you yell it so the whole world'll hear?"

I lowered my voice. "Why didn't you let me know? Why didn't you take me with you?"

He got up slowly with his jaw set in a way I had never seen before; I thought he was going to take a whack at me.

"Any time you get the idea, young feller, that you don't like what I do, pick up your duds and go. I ain't got any strings tied to you. And keep your mouth shut!"

I did. I was scared to death that Chuck might turn me out, and I never said another word. He never asked me how I knew he'd been out on a job that night. To tell the truth, I didn't know myself; I just had the feeling.

A COUPLE of weeks later I was half dozing on the bench in the hotel; it was a dull night, with barely anybody going in or out. I must have fallen asleep, for I began to see things—to have bad dreams. I saw Chuck Chilton. First he was far off; I could only tell it was him by the way he walked. He was badly worried, I could see that; and he seemed to stumble now and then. I felt all choked up. I knew something awful was happening. Then I saw Chuck real close. He was covered with blood, his face was white as a sheet and twisted with pain. I must have yelled.

A hand grabbed at my collar and shook me wide awake.

"For Christ's sake, wake up! You got the jimmies?"

It was the bell captain. I looked up at the clock; it was just past three, and I had three more hours on my shift. I couldn't go through with it—not with Chuck looking like that.

"Lemme off," I said to the boss. "I got to go home. I'm sick."

"Sick, hell!" he growled. "You stay where you are."

"I can't! I'm going home—I've got to." I was desperate.

"You leave that bench and you're through."

It didn't make any difference. I stripped off the uniform and climbed into my clothes. Chuck Chilton'd be sore as hell when he found out, but I couldn't do anything else.

My heart was going like a trip-hammer when I opened the door to our room. It was dark inside, but the sound I heard from the bed set me trembling in every limb. It was Chuck breathing—a horrible sound between a groan and a whine. I turned on the lights and he opened his eyes.

He was lying on the bed with his clothes on, and at sight of him I knew he was done for. His eyes were glassy, but he recognized me.

"THEY got me, kid," he said, and his voice was just a whisper. "I'm glad you come home. You got to listen to me."

He jerked a bit and his fists were clenched in pain.

"You got to listen to me," he repeated. "You're never to be no crook—you hear me, kid?"

"Sure, Chuck," I said. I was fumbling with his clothes.

"Quit it," he groaned. "You're hurting. Just get me a glass of water."

When I came back to the bed his eyes were wide open.

"You got to swear to me, kid, you'll never do nothing crooked. You hear?"

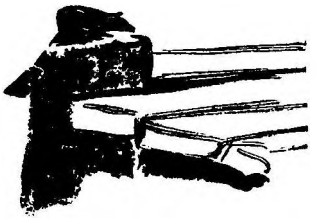
"Sure, I hear. Take it easy, Chuck——" I didn't know what to say or do.

"Swear!" he gasps, and I held up my right hand and swore. His eyes closed, and his breathing got fainter. I don't know when he passed out.

But in the morning I was still sitting on the bed by the body, figuring things out. I couldn't do Chuck any good being found in the room with him. I'd thrown up my job at the hotel, and I felt sick at what had happened. No use in my staying in town; so an hour later I was on a train.

My promise to Chuck kept me straight for some time. I was a husky kid, and got a job with a contracting gang. Soon I'd picked up a lot of patter about the work. But I was restless, sticking to one thing, and after a while the memory of that oath got kind of dim. The job gave out, and I was back in a pool-room sitting around, thinking up some quick way to get my hands on easy cash.

I'd picked up a lot from Chuck about the way to plan things. Safe-cracking, for instance, took at least two men; there's night watchmen to guard against, and burglar alarms, and lots of work to be done. But house-breaking is a one-man job, and that's where I figured I'd fit in. I prowled around the district where the rich homes were, and finally I made up my mind. It looked like a good thing, and I was going to try it alone. My promise to Chuck Chilton had gone clean out of my mind.



I stalled around that night until about one o'clock; then I crept up in the shadow of the trees to a basement window I had picked out. I had learned how to handle tools with the contracting gang, and in a minute I had the lock sprung. Everything around was quiet as the dead, and I slipped inside. I stood there a minute to get my eyes used to the darkness. My heart was hitting pretty fast; but it was excitement, not fear. I was as cool as if I had done this sort of thing all my life.

But as I stood there, a glow of some kind seemed to gather from the far end of the room. I couldn't make it out, and at first I thought it was a reflection from somewhere. It got a bit brighter, but still it didn't light up anything in the cellar, like a real light would do. My breath started to come a little quicker.

And then in that misty light I began to see Chuck Chilton—bigger than he ever was in life, with a stern, threatening look on his face. It reminded me of the time when he'd got up out of his chair and I'd thought he was going to hit me. His hands were folded and he just stood there, his eyes boring into me.

I don't scare very easy, and I closed my eyes and sort of wiped my hands across my face, thinking to drive that thing out of my mind. When I looked again he was still there. I took a step sidewise—and Chuck did the same. Then suddenly I saw blood streaming down his side. The face that had been solemn and calm twisted in a spasm of pain, and the figure started to stumble toward me!

I would have yelled if I could, police or no police; but the breath just hissed out of my lips. The hands were clenched tight now, and the eyes seemed to be rolling, but they never left me for a moment. The Thing came closer. Suddenly it reached out, and I fell back. I'd been standing right in front of the open window, and I squirmed back through it, quick as a flash, out onto the lawn.

I must have laid there for an hour, weak and trembling, not daring to move. But I got some strength back at last, and crawling inch by inch over the grass, I finally got to the hedge along the sidewalk. Then I turned to look back at the window. The black opening still gaped as I had left it; there was no sign of light inside or any movement at all. But a million dollars in cash laying on that window sill wouldn't have made me go near that house again.

Did I go back to work? You bet your life I did—back to the contracting game, and pretty soon I was foreman. Work was brisk, and I learned the trade pretty smart. But you know how it is. Jobs don't last forever, and finally I was stranded out in some Western town, stony broke. I'd given up all idea of ever doing anything crooked after that last experience I'd had; but there's something about an empty stomach—and no chance of filling it—that wipes out good intentions.

BUT it wasn't until I was down to my last dime that I really made up my mind. I'd been all over town trying to get work, and the only answer I'd gotten was "Come around in a week or two." In between times I'd been thinking of what I might turn my hand to.

The job I'd worked on last was next to a factory on the edge of town, and I'd had plenty of opportunity to map out the lay of it during the three months I'd been working there. There was always a pretty big sum kept in the safe, and although the factory was a large rambling building that covered a whole block, it wasn't hard to get into. There was a roundsman at night, but he just came once an hour to pull the box, and I felt I could slip in without any danger and make my get-away between trips.

I made my plans pretty carefully, and was prepared for anything. I'd picked up a gun in my travels, and now I saw to it that it was working okay. I fixed myself a "comealong" to use on the safe, which was just an old-fashioned box, and wouldn't give me much trouble. I borrowed enough to get myself a ticket out of town so I could make my getaway before the trail got hot.

It was raining cats and dogs when I started out. The plant was clear out of town and I was soaking wet when I came up to the building, which was black and deserted. I'd figured my time so as to get there just after the night watchman left, but I'd been delayed on account of the storm, and I had less than a half hour before he'd be around again. I couldn't take a chance on such a short margin, so there was nothing to do but kill time until he made his next round.

I climbed the fence and parked myself under a shed where they'd stored old barrels and boxes. The rain came through the roof and the wind howled like a flock of coyotes. I figured I was sure earning my money that night. I wasn't

as hard-boiled as I had been—good hard work takes that out of you—and once or twice I got cold feet, thinking I'd ought to quit and stick it out until I got myself an honest job.

But I was still a kid, and the idea of backing down came hard. I'd see it through, and after this one trick I'd go straight.

The time simply wouldn't pass, and in the dark and the storm I had other things to worry about, too. I remembered the last time I had tried house-breaking, and what had happened. It took a lot of hard thinking to get that out of my mind.

"Can that stuff!" I said to myself. "You were dreaming that night, bozo, or you got chicken-livered and thought you were seeing ghosts. You've grown up since then."

STILL, I wasn't exactly comfortable, remembering Chuck Chilton and what he'd think about me breaking my word to him. But finally an interruption put an end to all these far-fetched thoughts. The roundsman came by, made his call, and as I crawled out of my hiding place I saw his shadow slip by the iron gate on his way down the street. I gave him five minutes to get clear; I knew he wouldn't be loafing outside on a night like this. Then I set to work.

It was a rear door that I had decided to break in—a long ways from the office where the safe was stowed, but safer on account of being clear out of sight. I wasn't afraid of making a noise, for with the wind and the rain there wasn't a chance of being overheard.

I got inside without any trouble. I had a pocket flash, but having plenty of time I didn't bother to use it. I just groped my way through a storehouse full of bales and cases. I bumped my head once against a box that stuck out into the aisle, and it didn't help my temper any. I got into a narrow hall, and started in the direction where the office ought to be. The hall ended in a flight of steps where there oughtn't to have been any steps, and I cursed out loud.

I started back, and, as I turned, my heart seemed to spring up in my throat and then stop. A kind of misty light was gathering at the end of the hall near the door. I didn't know what it was, and I couldn't see to make it out. All I could think of was that other awful light that had taken the shape of Chuck Chilton—and of how I'd been sick for weeks afterward. All I wanted to do was to run—to get away from that place before the light started to move.

But where to run? Up those steps into the factory, where I didn't know my way, and would easily be caught? I had no choice. I turned and made for the stairway. I didn't care where it led to; I was ready to jump out of a window to get out of that place. There was a long hallway at the top, and I raced along, not caring how much noise I made. Then, panting, I stopped and looked back. Not a thing to be seen. I gave myself a few seconds to get my breath; then I tried the door nearest to me. It was locked, and my hands were trembling so it was impossible for me to use my jimmy. I had to give it up.

I followed that hallway further. Every door was locked, and I was frantic now to get out. At the far end was another stairway. I took it three steps at a time, head down, not caring what I ran into. At the bottom I gave one look and I believe I yelled. There was that infernal light, moving a little, waiting for me at the end of the hall!

My strength gave out and I collapsed; it was more than human nerves could stand. I hid my face in my hands. Sweat was pouring out all over me, and I mumbled things to myself. I think I tried to pray.

I looked up at last, hoping the Thing might be gone. But it was closer now, and seemed to be making motions. It was the face of Chuck Chilton, the same as before, and he was waving his hand to me, sort of beckoning me to follow him. I tried to tell myself it was a dream; that I was asleep. I pinched myself all over—and my hand gripped the revolver that I had strapped to my belt.

I must have gone crazy then. I pulled out the gun, and, closing my eyes, fired at that misty figure coming toward me. The sound cracked through the building like a roar of thunder, and I sprang to my feet. There were two things I had to fear—the light ahead of me, and the roundsman who would be attracted by my shot. Somehow I had to get out!

But before I could make a move I was held paralyzed by another sound on the floor above me. It was a hard rasping sound of a man's voice.

"Them rats are shooting each other up! Get back the other way, and we'll have 'em between us."

Already I was trapped. The roundsman must have been right on my trail, and finding the door open, had summoned help. And the ghost of Chuck Chilton stood in my way!

The actual danger from the men who were lying in wait for me cleared my brain a little and gave me strength. I dared to look up at the nightmare that stood in my path. It was fading quickly, floating down the long hall, but waving to me all the time. As I watched it, it seemed to turn a corner and disappear.

There was nothing else to do but follow. I was hopelessly lost in that big factory, and my pursuers were closing in. The only way open was the one straight ahead. Ghost or no ghost, I had to take it. I ran down the hall, my footsteps thundering like the blows of a hammer.

"Down here, Jim!" I heard a man call out. "There he goes!"

A shot came from behind and I heard the *ping* of the bullet against the wall. I ducked around a corner only to realize that this was the very turn the ghost had taken! There it was, far along the corridor, beckoning me on.

And then there crossed my mind the idea that perhaps Chuck Chilton, or his ghost—or whatever it was—was trying to help me out of this place; to help me make my getaway. And with that my brain cleared up. I felt no more fear; it was all as plain as day. Chuck would never desert a friend; here he was, come back to save me, his pal!

I raced along like mad now, no longer afraid of that dim light, but hoping to catch up with it; wanting only to get away from the men who were close behind. The dim figure of Chuck Chilton kept well ahead of me. In and out, through doorways and narrow halls it weaved, and wherever it turned, I did too, confident that I'd escape.

The sound of pursuit behind me had ended; all seemed quiet, for in that huge rambling place there was plenty of opportunity to lose one's way. Finally the shadowy shape I was following raised its hand and went out—disappeared completely in the darkness. I stopped, terrified again. How was I to go on? But then a gust of cold, damp air struck me, and I realized that I was close to some outer exit.

I WENT forward quickly, but as noiselessly as I could; and there, where Chuck Chilton's ghost had vanished, I found an open door leading to a side street and to safety.

It was still raining and the wind was howling. Not a sign of ghost or man; just the night and the storm. I slipped along the walls of the building in the deepest shadows I could find, and at last I got back to my room.

Did I ever see Chuck Chilton's ghost again? Never. I was cured. Many a time after that I was down on my luck, broke, despondent; but nothing in the world could ever make me touch a nickel that belonged to another man. My luck changed soon enough, too. I got a steady job with a building contractor who finally made me a partner. I got along fine; managed the business; made good investments, and when I came back here after the big war, I was ready to start in on a big scale. You know how it's gone, young man. Lots of success; lots of money.

But I've never forgotten how my boyhood was spoiled, and how I might have been doing time right now up in the big house if it hadn't been for Chuck Chilton. Do you wonder, now, that my new industrial home for boys is going to be called the Chilton?

The JADE FROG

By C. L. RAY

"The frog?" Miss Wilton inquired blankly. "But are you sure that's what it was?"

PETER WOOD'S executors found their task a very easy one. He had left his affairs in perfect order. The only surprise yielded by his tidy writing-table was a sealed envelope on which was written, "Not wishing to be bothered by well-meaning research societies, I have never shown the enclosed to anyone, but after my death all are welcome to read what is, to the best of my knowledge, a true story."

The manuscript bears a date three years previous to the death of the writer, and is as follows:

I have long wished to write down an experience of my youth. I shall not attempt any diagnosis as to its nature. I draw no conclusions. I merely record certain facts; at least, as such, these incidents presented themselves to my consciousness.

One evening, shortly after I had been called to the Bar, I was rather dejectedly returning to my lodgings, wishing I could afford a theater ticket, when my attention was drawn to the brightly lit window of a shop. Having an uneducated love of bric-a-brac, and remembering an unavoidable wedding present, I grasped the handle of the door which, opening with one of those cheerful clanking bells, admitted me into large rambling premises thickly crowded with all the traditional litter of a curiosity shop. Fragments of armor, pewter pots, dark, distorting mirrors, church vestments, flower pictures, brass kettles, chairs, tables, chests, chandeliers—all were here! But in spite of the heterogeneous confusion, there was none of the dingy, dusty gloom one associates with such collections. The room was brightly lit and a crackling fire leaped up the chimney. The atmosphere was warm and cheerful. Very agreeable I found it after the cold dank fog outside.

AT my entrance, a young woman and a child—by their resemblance obviously sisters—had risen from two armchairs. Bright, bustling, gaily dressed, they were curiously unlike the type of person who usually presides over that particular sort of wares. A flower shop would have seemed a more appropriate setting.

"How wonderful of them to keep their premises so clean," I thought, as I wished them good evening.

Their smiling faces made a very pleasing impression on

I was as mystified as she. Didn't these sisters know . . . ?

Suppose you bought a priceless curio for a song—and then discovered that nobody had sold it to you. What would YOU do?

me, one of comfortable, serene well-being, and, though the grown-up sister was most courteous in showing me the crowded treasures and displayed knowledge and appreciation, she struck me as quite indifferent as to whether I made any purchase or not. Her manner was really more that of a custodian than of a saleswoman.

Finding a beautiful piece of Sheffield plate very moderately priced, I decided that here was the very present for my friend. The child deftly converted my purchase into a brown paper parcel. Explaining to her elder sister that I was without sufficient cash, I asked if she would take a check.

"Certainly," she answered, briskly producing pen and ink. "Will you please make it out to the 'Corner Curio Shop'?"

It was with conscious reluctance that I set out into the saffron fog.

"Good evening, sir. Always pleased to see you at any time," rang out the girl's pleasant voice, a voice so agreeable that I left almost with a sense of having made a friend.

I suppose it must have been about a week later that, as I walked home one very cold evening—fine powdery snow brushing against my face, and a cutting wind tearing down the streets—I remembered the welcoming warmth of the cheerful Corner Curio Shop, and determined to revisit it. I found myself to be in the very street, and there—yes, there was the very corner. It was with a sense of disappointment, out of all proportion to the event, that I found the shop to be wearing that baffling—so to speak—shut-eyed appearance, and saw that a piece of cardboard, on which was printed the word "Closed," hung from the handle.

A BITTER gust of wind whistled round the corner, my wet trousers flapped dismally against my chapped ankles. I longed for the warmth and glow within, and felt annoyingly thwarted. Rather childishly—for I was certain the door was locked, I grasped the handle and shook it. To my surprise the handle turned in my hand, but not in answer to its pressure. The door was pulled open from inside, and I found myself peering into the dimly-lit countenance of a very old and frail-looking little man.

"Please to come in, sir," said a gentle, rather tremulous

voice, and soft footsteps shuffled away in front of me.

It is impossible to describe the altered aspect of the place. I assumed that the electric light fuse had blown out, for the darkness of the large room was only thinned by two guttering candles, and in the dim wavering light, the jumble of furniture, formerly brightly lit, now loomed towering and mysterious, and cast weird, almost menacing shadows. The fire was out, only one faintly glowing ember told that any had lately been alive. Other evidence there was none, for the grim cold of the atmosphere was such as I had never experienced. The phrase "it struck chill" is laughably inadequate. In retrospect the street seemed almost agreeable; in *its* biting cold there had at least been something exhilarating. The atmosphere was now as gloomy as it had previously been genial. I felt a strong impulse to leave immediately but the surrounding darkness thinned, and I saw that the old man was busily lighting candles here and there.

"ANYTHING I can show you, sir?" he quavered, as he spoke approaching me with a lighted taper in his hand. I now saw him comparatively distinctly, and his appearance made an indescribable impression on me. Rembrandt flitted through my mind. Who else could have suggested the strange shadows on that time-worn face? Tired is a word we lightly use. Never had I known what the word might mean, till I stared at that exhausted countenance. The ineffable, patient weariness of the withered face, the eyes—which seemed as extinct as the fire, save for a feeble glow as of some purpose. And the wan frailty of the figure!

The words "dust and ashes, dust and ashes," strayed through my brain.

On my first visit, you may remember that I had been impressed by the incongruous cleanliness of the place. The queer fancy now struck me that this old man was like an accumulation of all the dust one might have expected to see scattered over such precincts. In truth, he looked scarcely more solid than a mere conglomeration of dust that might be dispersed at a breath or a touch.

What a queer old creature to be employed by those healthy, well-to-do looking girls! "He must," I thought, "be some old retainer kept on out of charity."

"Anything I can show you, sir?" repeated the old man. His voice had little more body than the tearing of a cobweb, and yet there was a curious, almost pleading insistence in it, and his eyes were fixed on me in a wan yet devouring stare. I wanted to leave. Definitely I wanted to go. The proximity of this pitiable old man depressed me; I felt wretchedly dispirited but, involuntarily murmuring "Thank you, I'll look around," I found myself following his frail form and absent-mindedly inspecting various objects temporarily illuminated by his trembling taper.

The chill silence, only broken by the tired shuffle of his carpet slippers, got on my nerves.

"Very cold night, isn't it?" I hazarded.

"Cold is it? Cold, cold, yes, I dare say." In the gray voice was the apathy of extreme lassitude.

"Been at this job long?" I asked, dully peering at an old four-poster bed.

"A long, long time." The answer came softly as a sigh, and as he spoke Time seemed no longer a matter of days, weeks, months, years, but something that stretched immeasurably. I resented the old man's exhaustion and melancholy, the infection of which was so unaccountably weighing down my own spirits.

"How long, O Lord, how long?" I said as jauntily as possible—adding, with odious jocularity—"Old age pension about due, what?"

No response.

In silence we moved across to the other side of the room.

"Quaint piece that," said my guide, picking up a little grotesque frog that was lying on a shelf among numerous other small objects. It seemed to be made of some substance similar to jade and, rather struck by its uncouth appearance, I took it from the old man's hand. It was strikingly cold.

"I think it's rather fun," I said. "How much?"

"Half a crown, sir," whispered the old man, glancing up at my face. His voice had no more body than the sliding of dust, but in his eyes there was an unmistakable gleam of eagerness.

"Is that all? I'll have it," said I. "Don't bother to pack up old Anthony Roland. I'll put him in my pocket. Half a crown, did you say? Here it is."

In giving the old man the coin, I inadvertently touched his extended palm. I could scarcely suppress a start. I have said the frog struck cold, but its substance was tepid compared to that desiccated skin. I cannot describe the chill sensation received in that second's contact. "Poor old fellow!" I thought, "he's not fit to be about in this cold, lonely place. I wonder at those kind-looking girls allowing such an old wreck to struggle on."

"Good night," I said aloud.

"Good night, sir; thank you, sir," quavered the feeble old voice. He closed the door behind me.

Turning my head as I breasted the driving snow, I saw his form, scarcely more solid than shadow, outlined against the candlelight. His face was pressed against the big glass pane. I imagined his tired patient eyes peering after his vanishing customer.

Somehow I was unable to dismiss the thought of that old man from my mind. Long, long after I was in bed and courting sleep I saw that maze of wrinkles, his ravaged face and his great tired eyes like lifeless planets, staring, staring at me, and in their steady stare there seemed to be a sort of question. Yes, I was unaccountably perturbed by his personality, and even after I achieved sleep my dreams were full of my strange acquaintance.

Haunted, I suppose, by a sense of his infinite tiredness, in my dream I was trying to force him to rest—to lie down. But no sooner did I succeed in laying his frail form on the four-poster bed I had noticed in the shop (only now it seemed more like a grave than a bed, and the brocade coverlet had turned into sods of turf)—than he would slip from my grasp and totteringly set forth on his rambles around the shop. On and on I chased him, down endless avenues of weird furniture, but still he eluded me, and now the dim shop seemed to stretch on and on immeasurably—to merge into an infinity of sunless, airless space until at length I myself sank breathless and exhausted on to the four-poster grave.

THE next morning I received an urgent summons to my mother's sickbed, and in the anxiety of the ensuing week the episode of the Corner Curio Shop was banished from my mind. As soon as the invalid was declared out of danger, I returned to my dreary lodging. Dejectedly engaged in adding up my petty household accounts and wondering where on earth I was to find the money to pay next quarter's rent, I was agreeably surprised by a visit from an old school-fellow—at that time practically the only friend I possessed in London. He was employed by one of the best-known firms of fine art dealers and auctioneers.

After a few minutes' conversation, he rose in search of a light. My back was turned to him. I heard the sharp scratch of a match, followed by propitiating noises to his pipe. These were suddenly broken off by an exclamation.

"Good God, man!" he shouted. "Where, in the name of trade, did you get this?"

Turning round, I saw that he had snatched up my purchase of the other night, the funny little frog, whose presence on my mantelpiece I had practically forgotten.

He was holding it under the gas-jet, closely scrutinizing it through a small magnifying glass, and his hands were shaking with excitement. "Where did you get this?" he repeated. "Have you any idea what it is?"

Briefly I told him that, rather than leave a shop empty-

handed, I had recently bought the frog for half a crown.

"For half a crown?" he echoed. "My dear fellow, I can't swear to it, but I believe you've had one of those amazing pieces of luck one hears about. Unless I'm very much mistaken, this is a piece of jade of the Hsia dynasty."

To my ignorance these words conveyed little. "Do you mean it's worth money?"

"Worth money? Phew!" he ejaculated. "Look here. Will you leave this business to me? Let me have the thing for my firm to do the best they can by you. Today's Monday. I shall be able to get it into Thursday's auction."

Knowing I could implicitly trust my friend, I readily agreed to his proposal. Carefully wrapping the frog in cotton-wool, he departed.

FRIDAY morning I received the shock of my life. Shock does not necessarily imply bad news, and I can assure you that for some seconds after opening the one envelope lying on my dingy breakfast tray, the room spun round and round me. The envelope contained an invoice from Messrs. Spunk, fine art dealers and auctioneers:

To sale of Hsia jade, £2,000, less
10 per cent. commission . . . £1,800

and there, neatly folded, made out to Peter Wood, Esq., was Messrs. Spunk's check for £1,800. For some time I was completely bewildered. My friend's words had raised hopes; hopes that my chance purchase might facilitate the payment of next quarter's rent—might even provide for a whole year's rent—but that so large a sum was involved had never even crossed my mind. Could it be true, or was it some hideous joke? Surely it was—in the trite phrase—much, much too good to be true! It was not the sort of thing that happened to oneself.

Still feeling physically dizzy, I rang up my friend. The normality of his voice and the heartiness of his congratulations convinced me as to the truth of my astounding fortune. It was no joke—no dream. I, Peter Wood, whose bank account was at present £20 overdrawn, and who possessed no securities save shares to the extent of £150, by a sheer fluke, now held in my hand a piece of paper convertible into 1,800 golden sovereigns. I sat down to think—to try to realize—to readjust. From a jumble of plans, problems, and emotions one fact emerged crystal clear. Obviously, I could not take advantage of the girl's ignorance or of her poor old caretaker's incompetence. I could not accept this amazing gift from Fate, simply because I had bought a treasure for half a crown.

Clearly I must return at least half of the sum to my unconscious benefactors. Otherwise I should feel I had robbed them almost as much as though I had broken into their shop like a thief in the night. I remembered their pleasant open countenances. What fun to astonish them with the wonderful news! I felt a strong impulse to rush to the shop, but having for once a case in court, I was obliged to go to the Temple. Endorsing Messrs. Spunk's check, I addressed it to my bankers, and, consulting the fly-leaf of my check-book, made out one to the Corner Curio Shop for $900. This I placed in my pocket, determined to call at the Corner Shop on my way home.

It was late before I was free to leave the Law Courts, and on arriving at the shop, though somewhat disappointed, I was not greatly surprised to find that it was again shut, with the notice "Closed" slung over the handle. Even supposing the old caretaker to be on duty, there was no particular point in seeing him. My business was with his mistress. So, deciding to postpone my visit to the following day, I was just on the point of hurrying home, when—as though I had been expected—the door opened, and there on the threshold stood the old man peering out into the darkness.

"Anything I can do for you, sir?"

His voice was even queerer than before. I now realized that I had dreaded re-encountering him, but I felt irresistibly compelled to enter. The atmosphere was as grimly cold as on my last visit. I found myself actually shivering. Several candles, obviously only just lit, were burning, and by their glimmering light I saw the old man's gray gaze questioningly fixed upon me. What a face! I had not exaggerated its weirdness. Never had I seen so singular, so striking a being. No wonder I had dreamed of him. I wished he hadn't opened the door.

"Anything I can show you tonight, sir?" he rather tremulously inquired.

"No, thanks. I have come about that thing you sold me the other day. I find it's of great value. Please tell your mistress that I will pay her a proper price for it tomorrow."

As I spoke there spread over the old man's face the most wonderful smile. "Smile" I use for lack of a better word; but how convey any idea of the beauty of the indefinable expression that now transfigured that time-worn face? Tender triumph, gentle rapture! It was frost yielding to sunshine. Never before have I witnessed the thawing of thickly frozen grief—the dawn radiance of attainment. For the first time I had some inkling of the meaning of the word "beatitude."

Impossible to describe the impression made on me by that transfigured face. The moment, as it were, brimmed over. Time ceased, and I became conscious of infinite things. The silence of the shop was now broken by that gathering sound of an old clock about to break into speech. I turned my head toward one of those wonderful pieces of medieval workmanship—a Nuremberg grandfather clock. From a recess beneath its exquisitely painted face, quaint figures emerged, and while one struck a bell, others daintily stepped through a minuet. My attention was riveted by the pretty spectacle, and not till the last sounds had trembled into silence did I turn my head.

I found myself alone.

The old man had disappeared. Surprised at his leaving me, I looked all around the large room. Oddly enough, the fire, which I had supposed to be dead, had flared into unexpected life, and was now casting a cheerful glow. But neither fire nor candlelight showed any trace of the old caretaker. He had vanished.

"Hello! Hello!" I called interrogatively.

NO answer. No sound, save the loud ticking of clocks and the busy crackling of the fire. I walked all around the room. I even looked into the four-poster bed of which I had dreamed. I then saw that there was a smaller adjoining room, and, seizing a candle, I resolved to explore it. At the far end I discerned a small staircase obviously leading up to a sort of gallery that surrounded the room. The old man must have withdrawn into some upstairs lair. I would follow him. I groped my way to the foot of the stairs, and began to ascend, but the steps creaked beneath my feet; I had a feeling of crumbling woodwork, my candle went out, cobwebs brushed against my face. To continue was most uninviting. I desisted.

After all, what did it matter? Let the old man hide himself. I had given my message. Best be gone. But the main room to which I had returned had now become quite warm and cheerful. How could I ever have thought it sinister? And it was with a distinct sense of regret that I left the shop. I felt balked. I would have liked to see more of that irradiating smile. Dear, strange old man! How could I ever have fancied that I feared him!

The next day being Saturday I was free to go to the shop. On the way there my mind was agreeably occupied in anticipating the cordial welcome the grateful sisters were sure to give me. As the clank of the bell announced my opening of the door, the two girls, who were busily dusting their treasures, turned their heads to see who came at so unusually early an hour. Recognizing me, to my surprise, they bowed pleasantly, but quite casually, as though to a mere acquaintance.

With the fairy-tale bond between us, I had expected quite a different sort of greeting. I at once guessed that they had not yet heard the astounding news, and when I said "I've brought the check!" I saw that my surmise was correct. Their faces expressed blank incomprehension.

"Check?" echoed the grown-up sister. "What check?"

"For the frog I bought the other day."

"The frog?" she inquired blankly. "But are you sure that's what it was? I only remember you buying a piece of Sheffield plate."

I was as mystified as she. Didn't these sisters know what was going on in their shop? By degrees I told them the whole story. They were bewildered with astonishment. The elder sister seemed quite dazed.

"BUT I can't understand it! I can't understand it!" she repeated. "Holmes isn't even supposed to admit anyone in our absence—far less to sell things. He just comes here as caretaker on the evenings when we leave early, and he's only supposed to stay till the night policeman comes on his beat. I can't believe he let you in and never even told us he'd sold you something. It's too extraordinary! What time was it?"

"Round about seven, I should think," I answered.

"He generally leaves about half-past six," said the girl. "But I suppose the policeman must have been late."

"It was later when I came yesterday."

"Did you come again yesterday?" she asked.

Briefly I told her of my visit and the message I had left with the caretaker.

"What an incredible thing!" she exclaimed. "I can't begin to understand it, but we shall soon hear his explanation. I'm expecting him in at any moment now. He comes in every morning to sweep the floors."

At the prospect of meeting the remarkable old man again, I felt an uncanny thrill of excitement. How would he look in the strong daylight? Would he smile again?

"He's very old, isn't he?" I hazarded.

"Old? Yes, I suppose he is getting rather old; but it's a very easy job. He's a good honest fellow. I can't understand his doing this sort of thing on the sly. I'm afraid we've been rather slack in our cataloguing lately. I wonder if he's been selling odds and ends for himself? Oh, no, I can't bear to think it! By the way, can you remember about where this frog was?"

I pointed to the shelf from which the caretaker had picked up the piece of jade.

"Oh, from that assortment? It's a lot I bought the other day for next to nothing, and I haven't sorted or priced them yet. I can't remember seeing a frog. Oh, what an incredible thing to happen!"

At this moment the telephone rang. She raised the receiver to her ear, and spoke into the instrument.

"Hello! Hello!" I heard her voice. "Yes, it's Miss Wilton speaking. Yes, Mrs. Holmes, what do you want?" There was a few seconds' pause, and then in startled tones her voice went on: *"Dead?* Dead? But how? Why? Oh, I *am* sorry!"

After a few more words she replaced the receiver and turned to us, her eyes full of tears.

"Fancy," she said. "Poor old Holmes, the caretaker, is dead. When he got home yesterday evening he complained of pain, and he died in the middle of the night. Heart failure. No one had any idea there was anything the matter with him. Oh, poor Mrs. Holmes! What will she do? We must go round and see her at once!"

Both girls were very much upset and, saying that I would soon return, I thought it best to leave. That hauntingly singular old man had made so vivid an impression upon me that I felt deeply moved by the news of his sudden death. How strange that I should have been, except for his wife, the last person to speak with him. No doubt the fatal pain had seized him in my very presence, and that was why he had left me so abruptly and without a word. Had Death already brushed against his consciousness? That ineffable irradiating smile—was that the beginning of the Peace that passes all understanding?

I returned to the Corner Curio Shop the next day. I told them all the details of the sale of the fabulous frog, and presented the check I had drawn out. Here I met with unexpected opposition. The sisters showed great unwillingness to accept the money. It was—they said—all mine, and they had no need of it.

"You see," explained Miss Wilton, "my father had a flair for this business amounting to a sort of genius, and made quite a large fortune. When he became too old to carry on the shop, we kept it open out of sentiment and for the sake of occupation; but we don't need to make any profit out of it."

At last I prevailed upon them to accept the money, if only to spend it on the various charities in which they were interested. It was a relief to my mind when the matter was thus settled.

The strange coincidence of the frog was a bond between us, and in the course of our amicable arguments we had become very friendly. I got into the habit of dropping in quite often. In fact, I grew rather to rely on the sympathetic companionship of these two bright girls and became quite at my ease with them. I never forgot the impression made on me by the old man, and often questioned the girls about their poor caretaker, but they had nothing of much interest to tell me. They just described him as an "old dear" who had been in their father's service as long as they could remember. No further light was thrown on his sale of the frog. Naturally, they didn't like to question his widow.

One evening, when I had been having tea in the inner room with the elder sister, I picked up an album of photographs. Turning over its pages, I came on a remarkably fine likeness of the old man. There, before me, was the strange, striking countenance; but, obviously, this photograph had been taken many years before I saw him. The face was much fuller and had not yet acquired the wearied, fragile look I so vividly remembered. But what magnificent eyes he had! Certainly there was something extraordinarily impressive about the man. I stared at the faded photograph.

"What a splendid photograph of poor old Holmes!" I said.

"Photograph of Holmes? I'd no idea there was one," she answered. "Let's see."

AS I approached with the open book the younger sister looked in through the open door.

"I'm off to the movies now," she called out. "Father's just rung up to say he'll be round in about a quarter of an hour to have a look at that Sheraton sideboard."

"All right. I'll be here, and be very glad to have his opinion," said Miss Wilton, taking the album from my hand. There were several photographs on the page at which I had opened the book.

"I don't see anything of old Holmes," she said.

I pointed out the photograph.

"That!" she exclaimed. "Why that's my dear father!"

"Your *father?"* I gasped.

"Yes, I can't imagine two people much more unlike. It must have been very dark in the shop when you saw Holmes!"

"Yes, yes, it was very dark," I said quickly to gain time in which to think; for I felt quite bewildered with surprise. No degree of darkness could account for any such mistake. I had no moment's doubt as to the identity of him I had taken for the caretaker with the man whose photograph I now held in my hand. But what an amazing, unaccountable affair!

Her father? Why on earth should he have been in the shop unknown to his daughters, and for what possible purpose had he concealed his sale of the frog? And when he heard of its fabulous value, why leave the girls under the impression that it was Holmes, the dead caretaker, who had sold it?

Had he been ashamed to confess his own inadvertence? Or was it possible that the girls had never told him, wishing perhaps to keep their sudden wealth a secret? What strange family intrigue was this into which I had stumbled? If the father had determined thus to keep his actions in the dark, I had better not precipitate any exposure. Instinct bade me hold my tongue. The younger sister had announced his approaching visit. Would he recognize me?

"It's a splendid face," I said, resolving on reserve.

"I SN'T it?" she said with pleased eagerness. "Isn't it clever and strong? Yes, I remember when that photograph was taken. It was just before he got religion." The girl spoke as though she regarded "religion" as a regrettable indisposition.

"Did he suddenly become very religious?"

"Yes," she said reluctantly. "Poor father! He made friends with a priest, and he became so changed. He never was the same again."

From the sort of break in the girl's voice, I guessed she thought her father's reason had been affected. Did not this explain the whole affair? On the two occasions when I saw him, was he not wandering in mind as well as in body?

"Did his religion make him unhappy?" I ventured to ask, for I was anxious to get more light on the strange being before I re-encountered him.

"Yes, dreadfully." The girl's eyes were full of tears. "You see . . . It was . . ." She hesitated, and after a glance at me went on: "There's really no reason why I shouldn't tell you. I've come to regard you as a real friend. Poor father got to think he had done very wrong. He couldn't quiet his conscience. You remember my telling you of his extraordinary flair? Well, his fortune was really founded on three marvelous strokes of business. He had the same sort of luck you had here the other day—that's why I'm telling you. It seems such an odd coincidence," She paused.

"Please go on," I urged.

"Well, you see, on three separate occasions he bought, for a few shillings, objects that were of immense value. Only—unlike you—he knew what he was about. The money he realized on their sale came as no surprise to him. . . . Unlike you, he did not then see any obligation to make it up to the ignorant people who had thrown away fortunes. After all, most dealers wouldn't, would they?" she almost angrily asked.

"Well, father grew richer and richer. Years after, he met this priest, and then he seemed to go all sort of morbid. He came to think that our wealth was founded on what was really no better than theft. Bitterly he reproached himself for having taken advantage of those three men's ignorance and allowed them to chuck away their fortunes. Unfortunately, in each case he succeeded in discovering what had ultimately happened to those he called his 'victims.' Most unfortunately, all three men had died in poverty. This discovery made him incurably miserable. Two of these men had died without leaving any children, and no relations could be found.

"He traced the son of the third to America; but there he had died, leaving no family. So poor father could find no means of making reparation. That was what he longed for—to make reparation. This preyed and preyed on him, until—in my opinion—his poor dear mind became unhinged. As religion took stronger and stronger hold on him, he got a queer sort of notion into his head—a regular obsession—a 'complex' they would call it now. 'The next best thing to doing a good action,' he would say, '*is to provide someone else with the opportunity for doing one.* To give him his cue, so to speak. *In our sins Christ is crucified afresh.* I must be the cause of three good actions corresponding to my own bad ones. In no other way can I expiate my crimes against Christ, for crimes they were——' In vain we argued with him, saying he had only done as nearly all men would have done. It had no effect. 'Other men must judge for themselves. I have done what I know to be wrong,' he would mournfully repeat. He got more and more fixed in his idea. Real religious mania it became!

"Being determined to find three human beings who would, by their good actions, as it were, *cancel* the pain caused to Divinity by what he considered his three crimes, he now busied himself in finding insignificant-looking treasures which he would offer to the public for a few shillings. Poor old father! Never shall I forget his joy when one day a man returned a piece of porcelain he had bought for five shillings and discovered to be worth five hundred pounds, saying: 'I think you must have made a mistake.' Just as you did, bless you!

"FIVE years later a similar thing occurred, and he was, oh, so radiant! Two of Humanity's crimes canceled, he felt. Then came years and years of weary disappointment. 'I shall never rest until I find the third,' was what he always said." Here the girl began to cry, hiding her face behind her hands and murmuring something about "Too late, too late!"

I heard the door-bell ring.

"How he must have suffered!" I said. "I'm so glad I had the luck to be the third."

She withdrew her hands from her face and stared at me.

"And I'm so glad I'm going to meet him again," I added, as I heard footsteps approaching.

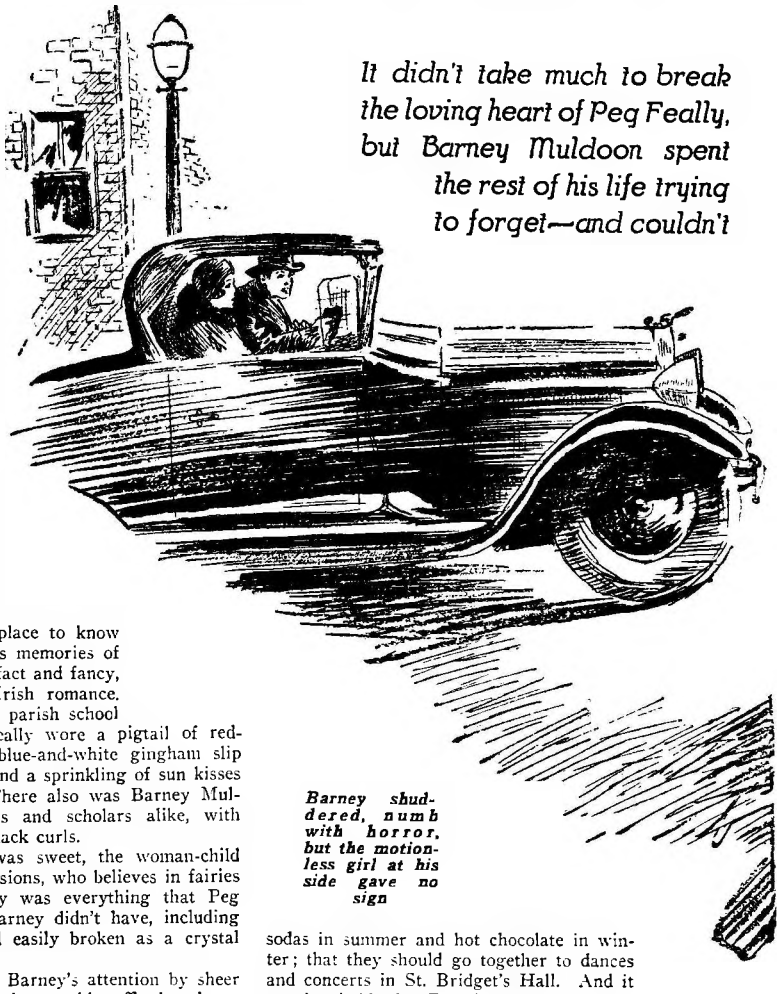
"Meet him!" she echoed in amazement, as the footsteps drew near.

"Yes, I may stay, mayn't I? I heard your sister say he was coming around now."

"Oh, I see!" she ejaculated. "*Her* father! We are only step-sisters. My dear father died seven years ago."

The PUNISHMENT

It didn't take much to break the loving heart of Peg Feally, but Barney Muldoon spent the rest of his life trying to forget—and couldn't



Barney shuddered, numb with horror, but the motionless girl at his side gave no sign

IF you have known the gray lake-city of Buffalo long and well, you must know about the Irish of the old First Ward. In days past they were one and the same thing, but the Irish finally outgrew the Ward in numbers, ideas and ambitions, just as they had outgrown the Emerald Isle itself. Rovers they are and rovers they will be. And not Ireland herself, much less the First Ward, could ever hope to keep them always.

The Ward bred them, acres of them, in houses of this or that size and sort, fine in their day but not fine enough for the growing ambitions and success of the race that grew up there and spread out to all quarters of the country. In its day the Ward was a place to know and remember. Today it holds memories of Irish charm, founded on Irish fact and fancy, and colored with glamorous Irish romance.

This story started in the old parish school of St. Bridget's when Peg Feally wore a pigtail of red-gold hair down her back, a blue-and-white gingham slip with a sash bow tied midway and a sprinkling of sun kisses on the bridge of her nose. There also was Barney Muldoon, the torment of teachers and scholars alike, with twinkling eyes and a head of black curls.

Then and afterward, Peg was sweet, the woman-child who dreams dreams and sees visions, who believes in fairies and elves and angels. Barney was everything that Peg was not. And Peg had all Barney didn't have, including a heart as clear and true and easily broken as a crystal chalice.

In those first days, Peg held Barney's attention by sheer sweetness. No amount of teasing could ruffle her brow nor take her eyes from her lessons. Out of school she was as quick with her tongue as any colleen, and many a time Barney felt the sting of it, and saw fire in her gray eyes. She had that something about her that makes a woman interesting to a man.

From first to last she baffled Barney. Not then nor later could he measure up to her fineness. It was not in him to know how loyal Peg could be, nor how great was the strength of her heart to love.

When her pinafore was changed for a wispy blouse and trim blue suit, with shoes so small a man might close his fist about one, she went to be a stenographer in the office of Braunstein the Jew. Barney's trousers by that time had dropped to his feet and had a tailored crease. Barney's neckties were the envy of other young bucks, for he was earning eleven dollars a week in Donegan's hardware store just a block below the office where Peg earned eleven but received only eight—because she was a girl.

It was natural that Barney should walk home with Peg twice a day and to the office with her at noon. It was natural that they should drop in at Dillon's for ice cream sodas in summer and hot chocolate in winter; that they should go together to dances and concerts in St. Bridget's Hall. And it was inevitable that Peg should begin to care for Barney dearly.

Faith, it wasn't hard to like Barney. Handsome as the black Irish well can be, forever laughing, forever growing taller, forever learning new jokes and ease of manners and the flattering ways that appeal to women-folk. He was worth any girl's attention and well he repaid it, even when he worked in Donegan's at eleven dollars a week.

AND if a new, smoother-tongued Barney arose, Phoenix-like, from the hobble-de-hoy, shock-headed terror of school days, a new Peg grew from the little gingham-clad girl of freckles and leggy ankles. A Peg with a mop of red-gold hair swirled on her small head like a twist of raw gold. A Peg with a velvet-smooth cheek below the soft caress of that hair. More lads than Barney saw and paid court to her prettiness, but only Barney found her heart.

For him her gray eyes would light and her red mouth tremble. And if ever Barney Muldoon came near loving a woman, it was Peg. But with Barney, youth was at its heyday. Men like Barney need battles before they win love or know the value of it. If not war, and the tempering

# of Barney Muldoon

By BASSETT MORGAN

A heart-breaking cry tore from the lips of the old woman — "Peg! My pretty Peg!"

grind and wear of it, then life, with its struggles and heartache, must teach and temper them. Barney needed more than most, but he never got it.

Donegan's spoiled the boy. It gave him a chance to earn by his nimble ready tongue what his betters had to toil for with naked horny fists. It seated the little god of self on a pedestal to be fed with the incense of admiration; and the stuff clouded what clear vision Barney had and filled his nostrils with the smoke of conceit which smothers a man. Mostly women burned the stuff before Barney and this was worst of all.

Because his bold eyes seldom met an unwilling glance, they got the habit of roving. Because his bold tongue had "a way wid it," he let it ramble for amusement first, and then for conquest. And all this time Peg was loving him and saving her eyes and lips for him—ay, and her heart.

It took but little to break the heart of Peg Feally. So little that it can scarce be told. A flirtation between Barney and Mary Nolan, a bit of talk over Barney and Nellie O'Shea, a moonlight walk by the lake with Jimmie Martin's sister. Talk, which had no more to start on than a kiss or two and a walk or two and a bit of a quiet stroll with some other girl, and Peg's heart was broken.

Perhaps it was not so much hurt love as hurt loyalty, for she loved Barney to the last. But she would have none of him after that day when she told him so. Her heart did break, hard and clean.

BARNEY never knew from Peg how deep the hurt went. He never guessed from her gray eyes that the flash of them hid a sorrow greater than he was capable of. He was not the man to understand white-lipped silence like hers; but he saw scorn in her face and was shamed.

Even then he might have humbled himself, but the god of self on the pedestal was blinded by the incense of conceit. He would not utter the words of pleading he had not spoken before. He would not bend his handsome head before this wisp of a white-faced girl. Barney hated what he'd done, but he did not understand that never again would such a great love as Peg's come to him.

So he went from her and never looked back when her white hands reached out after him as if even then she'd have forgiven.

AT that time Donegan was taking his son into the store and he got Barney a place as a traveling salesman with a wholesale firm. Barney was glad to take it, since it removed him from seeing Peg daily. Rapidly he became one of the brotherhood who contribute to that notion of mothers with young daughters: that it is best to go with a boy you know, and not be too friendly with traveling salesmen.

Barney liked his new job. He was successful, from the first day he started away with his black-and-white check suit and tan leather grips to the day when he looked back and laughed at his pride in the checked suit, and nodded approvingly at his dark clothes and neat black tie. He played the game from the old days of treating a customer

at the bar to the new mode of business brevity. He found a man's weakness and used it. Was it civic pride? Then Barney enthused about the town. Books? He could talk them. Horses? Ah, there he shone, for the love of horses is in Irish blood. Home? Then Barney became that disconsolate wanderer who lived only for a day when he could build a nest of his own. And while talking he would open his order books and sample cases and allow the customer to distract him by talking his own hobby.

And he had good times by the way. Bold he was, honest in his dallying, if there be honor in such. His wants were few: good company, latitude and pretty women, mostly of the sophisticated type. As he put it:

"If a nice pink-cheeked peach hangs in reach of a man's hand on a bough, 'tis natural to reach for it."

Boldly he plucked, but swore he never shook the tree. So spoiled that he was, in a way, bad for himself. He was selfish, and selfishness is a boomerang. Tales of things he did came back to the old First Ward in time, and Mickey Downey, Braunstein's buyer, related them to Peg Feally.

Mickey lived next door to the Feallys and he thought Peg was all over caring for Barney Muldoon. But her hand clutched at her throat and she turned away, a prayer on her lips. And from that day Braunstein the Jew began to worry over the health of Peg Feally. He was a kind-hearted little man and tried to save her a good deal.

"You're losing your dimples," he said once. "Take a vacation on the firm's time and get rested."

"Oh, God, no!" said Peg. "I want to be busy."

So Braunstein hired an extra girl to help Peg, but she got no better and one day as her fingers flew over the keys, tap-tapping a letter, they flew into the air and stayed rigid, and Peg's scream startled the office. Braunstein was like a father. He took her home in his car and she didn't know who he was, didn't know her own mother. Braunstein brought the finest doctor in the city and a nurse, but they could not restore the reason jangled out of tune. The mists closed down on Peg Feally to clear only in heaven. But during her illness she babbled the name of Barney Muldoon until broken-hearted Mrs. Feally could not keep it from Mickey Downey's wife.

It was Mickey Downey who broke the news to Barney when he came in on Christmas Eve, and he voiced it ungently:

"They say Peg died of a nervous breakdown, but there was something caused it. I'm tellin' you the heart of her broke, and I'd hate to be the man to blame."

Barney understood what Mickey Downey meant and did not show anger for once. He went out with a hurt to soothe, a ghost to lay—and he did it thoroughly. He had lost most of his belief in heaven and hell. He endorsed the idea that prosperity is not always to the righteous. In time he forgot Peg Feally. The small glow of her love was lost amid many warmer sparks.

One day Barney was on the train between Erie and Buffalo where an important appointment waited, and he was looking around for some way of passing the time.

A woman in the seat ahead caught his eye because of a glint of red-gold hair beneath her little, close-fitting hat. She wore a silky fox collar and breathed violet perfume. Something in Barney stirred at sight of her hair. But she took no notice of anyone.

Fate favored him when the train stopped. As the girl stepped down on the little box placed by red-cap porters, her foot turned and she fell forward with a cry. Barney leaped and caught her and, for one moment, the fox collar touched his face, the red-gold hair was near his cheek. She thanked Barney and said her ankle felt sprained.

The voice of her! The pretty face of her! It was white with pain, yet lovely. Her gray eyes set his heart pounding. He got into a taxi with her and they went through the streets now gray under the winter mist and dark smoke.

Something like memory was stirring, clutching at Barney. His heart went from his keeping during that drive, and this strange girl's voice sang in the empty space where his heart had been. She was really hurt and when Barney Muldoon carried her up the steps of the place she said was her home, his face was the whiter of the two.

He sent her flowers and books and candy. He came to call and found her propped in a big chair, wearing the prettiest frocks, and dazzling him with the sweetest of smiles. Barney sat on the edge of his chair holding in leash a tongue accustomed to bold attacks.

From the first he was in love. And his guardian angel never warned him, or if it did, he did not hear. Her name was Margaret, she said, and she admitted being Irish. Barney did not care if she were African, so long as her gray eyes and red lips smiled for him, and he could feast his sight on the curve of her throat and chin, and on the white hands which swayed him with every movement.

HIS love was a fire of glowing heat so long as he was uncertain she cared. But when at last he dared whisper, brokenly, words that had always slipped glibly from his tongue, and bent his head to meet her lips with his, he felt as if ice-water was in her veins.

Fire and ice she seemed, mixed and contending, and he was the tormented victim of both. He loved her with all the good in his heart, but she only fed the flame and chilled him. Barney was fiercely happy and never at rest. Solve the puzzle of her, he could not. For the first time he was faithful, turning from husks and setting himself a goal to win. For Margaret unspokenly demanded his best; yet never by word or sign did he know she found fault or flaw in him.

Thoughts of her kept him fevered all day and awake at night. The sight of her soothed and tortured. Her kisses burned and chilled. Her lovely hands made him think of the hands of dead girls, until he looked at the warm satin skin, the rose-petal palms, the pink nails. Her red-gold hair against his cheek made him shiver. Yet if she knew, she made no sign.

Sleep forsook Barney Muldoon. Food failed to tempt him because the sauce of hunger was gone. At first he thought it was because he had quit drinking and was spending the nights quietly after years of late hours. For weeks he waited patiently until his body should have become accustomed to the change. Then he went to a doctor.

The doctor laughed as he thumped Barney's chest.

"Sound as a dollar. Yet care killed a cat," he said. "Better stop brooding!"

"I haven't a worry in the world, Doctor," said Barney. "Business never was better and I'm going to be married."

"Well, missing a few meals and a few hours' sleep won't hurt you."

Lighter-hearted, he almost ran to Margaret. Her ankle was better and she had just come from a walk. Melting snow glistened on the fox fur, a wisp of gold shone below her hat, her cheeks were wild roses, her eyes like stars. He enfolded her in his arms and shuddered from head to foot. His lips went white and his blood ran cold, as if he had kissed a ghost. Something eerie was between them and it chilled the warmth of the room.

"Your hands are cold, Margaret."

"No, they're warm as toast. Feel them."

She laid them against his cheek and he shrank.

"You're nervous, Barney. You've been working too hard. Suppose you take a holiday and play with me. We'll

go for jolly rides in the country and have long talks."

"Marry me. Make it our honeymoon and I'll take two weeks. What are we waiting for?"

But she would not promise.

"This day week if you still want me," she compromised.

Want her! *Want her!* He tried to tell her how much he wanted her, but his tongue stumbled and halted over words so ineffective he felt mute.

"Am I the only woman you ever loved?" she asked.

Many times she had asked that question as women will, and many times he had answered in the one possible way; but this time a devilish something spoke for him against his will.

"There was one other—a girl I thought I loved. But it was never like this. And she is dead."

"Dead!" she cried. "Loving you, and dead!"

That was all. He cursed himself for dragging the old memory of Peg Feally into his life again—Peg, so long forgotten. Then a voice beyond his control said:

"You remind me of her. Her eyes were gray. Her hair was red. She had height and figure and white hands, like yours. But she is dead these many years."

MARGARET did not speak. They were sitting before the fire which she loved to watch, and for a long time only the snap and crackle of coals bursting in blue wispy flames broke the silence.

That night they were to go to a hotel for dinner and Margaret went to dress. Darkness filled the room and the fire died to a blue glow. Barney was glad when they were on the street again, glad of the hotel lights and music, until Margaret slipped off her cloak.

Her dress was a blue and white silk in a checkered pattern, and around her slim waist was a bow sash.

"Heavens," he thought, "Peg at St. Bridget's in her gingham dress!"

The evening was spoiled. When someone touched his shoulder he jumped. It was Mickey Downey with his wife. But when Mickey saw Margaret he mumbled some excuse and hurried his wife away. And the next afternoon Barney said to Margaret:

"You're Irish, yet you've never been in the old First Ward where I was born. How would you like to drive out there?"

Margaret in her fox furs and her little hat, was a woman to draw Irish eyes which turn readily toward beauty. The day was clear and cold, the streets were crowded with Christmas shoppers. Barney drove his car slowly and watched for faces of people he had known. He saw Jimmy Martin's sister with a child by the hand. She was older now, but Barney stopped the car and called her name. She smiled at him, then stared at Margaret.

"Saints preserve us! It might be Peg Feally," she gasped.

Staring and round-eyed, Jimmie Martin's sister hurried away, dragging her boy by the hand.

In Barney's brain something snapped. Horror chilled him, though Margaret seemed to notice nothing unusual. But Barney was recalling Peg Feally in her little blue suit hurrying to and from the office, the shy glance of her, the sweet smile.

"I'm cold," said Barney. "Let's drop in somewhere and have hot chocolate."

In Dillon's ice cream parlor he had often sat with Peg, but it was the only handy place. All went well. He was forgetting Jimmie Martin's sister when Mary Dillon came from the rear of the store, Mary Dillon with whom he had gone to school. She took a look at Barney and held out both hands.

"It's that glad I am to see you, Barney Muldoon!" she cried.

Then her glance turned on Margaret and the welcome look faded. She hurried away with an excuse, and presently Barney led Margaret from the store. On the sidewalk they almost collided with Braunstein and the old man came closer and stared.

"Excuse me," he muttered, "but the lady is like someone I once knew."

"Let's go," cried Barney hoarsely and in a moment Margaret was in the car which lurched forward and slid into a purring smoothness. At the corner a signal halted them just as Braunstein's factory workers came out of the gates—laughing, bright-eyed girls and boys, men huddled deep in coat collars, hands in their pockets. They looked at Barney's fine car and at the girl beside him but Margaret's eyes were straight ahead. She had not spoken since they left the ice cream parlor. Through his big ulster, her nearness chilled Barney Muldoon. There was no longer love for her in his heart, only poignant pain and terrible unrest.

On the corner was a little bake-shop from which came an old woman in a faded brown coat. Barney watched her totter along the icy pavement with a loaf clutched to her breast and he stopped the car to let her cross the road. Suddenly she looked up at Margaret. Barney shuddered, numb with horror, but the motionless girl at his side gave no sign. A heart-breaking cry tore from the lips of the old woman—

"Peg, my pretty Peg!"

In the next instant she crumpled on the icy street and Barney plunged from the car to lift her in his arms. It was Peg Feally's mother!

A crowd gathered; a police officer elbowed his way through. Barney was only conscious of Fear closing down—something like the despair of a criminal run to earth, the accusing hand of justice gripping his shoulder. Only, no earthly prison held the terror of this nameless thing pursuing him.

Presently he was driving like mad. Margaret had not spoken. Once she looked at him and her glance froze his blood. He saw the eyes of Peg Feally accusing, imploring, and he could not answer that look with a word. He stopped the car before the place where he had spent hours with Margaret, learning some terrible lesson that he did not yet understand.

Darkness had come and street lamps shone on the house. But there was no light in the windows and the snow lay on the doorstep. It looked cold, deserted, empty, and he wondered dully what had happened there since last night when he had sat before the fire with Margaret in a tastefully furnished room. He could not think. Already the street lights seemed to be circling in a slow dance, mist-blurred and whirling faster and faster.

HE had not opened the car door, but Margaret was already on the sidewalk before the dark house, a blurred, vaguely moving figure whose white face turned toward him, whose red lips would not speak, whose eyes tortured him. Then she faded like a vision, and he roused to follow her. Up the steps of the house he went, opening a door into an empty, uncarpeted, deserted hallway, into rooms where his tread echoed weirdly, with no sign of furnishings or habitation for months past.

Barney forgot his car beside the curb. He went down the street searching for Margaret or Peg. He came at last to the house again and stood calling her name:

"Peg! Margaret! Margaret! Peg!"

She came. He could see her like a shadow, but she would not let him touch her. When he came near, her ghost-white hands repelled, fluttering in the darkness.

Sick to death, he stumbled out in the cold gray of the dawn that was breaking through city smoke. His body was icy cold, his face burning, and every breath tortured his lungs. All he wanted was to find the woman he had forsaken and undo the wrong of years.

He called but she did not come. The big ulster was snow-powdered, one of many (*Continued on page* 95)

The Man with the

By JAMES HASKELL
As told to
Alan Schultz

"Never mind me," I told the Jap. "I'm not going to leave Miss Bixbee until——"

MY experience with the uncanny began when I discovered a curious workbench in the attic of an old house my mother had taken in Corona, Long Island. After an unusually weird occurrence, I went for a walk one evening. As I passed the subway entrance a beautiful girl almost fainted against me. She seemed terrified and asked me to take her home, but on the way she would tell me nothing but her name—Ella Bixbee.

I returned home, and at my workbench a copper plate I had been using started to rap out a meaningless message in code. Suddenly a wraithlike old man appeared in the moonlight and made everything clear; then he vanished.

Obeying the instructions I had received I went the next night to the Crystal Slipper, a Broadway night-club. There I met Raoul Murtha, an odd man with a sabre cut across one cheek. He had come to see a certain dancer, and when she came on—I recognized Ella Bixbee! In the midst of her number the dancer fell to the floor, senseless, and I saw Murtha's eyes hypnotically fixed on her. Afterward I heard him planning to take her on a party.

While waiting to see Ella and warn her, I was drawn against my will into the wineroom, where I barely escaped being murdered by Murtha's Jap chauffeur. Later, I was told by Ella's friend, Dixie Lee, that the party had been postponed. That night I received a second warning from the ancient ghost to keep Ella away from Murtha.

Next evening, in Ella's dressing room, Dixie Lee became possessed and tried to strangle me. When I had subdued her and was taking the girls home, I was nearly run down by Murtha's car. Having learned from Ella that her great-grandfather, an electrical inventor, had once lived in my house and used my workbench, I hastened to the attic. There I got a code message which sent me flying back to Ella's house.

I found a ladder up against her window, and on it was the Jap! He was lifting Ella's inert body over the sill. I let out a shriek. The monster dropped Ella safely inside and slid to the ground. I caught him, but he threw me and fled. I raced to the house, roused Ella's aunt and Dixie, who put the unconscious girl to bed. They evaded my questions and seemed unconcerned about my sweetheart's plight.

ELLA went back to work and Raoul Murtha was as suave as ever. Then I learned he was planning a private party at his place. Without waiting to be invited, I entered Murtha's Isotta Fraschini with Ella and Dixie. As we headed out of town, Murtha's behavior toward Ella infuriated me, and when he offered me a drink I declined. The car stopped and I was ordered to get out. I refused. The Jap ran around, reached in, and before I could think, I was on the ground, fighting for my life. Once I staggered up, to see Murtha at the wheel and Ella struggling with him. I sprang for the car. Ella had fainted and Murtha sat rigid, but with a snarl I flew at him.

SABRE CUT

Beneath the padlocked night-club, Murtha sets a trap for Haskell and his sweetheart— But a frightful foe awaits him!

"So, Mister Haskell! You defy me again!" It was Raoul Murtha, and his eyes were blazing

I MADE a lunge at Murtha, pummeling him wildly with my fists as I bore down with all my weight upon his reclining body. He had ceased struggling, and for a moment I thought I had killed him. But the next instant I realized I was pounding no human flesh—or at least nothing that reacted like human flesh. I might just as well have been pounding at a straw-stuffed dummy! The man with the sabre cut was unconscious; absolutely without human responses. He lay rigid, in a sort of cataleptic fit.

Too late to even raise a hand, I grasped the real peril of my position. I had forgotten the Jap! I saw him coming at me like a missile hurtling through the air. And then—a sharp, winging pain struck me amidships! I crumpled up, all my resistance knocked out of me. The Jap's hands grabbed me at the hips. There was a lifting movement, a bend forward, then a mighty push—and I was hurled in a heap on the ground, well clear of the Isotta Fraschini!

The world went black before my eyes, and as I lay there, too stunned to move, or even think, I could hear the purr of the huge car as it got under way and sped off into the night. I tried to shout "Ella!"—though I hadn't the faintest hope of its doing any good. Besides, by this time the car was out of ear-shot and Ella was without even the slight protection I might have given her. . . .

For a while I lay motionless. To move took more grit than I could summon. The neighborhood was still, with hardly a house in sight. Some kind of parkway faced me. The shadows of its great trees were like a prison wall around me.

When I managed to struggle to my feet, every movement caused the most excruciating agony. But the pain gradually disappeared and I started vaguely off in the direction the fleeing Isotta Fraschini had taken.

"You prize idiot! What a mess you've made of it!" I kept telling myself as I trudged on. The picture of that car speeding into the night with my Ella, unprotected, in the hands of the fiendish Murtha and the mad Jap haunted me like a bad dream. I knew well enough that Dixie's presence in the car would be no help.

The night dragged endlessly and I groaned at every step I took. I had no plan, of course; I just kept going. But walking eased my sense of defeat. And then I heard——

Yes—the sound of an automobile!

It came from somewhere on the next intersecting road. I hurried around a clump of shrubbery, into dazzling twin lights. I ran toward them, dashing out into the middle of the road, waving frantically.

The car proved to be a taxicab, homeward bound. The driver was a surly fellow and objected to taking a fare back to Manhattan. I told him it was a matter of life and death. Finally, for an additional fee, he agreed to turn back.

I hopped in and we swung toward the Crystal Slipper. It was the only course open to me. I had not the faintest

knowledge of how to trace the man with the sabre cut; and to try to track the Isotta Fraschini with the lead it had, would have been madness. At the Crystal Slipper I could, at least, try to question Slink Mustapoy, the proprietor.

That ride to the Crystal Slipper was a nightmare. The taxicab seemed to be crawling and I kept urging the driver to go faster. But he only growled back in answer, while I imagined every possible horror overtaking Ella Bixbee. Eventually, when it seemed as if another moment would prove too much for me, we did pull up at the door of the Crystal Slipper.

It was very still. No one seemed about. Dismayed at the possibility of its being closed, I hurried to the entrance. An arm shot out of the shadow and a hand clamped over my shoulder! It was a policeman.

"What are y'after?" a rough voice demanded.

I explained that I had to talk to the owner of the Crystal Slipper and the same voice snarled something like: "Ain't that nice, now!"

The hand tightened on my shoulder. Two other policemen walked over. They fell in on each side of me. I was dumfounded.

"Take him in to the Sergeant," the rough voice said.

"Easy, boys," I suggested, in my most diplomatic tone. "I'm in an awful hurry. Got to get an address from somebody. From Slink. Outside of that——"

"OH, he's a friend of Slink! Well-met. The Sergeant's dyin' to see you," said a tall policeman with a hatchet face.

Rather nonplussed, I let the burly cops escort me into the Crystal Slipper. Down the familiar corridor we went, into a side door which opened on Slink's private office. A police Sergeant was sitting at the ornate Louis XIV desk which the half-breed Slink usually occupied when he was "putting on dog." Opposite the Sergeant was the proprietor himself, looking as if he had received the tender ministrations of half a dozen policemen.

The rough-voiced cop explained to the Sergeant that he had rounded up a suspicious character, and pushed me forward. What with excitement and worry, I probably did look questionable. Still, I was about to protest, when the pleasant Irish face of the Sergeant gave me hope. He looked like the kind of chap you could talk to.

Suddenly, turning to me, he said: "Well? Spill it."

The cold directness of the query floored me. Could I tell that Irish Sergeant about Ella and Dixie and our startlingly mysterious experiences with Raoul Murtha and his Jap? He would think I was blarneying him. And so, rather incoherently, I am afraid, I patched up a quick yarn about being worried over the whereabouts of my fiancée, Ella Bixbee, who worked at the Crystal Slipper, and about my coming for a clue to Slink.

Quite abruptly the Irish Sergeant said, "Quit kiddin', me lad." He squinted sharply at Slink and added, "What's this bedtime story artist's connection with you?"

To my amazement, the contemptible half-breed nodded knowingly, as if to intimate a vast and dirty tie-up between him and myself. The Sergeant shook his head.

"So that's it!" he growled. "Take the lad out in the corridor and let him rest his feet till I'm ready," he said and I was bundled out without a chance to offer another word.

The policeman found me a camp stool. I smiled to myself as I recognized the very stool I had used on so many nights while waiting to take Ella home. "Warm this," one of them said and they left me alone. I suppose the place was well guarded, for they didn't seem to worry about my making a getaway.

I was as much up a tree as I have ever been in my life. Not even the glint of an idea came to me. I just sat and waited, depressed and uneasy, occasionally rubbing the copper plate which I had slipped in my pocket on leaving my house the day before. I don't know why I expected help from it, and yet I did. It had brought me to Ella before. . . .

And all the while time was flying—time in which the man with the sabre cut had my Ella entirely in his power. There were moments, as I sat on that stool, when the urge to rush back to Slink's office and shout the truth at the Sergeant was overpowering. Yet the hopelessness of such procedure held me back every time.

I sat, my chin cupped in my hand, with my eyes, from long habit, on the door of the main hall and the wineroom. My thinking was haphazard. My mind was out in the night, riding in an Isotta Fraschini, trying to visualize its mixed company. The policemen were patroling the entrance; I could hear their occasional conversation. From Slink's office there came no sound. My own eyes were growing heavy. It was getting on my nerves, waiting for that Sergeant to call.

I was on the point of knocking on the office door, when there was a stir along the corridor. A creaking. I felt a draft. The wineroom door was moving! Was that a shadow? My attention sprang taut like a released coil. The door continued to open. I was half out of my seat before I knew what I was doing. Was that a shadow—or a person? No, the door seemed to move of itself!

And then I was walking toward the opening. It yawned wide. Within was pitch blackness. And Something was drawing me toward it against my will—like the undertow of an unseen ocean. There was no power in me to resist. Just as on that first occasion, I was at the mercy of an invisible force. It compelled me forward, in slow regular steps.

My tongue clung to the roof of my mouth and fine dry sand seemed to be pouring against my eardrums. I knew I should not go on, and yet I had to. Death might be lurking in the darkness of the wineroom, but I could not stop. Danger was there surely, but no recognition of it could counteract the power of whatever was luring me forward.

I was before the open door. My blood drummed in my head. Everything in me rebelled. My feet were on the threshold. I was across. I was inside the wineroom—and the door closed behind me, noiselessly.

A sudden assurance possessed me. The dark did not seem to matter. I went forward, as if on familiar ground, never hesitating. Terror deserted me. After the first few steps in that wineroom, I seemed to get a new grip on myself.

A hand clapped over my shoulder! Even that did not startle me. Rather, I had expected it—though I could not account for such a premonition. I heard a door open under my feet; I was pushed forward and down an incline, along an uneven surface, deeper into the pitch dark. Doors seemed to be opening and shutting before and behind me, but always I went on, with that hand clapped to my shoulder. I did not turn to see who directed me; I did not need to. I knew it was the Jap!

THERE was a blaze of light, blinding in its suddenness. I was standing in a room which gave an effect of stretching endlessly on all sides, but which was really only a large, beautifully decorated room, its sloping walls lined with mirrors. As my eyes grew accustomed to the light I could identify individual pieces of exquisite furniture. There was a tasteful luxury apparent throughout.

I was alone in this room, as far as I could see. Whoever had brought me all that long, mysterious way had vanished, leaving me to enjoy the amazement of having stepped through a trap door in the wineroom of a Broadway cabaret to find myself in a palatially furnished room of impressive, almost oriental splendor.

"Isn't it nice, Jimmie?"

I almost toppled over at the sound of Dixie Lee's voice. She was still wearing her gaudy evening gown, but her attitude betrayed no sign of the mad seizure she had undergone in the Isotta Fraschini. She was smoking a cigarette through a long ivory holder, and her face was like a mask

behind the smoke shadows. She was waiting for me to speak.

"You—here?" was all I could muster.

"Sure. Add me up, and see if it isn't me!"

"Where's Ella?"

"Here, too."

"Let me see her. At once!"

"Whoa, James! Don't be a fool."

"What do you mean? How can you stand there so calmly when I'm wild to know where Ella is—to know what happened——"

"That's just it; you get riled over what you can't change."

I must have glowered at Dixie because she stepped back hesitantly.

"Never mind me! Where's that dirty dog?" I demanded. "I just want to get my hands on his throat for a minute."

Dixie raised her hand warningly. "Be careful! You'll only do yourself harm."

"I'll kill that yellow trickster——"

DIXIE put her hand across her lips as if begging me to say no more.

"Trickster?" She spoke slowly, as if considering the word. "No, James. But whatever he is, he's too powerful for you to resist. That man has control of more than the eye can see."

I was bewildered by this awe on Dixie's part. I had previously surmised her admiration for Murtha, but to talk of him worshipfully!

"Where is he? *Where is he?*" I repeated desperately.

"I'm giving you fair warning, James. You'd better keep cool. Murtha doesn't like opposition," she said.

There was an unusual gravity in Dixie's speech. I felt at the time that she was sincerely worried about my own welfare. Her face was pale and drawn, like that of a person in pain. Each time I started to ask her directly about Ella, something in her look stopped the words on my lips. And then, unexpectedly, Dixie began her gay banter, in an informal Broadway manner, and I had the distinct conviction that now she was no longer herself. It struck me that someone was playing on her mind, prompting her, feeding her words. There was a bedeviled air about her—a something unfamiliar.

"Stop! For heaven's sake, stop!" I cried.

In a flash her face sobered.

"You must submit to him," she whispered.

"Submit!" I sneered. "What about Ella?"

"She, too. Everyone must submit to him. He's too strong. No use fighting. I tried long enough. He's uncanny. What he wishes he does——"

"*Sit down, James Haskell!*"

I swung around to meet the stabbing gaze of Raoul Murtha, very suave again, tall and distinguished looking, as he sipped a liqueur from an amber glass. He pointed toward a marble-topped table.

"Have a drink," he said, smiling broadly; and I knew he was thinking of my earlier refusal to drink with him. I knew, too, that his smile implied that I would no longer dare to refuse.

Nor did I! What ever was in that liqueur glass, I drank it. I simply had not the strength to resist.

I sat down in a green damask club chair and the man with the sabre cut took a seat opposite me. Dixie had already left the room.

"You interest me. I do not understand from what source you draw the power to oppose me," said Murtha, in the tone and manner of a man discussing a bit of political news. The effrontery and poise of the man were in themselves, regardless of his astonishing demonstrations, overpoweringly impressive. He continued, "I am even beginning to like your grit—your *psychical grit*. At first, I thought you were just a stockish, dull clod and insensible to my subtle influence; but I am now convinced you are a person of some quality."

He seemed to be waiting for an answer.

"Thank you," I said, "but your meaning is beyond my depth."

"Ah, there you are, fencing with me already! Well, I am not accepting your challenge. Just now I want to be comfortable. You do, of course, understand that I have occult power?"

I hunched my shoulders, smiling non-committally. The situation was unreal, provocative. There was about us a suggestion of two gentlemen conversing at a club. Supposing that one of the gentlemen should lay claim to possessing supernatural power, what *could* the other do but shrug his shoulders?

Murtha eyed me shrewdly, perhaps seeking to gauge my thoughts. My mind was, in fact, a blank.

"You do not seem impressed," he said.

"Perhaps I do not quite understand," I replied.

"Or perhaps you are too confident of your own allies?"

There was a wealth of innuendo in his question. I grew alert at once. Allies! At what was he hinting?

"No person on earth—no worldly power can resist me," he continued, and I thought there was just a shade of anxiety in his voice.

"But there are other powers." Something had dawned on me and I sprang to my opportunity. Murtha's face grew impassive.

"No one is my equal," he said, rather heavily. "I was born with an occult gift and I have broadened it through study."

"All the knowledge of the human mind is like a grain of sand in a desert, compared to *their* knowledge," I said.

He went on, as if I had not spoken. I saw he was intentionally ignoring my remarks, and I gained confidence.

It was a strange game we two were playing.

HE said: "Fifteen years of study in India and five years in a special, secret school in Germany have given me *the key*. My hypnotic power is a natural gift, except that in me it has reached higher development. But my control over minds at a distance from me, my ability to do what is vulgarly called mind reading, my gift for communication with the spirit world and my scientific attainments have all combined to make me the strongest living force in the world!"

There was bravado in his voice now, and somehow it

lowered him in my estimation. He leaned back, like an actor awaiting applause. I did, however, shake my head in feigned admiration. I thought it best to humor him, though I could not but marvel that so powerful a person should be anxious to praise himself, to win adulation from a mere everyday person like myself. Why, Raoul Murtha was giving evidence of human weakness!

"No doubt you are everything you say you are," I responded. "You have more than convinced me. But I have just one request to make. Won't you be kind enough——"

"Ah, now you are getting off the subject. You must not ask about Ella."

Immediately, the confidence I had been building up, vanished. His quick abiilty to read my thoughts and the malignant tone in which he challenged my right to talk of Ella, made me sick. Actually sick, inside. There was nothing I put beyond Raoul Murtha, and his command for silence regarding Ella had completely dismayed me.

But submission was impossible. I was not to be silenced so easily! He would have to tell me more or else let me see Ella. I got up and took a few steps across the room, trying to calm myself, to marshal my thoughts.

"You need not grieve," he said. "I like her too well to hurt her. In fact I am jealous of you, Mr. Haskell."

"She is unhurt, then?"

"Of course—and learning to accept her situation."

"What do you mean?"

"DID I not say you must not talk of Ella!" His eyes probed mine and robbed me of any courage to contradict him. I sat down again, facing him. "I must admit," he went on, "I am deucedly curious about you. There is a psychical resistance in you—a toughness. Where did you get it?"

His question recalled my first advantage. I rallied to it. His anxiety might prove an entering wedge for attack. And though my mind moved dully in that mirror-walled room, with its peculiar confusing quality, I hazily set myself a plan. I reached into my pocket and kept my hand on the copper plate. If it were possible to strike awe into Raoul Murtha, I meant to do it.

"I am different from you, sir," I said. "I do not rely on my own powers."

"Yes; you need allies."

"There are powers in the Unseen World——"

There was a chuckle, but I felt Murtha was forcing his merriment.

"You are jesting," he said. "I see no occult sign about you—and yet, you puzzle me. There *is* a defense around you . . . I cannot quite make it out. . . ."

The man with the sabre cut was talking more to himself than to me. But I saw my path clearly now; saw, too, that there was no time to spare; he would take advantage of any tardiness, I knew. He was bent on evil. In his eye was a strained intensity of malevolent purpose. It concerned Ella and it concerned me.

"My defense is beyond even your meddling," I said.

"That is not true! Nothing is!"

"You cannot defy the Unseen World," I said, marveling at my own words. Never before had such thoughts crossed my mind, much less my lips. I believe, now, that I was prompted at the time in a most singular fashion. Furthermore, I am sure Raoul Murtha knew it! He who could see beyond the realities of the everyday world, saw, and his face blanched.

"No," I repeated, "even you cannot defy the Unseen World!"

"I have before, and I will again!" The scar on his right cheek glowed a dull red and his eyes seemed to snap about the room.

"You have *failed* before, too," I said, for above all I wished to draw him into fuller speech and to vex him if possible.

"Damn you!" he cried. "There *is* something behind you!"

Then and there, I decided to stick to my guns. In my new line of argument I saw my only chance. If the suggestion of co-operation from the Unseen World was enough to throw Murtha off his poise, then obviously that was the course to pursue. Indeed, I was beginning to feel convinced myself that the ghost of Ella's grandfather was throwing his force into the balance on my side and would not let me be defeated.

Not troubling to conceal my confidence, I smiled blandly, while Murtha was becoming more enraged by the minute. He jumped up from a chair and stamped up and down the room.

"Your resistance insults me!" he thundered, and I felt myself quail inwardly.

"You forget," Murtha went on, "that here, in my own apartment, your chances of summoning any Other World aid are more than slim."

I met his gaze resolutely. For now, I could not get the ghost of James Stephens Bixbee out of my mind. If only I could contrive to face Raoul Murtha with the ancient ghost! I was sure the spirit of the old inventor would strike a blow in defense of his great-granddaughter. *There* would be a chance for victory. Insinuatingly I began:

"You should not resent failure. The spirits of the Other World are unconquerable."

"I deny it!" There was a flaming fury in the man. His eyes seemed to be setting the room on fire. "There are ways to control the Discarnate Spirits of the Other World, too. I already possess part of the secret!"

That dovetailed beautifully with my plan! If only I could egg him on further! I said:

"The spirit that guards me is beyond your power."

The hardness left his face. He grew thoughtful. Rather gently he said, "We shall see. Meanwhile you may consider yourself my prisoner, to do with as I please."

I offered no resistance even in speech. It was clear that as matters stood I was helpless against the man with the sabre cut. He was smoking now, wrapped up in his own thoughts. My eyes searched the corners of the room and my ears were alert for sounds. Where had he imprisoned Ella? Would Dixie appear again? Was the Jap guarding them both?

"How about the police?" I said suddenly. "When they find me gone they will make a thorough search."

"Don't worry," Murtha answered. "This place is scientifically impenetrable. No police in the world could gain entrance into it."

I stared uncomprehendingly at him. I had the feeling that I had long severed all connections with a normal world and was living on a strange plane.

"I built this apartment," he continued, "when I went into the liquor traffic. I get a thrill out of defying the police. That's why I first became connected with the Crystal Slipper."

He laughed at the confusion I betrayed. The whole affair was becoming more shrouded in mystery with each moment. I wondered whether I might consult Murtha again about Ella, and as quickly decided against it. His face was like a death's head, set and grim, without a hint of mercy.

Sarcastically commending me to take care of myself, Murtha left the room. Even then I had the unpleasant sensation that I was being watched.

IT became impossible to remain inactive. I rose and gingerly wandered about, examining my surroundings. Several doors led out of the mirrored room. They looked like part of the glass paneling. I tried one of them. It gave easily. Beyond, was a rose-colored hallway. I followed its length around a bend and encountered a number of rooms, some showing luxurious furnishings through open doorways. I moved along quietly, listening at every step. At last I heard what I was seeking!

Quickly I turned the knob of a high panelled door. It opened on a small boudoir, the details of which I could

scarcely discern in the soft, amber light. I took a few steps forward—and then I saw her!

She looked more like a statue of herself, than the Ella I knew. Motionless, she sat before a low table set with a coffee service, staring into vacancy. Even on recognizing me she did not stir. The heart went completely out of me at these signs; they hinted too clearly at what I dreaded.

I went up close. She was woefully altered. There was a sad, resigned look in her eyes as she held out her hand in a grave, hopeless way and said, "Jim, there is no use.'

Just that! As if we had been discussing it for hours

"No use? Why, we have only begun, Ella," I said.

"Shhhh, shh!" she cautioned. "He will hear."

"He won't hurt you. He assured me of that, dearest Ella."

"It makes no difference what he says. We are lost."

"Don't say it, Ella, sweetheart; it's not so! You must keep up your courage."

She only smiled wanly. There was a sadness in her expression which was touching. I would have given my life to have been able to restore the dancing lights to her eyes and the bright freshness to her cheeks. Her resignation was frightening.

It seemed to me she had no memory of what had actually happened. In some way Raoul Murtha had succeeded in striking her with awe and killing all the resistance in her.

TO win her back to a show of interest in her safety and in a possible escape from the luxurious prison we were in, seemed a hopeless task. There was an unapproachable indifference about her. I decided to give her time to recuperate; and all the while I was tortured by the thought that perhaps it was too late; that perhaps Raoul Murtha had already done his devilish work and won another victim.

There was a low stool in front of the dressing table. I sat down and tried to engage Ella's attention by talking. But she hardly listened. After a while we just sat facing one another, saying nothing.

As if he had materialized out of thin air, the Jap appeared in the boudoir. I was on my guard at once. But in his face was no hint of our former desperate encounters. He addressed me politely in smooth English, telling me he would show me to my room.

"Never mind me," I told him. "I'm not going to leave Miss Bixbee until——"

The Jap waited as if my answer were no answer, and hardly had I completed my statement, when a tall form loomed up in the doorway and I heard a familiar voice. "So, Mister Haskell, you defy me again!" It was Raoul Murtha, and his eyes were blazing. "You will go at once to your room," he said.

I felt my will waver and break under his glance. Ella did not look up. I rose to my feet, made as if to argue the point, and then silently followed the Jap out.

Of the night I spent in that handsomely furnished bedroom in an apartment beneath a midtown cabaret, I recall surprisingly few details. I know I flopped down on a silk covered bed, with all my clothes on. I was certain I would not be able to close an eye. Yet in no time I was in a deep sleep.

When I awoke, it was out of a harrowing dream, in which a bedlam of ringing, clanging and buzzing made a maze of horrors through which I had to cut my way. I sat bolt upright in my bed, with the hideous noises echoing in my ears. But as I listened, the room and the apartment were deathly still. Not a ripple of the shattering nightmare lingered. "Good Lord!" I muttered, "I've been dreaming."

I turned on the reading lamp and looked at my watch. It was five o'clock. My eyes felt very heavy and I lay down again, digging my head into the pillow. Whatever was ahead of me, I would need sleep to face it.

I was falling into a doze again when something I imagined to be a burlap bag came down over my head. I sprang up, beating wildly at the bedclothes which in my nightmare had become wound around my head. Nevertheless, this time I had the feeling that I had not been altogether dreaming. Anyway, I knew I could stand no more of it. My reason was staggering. Something was in my room.

And then, so quickly that I knocked over the reading lamp, I jumped out of bed and ran to the bathroom door, tearing it open. And there stood Raoul Murtha!

His head was thrown back stiffly, his fingers extended fanwise and an appalling immovability seemed to hold his body rigid. In my extreme confusion I had a mental flashback to his other cataleptic fits, especially the one at the cabaret when he had caused Ella to faint; obviously there was a relation between his fits and his hypnotic powers. . . .

My minute of bewilderment gave him time to recover. Before I could take a step, the man with the sabre cut was his own genial self again, nodding his head and asking me how I had slept.

I could not measure up to his sociability, for it was on my tongue to call him every kind of a villain, when, as if guessing my thought, he said:

"I was just on my way to ask you to take breakfast with me."

Something boiled over in me. "And that's why," I cried, "you were in a cataleptic trance, trying to overcome my will?"

I had expected some sign of embarrassment on his part, but if he felt any, it was not evident.

"You know too much, Mr. Haskell," he said. "Come, a bit of breakfast will improve our tempers."

"I see you pay close attention to your guests."

"Shall I give you a few minutes to make your toilet? You will find clean linen in the highboy."

He bowed and left through a second door which I now saw led from another bedroom to my bathroom. Perhaps the other *was* his room; but I doubted it.

Curiously, I felt I would be at a greater advantage if I did brush up. It would mean something to face the rascal with a bit of his own nonchalance. So I acted on his suggestion, rummaging through the highboy until I found a shirt and underthings my size. After a cold shower and a rubdown, I dressed carefully, and left the bedroom.

The Jap, now in a houseman's jacket, was waiting for me outside the door. I acted as if I had expected just that and followed him into a large, somber, walnut dining-room.

Murtha, who was already sipping his coffee, rose and motioned me to an upholstered, leather seat opposite him. I sat down as if anticipating a pleasant time over my food. For I had made up my mind, while dressing, that whatever happened, I was going to play a cool game. If, as Murtha had said, I had gained his respect, there was just a chance in a million of gaining more if I kept my head.

Raoul Murtha was playing the elegant host and I was doing my best to follow his lead. The Jap served us, carrying in trays and casseroles of delicious food.

SUDDENLY Murtha leaned back and said: "When did you first come in contact with the Discarnate Intelligence which is allied with you?"

I was taken aback, having lost track of our involved conversation of a few hours before. But I saw that Murtha took my hesitation for willful obstinacy.

"All right," he cried, "keep a close mouth! But whatever is behind you, you shall never have an opportunity to call it to your aid."

I went on quietly eating, while I got a grip on myself. Calmly I determined to keep up the game I had played the night before. It was evident to me that Murtha feared only the people who had no fear of him.

"You might as well know," he said, and his words sounded like whip-lashes, "I'm removing Ella Bixbee and Dixie Lee so that you shall never see them again. And to make sure that you give me no further trouble, I'm leaving you in solitary confinement in this apartment until—until

I decide on a more effective method of destroying your influence."

Though I quailed inwardly, I went through the gestures of eating breakfast. But as the man with the sabre cut went on with a scathing explanation of what terrors he meant to visit on Ella and Dixie—and eventually on me—the blood froze within me. His face grew livid and the very soul of the man seemed to blaze forth in hatred.

I laid down my knife and fork, watching his eyes as if the horrors he pictured for me were illustrated in their flashing brightness.

"And for your opposition in the past you shall be fully punished," he said grimly between his teeth.

I sat back, instinctively shoving my hands into my pockets. The fingers of one hand closed over the copper plate I had brought along with me from my attic. Its touch gave me reassurance. I clutched it more tightly as Raoul Murtha stormed on in his threats.

"You really deserve death!" he yelled.

A QUEER, sardonic laugh broke from me. It was as if I were losing my mind. In no other way can I explain it. But the laugh had a curious effect on the man with the sabre cut. He sprang from his chair and darted glances of devastating wrath at me, *at the same time moving backward slowly, step by step.*

Instantaneously I felt a shudder pass through my hand which still held the copper plate. Then there followed a shock. As it shot through my arm and shoulder blade, I became aware of a cloudiness hazing over one corner of the room.

Almost with a maniacal glee I pointed to it.

"Look!" I cried.

Raoul Murtha put a hand before his eyes and then quickly lowered it.

"Take it away!" he said in a strangled sort of voice.

And as I gazed at the cloudiness, I saw a slight tremor go through it, and saw it take on a likeness—to the ghost of James Stephens Bixbee!

"Look!" I cried again, pointing toward the ghost and addressing myself threateningly to Murtha.

"Away—send it away—" he gasped.

An exaltation filled me. As on previous occasions, I had no clear understanding of what was occurring, but a psychic sense of its importance and implication seemed to dominate me.

I stood still, waiting for the ghost to speak. It had become increasingly strong in the last few moments, and now its *hand rose straight up to its shoulder and struck out toward Murtha.*

He slumped to one knee and I could hear his breath as if he were sobbing. But still, no words came from the ghost. In a flash I understood that I should speak. I glanced toward the specter; it was nodding.

Immediately I turned back and spoke to Murtha: "Have you seen enough?"

His shoulders shook in reply.

"Then free the two girls," I continued, "and lead us all out of this unholy place."

My own words sounded unfamiliar; I stood silent, waiting. Another flash and the way was clear to me; I was to take the first step toward liberty.

In a fever of anxiety I dashed from the room, found Ella and then Dixie, secured their wraps, and then through a maze of hallways and stairs and sliding doors I led the girls through a murky darkness which seemed lit up by a faint phosphorescent glimmer which moved always on beyond us and in which I had full confidence.

We were on the street again! We were free! My heart flowed over with thankfulness. But the girls were silent. A daze still hovered over them.

I hailed a taxicab and soon we were on our way home.

IN less than three weeks, Ella recovered and was once more her normal self. With Dixie we had some trouble during the first half year. It was no easy matter to free her from the bondage in which Raoul Murtha had held her for so long.

Curious though I was, I made no further inquiries concerning the Crystal Slipper, except to discover that it was actually padlocked. But the thing that finally relieved my mind of all anxiety was the report I read of Murtha's tragic end. The ghost had proved too much for the man with the sabre cut—he died in a paroxysm of terror. And when the Jap discovered him, dead, he dashed upstairs, square into the arms of the police. The mysterious passing was attributed to "unknown causes," but it was hinted that Raoul Murtha's bootlegging connection had in some way caused his finish. Though we never referred to it afterward, I believe neither Ella nor Dixie have clear impressions of what happened that night in Murtha's exotic apartment. Sometimes, I am not sure I have, though to the best of my ability I have given herewith a close account of my actual experiences.

When I married Ella Bixbee, Dixie and old Mrs. Williams came to live with us, and in the contented days that followed, the Crystal Slipper faded into a memory; no one ever mentions it in our home. No one, in fact, seems to ever think of it, except myself; and I am persistently haunted by the baffling knowledge that I do not yet fully understand the weird adventures through which I lately passed.

THE END

The Haunted Well

MOTORISTS on Queens Boulevard, the main traffic artery from New York City to various points on Long Island, have probably noted a large deserted house in a weed-grown yard some miles beyond Long Island City.

The building, despite the ravages of time and neglect, still gives indication that it was once a fine home. Yet it has been vacant now for more than ten years, and will probably remain so until it crumbles to ruin. Its original owner disappeared mysteriously, and ever since there has been no one willing to live in it for long.

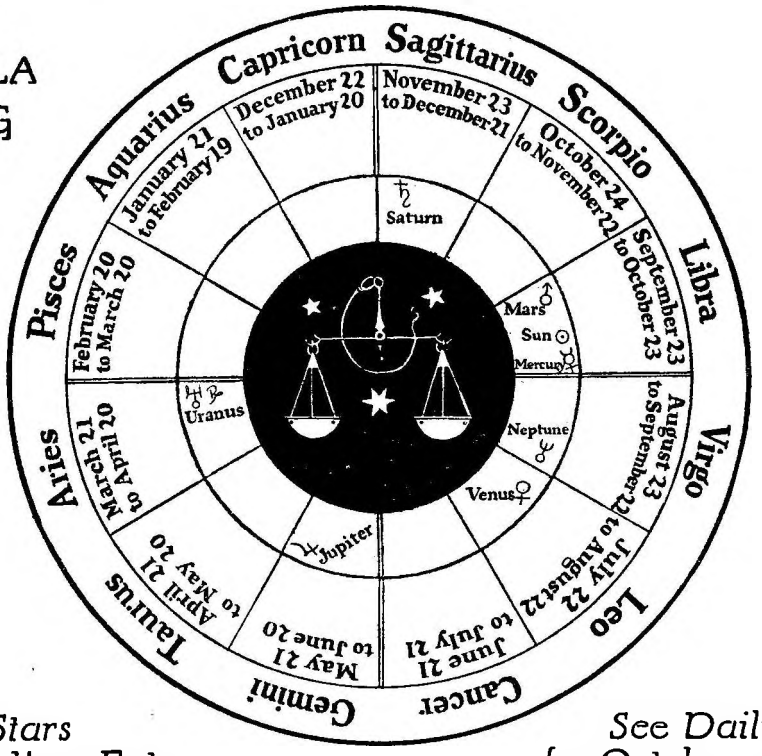
A newspaper clipping tells the story of the last family to occupy it—for two weeks. Close to the front door was an old and nearly dry well, over which was a wooden cover weighted down with a large stone. Two nights after the family moved in, and while they were all at dinner, the door of the dining room was slowly closed! Yet immediate search revealed no outsider near the place. Next morning the tenants found the well cover tilted and the huge stone gone.

After that, strange noises were heard during the day, in supposedly unoccupied rooms. And then, one night, a strong light, coming directly from the well, shone into a bedroom, wakened the sleepers and sent the whole family racing from the house. They came back only for their belongings, and soon left the house to the shadows, which have since been its only occupants.

Within the past year Queens Boulevard has been widened, and in the course of the work the front yard of the abandoned house was taken over and the old well had to be filled in. But when workmen drew off the water remaining in it, they brought to light the skeleton of a man. Investigation fixed the bones as those of the original owner. It was supposed that he had fallen into the well and drowned. If so, was his the restless spirit that came back to haunt his house?

Were You Born in October?

By STELLA KING



Let the Stars Indicate Your Fate

See Daily Guide for October, page 78

CHERRY lips, love dimples, pretty curves, a right merry countenance and an agreeable disposition—all these are associated with Libra and its beautiful ruler, the planet Venus.

If you were born between September 23rd and October 23rd, you are doubly fortunate in that you possess both physical attractiveness and a pleasant disposition, which, unfortunately, are not always found together. As the child of Libra, you should be kind, courteous and amiable, interested in many different pursuits; yet able to find contentment in the little things of life which, in the last analysis, are of such tremendous importance. So often they hold the balance between misery and happiness!

Ever a worshiper of beauty, you are neat and methodical and at the same time very adaptable. Keenly appreciative of pretty clothes, and by no means averse to luxury, it is possible that, like most people of your type, you are quite susceptible to flattery. You are also, perhaps, too ready to take the line of least resistance and agree, rather than hurt anyone's feelings by saying "No." It is natural for you to live in the present, without thinking much about the future.

In the dim past, of which we really know so little, the balance—or scales—was the symbol given to Libra because it is the half-way sign in the zodiacal circle—the turning point at which all must be weighed and balanced. This is why you Librans are interested in so many things and able to do so many of them well, without being a specialist. You like to compare one thing with another. The pleasant things of life attract you: the sordid and the ugly repel you. You do not wish to be brought into contact with suffering—not because you are lacking in sympathy, but because your rôle in life is to promote harmony, as expressed in terms of love and beauty. The desire for peace at almost any price is characteristic of your type and nothing is so foreign to your nature as strife, contention and discord. Even physical ugliness is repugnant to you. Order, neatness, harmony and justice are essential to your well-being.

The sweetness of the Libran disposition and the gentle acquiescence, particularly of its women, are attributes the world could not afford to lose. Like art in its purest form, the constructive Libran sweetens life for the more rugged and aggressive types; and if there is a recklessness and an easy morality about some Librans who may think the end justifies the means—well, none of us is perfect, and these primitive types will learn through experience.

Libra symbolizes the wistful beauty of an Indian Summer—the full-blown flower of womanhood, gentle, loving, understanding, kind, just and forgiving. Though not aggressive, she is yet able to do whatever is necessary for the comfort of the family. Man's ideal of what his woman should be!

The difficulty in deciding upon a career, the lack of initiative and aggression in some Librans—in men especially—is frequently a source of tragedy for others, because when success remains persistently around the corner, such individuals grow easily discouraged and drift into bad ways. It is therefore important for parents to train the young Librans to be self-reliant, considerate of others and persistent. The child who is taught to do things for others and made to feel that he can help (*Continued on page 78*)

What *the* Stars Foretell *for* Every Day This Month

Below are given the planetary indications for each day in October. Let them guide you to happiness

1. An adverse day. Postpone important matters and avoid risk.

2. Do not make changes. Be careful in traffic. Take no chances if you are engaged in risky occupations or experimentation. Vibrations are favorable for invention and writing.

3. Push business and attend to educational matters, correspondence and travel. A favorable day for salesmanship and general trading. Visit elderly people or buy in the evening.

4. A good day for enterprise and business. Much should be accomplished. Patronize amusements in the evening. Do not move or engage help. A good day for canning or preserving.

5. Jupiter is very powerful this month and credit should be good. Shop early in the morning. Be careful what you say to relatives in the afternoon.

6. A very favorable day for travel, reading, writing and religious interests. Exercise out of doors.

7. Invention, radio, electricity and railroads prosper. You may make changes, commence new undertakings and advertise. Conduct experiments in the morning. Seek employment and promotion. A very good day for commencing new projects.

8. Not so good for financial interests; business is likely to be slow. Take care of health. Finish work, tidy house or desk, write or study. Spend the evening quietly.

9. Take up work requiring energy and decision. Vibrations are favorable for outdoor occupations and for anything connected with machinery, chemicals and liquids. Get your canning done. Avoid discussion, change and danger in the evening, when vibrations are adverse. Money conditions should be especially good, with prices high. Sell, but do not buy.

10. Another good day for finance and salesmanship. Do not expect too much, but seek opportunity and further your interests. Avoid risks because vibrations are changeable. Be prepared for the unexpected.

11. Unfavorable. Avoid risk and dispute. Be careful in the evening.

12. Make changes, commence new undertakings and attend to important affairs. Seek employment or travel in the morning. Favorable for invention and friendship. Advertise, both in the morning and evening papers. Sell.

13. Vibrations very fortunate so long as you avoid speeding and do not get too excited. Visit elderly people.

14. An uncertain day. Do executive and mechanical work but avoid antagonism and gossip. Take no financial risks.

15. Do not speculate. Attend to routine business and postpone matters of importance.

16. Another uncertain day.

17. Avoid accident in the morning. Vibrations improve greatly in the afternoon when business and financial conditions should pick up.

18. A good day for buying, and for any matters which require concentration and organization.

19. Favorable for business, for buying and for real estate. Be careful of accident from machinery or fire.

20. Avoid speeding and enter no family discussions or controversies.

21. Vibrations favorable for business activity and change. Take up important matters, sign documents and hold important conferences. Write, study and do original work.

22. Afternoon not so favorable, with probable delay and disappointments, but evening brings success and opportunity.

23. Adverse vibrations again in force. Make no changes and be careful in trading.

24. Do not ask favors or seek financial aid.

25. See your friends, buy clothes or attend to your appearance in the afternoon. You may also make changes or deal with corporations or academies, invent and experiment from noon until 5 p. m.

26. Good for business and financial interests and for salesmanship. Not so favorable for friendship or pleasure.

27. A day of general success.

28. A fairly good day, but do not begin important enterprises. Spend the evening quietly.

29. Expect the unexpected and avoid risk.

30. Favorable for financial and social affairs, for courtship and marriage. Wear your new clothes. Buy clothes or anything to beautify the home. Invest.

31. Visit elderly relatives, interest yourself in real estate and buy to sell again. This and the preceding are two very propitious days.

Were You Born in October?

(*Continued from page* 77)

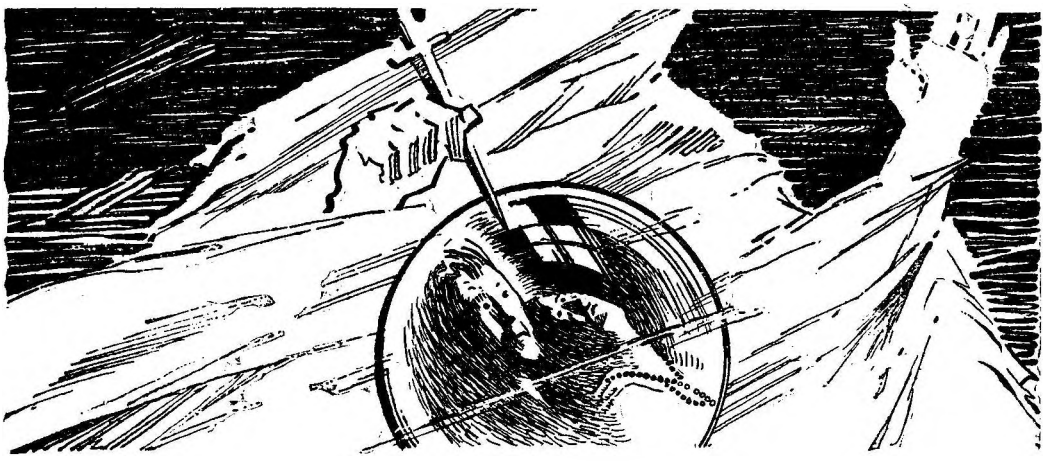
them is not so likely to succumb to flattery and fall a prey to his own attractiveness. Romance, sentiment and the worship of beauty are all excellent attributes if balanced by a sense of responsibility. The protective instinct should be cultivated in all Libran children.

The all-round ability of Libra qualifies those born under its rule to become stage directors, designers and producers; its courtesy and refinement lead to success in social life; its sense of justice and innate diplomacy find expression in law, constructive politics and the church. In medicine, the Libran becomes the well-loved and busy general practitioner rather than the specialist.

In choosing a career, the Libran should remember that beauty is the keynote of his nature. He will be more successful in something that satisfies this desire for beauty and harmony than in a career demanding aggression or dealing with the unsightly and distasteful. Libra does not like to soil the hands but takes great joy in making or selling beautiful objects. Music, color, form, sparkling jewels and beautiful clothes all find an echo in the heart of Libra's children, and in any of these fields they are sure to find congenial occupation. Most people born under this vibration are scrupulously honorable in regard to money matters and make excellent business partners.

Marriage is, of course, always an important feature of life and since Libra is ever seeking completion and is the sign of partnership, the choice of a mate is, to people of this type, a matter of perhaps greater importance than anything else. Most Librans marry early. The happiest marriages are made between Aries and Libra, who are opposites and hence complements of each other. Astrologically, this is explained by the fact that these signs are ruled by Mars and Venus, who are the heavenly lovers. Also, since Libra is an Air sign, successful marriages may occur between the Libran and a partner born either between January 21st and February 18th, or May 22nd and June 21st.

Opals, diamonds and pearls are the gems you (*Continued on page* 84)



SPIRIT TALES

A Ghost that Made History—Others that Made Mischief—Some Startling Experiments and Experiences

By COUNT CAGLIOSTRO

"COMMODORE PERRY is dead!"

With this wild cry from the lips of Captain Joseph Nicholson, U. S. N., was born one of the most amazing mysteries in the annals of the supernatural.

His customary dignity forgotten, Captain Nicholson had burst from his cabin in mid-ocean to tell the story of a ghostly visitant that brought a fatal message. Epaulettes askew, hair disheveled, Captain Nicholson stood quivering before his fellow officers and repeated more calmly:

"Commodore Perry is dead!"

For a moment his junior officers were stunned. The statement, made with such certainty, was obviously impossible of belief.

It was August 24th, 1819. Captain Nicholson, in command of the U. S. S. *Constellation*, was still several hundred miles from St. Thomas, where Commodore Perry was to meet his small fleet.

Since the beginning of the War of 1812 pirates had preyed on United States shipping in the Spanish Main. The war between Spain and her South American colonies had resulted in wholesale depredations by freebooting privateers.

The United States had protested the outrages. Bolivar, the Washington of the South, was unable at the time to do more than reply with sympathy to American notes. He had no navy with which to punish the pirates.

From protesting, the government of the United States took to action. Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry, hero of the Battle of Lake Erie, was called to active service. He was provided with a fleet of three vessels—the corvette, *John Adams;* the frigate, *Constellation;* and the schooner, *Nonesuch.*

General Bolivar agreed to meet Perry at the mouth of the Orinoco, there to provide the Commodore with a list of authorized privateers. The *Constellation* was an old ship, badly in need of repairs. Perry did not wait to take command of her, as his position warranted, but instead, sailed in the speedier *John Adams.* The other vessels were to join him at the island of St. Thomas in the West Indies, and there to launch an expedition against all unlisted privateers.

Due to greater sailing ability, the *John Adams* reached the Orinoco in record time, while the *Constellation,* of which Captain Nicholson had been placed in temporary command, wallowed through unfavorable winds in the Caribbean.

Captain Nicholson had retired to his cabin on the eventful afternoon of August 24th. He estimated that he would arrive at St. Thomas within the week.

With eyes shut against the tropic glare, the Captain lay on his lounge, thinking no doubt of the task before him and of the intrepid leadership of Commodore Perry under whom he would fulfill his duty.

Suddenly, according to his own account, there appeared beside his bed the spirit of Captain Charles Gordon, a fellow officer who had been dead two years.

The spirit saluted and asked the ship's destination.

Captain Nicholson felt no fear. He and Captain Gordon had been firm friends. Quite naturally he replied:

"I am bound for St. Thomas to meet Commodore Perry. He will assume command of the fleet there."

The spirit of Captain Gordon smiled sadly. "No, you are mistaken in that," he said, and gestured with one arm. "Commodore Perry now belongs to my squadron! Look!"

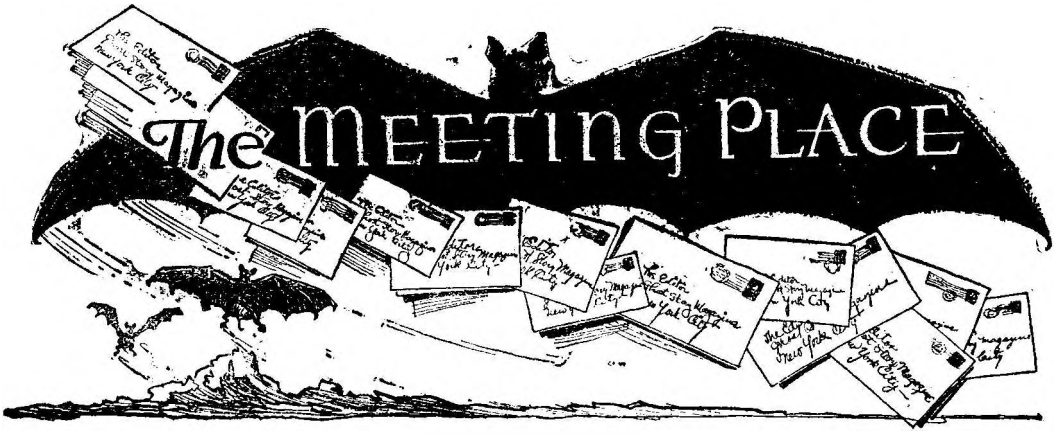
CAPTAIN NICHOLSON peered in the direction the spirit indicated. Quite distinctly he saw before him a harbor, over which loomed a fort.

The flag on the fort hung at half-mast. Ships in the bay also flew the fatal sign. Near-by, a warship was draped in mourning. The solemn boom of minute guns resounded over the water from the battleship.

A boat put off from the vessel. Crepe adorned the arms of the officers in the stern. A marine band followed in another boat. Captain Nicholson heard the sad music of a funeral dirge float from the instruments. The drums were muffled.

Still another boat put off from the battleship. In it was the black outline of a coffin, on top of which were a Commodore's hat and sword.

(*Continued on page 96*)



Eerie Children

An Editorial by ROBERT NAPIER

FROM Dublin, Ireland, comes the story of a boy tormented by a prankish spirit that appeared as his double in various parts of the city and made his relatives and friends fearful of what it might portend. A ghost that took the shape of another person—and that person a healthy everyday boy—was something to appall the imagination!

This unaccountable apparition of himself was the result of the boy's visit to a haunted house in the company of a number of lads his own age who went to the place on a lark. But the chief joke seemed to be on this youngster who found himself enabled to be in two places at once!

What are known as "living" phantasms usually presage death or disaster to those they represent. Here, however, nothing of the kind happened, so far as we can gather. Appearing as his double was simply a puckish trick on the part of the Unknown. We cannot help wonder what the outcome would have been if the boy had met "himself" on the stairs or in the street.

Whenever children are involved in supernatural or supernormal occurrences, they exercise a peculiarly powerful influence on the human mind. Even the most dyed-in-the-wool materialist will pause to give the phenomena serious attention, for a child is seldom guilty of any deliberate hoax. Psychic powers witnessed in the very young have always proved a fascinating subject for scientific study.

Probably the outstanding case of the kind is that of the celebrated Fox sisters, whose rappings in their home at Hydesville, New York, were, like the shot of Emerson's embattled farmers, "heard round the world." Whether the girls were genuine psychics or frauds—and there is plenty of proof either side—they began in their teens.

Little Leo Brett, twelve years old, the son of the Professor of Bacteriology in the College of Physicians and Surgeons in Boston, Mass., was an astonishing child of another sort. Under hypnosis, he could actually see through the body of a person just as if his eyes were an X-ray apparatus. Many experiments with Leo in a hypnotic state convinced numerous medical men that he could detect and describe minutely bone fractures, lesions of the heart, tumors and other pathological conditions. One of his sensational feats was to tell a surgeon exactly where a charge of birdshot had lodged in various parts of a patient's elbow joint, so as to guide the operation and save the arm from permanent crippling.

There is also a little girl on record who possessed the same strange power without the aid of hypnotism. Her name was Beulah Miller, she lived in Warren, Rhode Island, and used to astonish and entertain her playmates by

telling them what was in their minds and hidden in their pockets. Beulah's fame spread, and both Professor Hyslop, then Secretary of the American Society for Psychical Research, and Professor Munsterberg, the psychologist at Harvard University, tested and investigated the singular gift of this little girl.

Professor Hyslop was satisfied that her power was supernormal, but the Harvard psychologist suspected that Beulah depended on the presence of her mother in the room. Munsterberg was sure that a code of signals was employed.

To prove or disprove the phenomena, experiments were conducted in New York City with the mother of Beulah at home in Rhode Island, and the child came through the trial with flying colors. Surrounded by strangers, it was demonstrated that her gift did not depend on collusion, or even on the ordinary variety of mind-reading, for she could correctly describe the detailed character of articles unknown to and unseen by herself and the witnesses present at the test. To all appearances her eyes saw through solid substances without effort when she so willed.

Then there are the little English girls, discovered by Conan Doyle, who see real fairies and play with them. Photographs of the children and their incredible playmates have been shown to the world—visual evidence that has been lauded as marvelous and denounced as spurious!

Very few stories have been written of child ghosts. That may be because they are especially poignant. In the next issue of this magazine there is one that we want you to look for. It is called "The Spirit in the Garden," and a more touching and tender tale would be hard to find.

READERS are invited to send brief accounts of personal experiences with the occult to The Meeting Place. The correspondent's full name and address must be signed to each letter but we will print only the initials or a pseudonym if it is requested. Answers to other correspondents' letters will also be printed.

Here is a chance to get in touch with persons all over the world who are interested in the supernatural!

Some More About Margery

IN running through the magazine, *Psychic Research*, for May, I came across some highly interesting accounts of the medium "Margery," referred to by Mr. Robert Napier in the August GHOST STORIES. The experiments I should like to tell about were made by Mr. F. Bligh Bond, the psychic researcher who, I believe, is already familiar to your readers.

During the winter of 1926, Mr. Bond sat several times with "Margery" for automatic writing. Perhaps the most interesting of these sittings were those in which the famous Oscar Wilde made his appearance, introduced by "Margery's" brother and spirit control, Walter. The writing was characterized by the particular Greek "e" used by the poet.

On the first occasion Wilde kept interrupting the communications between Walter and Mr. Bond, then took over the control himself, saying:

"Bond, death is such a distressing certainty, isn't it—like marriage? Only one can avoid marriage, and not death. Never think about it! But one must—it is too certain. . . ."

There followed more in the same vein, and then some advice to Mr. Bond in his future writing.

Later, the contact now established, Wilde was able to write through Margery to Mr. Bond, without the latter's being present. The following quotation is part of one such message the medium received:

"I am coming to you through the mind of another. . . . I am going to try and help you with an idea; part of it is truth and part lies. I have told you (referring to a previous sitting), lying is an art. It requires the most careful study . . . .

"If people talk—let them! You can't possibly stop them. I have told you there is only one thing worse than being talked about, and that is, not being talked about; so let's proceed. . . .

"I was not appreciated living: nor do I expect to be now that I am dead—dead!—what a beautiful word. It conveys the meaning that the end has come—an end to everything. I was a great artist in my line: you will never find a greater one. With full appreciation of myself, let us proceed."

Wilde then went on to sketch a play—one of unusual merit, by the way—which was later worked out but never produced.

One of the most important facts bearing upon these communications is that "Margery" knows little or nothing of Oscar Wilde—and is not familiar with the incidents of his life, or the literary style he affected.

On New Year's Eve, 1926-27, Mr. Bond was again sitting with "Margery" when an unrecognizable spirit began to communicate.

"Yes, you are kind. Old friends have changed: old manners gone. Imagine a dry New Year's Eve! Take a few of these busy folks and chop their heads off . . . (like) the last Abbot."

Mr. Bond had to explain to "Margery" the humorous allusion to the last Abbot of Glastonbury. Then the spirit resumed his communication, but refused to tell who he was, only saying: "I am from the Isle of Apples (which Mr. Bond interpreted as being "Avalon", or Glastonbury) and "I am your friend . . . your worthy friend. You know me well." After these came the signatures: "Flohr" and

"Flower." It so happened that this last was the name of a man associated with Mr. Bond, a man who was then living in Glastenbury.

The investigator therefore tried to find out whether the spirit was that of his friend, sleeping, but he could get no satisfactory assurance. So he wrote to Mr. Flower and in a few days received a reply stating that at the time of the sitting that gentleman had been in a discussion during which Mr. Bond was continually referred to. Also that Flohr was the early spelling of his family name—a form that was unknown to anyone else besides himself.

The amazing part of the case is that Mr. Bond was with "Margery" in America, while Mr. Flower was speaking of him in England! At the conclusion of his article Mr. Bond explains the coincidence on the grounds of subconscious affinity between his own and Mr. Flower's personalities.

Westport, Connecticut. M. B. WILSON.

George Bernard Shaw On Dreams

YOU'VE probably heard the views of George Bernard Shaw, the satirist and playwright, on everything under the sun. I thought I had, until I read in a London journal, what the great man thinks about dreams. In the *Sunday Dispatch* he writes:

"I have found that the dreams of other people generally come true, but, singularly enough, I have never had a dream that has come true."

He goes on to say that despite this, he did once have a dream that furnished him with some information he was seeking. His play, *Arms and the Man,* was produced in 1894, but at no time was Shaw informed as to who had supplied the financial backing for the piece. The person's name was kept a close secret—until ten years later, when Shaw had his dream. Telling of it, he says:

"I dreamed that I was in a sitting room and presently Miss Horniman came in, and I remarked, 'So it is to you I am indebted for the production of *Arms and the Man?*'

"The next day I called on Miss Horniman, and she confirmed my dream."

Aside from this one experience, however, Mr. Shaw could cite no other case in which dreams had ever remotely affected or aided him in his writings. He concludes the item with this warning:

"Please do be careful when listening to scientists' views on dreams! You know they are the most credulous people in the world!"

Isn't that a typical Shavian remark?

London, England. M. LANGTHORNE.

Another Faker Exposed

AFTER reading Howard Thurston's illuminating exposure of fakes in the September issue of GHOST STORIES, I was reminded of something I had read a while before, and which I thought might interest your readers.

A man named McLaughlin, as I remember, went to a Coney Island freakshow. He, along with the others present, was allowed to ask one fairly general question that he wished the spirits to answer. After that the so-called "Indian Psychic"—really just a plain Mexican Indian—handed out slips of blank paper, asked the recipients to sign them, and then went around and collected them.

He placed the sheets in a large empty test tube, where, to the amazement of all the subjects, they became covered with writing—ambiguous answers to their vague questions. Mr. McLaughlin, however, did not turn in his paper, but kept it, and on his return home, discovered that heat would bring out the writing that had been on the apparently blank paper. But—the Indian had used no heat!

Curious, he sent the sheet to a psychic research group and was shortly informed that he had witnessed one of the oldest pseudo-psychic tricks known. For there are apparently hundreds of inks which, while ordinarily invisible, will appear under the effects of heat. Milk and onion juice are only two of the more common fluids that can be used.

But the ink on his particular scrap of paper was one which developed when exposed to strong ammonia fumes. The Coney Island faker had poured a few drops of concentrated ammonia into the bottom of the test tube.

So there seems to be no end to the methods of fooling the public!

Long Island. HAMILTON G.

The Housekeeper's Tale

WHEN my grandmother died, my grandfather employed a housekeeper, Mrs. Price, to take charge of his rather large house. Mrs. Price was plump, good-natured and quite unimaginative, so that the incident I am going to relate about her is all the more surprising.

The housekeeper was dozing before the fire in the kitchen. Her husband was on night shift at the railroad yards and wouldn't be home until morning. She thought of him out in the bitter cold, for it was a terrible night. The snow was falling and a wind howled around the house.

Suddenly, without any warning, the fender in front of the old-fashioned fireplace rose vertically from the floor to a height of about five feet. Then it fell with a bang. This was repeated three times, without a sign of any human agency.

While Mrs. Price was still staring, transfixed with horror, she heard her name called faintly, apparently from outside: "Emmy, oh, Emmy!"

It was her husband's voice!

Mrs. Price rushed to the back door, and almost before she opened it, she felt a gust of cold air stream past her—and something icy brushed her cheek. She took one look outside, but there was no one in sight and she slammed the door in terror.

The room was very warm when she came back, but still that chill air clung about her. The uncanny sensation drove her frantic. Just then the telephone rang, shattering the silence.

She picked up the receiver, but after holding it only a second, she let it fall from her nerveless hand.

The man at the other end had told her simply that her husband had been instantly killed by a shifting engine just a few minutes ago.

Mrs. Price swears to the truth of this incident, and feels that it is all the stranger for the fact that she was anticipating nothing unpleasant beforehand.

Clairton, Penna. G. and E. BOTT.

The Ghost in the Jail

ALMOST every town can boast of a haunted house; but how many can boast of a haunted jail? This town can—West Orange, Nebraska. The wraith of the West Orange police station has been causing trouble for years with its clanking of ghostly chains and its mysterious rattling of the bars. And now it's come back again!

This time it has been manifesting new tricks, for the guards are kept continually on the run to locate the footsteps in the cell rooms and on the second floor of the building—to say nothing of the spooky clankings which still continue to be heard all over the jail.

Inspection always discloses, however, that the prisoners are fast asleep in their cells, and that there is not a human being up and abroad during the night watches. Now a constant vigil is being kept by Lieutenant Dangler, of that precinct, for he has an idea who the specter may be.

There is no record of anything uncanny about the century-old house which has been remodeled into a jail, but there *is* a record of an actor who was imprisoned there several years ago, and who hung himself in his cell. His is the ghost Lieutenant Dangler is prepared to see.

West Orange, Neb. ABE GREELEY.

The Halo of Romance

Never Encircles a Bald Head!

"You're a dear, Bob—but a trifle unromantic. After all, I'm young, you know. I want romance—thrills! I am fond of you—but not that way."

A BITTER end to his long and secretly cherished dreams! Sadly unlike the rapturous scene he had pictured! Her young frankness and candor cut him more cruelly than a curt "no" might have done. Yet after all, why had he dared to hope? She had been friendly always—kind—but never too encouraging.

And then slowly it came to him! Scraps of her conversation in the past. Her apparently casual admiration for men with thick, well-groomed hair. She had been hinting of course. How blind he had been! But now—he knew—knew that no matter how gifted a man may be otherwise. No matter how intelligent or accomplished, or influential—no matter how strong or virile; he never quite receives the respect or admiration due him, if few or no hairs grow on the top of his head. How impossible it is to place the halo of romance around a bald head!

So many thousands of men let that bald spectre come between them and the best things in life. It turns aside romance; it destroys self-confidence—it even blocks success! These men face just such tragic moments in life—moments that are doubly tragic because so unnecessary. For baldness can be prevented, if the needful steps are taken in time.

Don't Accept Baldness

Don't think that fate has singled you out to be particularly unfortunate. And that unfortunate, you must remain for the rest of your life.

For it makes no difference how many kinds of tonics you apply to your scalp. It matters not how much money you spend in barber shops. Everything is useless unless the simple laws of nature are followed. Just as it is true that the organs of the body will not function properly without a supply of rich, red blood coursing through them. So it is also true that the hair will not be healthy, cannot be luxuriant and abundant—unless there is a proper blood supply at its roots. By following certain, easy rules, thousands have acquired heads of hair that are the admiration of all. The beautiful gloss, the luxuriant abundance and healthy strength make this hair indeed a crowning glory, and certainly there is no reason why you cannot do the same.

Bernarr Macfadden's Amazing Discovery

Bernarr Macfadden was threatened at one time with baldness. The idea seemed intolerable to him. So with his customary decisiveness, he began the scientific study of hair—and it was scarcely the subject of an hour. There were many, many hours and days and months spent by him on this task. He unraveled fact from theory, truth from speculation. Yet he applied some new ideas and found many of them workable.

The results astonished even himself. For in place of the thin, sickly, straggly hair, which had been falling out, he developed a mass of luxuriantly healthy hair!

So remarkable are the results obtained through Bernarr Macfadden's new, easy hair culture methods, they seem unbelievable to some who have tried the usual kind of "Hair-growers" without benefit. Yet thousands upon thousands men and women have already used these remarkable methods with uniformly satisfactory results.

You can learn Mr. Macfadden's methods of Hair Culture in a few minutes

The most wonderful thing about Mr. Macfadden's discovery is that his methods do not require the use of any so-called tonics or treatments. They do not demand any apparatus. In fact, his system of hair culture is so simple, so easy to apply, that anyone can learn it in only a few minutes. Once you have learned the amazing secret you can be sure to have strong, vigorous, healthy hair, and it won't cost you a single penny to use it day after day, year after year!

If your comb reveals that you have dandruff, or that your hair is coming out too fast, if your head is too dry or too oily, if you are threatened with baldness in any degree, you owe it to yourself, to your peace of mind, at least to investigate Mr. Macfadden's discovery. Find out what your hair is, how it grows, why it dies and falls out, why it loses its color, why it becomes brittle. Then read how this simple natural method can quickly end your troubles, stop your loss of hair, end your dandruff and make your hair grow thicker, stronger, more beautiful than perhaps you have dared to hope!

Send No Money

Don't send one cent in advance. Just fill in, and return the coupon on the left, and the book will come to you by return mail. When the postman hands it to you, deposit only $2.00 plus a few cents delivery charges with him. Then after you have kept "Hair Culture," for 5 days—after you have tested the methods described—if you are not absolutely satisfied, return the book to us and your $2.00 will be promptly refunded.

What do you know about Your Hair?

What are the most scientific preventatives of baldness?
Should a wire brush ever be used on the hair?
When should the hair be forced to fall out?
Of what benefit to the hair is singeing?
How often should the hair be washed or dampened?
What is the one great cause of dry scalp and hair?
What is the best soap for oily hair? for dry hair?
What are the three causes of baldness?
What is a dry shampoo and how does it affect the hair?
What is the strongest stimulant that can be used on the scalp?
What one thing is most important to luxurious growth of hair?
Why does hair fall out after sickness?
What causes gray hair?
Is dandruff contagious?
What has diet to do with dandruff?
What is the best way to kill the dandruff germ?
How can the eyebrows and eyelashes be strengthened?

Were You Born in October?

(*Continued from page 78*)

should wear if you are a daughter of Libra. The opal is the most individual of precious stones because no two are ever quite alike and because it is non-metallic. It is a product of sulphur and alumina and if fire is applied to it, it disappears immediately, leaving only a puff of smoke. It has always been considered lucky for the October-born. Indeed, the belief in the "unlucky opal" seems to have little foundation; it appears to have arisen from a story in one of Sir Walter Scott's novels, "Anne of Geirstein." The old Sanskrit word for opal means "precious stone," and this highly prized gem was supposed to protect its wearer from disease and was considered particularly efficacious in all eye affections.

Your colors are pale blue, all the pale shades of yellow, dove-gray and pastel hues. Roses, violets and lilies of the valley are your flowers.

You need companionship and should never live alone.

During the past two years, those of you who were born in September, or during the first week of October, have met with strange and unexpected happenings and some of you have doubtless suffered sudden reverses. In the planetary map of man's destiny this is explained by the position of Uranus, which has been opposing your sun. It is also probable that you have found yourselves in a position where you had to do one thing when very likely you would much rather have done something else. Uranus frequently compels such reluctant obedience.

Should your birthday come during the first few days of October, January or July, I am afraid you will have to be ready to meet continued adverse conditions for some months to come. Uranus is a separative influence and it is only those who exercise great self-control who are able to withstand his rays. You will feel this influence all the more strongly if you were born in any of the following years: 1866, 1878, 1880, 1883, 1886, 1898, 1901, 1905 or 1907. Be as careful as you can and try to avoid risk of any nature, because the Uranian bolt does not always strike in the same place. This is no time for you to play the market, to indulge in secret intrigues, to fly for the first time, or to make dangerous experiments with explosives or electricity.

THE planet Uranus passed through Libra from 1885 to 1901; he spends seven years in each sign and takes 84 years to make the complete circle. Not only is this planet the synonym of progress, but it is also a tremendously egotistical as well as a separative influence. For this reason, it is usually very much in evidence in any divorce proceedings. The effect of its presence on partnership and marriage must be taken into consideration by those born during the years just mentioned. Was

this ascendancy of Uranus one of the causes of the increase in divorce immediately after and during the war, at which time the children born in the late eighties had reached the marriageable age?

And, while we are speculating, what about the influence of Neptune on slenderizing? Though Neptune is the ruler of the sea and is associated with liquids and the glandular system of man, his tendency is to dry up and wither. In this, he is like Saturn. Neptune entered the sign of Cancer, which rules the breast and stomach, in 1901 and as he makes a fourteen-year visit to each of the signs, he stayed there until 1914. Was it not during this period that the boyish form made its appearance in the world of fashion? Furthermore, those who were born in 1901, when Saturn opposed Neptune, were greatly influenced by this craze, for Neptune fosters fads, especially when he is on adverse terms with the other major planets.

The last time Neptune entered Cancer was in 1736 and in a history of this period, when our great-great-great-grandmothers wore many flounces and patches and head-dresses twelve inches high, a very shocked historian complains that young ladies were to be seen galloping on horseback attired like rakish young gentlemen, with no mark of their sex save the petticoat—and even that was of the same material as coat and waistcoat! Each generation has its problems!

The adverse rays from Uranus will be especially powerful during the first week of October and again about the 18th and 19th of that month, so great care should then be taken to avoid the possibility of accident.

JUPITER is now stationary in sixteen degrees of Gemini and if your birthday comes about the 7th of June, the 10th of October or the 5th of February, you may expect fortune to smile upon you. This is the time for you to grasp every prospect of success and to advance your interests in every way possible. Jupiter completes the circle in rather less than twelve years, so that your good fortune is all the more certain if you were born in 1905 or 1906, or in 1910, when Jupiter was last in Libra. This should be a fortunate year for the Geminians, Aquarians and all those Librans who were born after the first week in October.

The eclipses in 1929 do not affect the October-born; but in 1930 there will be an eclipse on April 13th which will affect those born about the sixteenth of October. It will be as well for these people to build up health and protect their interests in the meantime, though the effects of an eclipse are not always immediate.

Saturn remains in practically the same position as he occupied last month.

NEPTUNE is now in three degrees of Virgo and is passing over the sun in the birthcharts of those born on the 26th and 27th of August. To those engaged in creative work the Neptunian rays should be of great value because they proceed from the planet of inspiration. Neptune will also assist those interested in mediumship. Anyone born about the 22nd of February or May, or around the 26th of November should observe great discretion, because these rays, falling at an adverse angle, lead to confusion, misrepresentation and loss. Those born in 1878, 1888, 1897, 1898, 1919 or 1920 should be very prudent and careful and should keep away from the get-rich-quick promoter. These discordant Neptunian rays frequently lead to trouble through jealousy and intrigue and though they may appear to promise a great deal, they usually end in disappointment.

On the other hand, those born about the 25th of April or December are now in favor with Neptune and may expect success in drama, in travel, and through large combines and even "booms," both of which are dear to the heart of Neptune. If you happen to have been born on either of the above dates in 1875, 1877, 1881, 1893 or 1905, these vibrations should bring you something well worth while in a material sense or some unique experience which you will long remember.

Mars is stirring into activity those born between the middle of October and the fourth of November. During the years 1890, 1891 and 1892 Uranus was in the part of the zodiac now being traversed by Mars and if you were born during that period it is necessary for you to be careful or these high-powered Uranian rays may lead you into conflict or accident. Other birthdays which lie in the path of these rays occur from the middle to the end of February, April and August.

The PSYCHIC CIRCLE That Won First Place

By Mrs. S. N. FROMAN
of Eureka, California

WHEN GHOST STORIES announced, a while ago, that it would offer awards for the most interesting reports made by private psychic circles, our little group decided to enter the lists. We are four in number, all residents of Eureka, California, and in accordance with the editor's provision, we met to appoint a secretary who should keep the minutes of every séance we held. I, Mrs. S. N. Froman, was made secretary on that occasion; the others who would work with me were Mr. and Mrs. Olin Kenny, and Geraldine, a child of ten who is under my care. The date of our first séance was decided upon as well as the place of meeting.

I shall now set forth as clearly as I can what were the times and places of our efforts, and what were the results we obtained at each sitting.

July 30th, 1928. The first séance was a complete failure in that it was broken up by the intervention of members of the family who were not in sympathy with our aims. We did, however, set a date in advance for our second meeting.

August 6th. The séance began at 9 P.M. at the secretary's home. The room in which we sat was in darkness, and the four of us were seated around a massive table, our hands interlocked. In the intense silence there suddenly sounded slight raps on chairs and floor, growing louder and louder as they mounted to the table top. Then the table, weighing from seventy-five to one hundred pounds, rose clear off the floor. We took that to mean that our spirit friends were ready to communicate with us and that the séance could now be begun with them.

We had prepared for their coming and had laid pencils and paper in the center of the table. In a few seconds we heard a pencil moving over one of the blank sheets, and as soon as it clattered to the table we turned on the lights. Words were written quite plainly on the paper.

With the lights off again, we waited and were rewarded by the movements of our trumpet, which was made of heavy building paper and had also been placed in the center of the table. While we all sat with arms outstretched and hands clasped around the table, the trumpet rose in the air and floated, unsupported, above our heads.

Little Geraldine became frightened at about that time, and one of the sitters laughed at her. At that the trumpet came down, touched each of us in turn and then alighted on the table. No sooner was it still than a hand materialized out of space and touched the members of the circle. At the same time a voice whispered from the trumpet. I asked who wanted to talk. It was a woman who gave her name as Carmen———. As we all knew, this was the name of a girl who had been murdered here in Humboldt County about two and a half years ago. She gave the full name of the man who had been tried for her murder and acquitted. She said she had seen Jesus, and yet did not seem to know she was dead.

The control changed then; the trumpet gave blast after blast of deafening, soul-chilling noise, until we all felt we should go mad. Suddenly the bedlam changed, and sounded like the reports of revolvers being fired all about us. Lastly, a whistle, like that of a policeman, shrilled out. I asked Olin if he had blown it, but before he could answer the sound leaped up until it seemed to come from the ceiling.

ALL of us were too exhausted to continue, so we broke up.

September 10th. The next séance was conducted at the home of Mrs. J, an invalid who is also a spiritualist. Our circle numbered six on this occasion, the additional members being well-known business men in Eureka. We began promptly at 8 P.M., with the sitters at their regular places around a table which had been drawn up to the sick woman's bedside. After a few moments of quiet the trumpet moved about and a voice could be heard within. The spirit speaker was addressing Mrs. J., and informed her that it was her departed daughter-in-law. The nature of the communication convinced us all that the invisible speaker was a supernatural intelligence.

Spirit power was then demonstrated by raps, by the moving of the table, and finally by the lifting of a straight chair which was placed on top of the table without the aid of any human agency. After that, almost every member of the group received individual written messages. The last of them said "God bless you all. Good night."

Date Unrecorded. We gathered again at the home of Mrs. J. On this evening I left my home without our trumpet and writing materials. But with the aid of paper and pencils supplied by Mrs. J., we obtained very satisfactory results. Everyone received independent messages, written either by some unknown supernatural being or by

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Some time ago, GHOST STORIES offered to all amateur investigators of psychic phenomena an opportunity to form their own psychic circles and submit records of séances held over a period of six months.

All reports were passed upon by the following board of judges:

Fulton Oursler, novelist and playwright.

Doctor Hereward Carrington, eminent student of psychic phenomena.

The Editor of GHOST STORIES.

The account printed in these pages was selected as the best of those submitted and received the first award of $100.

Second and third place were given to Mrs. Jennie B. McLaughlin and Mr. P. O. Wesner, both of Perry, Arkansas.

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the hands of our own departed ones.

November 5. The meeting was called to order at 8 P.M. at the home of Mrs. J. Seven people were present.

While we all sat with hands linked around it, the table was lifted from the floor, and chairs—more than one this time—were placed upon its top. One spirit spoke through the trumpet in a very audible voice and then wrote a message of farewell, after which she—it was a woman—signed her name. This brought the sitting to a close.

November 23rd. This séance was held at the same house as the previous one, and again seven persons were present. One of these, a lawyer, had had no previous experience with the occult and was amazed at the manifestations. He was thoroughly convinced that he held a conversation with his departed daughter. No one else had heard this communication, but the lawyer told us that it was a continuation of his daughter's conversation with him as she lay on her death-bed. The voice came through the trumpet, and during the fifteen minutes that it spoke, flowers were distributed to all of us. The bouquet laid before the lawyer was composed of his daughter's favorite flower.

THEN a message came to each of the others in the room. A chair was again lifted onto the top of the table, and on the chair was placed the trumpet. Then the spirit wrote simply: "God bless you all. Good night."

December 4th. Mrs. Kenny and I were alone at my house and decided to work for some demonstrations from the Unseen World. We drew our chairs up to the library table which weighed about twenty-five or thirty pounds. Books lay on the lower shelves and the large drawer was filled with miscellaneous articles. Suddenly the leaves of the books began to move and rustle, while the table rose slightly and fell again.

My eyes caught sight of the open piano and I asked the spirits to play for us. In a second or two there came gentle taps upon the keys. For every question we put, the spirits struck a key: three taps for "yes"; one for "no." Presently whole chords were sounded and the keys were struck more than twenty times.

December 11th. Our spirit circle met at the secretary's home at 8 P.M. There were seven members present at this sitting. The meeting opened with the playing of two songs on the victrola: "When the Roll Is Called up Yonder," and "He Leadeth Me." Then the lights were turned off and we became quiet.

Presently spirit messages began to come, written on the paper that lay in the center of the table.

Next the trumpet was set in the middle of the table. Soon, however, it rose and passed from one to the other, speaking to each in turn. When the trumpet came to me, an Unseen Power tossed it over my head to the floor where it lay for the rest of the evening.

Almost immediately the piano began to play, though no one was near it. The rendition seemed to be very good, and the tunes were two old favorites: "When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder"—which we had played on the victrola—and "Home, Sweet Home."

This meeting lasted for one hour and a half.

January 21st, 1929. The original four of our circle held a séance at the bedside of Mrs. J., who was very ill.

At a quarter past seven we took our places at a table by her bed.

As soon as the first raps announced the arrival of our spirit friends, I asked for a message for the sick one among us. An unseen hand began to write immediately, and when Mrs. J. asked the spirit about heaven and Jesus, a voice answered her through the trumpet. Everyone could hear the words spoken and their nature was such as to rejoice the heart of the invalid. Afterward, the trumpet moved about the circle, whispering a message to each of us. Then its behavior changed and it floated about the room.

WHEN the room was quiet again I asked for a song for the sick lady. Just then Mrs. J. herself, started to sing softly "Will There Be Any Stars in My Crown." She was sitting up in bed at the time, and suddenly we could all hear the sound of the pillows being arranged. Mrs. J. stopped singing and said: "They are fixing my pillows for me." Then she took up her song again and this time the trumpet moved over to her and a spirit voice sang from it with her until she had finished.

The trumpet fell gently across my hands, and suddenly in the now quiet room, I began to whistle. I stopped abruptly, but from the opposite end of the room a ghostly voice whistled the same tune through to the end.

The meeting lasted for one hour and twenty minutes, and was brought to a close by a voice which came very distinctly to us—and not from the trumpet—saying, "Good night!"

January 26th. The circle met at the home of the secretary, and consisted of seven members in all. The séance opened at 8 P.M. and from the first some trouble was encountered in getting into touch with the Other World.

When harmony was at last obtained and the spirits were able to come to us, they announced themselves by playing the piano. They wrote only one message on this occasion, though later they talked to several of the sitters through the trumpet. Then of a sudden a distinct, but unfamiliar voice was heard in the room. It said "Hello!" We all responded with "Hello, friends!"

The messages which followed were given only to members of the immediate circle, and in no way concerned prophecies or fortune telling.

The meeting lasted for one hour and a half and was the most difficult we had held during the entire test period.

Signed
Mrs. S. N. Froman, Secretary
Mrs. Etta Kenny

The above document was witnessed and sealed on the 31st of January, 1929, by J. F. Fraser, Notary Public for the County of Humboldt, in the State of California.

"Dey Aint No Ghosts"

(*Continued from page* 15)

King ghost, an' I met all de ghostes whut yiver was in de whole worl', an' yivery ghost say de same thing: 'Dey ain't no ghosts.' An' if de Cap'n ghost an' de gin'ral ghost an' de King ghost an' all de ghostes in de whole worl' don' know ef dar am ghostes who does?"

"Das right; das right, honey lamb," say de school-teacher. And she say: "I been 'spicious dey ain' no ghostes dis long whiles, an' now I know. Ef all de ghostes say dey ain' no ghosts, dey *ain'* no ghosts."

So yiver'body 'low dat so 'cep' Zack Badget, whut been tellin' de ghost-tale, an' he ain't gwine say "Yis" an' he ain't gwine say "No," 'ca'se he right sweet on de school-teacher; but he know right well he done seen plinty ghostes in he day. So he boun' to be sure fust. So he say' to li'l black Mose:

"'Tain' likely you met up wid a monstrous big ha'nt whut live down de lane whut he name Bloody Bones?"

"Yas," say' li'l black Mose, "I done met up wid him."

"An' did old Bloody Bones done tol' you dey ain't no ghosts?" say Zack Badget.

"Yas," say li'l black Mose, "he done tell me perzackly dat."

"Well, if *he* tol' you day ain't no ghosts," say Zack Badget, "I got to 'low dey ain't no ghosts, 'ca'se he ain't gwine tell no lie erbout it. I know dat Bloody Bones ghost sence I was a piccaninny, an' I done met up wif him a powerful lot o' times, an' he ain' gwine tell no lie erbout it. Ef dat perticklar ghost say dey ain't no ghosts, den dey *ain't* no ghosts."

So yiver-body say:

"Das right; dey ain't no ghosts."

AN' dat mek' li'l black Mose feel mighty good, 'ca'se he ain't lak ghostes. He reckon he gwine be a heap mo' comfortable in he mind sence he know dey ain't no ghosts, an' he reckon' he ain't gwine be skeered of nuffin' never no more. He ain't gwine min' de dark, an' he ain't gwine min' de raindoves whut go, "Oo-*oo*-o-o-o!" an' he ain't gwine min' de owls whut go, "Whut-*whoo*-o-o-o!" an' he ain't gwine min' de wind whut go, "You-*you*-o-o-o!" nor nuffin', nohow. He gwine be brave as a lion, sense he know fo' shore dey aint no ghosts. So prisintly he ma say:

"Well, time fo' a li'l black boy whut he name is Mose to be gwine up de ladder to de loft to bed."

An' li'l black Mose he 'low he gwine wait a bit. He 'low he gwine jes' wait a li'l bit. He 'low he gwine be no trouble *at* all ef he jes' been let wait twell he ma she gwine up de ladder to de loft to bed, too! So he ma she say:

"Git erlong wid you! Whut yo' skeered ob whin dey ain't no ghosts?"

An' li'l black Mose he scrooge, and he twist, an' he pucker up he mouf, an' he rub he eyes, an' prisintly he say right low:

"I ain't skeered ob ghosts whut am, 'ca'se dey ain' no ghosts."

"Den whut *am* yo' skeered ob?" ask he ma.

"Nuffin'," say de li'l black boy whut he name is Mose; "but I jes' feel kinder oneasy 'bout de ghosts whut ain't."

Jes' lak white folks! Jes' lak white folks!

A Specter That Stopped a War

(*Continued from page* 39)

on end from fear. The papers on the table rustled.

Beyond the shadow of doubt, *I knew that there was a presence in the room!*

My first impulse was to turn on the lights and arrest this intruder at the point of my revolver. Then I wanted desperately to shoot at the sound, for the atmosphere in the room was ungodly weird and I would have given a lot to restore it to normal. But I resisted both temptations. My duty was to learn what the visitor was up to, and it would be better to leave it to him to make a light.

The profound darkness continued, however. It troubled me less than the unnatural silence which now prevailed. If only I knew exactly where he was standing, or whether he was stealthily approaching me across the soft carpet! As if to reassure me, a sheaf of papers was quite roughly disturbed, and it seemed that a bound book was opened in such a way that its covers rapped on the table. Straining my eyes, I made out the dim figure of a man standing a few feet away from me. But—instead of being a more solid bulk in the blackness, it was tenuous and pale, like a drift of fog against a night sky!

THIS was beyond my powers to endure. I leaned over swiftly and pressed the button of the electric switch. For a moment I was blinded by the glare. Then my eyes fairly started from my head. For I was, after all, the only *mortal* creature in the room.

How am I to account for the thing that I saw? And how describe it? I had never placed the least faith in the supernatural, and would have mocked at any one who affirmed that an apparition could be other than the product of a diseased imagination or a bad digestion. Yet I was looking straight at a ghost, thinned down to a mere outline by the electric light, but none the less convincing for that!

It was the form of a tall old man in full military regalia. The stern face had something dog-like in its outlines. I thought instantly of a great mastiff. Thick eyebrows arched over the cavernous eyes. The upper lip was hidden by stiff upstanding mustaches. The skin of cheeks and throat hung in ponderous folds that heightened the general impression of formidable strength.

I knew that face. Anyone who is at all familiar with European history would have recognized it as quickly as I did. I was confronted by the ghost of Bismarck, the Iron Chancellor, the man who made a warlike nation out of modern Germany, but did not live to see the climax of the World War.

Though I had been frightened in the dark, I was now beyond the point of fear. Curiously, I waited to see what the specter would do. It gazed at me for a few minutes, as if wondering whether I could be made to serve its ends. Then it continued its slow course around the table, fumbling with transparent hands at the piles of documents and causing them, by some strange power of levitation, to turn over and shift their positions. The scheme of placing lists of German casualties at the top of each heap was evidently being repeated.

When the ghost reached the seat of Baron Gerassy of Rusonia, it launched abruptly into an uncanny display of emotion. With clenched fists, it beat upon the table and the back of the chair. The features of the venerable, grim face became contorted with anger. The eyes glowed like spots of phosphorescent light below the white eyebrows. The mouth framed silent words—curses, obviously.

FOR my part, I needed no more evidence to solve the mystery of the Zurich Conference. But I had still the task of convincing hard-headed diplomats, and realized that an ocular demonstration was the sole means of arriving at that end. I quickly made up my mind to try an experiment that promised to be effective, but certainly was ruthless.

With a salute, which the phantom returned punctiliously, his hand to his shadowy *pickelhaube* helmet, I left the room by way of the secret passage.

"It is too late to learn anything tonight. The mischief is already done," I told the officer who awaited me.

And this was the evasive report I made the next morning to Georges Debroux. When he clamored that no spy could have passed the sentries, either going or coming, ahead of me, I simply shrugged my shoulders. With a certain brusqueness, I asked him not to interfere any further in my plan of action. I would watch again that night,

I said, and would probably show results if left to do things in my own way. Though a bit ruffled, he conceded the point.

But Debroux would have been a greatly surprised man if he had followed the steps I took later in the day. At five o'clock, I presented myself at the hotel suite occupied by Baron Ludovic Gerassy, and was courteously received by the rather sinister-looking gentleman. His face was of the Oriental type, swarthy and expressionless as a mask, except for the coal-black eyes which glittered with cruelty. He might have been thought handsome, had he not been so stout. His neck must have measured twenty inches, and marked him as being apoplectic, even though he lacked the usual florid coloring. A sparse mustache shaded his upper lip, and curled unpleasingly about the corners of his mouth.

"EXCELLENCY, I have been retained in connection with the peculiar——" I began.

"Yes, I have heard about you," he interrupted. "Can I do anything to assist you?"

"You can do a great deal," I replied with alacrity. I had not expected so favorable an attitude from him. "The evidence, so far, points to the fact that the intruder is chiefly interested in your Excellency's papers. He is what any court of justice would classify as a crank rather than a criminal, and he appears to wish to reach you with a message."

"A remarkable theory, indeed!" said Gerassy coldly. "On what do you base it?"

"I have seen the intruder. He is an old man who speaks a language I do not understand. But he will surely be able to explain himself to you."

"Do you think he is a Rusonian?"

"No."

"You have arrested him, of course?"

"I have not. He entered and left the conference room mysteriously. There must be still another private corridor, the secret of which I have not yet solved. I propose to your Excellency to accompany me tonight. The experience could not fail to interest you, and the physical danger would be very slight."

My closing statement had a double edge. Gerassy bridled, as I had felt certain he would, and answered curtly: "It is not a question of fear. I will join you at the *Rathaus* at eleven."

I bowed, and withdrew. Thereupon, because I felt that it would be well to have not only a witness, but one who had proved herself to be sensitive to this particular ghostly visitation, I telephoned the Secretariat of the League of Nations and invited Louise Petitpas to have dinner with me, not explaining my reason at the time.

Later, at the restaurant, she stared at me with the utmost curiosity when I told her that I wanted her to act as my assistant that night. But I had decided in advance not to give her an account of the weird phenomenon I had seen, nor to shake her nerves by even hinting at what might recur.

"The case is the strangest I have ever handled. You helped me to understand it by confiding in me yesterday, and I want you to see the finish of it," I said.

And, fortunately, Louise was the sort of girl—rare enough in the world today—to co-operate loyally without wanting to know too much.

We killed some time at an American movie, but eleven o'clock found us at the *Rathaus*. Baron Gerassy also arrived with military promptness. He was accompanied by several members of his staff, but offered no objection when I suggested that he bring only one young aide-de-camp with him into the conference room. It was consequently a party of four that followed the route I had taken the previous night. As soon as we arrived, I took four chairs from around the table and placed them against the wall. I invited the others to be seated, and then switched off the light.

"WHAT melodrama is this? Why the devil should we sit in the dark?" asked Gerassy testily.

"The visitor I expect is not a normal person. These are the conditions under which he came last night, and it is best to re-create them," I said. "He might lack confidence otherwise."

A moment later, I heard Louise gasp. Then the bulky form of Gerassy on the other side of me stirred in his chair and I heard him puff heavily. I was not yet conscious myself of any untoward presence in the room, and I refrained from either action or comment. I felt it in another moment, but even then I waited until the papers on the table rustled. As the Baron grumbled throaty Rusonian oaths, I stretched out my hand to the button on the wall and flooded the room with light.

The dim phantom of Bismarck was stalking restlessly along the far side of the table. It halted, to fumble with its gnarled hands at a pile of diplomatic documents. Its head moved slowly from side to side in an Olympian gesture of despair. Then it walked on to the place of the next delegate.

I turned my eyes from the ghost, to look at my companions. Louise was trembling all over, gripping the arms of her chair and biting her lips, to prevent herself from screaming. The Rusonian aide-de-camp sat stiffly, his arms crossed on his chest, his juvenile countenance pale but unflinching. Gerassy, who naturally interested me most, was a study in mingled astonishment and rage. His little black eyes bored forward, and his cheeks expanded and collapsed like balloons as his laboring breath came and went. His lips were contorted—snarling.

"It's a trick!" he roared suddenly. "A damned hocus-pocus from the theater! Bismarck—How did he get here? He's *dead!*"

His thundering voice was enough to break any purely imaginative spell. I swear I expected to see the ghost dissolve instantly, to live on in our memories only as an inexplicable phenomenon. But no, it was not to be so

simple—it was to be a scene never to be forgotten.

The tall, grim figure behind the table raised its head, and for one awful instant it never moved, gazing steadily at Baron Gerassy. Then the lips tightened, and the eyes glowed again as I had observed them glow once before. The arms were extended at full length, and the fingers curved like the talons of an eagle. The whole towering body moved directly forward, passing through the table that stood in its way—and advanced swiftly upon Gerassy.

The Baron started to leap from his chair—but he was too late. His throat was in the grip of the spectral hands before he could gain his feet, and he sank back choking. The frantic efforts his mortal fingers made to tear those relentless hands away from his neck were pitiable to watch. The sword thrust with which his aide tried to combat the phantom added a touch of the grotesque. Of what avail were such tactics against an avenging spirit from the beyond?

I saw the Baron Ludovic Gerassy die, strangled, in less than three minutes after the Iron Chancellor's ghost swooped down upon him. Later, the physicians were unanimous in declaring, of course, that he had passed as the result of a fit of apoplexy. But I know what I know. Louise Petitpas and the Rusonian officer witnessed exactly what I did, and they were steadfast in corroborating me before the small committee to whom I made a confidential report. All three of us were scoffed at, more or less, especially when we truthfully stated that the ghost had vanished the instant the deed was ended.

That committee would have been satisfied, I suppose, only if we could have produced the ghost as evidence. I cannot blame them, for we were asking materialists to believe a great deal. They dismissed me from the case, and it figures against me in the records as one of my failures.

But the Zurich Conference continued, with a new delegate from Rusonia, and from that day on, the papers of the diplomats were never disturbed.

I received the only personal vindication I cared about when Georges Debroux came to see me in Paris a few weeks later. He sat in the armchair beside my desk and fidgeted in his nervous way for several minutes before he spoke.

"IT'S pretty difficult for me to admit it, Rops," he said finally, "but I have come around to believing that you were right about Gerassy having been destroyed by the ghost of Bismarck."

"What convinced you?" I asked amiably.

"You remember that the papers were always opened at pages which gave the statistics of German losses in the World War?"

"Certainly. I observed that in the first place, and called it to your attention."

"Er—er, that's right! Well, it developed—behind the scenes, you understand—that Baron Gerassy was doing his best to plunge Central Europe into another war. He had it in his power to do so, and Germany would have been involved. He was the only person at the Zurich Conference who was working to bring such a disaster about."

"How did that come out?" I asked interestedly.

"The man Rusonia sent in his place confessed it. He was a pacifist, and was horrified to learn the truth from Gerassy's private memoirs which were turned over to him. He reversed his country's policy at the Conference, and the world was saved from untold horrors."

"So the ghost was trying to remind all the delegates of the cost of war," I said slowly. "His vengeance was reserved for Gerassy, but he lacked the power to molest him during the day sessions. I gave him his opportunity when I took the Rusonian there at night."

"That would seem to be the truth of the matter," Debroux mumbled.

"Bismarck in life was a militarist, but he loved his country," I continued. "Do you suppose he has learned beyond the grave that 'the pen is mightier than the sword,' and can probably now influence Germany along those lines?"

"It is conceivable," grudgingly replied the representative of the League of Nations, "but I would not have the courage to sponsor it as a theory in international politics."

The reader doubtless agrees with Georges Debroux. I merely present the suggestion, however, for what it is worth.

The Sign on the Throat

(*Continued from page* 11)

Suddenly, far below me, there was a rattle of clashing iron, followed by a shriek.

I call it a shriek; but there is no word in the language to describe that unearthly evil sound. Almost immediately I heard footsteps flying across the hall—footsteps I thought I recognized as José, fleeing hell itself. There was the sound of the great outer door being slammed behind him; and then everything was still. . . .

GOD, how silent it was! Silent as the grave; and I lay back in my chair like a dead man, with eyes closed, and yet conscious of the red flickering light of the fire that licked at the darkness beyond the open door. Now the light would leap into the very corridor itself: and again it would recede suddenly, leaving the doorway lost in shadows.

And then, silently, horribly, the shadows in the corridor beyond commenced to take form. Sitting there, unable to move, I was aware of it, despite my closed eyes. The shadows seemed to tower up, in a blackness darker than the gloom around them—and out of that blackness, two terrible eyes gazed upon me.

Then *It* came in. Slowly, quietly, It approached me. I tried to squirm, I tried to cry out; but I was helpless. Was some power, stronger than the drugged wine, holding me there?

It came on, the personification of strength and black evil, and I glimpsed the visage of a man. He reached the mantelpiece, halted, crouched like an animal—and then sprang forward.

And immediately, as his feet touched the spot before my chair, still damp with the holy water, he leaped back with a snarl of pain. For a moment I knew he was standing in the doorway, his eyes upon me, burning with baffled hate; and then his form dissolved in the black shadows.

And now I was conscious of voices—many, many whispering voices, while forms, transparent as smoke, flitted before my shut eyes.

"Holy Water," they murmured, and their voices were like the whisper of a running brook. "Holy Water! and the fiend cannot approach the chair!" And then another voice, way across the room, spoke, so low I could scarcely hear:

"He must leave the chair," it said. "He must be made to leave the chair!" The voice was old and cracked, and its owner hobbled into the vision of my closed eyes. It was the old hag of Lisbon, whose dead body I had seen in her coffin!

She reached the edge of the damp spot on the rug, and raising her stick, she shook it furiously at me.

"Wait! Wait!" she cried, in that terrible unearthly whisper of my dreams—a whisper which I felt rather than heard. "We'll wake you up!" she cried, "and then you must leave that chair! You cannot stay there forever!" And as she spoke, her voice died away, and at the same time I sank into a heavy, dreamless coma. . . .

I AWOKE with a start and rubbed my eyes.

The fire was out and the room was in darkness. I sat very still and listened.

The whole chateau was as still as if only I were alive for miles around, and sitting there I thought of my terrible nightmares, on this night and the night before, and of the whispering voices I had heard in my dreams. Was I going mad? Or was there really something else, some horrible——

"Jennings!"

I sat upright and listened. The voice, indescribably forlorn, came from far above me.

"Jennings! Jennings!"

I jumped to my feet—and then stood there, hesitating. It was the voice of my beloved cousin, Helen . . . and yet—yet—— Why was it that instead of making me joyful, its very sound

created a queer revulsion in me? I stood there, wetting my lips to reply, but somehow finding it difficult. And in the silence that followed, I listened, until at last it came again.

"Jennings!" Sad, doleful, there was a sort of *dead* quality about it. *"Save me, Jennings!"*

I took a step forward.

"Hello, Helen!" I shouted. "Where are you?"

My voice echoed loudly through the room around me. It rang in the hall, and up in the empty room above. And as it died down once more I heard her voice.

"Jennings! Jennings! Help me, Jennings!"

Forgetful of all else, I left the chair and the still damp spot around it. For a second I hesitated again, and I thought I heard a small chuckle as of some old hag in the darkness behind me. But again sounded the faraway lifeless cry:

"Jennings . . . Jennings. . . ."

I felt my way to the door, and there I crossed the hall to the grand staircase, my footsteps echoing loud in the stillness of the chateau. Grasping the banister, I started up the steps, trying for some reason to deaden the creaking of the ancient boards.

"Helen!" I called. "Where are you?"

I waited for the sound of my voice to die down, and then I listened. But there was no answer. A minute longer I hesitated. Then I started down the hallway, trying door after door, and calling out at each. The last door opened at my touch, and entering, I felt around until I hit a table with a candle on it. Striking a match, I touched it to the wick.

Slowly the flame rose; slowly the darkness dissolved in the dim yellow light. Finally I could make out a bed upon which lay a dark form. Taking the candle in my hand, I crossed over to it—and recoiled with a cry of horror.

There, stretched out upon the disordered bed, was the body of my pretty cousin, Helen . . . and along her white throat were three flaming red marks—the sign of the fiend!

When the lovely Helen uttered that anguished cry for help was she even then in the merciless grip of some demon? Her brave cousin has found her—but has he come too late? Jennings Holt is hopelessly caught in the hideous mystery that lies behind the chateau's dismal walls. What will his own fate be? Read "The Sign on the Throat" in the November issue of GHOST STORIES. *It will be on sale at all news stands October 23rd, and you won't want to miss one word of this breath-taking tale!*

An Unearthly Stowaway

(Continued from page 35)

one of them tallied in any degree with the writing on the slate.

Three of the crew were unable to write, but each of them had made his mark. Yet the strange handwriting was still unidentified!

"Then there must be a stowaway aboard this ship," concluded the captain, and immediately ordered a complete turning-out of the vessel. Even her lazarette and her hold were to be gone through.

First mate Bruce gave the orders, but shook his head doubtfully.

"How could there be a stowaway aboard," he asked, "when we're nearly six weeks out of Liverpool? We're due to make St. John's in a few days. . . . If the stowaway had kept quiet this long, he'd have *stayed* under cover. Besides, how could a man hide food and water with him for so long a trip?"

But the captain was determined.

"It's either a stowaway—or else both of us are madmen," he insisted. "Comb the vessel."

THREE hours later Bruce had to inform Bartlett that every inch of the *Judith* had been gone over carefully, and that it was impossible for any living creature, much less a full-grown man, to be hidden away.

The two men sat, one on either side of the table that served the captain as a desk. Between them was the slate, still bearing the cryptic message. Its chalky lines stood out like letters of white fire. For a while the pair smoked in silence, and finally Captain Bartlett arose with sudden determination.

He was a veteran of the sea, and his eyes had seen many strange sights in a lifetime of ceaseless struggle with elemental forces. So it was that Captain Eric Bartlett did not laugh the whole affair away as an hallucination, nor did he cower in fear at the strangeness and weirdness of it all.

There was the message. How and why it had come, he did not know, but it had been clearly written on his slate by some unknown hand. His decision was made.

"Send a a man aloft for lookout at once, Mr. Bruce. And alter the course a dozen points—to about nor'west by north."

The skipper went up to the bridge, no longer solely under his command, for a spectral hand had given an order aboard his ship—and been obeyed!

Slowly the *Judith* put about, veering off in a new direction, under the guidance of the man at the wheel. At the same moment a seaman in a heavy jacket clambered slowly up the rigging to the crow's nest, his eyes penetrating the vastness of the Newfoundland banks that stretched ahead on each side of the little barque.

For two or three hours the lookout stood at his swinging post, his glasses sweeping the horizon. Below him the first mate and the captain waited—for what, they did not know. But each of them had a presentiment that something, anything, was going to happen. Their eyes were always fixed dead ahead, where the misty fog might at any time

break to show a lurking iceberg, jagged and ready to tear their frail craft apart.

"It's a warning against collision with a berg—that writing on the slate," said Bartlett. "If we'd held to our course, we'd probably have been sunk. . . ."

But Bruce shook his head. The message did not seem like a warning to him.

Just then a hail came down from the man aloft.

"Sail ahoy. . . ."

Both Captain Bartlett and Bruce jumped as if shot. Came the answering hail from the captain.

"Where away-y-y?"

The man in the crow's nest pointed with a sweep of his binoculars. "Dead ahead and a distress signal flying. . . ."

In a few minutes, while daylight still lingered, the watchers aboard the *Judith* caught sight of a dismantled ship lying on her beam ends, stuck fast in the ice. She was almost in the center of an ice floe comprising several acres, while farther north several enormous bergs lay, their peaks shining above the mists.

As the *Judith* cautiously wormed her way toward the captive vessel, Captain Bartlett made out with his telescope that there were men aboard her. The ship's name was covered with ice, and only one mast rose out of the wreckage on her deck, but a few dark spots were discernible moving this way and that through the slush that washed over her.

A sailor on the *Judith* came running with the megaphone, and Captain Bartlett sang out across the water and ice: "What ship are you?"

Faintly the answering hail came, as though from lips stiff with cold.

"The *Redemption,* of Quebec, bound for Liverpool . . . fast in the ice for three weeks . . . for God's sake take us off."

NO time was lost in lowering a boat, and making for the disabled vessel. It was discovered then that, while every member of the crew and every passenger of the *Redemption* was safe, the food supply had given out on the previous day, and the water was almost exhausted.

Captain Bartlett himself went in command of the *Judith's* long boat, and in a short time he returned with the first load of refugees. Bruce was kept busy supervising the landing of the rescued men, and in providing for their comfort. Soon the second load was brought across the choppy water.

For the third and last time the long boat pulled alongside of the *Judith.* The officers of the lost vessel were aboard, bearing the ship's money and papers. Bruce leaned over the rail to cast them a line, and then whistled in surprise.

The excitement of the rescue had made him forget all about the mysterious way in which they had received the word to sail "nor'west." But there in the longboat, half-supported by the captain of the *Redemption,* was the man he had seen just after noon, seated in the captain's cabin, writing on the slate! In amazement he saw the "specter" rise to its feet, and with the aid of an oarsman, climb up the rope ladder!

Bruce staggered back, thunderstruck. There was no mistaking the likeness. It was no coincidence, no fancied resemblance! The man he had seen writing the fateful message had been on the wrecked ship at the time!

But the mate had no opportunity to indulge his astonishment. There were exhausted men and women to be made comfortable and given makeshift quarters. The officers and crew of the *Judith* were busy until late in the evening, and then Bruce called Captain Bartlett aside and told him what he had seen.

"Impossible," pronounced Bartlett. "Maybe a ghost did guide us, but ghosts are dead. They don't climb down off wrecked ships. But we'll talk to this fellow. . . ."

THE rescued man was in conversation with Mullet, captain of the wrecked *Redemption.* At Captain Bartlett's request, both men followed him back to his cabin, where Bruce was waiting. The stranger introduced himself as a Mr. Trevor, a cotton-merchant of Brooklyn, New York.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Trevor, but would you mind writing something on the back of this slate?" Bruce slid it across the table to the stranger, who obligingly picked up the chalk. "Write 'Steer to the nor'west'," ordered Captain Bartlett. Both he and Bruce kept their eyes fixed upon the slate as Trevor slowly traced the characters upon the black surface. Then they gasped.

Bartlett took the slate, and then passed it to Bruce and back to Trevor. Captain Mullet watched in silence.

"Mr. Trevor, which of those messages did you just write?" Bartlett asked.

Trevor turned the slate over and over—both sides were identical. His brow was puzzled, and he seemed honestly bewildered.

"The experiences of the day have been too much for me," he confessed. "I had a shock at noon, and haven't felt well since. But this is the worst of all, for I'll swear that I only wrote one message, though both are written in my hand."

"What shock did you have at noon?" Captain Bartlett's voice grew tense.

"I can tell it better than he," put in Mullet. "Mr. Trevor fell asleep on the deck of the *Redemption* at noon today, exhausted by exposure. I had him taken below, but we could not bring him to until an hour later, when he awoke in a daze, declaring that we would be rescued in a short time. He said that he had had a dream in which he was aboard a barque coming to our rescue. That was all, and none of us put any stock in it until we saw your sails and recognized the rigging that he had described."

Trevor nodded. "And I have a strange memory of the interior of this ship—of her rigging, and even of your faces—although I was never aboard her in my life. But I don't remember any message on my part, or anything more."

Captain Bartlett looked at Bruce.

"I apologize," he said. "You were right and I was wrong. If it had not been for the fact that the ghost of this living man appeared to you and left a message, we would have sailed by the wreck, leaving a boat-load of human beings to die a few miles north of us."

The Varsity Murder

(*Continued from page 43*)

as familiar with the structure of the brain as a master surgeon.

"I think the forehead bruise was incidental," was his voiced opinion. "I am confident that a post-mortem will reveal that Harter died from a thrust of some long, sharp, slender instrument which penetrated the medulla oblongata. Some instrument, for instance, like a hatpin."

The room swam about me. "Like a hatpin!"

Then some girl was the slayer! And Avis Brent, the girl I loved, had been questioned sharply by Chief Quigley!

As I walked up to the chapter-house, the thought of Avis was as much with me as the memory of that surprising demonstration in the professor's home. And a meeting with "Scrooge" Allen on the porch did not help to assuage my fears. "Scrooge," something of a gossip, had gotten hold of a choice piece of news. In Harter's pocket, he told me, Quigley had found a typewritten note asking Bob to keep an appointment at nine o'clock in a lonely retreat at Latham Corners, near the field where his body had been subsequently found. And the note, Allen said, was signed *AVIS!*

Now I knew why Avis Brent had been questioned by Quigley, and why the chief had asked me just when I had left her that night. Also that remark of his to Doctor Brent about his having had no choice but to question Avis "when the evidence arose" was now clearer to me.

I GAVE "Scrooge" the slip, and wandered over to a spot near the college library, where I sat and thought in the darkness. My fears for the girl I loved temporarily brushed everything else from my brain. Avis was an uncommon name, and there could hardly be any other Avis that Bob Harter knew. I sat there and constructed—against my will—several possible situations.

Avis had gone around with Bob Harter until my growing intellectual companionship with her had dulled her interest in the handsome but frivolous football captain. Then, too, Bob played about with many girls, and Avis was the type who wanted a suitor all to herself or not at all. Suppose she had made some appointment with Bob to tell him that this meeting should be the last. Perhaps Bob had pleaded and argued in vain, and had then tried to embrace the girl against her will. Suppose there had been a tussle at the Latham Corners' retreat, and Avis—in a momentary loss of control—had jabbed the unruly would-be lover with a hatpin. I knew Avis to be a girl of spirit, at times willful and hot-headed. She might be capable of a swift action the result of which would be wholly unforeseen by her at the time.

Over and over in my mind I turned these possibilities. Part of my brain was acting like a legal prosecutor, part of it like a defender. It was true, I thought, that these days girls usually wore cloche hats and did not use hatpins; but then Avis wore her hair long, and I had known her to go for motor-rides in a wide-brimmed floppy hat or poke-bonnet. The latter was the kind of a hat I had seen her wearing in the ice cream store. Might it not be possible that she had borrowed a hatpin from her mother, who, as the wife of the Faculty Dean, was an aristocratic but far from advanced dresser?

From my retreat in the shadow of the library, I could see the lights in the Brent home near the top of the hill. It was clear to me that Avis' family was not planning to get any sleep this night—this hectic night that, whatever may happen to me, will stand out the most sharply-etched of all in my pages of memory.

I did not go to bed at all myself, and next morning, as did most of the student body, I cut both chapel and classes. I snatched some breakfast in the Hall of Commons on the campus, and started downhill. I wanted to see those penciled sheets once again, in the daylight. Perhaps, I thought, the eerie night had played tricks with my impressions.

But "Prof" Cormier was not at home. As I walked down from his porch, Doctor Brent called to me from next door. He invited me to sit down on his veranda, and told me that he had something to say to me. He must have seen me looking around for Avis. "Avis is not at home," he said. "She could not sleep, and I advised her to take an early morning walk."

And then Doctor Brent told me some facts that proved to me that much of my worrying of the night before had been without foundation. The hypothetical case against Avis that I had built up in my mind crumbled as Doctor Brent talked, and a great load was lifted from my mind.

"You were down there at Quigley's office when he questioned Avis," said her father. "It was unfortunate that her name had to be brought in at all, though now, reasoning more coolly, I do not blame Chief Quigley. He was properly apologetic when satisfied as to the real facts."

What he then told me made me very happy—as happy as I could be under the circumstances. Avis' appointment the night before had been with the daughters of Hosea Wardwell, the college president. She had been at their home until about ten, when she had accompanied them to the ice cream store, where I had seen her. Quigley had satisfied himself as to this fact by telephoning the Wardwell's home, but not until after he had dismissed me from my grilling. That was why he was still interested in what I had told him of Avis' mysterious appointment. The note signed *Avis* was apparently written by the murderer to throw the authorities off the trail—and, Doctor Brent said, when the writer of that note was found, Bob Harter's murderer would be found!

The final cloud was cleared from my mind when, as I continued down the hill after our talk, I met Avis herself. In the course of our conversation I learned the reason for that queer expression on her face when she had looked at me after Quigley's announcement of Harter's death.

"The news itself was terrible enough, Dick," she said. "But, for the moment—you must forgive me, Dick—it flashed across my mind that maybe *you* had—— Oh, I ought never to have suspected you, I know! But you acted so jealous of Bob at times. Poor Bob was never anything to me but an amusing companion, but one whom I shall always remember with the deepest affection. I guess I'm a one-man woman, Dick. When I met you at Bar Harbor, I knew then that you were the one person for me."

It was the first really serious talk that I had ever had with Avis, and during this period of our mutual grief, the feeling we had for each other developed into a deep and understanding love. Only through tragedy did we come to know how much we really meant to each other.

IN the village that morning I ran into another surprise. "Prof." Cormier, it seemed, had already been down to see Quigley, and had brought him the penciled messages we had received the night before. I could well imagine the clash of these diametrically opposed personalities—Cormier, with a child-like simplicity beneath his professional learning; and Quigley, semi-illiterate, but with a hard-surfaced practicality and a strong tendency to style as "nonsense" anything that was not tangible. He had scoffed at Professor Cormier as he had scoffed at me, and scouted "Prof's" statement that Harter's death had been due to the penetration of the lower brain rather than to the blow over the forehead. From the rumors I heard, I learned that "Prof" had left Quigley's office with his dignity ruffled.

Sometime before noon, however, I saw Quigley turned from a cynical, scoffing skeptic to a man fairly bursting with excitement. The coroner's physician had completed his post-mortem. And he had officially reported that Robert Harter came to his death *from the penetration of the medulla oblongata by some slender, sharp instrument!*

"Where's this Professor Cormier? Where is he? I want him in this office within fifteen minutes!" Quigley bawled to one of his deputies. "He's got some tall explaining to do! He told me this same thing more than two hours before even the coroner's physician discovered it! Get him on the 'phone! Tell him to report here at once!"

"Sorry, Chief," spoke up one of the constables. "I saw Professor Cormier over at the Corfield Garage about two hours ago. He was hiring a car, and told the driver to prepare for a long trip."

Quigley threw up his hands in a gesture of outraged authority.

"He's beat it out of town on us!" he yelled. "Get a full description of the car. Get the route that it started over. And 'phone the police of every town for a hundred miles around. By God! This thing is all clear to me now!"

Still smarting a little from Quigley's cavalier treatment of me the night before, I took the liberty to remind him that, had he followed "Prof" Cormier's warning, he would have known, hours before, the facts that he had just arrived at. I then told him in detail of the séance we had held in the professor's home.

"And you want me to believe such nonsense!" Quigley scoffed. "No, sir! Cormier has something very serious to explain. From your own story, you *saw* none of this. You simply took Cormier's word. For all you know, he may have drugged you, and worked this trick on you. Don't ask me what his motive could have been. No one can dope out the motives of a queer, eccentric old duck like Professor Cormier. When an ordinary man kills, the motive is clear—jealousy, revenge, fear of black-mail, physical fear, theft—or several other things easy to analyze. But Cormier is far from being an ordinary man. Listen, my boy, don't think you know it all. You could be fooled by a seasoned old duck like Cormier."

My arguments made little headway with Quigley, and I wandered over to the Corfield House, a popular hotel. The town was a-buzz with gossip, with rumors, some subsequently proved true and some false. Of course in a town like Corfield, the chief's suspicion of Professor Cormier leaked out, and there were many willing to think that the "queer old bird" knew something about the crime. Professor Cormier was far from a popular man in town, although the few who knew him admired him intensely.

One of the rumors which later proved to be true, and which worried me not a little, was that Professor Cormier had been missing from his home from eight-forty the night previous until nearly midnight, when I had met him returning from a walk into the country. Where had he been? And what had he done in the interim? These were the questions asked or intimated. And all but the very few who knew of his unusual powers asked how it was that he had known of the cause of Harter's death even before the coroner's physician knew it. And why, asked some, had he left town when Quigley refused to be taken in by his "nonsense" about his spirit messages?

THERE were scores of theories, you may be sure. It was pointed out that "Prof" Cormier was over-organized mentally—that a human life would mean nothing to him if he had some object in furthering his scientific theories. Others claimed that the murderer, by planting the "Avis" note, had very obviously wanted folks to think that the murder was the work of a woman. And, in furtherance of this theory, "Prof" Cormier had come out with his belief that the death wound had been caused by a hatpin! Just like him, wrapped in his studies and out of touch with everyday things, to think that girls still used hatpins!

As for myself, I was still loyal to "Prof" Cormier. I could not but admit, though, that in staging the séance the night before, this savant of sixty-odd might have had some motive in his scholar's brain not fully apparent to a college boy of twenty like myself.

I made a miserable failure of trying to lunch at the Corfield House, and then strolled over to Bell's to view Bob Harter's body. But it had not been properly prepared yet, and I came out of the parlors to see Quigley stepping into his car in front of his office.

"Hey, Foster!" he called at me. "I want you to ride uphill with me."

I thought there was some submerged triumph in his manner as I got into the car with him. But he would answer no questions until the car had struggled to the top of the steep hill, and turned into the driveway that led past the Hall of Commons. Then Quigley trained his keen blue eyes upon my face.

"Cormier holds special after-hour classes in psychology, sometimes, don't he?" he asked. "And he types the notices to notify the students when they are being held, don't he?"

I thought I realized the reason for his question. "Yes," I replied. "Most of the posted notices come from the college administrative offices. But these 'psych seminars,' as we call them, are semi-informal. 'Prof' Cormier types those notices himself."

"I THOUGHT so!" Quigley observed, grimly. He got out of the car, and as we walked over toward the bulletin-board in front of Commons, he pulled a note from his pocket. I could see that it was typewritten. I noticed the name *Avis* at the bottom. It was, without doubt, the decoy note of the murderer.

We reached the bulletin-board. In among the mass of typewritten notices posted there was one signed with the letters *C. D. C.*—one of Professor Cormier's announcements of his class.

Quigley was comparing the type on the notice with that on the note he held in his hand. And even before he let out a triumphant whoop, I knew that the typing on both were identical. The "v" in the line *Carver's text-book will be used* was out of alignment in exactly the same way as the "v" in the word *Avis* of the mysterious note. The capital "D" of the professor's middle initial was ink-clouded, just the same as the capital "D" in *Dear* in the note.

Chief Quigley turned to me.

"Well, Foster," he said, "what do you think about things *now?*"

I didn't think—I couldn't . . . "Prof" Cormier stooping to a trick like that? Surely he could explain, somehow . . . and then I remembered. He'd been missing at the time of the murder, and—*he was missing now!*

In the face of such overwhelming evidence, Dick's loyalty to the old Professor is strained to the breaking point. His youthful word carries no weight in the eyes of the law. But a surprise awaits you in the unraveling of this eerie riddle. The next instalment will reveal even more amazing secrets of the Other World. Don't miss "The Varsity Murder" in the November GHOST STORIES, *on all news stands October 23rd.*

The Punishment of Barney Muldoon

(*Continued from page 69*)

snow-whitened figures hurrying through the storm which blurred the street lights. On and on he went, one hand touching the store fronts to steady his faltering steps.

At the street corner where traffic confused and frightened him for the first time in his life, Barney Muldoon waited and looked about. In the bleak light he saw a white figure standing before the gray walls of an old church; it was a statue of an angel. When a little boy, he had thought that when people died they took the same form as that angel. Now, he knew better. Peg had died. Peg had been sweet and good. But she still wore the earth-shape he had known; she dressed fashionably; she spoke with her old sweet voice, and looked at him with eyes that tortured.

Somehow he was impelled toward the church, and stumbled up the path. People passed him and stared, but he took no heed. Peg was beside him. He felt her unearthly presence. Hadn't she been there from the first day he met Margaret? She had not left him for a moment. And now, at last, he understood. His sin had destroyed him, as he was afraid. . . .

The storm increased. Thick, soft flakes of snow fell like feathers. "The [illegible]man is picking her geese," Peg used to say—dear little Peg!

"Peg darlin', the Old Woman is picking her geese," whispered Barney.

An eddy of wind swirled the snow about the marble angel and pigeons came from their shelters to circle near. Barney stepped from the path, waded through the drifts toward the angel, sank up to his knees in snow and fell.

The marble angel smiled and comforted him. She understood his hurt and held out her sheltering wings. His hand fumbled for his watch chain and, as if it were a rosary, his fingers slipped along the links. He was praying. Then Peg and Margaret came close, Peg in her blue gingham dress, Margaret in her furs. And presently the angel was Peg, smiling.

For Barney was murmuring brokenly: "Forgive, forgive, forgive!"

He felt the sweetness of her that no longer burned and chilled. She had forgiven and was there beside him. The snow heaped high on the wings of the angel and on Barney Muldoon. But he and Peg had gone hand in hand into the church, into the warmth and candle gleams. It was the day before Christmas and her mother was there on her knees, saying a prayer, because Peg died on the day before Christmas—and so did Barney Muldoon.

Spirit Tales

(*Continued from page 79*)

The three boats moved toward the shore. Smoke drifted from the fort as it took up the refrain of the minute guns.

Captain Nicholson peered eagerly at the picture. He raised himself abruptly, and——

The vision vanished as suddenly as it had flashed before him. Captain Nicholson found himself alone in his cabin.

Overcome with what he had seen, he rushed to tell his officers of the vision. They were astounded. Captain Nicholson's earnestness soon dispelled whatever doubts they might have had.

The *Constellation* was several hundred miles from St. Thomas. There was at that time no possible means of communicating such news as Captain Nicholson had told them.

Nevertheless, the Captain was so impressed by what he had seen that he proposed a memorandum to be made of the event. The exact hour and date of its occurrence was definitely ascertained and full particulars described in an affidavit to which all of the officers appended their names. It reads:

U. S. Ship *Constellation*
At Sea. Lon. 69 94. Lat. 27 19
Tuesday, Aug. 24, 1819

Memorandum of an Extraordinary Occurrence (in connection with Commo. Perry, commanding the West India Squadron), on board this ship, the details whereof have been communicated in full to the wardroom officers and midshipmen. The purpose of this memorandum is to preserve for future reference the exact moment, as near as may be, of this event, the same being at or about 4 o'clock p. m. of the day named above.

Written and signed in the presence of and at the request of the officers named.

JOSEPH J. NICHOLSON,
Capt. U. S. N., Commanding

The remainder of the voyage to St. Thomas was completed under a shadow of dread that was felt by every man on board.

When the *Constellation* entered the landlocked harbor of St. Thomas suspense was high. Captain Nicholson, on the quarter deck, perceived that the *Adams*, in which Perry had started the expedition, was already in port.

At once a boat put off from the commodore's ship. In it was a naval lieutenant, a somber band of black encircling his arm. As he reached the *Constellation*, his pale and sorrowful face was plainly visible to every man aboard.

He took his station beside Captain Nicholson. The ship's company had been mustered on deck; they waited breathlessly—*and heard from the lieutenant's lips that Commodore Perry had died on August 23rd, at 3:30 p. m.!*

Captain Nicholson pressed the officer for details.

"Commodore Perry was attacked by a malignant fever while coming down the Orinoco," said the lieutenant. "He died at Port of Spain and the body was buried the following day."

Further questioning developed the amazing fact that all of the details which Captain Nicholson had related to his officers as he had seen them in the dream were correct in every particular.

Three boats had left the Adams, *with Commodore Perry's body in the last one, launched at 4 o'clock, August 24th.*

The minute guns fired by the corvette, John Adams, *had been succeeded by minute guns fired from the fort. Sir Ralph Woodford, governor of the island, had taken this means of showing his veneration for a brave naval officer. All flags were likewise unfurled at half-mast.*

In fact, Captain Nicholson had described every part of the funeral procession as though he had been an actual eye witness!

$10 for a Letter!

WHEN you have read this issue of GHOST STORIES Magazine, let us know what you think of the stories it contains.

Which story is best? Which is poorest? Why? Have you any suggestions for improving the magazine?

Ten dollars will be paid to the person whose letter, in the opinion of the judges in charge of this award, offers the most intelligent, constructive criticism; $5 to the letter considered second best; $3 to the third.

Address your opinions to the Judges of Award, care of GHOST STORIES, 1926 Broadway, New York, N. Y. This contest closes October 25th, 1929.

Three awards will be made promptly. See that your opinion gets one of them.

PRIZES

for opinions on the June GHOST STORIES were awarded as follows:

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Midwest, Wyoming

SECOND PRIZE $5
MR. HARVEY L. QUINLEY
Moberly, Missouri

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DB9-"PRINCESS PAT"; Style and dependability. 14K Solid White Gold engraved case, guaranteed 15 Jewel movement. Engraved genuine "Wristcrat" flexible bracelet. $1 now, $1.96 a mo.

$25

DB4 Hand engraved and pierced 18K Solid White Gold lady's ring. AA1 genuine blue-white diamond. $1 with order, $2 a month.

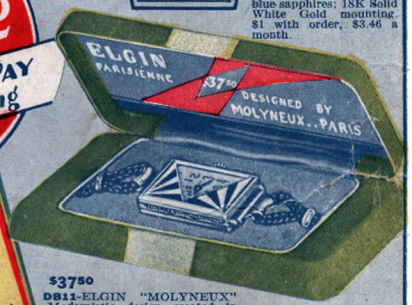
$42.50

DB10 Gorgeous new style lady's dinner ring; 3 perfectly matched, "AA1" genuine blue-white diamonds, 2 French blue sapphires; 18K Solid White Gold mounting. $1 with order, $3.46 a month.

It's a BULOVA

$29.75

DB5-Nationally advertised 15 jewel BULOVA gentleman's watch. White gold filled case; "dust-tite" protector keeps out dust and dirt; radium dial and hands; furnished with latest style woven mesh wristband to match. $1 with order, $2.39 a month.



$37.50

DB11-ELGIN "MOLYNEUX" Modernistic design created in Paris. Triangular dial; guaranteed dependable ELGIN movement, case furnished in black or jade green enamel, newest style silk cord wrist band. $1 with order, $3.04 a month.

$25.00

DB6 Gentleman's initial or emblem ring. 14K SOLID WHITE GOLD, set with genuine black onyx and flashing blue-white diamond. Any initial or emblem in raised white gold. $1 with order, $2 a month.

$50.00

DB7-A massive, 14K Solid Green Gold gentleman's ring; 18K Solid White Gold top; genuine blue-white diamond. $1 with order, $4.08 a mo.

DB16-The "MODERNIST", richly hand engraved, fashionable step mounting, 18K SOLID WHITE GOLD square prong effect. Brilliant, superior quality, genuine blue-white diamond. $1 with order. $3.66 a month **$45.00**

$48.50

DB12-Dazzling cluster of 7 perfectly matched genuine blue-white diamonds. 18K Solid White Gold mounting. Looks like a $250 solitaire. $1 with order, $3.96 a month.

$75.00

DB17-Hand pierced modern baguette effect 18K SOLID WHITE GOLD engagement ring. Large dazzling grade "AA1" genuine blue-white diamond. $1 down, $6.16 a month

$28.75

DB18 Compare this astonishing value! 7 perfectly matched genuine blue-white diamonds hand engraved 18K SOLID WHITE GOLD wedding ring. $1 with order, $2.31 a month.

$19.75

DB14 Lady's birthstone ring of 14K Solid White Gold, border of seed pearls; furnished with topaz, amethyst, emerald, ruby or sapphire. $1 with order, $1.56 a month.

$37.50

DB8-Fashionable new design in a lady's wrist watch, 14K SOLID WHITE GOLD hand engraved case, set with 2 diamonds and 8 emeralds or sapphires. Guaranteed 15 jewel movement. Handsome pierced flexible bracelet set with sapphires or emeralds. $1 with order, $3.04 a mo.

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DB19 WALTHAM Decagon thin model, 12 size engraved White Gold Filled case, guaranteed 20 years, timed and tested 15 jewel WALTHAM movement. Superior grade gold filled pocket knife and fine quality "Waldemar" chain. All complete in handsome presentation case. $2.21 a month. **$27.50**

$29.50

DB15-The "SPORT KING". Handsomely engraved new sport model. White or green gold filled case, warranted 20 years, fitted with a guaranteed, accurate ... and tested WALTHAM movement. Gold flat watch ... order.

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