

UNCANNY, SPOOKY, CREEPY TALES

SEPTEMBER

★ Ghost STORIES

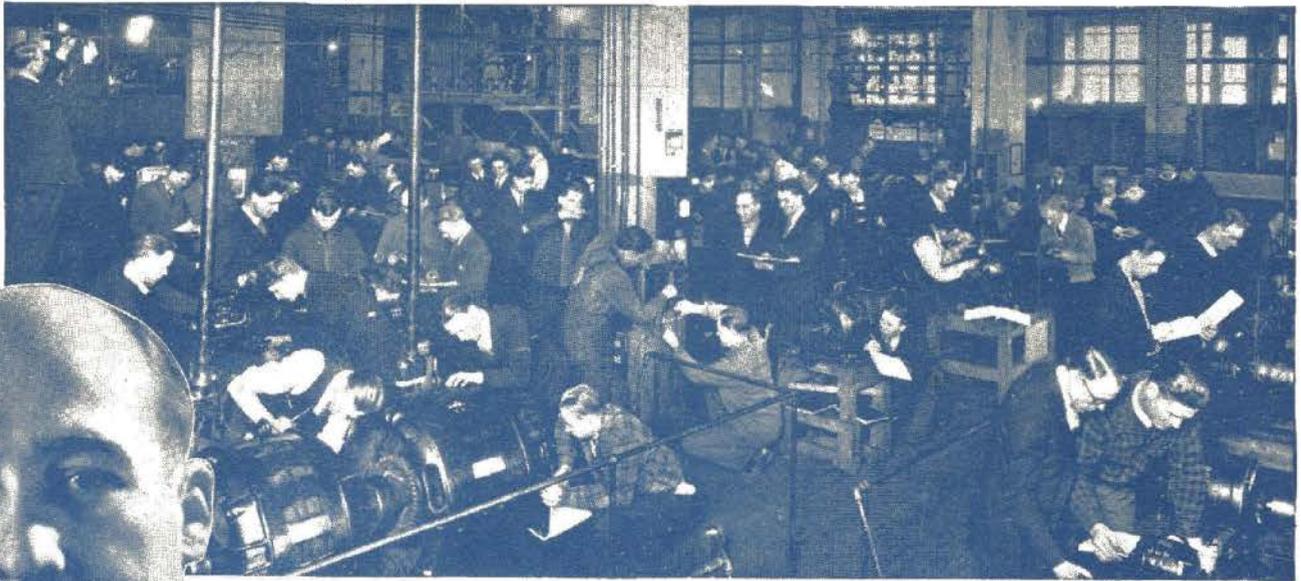
A MACFADDEN
25
CENTS
PUBLICATION



My Weekend with the Other World

The Phantom of the Big Top

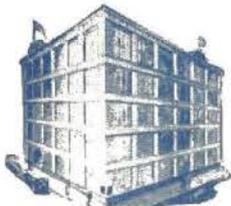
The House of the Dancing Mirrors



An actual photo of a small part of one of our nine departments



Where 1000 Young Men Are Learning Electricity By Actual Work...in 90 Days



NOW IN OUR NEW HOME

This is our new, fireproof, modern home wherein is installed thousands of dollars worth of the newest and most modern Electrical Equipment of all kinds. We now have the largest amount of floor space devoted to the exclusive teaching of practical electricity in the world. Every comfort and convenience has been arranged to make you happy and contented during your training.

COYNE can and does make men practical electrical experts in 90 days. Coyne students learn without books or lessons. They learn by doing... by actually performing every conceivable step on every type of electrical apparatus.

They learn the theory, operation and repair of storage batteries, not by looking at charts, but by actually building one complete, testing it and operating it. They learn house-wiring by actually wiring a house. Step by step, Coyne training takes you from the

simplest first principles to the most complicated switchboards, great motors and power stations—always on real full-sized equipment in full operation.

In the great Coyne Shops are mammoth control boards... there are automobile chassis... here a whole roomful of illumination equipment... here farm power plants... dynamos... motors... a two-story transmitting station... and other machinery too numerous to mention.

And here, working on the greatest outlay of electrical apparatus ever assembled, are 1,000 students from every state of the Union and province of Canada.

You learn from men who know—men who are themselves masters of electricity.

Here in this great school, every student gets individual attention. Training is intensely practical. No time is wasted and no student is ever hurried. In each department you may stay as long as you like.

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Many of our graduates have achieved spectacular success. One month after graduation Clyde F. Hart accepted a position with the Great Western R. R. at \$100 a week.

Clarence Ackland, living in the little town of West Brooklyn, Ill., writes: "Today I am making more money than ever before in my life. Some days I have made as high as \$25 clear."

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These are some of the reasons why Coyne men are in demand all over the country...why our Employment Department secures many positions weekly and why many graduates are earning \$225 and up a month.

The whole world of electricity is open to the Coyne trained man. He is trained completely. He can make big money as Power Plant Operator, Superintendent, Telephone Man, Construction Worker, auto, truck or

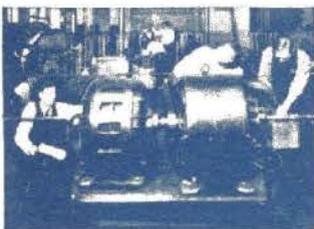
tractor electrician, battery man, radio expert, or he can go into business for himself as electrical contractor, dealer, auto ignition or battery expert and make \$3,000 a year and up.

R. R. Fare to Chicago Allowed

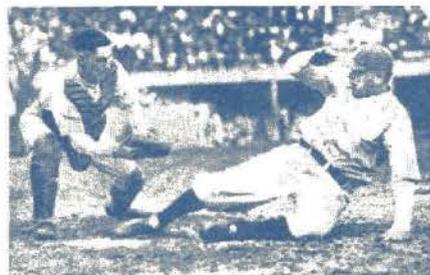
Coyne training requires 12 weeks, and you may enter at any time. Age, lack of experience or advanced education bars no one. Don't let lack of money hold you back. Our Employment Department assists many fellows to part-time positions where they can earn while learning. And right now our special offer allows your railroad fare to Chicago as soon as you enroll.

Get the Facts, FREE

Find out now what Coyne training can mean to you in money and future. Simply mail the coupon below for FREE Coyne catalog—56 pages of photographs...facts...jobs...salaries...opportunities in the electrical industry. This step does not obligate you. So act at once.



56 Page CATALOG FREE 150 Photographs



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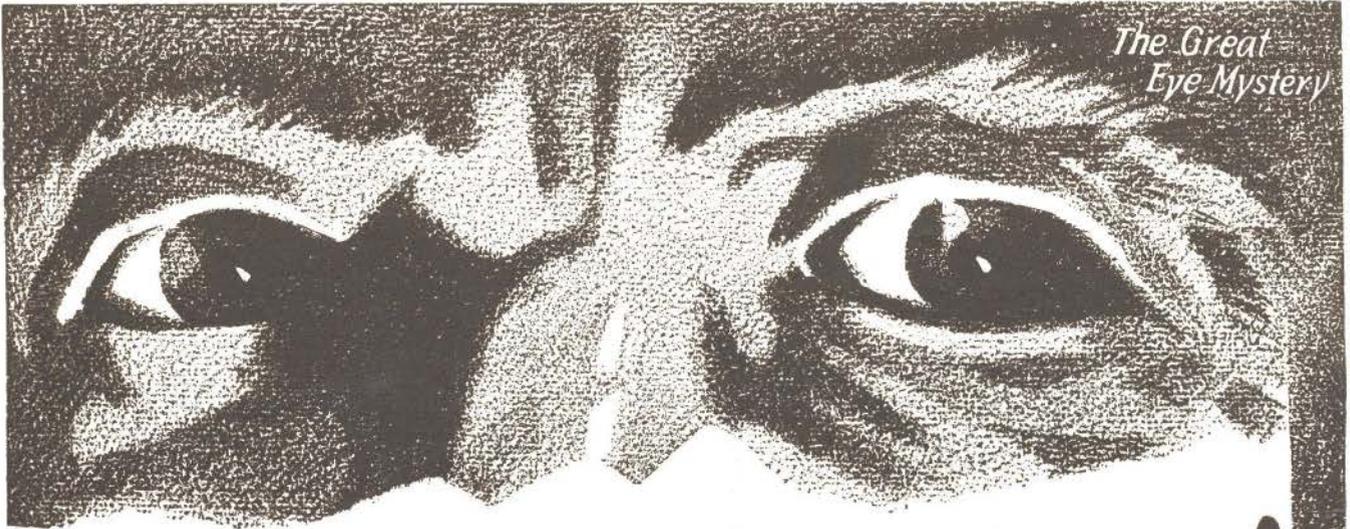
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H. C. LEWIS, Pres., Dept. 67-43
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COYNE ELECTRICAL SCHOOL, Dept. 67-43
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Name.....

Address.....

Age.....

GHOST STORIES

Vol. 3

SEPTEMBER, 1927

No. 3

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THE SPECTER CUTS THE ACE

Suppose you were planning an evil deed and then found that your own double was trailing you?

A MOTH—By H. G. Wells

How the vengeance of a jealous scientist persisted beyond the grave

THE TIGER WOMAN OF THE PUNJAB

Time and again the woman in the tiger-skin coat has brought Ethridge to the brink of the grave. How will he break the spell?

THE CURSE THAT CROSSED THE WORLD

Rogan, of the Foreign Legion, meets his two bitterest enemies in the streets of New Orleans—and one of them is a ghost

ARMS IN THE DARK

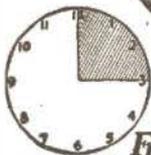
Had the lust for knowledge driven Doctor Bender mad? Perhaps. But after his tragic death—

THE SLAVE HOUSE OF THE MAINE COAST

A tortured girl had sent out a plea to be saved, and a century later—

These and other creepy, thrilling stories make the October issue one of the best we have ever offered to our readers. On the newsstands August 23rd. Order your copy now!

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Sensational New French Invention gives

A Perfect Marcel Wave in 15 minutes — cost 2¢

Not a concoction from a bottle—not a sticky, messy lotion—not a “trick” brush—not a “magic” cap—not an antiquated “curling” device—not a “scientific” substitute for the old-fashioned kid curler. This amazing French invention is positively guaranteed *actually* to marcel wave any head of hair in 15 minutes at a cost of less than 2c.

By Mlle. Renée Duval

From Paris I have brought to American women the greatest beauty secret of all time—French hairdressers have guarded it jealously for many years. This secret will enhance the beauty of any woman's hair a hundred fold—and there is but one little, simple thing to do. Now every American woman can know for the first time, the real and true secret of the French woman's always perfectly marcelled hair—a thing that has caused American women much amazement.

Satisfied User Sells for Profit

“Have been using Marcelwaver three months and my hair holds the wave fine, and no one sees me with straight or straggly hair any more. I have sold enough Marcelwavers among my friends to more than pay for my own and wouldn't be without it now if I had to sell my shoes.”
Mrs. B. R. Los Angeles

—that every one of these one thousand women asked to keep it—and their friends sent me thousands of orders for Marcelwaver.

Saves Money, Time and Inconvenience

As these pictures show, any girl or woman can use Marcelwaver in the privacy of her boudoir. She can give herself as perfect a marcel wave as any master hair dresser. And the saving is astonishing! For less than 2 cents—in from 12 to 15 minutes—

any woman can give herself as perfect a marcel as would cost her from 50c to \$2.00 at the hairdresser's. Women everywhere are clamoring for Marcelwavers. Thousands have been sold—are being used every day. And each time one is sold it sells many, many others.

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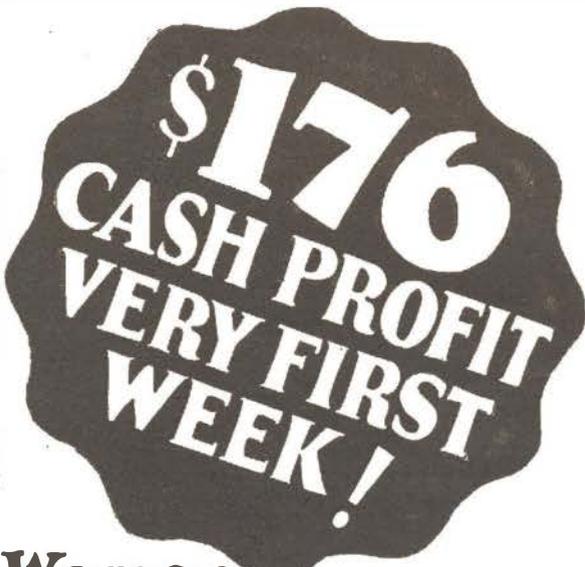
GUARANTEED!

Every Marcelwaver is sold under a binding guarantee of absolute and complete satisfaction or money refunded.



“Finally, after 10 years of selling, I've found the biggest money maker of them all—MARCELWAVER. My first week's profit was \$176.00 and I've averaged better than \$125.00 every week since.”

A. R. MOHR, New York



Men or Women Make Big Money Quick with MARCELWAVER

HERE IS BIG MONEY QUICK!

\$29 Cash Profit First Day

“Never saw anything like Marcelwaver—\$29 was my profit for first day's work. Women crazy about results.”

GEORGE B. EBERTS, Iowa

\$389 Profit in One Week

“MARCELWAVER just sells itself at sight. Every woman who sees it immediately says: ‘That's just what I've always wanted.’ Last week I made \$389 and haven't got going full speed yet.”

A. F. STEINERT, Penna.

\$40 Weekly in Spare Time

“I have averaged over \$40 a week in spare time alone.”

MRS. V. T. KRONE, Ala.

\$233 Profit in 4 Days

“I sold 53 electric and 37 stove heated MARCELWAVERS in first four days this week. Think I've done pretty well on profit, too—made \$233.”

FRANK V. WANDER, Minn.

\$24 in 2 Hours Spare Time

“Sold eight electric MARCELWAVERS in two hours—made \$24 profit.”

ELLA BRONSON, Ohio

This amazing invention of a French expert is literally pouring golden profits into the pockets of men and women everywhere. As little as two sales per day in spare time will earn you nearly \$50 a week. Full time workers find it easy to average over \$100 every week—nothing ever has touched MARCELWAVER as a profit maker.

NEW! A startling invention—an astonishing money maker—a whirlwind seller—and guaranteed perfect results—these are what have made MARCELWAVER the most sensational direct selling proposition within its first six months. **EXCLUSIVE** MARCELWAVER gives a perfect marcel wave to any head of hair in 15 minutes—and at a cost of less than 2c. Women everywhere are wild over the astonishing results it gives.

BIG, QUICK, CASH PROFITS

Agents and salesmen—old and young—experienced and inexperienced—men and women—are cleaning up the biggest profits in years. MARCELWAVER has no competition—there is nothing like it—can be nothing like it—because it is fully covered by patents.

\$3.00 PROFIT on every sale—nothing sells so fast and brings such a big profit—there is no limit to what any man or woman can earn with MARCELWAVER.

SELLS EASILY TO EVERY WOMAN

MARCELWAVER practically sells itself—it's what every woman and girl—as wanted for years—and especially now that bobbed hair is the thing. Saves hours of time wasted in hair dressing parlors—saves many, many dollars spent for marcel waves—gives a perfect marcel wave in 15 minutes at times when women want to look their best but can't go to a hairdresser. And MARCELWAVER is absolutely and unconditionally guaranteed, not only to be mechanically perfect, but to give a perfect marcel wave to any head of hair. Made for both electric and stove heat.

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Dept. M-253
CINCINNATI, OHIO

FREE To Any Man or Woman

Don't lose a single minute—send at once for FREE Deluxe Selling Outfit Offer. Begin tomorrow to get your share of the amazing profits being earned by hundreds like those mentioned above. Complete information is yours—FREE—for the asking.

SEND NO MONEY!

Sensational Super Selling Equipment



MARCELWAVER

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Make more money - Get the things you want - Banish sickness and be well - -

\$25.00 VALUE
for
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\$25 Worth for \$1.98

Mr. Collier's wonderful talks that make a new man and woman out of each one that hears or reads them would cost you \$25 if you took the lecture course—yet the MAGIC SECRET (Special Edition), containing all of the Collier teachings, discoveries, formulas and secrets may now be yours for only \$1.98—4 handy volumes; art printing; durable paper binding.

SEND NO MONEY Try Out "Magic Secret"

You CAN get the things you want, I guarantee it. I simply want you to deposit money with your postman as evidence of sincerity. Try out the MAGIC SECRET. Send it back any time and get your money if you do not get what you want as the result of following my directions or if, for any other reason, you are not fully satisfied.

(Signed)

Robert Collier

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"What you promised for your books has happened. My husband has not only doubled his salary from \$225 a month to \$500, but turned a business deal that meant \$10,000 in one day's time."—Mrs. Chas. S. Norton, 130 S. Gladstone Ave., Indianapolis, Ind.

"Your books have remade several men of my acquaintance."—John Hewins Kern, Ph.D., Howard Beach, L. I., N. Y.

"Since receiving your books, I have made more than \$100,000. My previous income over a period of years had been only \$7,500 per year."—M. D. Couch, Capitola-By-The-Sea, Capitola, Calif.

"Here at last is a man who, in these books, has given to the world a practical method of having happiness on earth."—Editor, Business Magazine, New York.

These people mailed this coupon. So did hundreds of others. If you mail it you too may have the key to wealth and happiness!

Yes, Mr. Collier, you may send me the Special Edition of your MAGIC SECRET—643 pages, 4 volumes; art printing. I will deposit \$1.98 (plus postage) with my postman when books arrive. You are to refund my money to me if I do not get what I want after reading the MAGIC SECRET.

Name.....

Address.....

Mail this Coupon at Once to:
ROBERT COLLIER, INC., 599 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK, N. Y. Dept. 15

I Was Afraid of This New Way to Learn Music

—Until I Found It Was Easy As A-B-C

Then I Gave My Husband the Surprise of His Life

DON'T be silly, Mary. You're perfectly foolish to believe you can learn to play music by that method. You can never learn to play the piano that way . . . it's crazy! You are silly to even think about it."

"But, Jack, it's . . ."

"Mary, how can you believe in that crazy music course. Why it claims to teach music in half the usual time and *without a teacher*. It's impossible!"

That is how my husband felt when I showed him an ad telling about a new way to learn music. He just laughed. His unbelieving laughter made me wonder. I began to feel doubtful. Perhaps I had been too optimistic—perhaps enthusiasm and the dream of realizing my musical ambitions had carried me away. The course, after all, might prove too difficult. I knew that I had no special musical talent. I couldn't even tell one note from another—a page of music looked just like Chinese to me.

But how I *hated* to give up my new hope of learning to play the piano. Music had *always* been for me one of those dreams that never-come-true. I had longed to sit down at the piano and play some old sweet song . . . or perhaps a beautiful classic, a bit from an opera, or even the latest jazz hit. When I heard others playing, I envied them so that it almost spoiled the pleasure of the music for me. For *they* could entertain their friends and family . . . *they* were musicians. And I, I was a mere listener. I had to be satisfied with only *hearing* music.

I was so disappointed at Jack. I felt very bitter as I put away the magazine containing the advertisement. For a week I resisted the temptation to look at it again, but finally I couldn't keep from "peeking" at it. It fascinated me. It told of a woman who had learned to play the piano in 90 days! She had mastered the piano by herself, in her spare time, and at home, without a teacher. And the wonderful method she used required no tedious scales—no heartless exercises—no tiresome practicing. Perhaps I might do the same thing!

So finally, half-frightened, half-enthusiastic, I wrote to the U. S. School of Music—without letting Jack know. Almost as soon as I mailed the letter I felt frightened. Suppose the course proved to be



horribly difficult . . . suppose Jack were right after all!

Imagine my joy when the lessons started and I found that they were as easy as A. B. C. Why, a mere child could master it!

While Jack was at work, I started learning. I quickly saw how to blend notes into beautiful melodies. My progress was wonderfully rapid, and before I realized it, I was rendering selections which pupils who study with private teachers for years can't play. For thru this short-cut method, all the difficult, tiresome parts of music have been eliminated and the playing of melodies has been reduced to a simplicity which *anyone* can follow with ease.

Finally I decided to play for Jack, and show him what a "crazy course" had taught me. So one night, when he was sitting reading, I went casually over to the piano and started playing a lovely song. Words can't describe his astonishment. "Why . . . why . . ."

he floundered. I simply smiled and went on playing. But soon, of course, Jack insisted that I tell him all about it. Where I had learned . . . when I learned . . . how? So I told of my secret . . . and how the course he had laughed at had made me an accomplished musician.

One day not long after, Jack came to me and said, "Mary, don't laugh, but I want to try learning to play the violin by that wonderful method. You certainly proved to me that it is a good way to learn music."

So only a few months later Jack and I were playing together. Now our musical evenings are a marvelous success. Everyone compliments us, and we are flooded with invitations. Music has simply meant everything to us. It has given us Popularity! Fun! Happiness!

* * * * *

If you, too, like music . . . then write to the U. S. School of Music for a copy of the booklet "Music Lessons in Your Own Home," together with a Demonstration Lesson, explaining this wonderful new easy method.

Don't hesitate because you think you have no talent. Thousands of successful students never dreamed they possessed musical ability until it was revealed to them by a wonderful "Musical Ability Test." You too, can learn to play your favorite instrument by note thru this short-cut method. Send the coupon. The Demonstration Lesson showing how they teach will come AT ONCE. Address the U. S. School of Music, 4789 Brunswick Building, New York.

Instruments supplied when needed, cash or credit.

U. S. SCHOOL OF MUSIC
4789 Brunswick Bldg., New York City

Please send me your free book "Music Lessons in Your Own Home," with introduction by Dr. Frank Crane, Demonstration Lesson and particulars of your offer. I am interested in the following course:

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 Have you above instrument?

Name
 (Please Write Plainly)

Address

City State

PICK YOUR COURSE

Mandolin Drums and Traps Harmony and Composition Sight Singing Ukulele Piccolo Trombone	Saxophone Piano Organ Violin Clarinet Flute Harp Cornet Cello
Guitar Hawaiian Steel Voice and Speech Culture Automatic Finger Control Piano Accordion Banjo (5-string, Plectrum and Tenor)	

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The Romance of the "Supernatural"

By ROBERT NAPIER

WE think loosely of ghosts as "supernatural" beings. In our everyday talk, we apply the term "supernatural" to such manifestations as telepathy, clairvoyance and prophecy.

In the Dark Ages, the entire subject was condemned under the name of magic. Those who claimed to know anything about it were called sorcerers, necromancers, devil worshippers, and what not.

Actually, nothing is, or can be, "supernatural." A phenomenon perceived by our senses must necessarily have a place in the eternal scheme of things. It is due to the working of some law, the key fact of which is unknown to us—that is all.

But when a man begins to manipulate the unknown—purlblind and fumbling though he may be—he is always a magician to his fellows.

Two hundred years ago, electricity was a force of nature which no one understood. When lightning flashed in the sky, the terrified observers did not even know whether it originated on our planet, or whether it came from outside the solar system. When sparks crackled from a cat's back, it was thought to be the work of a demon.

The first men who experimented with electricity were regarded as sorcerers.

Then Benjamin Franklin sent up his kite—and the way was cleared for the harnessing of the force that drives our subway trains and lights our homes.

The answer to the psychic mysteries may prove to be equally simple.

But in the meantime the subject is infinitely romantic, because it is so little understood.

That is why uncanny, weird tales—ghost stories, in short—make such good reading.

My WEEK-END with the

*Samuel Fraser's first wife fled with a lover
second wife went mad there. But no one
secret of the place until an unearthly voice
in the haunted*

By Charles Conrad
As told to Wilbert Wadleigh

HEAVENS, what a week-end! Cold shivers run through me every time I think about it. We should never have accepted Harry's invitation.

You see, he and Clara had just moved into a house that they had unexpectedly received as a legacy from an uncle, Samuel Fraser. I had gone with Harry to look at the house some months before, and we found it the mustiest, dustiest,

most neglected and dilapidated place in the world. It was a rotting, two-story structure, with latticed windows overgrown with vines. The shingled roof needed repair, and some of the panes of glass in the windows had been broken. A tall, scraggly evergreen hedge enclosed the property, which consisted of the old mansion, a decrepit greenhouse, a windmill and tank, and a building that had formerly been a storehouse and stable.

Inside the house it was even worse. The curtains were yellowed and covered with dust, and the old rag carpets were equally dirty. All the furniture was ancient and somber. The floors were littered with scraps of paper, rags, soiled clothing, and even fragments of decayed food.

On this trip I also learned something of Samuel Fraser's history. Some forty years ago, his wife had left him for another man, the son of a neighboring farmer. He had married again, and his second wife had lost her mind and had died a raving lunatic in an asylum. Fraser had drawn away from his relatives and friends, and had lived the life of a recluse in this house for many years, up until the time of his death.

Harry was my best friend, and I felt free to advise him against moving into the place. But he scoffed at my fear of the unwholesome at-

*The blood
froze in my
veins as I
glanced up
at the win-
dow of old
Fraser's
room*



Other World

from the house, and his dreamed of the hideous spoke through the radio room

Suspended against the murky blackness of the interior was a hideous, ghostly face

phere and assured me that he intended to renovate the place from top to bottom.

This work had now been accomplished, and Clara and Harry had been occupying the house for a short while. Clara's mother and father were planning to join them later.

On the Saturday evening when Mary, my wife, and I arrived at the house, we were much impressed. As we drove into the yard, we saw how neatly the hedge had been trimmed, and noted the shrubs and things that had been planted, and the new grass that was beginning to come up. The house was freshly painted, the roof repaired and stained. The greenhouse seemed as though it had just been erected, and within it were all manner of ferns, flowers, and other plants. The stable was gone, or seemed to be, for in place of the decrepit structure was a trim double garage. The old windmill and tank had even been painted and repaired, though now it was, of course, merely a sort of ornament.

Harry emerged from the house as we were getting out of the car, and hurried to greet us, all smiles.

"Some transformation, eh?" he chuckled. "I knew we could do it. But wait until you see the inside! And we have a colored maid of all work, and she's preparing a wonderful dinner."

"Ah!" I exclaimed, hungry from our drive, "a perfect host."

HE opened the garage for us, and we put the car away, remarking upon the wonderful manner in which the homestead had been rejuvenated and beautified. But the interior was truly a revelation, completely repapered, and fitted out with new rugs, furniture, fixtures, and drapes.

Clara and the colored maid, whom they called Susie, were preparing dinner in a kitchen that was certainly transformed, and while the girls chatted together, Harry took me over the rest of the house. All of the bedrooms, with the exception of that of the maid, were on the upper floor, and I could not but admire the taste and judgment with which they had been decorated and furnished. Throughout the house floor heaters had been installed, connecting with a hot-air furnace in the basement.

"Harry," I exclaimed, "I'll bet it cost you as much to make over this place as it would to buy a bungalow."

"More," he grinned cheerfully; "in fact I had to take a small mortgage. But what of it? If we had purchased a bungalow, we would have been confined to a small forty or fifty foot lot, while here we have over an acre in the homestead proper, with forty more acres surrounding us."

I knew Harry to be a man of unusual discernment and acumen, and the way he had carried out the transformation of the old homestead was conclusive proof of the soundness of his judgment. It also indicated the thoroughness he was capable of in all things, even in the love he bore for Clara.



Yet, as I followed him to the living-room, a vague feeling of uneasiness stole over me. Despite the sunlight that streamed through the windows, and the meticulous care with which the house had been renovated and furnished, there was something in the atmosphere of the place that got under my skin. And I could still recall vividly the somber old furniture, dirty curtains, the dust, and the litter of trash, apple cores, crusts of bread, and chicken bones I had seen on my first visit.

The dinner that evening was excellent, and well served, but it was marked by one disturbing factor. Clara informed us that the maid intended to leave that night.

"She's been imagining all sorts of things," Clara said, "and she says she wouldn't spend another night in the house for double her salary."

"Thinks the place is haunted," Harry said and laughed, "but Clara and I haven't lost any sleep."

The vague uneasiness I had felt grew upon me, and as I glanced at my wife I saw that she was a trifle pale.

"You mean that—she has seen ghosts?" I exclaimed.

Harry nodded, smiling.

"Yes, she claims to have awakened last night to see a spectral form bending over her, with claw-like hands reaching for her throat. She screamed—oh, we heard her—and scrambled out of bed, switching on the light."

Clara gave a nervous laugh.

"OF course it was all imagination; probably—a nightmare," she said. I noted that her smile seemed rather forced. "And poor Susie insisted upon leaving her light on all night."

Susie entered at that moment, and while she served the next course we switched the topic to other things. I noticed, however, that the girl was extremely nervous, and no

doubt anxious to get dinner over and take her departure.

Between her appearances at the table, the subject of the maid's experience or hallucination was discussed further. The girl had been working for Clara three days, and had spent two nights in the house. The first evening she had imagined she heard footsteps in the hall outside her door, and screams, as well as other noises. Terrified, she had pulled the covers over her head, and passed a sleepless night, trembling with fear. It had taken much urging to get her to remain another evening in the house.

HARRY was the only one of us four who was not affected by the situation. I don't know whether I should be thankful for this or not, for his gaiety was infectious, and his reasoning at the time unassailable. He scoffed at what he termed "spookiphobia," and pointed out that neither Clara nor himself had heard any peculiar noises or seen any phantoms.

Sinclair is of a type of men—or *was* of a type of men, I should say—who, in their immersion in material things, are more or less impervious to psychic reactions and influences, and, I must add, are in a measure fortunate. Yet, when I think of what befell Harry in the short hours that followed this dinner, I can not but doubt that any person, regardless of beliefs or mental attributes, could go through the experiences that follow without realizing that there is a world beyond this, or surrounding it; that there are forces existing that we do not yet fully understand and give credence to.

Following dinner, we adjourned to the living-room, which was cosily and tastefully furnished, and for a half hour or so chatted idly about mutual acquaintances and other things. Dusk had merged into dark outside, but within, seated comfortably in this cosy room around the glowing logs in the fireplace, we hardly noted the passing of the day. The girls went to the piano, and Mary had just commenced playing a popular air when there was a sharp scream from somewhere in the house, and the sound of a door slammed shut.

"Oh!" cried Clara; "what was that—"

"Susie," snapped Harry, rising quickly and starting for the hall. Simultaneously there was the sound of scurrying feet, and another outcry:

"Help! Help—oh Gawd, it's got me-e-e—"

As we jumped to our feet, the colored girl burst into the room, waving her arms about her head, her eyes wide and staring, her features contorted with stark terror. Harry seized her and with some difficulty and considerable shaking, managed to wring a gasping account from her.

"Ah—ah was in mah room—a packin' mah grip," she breathed through chattering teeth, "an' jest as ah switched off de light—oh, Lawd! Ice col' finguh's, dey grab nie by de troat—dey did!"

"**S**SOME one grabbed you by the throat?" Harry said ironically.

"Y—yes suh; ah—ah beat aroun' wit mah hands, but didn't hit nuffin. An' ah screamed, an'—an' ran intuh de hall. B—but it wuz dat ghost—his col' finguh's still pressed intuh mah neck—"

She gave a sobbing shudder, and Harry conducted her to

a chair, forcing her into it. Clara hurried off to the kitchen, and returned with a glass of water, and the girls did all they could to quiet the negro maid.

I accompanied Harry down the hall to her room, finding the grip just outside the door. He picked it up and handed it to me, and entered the room, switching on the light. The place had been left in order, and the room was as clean and cheerfully appointed as the rest of the house.

"Susie just had another brain-storm," Harry grumbled disgustedly. "I'll be glad when she's gone."

He raised the shade and glanced at the window, however. It was locked.

"This—this was old Fraser's room, wasn't it?" I exclaimed.

Harry shot me an interrogating glance.

"Yes. Your voice sounds queer, old boy; you're not getting upset over this nonsense, I hope?"

I have always considered frankness the best policy.

"You bet your sweet life I am!" I retorted. "I've had an oppressive feeling ever since I entered the house, and I believe Mary has, too. I can't explain it, but I feel it."

He smiled, shrugging, pushing me out of the room and switching off the light.

"I'm surprised at you," he exclaimed. "Take a look in there now, while it's dark. You don't see any ghosts, do you?"

The contempt in his tone irritated me, and flushing, I gazed into the shadows.

"No. I don't."

"Of course not, and you never will, nor any sane person."

He closed the door, and we returned to the living-room, where the maid, fearing to venture out in the dark street, begged Harry to accompany her to the nearest trolley.

"Certainly, Susie," he said and shrugged, grinning at us. "I'll do better than that; I'll get out my car, and drive you there."

THE frightened negro was overjoyed, and Harry got his hat and overcoat, and he and the maid went to the garage.

"Poor thing," Clara exclaimed, "she's just superstitious, but I hate to lose her; she was a splendid worker, and a fine cook."

Her face was pale, and her voice trembled slightly, and I exchanged uneasy glances with Mary.

"See here, Clara," I exclaimed, "you don't feel right about all this, and you know it."

She sighed, glancing away.

"Oh—of course, I've been a bit nervous, even before Susie came. I don't know; it's just been a sort of uneasy feeling, though when Harry's home—oh!"

There was a sudden crashing sound coming from somewhere in the distance, and a muffled scream. For an instant we stared at each other, inarticulate, and then Clara leaped to her feet and rushed toward the door. We followed her into the yard, running toward the garage, where we could see the lights of Harry's car through the open doors. As we reached the spot we heard Harry indulging in some very eloquent and profane remarks. He was tugging away at the front bumper, and I saw that a section of the back wall was broken open, and one of the boards had split and secured one end of the bumper. The colored girl was huddled nervously in the rear seat.

"Give me a hand here," he retorted, as I inquired what had happened. "I just tried to plow through the confounded

wall, and there you see what the result has been."

"How on earth did you come to do that?"

"That's what I'd like to know," he muttered. "I've never done such an asinine thing before."

Despite the fact that Harry had driven cars for several years, he had somehow been guilty of throwing the gear-shift lever into second instead of reverse. I knew then, that despite the "front" he had maintained over the alleged supernatural occurrences, the old house and its grim atmosphere had begun to tell upon his nerves.

When he had driven out of the grounds, I accompanied the girls back towards the house in a very unsettled frame of mind. The blood froze in my veins as I glanced up at the window of old Fraser's room. Suspended against the blackness of the interior was a hideous, ghostly face—a claw-like hand on

I took a grip upon myself. Forced myself to outward calm. "Mary," I said earnestly, "we've got to stick it out. After all, it's all a question of will power; of not giving in to these impressions."

"But—that horrible face at the window!" she gasped. "Was it man or devil? Oh, and this creepy old place—we've never faced a situation like this. And when I think of spending the whole night here—"

Clara appeared with the serving-cart at that moment, and I squeezed Mary's hand. The sight of the urn of steaming coffee snatched our thoughts temporarily away from supernatural matters, yet, even as we began to sip the hot beverage, I was conscious of the growing restraint of both Clara and my wife. It was all too plainly indicated in their pale faces, and in their tones. As for myself, the dread atmosphere of the house and the memory of that face pressed upon me like an omnipresent incubus.

Yet nothing occurred during the period



Babbling incoherently, the possessed man was choking his wife into insensibility

either side—the eyes glaring at us malignantly.

I felt the pressure of Mary's fingers, and knew that she also had seen the thing. Clara, however, was occupied in her speculations over Harry's accident, and had evidently had her eyes upon the path.

"You—you saw it?" my wife whispered to me as Clara led us to the front door.

"Yes, Mary," I breathed. "For God's sake, pull yourself together—Clara mustn't know—"

We followed Clara in, and as we seated ourselves, Mary gasped and darted a hand to her neck. As we stared anxiously at her, she dropped her hand, and forced a smile.

"Mary! What is it?" Clara cried.

"It's—it's nothing. My throat felt strange—I—I suppose it is the excitement."

Clara put an arm about her.

"Poor dear, you're all unstrung. And I'd forgotten about the coffee; it's just what we all need."

She hurried into the kitchen.

"What was it, Mary?" I asked my wife hurriedly.

"Oh—it was as if invisible fingers were feeling my throat! I—oh, I wish we hadn't come—"

Harry was out. I managed to pretend an ease of demeanor that I didn't feel, though as the long minutes dragged by I found it increasingly difficult to keep the conversation from becoming strained. I was thankful when we heard Sinclair's car in the driveway, and heard his brisk tread on the porch.

"Well, folks," he grinned at us as he entered, "I put Spooky Susie on the street-car. Gad! that fool woman made me nervous! Pour me a cup of black coffee, Clara."

For two hours we played a perfunctory game of bridge. Harry, trying to infect us with a pseudo-cheerfulness that we all knew he didn't feel, talked with forced animation. We avoided making any references to the deceased and unfortunate Samuel Fraser and his two wives, the experiences of Susie, or to the atmosphere of the old house, which Harry was now beginning to feel.

That conversation, as I recall it, reminds me of a pendulum, that, after being set in motion, swings to a gradually slowing and shortening measure, (Continued on page 66)

Captive Souls

I SOMETIMES wonder how this tangle of unusual events, ending in an almost unbelievable climax, could ever have happened to me. For I am the daughter of well-to-do parents, and I had always lived a happy, sheltered life among the simple country-folk of the New England hills.

The only unwholesome element in my environment was supplied by a dismal, old mansion that stood across the valley from our home. Just how old the house was, no one seemed to know, but it was gray with age and had been built by some one known to be "odd." It must have been at least a couple of hundred years old.

It had been built to resemble a castle. There was even a tower with long, narrow windows, and there were numberless rooms and unfurnished attics. Superstitious old women told of its winding stairways, mysterious dark chambers, and corridors where the echo repeated again and again. In fact, the place was credited with everything that a castle should have—except a torture chamber. Why that was omitted I could never quite understand.

A curse had been cast upon the house years and years before. The owner's young wife had fallen sick and died within its walls very suddenly. A few years later his only son was stricken with a strange malady and—despite every effort that could be made—followed the young mother. Not long after this, the man's aged parents were found dead in their room from the effect of some mysterious poison. An old and trusted servant was the next victim; he dropped dead while serving his master.

The unfortunate owner was crazed with grief. He walked from room to room, from floor to floor, looking out of the windows or over the banisters and talking to himself or to some imaginary guest. Finally, in his desperation, he uttered the curse. He called down a horrible fate upon all who should occupy that house from that day until it crumbled and fell away.

During the following years he was a raving maniac, and at last he died a victim of his own curse. His distorted

body was found in the room where he had uttered his curse.

The castle was built on the side of a hill and was almost entirely surrounded by a dark forest of evergreen—a dismal background for a dismal house. As a child I had a great horror of it. I looked across the valley at it with awe and I imagined it full of all kinds of wild beasts, un-

earthly creatures, giants and devils, not to mention bats and owls and ravens and rats as big as



"Donald," I exclaimed brokenly, "Please tell me—please—why you act so strangely!"

hares, as evil as demons.

Up to the time I was ten I had never seen a light in it, but some imaginative child of about my own age told me that after twelve o'clock every

night a ghost went up in the tower and placed a lighted lantern there. She did not explain the ghost's object in doing this and I never thought to ask. But it was just like a ghost to do such a thing; and so, when I went to bed, I ducked my head under the cover, and nothing on earth could drive me out till daylight.

But one bright night I awoke suddenly and sat up in bed. I looked out of the window before I realized what

If the man you were engaged to marry should vanish between haunted walls, would YOU have Mildred Stewart's courage in battling with ghosts to save him?

By Cassie H. MacLaury

I was doing. A big, bright planet was directly over the tower, and oh, what a terrible shock it gave me! My heart almost stopped. I was smothered in an agony of fear and horror. I could have sworn I saw the ghost in the tower and I had an awful feeling he had seen me—had located my room and knew I slept there alone.

No one knows the hours of torture I suffered during the nights that followed. My only relief came with the hourly call of the cuckoo downstairs in the hall. I wished I were as small and as brave as he. I would have been willing to live in a clock all the time and to come out only once an hour, if I could have had his security behind those little doors of defense that snapped tight.

With the coming of dawn I would fall into a sound sleep and awake to find the sun shining through my windows and the birds singing in the trees without. My courage then would come back and I would look at the tower in defiance—until the dark came again.

One night at dinner my mother made some remark about the castle, but I did not listen to her because I did not care to speak of such a subject after dark. I played ball with Trix, the fox-terrier, after dinner. The ball bounded into the hall and we both raced after it. I hit it with my toe and it bounced over toward the window. We reached it at the same time but I got it after a scramble.

When I stood up I chanced to look out of the window. The shades had not yet been drawn, but Mother would be coming soon to lower them. And, oh, how I wished she had been a minute or two earlier. When I looked out that window I saw a light, a bright, yellow light, on the first floor of the castle across the valley!

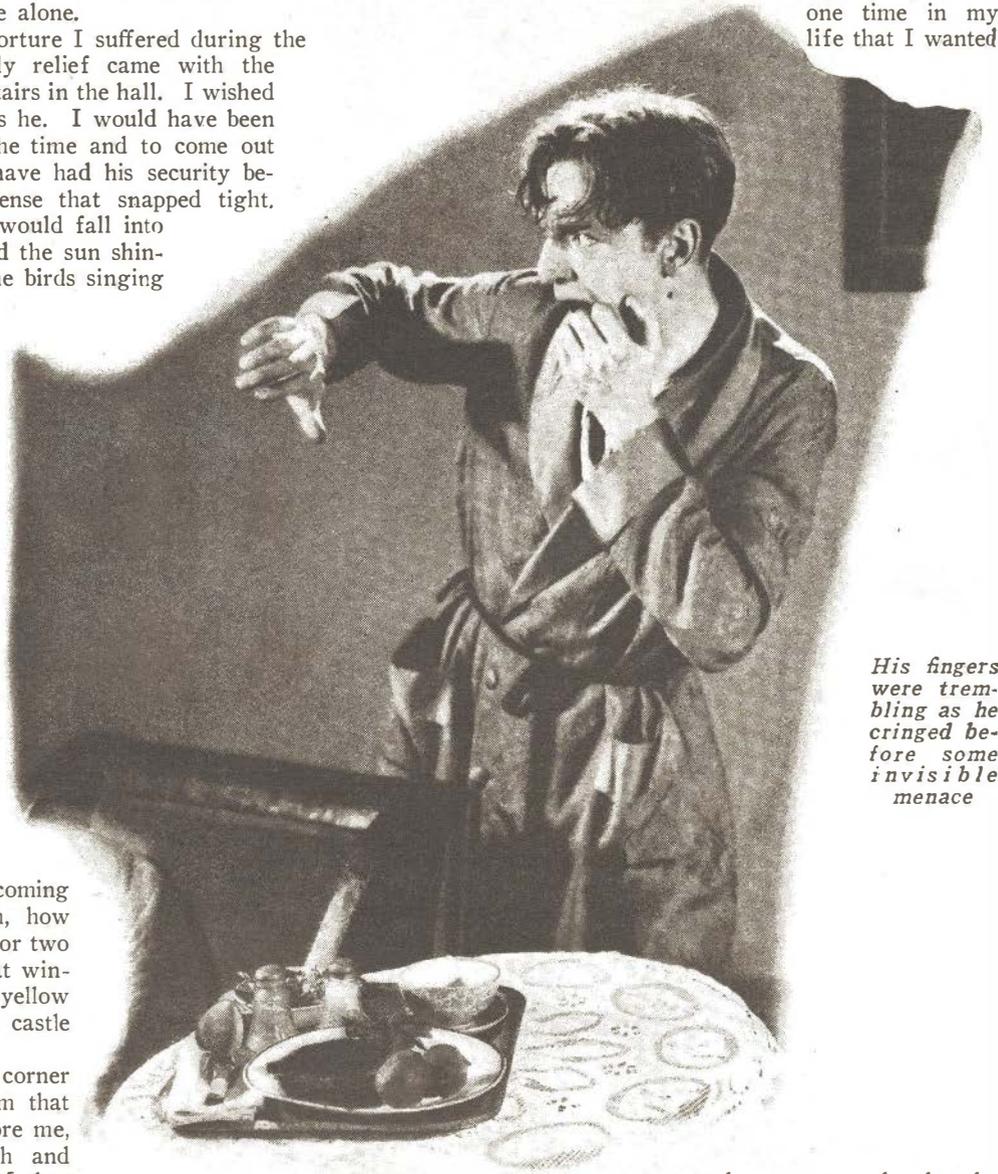
I sat down on the floor in a corner—the darkest and farthest from that window—while Trix stood before me, holding the ball in his mouth and wagging his short, stumpy tail. Mother entered a few minutes later and I wanted to cry out a warning to her. I did not want her to see what I had seen—how I hoped she would forget to lower that particular shade! But she didn't—she went right to the window and had the shade almost down when she looked under it and raised it again.

"Yes, John," she said to my father who was just entering the room, "I guess we have neighbors in the old castle at last. See! There is a light down-stairs now. I could not believe it when I heard it today."

My father walked over and looked out the window.

"Well," he exclaimed, nodding.

But were they right, or was I? Was it a new family just moved in or was it the ghost? I did hope they were right. That was one time in my life that I wanted



His fingers were trembling as he cringed before some invisible menace

to be wrong, absolutely dead wrong. But I was in terrible doubt, and my doubt seemed to drown my hopes.

What courageous, nervy people they must be if they had really moved into a house with such a reputation! Child-like, I began to wonder if they could find no other home and just had to live there; for I could not imagine any one even entering the castle except under compulsion.

What a perfectly awful state of affairs—to have to live with ghosts and devils and all those other things! When I went to bed I fancied myself and mother and father in

the same fix; and then I shivered myself to sleep.

Next morning I sneaked a glance across the valley. There was smoke coming out of one of the chimneys. But even then how could I be certain that it wasn't the ghost who had become chilly and decided to warm things up and maybe prepare a bite to eat? Ghosts did everything else—very likely they did get hungry and eat sometimes. But it was daylight, and so I could be quite indifferent.

We met the new people in church next Sunday. They were perfectly natural, ordinary people and did not look to be in circumstances that would compel them to live in a haunted house. There was Mrs. Harrison and her son Donald, who was a few years older than myself. Mr. Harrison was to be our new preacher. To any one who knew the condition of the old rectory it was plain why the Harrisons preferred the castle. Repairing the rectory was one of those things that had been put off from year to year, until the house was in such a condition as to make it unlivable. Petty squabbles had kept the congregation from uniting on any plan to renovate it.

IN the years that followed I came to know the Harrisons well. Mr. Harrison was cordially welcomed by the community and throughout the long years of his connection with the church was beloved and respected by his entire congregation. Due to his personality and magnetism the church membership was more than doubled.

The Harrison family came from Tennessee and brought with them several colored servants. Among these were Lily, the cook, Adolphus the butler, and a big mulatto who acted as attendant for Mr. Harrison. And the old castle was soon equipped with modern conveniences, though its exterior remained as rugged and hoary as ever.

As there was no way of getting across the valley, visiting between our house and the castle involved a circuitous trip of about three miles. However, I made the trip often; for Donald and I soon became fast friends.

But I would not go inside the castle at first. When I was finally persuaded to enter it, I remember how Donald laughed and showed me all the nooks and cubby-holes and dark corners, declaring them to be the favorite haunts of the ghosts and witches he knew I feared so much. He showed me also the back stairway, which was narrow and dark, and told me of the number of ghosts he had caught there from time to time and "licked."

DONALD graduated from the local school and went away to a preparatory school. He intended to be a minister like his father, and his parents, of course, were delighted. I thought it just wonderful, and I figured he would finish his studies just in time to take his father's place, for Mr. Harrison was getting along in years and was not in very good health. I would go to church then every Sunday, rain or shine, and listen to his sermons. I had the greatest confidence in Donald's oratorical abilities. He would be known around the globe and people would come miles to hear him. During the time he was away he wrote to me at first in a light-hearted, gay, boyish manner and then gradually his letters became more serious, more dignified and more sincere.

The letters meant worlds to me, and the months Donald

was away were like years. I looked forward to his vacation with such longing and delight that I was afraid my parents would become aware of the affection I felt for him. For some silly reason I did not want them to know. I kept my feelings to myself and thought of him in the solitude of my room or when walking through the woods or riding to town on the bob-tailed chestnut.

DONALD'S letters became more than friendly notes. As the months went by, there was something deeper. I saw it and read it in every line. Before he finished his studies, I gave him my promise. We decided we would be married just as soon as Donald was ready to preach. We consulted no one; we planned it all ourselves. But every one in town seemed to take it for granted that Donald would take his father's place.

Donald had developed into the finest of manly men. There was no longer that look of mischief in his face that had been there when he tried to scare me with stories of the ghost. In its place was dignity, sympathy, breadth of mind, and character. And he was handsome, tall, and straight. His father's fortune meant nothing to him—he just wanted to be a successful, able minister, as his father had been, and as I, for one, had no doubt that he would be. He was already known as "Young Dr. Harrison."

But one day Donald received a telegram saying his father had been stricken at six o'clock that morning and to come home at once. He arrived that night. Dr. Harrison was still unconscious, but his condition was somewhat improved. However, it was a week before he was able to sit up.

The doctor said that a few weeks of rest would add greatly to his strength, but that he would never be in good health again nor would he ever be able to appear in the pulpit. His right side was almost completely paralyzed.

The father urged Donald to return to his studies and earnestly impressed upon him the importance of the next few months. His greatest desire was to see his son in minister's robes.

AFTER Donald had gone back to school, I used to stand by the window of our house on sunny mornings and look across the valley to see Dr. Harrison as he was wheeled about in his invalid chair by the mulatto, who never seemed to leave his side. I could not realize the hopelessness of his condition, and I felt sure that he would finally recover.

And then one day the place across the valley seemed strangely quiet. I watched for the mulatto with the invalid chair, but he did not appear. It was a fine, warm, sunny day and I wondered why Dr. Harrison was not out. He did not appear next day, either, and so I drove over to see if I could not cheer him. Since his illness, he recognized only his wife, Donald, and me. All others were strangers to him.

When I arrived at the castle, the evergreens seemed darker than ever—not a leaf was stirring. There was no sign of life about the place and just before I reached the house I saw a dark object hanging on the door. I turned about slowly and went back.

Now Donald would be coming home. I met him at the depot the next night, but I did not tell him—I could not tell him—that there were two crêpes (Continued on page 76)

"My trousseau was finished, our honeymoon planned, everything was in readiness for our wedding.

"But one night I awoke suddenly. The cuckoo told me it was two o'clock. I looked over at the haunted castle, and saw——"

The Ghost Light

The three mad scientists should never have brought their dreams to the house on the hill. A greater sorcerer than they had made it a place of awful menace

By C. B. Bigelow

MY guide, Valmont, and I, having rested ourselves sufficiently, continued our journey through the ancient New England graveyard. A long tramp through the woods had tired us greatly, and so we were taking a short cut home.

As we neared a crumbled gravestone my guide stopped, and, pointing to it, said:

"That, sir, is the grave of an Italian doctor. If you will look

The armless hand had seized Van Kesner's razor and was lifting it towards his throat

straight up between those trees on top of that mountain, you may see his house. If it were dark, you would notice a light in the window. Believe me, the doctor has now been dead nearly two hundred and fifty years, but every night, as far as I can remember—and the history of our people says that every night since the doctor died—there has been a light there. No one since his death has dared go near the house, for in the year 1680 he was burned for a sorcerer. It was said that from chemicals he could manufacture living things."

I listened attentively to the old man's story.

When, at his last remark, I smiled and said that it was nothing but one of the impossible notions of the witch-fearing times, and that the light was caused by some reflection of the moon and stars, he became quite angry. He thought a minute, then turned on his heel and started to walk toward the town."



I followed after and hastened to make peace with him, for I was fond of the old man and was sorry to have hurt his feelings. By the time we had arrived home he had apparently quite forgotten our quarrel, but during the process of frying eggs and bacon he turned abruptly to where I was sitting: "The moon and stars do not shine every night," he said, "but that cursed light is always there."

SOME weeks later at the general store, a man who by his dress and manner I knew could not be a native addressed me: "You are MacNarland, I believe."

"Yes."

"You are not in the least superstitious, of course?"

"Why, no."

"Thank you." He turned and started toward the door, then apparently on second thought: "My name is Jamison, Doctor Jamison. I am very glad to have had the pleasure of meeting you. Good day."

The man was uncanny, not only in his strange conversation but in his general appearance. His face, what could be seen of it (the greater part being covered by a long reddish-gray beard) was horribly scarred and wrinkled. The fingers of his left hand, if they had not too much resembled claws, would have been almost artistic. The fingers of his right hand, however, were chopped off at the first joint, with the exception of the thumb. When he had left, I turned to the store-keeper and asked him if he happened to know the man.

"Ah, my friend, I'm not exactly sure," he answered, "but I think he is one of those scientists. There are two other gentlemen with him. They are going to live in the old haunted house on the hill. I wouldn't live there for the world."

When I told old Valmont that his haunted house was about to be inhabited he ceased his tobacco chewing for a moment. "That's very interesting," he muttered.

"But I thought you said it was full of ghosts."

"Sure. It is."

That year I did not leave when the summer was over. I was so fascinated by the place that I determined to stay as long as I could.

Unlike most New England villages, Charlesville was not periodically turned into a summer resort. The three scientists and myself were the only transients. Its location made it inaccessible and added to its charm. Set down in the center of four ranges of mountains, it was completely isolated, the nearest village being twenty miles away. The great distance had, before the invention of the automobile, made it necessary for the inhabitants to raise or manufacture practically all the necessities of life.

EVEN now Charlesville was untouched by the flurry of the modern world. Its houses were on an ancient model. Not one of them was less than a century and a half old.

To the amazement of the community, the three scientists seemed to remain undisturbed in the haunted house. They were sullen, however, and had little to say to the villagers. They came down to Charlesville only when they needed to lay in a stock of provisions.

As the autumn passed they were seen less and less frequently, and finally it was said in the village that no one

had seen them for weeks. People began to feel alarmed, but no one would take the risk of visiting the house.

At the end of another week I determined to call upon my strange neighbors. I urged old Valmont to go with me, but nothing could tempt him to venture within half a mile of the place.

When I started my walk up the mountain, a cold breeze was blowing. It was well on toward the middle of November, and in New Hampshire winter comes quickly; we had already had snow. The gray, unpleasant afternoon was wearing to a close.

Having reached the summit, I stopped to examine the decaying structure before me. It was large, and had it not been of wood, it might have been taken for a medieval castle. I walked over to the entrance and knocked. There was no answer. After knocking and calling for nearly half an hour and getting no response, I decided that the best course was to turn and go home. The tenants had probably left without word, I thought.

I had, in fact, turned to go when an overwhelming desire to see just what was inside of this legendary haunted house took possession of me. I pushed heavily upon the door; it opened. Within, the odor of decaying wood was very apparent. I found myself in a large room, in the center of which was a staircase. Finding no sign of life on the first floor, I began the ascent of the

"I turned and saw a figure that was neither ape nor man. In the dim light, it resembled an octopus, with a grotesquely misshapen head stuck on top and disproportionately thin arms and legs. . . .

"The thing was, yet it was not. It was indescribably animate and inanimate at one and the same time. . . .

"It came creeping slowly toward me, and then with amazing quickness it—"

stairs. There seemed to be few windows up-stairs—the hall was in semi-darkness.

I had searched what I thought to be the entire second floor without success, when, on opening a small door on the left of the stairway, I stumbled over an object lying across the threshold. The room was very dark, making it necessary for me to light a match. I glanced down and saw to my horror that I had tripped over the body of Jamison, the weird little scientist. There was no mark on him, but his face was distorted in an expression of unspeakable horror. Close by him was a lantern. Finding it in perfect condition, I lit it.

THE room was in great confusion; everything was turned upside down. There were papers scattered about. Leaf by leaf I picked up the following note. It seemed to have been written by Jamison:

"To occupy my troubled mind and to use these strange facts in further research work, if I ever return to civilization, I have decided to keep a diary.

"November 5—The sun is just setting behind the trees. As I watch it, terror fills my heart at the thought of what may happen after darkness has taken possession of the world.

"There were three of us, students of the horrible, multi-form and intricate workings of the disordered mind; we came far away from civilization that we might pursue our studies undisturbed. We have been making our abode in an old mansion apparently forgotten years ago, as there are only parts of it habitable. The greater part of the huge, grotesque wooden structure has fallen or rotted into ruins. The three of us were Van Kesner, a scientist of note; Ivan Stowskey—I always thought him mad, and now more than ever—and myself. (Continued on page 83)



*"Saloon!" says
the man with
the long beard.
"Brother, did
you patronize
a saloon? I
hope you re-
pented."*

The Haunted Print Shop

*If John Everton had not been guided by an
amazingly human sort of ghost, he might
have lost the girl he loved*

By John Clayton Everton
as told to
Harold Standish Corbin

IF anybody had asked me, the editor of the Brimmerton *Weekly Enterprise*, what I thought about ghosts I should have laughed at him and asked him what he thought about a million dollars. I wasn't concerned with ghosts. My thoughts were of the very material loveliness of Eleanor Holton, whom I seemed to have as much chance of winning as the usual small-town editor has of getting a million—short, of course, of robbing a bank.

I'd have climbed the Congregational church steeple or jumped in the ink barrel for Eleanor. That was the sort of deep and ardent love for her that filled me. She was twenty-two, tall, supple, athrill with the joy of life, her lovely features framed in a mass of soft dark hair. She led the women's golf field at the country club and she was no mean person with a tennis racket. She could ride a

horse or drive a motor car quite as well as she could bake those thistle-down biscuits. She was a leader in the choir. Altogether she was a wholesome, winsome, wonderful creature, too good for me, I was certain. Yet when she looked at you out of those big brown eyes of hers, it made you want to do big things.

And I wanted to do big things. Probably every fellow who has served on the official journal of his alma mater feels the same way. He harbors a high resolve to become some day a second Greeley or Dana or Bennett and let the world hang breathless on his words. That was how I had the nerve to persuade my father to buy the *Enterprise* for me. Thenceforth I would be a crusader, out of my callowness righting the wrongs of the Community, the State and even the Nation, and bringing to pass a new order of things. The world needed revision. I would re-

wise it—for Eleanor's sake, for her win fame and fortune.

Brimmerton, Connecticut, the town to which I had come fresh from college, had 10,001 souls. The Chamber of Commerce report made it 10,000 exactly. The other soul I'll tell you about shortly.

The office of the *Enterprise* was on the second floor of Union Block, overlooking Union Square. It was my office. It was my newspaper. I was fascinated by it, even though I was office boy and nearly everything else around the place as well as editor.

AS was my custom, principally because there was no other place to go except to the movies at the Star, I had remained late at the office. An August night had settled down and, as its soft folds enveloped the countryside, an errant breeze laden with the sweet scent of green meadows found its way in at the window beside my battered desk and mingled with the acrid odor of printing materials—ink, paper, paste and benzine. It swept across the room to rattle in a corner the dried leaves of the eight-foot corn stalks some proud farmer had brought in, and it even swung the picture of eager-faced old Greeley himself, with his black

in Brimmerton, and the adjacent country surrounding it.

I loved the atmosphere of the place. I had not switched on the light, for I wanted to sit in the half-darkness and dream a little and think very hard over a problem that concerned both Eleanor and me.

Lost in reverie, the sudden jangling of the telephone at my elbow made me jump. Wondering who might be calling at this late hour when the office was supposed to be closed, I removed the receiver and answered.

"That you, Everton?" came a hearty, patronizing voice. "Well, this is Jim Holton."

Eleanor's father! The very man of whom I had been thinking!

"I saw the light in your office," the voice went on, "and I thought it might be you. Business pretty good with you? That was a fine piece you wrote about the strawberry festival at the church."

"Thanks, Mr. Holton," I replied. "Glad you liked it."

"By the way," he went on; "I want to see you sometime about my campaign. Suppose you're going to support me for the Senate, aren't you?"

"I don't know, Mr. Holton," I said after a moment. "I'm not sure."

"Get into the house—quick as you can—and fetch Jim Holton out," whispered the ghostly voice of Henry Jenkins

"Not sure?" There was simulated amazement in the voice. "Why not? Haven't I done enough for this town to warrant



stock and open collar, who looked down at me from the wall.

Somewhere a mouse gnawed at the paste keg and just within the composing room door I could see the great drum of Old Hundred—the ancient press that roared and clattered in the weekly travail of proclaiming to the world the rarely interrupted cycle of births, marriages and deaths

the honor? Doesn't everybody consider me one of the leading citizens—if not *the* leading one? Has anybody said anything bad about me—anything that can be proved? Listen, young man, you'll lose a lot of friends for the *Enterprise* if you don't support me. And besides"—his voice took on a wheedling tone—"there's Eleanor, you know."

"I know," I said broodingly. "I want to think it over. I'll let you know later, Mr. Holton."

"Well, don't make any mistake," he called, and there was a hint of a threat in his voice. "We're good advertisers, you know."

THAT also I recalled. Jim Holton was a power in the community. Big, jovial, red-faced, hearty, he was the sort that shook hands with the laborer digging a ditch and kissed the minister's wife at a picnic to make her squeal and blush. He owned the woolen mill on the bank of the Quaboag just above the falls and he was the principal stockholder of the Bon Ton department store at the corner of Main and Elm Streets. He rarely attended church, but he contributed liberally to the support of churches. He owned a garage that was the agent for a popular brand of thousand-dollar cars, and more folks than I liked to imagine were in debt to him for them.

If I should ask the first ten people I met on the street if they would vote for Jim Holton for state senator at the coming fall election, nine of them emphatically would tell me yes.

But there had come to me that day a young man of the town, in a sad but communicative mood.

"I've got something to tell you—a big story for your paper, if you want it," he said.

"Will you print it?"

"That depends on what it is,"

I replied with what I deemed befitting editorial dignity.

"Do you know that roadhouse out of the Tompkins turnpike, two miles from here?"

I had heard of the place. It was a festering sore on the fair name of Brimmerton, a place that, for some reason I could not learn, was protected by the police. Not only was the vilest bootleg liquor sold, but gambling and rioting occurred there right along. Parties from Riverdale, a tough town across the Massachusetts line, visited it each Saturday night and made the Sunday morning hours hideous. Young men and women from our own town, finding they would not be molested, frequented it more and more. Church people complained, but their complaints were hushed up, or passed over lightly, and nothing was done.

"My sister came home from there this morning—beastly drunk," the young man continued. "She's at home now, under the doctor's care. I was terribly angry. I swore I'd break up the place myself before it ruined anybody else's sister. I went up there a while ago."

He paused.

"What happened?" I asked eagerly, for I sensed a real story.

"They threw me out. They beat me up pretty badly. But before they got me, I snatched these from the manager's desk. I guess they explain why the police won't raid the



The firemen continued to fight the flames with the last pails of water

place, why, instead, they give it almost open protection."

A breath of wind would have knocked me over, for he showed me a package of cancelled checks that had been made out by the manager to James Holton! He had also seized a letter written by Holton directing the manager to have repairs made about the place.

"What does it mean?" I asked blankly.

"What a few people around town know already," he replied. "Holton owns the place and shares in the profits. He wouldn't let his name appear, not for the world. He'd probably give me a thousand dollars to return these things and keep my mouth shut. It's up to you, Mr. Editor, to print the story and have Holton, the dirty, two-faced scum, driven out of town."

AND there was my problem. That is the way Fate sometimes plays tricks on us. I was madly, desperately in love with Eleanor. Whether she would return my love I had no means of knowing. We had met in a casual way and I had taken her to the Odd Fellows' ball and to one or two socials. To all appearances we were just good friends. But in my heart of hearts I loved her.

But she loved her father, too, with a great and uncompromising love. She had lost her mother years before, and her father had been everything in the world to her.

It was in my power to smash her idol. But by smashing him I would lose whatever chance I had to win Eleanor. She never would forgive me. I felt she liked me a little now. Yet if I did not print the story I would not be keeping faith with my high resolve to publish the truth. Nor would I be keeping faith with the parents of

those boys and girls who surely were going straight to perdition along the roadhouse path.

What was I to do? It was love against duty—the old, old story. For a long time after I had replaced the telephone receiver I sat in the half darkness of the office deep in thought. Eleanor's sweet face haunted my dreams; her lovely voice was ever-present in my ears. I could not give her up. I groaned aloud, trying to solve my problem. Tomorrow was press day. The story could not wait. Already Jim Holton had lined up his forces. Election was hardly two months away.

I looked up at Greeley's picture, faintly illuminated by the rays of a street lamp just outside the window. I studied the kindly but stern features, the firmness of the jaw, the forceful character of the man who would not swerve from duty. I knew what Greeley would do. I was a journalist too. I must do likewise, come what would. There was no other way. I swung back to my desk, lifting the typewriter to it, prepared to write the story.

"Good evening," said a voice out of the darkness.

It startled me. No one had entered the room. The door was locked. I was about to switch on the light over my desk, but I hesitated. There in the shadows, filling and overflowing one of the ancient wooden armchairs, was a mass of intangible whiteness, looking for all the world like a puffy summer cloud that had been taken from the sky and dropped in a heap in my office.

"Don't put on the light, son," the voice came again, spec-

tral but rumblingly good-natured; "it hurts my eyes since I took up this ghost business."

"Who are you?" I asked sharply.

"I happen to be the ghost of Henry Jenkins who used to live here in Brimmerton before you took over this paper. I was just passing along the railroad platform out there and thought I'd drop in to see the old *Enterprise* office."

Returning to my chair, I studied as best I could the source of the voice. As my eyes became accustomed to the shadows I saw looking at me out of the white cloud a pair of eyes that twinkled whimsically even in the darkness and that I suppose in life must have been blue. There was about as much detail to the features as to those of the man in the moon. The face was like the moon's too, for it was big and broad and there was a genial smile upon it that seemed to envelop everything. If there were ears, or hair or teeth in or about that thing that served for a head, I could not see them. It was quite as though the moon itself were paying a visit to me.

"This certainly is a surprise," I said. "I don't know whether I'm dreaming or not."

"Oh, no, you're not dreaming!" said the ghost. "I'm probably quite as substantial a spirit as you'll find anywhere. Fact is, I'm too substantial. That was why I became a ghost."

"How was that?" I asked.

"Well, you see, I never did believe in work. Before Jim Holton bought that garage, there used to be a livery stable there, with chairs in front. I used to think, 'What the devil is the use of working? We're here on earth for a little while and we toil and struggle to acquire a little wealth and

then suddenly we die and we're just as poor in death as when we started at birth.' So I quit working and used to sit in the sun in front of the stable.

"After a while I got terribly fat—weighed 320 pounds in fact. One day I got to sleep, all comfortable and nice, and the damn chair broke. It broke my neck too. Next I knew, I was up in the clouds somewhere feeling sort of light and free, with nothing on except a white nightgown, and a couple of fellows were fitting me to a halo."

THE ghost stopped and sighed. The sigh, despite the fliminess of its owner, made my chair creak ominously.

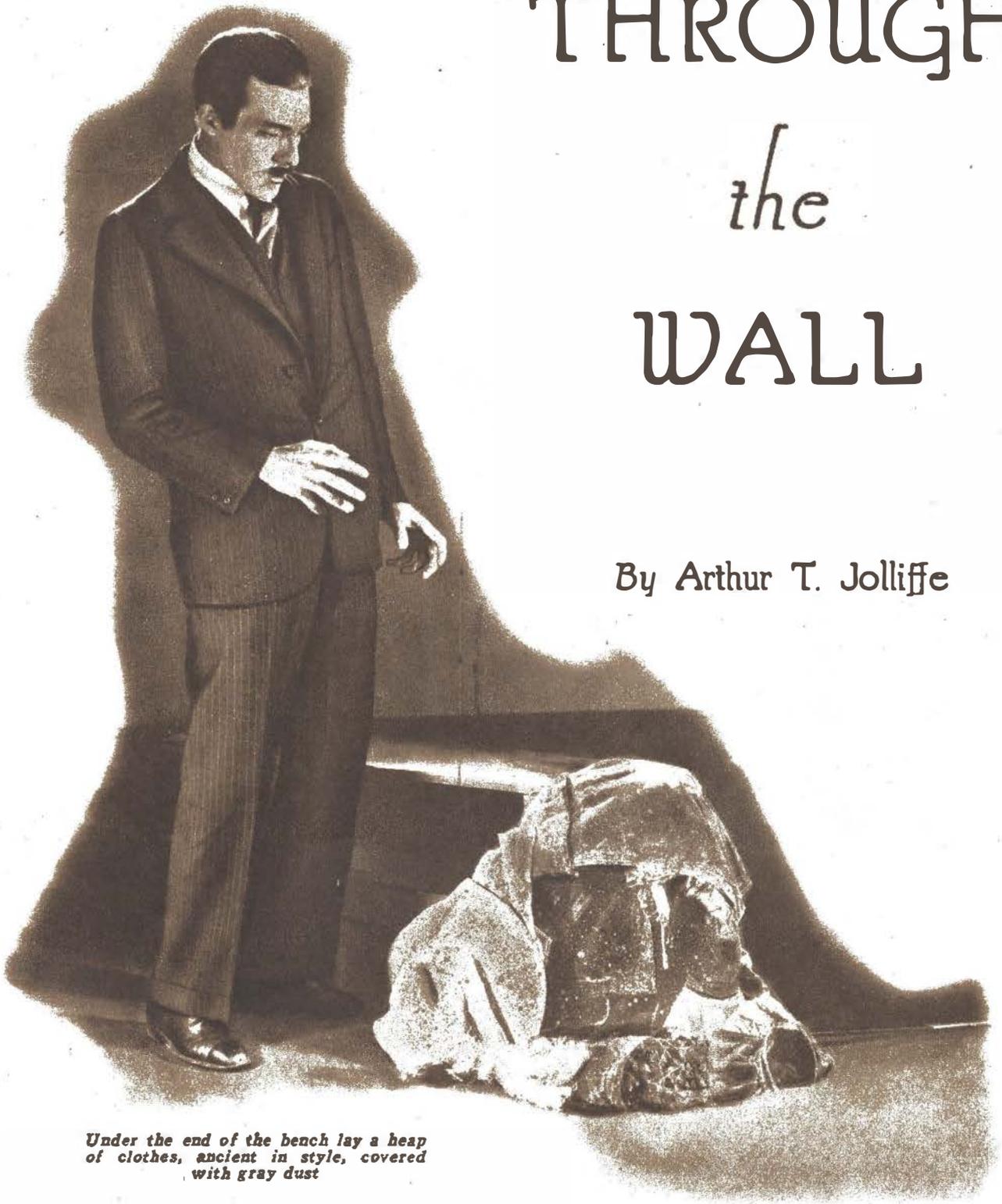
"I didn't know where I was," the ghost went on, "but I was willing to try anything once. They put a harp into my hands and told me to go into a big hall that was all white and gold, and to sing with the others in there. Well, next to sleeping I like singing best and I was ready to help. I twanged that harp for all I knew and I sang at the top of my voice. I got so interested that I got to sweating after a while and my halo slipped off with a loud clang that startled everybody, making them jump."

The ghost sighed again. He looked about him and espied a can of benzine that the office boy, lax as usual, had left in the front office instead of the composing room. The ghost picked it up and smelled of it. Suddenly he tilted it to his lips, and before I could stop him the burning liquid was gurgling down his ghostly throat.

"Gracious, but that was good!" he said as I snatched it away. "The first soul-satis- (Continued on page 57)

THROUGH the WALL

By Arthur T. Jolliffe



Under the end of the bench lay a heap of clothes, ancient in style, covered with gray dust

DEAR Mr. Paravaine: I have a natural reticence about bringing before you a subject which must be very painful to yourself—namely, that of your brother's death. Let me hasten to be explicit, therefore, and introduce myself and the reason of my writing.

The London newspapers, sent to your Australian address, and the letters from your lawyers have, of course, fully ex-

If this doctor's weird letter and the document left by his dead friend are genuine—then every man must tremble! Can the unpunished crime of an ancestor, centuries dead, be visited upon the living?

plained to you the facts of the case. In them you will also find my name (which I will not give here) as that of the physician whom your brother usually consulted, and who was the first to make an examination of the body of my patient, my friend. I was on the point of retiring that night when the summons came. In less than half an hour I was at the door of Paravaine House and was admitted by the policeman, who conducted me at once to the room where the tragedy had

occurred. It was the wonderful, old "Tapestry Room"—that relic of the past that your brother had so lovingly and carefully preserved from the ravages of time.

Mr. Paravaine's body was lying just as it was when found by the butler, except that some one had covered the face with a napkin. Death, I saw at once, had been caused by a stab inflicted by some sharp, slender instrument passing through the heart and completely through the body. He had been dead about two hours.

The rest of the story I need not weary you with. You already know the coroner's verdict: "Murder at the hands of some person or persons unknown"; the ineffectual efforts of the police, and the complete alibis of all who were suspected of the crime.

I feel it my duty, however, to acquaint you with an aspect of the case which is of such a nature that no one but yourself should have any knowledge of it. Before I proceed further I would also like to remind you that between Edward Paravaine and myself existed a very close and profound friendship.

The policeman

I seen such an expression of utter fear as was stamped upon that cold face. It was not the surprised, fearful look which the victims of sudden, violent death often wear upon their features; but—how shall I explain it?—a convulsed, terrible, *realizing* gaze that seemed to see all the hideousness of Hell opening before it. I hastily replaced the face-cloth and, trembling violently, wiped the sudden sweat from my forehead.

My nerves jumped, and uneasily I glanced about the room. A faint glimmer of white moved dimly in the shadow of the great oak bureau.

It was a sheet of paper—several of them. With a queer, inward feeling of excitement I retrieved them from the floor and held them up to the light. The familiar, sprawling hand-writing of my poor friend looked up at me.

Then the sound of a pair of heavy boots clumping down the corridor outside testified that the policeman was returning.

Something happened then—a swift, sudden emotion that left me momentarily bereft of my will. I cannot explain it, but it seemed as if some insistent, powerful entity was making me the instrument of its desire. At that moment, somehow, nothing seemed so important to me as that those papers should be hidden, that the policeman should not get a glimpse of them.

Hardly of my own volition, my hand went to my coat and stuffed the sheets into my breast pocket just as the man stamped into the room.

He looked at me with concern—a big, red-faced, phlegmatic fellow, rather worried by his sudden responsibility.

"What's the matter, Doctor?" he asked. "You're as white as a sheet!"

I groped about in my mind for a suitable answer. All I wanted, in that curious, detached state of mind, was to get away from there and read those mysterious pages.

"Did you see the face of—of the corpse?" I asked him.

"No, I didn't," he replied, with sudden curiosity. "The butler covered 'im up an' I didn't want to touch 'im till you came, sir."

The policeman strode across the room and lifted the face-covering. I watched him fascinated, as he stood there petrified, his big jaw hanging loosely and his eyes bulging.

"Good God!" he said.

"It knocked me over, too," I confessed. "Let's get out of here."

In an hour I was back in my study, perusing those written sheets—those awful, incredible pages, ending hopelessly in that ominous, despairing cry: *Moriturus!* . . . about to die! The significance of that word dinned itself appallingly into my consciousness. To die—yes; but it did not mean the sim-



In the doorway he leaned, his well remembered face darkening with his righteous wrath

had left the room for a few minutes and I was alone with the corpse. Perhaps it was more than curiosity that prompted me to see the face of the dead man. I lifted the napkin reverently—and recoiled with an exclamation of horror!

In my professional capacity I have looked upon death in many terrible forms, but never before in all my life have

ple ceasing of mortality for the man whose distracted words raced unevenly over the paper. I read into it a more sinister meaning. Death! —annihilation of something infinitely more precious!

That night I went out and walked and walked, trying to bring the matter to a logical conclusion. But my whirling brain could only grasp at that one cold refuge of puzzled science—insanity. Was he mad? But the idea was preposterous, it had to be rejected. No! not Edward Paravaine, the studious, the kindly, ardent advocate of "a sound mind in a sound body."

But if not that—what?

But I give no more comments. I only offer to you these dreadful sheets of manuscript, that you by reading this script from a dead hand may draw your own conclusions:

SOMETHING prompts me to write of the incidents that have just happened to me. I feel a sort of uneasiness that almost amounts to a premonition, a vague expectation of I know not what. Such a man as I can hardly hope to escape from the influence of generations of ancestors who have lived and died in the same house he calls his home.

"A few hours ago I made a discovery. It had been

a wonderful evening. Sir Douglas McAulis had dropped in on his way from his grim old Cumberland castle to London; Major Humphrey with his two beautiful daughters had been there; Caxton and his wife; the Bruces; and half a dozen others that I do not need to mention. They had left early to catch the ten o'clock train to Paddington, and I, not in the least sleepy, had wandered into my favorite haunt, the library.

"As a lad I lived in a world of unreality—no, not that; rather a world of unreality made real. For me the ancient chronicles of my house, the men and women who marched across the dusty pages of book and manuscript in the dim library, were more real than the few friends and acquaintances of my solitary boyhood. Perhaps I hoped to recapture that feeling tonight. Suffice it to say that I went with curious directness to the remotest corner of the library, and climbing up the short ladder came on a level with the top shelf. My hand was hesitating between an old copy of Boccaccio's *Decameron* and Froissart's

Chronicles (rather incongruous neighbors) when I arrested the movement quickly.

"Out of the tail of my eyes I had caught sight of a small book buried between two heavy Latin tomes. Any one who loves to browse among the dusty, forgotten volumes of an ancient and inexhaustible library will appreciate with what eagerness I dragged the volume from its hiding-place. It might be mediocre or it might be a 'find.' I clambered down from the ladder and, dropping into a chair, opened my discovery.

"A treasure? Well, rather!

"It was a small volume, bound in leather that was cracked and black and stiff. As I opened it the yellow pages rustled through my fingers and came to rest at the title-page. It was written in manuscript—a clear, smooth-flowing hand in ink of some kind that age had hardly rusted. The heading ran: *A Treatise on ye Noble and Gentle Arte of Falconrie, By Dame Elizabeth Paravaine.*

"Only those who love old books can sympathize with my feelings at that moment. Tears welled into my eyes. A faint, musty fragrance rose (Continued on page 69)



I was poised like a hunted animal . . . before the avenger

The CURSE of the

How could the vengeance of a Hindu idol touch an American have been stabbed to death in the dark! But when

By Laurence Martinson
As told to Lyon Mearson



Quivering in the wall was the dagger that had been buried in the body of my young secretary

had already met death. I laughed at the idea, but I had no desire to tempt providence.

A week later I gave a small dinner for the purpose of showing off my new acquisition. The guests were my Aunt Claire, Mr. and Mrs. Jessop, Sam Winship—my secretary—and Stephen Whitney, a rival collector but not a close friend.

When I passed the box containing the ruby to my guests, I told them of the curse. They were sceptical, of course, but no one made the slightest move to touch the stone until it reached Sam. With deliberate bravado he picked it up. As he did, the room was flooded with darkness, and an agonized scream rang out above our heads. Then the lights came on, and we saw Sam

lying forward on the table, with a gold dagger in his back. He was dead.

We were so horror-stricken that we could not move. When I regained control of myself, I rang for the butler and ordered him to call the police.

Was the happening supernatural? We did not know what to think.

Whitney, in his rasping voice, cried out that the thing was impossible—the ruby was nothing but a costly piece of glass. To prove his point, he picked it up.

Then the light seemed to be sucked out of the room, and the weird, unearthly scream again rent the air above us.

For a moment there was a terrible silence in the room while a vapory blue-green mist played around our heads. It was almost as if a film of bluish-colored smoke had been let loose in the room and had filled it completely. Nothing was visible through the mist. Although the room was not black as it had been before, yet it was worse than black—for the light was thick, though bodiless and ghastly.

I tried to call out in astonishment but could make no

WHEN I was in India, I went to see the great ruby set in the forehead of the Buddha of Bhangapore. It was the most beautiful stone I had ever seen, and I told my guide, Rabin-dranath Kim, that it was worth half a million of anybody's money. Since inheriting the tremendous Martinson fortune, I had acquired probably the greatest collection of precious stones in the world, and I knew the value of this ruby at a glance.

A year later—when I was twenty-nine—I tired of travel and returned to New York to live. One morning, to my great surprise, Kim called at my house. He had brought the ruby of Bhangapore with him and was ready to sell it. I did not inquire very carefully into the question of its ownership, but paid him his price, \$400,000.

As he gave me the stone in its little box, he warned me gravely that it was death to touch the ruby. It should be left always in the box or else carefully lifted by means of the cotton-wool around it. He assured me that the man who took it from the forehead of the idol

One-Eyed BUDDHA

millionaire? It was bad enough that Sam Winship should the lethal dagger began flying about the room—



sound, and I am sure that my companions were in a like case.

There was a swift rush of air in the room, but it was not the draught that one feels from an open window—it was the fearsome, fetid air such as might come from a tomb that had not been opened for a hundred years. It smelt of the damp, dank earth, rotted with green moss and with bones. It brought back to my mind all the cemeteries I had ever been in, all the burials I had ever witnessed.

That there was within the room a Presence unaccountable in terms of ordinary physical phenomena, I could scarcely doubt, yet that portion of my mind which was able to function attempted to reject the conclusion.

There was a gasp of astonishment in a voice which I recognized as Stephen Whitney's, and a choking sound in the heavy blue air. In some way, this must have broken the spell that hung upon us, for in an instant the room was filled with dazzling light as before, and all was as it had been—with one exception.

I LOOKED around at my guests, and I saw that each seemed frozen in some attitude of astonishment and fear. Stephen Whitney sat with his mouth open as though he were about to speak, but was unable to, his long lean fingers lying restlessly before him on the white cloth. The two Jessops sat with perfectly blank countenances, Mrs. Jessop holding on tightly to her husband, her eyes filled with a horror that it is impossible to describe. On the other side of the table my Aunt Claire sat quietly, her eyes closed, and her lips moving in prayer to whatever God she believed in.

After one dazed moment, all turned their eyes to stare at each other and to search the room for new traces of devilry. Nothing seemed to have changed—except—except that, an instant before, we had had a silent one at this table, one who lay still in death, with the gold handle

of a dagger protruding from his back. Now he was no longer here.

The body of the murdered man had disappeared!

Everybody present became aware of the fact simultaneously. We stared in terrified amazement at the chair where Sam Winship had sat, and could not believe our senses.

An exclamation of puzzled surprise broke from the lips of Stephen Whitney.

"My God!" he exclaimed. "It isn't possible!"

The voices of the two Jessops cut in in puzzlement. "It cannot be," they said in unison, and then there was heard the noise of the scraping back of a chair from the table.

"I am going home," my Aunt Claire said. "This doesn't seem a place for me to be in. If I had known to what sort of a dinner party you were inviting me, Laurence Martinson, I assure you that I should have stayed at home in my own house. You are playing some sort of a silly joke upon us—"

"My dear Aunt Claire," I protested. "I give you my word that I wish it were a joke. But you had better sit down, because I believe the police will be here any moment, and it will be well if none of us has left the room."

"Are we all sure," came the voice of Jessop, "that the young man actually was killed here?"

"What nonsense do you mean now?" returned Stephen Whitney. "Of course he was. Wasn't I sitting next to him?"

"I know," came back Jessop. "But there is such a thing as an optical or perhaps hypnotic illusion, and I am begin-

Whitney's cadaverous finger pointed at the wall directly behind the head of my Aunt Claire

ning to think very seriously that perhaps Miss Martinson is correct in her assumption that this is all a practical joke."

The cold, calm voice of Stephen Whitney cut the still air like a knife.

"It may be a joke to all of you, but I don't think it was a joke to poor Sam. Or if it was a joke, how does it happen that this spot of blood is on the seat where he sat?"

We strained our eyes at the place he indicated and the blood within our veins seemed to be chilled. What he said was true. I remembered now the thin stream of blood that had trickled down Sam's coat as he lay there in his last sleep.

"AND if it is a joke," came again the icy voice of Whitney, as he rose to his feet, his thin face pale as death, "look over there!

"And account for that if you can."

His cadaverous finger pointed at the wall directly behind the head of my Aunt Claire. Our heads turned instantly, as though we were puppets moved on some string—and what we saw turned the blood to ice in our veins.

Quivering in the wall, was the dagger that had been buried in the body of my young secretary.

A hysterical scream came from the lips of Mrs. Jessop, whose nerves were already strained completely beyond their normal resistance.

She fell into a fit of wild sobbing on her husband's shoulder while he tried in vain to soothe and calm her. My Aunt Claire edged away from the place where she had been sitting, right under the knife, and found a seat at the other end of the room. I sat in my own seat almost unable to move, and Stephen Whitney stood with his arm outstretched, his finger pointing at the murderous knife.

I think it was I who recovered my senses first, for I heard my voice saying, almost as if it were another person speaking:

"I don't see how that could happen."

I ROSE from my chair and approached the dagger, which was still quivering from the force of the impact that must have driven it into the woodwork a moment before. I looked at it carefully, but I did not touch it.

"Whoever threw that knife," came the voice of Stephen Whitney, "was some one material and physical, and if you find the hand that sent that knife through the air so rapidly and so accurately, you will find the hand which spirited away the dead body."

To my ears came the low sobbing of Mrs. Jessop on the shoulder of her husband, and at one end of the room, pale and still, I saw the set face and tense figure of my Aunt Claire.

I turned to Whitney.

"You were sitting next to the body; did you hear or feel or see anything at all?"

He shook his head.

"Nothing," he said. "I had the ruby in my hands when the room was filled with that ghastly bluish light, as you know. And just as the lights went out—"

"Where is the ruby now?" I asked.

He looked down at the table in front of him with astonishment.

"I dropped it on the table," he said.

We looked carefully for the ruby, but it was gone just as completely as the poor murdered body of my young friend.

"I don't understand—" came in a gasp from the throat of Whitney. "No one has entered this room and no one has left it. We are alone here."

There was a dull knocking at the door.

For an instant the effect of this unknown knocking at the door was electrical. We had for the time being forgotten that anything existed in the world outside of these four walls. Who could be demanding entrance at such a time?

Before I could call out in response to the knock, the door opened, and framed in the doorway stood a large, keen-faced man, with small, gleaming black eyes; and behind him I could discern the uniform of a policeman.

For a moment they stood in the doorway without speaking, their eyes rapidly surveying the room and resting finally upon me, whom they recognized as the host and the owner of the house.

I recovered my voice.

"Good evening, gentlemen," I said. "Come in, won't you?"

They entered the room—the heavy-set man, whom I correctly

identified as a plain-clothes man from Headquarters, and a policeman. I rose to greet them.

"What seems to be the trouble?" boomed out the detective's voice. "They told me down at Headquarters that some one had been murdered here."

His eyes roved around the room as he spoke.

"Yes," I said, "a man at my table was stabbed

to death. Who are you? Sent here from Headquarters?"

"Detective Sergeant Moran, at your service. Where is the body?"

"I don't know," I answered. I tried to explain that the body had been spirited away a few moments before.

He looked at me as if I were joking.

"Where were you when this happened?" he asked.

"I was right here," I replied.

"And all these others?" He looked round the room questioningly.

"Yes, they were all here," I said.

"And no one saw anything?"

"No one."

He was silent for a moment, looking at me incredulously, as if wondering just what sort of an affair he had been called in to investigate. Finally he said quietly:

"Say, what kind of a party is this, anyway? I don't think prohibition has struck this place yet. What brand do you people drink?"

"I AM not joking," I returned, as calmly as I could in the circumstances.

"Look at that." I pointed to the spot of blood on the chair where my ill-fated secretary had sat.

The detective and the policeman bent over it and examined it in a perfunctory fashion.

"It's blood, all right," the detective said.

"After one dazed moment, all turned their eyes to stare at each other and to search the room for traces of devilry. Nothing seemed to have changed—except—except that, an instant before, we had had a silent one at this table, one who lay still in death, with the gold handle of a dagger protruding from his back. Now he was no longer here.

"The body of the murdered man had disappeared!"

I pointed then to the dagger, on which the blood was already beginning to congeal. The detective whistled in amazement under his breath at it.

"Looks as if it were a rough party," he said. "Don't you think you had better tell me all the details?"

He sat down at the table with me and I told very rapidly all that had occurred—or, in any event, what we thought had occurred. When I had quite finished he sat quietly regarding the four walls of the room, the occupants, and finally—for an appreciable time—the dagger.

There was such a silence in the room that I could actually hear the ticking of the watch in my pocket.

"Well, it seems to me like a pretty funny story," he said finally. "Which one of these people had their hands on that there ruby last?" was the detective's next query.

He looked sternly at the assembled company for reply.

"I did, I think," said Whitney.

"What's your name?" asked the detective, turning toward the speaker.

"It is Stephen Whitney."

A light of recognition came

hobby for collecting jewels and the disappearance of this ruby—"

"Oh, not at all, not at all, Mr. Whitney," broke in the detective, in a surprised and slightly injured tone of voice. "I just thought, you know, that collectors get sort of crazy on that one subject—meaning no offence, you know—and you can't tell just what they are going to do next. I don't mean you, of course, because you don't have to get your jewels that way—at least, I suppose you don't. But with some collectors you never know. You say you dropped it right on the table in front of you?"

Whitney nodded. "Right here." He pointed to the spot in front of which he had sat.

"And when the lights went up, it was not there?"

Whitney shook his head.

"Well, that's pretty funny," the detective said. He looked around the room again at every one present. "Has any one here any idea as to how these here magical events occurred?"

All shook their heads except Aunt Claire.

"I would not presume to say, Sergeant," she said.

"But they do say that there was a curse upon that very expensive stone."

Detective Moran looked at her with mingled disgust and incredulity. "There is too much cursing goes on in high society," he said. "That's the only kind of cursing that means anything to me." He looked around the room again. "Has anyone any sensible suggestion?"

Properly squelched, my aunt subsided into her corner.

"We don't know how it occurred, or just what it was that did occur," I ventured. "If we did, we might not have needed to call upon your kindly and efficient assistance."

"Well, I don't know yet whether there is anything for me to do here," said the detective. "You say there was some one killed here and I don't see any body. And then you tell me that the dead man went off with the ruby."

"I don't remember saying anything of the sort, Sergeant," I put in.

"Well, you didn't say quite that, but you insinuated it. If he didn't run off with the ruby, who did? Neither him nor the ruby is here, are they?"

I shook my head.

"There!" he said in triumph. "If a ruby disappears, and one of the men what's been handling it also disappears, you can talk

all you like about him having been killed, but I have got my own idea in the matter."

"That's right," put in the policeman. "So have I. There's a great deal goes on in high life around here that we don't know nothin' about."

(Continued on page 90)



The weight which had blocked the door was the body of a man

in the detective's now respectful eyes.

"Not the Stephen Whitney of Whitney and Forsyth?" he asked.

He had named one of the largest banking firms in the country.

Whitney nodded. "Yes, I am he," he admitted.

For a moment the detective was silent again. Then he went on in a softer tone.

"I remember reading in the paper some time ago, Mr. Whitney, that you have one of the finest collections of jewels in the world. Of course, you can't always believe what you read in the papers.

Stephen Whitney nodded. "You can, in this case," he said. "My collection is perhaps the finest in the world, with the exception of that of my young friend here who has just bought and lost the best ruby I ever saw. Of course, if you think there is any connection between my

The WHITE

A voodoo priest, insane with hatred, threat of a white leopard—and kill—and kill—and perience with

By Mrs. Ralph Curtis
As told to Julia Tait Shearon

WHEN I went to interview Mrs. Curtis about her experiences as a big-game hunter, my curiosity was aroused by the pelt of an enormous white leopard—the only one I had ever seen. A brown-skinned girl—as graceful as a gazelle and as erect and poised as a queen—brought us tea, and I was curious about her, too.

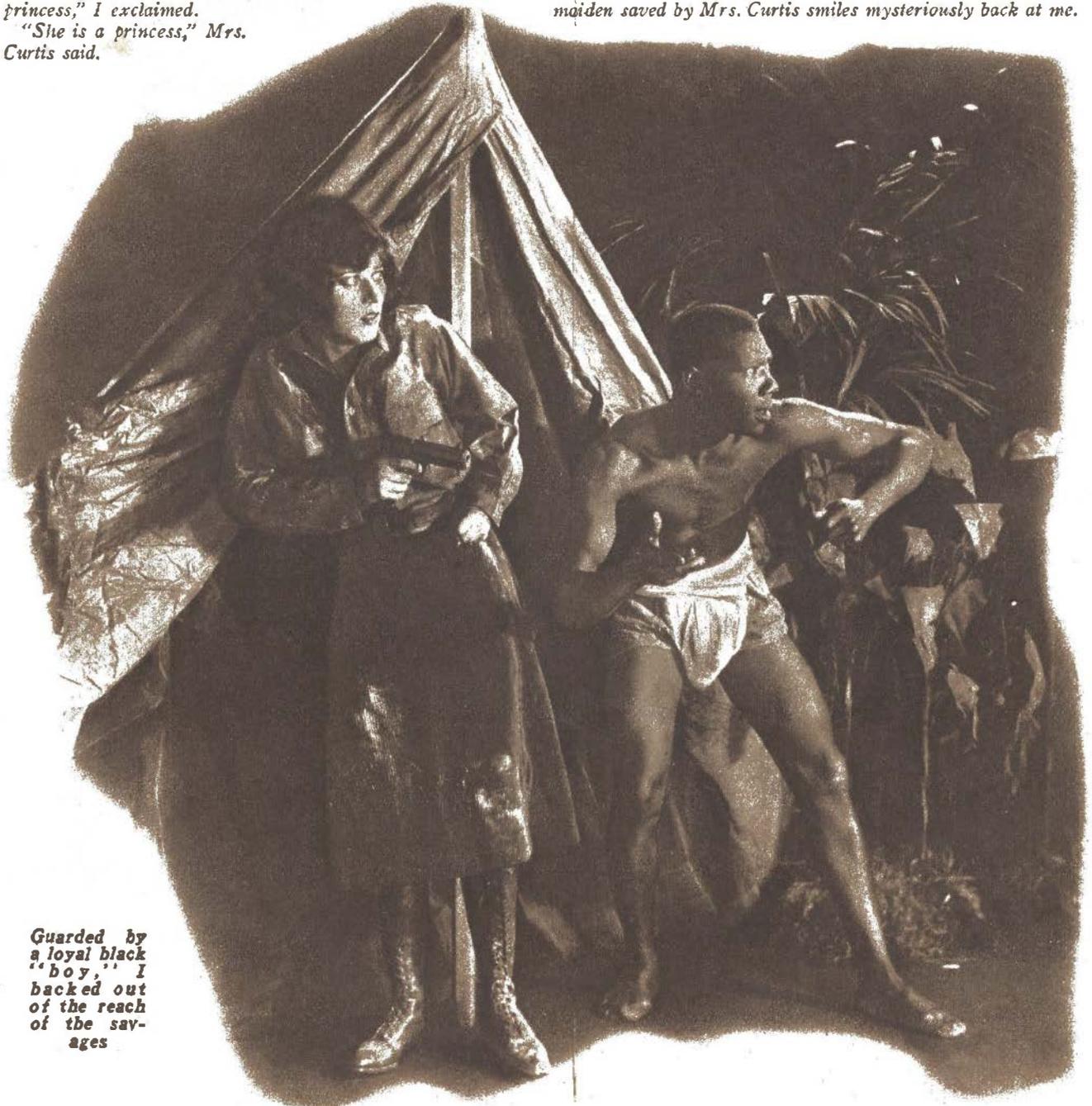
"That girl looks like a princess," I exclaimed.

"She is a princess," Mrs. Curtis said.

My hesitant questions drew forth the amazing story that I have set down

here—a story of the weird sorcery of Africa, of a princess condemned to death as a human sacrifice, and of a ghostly white leopard.

I tell it in her own words, and as I write I see again her living room with its ranged trophies as rare as those that any museum can boast. And the beautiful face of the maiden saved by Mrs. Curtis smiles mysteriously back at me.



Guarded by a loyal black "boy," I backed out of the reach of the savages

LEOPARD

*ened to follow the big-game hunters in the body
kill! Thus began Mrs. Curtis's terrifying ex-
black magic*

THERE is one phase of African life that is not often glimpsed by the matter-of-fact white man—that phase springs from the deep undercurrents of witchcraft and sorcery, magic and mystery that runs darkling in the bosom of native life. It is there like a festering sore; we of the Occident cannot understand it, but it is there—that understanding of the Unseen, that ability to control dark forces of which we are not even aware.

My own experience taught me that the forces, whatever they are, understood by the black in Africa and known as “voodooism” and “witchcraft,” are almost invariably used for evil purposes—it is black magic in its worst form. And this is why Africa, colorful, passionate, despite the charm it holds for me, always suggests to me a big, beautiful poison-flower, gorgeous but deadly.

It was three years ago that the thing happened, when my husband, Ralph Curtis, and I were on our second expedition. We were hunting lions in Uganda. Fine sport it was! We had gone down through the great Rift Valley across Mount Elgon to Lake Victoria Nyanza. There were twenty in our party, four white men beside my husband. The rest were natives in our employ. They were strong, reliable black “boys.” Most of them had hunted with us the year before. The leader of these natives was a big Kaffir black, Umsuka by name. He had been with us on our first trip and was devoted to Mr. Curtis. These natives were very superstitious and full of all sorts of strange fancies. Beasts and men they did not fear, but they were desperately afraid of the Unseen—spirits of the dead,

of goblins and witches, and spells of the witch-doctors.

We were camped by a water-hole near a dense jungle in the country of the Masai tribe. The day had been intensely hot, and though we had bagged no game, we had come across fresh spoor of the King of Beasts and next day's hunting promised big returns.

For days, as we advanced into the heart of the jungle, we had noticed that the boom-boom of the native tom-toms grew louder, more frequent and more insistent than we had ever noticed before. The jungle from one end to the other



*Mr. Curtis
carried the
brown girl—
the sacrific-
ial victim—
in his arms*

seemed to reverberate with the uncanny noise, and as we ventured farther into the domains of the Masai, it grew almost maddening. It was so creepy, so suggestive of mysterious, secret evil—and yet all who know Africa are familiar with this “native telegraphy.” Boom-boom-boom it sounded, carrying a message to a neighboring tribe, who quickly relayed it to others until miles and miles had been covered.

ONE of our men, on being questioned, informed us that the Masai had just been victorious in war with an enemy tribe and were calling together all friendly tribes to help them celebrate their victory with voodoo rites that night. Whereupon my husband, being ever a scoffer at the sorceries of the blacks, expressed a desire to attend these rites. When he made known this desire I noticed that our “boys” exchanged odd and troubled glances, and for a time they did not reply to Mr. Curtis, but stood in a small group apart as if discussing something important.

Finally Umsuka came forward as spokesman and told my husband that it was a very dangerous undertaking even to try to be present at the meeting-place of the Masai, as no white man was permitted to attend, but if his “Baas” cared to risk it, the adventure might be accomplished. Our black “boys” would be glad to accompany him, so as to be on hand should his presence be discovered.

Mr. Curtis laughed loudly at Umsuka’s fears. It was then that I asserted myself. I just would not be left behind; if my husband was going into the mouth of danger I would go, too. I was not afraid—why, I had already brought down four lions! Both my husband and Umsuka disapproved strongly, but in the end I had my way.

The night came down, dark as only an African night can be and heavy with the odors of the rare, tropical flowers growing abundantly about us. We set out through the jungle accompanied by ten of our bravest black “boys” to the place where the voodoo rites were to be performed. Umsuka had that day learned all the details from one of the Masai tribe.

We passed near the hut-village of the celebrants and found it deserted except by some old men and women and a few cats and dogs. A short march through the jungle brought us to the end of our journey. We located the spot by the incessant beating of the drums and the gathering of the dark, sinister forms slipping through the night like evil spirits or witches going to a midnight trysting-place.

IT was necessary to descend into what seemed a basin-like cavity in the earth, back of which loomed a number of hills. As we drew nearer we could see the flare of great torches and the shining, naked bodies of many hundreds of savages. They were squatted in a circle on the slopes of a small, shallow valley that resembled an arena. We did not dare venture too close, but stood atop a little elevation to one side and looked down on the crowd.

Truly a more fantastic scene I have never seen, nor a wilder, more barbaric one. Only the pen of a Rider Haggard could describe it. Africa, exotic, langorous, mysteri-

ous, unfathomable, was surely turning her dark side to us that night as we stood there among those uncouth voodoo worshippers in the heart of the Continent.

In the center of this natural arena two immense hot springs boiled and bubbled like a pair of witches’ caldrons, adding grotesqueness to the uncanny scene. We were familiar with such springs, of course, having often run across them in our travels. Smoke and spray in large volumes ascended into the air and the noise of the escaping gas from the bowels of the earth was like the hissing of many malevolent serpents.

Near the springs, yet far enough removed not to be in danger of the boiling water, were grouped a dozen or more of witch-doctors, grizzled, skinny, shriveled, repulsive-looking old creatures. The skins of leopards and blown-bladder necklaces constituted their “priestly” garb. I could not help but shudder as I looked at them sitting on their haunches with the torch-light flickering across their evil, wizened faces and glimmering in their beady eyes.

THE rites were just beginning as we arrived. The hundreds of blacks were chanting in a jargon I could not understand. After a time the chanting ceased, and from the crowd a score or more of strong black men stepped into the arena. Bowing reverently to the witch-doctors, they began to caper and prance to the rhythmical beat of the drums. Whooping and yelling they circled the springs, pausing now and then to hurl some small objects into the clouds of white spray formed by the boiling water. This was evidently the altar, or holy place, of their voodoo god.

When the spectacular dance came to an end, another black stepped out of the crowd into the arena. Around his neck was twined a deadly serpent whose flat, ugly head weaved to and fro as the man kept time to the beat of the drums. He raised his guttural voice in a wild hymn of hate which shortly changed to one of victory. He returned to his place and the blacks began

again their weird chanting. It swept through the jungle in an immense volume, awaking ghastly echoes and causing great shivers to run up and down my spine.

Suddenly the chanting ceased. There was a stirring among the blacks squatted on the ground; a curious, eager look came into each face, and necks were craned toward an opening in the crowd on the opposite side from where we stood.

Four Masai warriors entered and between them, her hands bound behind her, walked a young and beautiful light-brown native girl! I leaned forward for a better glimpse, while I grasped the arm of my husband for support. I shall never forget the expression on her face; it was strained, full of fear, despairing, hopeless, yet proud! She was led forward to confront the witch-doctors.

“She, daughter of enemy king taken in war,” whispered Umsuka to me.

Glancing up at my husband, who, up to this moment, had worn a bored look, I saw a tense expression come into his resolute, grey-blue eyes. He was getting interested.

Before the group of witch- (Continued on page 80)

“Mr. Curtis raised his rifle and took aim at the leopard crouched above me. But his shot went wild! . . . Again he fired—with the same result. Then a third time the bullet went astray while the animal growled menacingly.

“I expected every moment to be torn into bits. . .

“Before my husband could fire again, Umsuka had reached his side and had done a strange thing—”

The PHANTOM of the BIG TOP

When the "snake girl" died a hideous death under the claws of a tiger, the circus folk thought that her jealous feud with the "tiger woman" had reached an end. They were yet to learn the meaning of a Hindu curse

By Robert W. Spurge

A MOURNFUL, moaning wind swept across the circus lot, driving the rain in fitful gusts against the trembling canvas walls of the Big Top. It was one of those sudden Kansas storms that start with a gentle sand-blow and wind up in a roaring deluge—but its coming was unnoticed by the crowd inside.

All eyes were fixed in fascination upon the colorful spectacle in the center ring. A circular red plush curtain had just been raised on an exotic scene—tigers, snakes, and two beautiful women.

It was the big moment of the evening performance.

"Ladies and gentlemen!" dramatically began the pompous ringmaster, waving aloft his high hat as the roll of drums and crash of cymbals gave the signal for silence. "Madame Sabina, famous tamer of the wild beasts of the jungle, is about to entertain you with her daring feats in subjugating the man-eating Royal Bengal tigers."

Then he turned to "Princess Raneë, from far-off India, who hypnotizes the deadly, writhing reptiles, the only woman in the world unafraid of facing and caressing the venomous cobra."

It was the first time the tiger woman and Hindu girl had ever appeared together in the arena. The combined feature was a nicely-calculated bit of showmanship. Barnum said, "There's a sucker born every minute." Any showman knows that snakes and tigers ignore each other, but to the gullible crowd it looked a real thriller.



The cobra moved its ugly, flat head from side to side, back and forth to the rhythm of the music

We who watched from the sidelines felt a tenseness, a sense of foreboding entirely apart from the physical danger depicted before our eyes.

The two women hated each other—Sabina, fiery, tempestuous, whose frequent outbursts of violent temper betrayed a trace of the barbaric Tartar in her Magyar makeup; Raneë, lithe, sinuous, beautiful in a mysterious, Oriental way, who fondled snakes as a child does kittens. Something far deeper than just professional jealousy lay behind their hatred. It was man-jealousy.

And so, as we watched the tiger woman crack her whip at the striped cats, we felt something akin to fear—fear of the unknown for that dusky girl who stood on the tiny platform, picking her hideous pets from a trunk, draping them about her body, arms, and neck, letting their forked fangs play over her smooth cheeks.

THE tiger woman never seemed more sure of herself. Glorious in a brand-new scarlet military coat, creamy white breeches, high, polished boots, and furred Hussar helmet, she had given herself a regal touch by throwing a snow-white ermine cape across her shoulders. To the cracking of her whip and the sound of her sharp commands the tigers jumped gracefully from one pedestal to another, formed pyramids, played see-saw, now and then half-rising upon their haunches, pawing the air, but never losing their snarling, surly obedience.

Raneë, the snake girl, was a picture that needed no set-

ting, but her seductive figure was also enhanced by a new costume, a thing of gems and jingles. She swayed and undulated, weaving her mystic spell about her snakes, dancing with her whole body.

The act appeared to be going smoothly enough. Almost relieved, I let my eyes rest upon Sabina again. She was mistress of all she surveyed—statuesque, calm, almost cruel. To me she seemed to be holding herself in check, as though she were playing against time.

WAS she fighting a temptation? Did she appreciate the power the moment had given her? I saw her glance coolly out of the corner of her eye at her rival, the woman who had usurped the affections of Oscar Sanders, our strong man.

The storm outside proclaimed its presence to the crowd. The rumble and snapping of thunder and lightning could be heard growing louder, more ominous and insistent. The sounds ceased abruptly. People looked anxiously at the ceiling of the tent, but they kept their seats.

Once more, the ringmaster raised his arm for attention. It was Princess Raneë's turn.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he announced impressively, "you are about to witness the strange and thrilling rite of the Far East, enacted by the Princess Raneë. It is the ceremony of ancient India, the worship of the cobra, as it has been performed for many countless centuries. Princess Raneë will impersonate the temple girl paying homage before the angry spirit of the great Hindu god whose spirit has entered the cobra. Even the unruly tigers will crouch spell-bound before the spectacle of this beautiful girl fearlessly exposing herself to the death-dealing fangs of the hooded terror."

The tigers had been grouped in a circle about Raneë's dais, and their mistress stood by with folded arms. I thought she sneered—perhaps she begrudged her rival the center of the stage.

Raneë's Hindu musicians—we called them "the three wise men of the East"—squatted about the Princess and began to play their native instruments. Everything else was still, expectant, as the weird, monotonous dirge wailed forth, accompanied by the thumping of a hand-drum.

Raneë raised her hands slowly in a gesture of supplication. She gazed upward as if in prayer. Quickly she flung herself to the floor in front of a covered basket, and overturned it with a deft movement of her hand. An aroused cobra slid forth. Repulsively beautiful, like a fine-inlaid section of yellow mosaic, it hissed a challenge to the glaring lights. It reared up—hood inflated—and swayed uncertainly. The traditional effect of music upon its slimy soul was apparent; the cobra moved its ugly, flat head from side to side, back and forth, to the rhythm of the music. Its glittering eyes fastened themselves upon Raneë. The doleful dirge increased in volume and tempo, faster, faster. Nearer, nearer came Raneë, crawling up to the snake on her stomach, reptilian fashion.

PRONE and plainly helpless should the snake strike, Raneë uptilted her face and returned the malevolent stare of those beady, malicious eyes. Her hands, wearing huge

blood-red rubies, passed before the snake's head, and her body moved from side to side with a reptilian grace.

Suddenly she turned over on her back, her face directly beneath that hovering hood. The scene was grotesque, picturesque. You could almost see the audience shudder with delight, as it leaned forward enthralled by the sight. Everything was forgotten except the fantastic gyrations of the girl and snake.

Just then a fearful clap of thunder tore through the silence. The crash was deafening, paralyzing.

Before the echoes rolled away, it happened.

Rajah, the biggest tiger, leaped through the air, straight upon the prostrate girl. There was one agonized shriek.

Sabina bounded upon the platform, brought her whip down upon the killer's flanks, uttered a harsh guttural word. But the tiger's claws sank deeper into human flesh.

The curtain came down, shutting the tragic finale from an audience whose horror could find no voice.

We rushed into the ring with guns and fired shot after shot until Rajah rolled over—stilled. The other tigers were prodded and pushed into waiting cages before the sight and smell of blood aroused their primitive jungle lust.

When we turned to Raneë, a crimson pool was already widening beneath her, one tiny stream trickling off the edge of a board to the hungry sawdust below.

Oscar had dropped to his knees beside her. I have never seen anything so pathetic as the helpless horror and anguish of this strong man, holding that girl to his naked breast. For a brief moment his pleadings recalled her from the shadows. Her eyelids fluttered open as he begged her

"The ghost music seemed to burst through the very car top as a woman's figure, a figure I knew well, stood revealed in all its unearthly beauty. It was the specter of Princess Raneë, pointing, pointing, at something, at someone.

"'Mercy!' The cry from within the car rose even above the mad pounding of drums, the shrieking of pipes. But it was drowned by a rolling of thunder, and then—"

to speak. A wistful smile of recognition illumined her face. Her lips moved:

"When the moon shines full again."

It was a far-away murmur, scarcely audible to those crowding about. So the lovers parted. Her last words may have been a prophecy, or a warning. We had no time to ponder. Pandemonium had broken loose about us.

THROATS that had been paralyzed, now emitted a mighty roar of surprised terror, drowning the lusty efforts of musicians playing against panic. The crowd fought its way out into the stormy night—the chariot races forgotten.

Of course, the coroner came. He puffed with self-importance. It was a red-letter day in his uneventful career. He hemmed, hawed, and prolonged the inquiry. He quizzed Sabina, who seemed remarkably brave under the circumstances. Finally he dwelt upon her control over the tigers. Sabina flared up in her characteristic manner, pride battling with self-exoneration. The coroner merely shifted his tobacco quid and chewed. He was far from being stupid, this rustic official.

"I want to know, lady, whether there was any quarrel between you and the—dead woman?" demanded the Coroner, looking hard at Sabina.

The question was a poser, a bolt from the blue. But we lied, as though by prearrangement. Show-loyalty, and the inability even to suspect Sabina of being to blame, may have prompted. Oscar stood by, stolidly, and said nothing.

Sabina's relief at being shielded was obvious. At once she became the actress, the innocent accused. She began to weep, to voice loud grief for the dead girl. But her acting, if such it was, was short-lived.

Some one pointed at her.

Dancing upon her breast and growing in distinctness was a shadow, strange and of unexplainable origin. It moved and swayed. It was the exact outline of a snake, a snake with an inflated hood.

At that moment Sabina was seized by a violent paroxysm of terror. Her hands clutched her breast as if seeking to tear off something. She moaned, her eyes started in horror, and then she collapsed in a swoon.

Within that curtained enclosure we stared in fascination at the terrible Thing. It was a hissing shadow—black, sinister—that crept menacingly from the breast of the tiger woman, across the boards, toward the coroner. His jaws dropped open, his eyes popped out, and he backed away from the Thing. All his jauntiness had fled as he pulled forth a handkerchief and mopped his shiny dome.

"Yep," he muttered weakly, as he walked backward, "this appears to be a clear case of an accidental death." He disappeared through the curtain.

Face to face with tragedy, we were forced to smile as the coroner closed his investigation. "Haunts and showfolk" had been too much for him.

My smile froze on my face as a Hindu appeared, sidled up to me, and whispered that the cobra had disappeared. Till that moment the snake had been forgotten. Its

empty, overturned basket lay at our feet. Immediately every spare man was sent with blanket, net, and weapon to search the blackness of the rain-soaked countryside for the cobra, most deadly of all India's reptiles.

Every man but Oscar. He kept a lonely vigil by his princess. When we returned at dawn—without the snake—he still sat by her rude bier, his face buried in his hands. Raneë, the heathen princess, was buried next morning

in a Christian cemetery outside the town of Serene. Sabina was not at the funeral. She had pleaded illness—with good cause.

A local minister intoned a perfunctory prayer at the grave. The three "wise men of the East" stood by, stony-faced. But when the grave-digger reached for his shovel they motioned him away. With their hands they lifted the moist loam—little by little—and let it fall into the grave.

Mumbling strange chants, they finished their work, and then arose, facing the East. Basha, their leader, suddenly ejaculated and pointed at the new mound.

Something was taking shape at the head of the grave—a shadow—a snake! It stood out in bold relief on the bare earth, the omnipresent cobra! hood spread wide!

There was no mistaking the resemblance this time. We



"I want to know, lady, whether there was any quarrel between you and the dead woman?" demanded the coroner, looking hard at Sabina

all saw it and shuddered. We made no effort to mask the fear we felt. Nor did we attempt to locate the Thing that threw that shadow, for we knew it was not the reflection of physical reality.

The preacher, when it first appeared, was in the act of

lifting his hands in final benediction. As his eyes fell upon that eerie Thing he gave a start, as though brought down suddenly from Heaven to earth. His jaws snapped together in one quick "amen." Hands still upraised, he retreated cautiously. With a masterful show of dignity he turned and high-stepped his way to the waiting buggy, throwing a last backward glance of disapproval tinged with other emotions.

Again tragedy and comedy! A woman laughed nervously. The tension was broken. We could hardly credit what lay before our eyes. We tried to assure each other that it was an hallucination, but in our hearts we knew the truth. As we went back to the show, that strange shadow wriggled ahead of us, going the same direction.

What did it seek?

The search for the snake was useless. We stayed at Serene for two days behind our schedule and then gave it up. The cobra had apparently been swallowed up by the earth, and we were thankful that thus far none of the natives had seen it or knew of its being at large. It was too late publicly to spread an alarm—forty-eight hours after the snake had escaped. If the local authorities learned that a poisonous reptile was crawling about the countryside, all kinds of criminal proceedings were possible. Many a traveling show has been mobbed for less.

Only Basha and his two assistants seemed unworried by the missing snake.

"It will return," he declared gravely to me.

I pressed him for further details but he refused to answer. There is no one so uncommunicative as a Hindu when he chooses to be.

And so the mystery of the phantom cobra was unknown to Serene when we loaded onto the train and pulled out.

As we slowly rolled past the outskirts of the town, Bill Henderson, our sideshow barker, the man who helped promote the late Princess Raneë into the Big Top, looked dubiously at the scene of our enforced delay and declared emphatically:

"Unless I'm all cuckoo, we've got a jinx on this show. Yessir. Remember what that snake charmer said before she died? And that shadow Thing? Believe me, this outfit is in for it!"

Snakes! Shadows! Jinx! I sought relief from the subject by looking out of the car window.

The sun shone on an embankment. The train had halted. There it was, crawling about, first one direction then the other, searching for something. I looked away, my scalp tingled. I hoped it might be the locomotive's smoke, freakishly formed. When I looked back it was still there, a crawling, sinister manifestation that refused to be thwarted in its purpose. I felt the premonition that it would follow us, spread terror—"till the moon shone full again."

The expression on my face must have betrayed me to Bill. He also looked out and then cursed under his breath. "What did I tell you? That's it. You can't lose a shadow,

especially not that kind," and his gloom deepened.

We agreed to say nothing to the others who had yet to see it. Bill was as certain as I was that the supernatural was at work since Raneë's death.

We discussed the matter. If a Hindu curse was upon our show we knew that mortal efforts to stay it would be in vain. Both of us knew Hindus, their superstitions, their unsolved tricks. We knew of their belief in reincarnation, that the souls of the dead return to earth in the form of beasts—and snakes.

Bill recalled an old legend pertaining to the cobra. He

Then the wraith of a snake struck at the window-pane, and Sabina's voice screamed, "No, No!"



told me that it acquired its hood, according to the story, ages ago when an Indian scholar was stricken on the desert beneath the blazing sun. A snake appeared, its head muscles spread out, and shielded the victim till help came. Bill pointed out that in India the custom of pacifying the cobra with music is not merely motivated by self-protection, but by the desire to please the spirit in the snake.

If the hoodoo of the Hindus was upon us, it took a rest till we had passed through several towns. The shadow snake was absent for several days. News of the tragedy traveled ahead of us and proved good advertising. The human animal is always attracted by disaster to his fellow-being. The program was unchanged, except that the tigers appeared alone.

The snakes were sent back to join that family of circus creatures who do no work for their bed and board—the menagerie. Of the three Hindus, only Basha remained, to care for the snakes. When told their services were no longer needed the other two

(Continued on page 80)

The MIND READER

Grim encounters both with the living and the dead awaited Hugh Purcell when he attended the funeral in the fog

By
Hugh Docre Purcell

As told to
W. Adolphe Roberts

MY first contact with Daniel Buwalda, the amazing medium whose campaign to control the world is fresh in New York's memory, occurred at a séance on Baltic Street, Brooklyn. Buwalda did amazing things. He passed a tambourine through the solid wood panel of a screen, and he convinced me that—by the use of telepathy—he could control the minds of others. His assistant on the platform was Coralie Griffin, an Armenian woman of voluptuous beauty.

After I left the place at a late hour, I entered the subway and there encountered a man who had just cut his own throat. He died under my eyes, but not before he had told me that he had committed suicide because he had seen his wife in the arms of another man that evening.

The next day I learned from the newspapers that the suicide was James Griffin, bank president, the husband of that same Coralie who had assisted Buwalda at the séance. He could not have seen her in the arms of a lover. She had a perfect alibi, as I could testify.

Panic stricken, I rushed to consult my brother, Owen, who is a noted occultist. He explained that Buwalda had developed psychic powers of a very high order, that he had conjured up visions which induced Griffin to kill himself. It had been *murder by suggestion*.

Owen and I set out to learn the secrets of the sorcerer. We visited the house on Baltic Street and found that he had already abandoned it. But we discovered on the premises an opal and gold brooch belonging to Coralie. In an Armenian restaurant, I made the acquaintance of Peter Kanarjian, her cousin, who was in love with her and who eagerly joined in the fight against Buwalda.

Ordinary means failing, Owen the following night held a séance of his own. Two weird beings materialized, one in the form of a beautiful woman, and the other a demon. They fought each other and the demon was defeated. We were then able to get in touch with the spirit of a dead friend of my brother, who told us that Buwalda planned to clean up a fortune on Wall Street. I was, therefore, prepared for the financial panic that broke loose in the money market on Monday morning.

Accompanied by Peter, I visited the Stock Exchange and learned that an unknown operator was working through the firm of Holcombe & Glick. Guessing that Buwalda

was responsible, I started for the firm's offices, though I was far from knowing what action I would take when I got there. Peter, looking bewildered, walked silently beside me. An explanation of some sort was due him.

"I have a tip that Buwalda is playing the stock market—dishonorably, of course, though within the law. I think we shall find him at the offices to which we are going," I said.

"Ah, it is your dream come true!" exclaimed the Armenian. "Can we expose Buwalda? Can we have him arrested?"

"I'm afraid not. I told you he was working within the law. My plan is to spy on him, and follow him to the place where he is living, if possible."

"Good. Show me how I can help. I am ready to do anything you say."

On reaching the Exchange Place Building, we rode up in the elevator without noticing anything remarkable. But on the eleventh floor, it was at once apparent that we were nearing the headquarters of the war for the market's billions. The landing in front of the elevator was crowded with telegraph boys and special messengers.

A CLERK stood, obviously on guard, outside the door of the main office of Holcombe & Glick. He halted Peter and myself when we tried to pass him.

"Have you got an appointment?" he asked.

"No. But I want to buy some steel shares through your firm," I answered boldly.

"Very sorry. Our capacity is taxed for the present. We can accept no new clients. If you care to return towards the end of the week, shall be happy to talk business with you," he stated firmly but courteously.

I did not dispute the point, for it was plainly impossible to enter by that front door. Under the eyes of the clerk, Peter and I turned back to the elevator, but the latter had no sooner started to descend than I called the tenth floor. We emerged into a peaceful corridor, and Peter looked at me inquiringly.

"The role of detective—perhaps of housebreaker, too—is forced upon us," I told him. "I am convinced now that Buwalda is upstairs. We're going to climb the stairway and advance from the rear."

The stairs between floors in office buildings are seldom used, and we got back to the eleventh without being seen by any one. Holcombe & Glick occupied the front half of the floor. A passageway separated them from the offices to the rear, and all their doors that opened on this passage were lettered, "Private." We stole along, testing the door-knobs gently. We found them to be locked, and as the panels of the doors were of frosted glass it was impossible to peep through them. A confused babel of unfamiliar voices reached us faintly.

When we came to the last door, however, the one next to the airshaft, I observed with interest that its panels were of clear glass and that a piece of tapestry had been hung on the inside to insure privacy. The room was at the far end of Holcombe & Glick's suite. It had probably been intended as a store-room, but it would now be the very place where Buwalda could keep himself inconspicuously. The tapes-

She stared straight ahead of her, her wide opened eyes and pinched faces blank as those of a sleep walker



try, which was of good quality, suggested some such arrangement.

I tried the handle. It did not give way. The project of crawling on to the ledge over the airshaft and peering through the back window was weighed and rejected. The danger was too great. I did not doubt that if Buwalda should see me, he would hurl me down the shaft without compunction.

"There seems nothing for it but to hang around until the offices close and see if he leaves with the rest," I whispered to Peter.

"Yes, and if we listen by this door we may hear his voice."

It was a good suggestion. But though we kept our ears glued to the keyhole we could detect no sound except occasional footsteps and the opening and closing of a door.

Several times we were compelled to straighten up and look natural, because the employees of other tenants had entered the passage.

Perhaps fifteen minutes later, it struck me that Peter was wearing a diamond ring and that diamonds would cut glass. The sound produced is a rasping one if the glass is dry, but the use of a little water practically eliminates it. I determined to attack the door, so sent Peter to fetch water from a wash-

room in a paper cup. Upon his return, I drew his ring across a lower corner of a panel of the door. The glass was thin. I cut through it quickly and then eased loose from the putty a triangular piece about two inches wide.

With the aid of a lead pencil, I cautiously shifted the tapestry aside and put my eye to the hole. I had hoped to see Buwalda in that room.

I had almost reached the point of believing him to be there. But the sight that greeted me was a shock. The only person present at the moment was Coralie Griffin.

Swathed in widow's weeds, she sat in an armchair and smoked a cigarette. There were lines of grief in her soft, plump face. Her eyelids drooped over her indolent eyes. To all appearances, she had not a thought

in her head. She was waiting, waiting in her submissive way until it should please her lord to take her home. She had come with Buwalda, of course. But why had he brought her there? How had they dared to make a semi-public visit to a business office on a day she should have devoted to the preparations for her husband's funeral?

Peter meanwhile was crouching at my elbow and, naturally, quivering with eagerness for his turn to peer through the hole. I hated to give him the chance. It would inevitably hurt him to learn that Coralie was so ready to follow the medium's whims.

"Hold on a bit," I muttered. "I can't quite make out what's happening."

At that instant, a door swung open and Buwalda entered the room into which I was staring. He had on his hat and overcoat, and carried a heavy walking stick. Bending over Coralie, he said something in a low voice. She arose promptly, and they started for the door.

passage. I was ahead. I believed we had a good chance to get to the elevator before Buwalda did.

But suddenly my coat was roughly seized from behind, and a vicious snarl assailed my ears. I swung around in astonishment. Peter, his face contorted with fury, his eyes blazing, was bearing down wildly upon me.

"For God's sake! Peter! What is the matter?" I cried.

He was too insane with rage to give me a direct answer. "Brigand! Turk!" he screamed, as his powerful hands closed about my throat and he hurled me to the floor.

I had time for only a feeble gesture of defence. My clutching at his forearms had no more effect than if I had tried to tear the branches of a great tree loose from its trunk. A black cloud swam before my eyes. I was at the point of being throttled to death.

"Peter—Peter—my friend!—You are mad!" I strangled brokenly.

Perhaps I lost consciousness. I do not know. But my next sensation was one of exaggerated relief. The hands had been taken from my throat. My blood was circulating freely once

Her features were vaguely familiar to me. Where had I seen her before?

I leaped erect, aware that the most rapid action was necessary.

"Buwalda is on his way out," I hissed to Peter. "We must get down to the lobby of the building and watch for him by the elevators. Then we may get a chance to trail him, unseen. It would be fatal for him to catch us on this floor."

Peter nodded, and we started down the

more. I sat up, blinking and gasping. Some persons had come to the doors of offices, but Peter waved them away. He stooped towards me, anguished remorse stamped deeply upon his features.

"Forgive me. A terrible thing happened," he muttered. "I will explain."

I staggered to my feet. An especially officious clerk from Holcombe & Glick's was speaking to me: "What the devil has been going on here? Were you assaulted?" An intuitive confidence in Peter, despite appearances, dictated my answer.



"It was just a fainting spell. I'm all right now," I said briefly.

Taking the Armenian by the arm, I leaned on him for support until we reached the elevator. Enough time had passed, I knew, for Buwalda to have escaped us. The all-important quest must be again postponed.

In the lobby of the building, we found a stone bench in a quiet corner, and I faced Peter with a touch of severity.

"What in God's name possessed you to do such a thing?"

"You're going to think I'm a stark staring lunatic," he began, clamping both palms over his temples and staring miserably at me. "But it is the truth—the *truth*—that when I leaped upon you I would have taken an oath upon my mother's grave that you were Daniel Buwalda."

A prickly sensation stirred along my spine. I already saw the drift of his bewitchment. "Give me more details," I urged gently. "At what moment did the illusion start? How did it pass off?"

"Well, you said for us to go downstairs, and you walked ahead, you remember. I thought I heard something funny, and I glanced over my shoulder. Then I looked back at you—and you were Buwalda. Everything about you had changed. Your clothes, your walk, were his. I cried out, and the face that you turned to me was absolutely the face of the Turk. I did not stop to think what had become of the real you. In my rage, I only knew that I wanted to kill. You see now what a worthless brute I am. I had promised you that if we met Buwalda I would hold my hand. And I commit such a madness as this! I am ashamed."

"Don't take it so hard, Peter. What else happened?"

"You called to me, and it was the voice of Buwalda that I heard. But only at first. While I was choking you, you cried out again and again. The sounds grew different. You said, 'Peter—my friend!' and suddenly I knew who it was I was about to murder. The eyes and mouth of Buwalda faded away and I saw your face. Imagine, if you can, how I hated myself!"

His explanation made clear to me the sinister force that had been at work. It was a manifestation of the identical devilry that had caused James Griffin to cut his throat. First a telepathic contact and then mind control on the part of the formidable medium. Griffin had been made to see his wife in the arms of a phantom lover, so why should I doubt that Peter Kanarjian had had the illusion he described? He had been used to strike at me, and the objective had been murder. But how to hint as much to a man whose

notions of the occult were nothing if not naive? Vain to try.

"It was all part of the risk we faced in this investigation. You are not to blame," I said.

"But I am, Hugh, I am. It stands to reason that no one else can be to blame."

"You are wrong, and you must not torment yourself. I have learned something new today. I'll tell you about it, this evening, when we have the time. Keep a level head in the meantime, and believe that I trust you."

He gave a dumb, obedient look, his brown eyes swimming with gratitude. The more definitely to change the subject, I arose and led the way out of the building. The soreness in my neck had pretty well gone, though I afterwards found that I bore black-and-blue marks.

Wall and Broad streets had become raging torrents of excitement, scarcely less hysterical than the Stock Exchange itself, during the hour or so we had been indoors. The newspapers had issued extras, which were being bought with an eagerness not paralleled since the days of the World War. Headlines in letters two inches deep shouted in the faces of the crowd:

BILLION DOLLAR RAID SHAKES MARKET

and subtitles and the text below them repeated with innumerable variations the menacing (Continued on page 84)



It was the ghost of the tragic suicide

The HOUSE of the DANCING MIRRORS

Footsteps clattered, boards creaked and snapped in the dead of night, lights flashed—the place was a bedlam. Then, out of the dark—



This house we are in is where Mrs. Stanton was murdered—had her throat cut," gasped my wife

By John Parker
As told to Carl Easton Williams

IT was during the last year of the World War, when great hosts of men had been blown into eternity, and when, as I believe some of the spiritualists said, the air was filled with earth-bound spirits—whatever that may mean. We had just rented a house on Brook Terrace, and had found it modern, fairly new, and in good

condition in every respect. The third evening after we moved in, I was busy hanging some pictures in the living-room, when I heard some one walking about up-stairs. "Are the children up-stairs?" I asked my wife. "No, they're playing in the dining-room," said Edith. I looked for myself, and there they were. So I ran up-stairs,

turned on all the lights, and searched every room and closet. No one there—nothing.

Edith looked at me as I came down. I shrugged my shoulders. "But you heard it yourself," she said.

"God knows what I heard, or where it was. Certainly not up-stairs."

"John," she declared, with wide eyes, "this is a haunted house."

"Nonsense," I said. "What we heard, apparently, is some one walking next door."

The house next

Edith was screaming! There is nothing that so stirs a man, as a woman's scream in the night



door, on one side, was only about sixteen feet away. Edith shook her head. The explanation was not convincing, is not so even yet, as I look back at it. Yet it remains the only non-spiritualistic theory that I can find—and it seems impossible.

We heard these mysterious footsteps again and again, at odd times, even on a Sunday afternoon, and apparently they always came from the back up-stairs room, the guest room. I once heard them when I was alone, in the evening, trying to do some work at the library table in the living-room. Edith had taken the children over to a neighbor's where there were other children. The house was very still; and those footsteps were as clear and definite as anything I ever heard. They seemed to come unmistakably from that rear room, I ran up, turned on the lights, and searched. Nothing. I turned out the lights and looked at the house next door. The up-stairs windows were dark. The only light was in the living-room downstairs. Our neighbors were very quiet people.

When she came home, Edith put the children to bed with all lights going. Then, looking wild and scared, she came down-stairs to talk to me.

"Do you know what I've found out? Just as I suspected."

"Er—some one committed suicide here, and—" I said, trying to make light of it.

"Worse than that," she said dramatically. "Murder!"

"No, no."

"Yes, it is! This house we're in is where Mrs. Stanton was murdered—had her throat cut!" gasped my wife.

"Her throat cut?"

"Yes. This is the house. That up-stairs back room. Think of it."

For a minute we could only stare at each other, thinking of it.

"H-m," I said, "I see now why the rent was so reasonable."

"Just imagine—if *he* came snooping around here now—"

"Oh, that's absurd,"

I said cheerfully. "He's through—in this house. Any other house would be more dangerous now, where he's concerned."

"No, criminals come back to the scene of their crimes."

"Besides—they found his bones in the ashes of a shack that burned down over on Long Island. Remember? Some gangster's feud, they said. He was probably killed first, then burned."

"Those footsteps—" said Edith. "That might be him."

I smiled, very superior—but it was a forced smile—and shook my head.

"Or else it's the victim walking around," Edith insisted.

"Nonsense," I said, glancing into the hall and up the stairs.

"Did you hear her tonight?"

"I heard it tonight—whatever or wherever it is."

"It's she—an unhappy woman."

"Edith," I said, "have some sense. A spirit is spiritual. It's gone from the body—divorced from matter. How can it make sounds—footsteps or rappings? Why, it can go where it wants to without steps—"

"How do you know?"

"Why, it stands to reason that a spirit—that weighs nothing—wouldn't sound like a hundred and fifty pounds. It would move silently—"

"We've got to find another place," she said, ignoring me.

"We got a lease for a year," I said. "And cheap rent."

Besides, what was a haunted room, more or less, at a time of shortage of houses? And we never heard the footsteps when we were up-stairs.

About that time my brother Ed, all clad in khaki, stopped over on his way to France. He had a lieutenants commission in the medical corps, and was going over to do first-aid work. He expected to have considerable liberty during the couple of weeks he was to be in camp near by, and we gave him a key to the house and assigned him the rear spare room.

"The haunted room," asked our youngest. "Uncle Ed in Spookey's room?"

(Continued on page 62)

WRITTEN in SAND

*Jerry Ferguson went to his grave—poisoned.
His murderers believed that the dead had
been forever silenced. But into their
fool's paradise stepped—*

By Sidney Moore

As told to Edwin A. Goewey

"SIDNEY MOORE, Cape Town, Africa," I scribbled in the register.

The landlord of the Palace Hotel placed his pipe on the counter, turned the book around, and read the notation.

"You're a long way from home, Mr. Moore. Going to be with us long?"

"Only tonight, I think. Too late to look anybody up until morning. Then I'm going to the Towers to see my old side partner, Jerry Ferguson. Guess he'll put me up after that."

At the mention of Jerry's name the landlord gave a start and shot a look at me through narrowed lids. At the same instant the buzz of conversation among the loungers in the office suddenly was stilled. I sensed that, for some reason, my statement had caused general surprise.

"Oh—I see," he said, slowly. He lowered his eyes as if again reading my signature.

"You know Jerry, of course?" I queried.

"Yes. Sorry we have no rooms with bath. But I can let you have a room that's comfortable and has a big bed. Suppose you look at one or two and take your choice."

"That'll be all right," I said and laughed. "I've spent so many years in the open that I'm sure I can get along nicely here."

Without looking at me he came from behind the counter, picked up one of my grips, and headed for the stairway. As I followed with my other suit-case, I noted again the queer expressions upon the faces of the loungers.

When we entered the room near the head of the stairs, my host closed the door carefully, placed my grip in a corner, and looked me full in the eye.

"My name's Evans, John Evans," he began. "I try to pay strict attention to my hotel and leave gossip to others. But you evidently are not acquainted—let's sit down, if you don't mind. I can give you some information."

WHEN we were seated, he leaned forward to ask me, "How long since you heard from Jerry Ferguson?" There was something in his tone which chilled me.

"Not for more than three years. Say, what's all this mystery? Old Jerry hasn't gotten himself into trouble, has he?"

"Just a moment. You and he knew each other well; were intimates?"

"Rather. I'm sixty and Jerry's older. We grew up as boys in the same town and prospected all over the world together. Seldom were away from each other—until he married the second time and went to live at the Towers. Since then I've been going it on my own. He wanted me to stay there with him. But—well, I wasn't the kind to stay put. Besides—oh, I've just kept moving, but for some time have been in South Africa."

"I see. I didn't come to Collinsville until about two years back, so I didn't have much chance to get acquainted with him."

"Why not? He didn't move away, did he?"

"Jerry Ferguson is dead. He died nearly two years ago."

His words turned me cold all over. I tried to speak, but for the moment my tongue seemed to swell and choke me. Somehow, my brain just wouldn't accept Evans' statement that my life-long pal was no more. Death just couldn't have come to him without me learning of it; feeling it intuitively. No, I couldn't believe it.

Then speech came back to me. "You say Jerry's gone? Nearly two years? Did you actually see him in his coffin?"

"Yes. I was at the funeral."

"But—still I can't get it. Why didn't some one let me know?"

"Perhaps," Evans was scowling again, and his lips were compressed into a narrow, hard line, "perhaps his family didn't know where to reach you. And as for the town people, they gossip a lot and write but little. Did you ever correspond with any of them?"

NO But I wrote to Jerry now and then. Once or twice he answered. Didn't say much. But I didn't worry about that. He always was lazy about writing. But his wife or daughter must have read my letters after he died."

"Maybe"—Evans paused to light his pipe, keeping his eyes averted—"maybe there was some one who didn't want you to learn of Ferguson's death, who intercepted the letters." There was a sinister suggestion in his words.

"In heaven's name man, speak out. Tell me all you know. Jerry and I were closer than brothers. If Jerry didn't die in his bed, if—come now, can't you understand that I should know all that has happened? What's become of his wife and daughter?"

"They are still at the Towers. But—I've heard Miss Ruth and her stepmother are not on good terms—that she is going away soon to earn her own living."

"Earn her living?" I asked in amazement. "Why, Jerry had about half a million when we parted."

"He transferred everything to his wife some time before he died. Of course, Miss Ruth might get her rightful share by going to law. But she's a rather timid girl, in some ways, and independent in others. So she's going to strike out for herself. Going to the big city, I hear."

"But Jerry's wife? Won't she take care of the girl?"

"I guess so. But I think Miss Ruth's surroundings have suddenly become rather unpleasant and—however, that's only gossip. I don't know for certain."

"Tell me everything, including the gossip. If Jerry is gone, it's my job to look after the girl. What happened at the Towers to make things unpleasant for her?"

"Well, Ferguson's wife returned from Europe this week—been away nearly a year, leaving Miss Ruth in charge of the place. She brought a new husband with her."

"What! She's married again, so soon? But then"—I bit off what I was going to say—"she was a lot younger than Jerry."

"Yes. This time she married a man about her own age or a little older. As you know, she's very beautiful and probably appears younger than she really is. Her new husband's name is Riordan—"

"Not Stan Riordan?" I gasped.

"I think so."

"A fellow about thirty-five, powerfully built, black hair, swarthy skin?"

"That answers his description."

For several minutes I sat stunned and silent. My brain was in a turmoil. Riordan had been Jerry's rival five years ago when my poor friend had first met Sonia Pokol and determined to win her for his wife. Sonia was a Russian refugee living in Paris at that time, and Riordan was in business there. I felt treachery in the air.

*It was not the same
Jerry I saw—only
a wraith*



I wanted to be alone, to think, reason, plan. But I must learn more—everything he could tell me. If my half-formed suspicion received support, there would be much for me to do.

"Tell me," I said finally, "everything you know concerning Jerry after you came to Collinsville—how he lived, how he died, and what has occurred since."

"Gladly," Evans said, "but I cannot tell you a great deal. Not long after Ferguson and his wife came to live at the Towers, it seems that they began to drift apart, at least as far as their amusements were concerned. Jerry was content to tramp the hills and fish. His wife loved gaiety; she entertained the wealthy residents for miles around, wore the smartest clothing ever seen here, and drove the speediest automobiles.

"Shortly after I came here, Ferguson began to ail and soon took to his bed. He had been ill but a comparatively short time when he died. The physician who attended him, Doctor Carlton—now the coroner—said that his death was caused by a disease with which he was not familiar. It appeared to be an exaggerated case of hardening of the arteries."

"Where was he buried?"

"In the little churchyard just this side of the Towers."

"I know the place. Will I be able to locate his grave?"

"Easily. It is on the top of the North Hill. It is marked by a great flat stone. I guess that's all I know.

If you go to the Towers tomorrow you will be in time for the reception Ferguson's wife is giving to her old friends. They have been invited there for the evening to meet her new husband."

"I see. Maybe I'll wait until after the reception. I might—cut in a bit on the gaiety. I can spend the day visiting Jerry's grave and wandering about the grounds at the Towers. I used to like to do that at night. It reminded me a little of the western country. I may do that tomorrow night, when the others are at the reception."

A queer look came into the hotel-keeper's eyes while I was speaking and I thought he paled a bit. "If you intend to do that, Mr. Moore, I must tell you one thing more. It sounds like gossip and I don't believe it, but—during the time the woman was in Europe, Ferguson's ghost was said to have been seen about the grounds several times at night. A dozen men whom I know well—and would believe ordinarily—have insisted to me that they saw it. Now, if you please, I'll go below."

His statement gave me a distinct jolt. But I suppressed my emotions; tried to make him believe I considered it unworthy of comment. I didn't want him to speak of such a thing again—at least not then. So I thanked him for his information and

declined his offer to have some supper sent to me.

I was more upset than ever I had been in my whole adventurous life. The death of my dearest friend would have been sufficient in itself to unnerve me. But the other things I had learned—that Jerry's widow had married Riordan, that Jerry had turned over his entire fortune to Sonia, and had left his beloved daughter penniless, and that the

villagers believed his ghost haunted the Towers—all this had me fairly tingling with dread uncertainty, and suspicion.

My one desire was to find a place where I could think without being disturbed. A walk in the open promised the refuge I sought. I found a door at the rear and slipped out without running the gauntlet of the curious ones gathered in the hotel lobby.

Keeping in the shadows, I skirted the hotel and reached the main roadway. Something impelled me to turn my steps in the direction of the churchyard. I must see Jerry's grave—the stone which marked the final resting place of the one for whom I would have given my life at any time. The moon was full. I was certain by its light I could locate the grave.

I was much disturbed by Evans' statement that the phantom of my friend haunted the Towers, but I could not credit the tale. I had no belief in ghosts. Innumerable times I had encountered tragedy, witnessed violent deaths. I had been told by others of apparitions; but I doubted, for none ever had appeared to me. Even in India, where tales of the weird and uncanny are heard on every side, I never met with anything which I could not reasonably account for.

And yet, the very fact that the tales concerning Jerry's ghost had been circulated and given credence indicated at least a belief that my old friend had not come to his death by fair means. Evans had deliberately avoided any definite suggestion, but his manner had indicated that he was suspicious.

I thought of Ruth's position. In his right mind Jerry never would have left his daughter dependent on the bounty of her stepmother. I was sure of that.

And what of Riordan? The very fact that he and Sonia had joined forces indicated something not quite above-board.

Recollection of the unwholesome past of these two added fuel to the fire of suspicion which had been kindled in my mind.

When Jerry first became infatuated with Sonia Pokol, I had investigated her history. I found that she was the black sheep of a once great family and that she had drifted through most of the capitals of Europe. She had occupied a con-

spicuous place in the night life of Vienna at one time.

Riordan was prominent among her favorites. I never liked him. In the first place, he was a half-breed of some kind—a mixture of Irishman and Tartar, I was told. In the second place, there were rumors that he had been arrested and imprisoned for crimes committed in Austria, but had escaped just previous to the declaration of war and found refuge in France.

Knowing the temper of Jerry when the character of a woman he admired was questioned, I did not repeat what I had heard. But I finally persuaded him to return to the United States on business. Then, with the Atlantic between Sonia and ourselves, I compelled him to listen to what had been told me. For once he did not become angry. However, though he did not flare, he gave full vent to his stubborn streak. He absolutely refused to believe. He said she had told him her story, a tale of impoverishment

The ghost raised his cane from the sandy path, and wrote on the headstone—"Poisoned."



which had won his sympathy. A short time later, he returned to Europe, made her his wife, and brought her to the United States.

I did not accompany him. But we did not part in anger. Our friendship was too great. I remained to locate and purchase a home such as he felt (Continued on page 53)

Secrets of a

By
Samri Frikell

Millions of persons, including many
genuine mind reader and mystic. But

ANNA EVA FAY is dead. To the younger readers of this magazine, her name may have no significance. To those who do remember her, however, Anna Eva Fay will be recalled as a flashing figure of the supernatural, a riddle woman who seemed to walk with one foot on the ground and the other on the misty clouds of the unseen and the unknown.

For more than fifty years, Anna Eva Fay appeared before audiences in the principal cities of the world with her demonstrations of what she called "mind reading" and her quasi-spiritistic séances. The greater number of those who saw her believed she was genuine. This in spite of repeated exposures. I have heard many people declare that they wrote their questions at home, put the papers in their pockets and then went to the theater, where Miss Fay read the questions from the stage and answered them correctly.

Such miracles have never occurred. The people who testified to them exaggerated, lied a little, and by frequent repetition of the story, came eventually to believe it themselves. I know they did not occur for two good reasons. First, I know how Miss Fay did her tricks. Second, she admitted to me that *all* her work was trickery and that she had never performed a genuine psychic effect.

Yet she fooled the smartest brains of England, Europe and America. Her career was like a weird romance. Many great scientists believed in her implicitly; yea, verily and in her "phenomena." Miss Fay cost me one of the most precious friendships of my life—she estranged the late Harry Kellar, the great magician, and myself. The way of it was this. Miss Fay was appearing at the Hippodrome Theater in Baltimore about ten—perhaps twelve years ago. I called on her and her husband, Mr. Pingaree, in their dressing room.

"Thank God for an amateur magician," she said to me. "Now I can be myself."

Then she asked me if I had heard of the illness of Mr. Kellar. I had received a letter from his niece, telling me he was ill at his home on Ardmore Boulevard, Los Angeles.

"He is dying," Miss Fay said. "He is not expected to live through the week."

I was a reporter then and I published the interview with Miss Fay in the Baltimore *American*. That night the facts were wired to the New York *Morning Telegraph*, which printed the thing on its front page the following morning.

BUT it was all a mistake. Mr. Kellar was not in Los Angeles and he was no longer ill. He was at the Waldorf in New York and he was feeling exceptionally well. Over his breakfast he read the headline in the paper, "Kellar, Magician Dying in West." My name was mentioned in the story and Kellar held me responsible. He was a superstitious man and the story made him uncomfortable. Years before, he and Miss Fay had appeared together; they were no longer associates. I never heard from Kellar, or Miss Fay again.

Her death occasioned some interesting comment in the papers, especially in the New York *Sun*.

The very fact that more or less scientific persons had to invent such expressions as "muscle reading" and "telepathy" to explain the "mind reading" mystifications of this woman

shows to what an extent she bewildered audiences on both sides of the Atlantic for half a century. Every time that she appeared in public she knew that she had before her various sorts and conditions of the credulous and the incredulous. There were those who wanted to be entertained. They didn't care whether the whole business was a trick or not so long as they did not see through it. There were others, who, because of the difficulty of finding an explanation of the physical wonders involved, jumped to the conclusion that the woman was "psychic." Some of them were so impressed by the apparent elimination of time and space in her dealings with concrete things that they decided she must have a "message" and so be a link between the known and the unknowable. Finally there were the skeptics, who, while they muttered "fake," settled the whole difficulty by talking about "mass" or "group hypnotism" affecting the deluded audience.

The courts of New York, however, had no respect for the variety of appeal of the Fays. The law failed to see that a person could be an entertainer at one moment and something else the next, or both at one and the same moment. An appeal was taken to the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court in 1908 from a judgment obtained by John T. Fay and Mrs. Fay granting a perpetual injunction restraining two former employees of theirs from using the name "The Fays" to advertise performances in which they exposed the methods of their one-time principals.

"**E**QUITY does not bind rogues," said Justice Houghton in reversing the judgment of the lower court. Then he added:

"The situation disclosed is such that equity should not interfere at all. The plaintiffs are engaged in deceiving the public, and the most entertaining part of their performance is in effect fortune telling. . . . Persons who pretend to tell fortunes are defined to be disorderly persons. The pretense of occult powers and the ability to answer confidential questions from spiritual aid is as bad as fortune telling and a species of it, and is a fraud upon the public."

In other words, Justice Houghton and his associates brushed aside the protest of the Fays that their methods, "although at present not thoroughly understood by the mass of people, are perfectly natural and may at some future day be utilized by scientific workers." So Mrs. Fay will be known as a collusionist, while some of her rivals, like Washington Irving Bishop or Robert Heller will be remembered simply as illusionists or delusionists.

One of the celebrated feats of Anna Eva Fay was her "tape tie" in which she allowed her hands to be tied by a committee from the audience, after which she retired into a small cabinet. In this cabinet bells were rung, tambourines clanged and the usual manifestations occurred. Yet at any moment her hands could be examined and she was found to be securely tied up. It may surprise you to know that you can do this trick quite as well as Anna Eva Fay. I am not aware that its secret has ever been given to the public before, but I am going to reveal it to you here and now.

The tape that is used for this experiment is the woolen kind, not the cotton one. After the tape has been duly

Mysterious Woman

great scientists, swore by the late Anna Eva Fay as a she admitted to the author of this article that—

inspected you ask a spectator to tie it around your left wrist and while he is doing so and making the first knot you apparently assist him by holding the other end of the tape. What you really do is to pull slightly while he is tying the second knot with the result that the knots which he has tied have thus been converted into slip knots. Plac-

wrist and pull on the tape causing the knots to slide along the tape until they again rest firmly against the wrist.

At any time the knots may be thoroughly examined as they may be pulled so tightly against the wrist as to fool the most skeptical person of the committee. The performer usually calls attention to the fact that the tape is tied very



Houdini crystal gazing with Miss Fay in the garden of her home at Melrose Highlands, Mass.

ing the hands behind the back you ask him to tie the other hand in a similar fashion, which he does. As the tape is quite short, no suspicion is created when you exercise a pull also while this wrist is being tied, thus also transforming this tie into a slip knot.

When you are behind a screen—or in the cabinet, as the occasion may require—you simply slip the knots of either wrist, and after a trial or two you will find that you can slide them out along the tape, thus allowing you to make an opening large enough to draw out your hand. For spirit work it is necessary only to free one hand, while in the trunk escape trick both hands are freed, which after the preceding explanation is a very simple matter. To get back into the tie, you simply slip in again over the

firmly around the wrist and invites a most thorough inspection. Also, after the tape has been cut off his hands at the end of the trick he converts the knots into regular ones by a slight pull and then throws the tape out to the audience with the request that someone untie it, which will be found a very difficult task as the knots are drawn so very tightly.

Miss Fay once told me some of the most closely guarded secrets of the pseudo-clairvoyants. One of these was a method of reading sealed questions at a private séance. I am printing it here for the first time.

Suppose that you are giving a "spirit" séance. You furnish the "sitter" who is alone in the room with you, with a heavy white envelope, of small (Continued on page 82)

Dr. BLENHEIM Operates

His passion for science led Dr. Blenheim to envy the unholy skill of a monster who could retain the life in a severed head. But when he tried to imitate him—



"Where did that voice come from?" — gasped Blenheim

GRADUALLY, with great difficulty, like a diver beating a slow way up from tremendous, murky depths to the light above, Doctor Blenheim forced himself awake. The brilliant, overtaxed brain of the master surgeon, once drugged with sleep, had almost to be pried into consciousness; so desperate was its owner's need of rest after months of overwork.

Again he felt a hand shaking his shoulder. He shook his crumpled hair, and concentrated on the business of coming to life after his almost deathlike repose.

"Karl," his wife's voice came through the dark, "Karl, dear, wake up. The telephone is ringing. It must be something terribly important or you wouldn't be disturbed at this hour."

Again he shook his head to clear it of the fog of sleep.

"All right," he answered thickly. "All right." He stumbled toward the phone, still unsure as to whether or not he was awake.

"Hello!" he mumbled, "Doctor Karl Blenheim speaking."

"Karl." An electric, compelling voice crackled over the wire. "This is Doctor Kranz—Rolland Kranz."

"Yes." Blenheim started wide awake as he recognized the magnetic voice. Doctor Kranz—the only other surgeon in the country brilliant enough to dispute his right to surgical supremacy! It must be important for such a man to wake him at two o'clock in the morning. He listened anxiously for what he might say.

"Karl," the vibrant voice continued, "get dressed at once. I will be by in ten minutes to pick you up. Can't explain over the phone, but I have stumbled on to something you must see. The most marvelous thing! Marvellous? My God! It's awe-inspiring, ghastly, godlike, beyond human

understanding. Beyond imagining of a mind that is sane!"

"Can't it wait until morning?"

"No, no, no!" snapped back the impatient answer. "Take my word for it, you must come now, at once. You will see a surgical miracle that is beyond comprehension. The operation is to be performed at three o'clock, an hour from now. When it will happen again, I don't know—maybe never."

"I'll be ready," promised Doctor Blenheim, reaching for his clothes as he spoke.

Ten minutes later, Doctor Kranz's big sedan whirled up in front of the dark house. Blenheim hurried from the cold porch and climbed in beside Kranz, who was at the wheel himself. Almost before he had closed the door, the car started with a jerk and was guided out of the driveway and headed for the down town section.

"What is up, Rolland?"

"Wait till you see it. I can't tell you what it is. Wait till you see it."

Arrested by the queer, feverish intonation of the doctor's voice, Blenheim glanced quickly at the dark form crouched over the steering wheel. Doctor Kranz's face was as white as chalk. He was shaking as if in a chill; his lips hung slack, and quivered with hysterical nervousness. Blenheim felt a collar of ice constrict his heart. Whatever his errand in the dark hours before dawn, it must be terrible indeed to so affect the iron nerves of Rolland Kranz.

"There, there," Blenheim soothed him, "you're all upset,

By
Paul Hall



The head was alive, the writhing lips moved, and the harsh voice broke into speech

old man. Try to control yourself. Take it easy now."

"Take it easy!" mocked Kranz. "If you had seen what I saw an hour ago, Karl, you wouldn't sit calmly there and tell me to 'take it easy.'" His voice rose to a higher key. "I have found the greatest surgeon the world ever has or ever will know. He is a taxidermist!"

Karl Blenheim moved uneasily away from the man, and studied his wild, staring eyes with quick alarm.

"Of course. Of course," he said, as one would soothe a child frightened by the dark.

"Don't be a fool, Karl." Rolland's voice was querulous like the voice of an old, old man. "I'm not insane. But what I have seen! What I have seen—" The words trailed off into silence.

He braced his shoulders in a pathetic effort at self-control.

"Imagine," he continued more quietly, "imagine an alchemist who actually succeeded in turning lead into gold. Imagine an engineer who could fling a bridge from Earth to Moon. Conceive of a sculptor who could fashion a statue so lifelike that it would breathe and walk. Then try to imagine a surgeon who was, equally powerful in his profession. Such a wizard, performing just such impossible miracles, is this taxidermist, this skinner of animals and birds."

"Tell me all about it," urged Karl in a patient, humoring way.

"You still think I'm mad, don't you?" The man at the wheel of the car licked his trembling lips, and tried to hold

them steady. "Here, then, is the tale; or rather, as much of it as is necessary to prepare you in a measure for the spectacle that awaits you:

"As you know, I do a great deal of charity work, since in so doing I get the chance to perform many operations that do not show up in my ordinary, routine work among fashionable clients."

Blenheim nodded.

"This evening, at eleven o'clock, I was called to the phone. The night watchman at the old Flinton Building had fallen down the elevator shaft two floors to the top of the car which had been stopped at the seventh floor level. Although his neck was broken, the man was still alive. I hurried down at once to see what I could do. He was beyond help, and died almost before I could examine the fracture.

"It was while I was walking down the endless flights of stairs to the street that my attention was drawn by a beam of light that shone through the frosted glass window of an office door.

"I'll never know what led me to pay any attention to the light. It is not unusual, surely, for men to work in their offices till twelve or one o'clock at night. Certainly a lighted office in a dark building isn't necessarily a matter of mystery. But some instinct, some intuition, drew me toward that door. Without stopping to reason out my strange impulse, wondering at myself even as I acted, I crept silently up to the door. On the glass, standing out

boldly against the light within, were the words: *Anton Aluaine, Taxidermist.*

"My next move was as aimless and involuntary as that of a man in a nightmare. Softly, softly I turned the knob and opened the door, the merest trifle. My heart throbbed in my throat as a vague, formless premonition of something inhuman sank claws into my brain.

"The door opened into a small anteroom. A few feet away was another door, evidently leading into the man's workshop in the rear. Just at this stage of my inspection, I heard foot-steps in the hall as

was left of a powerful ray of light that poured down from a shaded bulb, and bathed with its beams a plain, pine table covered with leather, directly underneath and in the center of the room.

"Beside the table, with his face sharply defined in the

"It would be easier to experiment upon an unconscious person," Blenheim mused. He fingered the vial of chloroform



some one approached the office. In terror I slid through the doorway and into a small closet that extended across one end of the anteroom. Once inside, I found that fear had been my friend; for, through a crack in the warped partition, I discovered that I could look squarely into the taxidermist's work room with no danger of being detected.

"As I said, Karl, I had no earthly idea why I was acting like a sneaking burglar, and crawling into a strange office in this insane way. I had no idea why I should find such satisfaction in the fact that I was able to spy into Aluaine's work shop. Above all, I had no conception of what it was that I was about to see in that chamber. If I had known. . . .

"Looking through my crack in the wall, I saw a large, cluttered place, lighted dimly in the far corners by what

light, sat a man whom I judged to be Anton Aluaine. I won't attempt to describe him; nor to tell of the stark terror that his mere appearance sent to my wildly beating heart. You shall see him yourself in a few moments now.

"The footsteps that I had heard now sounded closer; and the outer door was opened—furtively, as I could tell from the sound. It was softly closed; I heard the door to the work shop creak; and a second man entered my line of vision.

"He wasn't at all like Aluaine. No supremely sinister intelligence shone from this man's eyes. From all appearances he was just a common thug, a hired desperado, with low intelligence and the look of a hunted rat. The two spoke a few words in tones too low for me to hear. Then the thug removed his clothing as though it were an accustoming thing that was about to happen, and stretched his length out on the table. Aluaine left the circle of light for an instant, and reappeared with (Continued on page 73)

\$10,000 for Ghosts

WE believe we are on the brink of amazing discoveries in the field popularly known as "Psychic Phenomena"—discoveries that can be established and passed to posterity as scientific fact. To this end the publishers of GHOST STORIES Magazine are offering \$10,000 in awards, as follows:

- 1 \$8000 award will be paid to the person who produces a visible, disembodied apparition, which can be identified to the satisfaction of the Commission judging the award, as the apparition of a deceased person.
- 2 \$500 shall be given for that physical demonstration, such as spirit photography, levitation, or any other physical manifestation of an unknown force, most convincing to the Commission.
- 3 \$500 shall be given for that mental demonstration such as clairaudience, clairvoyance, telepathy, automatic writing or any other mental manifestation of an unknown force, most convincing to the Commission.
- 4 \$500 shall be given to the person who satisfies the Commission that a house is haunted.
- 5 \$500 shall be paid to that person demonstrating phenomena in the field known popularly as "psychic phenomena" most convincing to the Commission, not covered in the first four classifications.

Investigation and payments of awards are entrusted to THE UNBIASED COMMISSION FOR PSYCHIC RESEARCH, consisting of a group of men, each an outstanding figure in his chosen profession, including: the Reverend Ralph Welles Keeler, D.D., Chairman; Bernarr Macfadden, noted physical culturist and publisher; Arthur Garfield Hays, distinguished counsellor at law; Howard Thurston, magician; Fulton Oursler, novelist and playwright; Emanuel de Marnay Baruch, M.D.; George Sylvester Viereck, poet and novelist; Harold Hersey, editor and author; H. A. Keller, editor and author; Joseph Schultz, attorney; W. Adolphe Roberts, editor, GHOST STORIES Magazine, Executive Secretary for the Commission.

These awards are open to all—Medium, Psychic Healer, Spiritualist, non-believer and layman.

THE UNBIASED COMMISSION FOR PSYCHIC RESEARCH is sincerely, honestly endeavoring to establish proof of certain so-called psychic phenomena; the Commission is ambitiously trying in a sober, serious, scientific manner to establish new facts and gather first-hand information in the field of Psychic Research.

This offer expires September 30th, 1927.

The Commission reserves the right to extend itself as to membership.

Have you ever seen a ghost? Are you in communication with the dead? Have you any justification for your claim that you can materialize a being from another world? Write—THE UNBIASED COMMISSION FOR PSYCHIC RESEARCH, 1926 Broadway, New York, N. Y.; W. A. Roberts, Executive Secretary, and due consideration will be given your claim. You have your opportunity through

GHOST STORIES Magazine

SPIRIT HANDS

"GET back to your grave!" jabbered the madman to the glaucous emptiness about him. "Go back to your shroud and your worms! Stay there! Stay there this time, for tonight I shall join you! I see your dead eyes—your bony hands stretching out for me!"

The eery green light that seemed to flow in rippling waves

Windrath deserved the tribute. His characterization had been masterful. The part he played was minus the saving grace of a single shred of sympathetic appeal. He portrayed a jealous murderer obsessed by the belief that the ghost of his victim had returned from its tomb seeking vengeance. In the big scene of the play, just concluded, he had been confronted by the apparition.

At length the audience was appeased by a brief

Some tremendous power held the switch in a grip like a colossal vise

from some unknown spot in the surrounding darkness,

was suddenly shot through with a bright flash which disclosed a humanlike figure in filmy white.

"You've come for the last time!" shrieked the madman, pitching forward with a choking groan, upon his face.

The green and white rays vanished, leaving him prostrate in the darkness, and the curtain fell on the end of the act at the Imperial Theater. The auditorium lights came on cheerily while a thousand pairs of hands were beating unrestrained approbation. The applause swept the house with the contagious spontaneity that stamped Broadway's elevation of a dubious first-night offering into the theatrical realm of a current hit. Beyond doubt this particular production was "made."

Standing in the wings back stage, I congratulated Charles Marsden, who was the producer of the play and who also was one of my patients. A light indisposition had caused him to send for me early that evening, and, following my ministrations, I had stayed on as his guest to witness this metropolitan premiere. Now we watched Eric Windrath, the star, take curtain call after curtain call.

curtain speech, and, after a short intermission, the fourth act proceeded. The final act was very short, and the play was soon over. As I was going out, Marsden stopped me with an invitation to remain and participate in an informal celebration of the successful opening. An hour later found me one of the merry group made up of the manager's associates.

I was particularly drawn to Eric Windrath. Chatting with him, I ventured to ask if the depressing morbidness of his stage character affected him in any way during the hours of his relaxation.

"Assuredly not, doctor," he answered, smiling his charming and magnetic smile. "Any character that I play is shed with my make-up after the performance, and I take particular pains to leave this one behind me in that manner.

The amazing history of the Imperial Theater
mystery as witnessed by A. M. Strickland, M. D. and
recorded by Gilbert Patten and Den O'Brien

Morel can attest to that," he added, turning to a gentleman at his right.

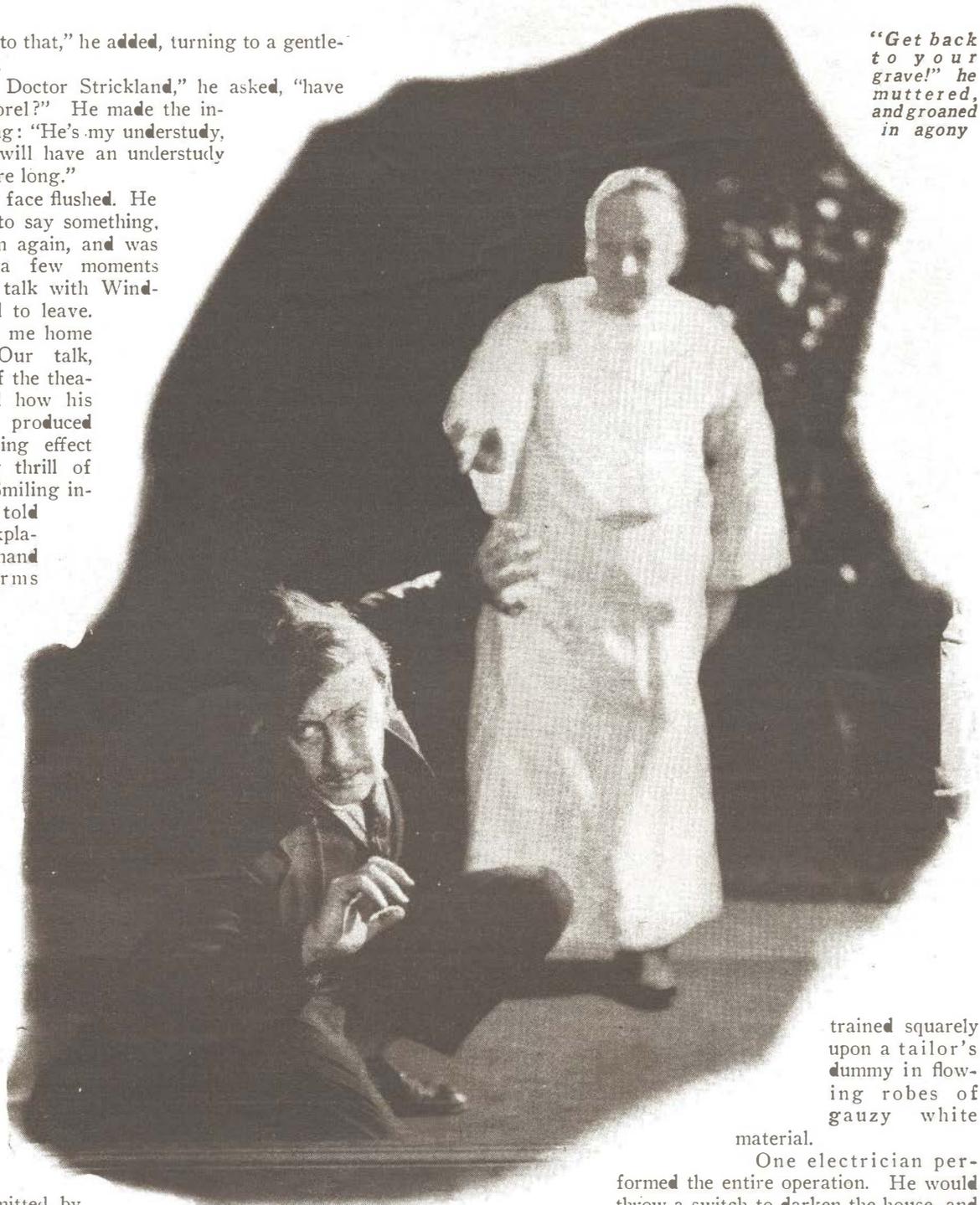
"By the way, Doctor Strickland," he asked, "have you met Mr. Morel?" He made the introduction, stating: "He's my understudy, who, I predict, will have an understudy of his own before long."

Morel's sallow face flushed. He opened his lips to say something, then closed them again, and was silent. After a few moments more of casual talk with Windrath, I prepared to leave.

Marsden took me home in his car. Our talk, naturally, was of the theater. I inquired how his electrical staff produced the weird lighting effect used in the big thrill of the third act. Smiling indulgently, he told me that the explanation would demand technical terms meaningless to anybody not initiated in back-stage lore. I felt myself properly reproved for unwarranted curiosity, but the curiosity persisted.

I looked in upon the play several times afterwards, never again seeing it from beginning to end, but taking it piecemeal, as it were. Being known to the house attaches, I was readily admitted by the stage door and thence to the stage itself, where I would unobtrusively withdraw behind some jutting wing.

In time I learned that the lighting effect which interested me was produced in the simplest manner imaginable. The waves of phosphorescent green came from a green electric bulb that oscillated slowly and gently behind a corrugated green gelatine sheet of varying thickness. The sudden white luminousness was shot from a "baby" spotlight—quickly snapped on and as quickly extinguished—that was



"Get back to your grave!" he muttered, and groaned in agony

trained squarely upon a tailor's dummy in flowing robes of gauzy white

material.

One electrician performed the entire operation. He would throw a switch to darken the house, and give it one revolution, which accounted for the waves of green light. Then he switched the baby spot on and off, and the thing was done. The most important item was careful attention to the closing of Windrath's last long speech of the act, and readiness for the "light cue" at the end of it.

I became thoroughly familiar with this awesome scene, knew well the light cue, which was, "Get back to your grave!" The tension brought about by the darkened stage and Windrath's soliloquy created (Continued on page 91)

TRUE GHOST EXPERIENCES

Have you ever seen a ghost? Have you ever had a message from the dead?

Nearly every person in the world has had some experience which could be classed as psychic. Not everyone would recognize a ghost, or would understand a message or warning that purports to come from another world—but most people have had at least one thing happen to them which could not be explained logically.

This department is for readers of GHOST STORIES Magazine who believe they have had some contact with the spirit world, and they are urged to send in accounts of such experiences. As many as possible of the letters will be published, merit permitting, and if any of the letters call for an explanation, perhaps some of our readers will be glad to write that also to this department. One of these experiences is printed below—and readers are urged to send in their answers. It must be made clear that we will not consider dreams.

GHOST STORIES wants the account of your experience. Send it to True Ghost Experiences Editor, GHOST STORIES Magazine, 1926 Broadway, New York, N. Y.

My Ghostly Burglar Alarm

By Antonie H. Luepke

IN the year 1921, on a dark and stormy November night, the little incident I am going to relate occurred. My husband, who is a physician, and I were living in a small inland town of three hundred inhabitants, not including the neighboring farmers. It was situated in the State of Wisconsin on a mountain ridge fifteen miles from the Mississippi River and the nearest railroad station. One of those quiet towns where apparently nothing exciting occurs and everybody seems perfectly satisfied that the electric lights are turned off at eleven every night. The plant is owned by the people, however, and light until one A. M. is voted on evenings when there is a dance.

Like most such little hamlets the place had on its Main Street a so-called park; a plot of trees with a bandstand, where the more or less talented young village lads met with their respective instruments and practiced for free concerts—to the enjoyment of the people. Back of this "park" was a former farm house which for many years had been known as the "Doctor's House." This was our home. Our nearest neighbor was fully two hundred yards from us.

Being used to city life we naturally were lonesome at times, but being so far from a railroad station and knowing most of the surrounding population, we had no fear of ever getting in close contact with the wickedness of the world. How erroneous an idea this was, we discovered after we had been located there for two years.

On the third day of November of the aforesaid year I was seized with a strange attack of sickness, if I may call it so. It was especially strange, as I am one of those small, wiry women, sound in body and soul, with never an ache or a pain, but always keeping busy at something. The day before,

I probably had overtaxed my strength a little while engaged in papering the walls of a small room. The following day was a Saturday, which again called for some extra work.

I had finished at four o'clock in the afternoon and sat down to rest. Suddenly a terrible thirst came over me, which nothing seemed to be able to quench. For hours I suffered the agony of people, who, as we read, die for lack of water on the high seas. This condition lasted until late at night, but my mind had evidently commenced to leave me, as I never did remember that a friend had called in the afternoon and that my husband had taken me upstairs to bed.

As the hour advanced toward midnight, my state of mind became alarming. When I tried to lie down, my body would twitch violently, causing the bed to shake; when I sat up, I would dig the bed clothes with my fists, my fingers being numb. Then I had hallucinations. I would jump out of bed, walk repeatedly to the window insisting that there was an automobile in the yard and two men, wearing khaki suits, with guns on their shoulders. Twice the doctor had to go downstairs because I heard the voices of two men and a woman in the office, and visualized them ransacking the place.

Another time I felt as if the bed were raising up on one side. I consequently rolled out and fell against an open door, knocking out two of my teeth, and, of course, bleeding from mouth and nose. All in all, this was a terrible night. I, without a fever and perfectly calm, knew all I was doing and saying, while my poor husband was deathly afraid that I had lost my mind. However, with the dawn of the morning and after the doctor had given me a steam bath, my senses gradually returned. In the afternoon I was my old

self again, and even received some friends to whom I naturally spoke about my visions.

Having had no sleep the night before, we retired at an early hour and slept like the proverbial logs. Upon arising the next morning, my husband said he had heard some noise during the night, but had felt unable to rouse himself. We hurried down and—lo and behold—my vision of the night before had come true. The first thing we saw was an old spoon lying in the open doorway; then we noticed that the drawers of the buffet were open and empty. Gradually we discovered that we had been robbed of everything valuable we possessed. My beautiful table silver, wedding presents from many years back, silver candle holders, napkin rings, a gold watch, bracelets, rings, etc., had gone. Also, some new surgical instruments and four bottles of chloroform from the office.

In the adjoining summer kitchen we found our big hatchet, which always was out in the woodshed, and a heavy iron crow-bar, which must have been picked up from the village blacksmith shop. This latter discovery sent a chill through us, for we now realized that the events of the night before must have been a premonition of what was to come. Had we not slept so soundly, those murderous tools would have been used against us and I would not be able to write this little episode of country life.

I might close my story here, but for the sake of those readers who would like to know whether the culprits were found, or the stolen articles recovered, I shall add a few more lines.

A neighbor across the road happened to be up that night and at two o'clock saw a closed automobile, without-lights, stop in front of the Park in the heavy rain for about fifteen minutes, when it

drove off in the direction of the county seat. Thinking somebody had called for the doctor, he gave the matter no more attention. After we had been pondering a long while who could have been the thief, I called out:

"I know who did it."

Nobody in the community knew what we had, nor could anyone of these plain people have distinguished plated ware from real silver. And this theft was done so cleverly, that only valuable pieces were taken and the few silver-plated articles left behind. So it must have been a "connoisseur."

Suspicion pointed to a young Bavarian who had come to the village as a sign-painter two months before. While he was painting signs for some business

men, he enjoyed our hospitality for three days. We thought he was so nice, so full of love for nature! He was educated and mannerly, spoke intelligently about having been interned at Fort Oglethorpe for two years, showed us the gold and silver leaf he carried in his grip and how by the merest touch he could tell what was real and what not. Police authorities in Milwaukee "grilled" a man of his description for hours, but found no evidence, the goods most likely having passed into other hands.

Through the courtesy of some of the doctor's friends, officers of the American Legion—who were interested in the case, since the man had posed as a United States soldier—most of the

stolen articles were recovered in a New Jersey city. Prohibition agents there in search of a moonshine still found same in a dugout under a cellar, together with thousands of dollars' worth of stolen valuables in a special compartment.

We had given a minute description of our property, and the authorities quickly identified a number of objects in this New Jersey haul as being ours.

Some medical authorities whom my husband consulted about me, claimed a small blood vessel in the brain must have burst and caused hallucinations. But often since, I have worked harder than at that time, yet never had another attack. Thus I am inclined to call my true ghost experience a "premonition."

Written in Sand

(Continued from page 43)

would be most fitting for his bride, one which would remind her somewhat of the grandeur of her early rearing. It must be on the bank of a river, he had said—the Pokol palace was on the Dnieper, she had told him—a structure whose architecture would suggest a castle.

I had found and purchased the Crimson Towers, so called because of the color of the ivy which all but hid its turrets and towers throughout the fall and winter months. It had been erected by a wealthy German, with large business interests in this country, upon a point overlooking the Hudson, many miles north of the great city. When the war came, its owner had placed it on the market and returned to his native land. None had occupied it since, and my purchase included the furnishings, all of which the owner had left behind.

I BROUGHT Ruth to the place and she prepared it for the return of her father. I remained long enough to welcome Jerry and his bride. But, for many reasons, I could not remain with them. So, pleading the 'urge of the wanderlust, I left him, hoping for the best, but fearful.

Now I had returned to find him—gone. To learn that his wife had but just returned from abroad, bringing with her a man reputed to have been her lover. She had gained possession of Jerry's properties, his daughter was to be sent into the world to make her own way—as though her father had not braved death time after time to mass the wealth which was to have kept her in luxury all her life.

Reason convinced me that all was not as it should be. And the more I thought the more I wondered if Jerry had been deliberately sent from this world before his allotted time. Had this woman and Riordan conspired against him so that they might enjoy the fruits of his years of toil?

I had trudged ahead, giving scant heed to my surroundings, and now I suddenly realized that I had reached the gateway to the little cemetery. I paused, permitting my thoughts to crystallize fully. I might be wrong. But, no matter to what lengths I might have to go, I was going to learn the truth. And if Jerry had been unfairly

dealt with, if Sonia and Riordan had been responsible for his death, I would shoulder the duty of righting the wrong. I would see that Ruth was not cheated of her due, and I would exact such revenge as my discoveries warranted.

I turned into a sandy path that led toward the North Hill where my friend was buried. As I moved slowly along, I felt my lips twist into a grin of satisfaction. For, if Jerry had been removed, I was certain I would ascertain the fact, learn it as positively as though he came back and whispered it. Years before, we had agreed upon a means of communication in the event that anything untoward happened to either of us. If that means of communication had not been destroyed—I would go to the Towers the next day to learn definitely—no scheming Sonia or others could do would cheat me of the truth.

At that point in my reverie the increasing steepness of the path forced me to give close attention to my footing. I put aside my grim thoughts. Up, up I climbed, until the top of the hill was reached. Jerry's grave must be near.

Eagerly I searched about among the stones, and it was only a few moments until I found what I sought. Yes, there was the name, "Jeremiah Ferguson." Gulping down a sob, I dropped upon my knees and uttered a prayer for him who had meant so much to me.

But, as I knelt, a strange feeling came over me. Instinctively I felt that I was not alone. That some one I knew was near. Stumbling to my feet, I looked about, then staggered back a step, gasping. My heart seemed to be missing beats, my blood to have turned to ice.

For there, directly before me, scarce a half dozen steps away, stood Jerry as I had last seen him, with his familiar cane grasped in his right hand.

And yet, it was not the same Jerry. I saw only a wraith of him, shadowy, intangible. But there could be no mistaking the features; the heavy brows which almost met, the deep-set eyes, the broad nose. Only the mouth was different. The old smile was gone. The lips were set and pressed hard together.

I must have taken a step toward him,

for his left hand went up, as if to warn me away. Then slowly, deliberately, his cane began to trace something in the loose sand of the grave. I could see the letters almost as clearly in the moonlight as if it were full day. "Poisoned." That is what I read.

Then the ghost raised his cane from the sandy path and wrote on the headstone—"POISONED." Again I spelled out the hateful word. Then, just below, "Find the box."

For a moment I thought I had gone mad. My throat seemed suddenly to close. I gasped for breath. With a mighty effort I pulled myself upright and looked toward Jerry. He was gone. What I had seen vanished.

Half stunned, I rubbed my eyes. I looked again. There was the great stone marking Jerry's grave. Again my eyes sought the path. "Poisoned." The tracing still was there. My eyes had not played me tricks. I had seen—Jerry.

There could be no doubting the meaning of what he had written. My old pal had been murdered—by poison. "Find the box." I knew what those words meant, too. Years before, Jerry and I had purchased two identical caskets containing secret compartments. Our arrangement had been that each was to keep his with him at all times. Should we be separated and misfortune overtake one of us, the one affected was to conceal a message in the secret compartment.

Swiftly I obliterated the writing on the grave, and with frantic haste I rubbed sand across the tombstone until the words scratched there were no longer legible. Then I turned and ran, slipping, stumbling, conscious only that I must get away.

I MUST have remained in a delirium of frenzied fear throughout my wild race from the graveyard to the hotel. When I had regained a sufficient calmness to be able to think clearly, I was lying across the bed in my room. For hours I lay awake, trying to determine my future course—how I should proceed to avenge the wrong done Jerry and balk the injustice being done his daughter. Perhaps the message in the box would give me instructions as to what I should do.

Surely it would tell me the name of his slayer.

But where was the box? It might be hidden in a million places.

However, despite the meagerness of Jerry's message, I knew that he expected me to proceed with the task without delay. He would find me faithful to my trust. I would begin on the morrow. But until I located the casket and read Jerry's final words to me, I must proceed upon the assumption that Sonia was the guilty one. None other had possessed a like incentive. Also, reason told me, Riordan was directly connected with the crime.

I would watch them both; try to trap them. But, unless the phantom appeared again and made some sign which would confirm my suspicions against the pair, I would hold my hand until I had located the box containing his dying injunction. There was a possibility that he might have named some other than Sonia and Riordan.

It was late when I awoke the following morning, and my nerves had regained some of their accustomed calm. I decided to say nothing of my adventure to Evans, but to spend the day arranging a definite plan. I hoped word of my arrival in Collinsville would not reach the Towers before I was ready to go there.

But the smallest item of news travels fast in such tiny communities. I had scarcely eaten my breakfast when I was summoned to the telephone. Sonia was speaking. I thought I detected a note of anxiety in her voice. I surely had to exercise considerable effort to hold my own steady. After a few words concerning Jerry's death, which I explained I had not known of until the previous evening, she insisted that I come to the Towers at once and make it my home during my stay. She would send a car for me.

I put her off with a plea that, as I had just reached America, I must devote the day to writing business letters. I promised to go to see her in the evening. Neither of us spoke of Riordan, but she repeated that, when I came to the Towers, I must come prepared to remain there indefinitely as one of the family.

Somewhat later, Ruth drove up in a small car. She recognized me despite our long separation, and greeted me almost as affectionately as if I had been Jerry. She was even prettier than in the past—with features like her mother, but favoring her father in height and build—a splendid young woman and a capable one. I read aright the intelligent look in her eyes.

Unwilling that the loiterers about the hotel should learn anything to supply food for gossip, I got into the car with her and had her drive out along the road to a secluded place. There we talked long and earnestly. I voiced no hint that I believed Jerry had not died naturally, uttered no word concerning what I had heard about the Towers being haunted. But I realized the meaning of the searching, half-frightened look which never left her eyes. Either she had seen her father's phantom or had been told by others concerning it. She wondered if I, too, had learned. Hoping to divert her trouble a bit, I suggested that her father could not have been in complete possession of his faculties just

before his death and hinted that legal steps should be taken to restore her rights.

She shook her head. "No, Uncle Sidney, it was his wish and I shall respect it. I have seen the paper, written and signed by him. I have other plans. In Baltimore, when I was in school there, I met a young civil engineer—Harold Archer is his name—to whom I am now engaged. We shall be married when he finishes some work in Mexico. I am going to New York and make my own living until that time. I had intended leaving next week. Now I shall remain as long as you are here."

WE discussed her plan to marry and her present status at the Towers, and she laughingly refused to permit me to finance her for the present. Then I asked her to return to the hotel with me and go to my room. When we arrived there, I unpacked one of my grips and took out the casket that was identical with Jerry's. It was about eight inches by four, and made of hammered copper, covered with Arabic characters. In the top of it was set a dark blue stone.

"Your father had a box like this one, Ruth," I said. "Do you recollect it?"

"Why, yes. He always kept it in his room. Even when he was ill it rested on a table near his bed. He kept his pipes in it."

"Good. Do you know where it is now?"

"I am not certain. But I believe my—stepmother took it. She always admired it. I seldom have been in her room since—but I think I saw it there."

"Listen carefully, Ruth. I have a particular reason for wanting to know the exact location of that box. Tonight I am coming to the Towers. I shall attend the reception; maybe remain some days. Learn where that casket is, but don't touch it. During the evening whisper to me the place where it is kept."

"I'll do what you say, though I don't understand."

"You don't have to now. It has to do with a pledge made by your father to me. When I see the casket, I'll explain."

Again a frightened, puzzled look came into her eyes. She placed a trembling hand on my arm. "Uncle Sidney, are you keeping something from me? Is there something I should know?" Her voice had sunk to a whisper and she glanced nervously about. Then she sighed, as if greatly relieved. She had seen nothing.

Her queries and actions convinced me that at some time, perhaps more than once, Jerry's phantom had appeared to her. She was trying, without coming directly to the point, to learn if I also had seen it. Possibly, with her woman's intuition, she was beginning to sense there was a sinister significance in the appearance of the vision. To this time she had entertained no suspicion that he had met with foul play. Otherwise she would not have remained at the Towers. But, what she—and others—had seen, coupled with my desire to obtain possession of the casket in which her father always had shown such great interest, had aroused in her a vague alarm which she was anxious to discuss with me. This was the one thing I did not want to do—at that time.

Shaking my head, I placed an arm affectionately about her shoulder. "No, Ruth, I am keeping nothing from you which you should know. But, to fulfill an agreement of years' standing with your father, I need the casket. After I have it, I will explain everything. There is absolutely nothing to worry about. Some things have taken place which we both regret. There are happier days ahead, I'm certain. Now run along home. I'll soon be with you."

When the car carrying Ruth back to the Towers had disappeared, I turned from the window with a grim smile. In all probability the box was somewhere at the big house. Ruth was in a position to learn its location far more quickly than I. And, if I once could get it in my hands, I felt certain I would learn exactly what Jerry desired of me.

Sonia, as gorgeously beautiful as ever, met me on the veranda of the Towers when I arrived there with my traps shortly after dusk. Only servants were with her. But through open windows came the chatter and laughter of her guests.

I guessed she would rather I had not reached Collinsville at that particular time. But nothing in her manner indicated this. She was gracious and strove to make her welcome appear sincere. When the servants had gathered my grips together and moved into the hallway to wait until I followed, she came close and in a voice but little above a whisper, said, "I know you must feel a bit resentful, Sidney, because of my second marriage. But be generous. I still am young. I was very lonely. However, no more tonight. In the morning we shall talk again, just you and I, alone, somewhere beyond prying ears."

"As you wish," I said, forcing a feeble smile.

"One other thing, Sidney—Ruth. She is not going away because I wish it. She and—Stan—do not get on well together." She paused for an instant, a deeper crimson coming to her cheeks, an ugly light into her eyes. "But, you understand, he is my husband. That is all, now. Come to the reception hall as soon as you can. You will like my guests."

I BOWED and was about to move to join the servants when I chanced to look beyond her, into the denser shadows at the end of the veranda. Standing there, as I had seen him the night before, leaning on his cane, stood the phantom of Jerry Ferguson. He was too far distant for me to see his features clearly, but there could be no mistaking that he raised his free hand and pointed toward Sonia. Then he vanished, as quickly as though an electric switch had been snapped off.

Amazed, as when first I glimpsed the vision, I stood and stared, unable for the moment to utter a sound. I was brought back to earth by a sudden grip upon my arm. Sonia was at my side.

"What is the matter? What are you looking at?"

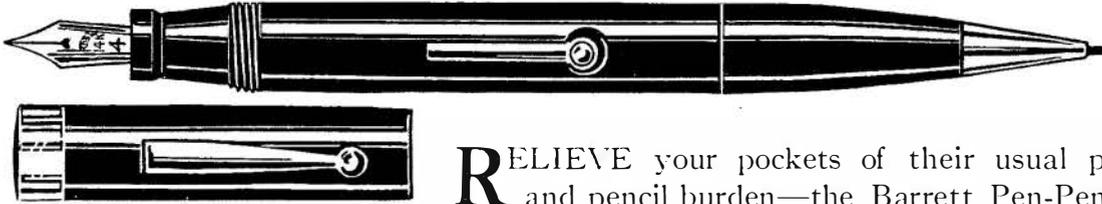
With a supreme effort I forced myself to speak. "Nothing—I guess. But I thought I saw some one—something—in the shadows—"

"Nonsense," she snapped, and there was anger in her tone. "Those fools in the

(Continued on page 56)

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n have been gossiping to you. They jeer and shout—ignorant, superstitious boors. Surely you, with all your experience, put no credence in their tales. I—no, we shall discuss that as well as other matters tomorrow. You have had a long journey and are fatigued. Join us quickly. I promise you plenty of gaiety, I want you to be glad you are with us again.”

A feeling of intense anger gripped me as I followed the servants to my room. What made me feel furious was not that she had mocked at the stories concerning Jerry's phantom, not that she had forgotten the moral obligation she owed his daughter, but that she was infatuated with Riordan. Her whole manner indicated she would stand as his defender at all times, fight to the utmost, if necessary, in his behalf. The living Riordan meant the world to her. Her dead husband—nothing.

As I tried to make myself presentable for the occasion, I wondered if it had been Sonia's scheme to marry Jerry, gain possession of his wealth, and then put him out of the way. I believed she was capable of it. But, somehow, I felt that Riordan also was to blame. I always had disliked him more than Sonia—I hated his smooth, Asiatic methods, which had nothing suggestive of a real he-man in them. The more I thought about him, the more I became convinced that he had been the instigator of the awful crime.

When I left my room to go below, Ruth stepped from a curtained recess, a finger raised to caution silence. Her lips were close to my ear as she whispered, “The casket is on the large dresser in my stepmother's room. There are only a few trinkets in it.”

The guests were what I had expected—men and women of many ages, well-groomed, happy and unaffected, the wealthier residents of Collinsville and the summer resorts near by. Riordan left a group of the younger men while Sonia was introducing me, and came forward. Our greeting was formal, our handclasp perfunctory. In the glance I flashed him, I tried to read his very soul. He was unable to hide his true feelings as cleverly as Sonia. In his eyes I detected a look of fear. And his mouth and jaws were set hard, as if he always were on the defensive but prepared to fight back.

It was not long before dinner was served. The burning resentment I felt increased as the meal progressed, and I had to struggle to keep my looks from betraying my feelings. For the banter and laughter, only natural in the guests, was led by Sonia, and Riordan's rumbling laugh was heard frequently above that of the others. Their gaiety, I was certain, was forced. It angered me. It was heartlessly brazen unless all that I believed concerning the death of Jerry was a fearful mistake. But I bided my time, believing that before the night had passed I would find a means of forcing a show-down.

Following the desserts, we moved to the veranda, and coffee, cigars and cigarettes were served. From jests we quickly passed to telling stories. Then came my opportunity. Some one suggested that I tell of my excursions into some strange land. Perhaps this prompter, had he thought a moment, would not have made

this request, for the recital of any adventure of mine must necessarily include Jerry.

“All right,” I said. “I'll tell you of the strangest thing that ever befell me and in the strangest of all countries, India. But, to make you appreciate my story fully I must illustrate it with something my old partner brought here. Listen, Ruth,” turning to the girl, “Do you know where your father's pipe box is? You know, the copper casket covered with Arabic characters.”

I kept my eyes on Sonia and Riordan. They exchanged lightning glances; and I thought both became a shade paler. With their clever brains they probably more than half guessed I was leading up to something which might spell danger to them.

“Why, yes, Uncle Sidney,” said Ruth, rising. “It is on—Mrs. Riordan's dresser. I'll get it for you.”

“Never mind, Ruth.” Sonia was upon her feet and moving toward me. Her tone was rather harsh and her mouth was set hard. “I know exactly where it is. I will bring it.” She passed from us and disappeared up the stairway. She had realized I desired the box for a particular purpose and was determined to examine it before it reached my hands—make certain there was nothing about it she had overlooked.

We waited in silence for her return. The seconds passed into minutes. An ominous feeling that something was amiss appeared to clutch and hold us all. Finally Riordan arose nervously. “I can't understand what is detaining my wife,” he said, moistening his lips. “Excuse me a moment, I'll see—”

He almost dashed from us and raced up the steps, covering several at each bound. But scarcely had he disappeared, when there came a series of fearful cries from above—shouts of dread and pain.

Astounded, I ran into the hallway, followed by the others. But, as I placed a foot upon the first stair, there came a crash from overhead. The next instant the body of Riordan came hurtling down and slid past us until it thudded against the wall, where it lay inert.

A second of terrible stillness followed. Then came a piercing shriek, the sound of a falling body, and the sobbing, choking, gasping cries of a woman.

Without thought of personal danger, I fairly raced up the stairway and to the room of Sonia, the door of which was open. A single glance, and I fell back against those crowding behind me. For upon the floor, directly before a great dresser, the copper casket by her side, lay the body of the woman.

That she was dead, none doubted. Her wide staring eyes, her features twisted into an agonized expression, her outstretched arms, with the fingers clinched, told the story. Forcing myself to a semblance of calmness, I dropped beside her to make absolutely certain. Then I saw what had escaped me before. There were red welts upon either side of her white throat, which some one's fingers had clutched with a merciless grip until she had gasped her last breath. Sonia had been choked to death.

“Go!” I called to the frightened guests and servants massed in the doorway.

“Telephone for the coroner and the police. See what has happened to Riordan.”

I snatched a covering from the bed and threw it over the body as they turned dazedly away. Next I picked up the casket and slipped from the room, closing the door behind me.

The others were already stumbling down the stairs. I glanced about, seeking a hiding-place for the box. A few feet distant was another hallway, extending to a balcony at the rear of the structure and bordered by rooms usually assigned to guests. I hastened toward it, intending to secrete the box temporarily in one of the guest-rooms. But, as I turned the corner, I was forced to halt by something which almost froze me with horror.

At the far end, before an open window, stood the phantom of Jerry Ferguson, just as I had seen it in the graveyard. It was too distant for me to note the features. But, as I leaned against the wall, unable to move either forward or back, the specter raised its right hand, waved, then drifted out upon the balcony and disappeared. It was my old friend's final salute.

Probably I ran from the spot. I never remembered. I regained my senses when I was again in the lower hallway, surrounded by the guests. The casket still was beneath my arm. Then I noted that a sudden storm, accompanied by thunder and lightning, had come up and added to the terrors of the moment.

I found that the authorities had been summoned by telephone, and I took the first opportunity to ask about Riordan. My query brought an instant hush. Then someone took me by the arm and led me to a rear room, at the door of which two servants stood guard. Pushing my way inside, I saw the man, sitting huddled in a corner, staring into space, his whole body twitching. He was mumbling incoherently. His reason had given way under the fearful strain of what he had seen in Sonia's room.

After I had directed the servants to watch him carefully, I returned to the guests, still carrying the casket. There Ruth, dry-eyed and almost upon the verge of collapse, begged that I remain close to her until after the authorities had come. This caused me to postpone opening the casket until later.

It still was raining in torrents when the police, headed by Dr. Carlton, arrived, soaked and mud-splashed. We told them our stories—everything which had occurred that evening—and I showed them the casket, which, indirectly, had led to the tragedy. They spent a long time searching, but reached no conclusion which would explain what had occurred. Their guess was that a thief had been on the second floor when Sonia and Riordan reached there, and that he had thrown the latter down the steps and throttled the woman. Of course, I knew differently. And some of the visitors, I think, suspected the truth. For more than once I overheard some one refer to Jerry's ghost with a shrug and a knowing shake of the head.

Dr. Carlton made no comment, though he directed the investigation and conducted the questioning. When this was concluded, he dismissed the guests and sent Ruth to his home in his car. Next he directed some of his men to remove Riordan to

the county hospital. The police continued a vain search for evidence that the crime had been committed by an intruder.

When the servants had gone to their quarters and the house had been closed for the night, Dr. Carlton picked up the casket and led the way to the library.

"Now, Mr. Moore," he said, "I'd like to have your story, the real story. I don't want it for the records, unless that becomes absolutely necessary, but I want to have my own suspicions set at rest. You can trust me."

I believed him. His whole manner inspired confidence. So I told him everything—Jerry's career and mine, from boyhood on. I told him of my old friend's first and second marriages, all that I learned about Sonia and Riordan, of seeing Jerry's ghost in the graveyard and directly after the tragedy, and of his pledge and mine concerning the casket.

"Have you opened it yet?"

"No. I had no opportunity."

"Do so."

Quickly I located and moved the hidden spring and lifted the false bottom, revealing two folded papers. The front proved to be Jerry's will, dated shortly before his death but unwitnessed. He left all his property, except his wife's legal one-third share, to Ruth. I passed the document to Carlton.

"This would indicate," I said, "that the

deed of the property to Sonia was a forgery."

The second paper was a letter, scrawled in a trembling hand by Jerry. With much effort I controlled the rush of anger which its contents aroused, and read it aloud:

"Moore:—I am dying. Only a day or two more and I shall be gone: I have been poisoned—by Sonia. I am paying for the folly against which you warned me. I don't know how she did it. Maybe in my food or tobacco. But she fooled me and the doctors—until too late. Only today I learned from a faithful servant that she had sent a cable to Riordan. It read, 'It will be soon. Wait.' I am too far gone to fight now. Death already has fastened upon me. Should you find this some day and desire to make certain, have my body dug up. Look for traces of poison. I was a fool not to have suspected it. Protect Ruth. Do not try to avenge me. I shall attend to that.

Jerry."

THE following day Carlton had Jerry's body removed from its grave. Something prompted me to be present. Had I known what we would discover I never would have consented to the first spadeful of earth being dug. For not only was Jerry lifelike as though he had died only the day before, but his shoes and trousers,

clear to the knees, were spattered with caked mud.

I can't explain. Nobody can. But I had seen the specter of Jerry at the Towers the night before. And at that time it was pouring rain. The clothes of the officers who had come to the house had been similarly mud-stained. And yet, Carlton's autopsy did disclose traces of a deadly poison.

There is little more to tell. At the County Clerk's office I examined the deed which Sonia had placed on file. I knew it was forgery, but there was no need of making the fact public. The death of the woman had removed the last obstacle to Ruth's obtaining the property.

Riordan died in a madhouse within the year.

Today I make my home with Ruth and her husband in the Far West.

We never found a purchaser for the Towers. Its reputation is such that even the local residents never venture upon its grounds. Probably it long will stand as a crimson monument to an old man's folly and a woman's treachery. Any one driving along the old river road from New York to Albany and curious to see it should keep his eyes open after passing a point considerably more than half way. The Towers stands upon a high point, to the right of the road, and overlooking a wide sweep of the Hudson.

The Haunted Print Shop

(Continued from page 20)

fyng drink I've had since Phillias La-pointe closed his saloon back in 1918.

"Anyway, as I was saying, about the time my halo clanged on that marble floor, a stout guy with a serious face and a long white beard came over to me and leaned down sort of confidentially. There was a worried air about him.

"'Might I be so bold as to inquire where you learned to sing, Brother?' he asked me.

"'You might,' I said prompt-like, laying aside my harp. 'I learned to sing down at Riordan's stable. They had a quartet down there when they weren't currying horses, and I was the bass.'

"'And might I ask where you learned to play the harp?'

"'You might,' I says again. 'Phil La-pointe had a zither that his father brought from Canada and when I was in his saloon I often used to pick it with one finger.'

"'Saloon! says the man with the long beard. 'Brother, did you patronize a saloon? I hope you repented.'

"'Oh, yes!' I says. 'I repeated probably fifteen or sixteen times every day when I had the money. I repeated so much sometimes I could hardly stagger back to my chair at Riordan's. Phil had the best beer—'

"'You not only misunderstand me, Brother,' says the old fellow sharply, 'you shock me. Don't you know that none can enter here who has thus fallen from grace?'

"'I thought it was a chair,' I said. 'I fell so damn hard—'

"'But before I could say anything more he had clutched me by the shoulder and was trying to drag me away.

"'Listen, old-timer,' I says, 'I'm a peaceable man if you let me alone. But don't get me riled. Take your hand off my shoulder or I'll sock you. Now I'm telling you.'

The ghost seemed agitated. He looked about him again and reached for the benzine can. I had placed it, I thought, beyond his reach, but his arm shot out, lengthening like a rubber band. He clutched the can. His arm contracted. The liquid gurgled down his throat.

"'Ah-h-h-h!' he exclaimed. 'Good old Phillias.'

He drew a hand across his mouth and though I sat amazed, not knowing what to do for my strange visitor should the liquid suddenly send him into spasms, he chuckled to himself.

"'Oh, that's all right,' he said, as though reading my thoughts; 'don't worry about me. Benzine never hurt a real ghost yet, especially the excellent kind you buy. Gascony, or Bideol—one of them, I should say by the taste. Anyway—'

"'The guy with the long beard gave me a dirty look—something like the Y. M. C. A. fellow in Boston the time I wandered in there by mistake and expectorated on the floor.

"'Pick up your halo,' says the bearded gent, severe-like; 'we don't need your

sort here at all. Return it and your harp to the brother at the desk as you go out.'

"'What have I done?' I asks, intending to give him an argument. 'Isn't my singing all right?'

"'A sort of sickly look came over his face at that, as though he'd had a full round breakfast of pickles and ice cream.

"'Emphatically not!' he shot at me. 'The less said about that the better.'

"'All right,' I says. 'All right, I'm not staying anywhere I'm not wanted. I'll go back to Riordan's and sing in the stablehand quartet.'

"'Do!' says the old fellow. 'Please do. The sooner you get out of here, the sooner we can go on with our own song service.'

"'Just then I happened to look across the aisle and there was Pete Simonds who used to be an insurance agent here before he died, giving me the laugh. Pete had a halo and a harp and there were wings on his back—yes, he had the whole outfit and I was ashamed of him.

"'Well, you old two-faced, widowskinning, son of a pirate; how the devil did you get in here?' I shouted. But the old guy with the beard must have done me dirt about that time, for I felt somebody shove my halo down over my eyes and there was a crack on the back of my neck and next I knew it was terribly cold and I seemed to be floating in mid-air.

"'I've been thrown out of better places than yours,' I yelled back over my

shoulder. 'Once when I was in Boston—'
"But there wasn't anybody near me anywhere. I was all alone. Gee, it was awful cold."

THE ghost reached for the benzine can again. This time I did not try to take it away. The chair creaked as he tipped the can to his lips. The breeze died away and the August night suddenly became desperately hot. I had forgotten all about Jim Holton and my problem. Here was the queerest personage I ever had seen. The ghost shook the can thoughtfully. There still remained a little of the liquid that splashed inside.

"Um-m-m, no! Guess I better save it a while," he reflected to himself. "Isn't much left."

He settled back in the chair, his hands crossed in front of his generous paunch, his moon face glimmering white but good natured in the shadows.

"It's awful to be alone," he suddenly announced. "Since I left that place where they played the harps and sang, I've been mighty lonesome. I didn't have any place to go and anywhere to sit for a long time. I'm probably the loneliest ghost that ever took up the business."

"But I should think you could travel," I suggested.

"Oh, I can!" he agreed; "there's no difficulty about that. All I have to do is wish I was some place and there I am. Whoever instituted that method of procedure was sure good to ghosts. It saves wear and tear in our road mileage, and you know we ghosts are not very strong."

"I never get hungry," he went on, "but I do sometimes get thirsty."

HE reached for the can, eyed it meditatively, and started to put it down. "There's another out in the composing room," I said. "If it agrees with you, you're welcome to it."

"Honest?" he queried, his face expanding in a wide effulgent smile. "Well, now, that's great. You're an awful nice young fellow to treat a poor old ghost so highly. Say, I haven't enjoyed ghosting so much since I've been in the business. Well—here's up and down the shirtfront, and long life and happiness to you."

The can came away empty. Once more his filmy hands were crossed in front of his paunch. His face remained wide and smiling.

"Speaking of happiness," he said at last, "you don't seem any too happy yourself."

"I'm not," I replied.

"Shucks! What's the matter? Taking life too seriously? Don't do that; it doesn't pay."

"I have to; I'm in love," I laughed shyly.

"Hm-m-m. That's bad," the ghost reflected. Then, after a pause: "I was in love once. In fact, I got married. Emily was a nice girl and I was ambitious. But somehow she got to liking an overseer in the mill and after a while she up and ran away with him. I don't blame her, sometimes, when I think of it. I had tried to get along, but things went against me and she got tired, I guess. I never knew what became of Emily. She might be up there playing a harp for all I know, though I hope not. They didn't give me time to look around much. Anyway, if Emily'd stayed with me I might

be a better ghost now, instead of wandering around all alone. But shucks, here I am rambling along—What's the trouble, son? Want to tell Henry about it?"

I did, of course. I needed to talk to someone and I told that ghost the whole story. He was paternal in a way and listened sympathetically, occasionally breaking in with strange croaking ejaculations that seemed to echo back in the cavernous interior of him. He had tipped his chair against the wall and part of the time seemed asleep, though somehow I knew he wasn't. I told him about Jim Holton and what I had discovered about him.

"I sort of surmised that for a long time," said the ghost when I had finished. "I think he's all right at heart, but he had a tough childhood and now his greed for money maybe has got the best of him. It's too bad for him, of course, but it's worse for the girl and tough luck for you. Wonder what we could do about it. If I had a good chew of Old Derrick, I could think better. You haven't got any Old Derrick about you, have you?"

I confessed I hadn't. The ghost looked around him and espied the roller from one of our job presses that was to be shipped out the next day for a new covering. Now, press rollers are not rubber, as they appear to be, but are a combination of glue and glycerine, or sometimes glue and molasses, that, with other materials coagulate and solidify to the appearance and consistency of rubber.

"Never mind," said the ghost, reaching out that expanding and contracting arm. "This will do."

Before I knew it he had torn off a chunk of that roller composition and had clapped it in his mouth. He thrust it into the side of his cheek and a look of further benignity spread over his face. A most enterprising and resourceful ghost, I thought.

"Just as I told you," he exclaimed after a moment. "I feel an idea coming on. I knew as soon as I could get a chew that something would happen. It has. What time is it by your earthly watch?"

I DID not follow his mind, of course, but I did look as he had directed. It was 11.15. I hardly knew where the evening had gone.

"What are you going to be doing about midnight?" the ghost asked. "You know midnight is the hour we always have to do our stuff—the witching hour you writers always call it?"

"Why, I'll still be worrying whether I can print the story tomorrow and if I do, what my further relations will be with Eleanor, if any."

"Well, don't worry too much," he advised. "I wouldn't if I were you. By the way, is there any—uh—any—"

I saw his need. I moved the cuspidor over within his reach. There came a crashing splash.

"Thanks," he said. "Honest, you don't know how I appreciate your companionship tonight. I was awfully lonesome and the way you've treated me makes me almost want to weep. I suppose a weeping ghost would be the height of foolishness. But it makes me feel that way—you've been so kind and listened to my story and been so hospitable. You don't know

how I appreciate it. And in return, just you stop worrying, because I think I can help you."

It was nice, of course, to receive that appreciative word, because an editor rarely gets one. But how this monstrous mass of intangible mist could help me was more than I could see.

The chair creaked threateningly again. The ghost was stirring. It seemed to shake like jelly and then the chair came down on its four legs with a complaining groan. The vague white form topped with the broad moonlike face gathered itself together and like a mountain of cloud slowly rose to what I should judge were its feet.

"I hate to move," said the voice at last. "Sitting with you was quite like old times back there at the stable—Shucks! I don't mean to compare the office of the *Enterprise* with a stable. Not at all; not at all! You know what I mean?"

I assured him I did.

BUT I've got to be going," he continued. "Now you just stay around here until midnight and after that you'll have to judge for yourself what to do. If you need further help, though, you just call 'Henry!' like that, and I won't be far away."

I thanked him. There was a whispering sound like silk rasping against itself, and suddenly he was gone.

The office seemed strangely quiet and lonely without his presence. Somehow I had liked him. Never before in my life had I seen a ghost, but this one wasn't so bad. I'd be glad to meet him anytime. Ghosts, as I had read about them, were fearsome things always at odds with mortals. This was a benign ghost. I made a mental note that I should keep an extra supply of benzine on hand, in case he ever came back.

The minutes dragged on. What could he do, if anything? For myself, I could see only two courses—to print the story about Jim Holton and take the consequences with Eleanor, or not to print the story and forever feel that I had been a coward, the most despicable of yellow-livered creatures.

The breeze had returned as I sat there. I had not switched on the light, for the darkness seemed cooler without it and, besides, I was loath to begin the story which I had set myself to punch out on the typewriter and which would finish for me my dream of love. If Eleanor only did not worship her father so much.

Union Square below me was deserted. Almost everybody in this respectable town was in bed by now, yet there did come to me an occasional laugh from the open windows of the clubroom in the second story of the building used as fire headquarters. It was a volunteer department, of course, for a serious fire seldom occurred in Brimmerton. As I sat there I could hear, too, the low murmur of voices and it occurred to me that one of them was Jim Holton's, boisterous and jovial. Setting his fences in the fire department now, I thought.

The street lamps flickered. They were about to go out. Midnight had arrived, for so peaceful a community was Brimmerton that we always put out the street lamps at midnight to save expense. Sud-

denly far down Elm Street the tones of the church steeple clock began their ponderous booming. One, two, three—up to twelve I counted.

But strangely the clock kept on. It was striking more than the allotted number. I sprang up from my desk. There could be but one answer to that. Somebody had turned in an alarm of fire on the last stroke of midnight.

It was true. Faintly I could hear a bell twinkling in the engine house. A clatter of overturned chairs sounded from the clubroom and quickly the big swinging doors on the street floor were thrown open. With a snort and roar, the combination pumper and ladder truck leaped out, the volunteers hatless and coatless, clinging to the polished nickel handrails. And as I gazed out of my window at them, I could see on the seat beside the driver, having the time of his life, none other than Jim Holton.

I COUNTED the strokes on the steeple bell and looked at my list of alarm boxes. Twenty-one! Tompkins road! Holton himself had had the box placed there, with an eye on his roadhouse, I knew now.

Down the stairs and out of the door I rushed. My flivver stood at the curb and in a moment I had the engine running and was following after the truck. As we left the business district and got into the residential part of Brimmerton, lights were appearing in the houses and heads were protruding from the windows.

A fire in Brimmerton in the middle of the night was a big event.

It was the roadhouse. I knew that long before I came in sight of it, for the sky was brilliantly lighted over the brow of the hill behind which it lay. I was close on the fire truck as it turned from the road into the driveway of the house, and like the firemen I knew it would be an almost superhuman task to save it. The house was a rambling old wooden building that formerly had been a tavern. It was two stories in height, and drafty. It burned like a tinder box, flames racing through it with fiendish speed.

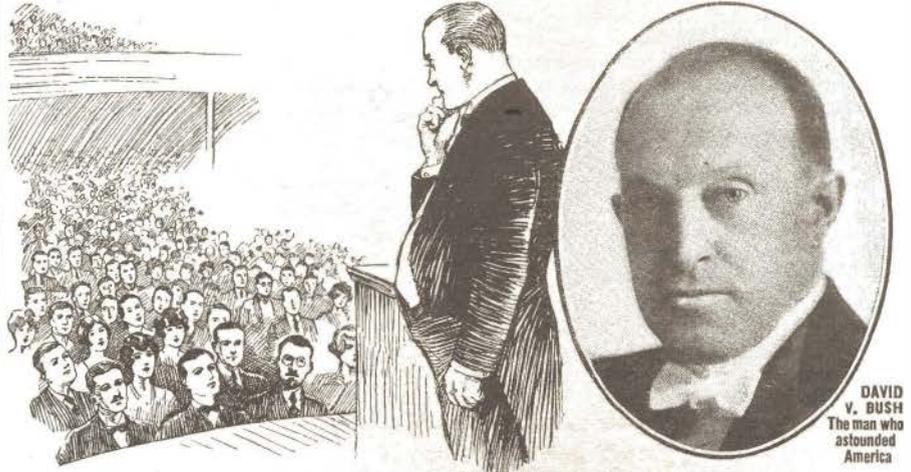
There wasn't a water hydrant within a half mile but the firemen dropped their suction tube into a well and started a stream. The well quickly was sucked dry. The firemen continued to fight the flames with the last pails of water. Some of them turned their attention to carrying out furniture and there was much yelling and excitement. Fortunately the half dozen "guests" who had been there had got safely out.

By this time automobiles were gathering, driven by the townspeople who had dressed hurriedly and in various raiment had come to see the fire. I was standing with one group of them, remarking that it wouldn't be long before the roof crashed through when I felt something cold against me and got a jab in the back.

I TURNED. Beside me was a ponderous white cloud topped by a broad, genial, smiling face. I knew it at once and it occurred to me at the same instant that I was the only one there who could see it.

"Get into the house quick as you can and fetch Jim Holton out," whispered the ghostly voice of Henry Jenkins. "Don't

I Was Ashamed Before My Vast Audience



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V. BUSH
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America

But It Ended My Stoutness

My first and only attack of stage fright showed me the way to banish excess fat—forever

MY heart beat fast! In 15 minutes I was going to face a vast audience! In 15 minutes I was going to speak in Carnegie Hall, New York—the most famous lecture platform in America! One of the largest crowds that had ever assembled in that great hall was waiting for me.

Why did my heart beat fast? Why did I hesitate to face my vast audience? I was a seasoned speaker. I had lectured for years. I had spoken before thousands of people in the greatest auditoriums in the United States. Why should I feel afraid?

The answer was simple. That very afternoon I had received a critical letter from one of my followers. Here's what the letter said:

"Why is it you are so fat?" my critic wrote. "You—David V. Bush—America's greatest authority on right living. You tell others how to live—what to eat—how to care for themselves mentally and physically. And yet you do nothing about your own stoutness."

This letter stung me like a lash! My methods of right living had proved wonderfully beneficial to thousands of men and women. They had proved beneficial in my own case. Yet there was one thing I had been unable to conquer—my stoutness.

Vain Efforts to Reduce

For years I had tried to reduce. I had tried fasting, dieting, exercises, and mechanical appliances—everything I could think of. Nothing seemed to help. I remained as stout as ever.

I couldn't figure out the cause of my stoutness. I am not a heavy eater, but to look at my rotund figure, anyone would think I ate too much. Such was not the case. I ate moderately—lived temperately and took a normal amount of exercise.

A Startling Discovery

That night after the lecture a comforting thought came to me. It was this: All the reducing methods which I had tried were other people's inventions. I had never tackled the problem myself. I had never tried to invent a reducing method of my own.

For weeks I studied. For weeks I tried to find the secret. Finally I came to the conclusion that there was only one logical way to get rid of fat. Then I began to experiment on myself.

Imagine my astonishment! Imagine my delight! In 24 hours I lost 2 pounds! During the next 24 hours I lost 3 pounds more! Day after day I continued my new method of reducing. Day after day I continued to watch my weight. And day after day I continued to lose excess pounds.

I felt better than I had felt in years. I felt vigor-

ous—vital—overflowing with energy. I slept soundly. My appetite increased. I lost that sluggish feeling that fat brings. My mind grew crystal clear. I was able to go through a long, hard day without the slightest fatigue! Needless to say, I continued my amazing reducing treatment. In three weeks I was back to normal weight! To say that I was pleased would be putting it mildly. I was overjoyed!

Nature's Method of Reducing. It Works or It Costs Nothing!

I want to tell you all about this amazing method of reducing which I have discovered. It is simply wonderful. I am delighted with it. My friends are delighted with it. Everyone who hears about it becomes enthusiastic!

I don't care how stout you are. I don't care how many times you have tried to reduce and failed. My amazing new method will make your excess fat melt away like magic—give you a normal, youthful figure—make you slim, buoyant, energetic, as Nature intended you to be, or the treatment won't cost you a single penny!

No starving—no exercising, no drugs—no external agencies—no mechanical appliances. You simply follow my instructions for a few days until your excess pounds disappear—until the scales tell you that you weigh exactly what you should.

This method is so simple that anyone, even a child, can understand how it works and why it works. It is so logical, so reasonable, so sensible that the moment you hear about it you will know instantly that it works.

Send No Money

Merely send me your name and address. When the postman brings you my complete instructions, "How to Reduce," simply pay him the special, low price of only \$2.98 plus a few cents postage. If at the end of two weeks you are not completely satisfied—if you do not lose weight rapidly and easily—then simply tell me so and your money will be instantly refunded. You risk nothing. WRITE TODAY.

DAVID V. BUSH, Dept. H-1439
225 N. Michigan Blvd., Chicago, Ill.

David V. Bush
Dept. H-1439, 225 N. Michigan Blvd.,
Chicago, Ill.

Please send me your complete method, "How to Reduce." I will pay the postman \$2.98 plus a few cents postage. I understand that if I am not completely satisfied at the end of two weeks, I may return treatment and you will refund my money at once.

Name

Address

City..... State.....

Sometimes C.O.D. packages are delayed. To get quickest action send cash with order. If cash accompanies order, we will pay the postage.

wait for anything. He's in the office."

Before I could reply, the cloud had disappeared.

I hadn't any choice. I ran into the office, though burning cinders fell about me and occasional puffs of smoke stung my eyes and made me cough.

There wasn't any particular danger, for the flames were still in the upper story, and I couldn't understand why Holton, in the office, needed help. But there he was, sprawled out on the floor, overlooked by the others, gasping for breath and nearly smothered.

The roar of the flames became more menacing now. Faintly above them, I could hear the crowd yelling excitedly. The roof, evidently, was getting ready to drop.

Holton was a heavy man and difficult to move. I raised him to his knees. He gasped wildly and though he could not speak, his eyes implored me to save him. Tugging at him, I got him propped up against the office desk. He tried to help himself and made it worse for me. I thought he was going to drop forward again and now the smoke was coming in larger puffs. Bending low, I at last got him on my shoulders and staggered for the door. It seemed a terribly long way. Paint on the casings was beginning to curl up in the heat. Setting my teeth I made one last effort and stumbled out of the building just in time. Behind me the roof came crashing through, bringing with it the second floor, and the room where I had been became instantly a roaring furnace.

A cheer went up from the crowd as I appeared at the door and there were many hands stretched out to help me. But foremost, among them all was Eleanor herself, with a look in her eyes of mingled fear and gratitude. At her direction, we carried Jim to her car and under her ministrations he soon was revived enough to start for home.

Just before she settled herself at the wheel Eleanor did a thing that made me feel dizzy—as glad as a Boy Scout who has done his daily good deed and is all set for the rest of the morning.

"John," she said, her eyes glowing strangely at me, "you're just wonderful! You've done more for me tonight than I ever can make you understand. If Papa had been burned to death in that horrible place, life wouldn't have meant much to me anymore. Please come to see me tomorrow night when I can thank you better."

I DON'T remember much about what happened at the fire thereafter. The old house burned flat to the ground and after a while the crowd began to disperse. I stayed there, taking notes, for I knew I'd have to write it for the next day's paper and it would be good for a two-column head on the front page. I even asked the fire chief, who otherwise is the leading grocerman in Brimmerton, what he thought was the cause.

"Crossed wires, or a leaky chimney flue," he said very professionally. "The mana-

ger assures me it started on the roof in the rear and was going like sixty before he discovered it."

I hardly heard what he said, however. After that look that Eleanor had given me, together with that invitation to visit her the next night when she could thank me more, I didn't know whether I were alive or in heaven. After a while, in a daze, I climbed into my flivver and drove back to the office. I went there because I was too dazzled by love to attempt to sleep.

My watch pointed to five minutes past four as I entered the sanctum door and daylight was coming on rapidly. Yet the office remained dim, for it faced the west where the last shadows of darkness were being chased away by the dawn. Again I did not switch on the light. I wanted to think—to think of Eleanor's lovely eyes, the delicate oval of her face, the soft brown hair, the whiteness of her throat and the strong suppleness of her body. I sank down at my desk, a perfect picture, I suppose, of a man so smitten with love that nothing short of a knock on the head would bring him to his senses.

I hadn't been there long, however, before I heard the chair creak across the room. I knew without looking whom I should find there.

"Well," said the voice of my friend the ghost, "it worked. The magic hour of midnight did the trick."

He seemed rather pleased with himself and since I, too, was in a cheerful frame of mind, I did not envy him his. But I was not sure what he meant by "it worked."

"Just what and why and whom do you mean by that?" I inquired.

"I said I'd help you, didn't I? Well, I figure I did. Hasn't it worked out all right?"

"Wonderful! Simply wonderful!" was all I could say. "But what did you do, for I know you did something."

"I JUST used my head," said Henry as he tore off another chew of the roller composition and settled it in the broad whiteness of his cheek. "First, I wished myself out at the roadhouse. Right away I was there. If you ever get to be a ghost, be sure you have this means of locomotion. It's worth while.

"Then I looked around a bit and figured the best way to get you out of the trouble was to burn up the damn place. That would relieve you of writing the story about Holton. If the place was gone it would take the kick out of any charges you made against him."

In the rush of events, I hadn't stopped to think of that.

"So I just hopped up on the roof," Henry continued, "gathered a few sparks out of the kitchen chimney and tucked them in under the shingles. It wasn't a minute before they were ablaze. I had to blow on a couple of them to get them going, and then I discovered something. The more I'd blow on them the better they'd burn. In less than a second

they'd blaze up like a blacksmith's fan forge."

"You mean—?"

"Yes, sir. The next time I have to start a fire I'm going to drink about a quart of benzine first. There's nothing like it."

"I hope you don't use cigarettes, as well as chew," I interposed.

"I know; I'll be careful," Henry agreed.

He seemed to fall asleep then, against the wall. I watched his placid moon face and loved him for the peace of mind he had brought me. He was right. There wouldn't be any point to the story now. The townspeople were glad the place had burned and they wouldn't want to hear any more about it, after the description of the fire that I should write. I would say at the end of my story that the cleansing properties of the flames had cleansed the sore and seared the wound. They would like that and they'd never know that the place really was Holton's. Moreover, after Holton had nearly lost his life there, I doubted if he would rebuild, or spend money for the manager to rebuild.

But there was one thing that puzzled me. After a time I addressed the ghost.

"Henry," I said, "you called me to carry Holton out. Why was he overcome there in the office, when neither fire nor smoke were so very close to him?"

Henry started as though I had prodded him.

"Shucks," he exclaimed. "I thought I saw a good way to help you a little, son. Jim was trying to get the books. He was afraid there might be something in them to incriminate him. I found him there and so I just sat on him. He couldn't see me and if he felt me at all, he probably thought it was a cold breath of air. I'm cold most all the time, you see.

"But I couldn't hurt him none physically even if I did hold him down. We ghosts are too soft and fragile-like. Still, I could smother him a little and that's what I did. I sort of rolled over on him as he lay there. He thought it was the smoke, when it was me all the time. Do you see?"

I saw. And then, when he had smothered Holton enough, he came out and tipped me off and I rushed in and got the man and I was the fair-haired little hero of the morning. Good old Henry!

The chair creaked again. The cloud that once had been 320 pounds of humanity was shaking and surging upward from its seat.

"WELL," said the voice. "I got to be going. It's getting too light for me. Light hurts my eyes, and then—it sort of spoils the ghost business to be caught in broad daylight. Might see you again tomorrow night. Hear you're going over to see the girl. If there's anything I can do, you just say to yourself, 'Henry!' like that. I'll be on the job."

Just before he faded out of my vision there came a terrific crash against the cuspidor. In the flesh or out of it, Henry's aim was unerring.

CAN A BIRTHMARK CONTROL ONE'S FATE?

NOEL ETHRIDGE, like his father before him, had a birthmark that suggested the gashes made by the five claws of a tiger. What could it mean? You will find the answer in one of the most thrilling stories we have ever published—

THE TIGER WOMAN OF THE PUNJAB, in the October issue on sale August 23rd

SPIRIT TALES

Timely Topics of Current Interest

By Count Cagliostro

READERS of this department will remember the several occasions on which I have referred to Eleonore Zugon, the famous "Poltergeist girl."

Once more I am able to do that very unpopular thing—say "I told you so!"

In the pages of this magazine I printed a digest of the sensational statements made about the girl by eminent European scientists. I then made a brief analysis of their evidence, and from a distance of four thousand miles I charged that Eleonore Zugon was a fraud.

One morning readers of the London *Daily News* rubbed their eyes when they read: "The Poltergeist Girl—Unmasked in Munich." The report went on to state that Eleonore Zugon, who recently visited the National Laboratory in London, had been "unmasked by a Munich doctor and conjurer acting in collaboration." The account, which is a translation from the *Berliner Tageblatt*, continues:

"Dr. Hans Rosenbusch and the conjurer, Herr Otto Diehl, a German amateur *Maskelyne* of unusual powers of observation, have published a document proving without a shadow of a doubt that the Polish Countess, Zoe Wassilko, in whose company the girl traveled, was the main agent of the deception. The pair were in Munich where a film was being made of Eleonore's strange markings and the film operator adds as evidence that in the pauses the Countess, under the pretence of smoothing the girl's hair, would skilfully scratch her cheek or neck.

"Eleonore is one of those curious human beings whose skin reacts abnormally, on an average two to three minutes after being pinched, scratched, or even poked. According to the document mentioned, while the girl was displaying one mark either she or the Countess would adroitly manage to injure the skin and so produce the next. Often a handkerchief or a hand held before the mouth to conceal a yawn was used as a cloak; often a flutter of the Countess's eyelids would give directions. So cleverly was this done that no complete evidence was forthcoming till Dr. Rosenbusch could get both to his own house at a tea party on the ostensible grounds of discussing the film, in the success of which the Countess was financially interested. At a sitting after tea, which continued for five hours, notes were taken by Herr Diehl, masquerading as a harmless inquirer, of the most insignificant movement of the girl and the Countess. The absolute coincidence of touch and the resultant mark proves there is no devil in the case, but only very clever sleight of hand. The pair

have now vanished from Munich." So runs the story.

When the Countess and her protégé left London they went to Berlin where they stayed about three months. Their success in London has already been told in these columns. On their way home to Vienna they broke their journey at Munich in order to see Baron von Schrenck-Notzing. Then some one suggested the Countess should make a film of the stigmatic phenomena and this, apparently, led to the "exposure."

Immediately after the publication of the alleged "unmasking" the Countess telegraphed to her principal advocate in Berlin instructions to commence at once an action for libel against Rosenbusch.

Another and immediate result of the *Berliner Tageblatt* article was the publishing in the *Neue Wiener Journal* of a statement signed by a number of Vienna savants rejecting the conclusions reached by Dr. Rosenbusch. The signatories to the document are: Professor Dr. Hans Hahn, Professor Dr. Richard Hoffman, Professor Dr. Hans Thirring, Professor Dr. Karl Wolf, Dr. Alfred Winterstein, and Michael Dumba. Most of these men belong to Vienna University, and they declare that they watched the girl for six months and noticed scratches, bites, and other injuries suddenly appear and disappear, even in broad daylight, when the hands of the medium were held. They state that they have known Countess Wassilko for many years and have complete confidence in her reliability and scientific honesty.

I publish these defenses because I want to be fair. But I maintain that Rosenbusch and I are right, although we are four thousand miles apart. The evidence, as I said before, is there, in the reports.

THE death has been announced of Miss Felicia Scatcherd. She was the daughter of Captain Watson Scatcherd, of the Indian Army. Early in life she interested herself in psychical research and often lectured on the subject of psychic photography at home and on the Continent. She was associated with the late W. T. Stead in the formation of "Julia's Bureau." She published little herself on the subject of spiritualism, but was interested in general literary work.

In recent months she had been engaged on a biography of Sir William Crookes. She was for many years associated with the Humanitarian League and later with the town-planning movement. She recently visited America. Before the war she traveled in the East and assisted Dr. and Mrs. Drakoules in their work in Greece. During part

of the war she edited the *Asiatic Review* and was also on the councils of the East Indian Association and the Sociological Society.

A REMARKABLE ghost story comes from the little quarrying village of Peak Dale near Buxton, Derbyshire, England. Three people, it is claimed, have seen the specter of the curate, the Reverend F. W. Bowring, whose death occurred from influenza over a year ago.

A professional man, who was a close friend of the curate, and whose home is within easy walking distance of the Church, states that when passing the gates in the course of a stroll about eleven o'clock one night, something impelled him to enter the burial ground. There he was startled to see an ethereal figure in clerical attire bending over the curate's grave. He had no difficulty in recognizing the features and figure of the curate himself, who was apparently examining a wreath which Mrs. Bowring had sent.

Confirmation comes from another and entirely independent source. A woman was walking past the churchyard one night, and also claims to have seen the ghost. She was so terrified that she ran to a near-by house for protection.

It is stated that Mrs. Bowring, who now resides in Nottingham, has seen the specter. For a time after the death of her husband she stayed in a house the bedroom windows of which overlook the burial ground. On several occasions the story run, Mrs. Bowring saw from the upper story this vision of the curate looking at his own grave.

THE ghost of Marie Antoinette has once more been seen in Versailles. A farmer named Larne, known to be honest and temperate, was passing through the park the other week when he had a vision of the queen and her court in the gardens of the Petit Trianon.

"It was just as though I had sunk into a dream," the astonished farmer explained to the villagers on his return home. "I was walking past the Petit Trianon on my way to Versailles town, as I have done a thousand times in my life, when I suddenly noticed that everything around me had become strangely silent. And then suddenly figures began to appear, and I saw Marie Antoinette sitting on a bench under a tree.

"I am sure that it was the queen, because I have seen many paintings of her, and because there were many courtiers and ladies in old-fashioned costumes bowing to her and showing respect in various ways. She seemed to be

(Continued on page 95)

The House of the Dancing Mirrors

(Continued from page 40)

"What's this?" asked Ed, laughing.

Edith glanced at me, ashamed of putting him in such a room. I grinned. "The family joke," I said. "We think we hear footsteps, sometimes."

"A woman was killed here," said Edith, honestly, and Ed laughed heartily.

"You not afraid of Spookey, Uncle Ed?" said little Phil.

"Why, Sonny, I used to go out nights spooking around with him, having great times. But now I sleep nights. I'm sleepy now. Lead me to it."

We saw Ed a number of times. He came and went, until finally we said good-by. We got one card, from Brest. After that he did not write, but we did not worry because he never wrote to any one regularly.

As the months went by we continued to hear the footsteps, for which, as I said, there was no accounting. And there were other noises. Boards creaked and snapped, in the dead of night. We made a habit of locking the children's door at night so that they would feel safe. It is human nature to get used to things, and we tried to laugh at Spookey, though we always had a little of that awesome, eerie feeling when we heard the unexplainable sounds.

We stuck it through the fall and winter, and spring was coming around. And then things happened thick and fast.

I suddenly awakened one night with Edith frantically clutching my arm.

"I saw a light in the hall—a flash of light," she was gasping.

Her fright was electrical, almost like a shock. And her fear was contagious. I leaped from the bed, and found my knees weak and wobbly. Huh! a light in the house! Of course, I investigated. I turned on all lights, and searched the premises—even the basement. All doors were locked. The windows were fastened. No one there.

Was there something supernatural about it? Did Edith really see a light? I told her it was imagination.

It was the next day that I found the knife. And that, you may imagine, didn't cheer me up any.

EDITH called my attention to what looked like a tiny leak over the kitchen, and I went up to the bathroom to investigate. I had forgotten that the children had splashed a lot of water on the bathroom floor the evening before. After some effort I pried open a little sheet-iron door in the wall, near the built-in bathtub, and made an effort to inspect the pipes there. The tub rested on a bed of what seemed like gravel, made up largely of plaster-crumbs and pebbles of concrete. But beyond the tub, under the slant of the roof, was some unused space, and it somehow occurred to me that there was room here for a man to conceal himself. As a boy, playing hide and seek, I would have delighted in such a hiding-place.

I found a moist section of this gravel of plaster crumbs, and I dug into it with my finger-tips, to pull it away from the

pipes. Suddenly I felt a sharp prick, as of a needle, and found that I had cut my finger. I continued digging with a pencil and in half a minute I uncovered the knife. It was apparently an old piece, with a jeweled handle, and of beautiful workmanship, the product of some skilled craftsman of a former century.

Startling? I'll tell the world. I began to speculate. I said not a word to Edith, not wishing to alarm her, but wrapped the thing up carefully and took it to the office of Mr. Fraser, then district attorney, although it made me late at my office. He said he could not express his appreciation of the service I had rendered. I replied that it was nothing.

"This is final proof that Joseph Terranella was the murderer of Mrs. Stanton," he said. "This knife is known to have been in his possession. It is two hundred years old, and has a murderous history. After cutting her throat with it, he probably washed his hands in the bathroom and then hid it there. Your discovery might cost him dearly."

"You mean, it might have done so? Isn't he dead?"

"Oh yes—that's right," he replied, with a moment's hesitation.

"You're not sure—absolutely?"

He shrugged his shoulders. "Practically."

"If there was any mistake about those being his bones—in the ashes—do you think he might come snooping around the house again, trying to get this knife back?"

He shook his head. "There was no doubt about those being his bones. But I wouldn't mention this—to anybody."

That evening my friend Duncan Roberts and his wife visited us. It was the first time they had seen the house. We had talked three-quarters of an hour when, in a momentary pause, we heard the footsteps. Edith looked at me. Dunc looked up.

"The children?"

"Didn't sound like children," said Mrs. Roberts.

"That's Spookey," I said.

"The house is haunted," said Edith.

"Holy snakes and catfish," exclaimed Dunc.

THEN I had them go up-stairs and examine the place. The children were asleep. When we came back to the living-room, Edith told of the mirrors that danced on the walls. This was a little too much, I thought. The mirrors she spoke of hung against the outer walls of the house, and a stiff wind outside would easily account for their shaking. I suggested that she tell about the light in the hall. She mentioned my searching the place.

"But, you know, this prowling around the house at night, looking for an intruder, is all wrong," said Dunc.

"I know. The best police advice is not to do it."

"Yeah. Suppose it's not a ghost. He's hiding, behind a door or corner. He has every advantage. The average house-breaker will shoot without warning. Won't even tell you to throw up your hands."

"Oh," said Edith. "But John always searches the house, when we hear a noise." "With an automatic?"

"I WOULDN'T have a gun in the house—with children," I said. "It's a rat-tlesnake in the home—more dangerous than burglars."

"Well, you've got your nerve—or you're foolish."

"He just wants to make me think he's not afraid," said Edith.

"It's not that," I explained. "It's to satisfy her that everything is all right. The need of giving her peace of mind is always greater than the risk."

"All right; sounds great," drawled Dunc. "But I think you're crazy."

Whereupon Mrs. Roberts said sarcastically that no one would ever catch her husband looking for intruders, and Dunc grinned, saying that they could take the house for all of him. Then Mrs. Roberts told of the time she woke up at night, wanting a drink, and saw the dining-room light burning, having probably forgotten to turn it out. She waked up Dunc, but he wouldn't even go out there and look, or switch it off.

"Not for a million dollars," he grinned. "It burned all night. I closed and locked the bedroom door, barricaded it with the bed, and braced the bed with the dresser. Then we went back to bed."

"And he went to sleep," added Mrs. Roberts.

"All very sensible," said Dunc. "But what would you do, John, if you met some one in the dark?"

"God knows. Probably curl up and die of fright."

"Or die from hot lead, with four or five holes through your skin. You keep on that way, and some night you'll meet him."

"Or her," said Edith. "This is a woman ghost."

"Personally," drawled Dunc, "I'm partial to women ghosts."

"Mrs. Stanton was killed in this house—up there," said Edith. "Don't you remember—with her throat cut?"

"Holy snakes and catfish!" exclaimed Dunc, and then he pulled off some low comedy stuff, rolling his eyes, peeking up-stairs and out the windows, and registering mock agitation.

"Of course this ghost business is all bunk," I said.

"How do you explain that sun-parlor door opening?" demanded Edith. "John had gone up to take a bath. I was sitting right over there, reading, when I heard a soft click and the sun-parlor door swung open."

"The wind? An open window?" asked Mrs. Roberts.

"No. I turned on the light out there and looked. Every window was tight shut. So I closed the door, and went on reading, and the first thing I knew I felt a sweep of cold air and the door was swinging open again—"

"O-o-o-oh! Wee!" exclaimed Mrs. Roberts.

"Holy snakes and—"

"But this time I didn't wait to shut it.

I ran upstairs and let it stay open."
 "Yeah," said I. "You came to the bath-
 room and asked if I didn't need your help
 in washing my back." And everybody
 laughed.

Then we told ghost stories for an hour
 and a half. "John, I'm scared to go
 home," said Dunc.

"Then stay here."
 "No, thank you. Good night."

We went to bed. I waked up with a
 start an hour or two later, without know-
 ing why. I raised my head from the pil-
 low so I could listen with both ears.

"John," whispered Edith, "do you hear
 anything?"

"No, I'm just listening."

Not a sound. I said to myself that it
 was only my nerves. Too many ghost
 stories.

"John, did you turn off the gas under
 the oatmeal? Those people were here.
 I can't remember." We always cook our
 oatmeal in a double-boiler a couple of
 hours the evening before.

"I guess I did, all right, but I'll make
 sure." I felt for my slippers, took my
 bathrobe from the chair, and went out in
 the hall. I did not try to light up. To
 do that would be like shouting that I was
 afraid. I listened. I felt my way down
 the stairs, hand on the railing. In the
 lower hall I felt what seemed cold air,
 and now I thought I would have light.
 I felt for the push-button near the living-
 room door, and pressed it. No light. I
 pressed the on and off buttons several
 times. The light did not work. Some-
 thing was wrong. I wondered.

Then again I felt the draft of cold
 air. Incidentally, cold breezes are often
 associated with ghosts, and so this one
 was chilling for more reasons than one.
 But then I reached for the front door.
 It was open—wide open. The nearest
 street light was three or four doors away,
 and the evergreens in our yard made the
 hall pitch dark. I closed the door and
 locked it. I remembered there were some
 matches in my vest pocket, and so I felt
 my way back up the stairs. I found
 Edith at the door.

"The front door was wide open—and
 the lights are out."

"Good Lord! What are you going to
 do?"

"Get some matches and go down and
 put in a fuse."

"In the basement? You'll do nothing
 of the kind."

"We want some lights."

"Maybe it's turned off at the power
 house."

"No, there's been no storm. I've got
 fuses in the kitchen drawer."

"There are candles in that same drawer."

I now had my matches, and lit one of
 them.

"Wait," said Edith, "I'm going with
 you."

"No, you stay here."

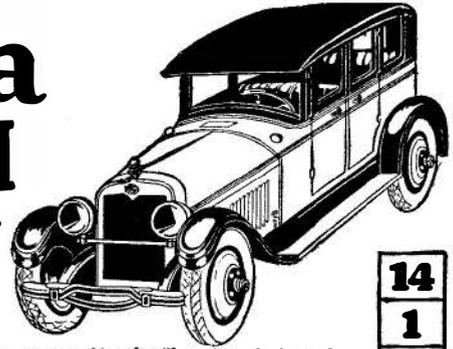
"I'm afraid to stay here."

"Oh, I see!"

"And I don't want you to go down there
 alone."

"I'll tell you," I said, as I saw Phil's
 little baseball bat in the hall, "you take
 this and follow me a few feet behind, in
 the dark. I'll go ahead with the light—
 inviting attack. See?" I giggled, trying
 to make it funny. It was a humorous

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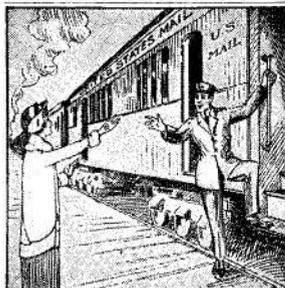
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idea at that. Then Edith became even bolder.

"If any one jumps at you, I'll nail him from behind," she added. And so we proceeded down the stairs, cautiously.

I was on the fourth match and had just reached the bottom of the stairs when I heard a soft rustling noise right overhead—rustling, spooky. My hair was raising on end. I stopped short and was just starting to look up when I felt a quick draft of air and my match blew out. At the same instant Edith let out a blood-curdling, ear-splitting scream. It froze me to the very marrow of my bones. And right on top of that I got a crack on the head, but the blow was muffled, padded.

What was this weird, strange attack? What had happened to Edith. Edith was screaming. There is nothing that so stirs a man as a woman's scream in the night. Though almost paralyzed, I had an instinctive sense that she might be falling, in the dark—and I turned to catch her. Just in time, too, for she dropped into my arms.

And now I was expecting to have to fight some third party, but nothing more happened. I found that she was all right, and after some nervous fumbling, I managed to strike another match.

And then we discovered what had happened. There on the stairs was Phil's overcoat. Apparently he had carelessly hung it over the hall railing above the stairs, and at just the right moment it had slipped off, creating the rustling sound that I had heard. It fanned me as it fell, blowing out the match, and of course it fell directly on top of Edith in that startling way; hence her scream. The bump I got came from the little bat, in her involuntary effort to shake herself free from whatever it was that had seemed to seize her, but fortunately the coat itself was tangled with the bat and padded it.

I laughed with relief, when we saw the coat, and Edith almost wilted as she leaned against me. But a moment later we continued our strange parade through the living-room, dining-room and kitchen, me with the matches, resolutely putting my unwilling feet one in front of the other, and Edith following grimly. In the kitchen I found a candle, in the drawer, got it nicely lit, and laid down my matches; also I put some fuses in my bathrobe pocket.

The candle made a much better light. I reached the basement stair door and opened it. And then the candle blew out, leaving us in pitch darkness again. Did

some one blow it out? Did some unearthly presence resent the light?

"John! John!" Edith cried. There was alarm in her voice. Naturally, she wondered if anything had happened.

"Oh, it's all right," I said. And by that time she had found the box of matches and lit one. This time, when I got the candle going, I put the matches back in my bathrobe pocket. And more carefully now, I went down the stairs, Edith following. The basement was full of shadows. I looked around, on all sides. I could almost imagine moving shapes in the far corners, as I crossed to the wall where the fuse-box was hung. Nothing happened, but we had all the sensations of something about to happen. It surely was a night of thrills.

"Let's see," I said, stopping in front of the fuse box, "did we press the button at the top of the stairs, to make this light go on? I mean, so we can see when the fuse is all right?"

"No."

"Oh, I'll go up and do it."

"I'll go," she said, and before I could stop her she was on her way up, and I could only follow her with the light. "Now," she said, as the button clicked.

The fuses looked all right. I thought I would try screwing them in, and I had just touched the first one, not turning it at all, when the light flashed on. Which was strange, and left us just where we were before, as to the mystery. Had the power house turned on the juice just at the instant that my finger touched the fuse? Had anyone been tampering with the fuses? Any housebreaker, wishing to kill our lights, would have unscrewed the fuse more than that, probably would have taken it out and thrown it away. Had the house been dark because of that barely perceptible turn of the fuse?

"It's the spirits," gasped Edith.

I shook my head. I searched the basement. Before I stopped I searched the whole house. Nothing was disturbed.

"Your brother Ed's been killed. I feel it," she said, in tones of awe, back in our own room. "That's why. That light last night was the flash of a bursting shell, over in France."

"Nonsense," I said, severely.

"And the door."

"Just neglected to fasten it, that's all."

"Something opened that door. What about the lights?"

"Accidental. Mere coincidence."

I took some exercise before I went to bed, bending over and touching my toes, to get my blood circulating and make me

normal so I could sleep. And after a while I really did sleep, though I am not sure that Edith did. But I had a strange weird dream.

In my dream I seemed to be wandering around with a candle in dark places, with creeping, moving shadows all around, and the candle was constantly being blown out by some mysterious figure that sneaked up behind me. And I was always feverishly trying to light it again with matches that would again and again break off or go out. Finally I would get the candle burning and start to look around at the shifting shadows, but the light would promptly be blown out again by my ghoulish, demon-like tormentor.

But the phantom that pursued me seemed to be changing, as things do in dreams. In the confused jumble it sometimes seemed that it was the stalking figure of a woman, in soft, grey veils, making a soft, rustling noise. And again it seemed to be a dark-skinned, fierce-eyed bandit, with a gleaming knife in his hand. Meanwhile I tried stubbornly and resolutely to ignore my pursuer and to keep my candle going and continue on my way. I seemed to be exploring some place deep in the earth. Finally there was a sudden gust of wind that put the candle out again, and in the darkness somewhere, very close, was the noise of a tremendous crash, like a bursting bomb, and with it I felt the phantom suddenly clutch me with a death grip on my shoulder.

At that I woke up, breathless and trembling, to find that the grip on my shoulder was genuine, and also that the noise I had heard was a real crash. The air in the room seemed to be still vibrating from the impact of whatever it was. Edith was clutching me hysterically, and together we sat up in bed. Had the door been battered in? Had an airplane smashed into the house?

I groped for the light, clumsy in my nervousness, and finally turned it on. At first glance everything seemed as usual. But what was the crash? Mystified, I turned toward the bed. And there I saw Edith, staring in terror up into the air. At the very thought that she was seeing an apparition I caught my breath, full of cold shivers.

"Wh-wh-what is it?"

"The mirror!" she screamed. "It was dancing on the wall. I heard it."

And that scream again was blood-curdling. What did she see in the mirror? Some weird phantom—some vague, shadowy form. Oh, God, the horror in her eyes! I turned to look at the mirror.

THE GHOST FORUM

the department that keeps you posted on the pros and cons of spook literature will be in the October issue.

Count Cagliostro, in SPIRIT TALES, will explain the new and amazing method of reading character by the tongue.

Watch for both of these.

It was gone. But what had she seen?

And then I realized that it was the mirror that had fallen, making the crashing noise, all the louder in the stillness of the night. It was one of the old-fashioned kind—courteously called "antique"—that was detached from the bureau and hung on the wall by itself, above. In cleaning, some one had pulled the bureau out from the wall a little, and the mirror had fallen behind it, all the way to the floor, the glass breaking to bits.

"Oh, that's all it was," I said, trying to laugh. But that did not relieve her.

"Some one in the family will die within the year," she moaned.

"Nonsense," I objected. "The only bad luck is having to spend the money for a new mirror. That is bad."

"You make me sick, always pretending like that," she cried.

"Nothing to it," I said. "Picture wire gets rusty, corrodes. Very heavy mirror. Finally, wire breaks. That's all."

"John, all these things are not coincidences," she persisted.

"Nothing else but," I insisted.

After all, everything was quiet, secure, and serene. We had simply been unnerved. We were all on edge. Why not talk about something else? President Wilson, for instance. He was a great man, with great ideas of world peace. But visionary, autocratic. And yet magnificent—

JUST then the light went out. A moment later it came on again. Edith clutched at me. Twice more the light went out and came on, and then it remained on.

"It's nothing—it's just flukey, that's all," and I got up and just a cigarette. But when I saw the look on her face, I said that I'd go down and look at the fuses again.

"No, you stay here."

So I lit the cigarette. It was soothing. I had her smoke one and I smoked another. The light behaved all right. We talked. Then I yawned. Work for tomorrow. Must sleep. She yawned. So we turned in again, and I doused the light.

I must have dozed off, though I have no idea how long I slept. I was tired. But suddenly I was awake again, without any special reason why. A sense of disturbance. I listened. Edith now seemed to be asleep. Then I thought I heard a board creak. That, of course, usually means nothing, but in the dead of night one always thinks it means something, for everything seems mysterious. I was uneasy. Then I thought I heard another sound—so slight that I could not be sure about it.

I told myself that I was making a fool of myself over this business—no doubt at all of that. But in spite of everything I soon found myself out in the hall—in my pajamas and barefooted—bending over the stair rail, peering down into the darkness and listening. I didn't want to disturb Edith by turning on the lights again. I had been making fun of this spookey business to her. It was nonsense, anyway. But this impulse of investigating noises at night was now a habit.

As I peered down into the dark, Dunc Roberts' words came back to me, repeating themselves over and over in my mind: "Some night you'll meet him—some night

you'll meet him—some night you'll meet—!"

I called myself a fool again. I said, "Bunk! Bunk!" I almost said it aloud. A case of shot nerves. I must brace up. So I straightened up, bodily, threw up my head, and turned around. All in utter darkness. And I determined to go back to bed.

And with this good resolution I felt a rush of cold air—and I was back where I was before, holding my breath in that choking way, with shivers down my spine, in spite of myself. I tried to think. Had we forgotten to close that back room door? I couldn't remember. Even so, were not the windows closed?

BUT while I was thinking I was quietly making my way to the door of the spare bedroom—Spookey's room—and I was scarcely surprised to find it open. I went in. It was pitch dark. Not only was it a dark night, but tall elms near the windows shut out even any trace of starlight. At that, it must have been cloudy.

I slowly made my way almost to the middle of the room, and there I stood, holding my breath and listening. I could hear my heart pounding against the walls of my chest—everything was so still. I couldn't hear a thing, aside from my own heart-beat, and yet, somehow, I seemed to feel another presence in the room.

I strained my ears. I tried to hear breathing, but I could not. Of course one can breathe noiselessly if he breathes slowly and gently. I wondered if one could feel the warmth of another's body in a place like this. I would concentrate on that, and see. But just then there came another draft of cold air, unmistakably suggesting the supernatural again, and making my hair rise on end. And I stood there, in suspense—listening. Thinking mostly of spirits, and assuring myself that I did not believe in spirits, and yet filled with nameless dread.

But after a few moments I did hear something. Yes, a very tiny, very slight noise, there in the dark, in front of me. It was only just perceptible to my straining ears, like some soft scraping, as of a man scratching his day-old beard, yet more metallic than that, while infinitely soft. A mouse gnawing? No. The sound did not come from the floor. It originated in the air—somewhere on a man's level. And then I realized that it could not be a spook. The cold air meant an open window.

So now the dread of the unknown was replaced by the certainty of a living intruder. And so it was that I came to know that I am more afraid of spooks, which I don't believe in, than anything real.

But at the time I didn't stop to think of that. I did not even think at all, once I knew that some one was there. In such a circumstance one acts spontaneously, automatically, instinctively—without knowing why. I have since puzzled as to why I did not reach for the light, which was near by, and turn it on. Perhaps my subconscious mind was working faster than my consciousness. Perhaps my subconscious mind had it all figured out if the intruder had a gun, he would have every advantage, and I every disadvantage, with the lights turned on.

Any way, what I really did was an impulsive thing that I have never since ceased

to be surprised at. At the time I did it without hesitation, and apparently with no sense of fear.

When I felt sure there was a man standing there in front of me I just reached out with my hands and took hold of him.

There he was, sure enough, in the pitch darkness. But by the time I felt him with my hands, somehow all my fear had left me. I suppose the feeling of the khaki cloth awakened instant associations. Even before my conscious mind seemed to recognize that the cloth was khaki the thought of my brother Ed flashed before me.

"That you, Ed?" I spoke quite casually, and was astonished that I did not convey my nervousness.

No answer. But in a moment I felt the man's sides vibrating with silent laughter. Then I reached for the light. It was Ed, all right. He looked as hale and hearty as ever, but when I saw the wound-stripe on his sleeve, I knew—without asking him—how he happened to arrive in America at such an unexpected time.

How he laughed, as I gripped his hand. Then I ran out into the hall and turned on the light there.

"Edith," I called, "I've got him. I've got Spookey. I caught him in the haunted room."

She was getting her kimono on. I took her by the wrist and half pulled her to the back bedroom. By this time Ed had disappeared into the big closet, and, as we looked, he thrust out a clutching hand through the crack of the door.

"Oh, my God!" However, she instantly saw that there was someone behind it all, though she was mystified.

"Come out, Spookey," I called. The door pushed slowly open. Ed waited a moment, for dramatic effect, and then emerged, laughing, and waving his arms.

EXPLANATIONS followed. Arriving from France, he still had the key we had formerly given him. He had opened the window because the room was stuffy. He had his match box in his hand, about to strike a light to find the electric fixture, when he realized I was prowling around. And he was curious to see how I would behave. Finally, as I stood there, he wanted to give me some slight warning, and so with his finger-nail he very gently scratched on the side of the match box.

"Did you want to warn me, or scare me?" I asked. "You could have spoken."

He only laughed. "I was surprised, John, that you were not scared."

"I was—frightened almost to death. But say, you big boob, don't you know you were taking an awful chance, prowling like that? I had a perfect right to shoot an intruder."

"You're a big boob your own self," he grinned. "You were taking a bigger chance. A regular thug would have filled you with lead, and no mistake. What you didn't know"—and Ed drew out his automatic—"is that I had this piece of artillery in my hand."

Well, I got something of a kick out of that, too, as part of this night of thrills. It almost brought me up on my toes.

"But say," I exclaimed, "what's the big idea, Ed, of pulling a gun on me in my own house?"

"Oh, the trouble was," he explained,

"that I wasn't sure that it was you."

"Well, huh, who else could it be?"

"Oh, that's what I've been wondering about. I've been watching him half the night."

I turned to Edith. Her eyes were as big as saucers. Apparently there were still one or two thrills on tap.

"John, I told you," she exclaimed.

"Now, wait a minute, lady," I replied, "you said it was spirits."

And then Ed told his story. As he approached the house, he saw a man prowling about, and stopped to watch him. The intruder opened a back door—probably with a master-key—and Ed rushed around to the front, planning to give the fellow a warm reception from the inside. He opened the front door with his key, and in his hurry neglected to close it. The prowler had gotten into the kitchen when Edith gave her blood-curdling scream on the stairs. Ed said he froze stiff at the sound. If it scared the intruder half as much as it upset him, he didn't wonder that the man hastily withdrew.

Ed followed, pulling the door shut after him. Then he sat on the front porch

for a time, watching the house, and finally the fellow returned, desperately determined, but probably still nervous. This time the man had no sooner got into the house when there came the sound of a crash up-stairs—the falling mirror—and that was altogether too much for the prowler's nerves. But this time Ed ran after him for some distance, the fellow evidently thinking the police were on his trail. Actually, before he stopped running, as we learned by the afternoon papers the next day, he ran around a corner into the arms of two policemen. And—as I might have guessed—the man was the notorious Joseph Terranella.

Ed did some further watchful waiting on the porch, before coming in to go quietly to bed in the spare room. He did not want to wake us up. He thought we had been disturbed enough.

When he finished his story Edith suggested that we all go down to the kitchen and have some cold chicken and apple sauce and hot malted milk. But before we did so, I was just silly enough to want to examine, with Ed's help and moral support, the hiding-place behind the little

door that opened to the bathtub plumbing. Of course there was no one there, and it was undisturbed. Then, as we ate our chicken and apple sauce, I told my little story about the finding of the knife.

We moved from the house two weeks later, sacrificing part of our year's rent. I might say, for the satisfaction of those interested in the supposed prophetic magic of a broken mirror, that no member of the family died within the year, nor since, although a kitten that we adopted shortly afterward did so, and enabled Edith to say that Pussy proved the point.

Also Terranella as you may remember, sat down for his last time upon a chair with certain highly electrical properties.

But did these events explain the mysterious footsteps? Not so one could notice. Three nights afterward we heard them again, up in the spare bedroom. The sounds were clear, definite, and inexplicable.

"What—Spookey again?" I asked, laughing.

But Edith did not laugh. "I told you, John. It's her—after all."

"Oh, nonsense," I said, as usual.

My Week-End with the Other World

(Continued from page 11)

and comes to a dead rest until it is started again. For every so often the conversation would lag, and then the oppressive silence of the old house would creep upon our preternaturally alert minds with a frightful and horrible swiftness, like a monstrous phantom cat pouncing upon helpless mice.

"By Gad," Harry exclaimed at length, "I'm licked! I never saw such a solemn gathering in my life. You all sit here like so many corpses."

I COULD have brained him. His wife shot him a reproving glance, while Mary gave a hollow, nervous little laugh.

"Couldn't you think up a better simile?" I exclaimed in exasperation.

"None quite as apt," he retorted, forcing a grin. "See here, old boy; do you know anything about setting up a radio?"

I admitted that I did, and he said that his mother and father had shipped their set, among other things, preparatory to moving into the house.

"Dad made the confounded contraption," he exclaimed, "and I don't know enough about it to put it together without having some parts left over. And he sent fresh batteries with it."

"Fetch it out," I told him, "and we'll see what can be done."

The prospect of having music to enliven our surroundings cheered us all considerably, and Harry went out to the garage with me and we uncrated the parts and carried them in.

It was just a simple regenerative four-tube set, operated by dry cells on both circuits, and we soon had it set up on the mantel, and in working order. Soon we were listening to a symphony orchestra in Cincinnati, the strains of the music that filled the room being as welcome to our ears as water to a thirsty traveler on a desert. I was thankful that the batteries were fresh, and I coaxed every bit of

volume out of the horn that was possible.

The effect of the music was instantly felt by us all, and we settled down to our game in much better spirits. It was nearly eleven before the Cincinnati station signed off for the night, and that insidious, menacing silence stole upon us again. I rose to tune into another station, but I had hardly reached my feet when Mary gave a sudden gasp, and clutched at her throat again.

"Oh—oh, I'm being—strangled!" she choked; "quick, dear—oh, those fingers—"

We were beside her in an instant.

"It's all right, Mary," I said sharply, well knowing that bringing our wills to bear upon this invisible force was our only refuge; "It can't hurt you—"

I took her in my arms, and abruptly she gave a shudder and relaxed, smiling bravely up at me.

"Oh—I'm just unstrung, that's all," she faltered. "I'm all right now—really."

Harry gave a sharp and relieved exhalation.

"Maybe you'd better turn in, Mary," he suggested.

"Oh," she cried, paling; "go to bed? I—I couldn't sleep a wink."

"Why, dearie!" exclaimed Clara, putting an arm about her; "of course, you can, and must. Come; we'll go to your room now. "You boys can occupy our room together, whenever you feel like turning in."

WE watched them ascend the stairs, and then Harry shot me an interrogating glance.

"See here, old chap, does Mary get those spells very often?" he exclaimed concernedly.

I started from the mental perturbation that was settling over me.

"She's only had those *spells* twice," I snapped, "and since setting foot in this wretched old house! Don't be an ass,

Harry; you know it as well as I do."

He smiled, shrugging.

"You're not any too composed yourself," he remarked. "I'm awfully sorry about that confounded maid. Things haven't been normal since she arrived, and I confess that she even got on my nerves. Fancy putting my car in second to back out!"

Subconsciously I was aware of the sudden contrast of sound and brooding silence, as his voice, like a plummet dropping into an immeasurable void, receded and was swallowed up by the enveloping stillness.

"Harry," I exclaimed, pulling myself together, "why don't you come clean?"

He stared at me—unconvincingly.

"What do you mean?"

"Make a full confession, you darned fraud! Say that you can feel something strange about this old house; the atmosphere of it; the characteristics of it, that, with all your papering, painting, and furnishing you have been unable to hide!"

He lowered his gaze—and have you ever seen features relax from gaiety to sobriety? His did.

"All right; you win," he muttered. "Clara noticed it the first night, and I've been playing the part of a cheerful fool ever since. Now that we are alone, I'll remove the mask temporarily. Yes; I've felt uneasy; especially these last two days. But damn it, old boy, it's just imagination!" he exploded. "There's no such things as ghosts, and—"

"Harry," I interrupted him, "just after you drove out of the yard tonight, Mary and I saw a horrible apparition at the window of the maid's room—"

I saw his figure tense, and he turned a grim face toward me.

"Did—did Clara see it?" he muttered.

"No; and we didn't tell her."

He gave a sharp sigh of relief.

"Thank God! Well, I may as well tell you; I saw it last night—when Susie's

screaming brought me down-stairs!"

There was a horrible interval of silence—silence as of the tomb, while we stared at each other. And then, somewhere in that room, we heard a low, shuddering, unearthly moan!

"W-what's that?" Harry gasped, staring around him.

I DUG my nails into my palms, and I looked wildly about. As my eyes swept the fireplace, the eerie moaning sounded again—from the mantel.

"Oh," I exclaimed, forcing a laugh, "it's the radio—I forgot to shut it off after that station signed off."

I hurried to the instrument, and found that I had turned on the rheostat too far. The filament in two of the tubes was humming a protest over the unnecessary strength of the primary current, yet the sound was not as loud as that we had heard, and differed from it.

Suddenly, now issuing from the loud-speaker, came that low, weird moaning sound!

I stared at the set, while Harry reached my side, regarding me askance for some explanation. And then, growing slightly in volume, came an unearthly, shuddering moan that chilled me to the bone:

"Oh—oh—oh—oh—oh—OH—"

Human; yet unearthly. I knew I lied as I muttered:

"Static, Harry; static."

And as if to mock my assurance, the moaning sound broke into strangely human and sibilant gasps, and then—into words; words that were muffled and nearly unintelligible:

"—Oh—h-h-have—mer-cy—in—the—n-name of—God!"

The blood froze in my veins, and I felt fingers dig into my arm. It was Harry, but he gave me a shock.

"What in the devil is that—that voice?" he chattered.

I reached for the tuning dial.

"Might be a radio play," I muttered; "some station with nearly the same frequency."

My fingers shook as I grasped the knob, and the weird voice began again. I turned the dial sharply, and a local station was brought in; the final bars of an orchestral rendition of *William Tell*.

"D-don't hear it, now," Harry exclaimed.

But between the final notes and the announcer's voice we distinctly heard that spectral moaning, and gasping words!

"Broad, that station—set isn't very selective." I mumbled, desperately seeking to find the cause or source of the strange cries in the instrument. The horrible realization burst upon me that, should I fail to do so, we were lost—would be at the mercy of that creepy old house and its monstrous phantoms; that frightful, staring, apparition with claw-like hands that strangled, or had almost strangled, two human beings within the short space of a few hours.

BUT, no matter where I turned the dials of the radio, we heard that awful, anguished, sepulchral voice, that chilled us to the very soul!

And then—I saw it! Out of the shadows of the hall came a hideous apparition, advancing slowly toward us, its claw-like hands spread, its vaporous lips fixed in a wide, maniacal grin!

I will never understand why I didn't die of sheer fright then and there; why we both didn't, or at least go into a faint. On the mantel beside us was the haunted radio, that creepy moaning and gasping issuing from the horn as an obbligato to faint strains of music from a half-tuned-in station, while drifting closer and closer was this awesome, terrible specter. Never will I forget it; the features and figure were that of a tall, powerful old man. The countenance, emaciated and distorted, with its ghoulish, staring eyes, a mop of ghostly hair hanging in bedraggled wisps about the large ears, was horribly satanic.

Then as we stood rooted to the spot gazing at this thing in speechless fright, we heard somewhere above us the screams of Mary and Clara, and the ghostly, muffled pattering of footsteps!

It was then that something happened to poor Harry. I heard him give an idiotic laugh, and babbling incoherently, he started toward the advancing specter! As he bore down upon it, the thing left the border of shadows and seemed to disintegrate, even as Harry stepped through it. And then another shrill scream pierced the darkness above.

I sprang forward toward the stairs, but I had hardly taken a half dozen steps before I was seized violently by the shoulders and sent crashing against a floor-lamp. As I sprawled to the carpet with the falling fixture, I caught a fleeting glimpse of Harry's face turned toward me. He was grinning idiotically and his eyes stared insanely. With his fingers spread out like talons, he bounded up the stairs, uttering a series of horrible laughs!

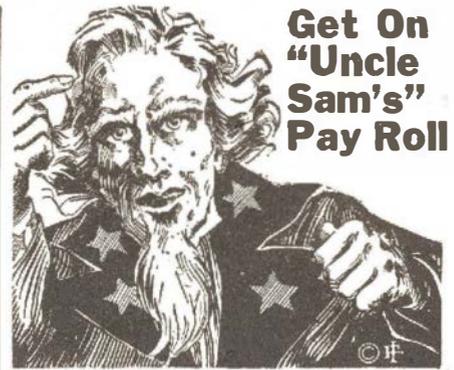
"Harry! Harry!" I shouted, scrambling to my feet.

Oblivious to my outcry, he took the top three steps at a single leap, and disappeared down the hall. A frightful realization burst upon my horror-saturated sensibilities. It was as if my capacity for terror had been exceeded, for suddenly my swimming faculties cleared, and I knew that Mary and Clara had screamed for help, and were now threatened by a new and terrible menace.

The haunted radio and the strangling phantom forgotten, I dashed up the steps two at a time, and had barely gained the top landing when I heard the sounds of a struggle, and the babel of screams, idiotic laughter, and Mary's voice calling to me frenziedly. The light from an open doorway projected grotesque, struggling shadows upon the floor of the bed room, and I hurried forward swiftly, horribly aware of what was taking place before I even gained the threshold. Babbling incoherently, the possessed man was choking his wife into insensibility, while Mary tugged frantically at his wrists.

HE raised a startling face toward me as I dashed into the room, but one glance at Clara's limp figure and those cruel fingers pressing into the soft flesh of her neck sufficed to launch me upon his tensed, muscular body. With a desperate effort, I wrenched his hands from Clara's throat, and while Mary dragged her to the bed, Harry and I locked arms, and crashed to the floor in a grim struggle.

He had always been my physical superior—at college, he had been regarded as the greatest tackle in varsity history. Now he seemed endowed with superhuman



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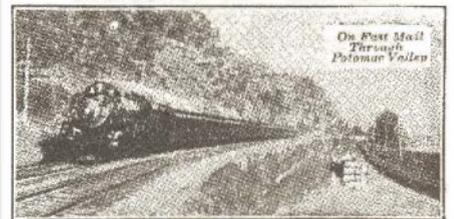
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strength, and in a trice he had me upon my back, and was kneeling upon my stomach, his strong fingers around my own neck. His face, with its staring eyes and grin, was like that of the specter.

"Ha!" he laughed through clenched teeth. "You're her lover! Her lover—her lover! I'll kill you both," he screamed, "with my bare hands!"

The tone of his voice, and his words sent a surge of unutterable horror coursing through me. I tried to pull his hands away, and I knew that Mary was trying to help, but the blood was congesting in my head; my lungs clamored for air, and things were growing black.

"I'll hide your bones with Amy's and Hiram's!" the maniacal voice dinned into my ears. "Ah-h-h-h—!"

"Harry—for God's sake, stop! Stop—"

Mary . . . for a brief instant my faculties cleared, and in that instant I acted upon the clamorous instinct of self-preservation. With all the force I could command, I crooked my right arm and sent my fist crashing against the point of his chin, and he collapsed, pitching sidelong to the carpet.

It seemed hours before I was able to stagger to my feet, but actually it couldn't have been more than three or four seconds. Harry, fortunately for all of us, had been knocked completely out, and I wasted no time in snatching a drape from the window and binding his wrists tightly behind him.

Meanwhile, Clara had partially recovered, and soon the girls and I lifted Harry to the bed, and then dropped exhausted into chairs.

"What—what was the matter with Harry?" Clara gasped. "Has he gone mad?"

"Temporarily," I said grimly, determined that the old house would exercise no further influence over us. "Harry and I saw the ghost that Susie was frightened at, and heard a weird voice coming from the radio. It affected the poor chap's mind, and he dashed up here like a maniac. He'll be all right, as soon as he comes to, but it's just as well that he's tied—in case he still has that strangling mania."

Clara burst into a flood of tears, and went to the bed. She bent over her husband and stroked his forehead.

"My poor Harry! Poor, dear Harry!"

"Poor, dear Harry almost did for us," I muttered. "We've got to take a grip on ourselves. I'm not going to let this confounded place bother me another instant."

"But that horrible phantom—and that haunted radio?" Mary said in a quivering voice; "and what did Harry mean—who are Amy and Hiram?"

I shrugged, muttering that Harry had been out of his mind.

"Of course he was, poor dear!" Clara exclaimed from the bedside. "I suppose he's been brooding over poor uncle's tragedy. You see, Amy was Mr. Fraser's first wife, and he loved her with all his heart and soul. When she ran away with Hiram Morrow, the son of a neighboring farmer, it nearly killed him."

Vague, sinister thoughts were circulating in my mind.

"But Fraser married again, didn't he?"

"Yes. A Nancy Flemming, a cousin of Amy's. She sympathized with him,

and he married her within a year. But—"

Harry was stirring, and she bent over and hugged him close. I remembered the rest of the tragic story, however. Nancy, Fraser's second wife had gone mad, and had been taken to the asylum, and Fraser had shut himself up in the old house for nearly forty years. . . .

"What happened?" I heard Harry gasp; "what am I doing here—Clara—"

"You fainted," I lied promptly, before either Clara or Mary could retort.

HARRY raised himself to a sitting posture, a disgusted expression on his face, and then he noted that his wrists were bound.

"Well—what's the idea of tying me up?" he demanded.

"Oh, tell him the truth," Clara exclaimed. "He may as well know."

I well knew that Harry had an inquisitive and tenacious mind, and I acquainted him with all of the details, while I untied his wrists. He was not a little mortified and embarrassed, and he and Clara caressed each other for a while. I could not keep from smiling grimly when he took her tenderly in his arms—I recalled too vividly how he had nearly choked her to death a few minutes before. I made a mental note to keep my eye on him the rest of the night.

But Harry, like myself, had, as he expressed it, become "fed up" on supernatural things, and we were both determined to resist all insidious impressions and conduct an investigation of the voice we had heard at the radio, and of the house in general.

"But what were you girls screaming about?" I asked.

"We saw a ghost," Clara said, paling; "the ghost of a woman kneeling upon the floor near the bed, swaying, and clutching at her throat. Oh, it was dreadful—"

Both Clara and Mary had seen the thing, and had screamed, leaping out of bed. The apparition had followed them, and as they had headed for the stairway, it had fled before them and fallen at the head of the stairs. Clara and Mary had hurried back again into their room, screaming, and then Harry had burst in upon them, in the throes of his mental obsession.

We all went down to the living-room. Naturally, sleep was the furthest thing from our minds, and so Clara and Mary made some hot coffee and sandwiches. We settled around the fireplace to eat the refreshments, and discussed the experiences of the evening. The radio was as I had left it, though the spectral voice had ceased its weird moaning. I tuned in to a powerful Chicago station that was broadcasting Easter music. I expected at any moment to hear the ghostly voice between music and announcements, but apparently the manifestation was not to be resumed.

But as we sat there, nibbling at the sandwiches, sipping coffee, and conversing, a recurrent feeling of dread stole over me, and I found my gaze often drifting toward the shadowy hallway. As the sinister phantom failed to appear, my courage returned in full measure, and when Harry finally suggested that we make the rounds of the lower floor, I readily agreed, though Mary and Clara were not disposed to be left alone.

"I'd much rather dress and go to Easter sunrise services," Clara exclaimed, when Harry invited her and Mary to accompany

us. "I don't mind telling you, Harry, that I have had enough of this place, and when it's daylight, we're going to pack up and go to a hotel."

HARRY shrugged, seating himself again, and I smiled at Mary, taking my place beside her.

"Clara's right," Mary exclaimed. "And we'll do the same thing."

"Well," Harry muttered, "it's been a mighty queer business, but I'll be darned if I take much to the idea of deserting the place, after all we've done to it."

"And how about all it's done to you, and to the rest of us?" Clara exclaimed spiritedly. "No, my dear Mr. Sinclair, we leave here right after breakfast, and you'll not drag Wife back with a team of horses!"

"But our furniture!" expostulated Harry; "all our improvements, and—"

"You can come back and remove our personal effects, and Dad's and Mother's things in the garage and basement; put them in storage, or else rent a bungalow. As for this old house and the furniture, maybe you can sell it to some one who is crazy, deaf, dumb, and blind."

It was a good argument while it lasted, and it lasted until dawn. After breakfast, we packed our things, and drove to the city, where, with rare good fortune, a furnished bungalow was found. While Clara and Mary relaxed for a few hours' sleep, Harry and I hunted up a drayman, and after a long search, it being Easter Sunday, we located one. Harry gave him the address of the place, and we went on out to get the things ready for moving.

During the morning I had been speculating upon the weird events of the evening before. I had no doubt that the horrible phantom strangler had been the ghost of old Samuel Fraser, bound to the old place by some grim associations. The specter the girls had seen had possibly been that of his first wife, Amy, but the weird moaning and gasping words that had come from the radio troubled me most. How was it possible that, even granting the existence of a spirit voice, it could transpose itself into electrical sound vibrations?

Harry suddenly interrupted my thoughts. "Old boy, I've a confession to make to you," he said soberly. "It's been a family secret for years, and I've never told Clara. I worried a bit over it myself, but I never dreamed that the thing would come up and ruin all that I have done with that house—that the darned old place would be haunted."

"Well, let's have it," I prompted, as he hesitated.

"Well," he said, "Uncle Fraser's first wife left him to run away with Hiram Morrow, all right. But that isn't quite all. Neither Amy or Morrow were ever seen again, alive or dead."

I gave a gasp.

"You mean that—"

"It is only a suspicion," Harry muttered, "but for a long while folks thought that somehow, Uncle Fraser had overtaken and killed them both, burying their bodies somewhere. But—they couldn't prove anything, and besides, Uncle was so broken up over the loss of Amy—he loved her more than his own life, they say. . . . And when he married Amy's cousin, Nancy, and she went crazy after a year or so in

the house and died in an asylum, everybody sympathized with him; even when he turned his back upon the world, and began the life of a recluse. And after a few years, it was whispered about that he had gone mad himself." He sighed. "He minded his own business, though, and folks left him alone."

WE swung into the driveway, and as I accompanied Harry into the house I questioned him further, a horrible suspicion growing in my mind. But it wasn't until we were crating some books in the basement that my suspicion crystalized into a dread, fixed theory. I came across an old volume that had formerly belonged to Harry's Uncle—a dog-eared, finger-marked book of Edgar Allan Poe's short stories.

"Come on," I cried to Harry, seizing a hammer and chisel.

"Are you going daffy?" he gasped, as I headed for the stairs.

"I was never more composed in my

life," I retorted. "Come on. Follow me, and give me a hand."

I hurried to the fireplace in the living-room, and after lifting the radio from the mantel, studied the structure. It was of fire-brick, painted over, with the exception of the mantel itself, which was of wood.

"Well, what's wrong with the mantel?" Harry exclaimed, following my speculative gaze.

"Have you any objections to my prying it apart?" I asked him. "Don't stare at me; I'm not crazy. Well?"

"Go ahead," he said and shrugged. "But what's the idea?"

I bent close to the mantel to see how it was put together, and as I did so I was conscious of a faint, nauseous odor. With a triumphant exclamation, I drove the chisel into the joint between the top board and the facing strip, and after pounding and prying away, the dry facing board split and, as I wrenched away at it the whole section tore loose with a

screach of nails, and a flood of mouldy, human bones clattered to the floor, among them two skulls.

Harry gave an exclamation, stepping back in horror.

"My God! Then—he did kill them—"

"That's all that's left of Amy and Hiram," I nodded. "They were buried *a la Poe*."

I turned away, sick with loathing and disgust.

"You might as well notify the police," I told Harry! "God! No wonder this place was haunted!"

It has been six years now since my gruesome discovery. Harry leased the old house for a while, and apparently the specters had departed, for the tenants were not troubled by any strange noises or ghostly visitations.

Indeed, they took a fancy to the place where we had seen spooks, and they finally purchased the homestead.

As for the radio, it has never been haunted since.

Through the Wall

(Continued from page 23)

from the yellowed pages. There it was—the graceful penning of a hand long laid to rest, whose blood now ran in my veins. I felt as though I stood before something holy. I turned as if half expecting to see a dark-haired, dark-eyed woman, dressed in the fashion of centuries ago, reading and smiling over my shoulder.

"I turned the page.

"To my Deere Lorde and Husbunde—". I read, and stopped. Something had dropped from between the pages of the book.

"Would to God that I had never touched the yellow sheet of paper that stared up at me from the floor. Why did not some benign spirit prompt me to snatch up that evil thing and fling it into the hearth?"

"But at that time I heard no warning whisper, I had no inkling of what was to come.

"I unfolded the sheet. Revelation!

"It was mildewed and yellowed with age but of a fine texture, silky, lustrous. And on it something that fired my imagination and made my antiquarian instincts leap into new interest.

IT was a drawing and I recognized it instantly—my beloved yet sinister Tapestry Room or, rather, a part of it. Could any one mistake that corner in which the long walnut panels depict the allegory of the Prodigal Son? Beautifully drawn, the intimate details showed up clearly; the fine moulding at the base of the paneling; the intricacies of the birds and flowers that rioted over the borders of the wood.

"One of the corner panels was more heavily drawn than the others. It represented the climax of the Biblical story. There, faithfully copied from the carvings of the craftsman, were the conventional figures—the Father clasping the returned Prodigal to his bosom, the tearful Mother hovering over them, in the distance the Dutiful Son stealing away, hatred upon his dark face.

"But what drew my attention was an arrow, a small arrow in one corner of the panel, an arrow which I well knew had no place in the carving of the piece itself. At its point was a small dot. I stared at the thing, trembling with excitement. Paravaine House is old, its origin buried in the mists of the centuries. And by many of its lords has it been remodeled and altered until today it is a veritable hodgepodge of Tudor, Stuart, and even Georgian architecture. And strangely enough this conglomeration is harmonious; it seems as if the best features of each period have been retained, purged from the dross until they blend softly and gracefully into the imposing whole. I who knew by heart all the legends of the house, its old nooks and crannies, its forgotten attics and vaults and dim corners, its secret passage chill with the memory of ancient, evil deeds, felt myself upon the threshold of a momentous discovery.

"It could only mean one thing. Behind that panel lurked something, another mystery in this house of lifelong surprises. I took a lamp from the library table and bent my steps in the direction of the Tapestry Room. Down the long, echoing corridor I walked. The door of the room was open.

"Did you at any time ever have the impression that an inanimate object was possessed of a personality, a sort of soul or entity? If so, you can fancy yourself in my place as I gazed into that silent chamber. It was as though the room was *waiting*, standing on tiptoe with a hushed, dread-expectancy.

LONG, quivering spears and pools of crystal moonlight shimmered upon the dark polished floor; one patch gleamed upon a tapestry which, gently stirring in the night breeze, lent a strange, fitful, writhing motion to its embroidered arabesques. And back in the dense shadows of the room

where the hangings rustled faintly and the dim shapes of furniture loomed darker, hovered something strange, malignant, an essence, an invisible phantom, breathlessly waiting.

"I went directly to the southeast corner of the room. The shadows closed in about me as I set my lamp on the floor and drew back the heavy folds of the tapestry that covered the panel. In the soft light the carvings wore a sinister appearance. The face of the woman had lost its welcoming smile, the expression of the features had degenerated into an idiotic leer. Over her shoulder the dour face of the Dutiful Son regarded me in what seemed ill-omened prophecy.

"My finger slowly traced on the wood the exact distance occupied by the arrow in the sketch. Yes, there was something there, a slight discoloration that would certainly have been overlooked by any one not searching for it. I opened my pocket-knife and commenced operations. The discoloration was nothing more than a kind of putty hardened by age. The last flakes of it fell away before the sharp blade and I was rewarded by sight of a small hole, about the circumference of a lead pencil, sunk into the wood a quarter of an inch.

"I explored the shallow hole thoroughly with the point of my knife, and stood back, looking at my work rather crestfallen. What now? After a moment's thought I snatched the silver pencil from my breast pocket, inserted the point in the hole, and gave a smart tap with the knife handle. Nothing happened. A second tap—something gave a little. A third—the pencil plunged into the opening and there came a musical tinkle from the other side of the panel.

"With sweating palms I again stepped back. I hardly knew what I expected to happen. Nothing did, of course. I might have known the panel would not move of itself.

"So I stepped forward again and, grasping a projecting piece of moulding, gave a strong heave to the left. The thing stood as immovable as a rock. Changing facts I threw my weight to the opposite side. There was an encouraging creak, finally the whole panel slid back, groaning protestingly in deep grooves, and disappeared behind its overlapping neighbor.

"A black, mysterious space yawned before me and my nostrils became aware of a dry, musty, irritating odor—that of air long enclosed in a narrow place.

"At my feet lay the lock that had held the panel immovable. It was nothing more than a rusty steel cylinder about the size of a pencil. From the wall of the chamber projected an iron bracket with a hole that corresponded to the size of the bit of steel. When this hole and the one in the thick panel were in conjunction, the cylinder tapped into them made a lock as simple as it was effective. All this I noted as I stepped into the aperture.

"The unsteady light of the lamp disclosed a narrow, curved flight of wooden steps that led downward into blackness. As I stepped down, carefully testing my weight upon each stair, the fine cobwebs of years clung to my face and hands, unpleasantly suggestive of grave-cloths. Underfoot the fine dust of centuries lay thick and soft. How many years, I wondered, had elapsed since a human foot had trodden that secret way? What anguish and terror might once have walked with him who last sought this refuge?

"The last stair creaked under my cautious foot and I found myself in front of a massive, iron-studded door that hung half-open upon huge, rusty hinges. They screamed like a wounded animal as my vigorous thrust forced the door back. I confess that my first feeling, as I surveyed the interior of the little oblong room, was one of disappointment. It was just a cubby-hole, a dry, musty box, carpeted with fine dust that whiffed up under my feet and stung my nostrils acridly. It was entirely bare but for a long oaken bench that stood against one wall and the innumerable spider-webs that, heavy with dust, bore a queer resemblance to tattered, faded battle-flags, moldering in a forgotten corner of some dim abbey.

"I set the lamp on a shelf near the door and looked carefully around the room. Then my heart skipped a beat. Under the bench lay a heap of clothes, ancient in style, covered with gray dust, yet suggesting the body of a man. My first disappointment vanished; instead, the queer, driving expectancy that had gripped me in the Tapestry Room descended upon me and left me sweating. It was as though that nameless agency which had brooded in the shadows above had followed me on tiptoe down those sinister stairs and stood veiled and waiting behind me. I turned with a shudder—and only the dense gloom met my eyes. But that heap of rags...

"Gingerly, I touched them. Under my fingers the velvet of the long cloak shredded away, disintegrated before my eyes. The miscellaneous heap of moldy linen that lay below might have been anything—fine fabrics, too fragile to withstand the onslaught of years. As I pulled at these dusty rags something brighter gleamed dimly from the debris. I brushed aside the brown relics—and tragedy stared up at

me. An old, old tragedy it was!

"It was a doublet, such as had once been worn by the young blades of Cavalier days. The bright cloth of gold had faded, the underlying fabric was desiccated and rotten, but it still gave mute witness of an ancient crime. A murderous hole gaped at me from the breast, and a dark stain, that once had been bright red, blotched out the tarnished finery. The crumbling bones of a man shone white through the hole in the doublet.

"I shivered. The somber shadows crowded close upon me; that presence that hovered in the gloom reached out an icy hand and touched my heart. Somewhere in the dark recesses of my soul sighed a whisper like the shuddering after-tone of a tolling bell:

"*'You are Guilty . . . guilty . . . guilty . . .'*

"I stepped back in horror, and then I saw that at the very bottom of that moldy, bloody heap there lay a sheathed sword.

"As I stared at its slender, carved scabbard and the wonder of its inlaid hilt, blind, unreasoning fear surged over me.

"And the whisper in the depths of my soul grew louder until it seemed to split my ears, and the thick shadows stirred and crowded closer still, and in the blackness I could hear the ghostly echo of evil laughter.

"The shackles of terror clung heavier about me until with a mighty effort of will I turned my back on that awful heap of bones and clothes. I stumbled blindly up the creaking stairs, and found myself in the upper room with the calm, blessed moonlight streaming in through the long windows.

"**I** KNOW now!

"Once again for me has the veil been rent, that thin, flimsy veil that mercifully guards us from the unseen, the unspeakable. Mercifully, I say, for how should we go blithely through our fool's paradise here, hoping, fearing, loving, if we knew that by our side stalks our grim Destiny, the terrible burdens of past ages—pain, despair, sin unnameable?

"Oh God! The agony of realization once that frail curtain has been sundered. To hear the awful trumpet voices of accusation echoing through the long slumbering vaults of the mind, galvanizing the dead memory to fearful life, crushing the spirit with the not-to-be-denied clamoring of vengeful conscience. To cower beneath the appalling weight of forgotten crime, to see pale faces and twitching hands hovering at the windows of the soul, demanding—justice.

"Tonight I have plumbed the dark depths of a human soul—my soul. And tomorrow—ah, will there be a tomorrow?

"Far into the night I had tossed in uneasy, intermittent slumber. Periods of apprehensive wakefulness alternated with broken dreams, chimerical, peopled with hollow voices, and Medusa-like faces that peered at me, and ghouls that danced in the halls of the dead.

"Suddenly I was wide-awake.

I SAT up in the bed trembling in every limb. Through the windows the stars glimmered, cold, impassive, millions of miles away. They dimmed perceptibly even as I watched. A gray, chill mist that

was the portal of the past rose inexorably before my shrinking gaze. What did it threaten? In a sudden frenzy of terror I strove to hurl myself from the bed! I tried to scream!

"Useless! My physical being, my will, was held as in a grasp of iron. Fascinated, I watched the gray folds eddying and swirling about me. They closed in on me. My fears were lulled to rest as their narcotic influence pervaded my senses. Slowly I lost hold on the tangibilities of life. Then Time was no longer; the world had been removed; and I floated through vague abysses of space where the hollow music of the universe tolled the requiem of the passing of the eons.

"There came a roaring as of the sea, the clinging vapor lightened and streamed away, reality rushed upon me—and I, standing with my back to the carved panels of that accursed Tapestry Room, wiping the cold sweat from my brow with my ruffled sleeve—I *knew!*

"For the floodgates of memory were opened and the veil had fallen from my eyes. There I stood as I had stood three weary centuries ago, and I looked at the naked sword in my hand, its blade a living glory in the reflection of the candle-light, and from it to *her*.

"She stood beside me as though the years had never been, her false, beautiful face convulsed with terror, her white hands thrown wide. Woman! Eve! Fair as Heaven and false as Hell—the wife of my friend! And I, guilty wretch, was poised like a hunted animal at bay, foul with fresh sin, terror-stricken before the avenger.

"In the doorway he leaned, his well remembered face darkening with his righteous wrath, his lips distorted, into a bitter smile. Oh, what were the thoughts that were passing through your tortured soul then?—you Claude, last of your ancient house of Merriel, you who were my friend, who had loved me with little less fervor than you had loved her, guilty partner of my crime.

"Your lashing, scornful words scourged: "So this is the honor of the Paravaines—adulterer!"

"And as the woman screamed, cowering back against the couch, his steel leaped like a living thing from its sheath, and I, reading death in his eyes, leaped upon him with the desperation of a cornered rat. The weird, vivid terror of that scene! The flickering candles cast ghastly caricatures of our straining forms against the beamed ceiling and splashed the whirling blades with golden fire.

"Lunge, parry, ripost, flannonnade, all the tricks of that devil's art flowed from the weapons in lightning succession. Rasp of steel! Hard scrape of foot on floor! My own hoarse breathing filled my ears. For he was my superior. Back, back I was forced, viciously, despairingly contesting every step of my retreat.

"He was like a demon. Twice my sword was crushed aside and death quivered at my throat. Only the frantic desperation of guilt saved me. I staked all on one lightning thrust and heard the breath hiss between his clenched teeth as with superhuman quickness his parry *en seconde* diverted my steel the fraction that cheated death.

"As his fierce ripost darted at my breast I hurled myself bodily aside and

felt the quick agony of the point in my left shoulder. Again the blades clashed on guard as he recovered. His attack redoubled in intensity, and parrying blindly, instinctively, I was forced to the paneled wall. For a moment I was lost—then with a curious suddenness I became icy calm.

"I had him!

"I knew it—knew that he had spent himself in his terrible fury, knew that he had thrown away his mastery in his blind passion. My head cleared as the warm blood trickled down my arm.

"I BEGAN to fence with the devilish skill of a master. Rapidly his attack grew weaker. I saw the burning eyes starting from his livid face and the beads of sweat standing thick upon his brow—and I laughed.

"It was a simple play, one that in a saner moment he would have scorned—the quick, disarming riposte after a parry *en sixte*. But it succeeded. His sword whirled from his grasp and before it had clattered on the polished floor he was transfixed, breast to back, the madness dying out of his dark eyes, the life slipping away from his convulsed body.

"I stood over him, bloody sword in hand, and watched him die.

"The red drops dripped from the point and I watched them fascinated. Dark haze swam before my eyes. Things grew confused. As in a dream I saw myself opening the secret panel, saw her, now steady-lipped and dry-eyed, helping me lift the body of him who had been my friend.

"Down the narrow stairs we carried him—and my guilty eyes could not meet hers. With face averted, I laid my end of the burden on the floor by the wooden bench. I put his sword—wet with my blood—back in its scabbard.

"We turned without a word and climbed the stairs to the Tapestry Room. Panic-stricken, I slid the panel into place and fitted the steel cylinder in the lock. I filled the hole with putty while she stood on guard at the door. I sealed the room against the passage of centuries.

"Then darkness descended upon me, and merciful oblivion.

"Soon the night comes—and for me it is the last.

"The last! Oh God! If it only were the last of all existence, that I might find relief from the crushing, rending fangs of conscience—of fear—before which the fear of ordinary death sinks to insignificance.

"What does my present life matter? It is a pitiful moment against the background of eternity. I may have done some good in it, I am sure of it, but—I have seen the other side of the balance!

"Whatever else I do I shall try to write coherently to the end. . . .

"My will has deserted me. Something has taken its place, something that stalks, monstrous yet unseen, at my side, controlling me, moving me like a helpless puppet.

"I struggle like a fly in the meshes of a web, but to no purpose. Once in a burst of hysterical fear I broke through for a moment and dashed madly out of the house. I ran down the dripping avenue under the elms, fleeing blindly, headlong.

"I staggered into the highway. A little girl stood in front of me, startled at my sudden appearance. I stopped dead. The child stood rooted to the spot for an instant, and—oh, horrible! that such terror should be in the face of one so young. I heard her screams echoing down the road as she turned, and ran frantically away from me.

"And I shivered as I felt that hand clutch again at my heart. I stumbled back, back to the room—for I had no choice.

"Unreal, fantastic as a dream, the short day has dragged to a close. I wander like a ghoul up and down the gloomy corridors, through the silent halls, the old staircases, and—I return.

"Not a God-sent human face or voice comes to help me. The servants are gone, fled, I suppose, before my convulsed face.

"I looked into a mirror once. The face I saw was of one who is already dead. I have not looked again.

"I have sat for hours and it is dark outside. The fire is burning brightly but its ruddy glow reminds me of blood.

"How intense the silence! Only the soft rain beating against the window.

"The most curious apathy has taken hold upon me. I cannot think clearly. I am trying to pray. . . .

"Ah, God! Down in the quiet hamlet the church bell is striking midnight. I stare round the chamber. The firelight is playing strange tricks with my eyes. This dimness, this shadowy something—is it a mist or am I going insane?

"God help me! It is suffocating me—that clammy vapor—hemming me in, numbing my brain. I cannot see to write. . . . but I shall fight on.

"I know what fear is now. . . . fear that clutches at the soul, blind, sickening—that turns the heart and brain to ice—

"I can write no more. . . . *He, he* is coming! . . . through that thinning veil. . . . clutching it in his hand. . . . that thing. . . . shining—blindingly—like the sword of the Angel of Death. . . . I can see—his eyes—like fires of hell. . . . !

"*Moriturus . . . !*"

PARAVAINÉ! Paravainé! I must tell you—I must!

Think me mad if you will, I whose life as a physician has always been dull and matter-of-fact. You must have wondered at the repressed, stilted phrases of my letter, but I dared not let myself go—then.

But now you have read, and I must tell you—a thing, horrible, incredible, beyond all the bounds of human reason.

For I went down into that secret chamber on the day following his death. I went down those creaking stairs and into the velvet gloom of that place with only his footprints before me deep in the soot dust.

I held that sword in my hand and I felt that shivering dread that he had felt. And it seemed to me, too, as though dark phantoms hovered breathlessly near me.

I put hand to hilt and pulled. The sword would not come from its sheath. I exerted my strength. It gave. For three inches down the blade the rust of years had glued the steel to the scabbard.

Then I drew it forth. . . . and sanity tottered. . . . and Hell seemed to laugh!

For the rest of the blade was red with newly dried blood!



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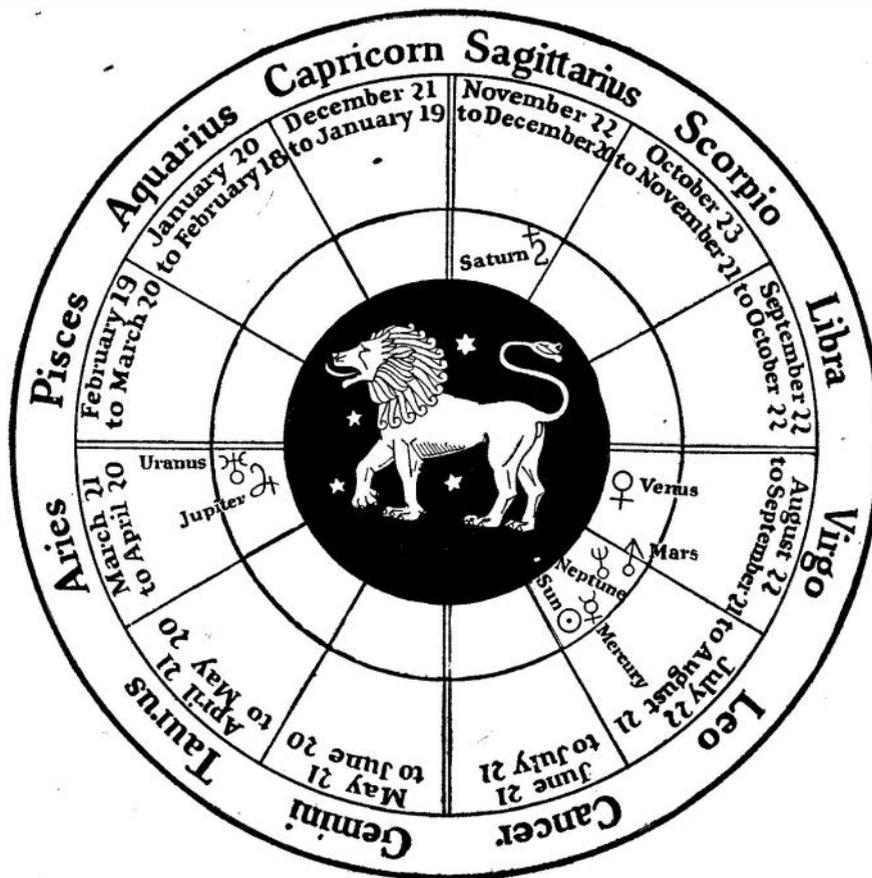
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Were You Born in August?

Let the Stars Indicate Your Fate

By "Stella"



THE CHART TO GUIDE YOU TO SUCCESS

SUMMER—long days when the Sun in all its glory beats down upon us and when all of us feel the urge to get away from our routine duties and play. This is the time of the year when the Sun is in Leo, the sign over which Old Sol has complete sway, for Leo rules the heart, just as the Sun is the heart of the Universe.

If you were born between July 22nd and August 21st, you are the child of Leo, and the life-giving Sun is ruler of your destiny. You yourself reflect something of the brilliance and vital warmth that is poured so constantly on the earth

and without which life would be impossible. You are intended to shine and to bring out the best in those with whom you have contact. We all know that evil thrives in dark places and cannot bear the light of the Sun, and that the bacteria of disease perish when submitted to the solar rays. In the same way, your tolerance, generosity, and faith in human nature destroys meanness in others and virtually compels them to give of their best. Always Leo is willing to make excuses for the shortcomings of others, and, instinctively realizing this, most people at least try to live up to what you expect of them.

This is not said to make you conceited or to lead you to sacrifice the happiness of others for your personal glory, but to help you to realize your own power and your place in the scheme of things. Your business in life is to help others by confirming their faith in themselves.

If you have artistic gifts, use them to promote happiness; entertain others and make them forget their worries; shine and be the center of attraction wherever you are; you were destined to radiate the warmth of human kindness and to keep the lamp of faith in the goodness of humanity brightly burning.

Those of you who were born during

the last ten days of July are now receiving helpful vibrations from Uranus and Jupiter, who are together in Aries, and from Saturn, who is in Sagittarius. Like your own sign, Aries and Sagittarius are of the element of Fire and spread warmth and enthusiasm. Your own sun-like vibrations are therefore receiving a great stimulus. You should be filled with energy and should push your business and social affairs and take all the opportunities for advancement that present themselves. Swift Mercury, messenger of the gods, brings you a message of hope, encouragement and opportunity, and as these are showered upon you—no matter what your circumstances are—you should find success and happiness.

Those who were born during the latter part of March are now under a conflicting vibration which may prove rather upsetting, but will eventually turn out to their advantage. Unexpected happenings are likely to come their way, but Jupiter will protect them from anything very catastrophic. Saturn also is in their favor and, in his rather grudging way, will see that they get their just due.

Are you a child of harmonious and intuitive Libra, born during the last few days of September? If so, you may now expect rather a hectic time. Though Saturn is working for you, Uranus and Jupiter are against you. The influence of Uranus is never very favorable for domesticity and an adverse vibration from this strange planet often presages matrimonial disaster. Saturn, however, will help you to make the best of things and his stern discipline—though not always to our liking—places happiness, when it does come, on a much more solid foundation.

All those of you who were born about

the 27th of September, December, March, or June, may expect unusual and even astounding developments. Most unexpected things are likely to happen and the course to pursue is to act as sanely and conservatively as possible, to keep out of disputes, and avoid unnecessary changes. Tranquility of mind, though difficult to maintain while under a disconcerting vibration, is the best weapon with which to overcome its effects. In no way would I minimize the advantages of excitement and enthusiasm. There is nothing so tonic in its effects upon us as the wild thrill of excitement, but just now you are under the Uranian influence and the qualities you should cultivate are calm and poise, so that if Uranus unexpectedly turns everything upside down you will be able to deal with the resultant situation.

I heard some one the other day speak of the planet Saturn as the "mirror of imperfection" and the name struck me as extraordinarily appropriate, for certainly by placing all kinds of difficulties in our path and leaving us to deal with them as well as we can, Saturn does show up the deficiencies in our characters. He limits, disciplines and tests us until we realize our faults and make a real effort to overcome them. Take heart, you who were born about the 23rd or 24th of November, May or August, or the 21st of February, if you now find yourselves limited and restricted by overwork, ill-health, and constant annoyances which may even appear trivial but nevertheless are very exasperating. Remember that your character is in process of repair and renovation and that this state of affairs is only a temporary condition, meant to put you on your metal and increase your determination to succeed in spite of all difficulties.

Neptune, mysterious ruler of the Astral world is still concerning himself with those born in mid-July, mid-March, mid-May and mid-November; and about the 18th of July, when he and Mars combine their forces, many of these people will feel this powerful vibration. Extravagance, speculation, bank-failures, waste—all these may result from the conjunction of visionary, impractical Neptune and fiery, impulsive Mars. As a matter of fact, the summer months of this year are hardly likely to be peaceful with Mars stirring up Neptune, and Uranus and Jupiter both in the sign of Mars. There is every indication of heavy storms and downpours, epidemics perhaps, and unusual developments in science, commercial aviation, and poison gases. Under such exciting vibrations, caution is the keynote of success.

Mental torment, suspicion, treachery, self-deception—all these are likely to afflict you under an adverse vibration from Neptune; yet, so often, much of the consequent heartache and worry turns out to have been quite unnecessary. If you imagine your sweetheart is interested in some one else, kill the thought and wait until you have definite proof; Neptune loves to tempt and torment us. Weep, if you must, but do not talk. If you are filled with extravagant ideas and visions, set your feet firmly on the earth before you commit yourself. Remember that Neptune deals with the emotions and not the reason.

Venus is sending the Virginians a vibration of love and pleasure. For them July and August should be fortunate months, especially as Mercury, their ruling planet, is sunning himself in Leo's warmth, softening their austerity and making them a little more self-indulgent than they usually are.

Dr. Blenheim Operates

(Continued from page 48)

an array of conventional surgical instruments.

"And then, Karl, then—" Rolland Kranz whispered the words as though a shadow claw were about his throat, tightening until he could speak aloud no longer. His hands shook so violently that Blenheim feared he would wreck the car, and took the wheel for an instant in his own sure grasp until Rolland could regain some shred of self-control.

"All right," he murmured again and again, "All right. You've had a bad shock. But we'll be down to your place of mystery in a few minutes now, and you'll probably discover that you've only had an unusually realistic nightmare."

"Dream! This was no dream! But—how can I tell you? With your own eyes you must see what I saw. Then only will you understand."

HE slowed the car's rapid pace and stopped about half a block away from a huge, old building that bulked shadowy and shapeless in the dark heights above the range of the street lights.

"What time is it?" he whispered. "My hand shakes so—my watch—I can't—"

"Ten minutes of three," answered Blenheim.

"Follow me. We'll slip into the closet I spoke of. And in ten minutes you will see an unbelievable thing."

As they entered the big building and began to climb the interminable five flights of steps to the taxide mist's office, Blenheim had the peculiar feeling of being split into two halves. One self slowly climbed a shadowy hill of stairs on soundless feet. The other stood off at a distance and watched with incredulous amusement. Blenheim shook his head to clear his mind of the queer illusion.

Sceptical as he was about the need of secrecy, he found himself imitating Rolland's stealth; and in furtive silence the two men reached the floor on which was Aluaine's office. The light was still shining through the frosted glass window, and the outer door was unlocked just as Rolland had described it. Blenheim found time to wonder irritably at this. Odd that, at such an hour, the man should be so careless as to leave his light unshrouded and his door unlocked. Or was he clever enough to reason that such open show of innocence was his first

protection?

With a quick glance inside to see that the anteroom was vacant, Kranz and Blenheim tiptoed across and into the closet.

Up until this moment Blenheim had harbored real doubts of Rolland's sanity; but now, as he discovered that everything so far was confirming his story, he began to share the other man's excitement. Peering around the half-opened door of the closet, not knowing what he was to see, almost dreading to look, he inspected the taxidermist's shop. It followed Rolland's description in every way. And there, by the table, sat the man, Anton Aluaine, whom Rolland had, with almost hysterical terror, refused even to attempt to describe.

Blenheim felt his skin tingle and crawl on his body as he watched him there in his somber room. Sitting in the yellow beam of light, Aluaine looked like King Death's court magician. The black, beady eyes; the bony face; the hands, with their long, flexible, yellow-stained fingers that writhed and squirmed like sightless snakes—all combined to picture a thing that was not a man but a monster. Of such a being, Blenheim could imagine anything.

Aluaine looked at his watch. He nod-

ded slowly, and began to finger an array of surgical instruments that were laid out in front of him on the bare, pine table. The yellow snakes of fingers weaved over the keen-bladed knives.

HE looked at his watch again, and tapped his thin lips in nervous impatience. Three o'clock, the hour that Rolland had mentioned, had arrived; bringing with it a preparation for the repetition of the marvelous operation that Rolland had seen earlier in the night. There was a creak at the outer door and Aluaine's head was lifted in quick attention.

Blenheim heard the inner door open, and on soundless feet the man, for whom Aluaine had been waiting, entered. As he slunk into the circle of light he looked apprehensively about the room, in the manner of beasts of prey that walk in perpetual fear of being themselves preyed upon. Satisfied at length that he was safe from vengeance of law or man, he nodded his bullet head, writhed his lips into a shifty smile of greeting.

Wordlessly, he began to strip off his garments to make ready for the coming ordeal. As he slowly undressed he looked in a cowed way at the table with its glittering array of knives; and Blenheim could read in his face an awed, animal terror.

At last, muscles jerking in nervous twitches, trembling in every limb, he approached the menacing table. He looked pleadingly at the cold, beady eyes of Aluaine.

"Doc," he whined, "you sure this thing's all right? It sounds kind of awful to me. I ain't never had you do it, you know. Has Spike been here?"

"Yes. Spike has been here. He is in boxes—ready to go," Aluaine looked toward a small work bench and commanded. "Tell him, Spike."

"It's okay, Joe," a harsh, contemptuous voice came from the direction of the bench. "Let the doc go ahead."

Blenheim, in the darkened closet, clutched Rolland's arm with both hands. "Where did that voice come from?"

"It's the only way you'll get out of town," the voice droned on. "The cops'll nab you unless you're shipped out in sections." The words ended in a choking laugh.

Rolland jammed his hand over Blenheim's mouth just in time to stifle the gasping cry that bubbled to his lips.

The words, dry and rattling, had issued from a small wooden box that stood on the bench! The box was barely large enough to contain a human head!

There was nothing under the bench. There was nothing else on it. There was no other human figure in the room that might have spoken. Meantime the voice spoke on in hollow, chestless intonation.

"Take me out of here, doc. I want to see this."

Without a word, cold eyes unblinking, Aluaine strode in a matter of fact way over to the bench. He lifted the lid from the box and reached in, taking out a living human head which had been severed from its supporting trunk about an inch below the chin. Carrying the head at arm's length, he stepped over to his impromptu operating table and set it down squarely under the light.

Blenheim and Kranz, greatest of sur-

geons in the land, stared at the miracle of that amputated head as little children stare in awe at the vast brilliance of the sun. The neck muscles, down to the point where they had been severed, rippled and swelled as the head turned itself this way and that. The eyes flashed and blinked in the strong light. The lips were red and full, not pallid and shrunk as they would be in death. In every way, beyond all shadow of doubt, the head was alive.

THE writhing lips moved, and the harsh voice broke into speech.

"That's better. Now go ahead, Doc. Get this over quick before Joe loses his nerve and backs down."

Aluaine nodded, and laid the frightened man out on the table. To his nostrils he placed a wad of gauze; and soon the sickly sweet odor of chloroform filled the room. Aluaine glanced hastily at his array of instruments as the man's slow, deep breathing showed him to be completely unconscious. Then he tilted back the patient's chin.

He twined his long fingers around his knife and raised it over the limp throat. Feeling delicately with the sensitive fingers of the other hand, he located the precise spot he wanted; and laid on it the glittering knife. Calmly, Aluaine seized the head he had severed, and placed it to one side.

"Doc," droned the harsh voice of the ghastly, bodyless spectator, "how do you keep 'em from bleeding? You cut a guy's head smack off, and there ain't no blood. That's funny."

In the darkness of the closet, Blenheim leaned toward the crack in the partition in tense eagerness to hear the reply. That feature of the astounding operation had shocked him beyond measure.

"It is the ointment," Aluaine explained impatiently, pointing to a small stone jar. "The knife is smeared with the ointment. That keeps the blood from flowing for just one little minute. In that little minute I have time to work my fingers—so—and so—and so." The yellow fingers moved in eerie manipulation. "With these hands I preserve life. I mould the cut ends of arteries together to keep in the blood. More you would not understand."

As he talked he bent busily over the headless trunk and commenced to dismember the body . . .

The trunkless spectator on the table spoke once more.

"Doc," it urged, "put his leg on once."

With the complacent grunt of humoring a child, Aluaine complied. With swift precision he fitted the left leg into the socket from which it had just been removed. Like a mechanic assembling a machine, he twisted it into place. The joint was smeared with ointment; and the cut flesh melted into place, leaving as the only trace of the slash, a thin red line. Even this faded rapidly into blending white. Body and leg were again one.

"Now it is through," Aluaine told the living head, after the leg had been amputated once more. With quick movements he packed the human fragments into small wooden boxes and nailed them shut.

In the closet, Blenheim leaned weakly against the wall. His clothing was wringing wet with perspiration. He breathed with difficulty. Sharp pains shot

through his chest. His head ached.

"God!" he whimpered again and again. "God! How awful!"

Rolland Kranz drew a deep, shuddering sigh.

"Now you have seen," he said. "Let us go."

Blenheim, with great effort, regained a semblance of control over his shaken nerves.

"Go!" he explained, careless of the fact that he had raised his voice until it was audible to Aluaine, who bent his head in startled attention like a listening vulture. "Go! And leave behind us the greatest secret of all time!" He squared his shoulders. "I mean to have a talk with our miracle worker," he went on with determination. "We shall learn his secret if I have to choke it from him a word at a time!"

He stalked from the closet into the workroom, and Kranz, emboldened by his strength, followed close behind. Aluaine, after his first alarm, made no move; but sat silently by his table, boring the intruders with cold, glittering eyes.

"Well," he queried suddenly in his guttural monotone, "what is it?"

Blenheim answered without preamble.

"You heard what I said in the closet. We saw what you did here. We are surgeons, and we want your secret. We'll use force to get it if necessary."

From the box on the table came the harsh voice: "Don't tell 'em, Doc. Don't tell 'em."

Anton Aluaine sneered, and faced the two men without fear.

"Bah!" he grated. "Suppose I do tell them. They are children, babies! They could never do it—no, not if they were the greatest surgeons in the whole world, You will not have to use force, gentlemen. Look. I show you."

He grasped Blenheim's hand in his own, and Blenheim shuddered at the touch of the dry, reptilian skin.

"The whole thing is the manipulation by the fingers," he said. "And that cannot be learned by such as you. But you shall see how I do."

He twisted the surgeon's fingers in contemptuous, repeated instruction.

"THIS is how it is done. No, no! Not like that—like this. So—and so—and so."

Again and again he illustrated the trick of it. At last he said: "There now, you know—or think you know. But I advise you, babe that you are, never to try to perform my operation. Now if you please, you will go."

"First I want some of that ointment," Blenheim demanded.

"Here it is," Aluaine shrugged blandly. "Much good it will do you!" He extended the small stone jar.

With wide, unseeing eyes, like a man in a dream, Blenheim stumbled from the room, and out into the corridor.

"Rolland," he breathed over and over. "Rolland! Think what we have here—the vast thing we have learned! We shall be the most famous of men. Fortune! We shall be glutted with wealth. It is marvelous, unbelievable!"

Rolland Kranz made no response. He walked to his car as though great weights burdened his stooping shoulders. His eyes were bloodshot and glassy as though

they had seen too much to be borne. Through the darkness that heralds the first sign of dawn he guided the machine in drunken zigzags. At length he halted in front of Blenheim's home.

Still muttering to himself, and working his fingers as he had been shown how to do, Blenheim entered his darkened house and strode to his library. He could not sleep now. Sleep? He felt as though he could never sleep again. The greatest secret the world had ever known—his! What man had ever dreamed of dismembering a human body, and putting it together again alive and whole! And it was so simple. As simple as death itself!

One had merely to use some ointment, and to manipulate the cut flesh like this—and this. He frowned faintly. Although he had been moving his hands in imitation of Aluaine's movements constantly, the motions seemed now to be a trifle uncertain. Anxiously he raised his hands close to his eyes and moved his reluctant fingers. Was it like this, or this—or like this?

Blenheim's hand clutched at his throat, and he tore away the collar that seemed suddenly to choke him. He held his hand close to his eyes, and worked his fingers frantically. The great secret began to dim his brain. He whimpered like a frightened child, and squeezed his fluttering hands between his knees to still their trembling. What were the intricate finger movements? What had Aluaine instructed him to do?

HE beat his moist forehead with his clenched fists, trying to batter away the swift gathering curtain that was shrouding his memory. He kneaded and prodded imaginary artery and muscle and tendon ends as he had been shown how to do. He strode wildly from wall to wall of the room, crying out, wringing his hands, the obdurate fingers of which refused to shape themselves as they had been taught.

Going were visions of godlike power. Fading were dreams of fame and fortune such as no man had ever earned before. The great secret was slipping slowly from his grasp.

God! If he could only operate. If he could only actually perform the sublime operation he had learned! A cat, a dog, something, anything with flesh and bone and sinew. He must operate to fix the process in the mind, or lose his magnificent, new knowledge forever. He clenched his fists in helpless anguish. There wasn't an animal in the household. He could not afford to take the time to find one. In the interval of hunting, he would too surely lose his failing remembrance of the movements of Aluaine's ghoulish fingers.

In a frenzy he bared his own leg. He would operate on himself! But that was a physical impossibility. He resumed his wild pacing, still working his fingers to preserve their tremulous knowledge. In heaven's name, who or what could he operate on!

He stopped his frantic pacing with a jerk like a mechanical doll in which the motive spring had snapped. There was, in the house, one living thing. There was accessible a subject on which he could perform Aluaine's operation before his fingers lost their newly acquired cunning.

Upstairs, wrapped in slumber, was the one person who could be reached in time to save his failing memory. His wife!

Blenheim collapsed into a chair with a groan. He shuddered and blanched, and hid his face in his hands to shut out the horrible thought that had been conjured up by his frantic brain. A vision of his wife, become a headless, legless, armless thing like that awful torso on the pine table, swirled before his eyes. He saw her, not a loving, living woman, but a pile of hideous fragments. No, no! Not that! This was his wife—not a drugged rat on a dissecting table.

Yet he was, for the time, sure of his power. He could operate on her, fix his desperate lesson in his mind forever, and undo his work in a few moments. She need never know the terrible experiment that had been performed on her helpless body.

While she slept he could creep to her side, chloroform her, and accomplish the whole operation before she should again regain consciousness. It was simple. Move the fingers like this—or was it like this?

Doctor Blenheim groaned again. He was not sure of his power. He was almost sure, but...

Almost! What a word to apply in such a case! It was an even gamble, with a woman's life staked against a secret almost too vast for the human mind to hold. Surely no man had ever played for such tremendous stakes before.

A gamble. A gamble. Fate was daring him to a wager. Very well. He would take it. His face set in bleak, determined lines as he deliberately stifled all thought of possible failure in his ghastly experiment. He was the surgeon now—not the husband.

He forced himself, step by step, up the dark stairs. Down the hall he crept on silent feet to the little laboratory where he kept his instruments. With calm, cool judgment he selected his sharpest, heaviest knife; and caught up a small vial of chloroform. His face was a leaden mask as he opened the door to the bedroom, softly, softly, so that he would not break her slumber. He doubted if he would have the ability to hold her against her will. It would be easier to experiment upon an unconscious person, Blenheim mused, as he fingered the vial of chloroform.

FOR an instant he gazed down at her as she lay in tranquil sleep. Her lips were parted in a little smile as though she were thinking of some delightful adventure to plan with him on the morrow. Blenheim turned his head away from that smile, and made an impulsive move toward the door. It was too great a price to pay. Although he was sure of his knowledge, the possibility of failure was too terrible to risk. He thought again of the dismembered thing he had seen on Aluaine's table after the taxidermist had finished his work.

Deliberately he dismissed the thought. After all, she would never know what he had done in this, the dark hour of dawn. With iron fingers he pressed a chloroform soaked cloth against her mouth and nose. Slowly the light, even breathing changed to the gradual, deep respiration of one who is completely drugged. The subject was now ready; it remained only for the

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cool, implacable surgeon to operate.

Doctor Blenheim flexed his fingers tentatively, striving again to remember more exactly the manipulations he had learned from Aluaine. He shuddered as he remembered the man's contemptuous advice never to try the operation he had learned.

He bent intently over the inert figure. With delicate fingers he located the precise spot on the soft, white throat that gleamed misty rose and blue veined in the faint light. He laid the knife edge lightly in place; and its sharp cutting surface just indented the soft flesh. For just one instant the Doctor's steel resolution wavered. Then he squared his jaw and turned wholly the experimenter.

SLOWLY, slowly, like a diver beating a laborious way up from tremendous, murky depths to the light above, Doctor Blenheim forced himself awake. He was wet with perspiration, shivering in the cold room in the thin garments of sleep. What a horrible dream! He blinked in bemused effort, still trying to reconcile nightmare with reality.

The familiar furnishings of the room reassured him like old friends. A dream. Thank God, it had been only a dream.

The rapid ticking of his tiny bureau clock sounded out and the Doctor smiled at its homely, bracing pulse-beat. Then he listened with frowning attention. Another noise began to make itself heard.

Mingled with the quick beat of the clock, almost as rapid and nearly as loud, the Doctor heard a dripping sound. Drip, drip, drip! That was odd, he mused. Again he listened—*drip, drip, drip!*

He moistened dry lips as the tenacles of an unnameable fear began to crawl in his brain. Ever more rapid, till the sound was almost continuous—drip, drip, drip! Like a faucet it was, a faucet that had not been entirely closed. Doctor Blenheim drew in a deep, shuddering breath—then gasped it out as though it had seared his lungs.

Chloroform! The air was choked, strangled with the sweet, heavy odor.

Doctor Blenheim stood stonelike in the center of the room, all his senses concentrated on hearing that thin, dripping sound that came from behind him. His arms, with fists clenched, hung limply at his sides. He would not think. He would not move.

He would not look at the bed behind him. Above all things, although Hell

itself threatenèd, he would not look at that bed!

Drip, drip, drip! Ever faster, ever louder, the sound begged, demanded, shrieked for attention. Blenheim clasped and unclasped his hands convulsively.

With the movement his surgeon's knife clattered to the floor.

His heart stopped, buried in ice, then jerked to action again, sending throbbing, flaming lights to whirl in crazy pinwheels in his reeling brain. He swayed like a tower about to crumble to earth.

It seemed as though bands of barbed wire tightened about his forehead in a compression too terrible to endure, as a horrible conviction became imbedded in his tottering senses.

The surgeon's knife—the chloroform—what had he done in his subconscious action while under the spell of this ghastly nightmare? What if he had—what if he really had—

No! No! God, no, not that. And yet—and yet—the chloroform—the knife—

Clutching at his choking throat, with a convulsive wrench he turned and looked behind him.

And there on the bed—his wife—his wife—

Captive Souls

(Continued from page 14)

there on the door, the other having been added that morning. When Donald saw them, his eyes turned slowly and met mine. I could only nod. He went silently into the house, and I waved my hand to him, turned my horse, and drove home.

That night I lay in bed, with wide-open eyes fixed on the castle and its background of stars and a crescent moon. And as I lay there my childhood fear again took possession of me. The curse! I had not thought of it for years, had almost forgotten it—but Donald's parents had died within a day of each other! It was weird.

I could see but one dim light on the third floor and I knew Donald was sitting up. Would he be the next victim of that awful curse? I wanted to warn him, to beg him to heed the handwriting on the wall.

I heard my mother moving about below and a feeling of gratitude surged up in me that she and Father were alive and well. And just as though I were a child again, I felt glad that we did not live in the cursed castle across the valley. Could I persuade Donald to leave it—leave it forever and go somewhere far away from the loathsome shadow of that place?

I heard Father's step on the stair and a moment later he and mother entered my room, bringing a tea-tray. They knew my weakness for tea when I was depressed, and they wanted to cheer me up. It was not accidental that neither mentioned Donald, though I knew they felt no less deeply for him than I.

Donald was ordained just a month after his father died, but, of course, we delayed our wedding for a while.

When we were talking of plans for the

future I suggested to Donald that he give up the castle for something smaller, less expensive, and nearer our demands. He smiled and looked at me wisely. "You never did outgrow your fear of the tower and the ghost. But don't fear. When we are ready we will find something entirely modern. I understand they are going to build a new rectory. What do you say to that?"

"**B**UT Donald, you haven't been—" I began.

"It's all happened, Mildred, just as we planned when we were kids. Remember? I have been offered my father's pulpit."

My trousseau was finished, our honeymoon planned, everything was in readiness for our wedding. One night I awoke suddenly. The cuckoo told me it was two o'clock. I looked over at the haunted castle, and saw a light in Donald's room. What was he doing up at two? But he was very studious and ambitious. Perhaps he was planning his first sermon. I could not go to sleep at once, and when I sat up in bed an hour later, I saw that light still burning in Donald's room. Was he sick? Still troubled in mind, I finally fell asleep.

I expected to see Donald next day, but he did not appear. He was to have had dinner with us that night, and when he did not come at seven nor send me word, I was really alarmed. Such a thing had never happened before. Had he been called away unexpectedly he would have left word with some one at the house or have let me know personally. Right after breakfast next morning I slipped out of the house, without a hat, and drove over to Donald's. The tall mulatto opened the door.

"Mr. Harrison cannot be seen," he said

in that smooth Southern voice.

I looked at him for several seconds. "Tell him Miss Stewart wishes to see him," I said shortly.

"Mr. Harrison cannot be seen," he repeated without the slightest change of expression.

"Is Mr. Harrison sick?" I demanded, my cheeks a bit flushed; for the man's manner made me indignant.

He bowed slightly, his lips half parted in a smile, and then closed the door. I was left standing on the porch. I waited there for a minute, too puzzled to know what to do. Mr. Harrison could not be seen? I could not see Donald! Those were not Donald's orders.

I stepped to the door, and found it was not locked. I opened it quietly and walked in. There was no one in the living-room. I heard the rattling of dishes from the kitchen in the rear. I waited a moment, and then tiptoed noiselessly up the stairs. I looked in some of the rooms on the second floor but found nobody there. So I ran up the second flight of stairs. As I passed along the hall here, I found each door open or half-open but there was nobody in the rooms and not a sound to be heard.

When I came to Donald's room, I stopped outside his closed door. For a moment I could hear nothing, and then the sound of footsteps began—back and forth, back and forth. I pushed the door open softly.

Donald was there, but I hardly recognized him. His hair was disheveled, and his face grey and haggard. He wore a dressing-gown. On a small table near him was a tray of food, untouched.

I stood still in surprise. I almost doubted if this were Donald. He had not heard me, and he kept up his restless pacing

to and fro. When he stopped at last, he did not turn his head and he kept his eyes fixed on the floor. He was only a few feet from me; I could almost have touched him.

"DONALD," I exclaimed, advancing into the room.

He started violently, straightened up, and faced me. "Mildred, you!" he said and then backed away from me till the table was between us.

"Donald what is it?" I begged, astounded by his actions.

"Mildred, go down, go out," he cried half hysterically, but he kept his voice low as though he wanted no one to hear.

"Tell me," I said, "and I shall go down if I think it wise. Tell me—I have a right to know."

"Go, Mildred, and forget me. Go—I can't tell you. I can't see you again. I can't—I can't marry you. Don't ask—I can't tell you. Mildred in Heaven's name, go!"

Donald threw out his hands as though to push me from him. He tossed his head back, and his eyes were half closed as though to hide me from him. Frightened almost to death, I couldn't move. I stood staring at him.

"Donald," I exclaimed brokenly, "please tell me—please tell me why you act so strangely! You know you can trust me!"

But he turned from me. He did not want to look at me. His fingers were trembling as he cringed before some invisible menace. He turned his back to me and over his shoulder he again implored me to go. A battle was raging within him. I could see the rise and fall of his shoulders. I stood breathless, waiting for him to speak and explain. But he did not move nor offer another word. Fear began to grip me.

"Donald, good-by," I said and slipped softly out of the room into the hall. When I was half-way down the stairs, I heard him start toward the door of his room. He did not open it, but I heard him call, "Mildred."

I stopped where I was.

"Mildred, good-by! Good-by! Oh, Mildred, good-by."

IT was a frenzied, hopeless call and I knew Donald meant it. I had never heard that tone in Donald before and it struck me cold. I couldn't go back then, had I wanted to.

I heard him throw himself upon his bed and his cries almost frightened me into hysterics. My teeth were chattering, I was trembling all over, my heart was beating madly, and I had a most unearthly feeling that something was going to fall on me or block my way. The cursed atmosphere of that house! I ran down the stairs, and rushed out into the sunshine and air again. I was panting wildly and choking back the tears.

And then I stopped—I was outside of that black house of horror, but Donald was not. I did not want to run away and leave him. Was there no one who could give me a hint? Some one must know. What was this terrible mystery?

Had Donald seen something that had frightened him? Impossible! Donald was not imaginative—he was too practical to be scared by an apparition.

No, it was not that—but why should he have bid me good-by so frantically? The more I tried to solve the mystery, the more puzzled I became. It couldn't be that he had allowed himself to become involved in any sort of dishonesty. No, he would have let me know; he wouldn't have kept it from me—not even that. But Donald was not dishonest—he couldn't be.

I could offer no help until I knew—and how was I to learn? I looked back at the castle twenty times on my way home; again and again I turned for a glance at his window. It was open and the breeze stirred the shade slightly—this was the only moving thing about the place. I hoped for a glimpse of Donald, but I was disappointed.

My parents did not take the trouble as seriously as I, but they, too, were much mystified by Donald's behavior. There were the usual number of *ifs* and *maybes* and *perhaps*, but they led nowhere. I agreed to Mother's suggestion to wait a while and see him again. But I had little hope. Donald's good-by was final, and I felt positive that I was not to see him again.

During the next few days I waited for his call on the phone or his ring at the door, but I heard neither. I watched across the valley from my room, night and day, but there was no sign of life there except a light or two at night. I looked always for a light in Donald's room, but none appeared there.

At last, when I could stand the waiting no more, I decided to visit the castle again. Father went with me this time.

When we arrived, the door was opened by the mulatto, whose long, West Indian face seemed longer than ever.

"Mr. Harrison cannot be seen," he said, looking first at me and then at Father.

"You will tell Mr. Harrison that Mr. Stewart wants to see him," said Father authoritatively.

"Mr. Harrison has given orders that he will see no one, positively," said the man. He spoke excellent English and there were other indications of a better education than most half-breeds can boast.

"Nevertheless, you will tell Mr. Harrison that Mr. Stewart wants to see him. If you don't, I will," my father answered.

The man hesitated, his eyes upon my father. Slowly he turned and started upstairs, leaving the door half open while we waited outside. In about five minutes he returned.

"Mr. Harrison will not leave his room and will see no one," he said.

"You delivered my message, I suppose?" Father asked.

"I did," he answered.

Father took my arm, we turned, walked down the steps, and drove home.

THE following Sunday we sat in church and listened to a strange minister. Donald was to have preached his first sermon on that day, and I had gone to church half in hope that he would be there.

When Donald did not appear, the congregation was surprised and curious, and I was made the object of glances and whispered remarks. I was never quite so unhappy and uncomfortable in all my life. I heard none of the sermon nor did I take any interest in any part of the

service. The church seemed unbearably hot, the organ intolerably melancholy and discordant, and the entire service painfully drawn out and dull. As soon as I could, I hurried from the church and into the open air, in an effort to escape those who would speak to me and ask questions I couldn't and wouldn't answer.

It was a day or two later when I learned that Donald's resignation of his father's pulpit had been accepted. There had been no explanation offered, apparently, and it was understood by every one that Donald had left town. I would not believe it at first, but as days went by and no word was received of him and no light appeared in his house except in the servants' quarters, I had to believe that he was gone.

When I visited the castle again, the mulatto announced that Mr. Harrison was not at home and had not been at home for some time. He did not know where he had gone nor when he was coming back—nor if he were coming back at all.

And so Donald just dropped out of sight, just disappeared from civilization. And he left not a clue to work upon—not a single definite clue. What was this insidious, horrible thing that had crept upon him so relentlessly and caused him to take such a drastic course? Why should he desert the ministry when he had spent years in training for it and was just on the eve of beginning a brilliant career?

I WAS stunned. I avoided all company and hated the very thought of talking to any one. My trousseau lay untouched. I canceled the order for wedding announcements and for my wedding cake. It was the hardest thing I ever had to do—canceling those orders.

I could not look my friends in the face. I could offer no explanation. There were many who thought I knew the explanation but was too proud to reveal the truth. And there were some who hinted that he had run away in order to avoid me. One girl, in particular, who had at one time been much interested in Donald, suggested almost openly that he had realized his great mistake in not marrying her and had gone away in hopes of mending a broken heart and to escape marrying one whom he had never loved.

Three months passed and nothing had been heard of Donald. There were lights over in the castle nightly, and now and then I saw servants on the grounds. It was natural they should occasionally glance our way. They had known of Donald's expected marriage to me. They must have realized what a blow his going away had been.

Father or Mother telephoned there from time to time, but always the mulatto, who had been left in charge evidently, would answer.

"Nothing has been heard of Mr. Harrison as yet."

At the end of a year I still watched that big house across the valley constantly; and always its gray, cold walls and its ominous tower stared back at me. It seemed to mock me, to challenge and defy me. What could it tell me? What awful secrets did it conceal?

Another year passed, and another. And still I watched—vain, silly, groundless hope still springing eternal. I had not

forgotten, and I never would as long as I lived on one side of the valley and that castle stood on the other. I would stand on the top of that little hill back of our house—or sit there in the tall fragrant grass—just as I had done in the years gone by when I watched for Donald's signal and gave him mine. This constant vigil offered little consolation, and kept my misery always with me. But I had no choice in the matter; something within me forced me to watch and wait—always.

One night I had undressed later than usual and was ready to retire. I turned off my light and raised the shades. I glanced across the valley automatically. On the third floor of the castle I saw a dull light. This was quite usual, but after a minute or two I realized that some one was looking out of that window, directly across the valley at our house.

Whoever had been standing at the window moved away a moment later; but I could not dismiss the incident from my mind. Instead of going to bed I sat on the edge of it, and stared at the castle.

The cuckoo announced twelve o'clock. I had not realized it was so late. I kicked off my slippers and was about to roll under the covers. It was a clear night though there was no moon. Just as I was ready to lie down, I saw a light on the top of the castle tower! There was a floating white object beside it! Tall and straight it was, and I saw the light swing slowly back and forth. It lingered for a few seconds, and then both light and floating object disappeared.

After the first few seconds of breathlessness, during which my body was rigid and icy cold, I got control of myself and was glad I had not screamed. Had this actually happened fourteen or fifteen years before, I think I should have died of fright. But I was no longer a child. My mature mind refused to accept the thing as supernatural. Surely there must

be some natural explanation of the matter.

But I could not go to sleep then, and I lay awake, thinking. I decided to watch the castle more than ever and to keep quiet about anything I might see. Who or what was this thing? And why had it appeared on this particular night? I made up a theory of my own, and decided to act accordingly.

THE next morning was bright, the air warm and balmy. In my walk around the garden I gave the castle several glances, but I saw no one nor any signs of life. I plucked a bunch of flowers quite casually and returned to the house. For weeks I kept up my watch as usual, and I spent several sleepless nights—but I did not see the ghost again.

Then I decided it needed a little encouragement. I sat up till just before twelve one night, then put out my light, raised my shade, and sat on the edge of my bed in the darkness.

A minute or two after the cuckoo clock called twelve, there appeared a light on the tower and then the apparition floated beside it—just for a few seconds. Then both light and ghost disappeared.

I did not scream or go into hysterics. My knees were a bit shaky, but I felt elated. Then followed several nights when my light went out promptly at nine; and though I did not go to sleep till after twelve, the ghost did not appear. Then I tried my experiment of leaving my light on till nearly twelve again. When the ghost appeared exactly as on the other two occasions I was positive that it was appearing solely for my benefit. But what was its object?

I decided that it was for one of two things, and I was determined to learn which one it was. I had reason to believe that this ghost was not to be trapped any more easily than any other ghost. I must not arouse its suspicions. My part,

then, was that of the timid, frightened child.

I COULD hardly realize it was four years since I had last seen Donald. There were some in the village who still talked, but most of the people seemed to have turned their attention to other and fresher items of gossip. But there was one whose interest in me had not yet abated. If I had only a little help, I might be able to discover something. But there was no one whose help I felt free to ask. I must conduct my investigations alone—in spite of fear or lack of physical strength. I knew that I must prove my theory either right or wrong so that I could go ahead and seek some other lead.

I decided that waiting gained me nothing. After all nothing but myth and superstition made that house so feared and dreaded.

It was dark, very dark outside when I slipped quietly down stairs, went out to the stable, saddled the chestnut, and started over the road that led past the castle. The air was cool and invigorating and a light breeze was blowing.

The thought of the adventure stimulated me and the strength of the big chestnut added confidence. For the moment, I was glad and unafraid.

About half a mile from the castle I drew the chestnut down to a walk and we approached slowly. Through the dark pines it looked black and arrogant. We were walking now very slowly, the chestnut with head high and ears pointing forward. There were no lights to be seen—every window was dark.

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The Phantom of the Big Top

(Continued from page 34)

appeared quite satisfied. They looked meaningfully at Basha, standing near by, and held a farewell consultation with him.

I saw all three look up at the sky meaningfully, and Basha said: "Moon."

His expression tantalized, then infuriated me. I suddenly decided that he must know all about the missing cobra and I demanded that he tell what he knew.

He only shrugged his shoulders and said: "Wait."

That was all I could get out of him.

Sabina's tiger act was good, if not better, than ever. The tiger woman seemed to be herself again, but when she thought nobody observed her, she let down her reserve and showed herself to be under some sort of strain. I began to watch her furtively and was convinced that she had undergone a subtle change.

A good actress—Sabina. Out of the exhibition cage she made a great show of being at ease, but I was convinced she was worried. Although she never mentioned the seizure she had on the night of

the coroner's inquest, she must have brooded over it.

Finally Sabina began to take me aside and with a carefully casual manner broach the subject of snakes, and the missing one in particular. I saw a chance to try a little suggestive psychology and when she asked what I thought had happened to Raneé's cobra I assumed my most knowing look.

I mentioned the reincarnation stuff Bill had told me, and I informed Sabina that I believed that the snake might follow the show and suddenly appear more vicious than ever. A little tormenting might do her good, I thought.

Many a true word is spoken in a jest!

When I had finished relating what I knew of Hindu legend, lore, and superstition, Sabina went white. I continued, and I very elaborately linked up the missing cobra with the full moon.

Sabina trembled almost imperceptibly and paced back and forth.

Did I really think, she stammered, that a snake would avenge its dead master—

or mistress—like a dog quite often does?

I told her I did think so. And I gloated inwardly at the shade of terror that passed over her features.

"I am not afraid," she cried shrilly, "It was not my fault. It was the storm, the lightning. I warned the Boss not to mix the acts. He laughed at me. I am not afraid. It was divine justice."

She broke off abruptly and at once began to cover up her remarks. She had loved Rance, she told me. She had no hatred for her.

She began to make sheep's-eyes at Oscar again. She flashed him a brilliant smile at every opportunity. As far as the rest of us could see, her efforts were wasted. Oscar, off the stage, was a pathetic, brooding figure. He wandered about absent-mindedly, lost.

Strange, his exhibition of muscle and might was never better. In fact, when the moon began to wane he was performing unheard-of feats. But that's another story.

Sabina grew more drawn and haggard

and would look back over her shoulder as though in fear. The jinx Bill Henderson spoke of began to be felt by every one in the circus. As usual, Basha was around to grin grimly. Sabina always glowered at him; she seemed to despise him.

ONE night he was just outside the door of her dressing tent as she emerged. She saw him, her lips curled in a contemptuous expression and she snapped her whip defiantly. Basha just followed her with his eyes and moved after her slowly, stationing himself in the wings to watch her perform.

Sabina had gotten half through her act. Her tigers were about to form the pyramid. She uttered a command, cracked her whip, and stopped short. She was staring at the ground before her.

Wriggling across toward her was that shadow, the shadow that came with Ranee's death—that shadow that came from Ranee's grave. It writhed and twisted about. The hood, as usual, was spread wide. I was searching, searching.

Basha, at my side, chuckled.

Sabina seemed to recoil in fear. She stared at the shadow in fascination; she seemed rooted to the spot, her whip and still upraised.

"Good Lord, Basha," I demanded, "are you to blame for that?"

"No, not Basha," he replied, never taking his eyes off Sabina; "Sabina is to blame. She will know when moon comes full."

Again Ranee's dying utterance!

"What has the moon got to do with it? Answer me, you grinning idiot!" I cried. But you can't browbeat a Hindu. Basha just stared into the ring.

Sabina's free hand had gone to her head. She staggered and the curtain was lowered on the unfinished act, the attendants taking charge.

Sabina was led out. She trembled like a leaf, but she made no mention of any shadow.

"I am ill," was all she said.

I concluded then and there that no woman would fight such a terror without a good reason.

That night marked the beginning of a reign of terror—a reign of terror spread by a shadowy thing formed in the shape of a snake. It appeared on the canvas tent sides. It crawled over the sawdust. It was everywhere, anywhere, at any time, but only for a few moments' duration. It vanished only to reappear at some other part of the lots.

It became the common gossip among the show people, performers and staff alike. Superstition plays a big part in circus life. The old-timers went about shaking their heads fearfully.

And a new, terrifying element began to creep into the order of things. Simultaneously with the shadow's appearance, we would hear the weird playing of Hindu pipes, and the far-away thumping of drums. It was such insistent thumping as one hears in the primitive recesses of darkest Africa when the negro voodoo clans gather.

When first told of the music, I laid it to Basha. But when I heard it myself, with Basha before me, I knew that the uncanny spell of India was at work.

Another night, one of the women ran

shrieking from the sleeping car at twelve o'clock. She fainted in Bill Henderson's arms. When revived, she said that she had seen the snake itself, heard it hiss, heard the music. A search was made. Of course, nothing was found.

As the moon grew rounder the shadow snake appeared more and more frequently.

Sabina was becoming a nervous wreck. Those who shared the car with her told of her nocturnal fits of shrieking, how she refused to turn out her light. Once, they said, she pointed at the window next to her berth and leaped from her bed, dropped to her knees, and babbled in terror about snakes, faces.

Joe Blake, boss of the canvasmen, came in one morning and said he was quitting.

"I know what's what," he grumbled uneasily. "This show is going kablooney. Ha'nted, I tell you. 'Bout three o'clock I'm having a quiet pipe round by the main tent and I seen it. No shadow—the real thing."

"What did you see?" asked the Boss.

"What didn't I see, you mean," responded Joe. "I never did drink much, but hereafter my only poison is lemon pop and weak tea. I seen that snake, the one Ranee used, come crawling out and go toward the train. There was a greenish light on the thing. That blamed drum-beatin' and piccolo playing comes from all sides. Out of the air I tell you. I musta been crazy, but I tagged after it."

"I guess that midnight movie performer didn't want an audience," he continued. "It turned and started at me. Oh, mother! The music started howling like a backyard full of cats and I left. I never knew my legs had so much speed in 'em."

JOE'S departure was only the forerunner of other hard luck. That night one of the tigers died. The show veterinarian didn't know the cause. A show hand had heard it howling and snarling. When he reached the cage it was dying.

Sabina accused Basha, and demanded that he be fired. Basha told me he had nothing to do with the tiger's death. I knew he told the truth. At the performance on the following afternoon, Sujata, one of the female tigers, made a leap for Sabina and only the timely action of attendants saved Sabina from Ranee's fate.

Misfortune dogged the show in a dozen ways.

Flipo, our star clown, came down with pneumonia. Our best trapeze artist fell from the top of the tent and fractured his spine. Animals were taking sick right and left. Attendance was falling off.

The Boss paced about, chewing unlit cigars and asking me what to do.

Bill Henderson said, "Get rid of Sabina."

This couldn't be done, as long as she was able to appear. She had a two-season contract.

The unearthly jinx was playing the devil with us, and we saw no way out. As before, only Basha remained unruffled.

"Soon now," he murmured when I turned to him for a glimmer of hope about the infernal curse.

Basha, Bill, and I watched the filling moon, the former with anticipation, we two with dread.

What disaster lurked ahead for us? "Till the moon is full again." What did the dying Ranee mean?

I formed the habit of sneaking about the lots at night, looking for trouble. One night, as I passed the railroad siding, I saw a vague, shadowy figure ahead of me. It was peering in at the car windows. It didn't walk, it *glided*. For a moment it was like a slender woman wrapped in a cloak; before my eyes, it changed into a snake, with inflated hood.

Gooseflesh crept over my body, but I followed fighting the fear of the unknown. The apparition paused before a dimly-lighted window and I heard a long-drawn wail of terror. Then the wraith of a cobra struck at the window-pane, and Sabina's voice screamed, "No, no." The voice trailed off faintly.

I ran into the car. Sabina was cowering beside her berth. "Oh, make it stop, keep it away," she moaned. "The snake-woman, the snake woman, I saw—" She shook with convulsive sobs as she pointed at the window.

I almost felt sorry for Sabina then.

Crossing back I met Basha. He looked very, very satisfied.

"Sabina?" he asked me, enigmatically, and strode out of my sight before I could answer.

I heard the chirping of crickets in a marsh near by, and the thousand and one sounds identified with a circus at night. I heard the stamp and whinny of horses, the restless rumble of lions, and the occasional shrill trumpet of a nervous bull elephant.

And intermingled with it all, I heard the sinister rhythmic pounding of a Hindu drum and the eerie wail of pipes, pipes that to my jumpy nerves must have been charming a thousand shadowy cobras somewhere over us.

But when I went to retire, I began to feel relief. Full moon was passing, and perhaps the curse would leave us. The next morning I saw the show women washing their clothes. They were singing.

Inside the car Sabina was lying ill. The doctor said she would be unable to appear that afternoon or evening.

I thought this would be the safest thing, at that. But my optimism was drenched with cold water when I spotted Basha passing by. An evil smirk was spread over his dark face.

"Why the happy look?" I asked him.

He merely glanced upward and passed on.

"Damn his hide," I thought.

THE night's show closed without anything unusual. We were playing a two-day stand. The showfolk turned in. The last rounds were made and the circus prepared to rest. Sabina was doing nicely, I heard.

It must have been about one o'clock in the morning when I awoke with a start. Some stark premonition seized me. The ghost music was playing, faintly, but growing in volume as though approaching from far away.

I dressed hurriedly and looked out. An icy white moon, round, full, had just broken through heavy, gray clouds, and bathed the entire lot. The tent peaks stared like a host of visiting specters, over the town.

I was possessed of a sense of certain calamity. As I stepped out I heard a cry from the women's section.

The strains of the ghost music rose and fell, more clearly than ever. Like the distant howl of a prairie coyote, the sound struck a chill to my bones, mocked me with its invulnerability.

I hurried over to the women's car and heard cries of alarm from within. It seemed that as I approached the weird incantations attained a terrific force, as though they centered about that place. The wail of the unseen Hindu pipes became a horrible shrieking, gaining force with every step I took. I started to enter the car when an icy blast struck my face and a lurid green light crystallized along the center of the car.

Several others had joined me and we were almost thrown off our feet by the rush of terrified women who sprang out from that bewitched interior, running in mortal fear away from the spot.

Something, some power beyond my feeble ability to resist, gripped me, held the others. We could not enter. We were powerless to do anything but wait.

Transfixed to the spot, I could only stare into the car with a nameless fear holding my senses.

My throat contracted, my hair rose along my neck as I saw a blurry form, bathed in that green light, materialize into a quivering reptilian thing with glittering, beady eyes that stared around in all directions, searching, searching. It was a huge curved thing of spreading hood and fiery fangs that danced to the furious nerveshattering blast of a thousand Hindu pipes, blowing the dirge of death for some mortal!

I heard a desperate, pleading cry, a succession of agonized screams come from the ghastly interior of the sleeping car. It was a screaming that reached to Heaven—or to hell.

The snake-thing grew dim for a moment; then it seemed to become larger, to take another form. It began to gleam, to glitter, as though covered with gems. I heard it jingle, saw it move menacingly to one side.

The ghost music seemed to burst through the very car top as a woman's figure, a figure I knew well, stood revealed in all its unearthly beauty. It was Princess Raneë, pointing, pointing at something, at someone.

"Mercy!" The cry from within the car rose even above that mad pounding of drums, that shrieking of pipes. But it was drowned by a rolling of thunder, and then a flash of light crashed down the center of the car, for the moment blinding us.

The thunder rolled away into a screaming silence. The music had stopped; the ghostly figure was gone. We stumbled into the car and turned on the lights. The body of a woman hung face down from a berth. The hands were clutched in a rigid agony.

We turned her face up. Eyes protruding from their sockets, a frightful look of horror frozen on to the face, a look such as I had never seen and never care to see again!

It was Sabina, the tiger woman. When we searched her berth, we found something else in there. It was a dead snake. It lay uncoiled as though it had made its last lunge before death. It was the missing cobra, Raneë's cobra.

"DEAD," said the doctor, when he arrived in answer to our frenzied summons. He pointed to a pair of tiny, bluish marks on Sabina's breast. "Snake bite."

We heard a diabolical chuckle behind us. We turned to see Basha. He advanced disdainfully to the side of the dead woman.

"Snake bite?" he repeated mockingly.

The doctor pointed at the dead cobra.

Basha picked it up, his manner was reverent as he caressed it. He looked around the circle. His eyes fixed themselves in hatred upon the lifeless tiger woman.

"Snake bite, poison—bah!" he said triumphantly. "This snake carried no poison in its fangs. The poison was removed when Raneë came with the show!"

He again pointed. This time at Sabina. "Look!"

The bluish marks were fading.

Basha departed with the snake across his outstretched arms. We saw its shadow. It was the shadow that had haunted us the past month. The lights reflected its brilliant hues, like gems.

Oscar came, and gazed down at Sabina's form.

"Yes," he said, "I know. I have felt Raneë's presence often. At night, when alone, I have heard her whisper in my ear. It was she who gave me the strength to go on."

As we dispersed, I thought the murmuring night wind carried away the last notes of a faint, mystic music that grew weaker, weaker, and died away in a journey to some far-off destination.

The cobra, we made certain had not been poisonous. We saw no more of its shadow. Our nights were never again disturbed by the haunting strains of a Hindu music playing the ghost song of an India that never forgets.

Princess Raneë had been avenged—though not by human hands.

The White Leopard

(Continued from page 30)

doctors the shapely brown girl stood with proud, uplifted head. She was so different, so entirely distinct from the other Africans, that I could hardly believe she had native blood in her veins.

WITH skinny, dirty fingers pointed at her, the hideous old men leered into her face mumbling some queer words between their toothless gums. I saw the proud head lower for a moment, then quickly lift again. Finally, the warriors who had brought her into the circle at the bidding of the witch-doctors grasped her roughly by the shoulders and started to drag her toward the boiling, seething springs in the middle of the place. The blacks arose en masse from their squatting positions and screamed a frenzied yell of victory.

"What are the devils up to?" whispered my husband to Umsuka.

"Sacrifice her, Baas. She enemy's daughter. Masai folks t'ink mus' sacrifice her to voodoo god else he be angry."

"I'll be dogged if they do!" Mr. Curtis was wide-awake and alert now. I saw his hand seek his hidden revolver. A great trembling took possession of me. I sensed trouble and danger.

The girl, now thoroughly frightened, was resisting with all her strength the efforts of the men to throw her into the boiling, steam-enveloped springs where, in a few moments, the flesh would be boiled from her bones. I caught a glimpse of her glorious, dark eyes wide with horror, and my heart melted in pity. Even at the distance where I stood, I could see the wild flutterings of her heart. From among the witch-doctors there arose and stepped forth the weirdest, dirtiest, most frightful-looking specimen of them all. Advancing to a point where he confronted the quivering girl, with a gesture he bade the men release her. He looked her straight in the eyes, and with his wrinkled, horrible hands made a few passes before her face. Then with a fiendish grin, he stepped aside.

The expression on the girl's face changed instantly, the trembling of the limbs ceased, the fear disappeared from her eyes, and in place of it there came an exalted look of ecstasy, of supreme delight. Her red lips parted and broke into a crooning chant. She took a step forward—another—then another—straight toward the deadly boiling springs!

"My God!" exclaimed my husband.

"The old devil has hypnotized her! He's making her sacrifice herself!"

Silence reigned among the blacks, who, with triumphant gloating eyes, watched the progress of their helpless victim. Sweetly on the soft, odorous African night floated the crooning notes coming from the slim, brown throat of the doomed girl!

I grasped my husband's arm tightly, tensely, my heart beating rapidly. There was a choking in my throat and tears misted my eyes—that beautiful, brown-skinned girl a victim to the inhuman, barbarous voodoo rites of a lot of grinning savages!

"By heaven! They shall not!" I saw fire leap into Mr. Curtis's eyes, I saw his hand close over his revolver and bring it forth; then, swift as a bullet, he catapulted himself through that crowd of startled savages straight to the side of the girl who was now only a few feet from the boiling springs!

Flinging one arm about the girl's body, he raised his right hand containing the revolver and fired it once—twice—three times; then, as he passed the old witch-doctor, who had stepped into his path, he struck him savagely in the face with the

butt of the weapon, knocking him to the ground. A howl of rage went up from the crowd of voodoo worshippers.

With the girl in his arms, Mr. Curtis broke through the crowd of squirming, excited savages and gained my side where I stood with my revolver raised—ready for any emergency.

The uproar was now tremendous—our secret had been discovered; the white man had dared to desecrate with his presence the holy rites of voodooism. Angry black faces crowded about us. With my revolver ready for use and guarded by a loyal black boy, I backed out of the reach of the savages. Mr. Curtis carried the brown girl—the sacrificial victim—in his arms.

Reaching our tents, we told the other white men what had happened, and set about reviving the girl who seemed to be in a deep swoon. This done, we glanced around for Umsuka. We found him and our other blacks crouching under a tree. Their heads were bowed, and they were moaning as though for the dead.

"What's the matter with you fellows?" inquired Mr. Curtis.

Umsuka answered: "Baas, mighty bad. You struck old Yangali—him biggest witch-doctor in country—him control ghosts and debbils. He taik wid evil spirits. Some'n tur'ble happen."

"Shut up!" commanded my husband, annoyed. "I'm not afraid of old Yangali or any of his devil magic. Come with me, I want you to tell me what this girl has to say—I don't understand her language."

Still shaking his head mournfully, Umsuka followed his "baas" into the tent and we soon had the girl's story. Her father, the king of a neighboring tribe, and her Portuguese mother, had been killed some days before by the Masai. She had been taken prisoner and reserved for sacrifice to the voodoo god of these people. Only our timely rescue had saved her. Her beautiful dark eyes shone their gratitude as she looked up into our faces. Thus did Nyssa become a member of our household.

Though we had brought upon ourselves the displeasure of the Masai tribe by what they considered a violation of their sacred rites and by the assault on their chief witch-doctor, and though we anticipated some trouble from them, we were not molested, or even visited by one of them during the remainder of our stay near them.

Some days later we changed camp, plunging farther into the heart of the jungle, following the spoor of the lions. Our first day out we bagged two, I killed one of them.

About us flourished a most luxuriant vegetation—giant date palms, creeping vines, and strange, beautiful, flower-bearing shrubs. On a little stretch of plain in the midst of the dense jungle we had pitched our tents. It had now been more than two weeks since the rescue of Nyssa, and she was daily growing more and more to be one of us. The dreadful fate Umsuka predicted had not befallen us.

But it came, or at least what might have been a very serious tragedy if providence had not willed otherwise.

One day Mr. Curtis stood near our sleeping tent conversing with one of the white hunters who was in a tent next to his.

Suddenly from out the jungle came the whirring of an arrow aimed at his heart. The attack was so quick and unexpected that it threw us all into consternation. Fortunately, however, it was my husband's custom always to wear just above his heart a little leather-covered bible that his mother had given him. That had saved his life. Pulling the arrow from the cover, he examined it closely.

"Poisoned," was his comment.

"Broadwell," he said to the white hunter with whom he had been conversing, "take Umsuka and the other boys and scour the jungle—every inch of it—within two miles of the camp."

His orders were quickly carried out, and before an hour had elapsed the party returned with a prisoner, no less a person than Yangali, the witch-doctor.

After a good kicking at the point of my husband's boots, and a severe scolding mingled with a few threats, the weird-looking old rascal was released and told to leave the country. He went hurriedly, glancing back over his shoulder and mumbling.

"What is he saying, Umsuka?" inquired Mr. Curtis.

"His say he go, but say he send his *impaka*—his spirit—back to kill—kill—kill!"

"Well, so long as he doesn't resort to poison arrows again, I'm not afraid of his spirit-avengers," replied my husband.

Next day I came across Umsuka cleaning and polishing the rifle my husband had given him after he had finished his first year's service with us; this, and a big silver watch, which I had given him, were his most prized possessions. Later I saw him bending over a fire he had kindled near the camp. His shining black face was twitching and his lips were mumbling an invocation of some sort. He evidently was preparing to combat any "charms" that old Yangali might start to work against us.

A few days after that, we staged a big hunt. We were in the lion country. Before the afternoon had half gone we had made our kill.

We were returning to camp. Our way led through vast stretches of papyrus and pampas-grass. I was lagging behind with Umsuka. My husband was more than three hundred yards ahead of me. I could see the tall grass waving to and fro as he made his way through it; then suddenly flanking us, creeping stealthily through the grass, appeared an animal that was stalking him. I caught my breath in amazement! It was snowy white—a white leopard. I had never seen one before. Like a wraith it moved forward slowly, the uncanny white beast. There was something so strange about its appearance, aside from its animal ferocity, that I felt myself shaking as with rigor. I raised my rifle and took aim—the animal vanished before my eyes!

"Umsuka," I questioned of the black behind me, "did you see that white animal—that leopard?"

"Yes, missie," he almost wailed. "That was spirit-beast. That Yangali's *impaka*. Him stalking Baas—him kill Baas—don't watch." His black face was almost ashen.

"Pshaw!" I answered. "Surely, Umsuka, you do not believe anything of that sort?"

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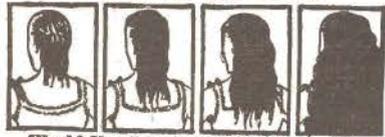
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With these words ringing in my ears, and many misgivings of my own, I hurried forward to overtake my husband—to tell him what I had seen and to repeat Umsuka's comments.

He was interested in the animal, but he laughed heartily at his black "boy's" superstitious remarks.

But there came a day when he did not laugh!

One evening a few days later I strolled out to the edge of the jungle where I was watching the opening of a strange, night-blooming flower. I was never afraid—perhaps association with Mr. Curtis has given me some of his fearlessness in the face of danger. Like the blacks, only the secret, hidden danger appalled me.

This evening I was only a few yards from the center of our camp. The moon was riding high in the heavens lending a peculiar glamor to the languorous, scented night.

As I bent down to watch the first magical unfolding of the wonderful night-flower, from the depths of the jungle, out of the mysterious night there plunged a monster cat, white as snow—the very leopard I had seen a few days before. I screamed, but before I could draw my weapon, the animal pounced upon me and bore me to the ground. I could feel the cruel claws tearing my flesh, but I did not faint—I lay perfectly still and it seemed as though all the evil in the world was bearing me down to death.

My husband had heard my loud scream, and snatching up his rifle, he ran across the space that divided me from the camp. The leopard stood motionless above me, and gazed with cruel defiance at the approaching men. As I lay there, I had

no hope of being saved, although I could hear the alarm sounding through the entire camp, and I saw my husband as he rushed forward. Umsuka with his own rifle was close behind him. Though the claws of the beast had entered my flesh, my suffering was not physical, but mental. My brain was leaden with the weight of an awful depression. I seemed to be in the grasp of an evil power—the concentrated action of all the evil thought that had ever cursed the world since time began!

Calling upon me to be brave, Mr. Curtis raised his rifle and took aim at the leopard crouched above me. But his shot went wild! I heard it whistle sickeningly over my head and strike in the jungle behind me. Again he fired—with the same result! Then a third time the bullet went astray while the animal growled menacingly.

I expected every moment to be torn into bits by the cruel claws of the savage beast, or to sink beneath the weight of the dark mental shadow that was crushing my spirit.

Before my husband could fire again, Umsuka had reached his side and had done a strange thing. Roughly shoving Mr. Curtis aside, he took aim at the animal in whose grasp I lay—and fired. The shot missed my face by half an inch and plunged directly into the heart of the white leopard! I could feel the huge beast relaxing his hold on me, and the blood gushed in a crimson stream across my face; his dying convulsions had begun. I was considerably torn during his death struggles though the heavy texture of my khaki clothes afforded some protection. But, happily for me, he died quickly. Then, I was tenderly lifted and taken into camp, while Umsuka followed jubilantly, murmuring:

"Silver bullet kill spirit-beast—good old silver bullet drive out evil spirit—him end Yangali, too—him save white Missie!"

"What on earth do you mean, Umsuka,

with your 'silver bullet' talk?" I heard my distressed husband ask of his faithful black.

"Plain bullet no good—never kill evil spirit—only silver bullet have power over spirit in beast. Umsuka melt silver watch—make bullets. When Yangali's evil spirit come in body of white leopard, shoot silver bullet into him—kill 'im—kill Yangali, too—save white lady-Missie!"

Being the wife of my husband and a sportswoman, I was not suffering too much to fail to be interested. I lifted my head from the pillow of my cot where they had laid me and inquired:

"Umsuka, you say you've killed Yangali? What do you mean? And you were melting your prized silver watch—the watch I gave you—when I saw you bending over the fire a few days ago? Well, you shall have the finest silver watch money can buy when we get back to civilization."

"Yes, Umsuka melt silver watch—make bullets. Same silver bullet killed spirit-beast, killed Yangali, too. You see."

And now I come to the strangest, most amazing part of the whole story—the thing that takes it out of the natural into the supernatural, that makes it not a mere coincidence but a startling "white man's mystery." A few days later in trekking back over the country through which we had come, we found the body of old Yangali lying in the jungle. His hideous, shriveled old carcass had not been touched by bird or beast though he had been dead some days.

And straight through his heart a bullet had passed, a bullet just the size of the silver one that had killed the white leopard.

I value the leopard's pelt so highly no money could buy it. And yet sometimes I enter the room expecting to find that it has vanished, for it is the skin of the avenging spirit-beast—the white leopard that came out of the jungle.

Secrets of a Mysterious Woman

(Continued from page 45)

size and a white card of the size of an ordinary visiting card. Request him to write the name of a spirit friend on one side of the card, and to write not more than two questions with it. Take the card in your hand, and the envelope in the other, place it slowly in the envelope before his eyes, and hand the envelope back to him to seal. You do this in order that you may be sure that the card is lying in the envelope with the writing next to the smooth side, and away from the glue. It would make him suspicious if you asked him to put the card in the envelope in that way. But he is quite satisfied when you return him the envelope to seal that the card has not been tampered with, and you may even score a point here by telling him to look and be sure that the card is there. Even if he pulls it out half way to see the writing he will not turn it around. Now provide him with letter wax, and let him seal the seams of the envelope to prevent it from being opened. You are now ready for the performance.

Take your seat at a table opposite the sitter and near a window. Place the envelope on a slate and thrust it beneath the table. Instead of holding the slate then with your hands, slip one corner between your legs and the seat of the chair. Thus you are holding it by sitting on it. Your hand is now free to do as you choose with. The sitter cannot see your movements because the table is interposed. From the ticket pocket of your coat take a small sponge saturated with alcohol. Dampen the envelope over the card. The envelope thus becomes transparent and you can easily read the name and question. Write the answer on the slate with a piece of soft chalk and your sitter will be paralyzed with astonishment when you say: "I think all is ready. Let us see," and withdrawing the slate you show the envelope, (which has dried rapidly, and shows no mark whatever of the alcohol,) with seals unbroken, and no evidence of having been tampered with. But the name of the sitter's dead

friend, and the answer to the question on the card appears upon the slate.

This trick may be improved in a variety of ways according to circumstances or ingenuity of the operator. Sometimes the pocket is inconvenient. The sponge could be secreted under the top of the table or under the seat of the chair or in the skirt of the operator's coat. Sheathing of dentist's rubber in the form of a bag around the sponge may sometimes be found useful in handling successfully, and prevents evaporation from the sponge. This is a feat performed by but few mediums, as few know the secret.

Another secret that she disclosed to me has been used by vaudeville performers—not by Miss Fay personally. This trick is performed as follows:—A woman is blindfolded and seated in a chair with her back to the audience. She holds in her hand a slate or writes on a blackboard just as you please. You, then, in the middle of the audience, say that you will convey to her any date or number of words,

etc. without sign or signal. The lady is breathing gently and regularly, but so that you can see her and notice the heaving of her breast or shoulders. You then start her counting by drawing a deeper breath than usual yourself. You watch the breathing and she counts her breaths and so do you, and you stop her when she has breathed up to the number you want by again giving another deep breath.

Let us suppose you want the number 74. You begin: the lady is breathing regularly and you give a deep breath to start her so that as you ask for perfect silence she can hear you, and as soon as she hears your breath she begins to count her own from the next breath and when she has breathed up to the seventh breath you again give another deep breath (just long enough for her to hear) which tells her that the number is 7, and as she goes on counting from that seventh breath and you again stop her on the fourth breath, when she at once writes on the slate or blackboard "74." This is the principle on which the trick is worked. You will then understand that you can convey any figure, card or letter by the code.

You do this in a drawing room, or even in a hall if you can get your audience to be silent. But where she cannot hear you from any long distance, have some one behind the screen or curtain to start her by making some little noise with the mouth, or anything else your fancy may suggest, but this person need not have the least idea of how the trick is done and any child could do that. All the child has to do is to make a little hum or noise each time he or she sees the operator look at the article which he (the performer) holds in his hand. This noise is to start and stop when necessary and takes the place of the deep breath. The operator must remain perfectly still and not make any sign or sound but merely look at the article he holds in his hand each time he wants the child to make the noise, as the child or whoever is behind looks through a small hole and can see the operator and is near the lady.

Thus, say you want to convey the Queen of Hearts. You look at the card or paper on which the name is written and

immediately the child sees you look, makes the noise agreed upon. You then count the breaths up to twelve, when you look at the card again, and immediately the child sees you look at it again, makes the sound. You then count the breaths up to three and then look at the card once more, which stops the lady. Then she knows the card to be written down. The queen of hearts is conveyed by fifteen breaths, twelve for queen and three for suit. Of course you see that you can convey anything, if you only arrange a code with a number for each article. This apparently difficult method has earned a livelihood for many performers.

It was during the war that I talked with Anna Eva Fay, and I remember that she showed me a Biblical prophecy that I found very intriguing. First she read to me from the Book of Revelations as follows:

"And I stood upon the sand of the sea and saw a beast . . . and upon his head the name of blasphemy.

"And they worshiped the beast, saying who is like unto the beast, who is able to make war with him?"

"Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred, three score and six."

Miss Fay attributed the significance of these verses to the Kaiser. This is how the problem works out: Take each letter of the Kaiser's name and number it according to its position in the alphabet—that is, K is the eleventh letter. Add the numerals together at the same time placing the number 6 (the number of letters in "Kaiser") at the right of each number. Then add the total. It gives 666, or six hundred, threescore and six, as Revelations puts it. Here it is:

K	.....	11-6
A	.....	1-6
I	.....	9-6
S	.....	19-6
E	.....	5-6
R	.....	18-6
	Total	666

That was one of the most fascinating interviews in my career as a journalist. I remember that I asked Miss Fay if she had ever seen anything genuine. She said she had—a boy in Russia she believed was absolutely psychic.

"At least," she said, "he fooled me." Before I left that afternoon she also explained to me the secret of what was called in those days "The Giant Memory" in which a performer was able to exhibit what really seemed to be a superhuman memory. I am glad to reveal it here.

This feat depends upon a novel adaptation of the "mnemonic system" and has an excellent effect on an audience blessed with more than the average intelligence. The performer hands a die to a spectator and requests him to throw it. We shall suppose he throws three. "Remember the number you throw," says the performer, who then hands the die to a second person, who also throws; a third, etc. When eight or ten, or even fifteen persons have thrown the performer tells each one his number. In order to do this the student has recourse to an ingenious system of mnemotechny. He pictures to himself that all who throw No. 1 wear silk hats; those throwing No. 2 wear derby hats; those throwing No. 3, straw hats, those No. 5 wear full dress suits; those throwing No. 6 a business suit, etc., etc. or any other series of pictures will serve as well as those enumerated.

In taking the die out of the thrower's hand, the performer looks fixedly in his face and fancies him with the garment or the hat the symbol of the number requires. When that same person later on asks the performer to name his number, he will recall it readily by its association with the mental picture.

Before I departed, I showed Miss Fay a trick.

I guaranteed to allow her to write a question on a piece of paper, and that I would write the same thing on another sheet of paper without seeing the question.

All that I did was write "The Same Thing" on a sheet of paper.

Miss Fay took it in good spirits. Few mystics have a sense of humor. Miss Fay had a great deal; she was a truly remarkable woman and I am glad that I knew her.

The Ghost Light

(Continued from page 16)]

"Now there are only two. Van Kesner was murdered, perhaps by—but let me give a full account of his death.

"I was standing at a short distance from Van Kesner, and for some reason fear and agony were depicted on his face. He was staring at something with horror. Was it at me? Then he seemed to shift his gaze to the table, where there were lying a razor and shaving mug. I saw a hand reach upward—just a hand—no arm, no body. The man sat motionless, apparently unable to move. The armless hand had seized Van Kesner's razor and was lifting it towards his throat. A second later, it had inflicted a deep slash. Van Kesner rolled to the floor without uttering a sound. Then the hand put the razor back on the table

and pointed to a bench not far from where Van Kesner lay, and with a great effort my wounded friend half dragged, half pushed himself upon it.

"Then it was that I seemed to come out of a mist, and there before me on the bench lay Van Kesner, his throat cut. Why was it that I had not helped him? Was it that, in my horror at seeing the hand, the full realization of what was happening did not occur to me? Or was it, as the half mad Stowskey said, 'my own hand.'

"But no, it was not my hand, I see it again, it is coming toward me.

"At the second appearance of the hand I must have fainted. I am unable to sleep, so I will continue my narrative. I

awoke with a bottle of brandy held to my lips; I looked up and saw Stowskey. He put down the bottle and walked over to an armchair, where he sat watching me. For some unknown reason, the sight of the man filled me with horror. I had noticed a peculiar change in him in the past week; when he spoke, his voice came as from far away and for a whole week he had not, to my knowledge, touched a drop to eat or drink. Suddenly he arose and came over to me.

"By this time I had got to my feet. He put his hand on my shoulder. I involuntarily shrank from him, for even through the heavy coat I swore his touch seemed cold and clammy, not like a hand, but like some leaden mist.

"Then he spoke in the same far-away voice, a voice that seemed not to come from him, but from the air above his head. 'Jamison,' he said, pointing to a small door on the other side of the room, 'as you value your life do not enter that room. I think Van Kesner tried to enter there when he died.'

"November 6—There is a terrible blizzard raging, a blizzard more severe than I have ever seen; an owl is hooting dimly. Occasionally a tree falls, with a terrifying crash and the wind whistles through the eaves of this old structure, like the moans and screams of the damned.

"November 7—In three days from now I must go for more provisions. I am afraid to leave or stay, even to think. Today the storm has greatly subsided; our fire is getting low. Stowskey has just suggested that we go out for more wood.

"Later—To my horror, on our way to the pile of firewood I happened to look down at the snow, and saw that although Stowskey's legs disappeared in the snow up to his knees, I was the only one who left footprints.

"My curiosity as to what lies behind the door grows and grows.

"November 8—I just tried to run my fingers through my hair—it has completely fallen out. Last night when I thought Stowskey to be asleep in his chair, where he always sleeps, I arose and crept stealthily to the door. I put my hand against it and pushed softly. Suddenly I was violently hurled across the room by some unseen force. I jumped back on the bed and lay there sleeplessly until dawn. Stowskey had not moved through the whole proceeding. In the morning I told him my story. 'You are mad,' he said. However, this afternoon I shall again look.

"Later—I have now lost all confidence in my sanity. I opened the door, and found the body of Stowskey, rotted horribly. The features, however, were still intact. Stowskey had been dead three

weeks, but that was not all. Standing above the figure of Stowskey was his exact likeness, and suddenly the likeness dispersed into a mist, and from the mist condensed again into the Hand.

"*Still Later*—The horror of what I saw, will surely drive me mad, if I am not already mad. The Hand—the Hand again; but no, it clears away, there is no hand: My mind clears. Great Heavens, it all comes to me! It was my hand that murdered first Stowskey and then Van Kesner. No, no, it was not I—something no worse really, but more horrible. It is coming, writhing, crawling toward me. It is—"

At this point the writing became completely illegible. Although it ran on for several more pages, I could not, as hard as I tried, decipher a word.

At first I thought the man had been insane—as I now believe he was partly, although he may have been reduced to that state in a few hours' time. Surely there had been no blizzard such as he had mentioned. We had had a few inches of snow, that was all.

I leaned over to examine the body of Jamison more closely. He could not have been dead more than three days at most. Then I found in a chink of the wall what at first I thought to be another leaf of the note Jamison had written. However, when I touched it to remove it from its hiding place, I found it to be a sheet of very ancient bleached leather. I am at a loss for an explanation of why Jamison or the others failed to observe it, for it was in plain view. However, this is the decipherable part of the inscription on the parchment:

"—*Knowledge of Chemicals—such per cent. of each make up the human body—succeeded—life—will live forever unless destroyed—under my control—kept in cage—if he ever escapes—ruin—at the end—will myself—*"

I had by this time righted the table. Wanting to save the lantern as much as

possible in case of emergency, I extinguished it and lit a table lamp, the chimney of which had been broken. The flame flickered slightly, and gave weird, fantastical shapes to the different objects in the room.

Terror now seized me. I was about to flee when a great gust of wind came from the hallway, extinguishing my lamp. From the door there came a sound of labored breathing, followed by a barely perceptible creaking. I turned and saw a figure that was neither ape nor man. In the dim light, it resembled an octopus, with a grotesquely misshapen head stuck on top and disproportionately thin arms and legs. I thought of the lantern at my feet. Gropingly my hand closed upon it, and while I lit it I kept my eyes riveted on the approaching Thing.

I thought: "This then is what Valmont meant by saying that the sorcerer of the old days could manufacture living creatures by means of chemicals."

The Thing was, yet it was not. It was indescribably animate and inanimate at one and the same time. I noticed that on the Thing's head there was a lusterless mass resembling hair.

It came creeping slowly toward me, and then with amazing quickness it closed in. We grappled. The lamp was overturned, the house caught fire. I jerked away from the monster, and fled toward the door. My enemy followed and overtook me. I tried to find its throat, and strangle it. There was no throat. Then, as a last resort, I caught in both hands the hair of its head, and by some miracle, managed to hurl the body into the flames. As soon as it struck the fire there was a sizzling, as if of burning chemicals.

From that time on, I remembered nothing, until I found myself by a little brook at the foot of the mountain.

Nothing remained of the house but a thin wisp of smoke ascending slowly toward a darkly clouded sky. Then I noticed, clutched tightly in my left hand, a lock of the horrible, the lusterless, hair.

The Mind Reader

(Continued from page 38)

word, PANIC. It was no false alarm. I snatched a paper from a newsboy and scanned the front page.

Dozens of the smaller brokerage firms had overreached themselves and collapsed. Their bankruptcy would involve millions of dollars in bad debts. Copper and certain other stocks had been forced to fantastic artificial values, and the actual holders were beginning to sell out for cash to deluded speculators who would be ruined when the inevitable let-down occurred. Of such stuff are financial panics made.

But dominating all else, from my point of view, was the reasoned estimate of the experts that some one unknown gambler on margins had benefited by at least \$1,000,000,000. He was the instigator of the raid, the cause of the general disaster that threatened. The Street had never seen a coup like this. Wild rumors con-

cerning his identity were abroad, but Holcombe & Glick guarded his secret well. The name of Daniel Buwalda was not once mentioned.

Peter walked back with me to my office. I said good-bye to him there. He was to call at my flat after dinner, we agreed.

My firm was not on the list of those that had been drawn into the slaughter of the morning, though I discovered that my chief had personally added quite a sum to his fortune by trailing along with the winner and stopping in time. I realized, startled, that I could have done the same thing and have become a comparatively rich man without running the slightest risk.

Routine work proved to be a terrible burden that afternoon. But I struggled through with it, and at four o'clock I rushed home to Fenimore Street. My first act was to call my brother Owen on

the telephone.

"You have seen the papers? You get the significance of what happened downtown today?" I cried.

"Certainly. It is what I expected," he answered coolly. "Now be careful how you express yourself to me over a public wire."

"I located the business headquarters from which our enemy was working."

"Yes. Go on."

"I saw him. I thought I'd be able to follow him to his home. But—"

And I proceeded to give Owen a succinct account of the hallucination undergone by Peter and its deplorable results to me. A few cryptic words thrown in here and there were enough to confuse possible eavesdroppers, but I knew that my brother understood. He made no comment until I had finished.

"It's a development of the greatest in-

terest," he said then. "The fellow apparently can practice his black art under any material conditions. H'm! That tells me all I need to know for the present. You and I won't have to meet today. Continue your investigation, and report again."

"But, Owen," I protested, "you are ignoring the problem of Peter Kanarjian. His friendship for me is sincere, and he can be very useful. I can't go on keeping him in the dark about how things really stand. Don't you think you're the one to open his eyes to—to our theories?"

"No," he snapped, after a brief silence. "I give you permission to talk spiritualism to him. Nothing too deep, you understand, that would bewilder him. Take him along with you as far as you had gone without my help. Impress him. Cement his confidence. But I forbid you even to mention my name."

It seemed an arbitrary restriction to me, but there is no disputing Owen when his mind is made up. I turned my thoughts to the details of the best course to follow in explaining myself to the Armenian.

He arrived at nine o'clock, his air a curious mixture of diffidence arising from his inability to believe I had quite forgiven him, and of morbid preoccupation with his own love tragedy. I had decided to stage a simple séance for his enlightenment. It would be anti-climax to me, I feared, after Owen's display of power. Yet it was destined, as the reader will see, to have a most singular upshot.

"Buwalda is a magician, Peter," I said bluntly, after our talk had played around the edges of the subject for a few minutes.

The hand that held his cigarette trembled, and his eyes evaded mine. "That is a strange word to hear spoken in New York," he muttered.

"Perhaps. But everything connected with Buwalda is strange. Recent events have persuaded me that he is even more dangerous than I had dreamed at first. Think of the incredible thing, for instance, that happened between us today. Buwalda was within a stone's throw of us, beyond the partition. He seems to have known that we were hunting him down. So he made you see what you saw. He cast a spell upon you."

I LACKED the heart to tell Peter that Coralie Griffin also had brushed by us on the other side of the wall.

"Ah, a spell!" he exclaimed wildly. "I used to hear talk of the kind when I was a boy in Armenia. Old Kurdish women sit in caves in the mountains and work evil upon our people, so it is said. But I never thought to experience the sorcery that could make the face of a friend alter to that of a foe. For God's sake, how was it done?"

"I do not know precisely. Buwalda is a spiritualist. I've already told you that. I've gone in for psychic research myself, and I'd be the last to deny that any evil is impossible when a bad man succeeds in putting himself in touch with the immaterial world. Peter, do you believe in an after life?"

"We Armenians are Christians," he asserted proudly. "Of course, I believe in the immortality of the soul."

"Have you ever tried to communicate with a departed spirit?"

"Never. I would have considered it a sin."

"It is not a sin, if one's motives are pure. Will you let me show you how it may be done? We are leagued together to fight Buwalda, and after you've shared my knowledge we'll both be the stronger for it."

He turned pale, then threw out his hand and gripped mine. "Anything that you say is all right, I will do."

I got out my talking table, rested my finger tips lightly upon it and told Peter to imitate me.

"This is a means of concentrating and of giving the dead an instrument through which they may send messages," I elucidated in A. B. C. terms. "If a person with mediumistic power—I have it, to some extent—is present, a control usually takes possession of him. A force I'll call magnetism, for want of a better word, flows from the medium to the others in the circle. The table quivers under their hands, raises itself upon two legs and raps upon the floor. It will answer questions. The code is, one rap for No, two for Doubtful and three for Yes. The table will also spell out messages by rapping once for the letter A, twice for B and so on. You understand, of course, that all such manifestations originate with the control."

Peter nodded, and we both remained silent for nearly a quarter of an hour. But though the table stirred now and then, there was no sign that it intended to develop real action. I began to suspect that my friend was one of those rare non-psi-chic individuals whose participation throws a damper upon a séance. Most persons are merely neutral, and are ignored by the control.

THE hitch was especially awkward in this case, for I had as good as promised results to Peter. I held on for a while longer and then said:

"Please take your hands off the table. Let's see what it will do for me alone."

He obeyed, pursing his lips and putting his head on one side.

In less than ten seconds, the table commenced to bounce up and down and give every sign of being eager to talk. I asked whether there was a message for Peter. The answer was, "No." A message for me, then? "Yes." Did it concern my pursuit of Buwalda? "Yes." Would the control spell out the message? "Yes."

Thereupon, by means of the slow process of running through the letters of the alphabet, the table rapped out the following:

"I will send her to you."

This was puzzling, and I demanded details. The table simply repeated, "I will send her to you," and had reached a third "I will send—" when I drew my hands away.

"You must know that feeble-minded, erratic spirits often cut in on these sessions. One is never sure of getting a clear message," I said apologetically to Peter.

He did not reply for a moment. "I don't want to be critical, Hugh," he observed at last. "But, after all, you, or any one else, sitting alone at a table could manipulate it into saying anything. Is there a reason why I shouldn't try it alone?"

"None whatsoever," I answered quietly.

"But you won't get results. You are not mediumistic."

"We'll see." He assumed the regulation pose. Naturally the table would not stir for him. He laughed.

I had found exhibitions of scepticism amusing in other people, but it was vitally important to me not to lose Peter's confidence. "Listen, old fellow," I said earnestly, "I am not trying to deceive you, and that much can be proved in no time."

I again placed my hands on the table. It resumed its antics, and I allowed it to work up a great deal of energy without putting a question to it. I then removed my left hand, and raised finger after finger of my right until only the index finger was still touching the wood. But, as I knew would be the case, the table continued to vibrate.

"What is the message you have for me?" I asked.

It rolled sideways on two legs. A little laboriously, yet with precision, it rapped out:

"I will send her to you."

"There you are," I addressed Peter. "You can't think I am able to juggle a heavy table with the tip of one finger."

AN awed look had spread over his countenance. "God, no!" he mumbled. "You—you must excuse me. I didn't really doubt you, but this sort of thing is new to me."

"Do you suppose I fail to make allowances? Don't worry, Peter. Tonight, the only message seems to be a mysterious promise that isn't going to be fulfilled. Whoever 'she' may be, she doesn't come to the table, and the joke is on us. Let's change the subject."

"All right. But tell me one thing. Do you believe that Buwalda is helped by the spirits of the dead to perform his magic?"

"Something like that. I haven't got to the bottom of his method. We'll go into the matter more fully, later."

We lighted fresh cigarettes and settled ourselves comfortably in armchairs. But though we tried to make small talk about books and travel, I could not shake off a sense of uneasiness and I was aware that Peter was affected in a similar way. It had started to rain. I fell to watching the great drops that spattered against the window pane. Our conversation languished. An almost sinister silence reigned in the room.

Suddenly this was broken by a light knocking at the door.

I started and glanced at Peter. "I'm not expecting a caller," I said under my breath, without knowing why I made such a point of the information.

"N-no?" he commented nervously.

I crossed over to the door and threw it open. There was a small, slim girl waiting on the landing. Her hat and her coat with its cheap fur collar were flecked with rain drops. She stared straight ahead of her, her wide-open eyes and pinched face as blank as those of a sleep-walker.

Her features were vaguely familiar to me. Where had I seen her before? I could not be sure, and in my surprise words with which to question her were lacking.

She walked past me into the room, mechanically swerving a few inches from

her course to avoid bumping into Peter, and came to rigid halt by the fireplace.

"Oh, Lord! More horrors!" I whispered. "The girl is hypnotized."

"Who is she?" asked Peter.

I answered him at the instant that a tardy recognition of her flashed upon my consciousness:

"She is Buwalda's secretary. She is the girl who used to take tickets at the séances in Baltic Street."

THE potentialities of this weird occurrence were not lost upon the Armenian, though he was far from guessing that Owen and I had made it part of our strategy to locate the very girl who now stood silently in my flat.

"Buwalda's secretary has been sent to us," he queried, his jaws gaping.

"It would seem so. The table promised to send a woman. I thought some new spirit control was meant. But, instead—we get this."

"Should we talk so frankly in her presence?"

"It doesn't matter. She's asleep on her feet, and afterwards won't remember what was said. But right now she'll tell the naked truth in reply to direct questions. The state is one of hypnosis."

"Who hypnotized her?"

"God knows!"

I approached the pathetic visitor and studied her, amazed in spite of my lore at her death-like detachment from the waking world.

"What is your name?" I asked gently.

"Anna Wagner," came back in metallic, clipped syllables, at odd variance with her manner of a gray mouse on the occasion of our first meeting.

"Where do you live?"

"One hundred and eleven Sackett Street, Brooklyn."

"Who was that man you worked for on Baltic Street?"

"Professor Buwalda."

"Where is he now?"

"I do not know. He has deserted me."

"Deserted you, Anna? Do you mean simply that his going has left you out of a job?"

"I mean more. I love him, and he swore that he loved me. He was to be very rich some day, he said, and then he was to take me to live with him in a fine apartment in New York. It was a lie. He has gone away without leaving even a letter of good-bye for me."

"Did you give all—give yourself to him?" I boggled, convinced that it was important I should know the depths of Buwalda's treachery.

"I gave all. I loved him."

Turning to Peter, I raised one eyebrow and shrugged my shoulders, as much as to say that he must take what comfort he could from the knowledge that Coralie was not the only woman who had fallen under the influence of the medium. It was on the tip of my tongue to question Anna about Coralie. I hesitated because I feared it would hurt his feelings. But in this matter the Armenian proved to be more realistic than I.

His face contorted with grief, he stepped forward and addressed the girl: "You had a rival, did you not?"

"Ah, the woman in the furs—the lazy, dark woman!" replied Anna slowly. "She

has made me cry, but I was a fool to care. It is she who is mad about the professor. He does not love her. He loves no one, I think."

Peter's chin sank onto his breast. He was too stricken to press the matter farther. I spoke again:

"Anna, why did you come here?"

"I was sent," she stated gravely.

"Who sent you?"

"A strange man. He came to my room and sat and talked to me for a few minutes, and told me where to go. I did not know his name, but he was a nice man and I did what he told me."

"Can you describe his appearance to me, Anna?"

"Well, he was tall and—and handsome, though he was not so young a man," she faltered. "You—you should go to his funeral."

AS she uttered these blood-curdling words, her muscles swiftly stiffened, her mouth fell open and her eyes rolled over in their sockets. She swayed, and would have toppled to the floor if I had not guided her to a couch, where I laid her out on her back. Peter had followed us, trembling.

"Is she dead?" he gasped.

"No danger of that. The hypnotic condition is wearing off. I can bring her back to normal in a little while."

"Who was the man she described. Wh—what did she mean about going to a funeral?"

"Can't you guess, Peter? A tall, middle-aged man, and obviously connected with this mystery, since he sent her to us! She must have been visited by the ghost of James Griffin."

"Holy Mother of God!" He made the sign of the cross. "This girl was hypnotized by a specter, you say?"

"So we must assume, though it is outside accepted theories on the subject. Perhaps she was self-hypnotized, and the ghost then found it possible to control her."

"But was it Griffin who spoke to us through the table, who made us the pledge that she would come?"

"There can be little doubt of that," I answered.

"Why did he not name himself?"

"I cannot tell you. I only know that whenever I have been in touch at séances with the spirits of the newly dead they have been erratic and limited in their freedom of expression."

A weariness had settled upon me. I wanted to be free for a while from the necessity of answering Peter's questions. There was so much in this new development that I wanted to mull over in my own mind, without interruptions. I swung brusquely around to the girl.

"I am going to awaken her," I said.

"Then I want you to take her home in a cab. Make friends with her on the way, and get her to promise that one or both of us may visit her soon. Will you do that?"

"But of course I will," replied Peter.

I stroked Anna's pale forehead until her features relaxed, and her breathing became soft and regular. As soon as I thought it safe to do so, I spoke in a clear, authoritative tone:

"You will awaken in exactly one min-

ute's time. But if in the future, I should want you to return to this state, your mind will be submissive to mine. Remember that. Now, in one minute—awaken!"

SHE stirred on the couch, sighed and opened her eyes. Her condition was that of an ordinary sleeper who had just been aroused. She gazed blankly about her, experienced swift astonishment at her strange surroundings, and sat up with a cry:

"Who are you men? Where am I?"

"We have been taking care of you," I assured her gently. "You were wandering about the streets, and entered this building. I think you must have been ill. You were in a sort of coma. My name is Purcell, and you are in my flat. Mr. Kanarjian here is a friend of mine."

"I was wandering about the streets!" she repeated, staggered. "I didn't know what I was doing? Such a thing never happened to me before."

"There's no reason to be scared, because you're all right now. What is your last waking memory?"

"Why, I was at home! I'd been reading on a settee, and I must have fallen asleep. I don't recall a thing after that."

"Luckily, it's turned out to be a harmless adventure," I smiled. "Mr. Kanarjian will escort you home, if you'll let him, Miss Wagner. You've already given us your address as well as your name, so you see your coma couldn't have been a very deep one."

She made a helpless little gesture with both hands, moved vaguely about the room, then solemnly said good-night to me and started for the door. Peter swung into step beside her.

"You will come back here?" I called after him.

"Certainly, Hugh," he answered.

Left to myself, I mused on the intricacies of this Buwalda affair, which each new event rendered a darker mystery for all concerned. The terrible mind reader had known that Peter and I were on his trail in the Exchange Place Building, though I had been assured that I had a perfect defence system against the telepathy practised by him. Doubtless, it was Peter's mind that he had read. Should I, in that case, regard the Armenian as a vulnerable assistant, a peril to myself in the enterprise? But it might be that Peter's introduction tonight to the rudiments of occultism would close his mind, also, to Buwalda's machinations. Time alone would tell.

It was clear that every-day persons were victims and unconscious tools of the medium. In all logic, it should be easier still for him to influence those who knew him personally and admired him. Why, then, had he allowed Anna Wagner to be drawn into my sphere? I could only figure that he had totally discounted the importance of Anna, that he had forgotten the drab little girl as soon as she had ceased to be of material service to him. If that were so, it was a sign of inefficiency. A superman would have discounted no one from his past life. There might be chinks in Buwalda's armor—a thought that lent hope of success to our fight against him.

As to the rôle which had suddenly been played by the spirit of James Griffin, I confess that the circumstances numbed me

with a fright I could not define. It had been so furtive a spirit! Was it, too, in the shadowland beyond the grave, obliged to take the fearsome powers of Buwalda into account? Why had it spoken through Anna, hurriedly, as an after thought, to say that I should attend the funeral of its mortal body?

I was sunk in the contemplation of these problems when Peter returned.

"Miss Wagner has ended up by feeling quite grateful to us," he announced. "She invites either or both of us to call to see her at any time."

"Good. The next lead for us to follow is the Griffin funeral. When is it to take place?"

"At eleven, tomorrow morning."

HAD you planned to attend it?"

"Naturally. I am a relative."

A way must be found for me to go. Do you have a car?"

"Yes—a sedan."

"Allow me to drive you to the funeral. I can pose as being a chauffeur."

"Don't you think it would be rather odd for me to appear in my own car? There will be a seat for me in one of the big family cars."

"You can claim that you are forced to leave from the cemetery on a trip out of town, and want to have your sedan handy. Ride out in the place assigned to you among the mourners, but give me the necessary excuse for trailing along. It is important that I witness this funeral from beginning to end."

"Very well," said Peter. "I'll call for you at nine o'clock tomorrow."

I was glad that he was ready to go home, for I was absurdly tired. I had no sooner crawled into bed than I was sound asleep.

Upon opening my eyes at half past eight the next morning, I was astonished at the profound darkness that lay upon the room. Surely the clock was wrong, I thought. But when I reached the window, I perceived that the city had been clutched by a black fog of the kind that occasionally occurs in New York toward the end of the winter. It was impossible to see across the street. A murky yellow filtering from above furnished the only sign that somewhere in the world day had been broken. This was a "pea soup" fog though it was not thick enough to halt traffic, as happens only too often in London.

I could not help wondering whether the funeral would be held as scheduled. It seemed a sinister day on which to send forth the final solemn cortege of a loved one. The psychological effect upon the mourners would be horribly depressing. I found myself shuddering with repugnance as I gazed into the wet darkness and pictured a long, slow journey with an open grave at the end of it.

Nevertheless, at ten o'clock Peter arrived, his face of a waxen pallor and his eyes troubled.

"The weather is ghastly, but there's to be no postponement," he said. "I telephoned, to make sure. We must start at once."

I put on a baggy overcoat and a soft hat which came down over my eyes.

Downstairs, I took my place without comment behind the wheel and set out to make the best time I could to the city. It

was a difficult and perilous trip. The stifling dankness that accompanies a fog caught my throat. The asphalt over which we glided was slippery, almost greasy, and the comparatively few cars that were out hindered our progress by their excessive caution, rather than otherwise. A driver ahead would slow up suddenly, in fear of an obstacle, real or imaginary, and time and again I escaped from a rear-end collision only by blind luck. On the Manhattan Bridge, the imminent dangers of skidding were doubled by the lurching, prowling tempo of the machines which felt their way across the great span. The illusion was that of voyaging in an aeroplane through a cloudy sky, for though we knew that the river lay below, the water was invisible, and the very arches of the bridge were lost in the sombre mist.

I succeeded in making my way within the hour to the Griffin home on West 72nd Street. The spectacle there was nothing less than fantastic. A huge motor hearse stood squarely in front of the steps, and strung out behind it were dark cars in which the mourners were already seated. The fog pressed down upon them like a pall, while plumes of yellowish murk eddied and swirled close to the roadway. The facade of the house, set back from the street, was indistinguishable. It might or might not have been the imitation French chateau I had seen in my vision at Buwalda's séance, for all I could have told on this day of gloom.

I drove up level with the hearse and let Peter out. Then I retired and took my station at the far end of the line. No one paid the slightest attention to me. In a few minutes, the cars began to creep forward. Funeral processions are trying on the nerves under ordinary conditions, but the snail's pace at which this one fumbled through the fog was a cruel and gruesome ordeal. I did not even know to which cemetery we were bound. Presently, I could tell by the route we took that it must be Woodlawn, which meant a journey of some ten miles. We would be doing very well if we got there by three in the afternoon.

Actually, it was three-thirty when we turned into the gates of the cemetery, and the fog had not lifted. I followed the other cars to a plot where the tombs were not thickly clustered. Immediately beyond, I thought I could make out the silhouettes of trees. I was among the first to descend, and after locking my car I pressed to the outer edge of the circle of mourners that was forming around James Griffin's grave.

What did I expect to see? I would have found it impossible to answer that question, though my life had depended on it. I saw a casket borne forward slowly, reverently. But it scarcely seemed important in the investigation on which I had embarked. I did not doubt that the casket contained the body of the man who had come to his death as the result of murder by suggestion. That mortal frame was no longer significant. The funeral itself was a mere ceremony. Within easy reach of me stood the widow, Coralie, conspicuous because of her flowing weeds. She was sobbing, a handkerchief held to her mouth. I could not locate Peter, and the other mourners were strangers to me.

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Feeling half ashamed of my rôle of interloper, I obeyed an impulse and withdrew some ten yards into the fog. The party about the grave was blotted out, but I could hear the voice of the clergyman starting to intone the commitment of "dust to dust and ashes to ashes." I shivered. Then suddenly I caught sight of a tall figure of a man approaching me obliquely, as if he had circled the grave. I was astonished at the silence with which he moved and the vagueness of his outline. But the mist, I knew, could play strange tricks.

The man walked by me without speaking. He gestured with his arm, as if signalling to me to follow him. Naturally enough, I hesitated to obey, since my own presence in the cemetery was irregular. I was bothered also by the feeling that I had seen this man before, in painful circumstances.

He moved closer, edging around in front of the gateway to a family vault. But his head was down and I could make nothing of his features. It was an odd fact that it did not occur to me to address him in words, to ask his name. I simply waited, and presently in desperation he raised his head. I found myself staring, as I had stared once before in an empty subway car, at the green-pale countenance and anguished eyes of James Griffin.

This time, however, it was the ghost of the tragic suicide. I was less frightened than I would have believed possible. Perhaps Anna Wagner's adventure that night before had prepared me for this. So though I trembled all over, I returned the phantom's gaze steadily, and when he turned away beckoning to me, I fell into step behind him.

He led me down a graveled pathway to a spot to the right of where the funeral was being held. Two small private chapels which served as entrances to vaults stood close together there. The party returning from the Griffin grave would have to pass within a few feet of the spot. I observed nothing unusual, but the fog made all observations uncertain, and, the next thing I knew, the ghost had disappeared. Apparently, it had entered the narrow space between the two chapels. I advanced with gingerly steps, hugged the wall of the nearest structure and peered around it.

A STARK surprise awaited me. Daniel Buwalda stood there, his back towards me, his head twisted on one shoulder so that I could see his profile. He was staring through a gap between two bulky tombs, staring into the fog in the direction of the funeral, yet keeping an eye upon the way of approach that I had taken.

Directly in front of Buwalda, and crowding him closely, was the specter. But I was stunned to perceive that the latter was invisible to Buwalda. The terrible phantom face could not have been ignored by even the most cold-hearted criminal, as Buwalda was ignoring it. His eyes were separated by inches from the eyes of the ghost. I was forced to conclude that the medium, despite his formidable powers in other directions, was not a clairvoyant.

The shadow-self of Griffin was appealing now to me. It signed furiously for me to attack Buwalda, and as I hesitated it raised both its hands, the fingers crooked,

and clutched at the throat of the living man. There was no mistaking the meaning. I was being told to kill Buwalda. It would have been possible for me to commit the deed at that moment, with little fear of discovery. He did not know of my presence. I had the strength to overcome him. God knows, it might have been better for myself and the rest of the world if I had done it! But I had no stomach for murder. I shook my head.

My feet must have kicked around in the gravel, for there was a scraping sound, and the medium turned and looked directly at me. His eyes dilated and his jaws fell open. Obviously, he recognized me. I reflected wrattifully that I probably had a fight on my hands, any way. But Buwalda harbored no such idea. Instead, he let out a hoarse cry and bolted through the far opening between the chapels.

SCARCELY realizing why I did so, I rushed in pursuit of him. I saw his grotesque figure bounding over low tombs, doubling on its tracks to evade taller ones. His arms flapped in the fog like those of a scarecrow. He seemed more of an evil wraith than the ghost that had led me to him. His speed was superior to mine. I knew he was getting away from me. Yet I continued the chase until I could hear his flying footsteps no longer. I realized then that I had only succeeded in losing myself in the miasmic and abnormally darkened cemetery.

When I at last found my way back to the scene of the funeral, the little car I had driven out was the sole one standing there. Peter, sitting at the wheel, wore a distressed air as he argued with two Woodlawn employees. I took in the situation rapidly. I had locked the sedan and put the key in my pocket, and it had been up to Peter to explain why he could not leave with the rest of the homeward bound mourners. Remorselessly, I hurried forward.

"I'm the chauffeur," I explained. "I—I felt ill, and I sat down on one of those tombs. I guess I must have fallen asleep."

It was a lame excuse, but seeing that I produced the key and Peter did not disown me, the attendants were willing enough to accept it and let us depart.

Making no pretence of taking the wheel from my friend, I slipped into the back seat and we started away.

"Where did you go, Hugh?" he asked. "I can tell from your face that you ran into something weird—some new slant on our mystery, I suppose. God, the whole thing is driving me mad! Did you notice Coralie's condition? She's a wreck."

I deliberately refrained from answering him for several minutes. Then, in a quiet tone, avoiding sensational words as much as possible, I began by giving him an account of how James Griffin's spirit had appeared before me and led me to the place where Buwalda was lurking, of our mutual recognition and his amazing flight.

When Peter tried to make a comment, I hushed him by raising my hand. I proceeded to tell him all that I had been holding back, everything that had happened to me, with the single exception of the séance conducted by my brother Owen. I did not feel I had the right to mention Owen, since the latter had forbidden it. But I described the passing of the tam-

bourine through the screen, and the motion pictures that had resulted in my own brain. I told of the death of Griffin, of my second visit to Baltic Street and the finding of the opal brooch. Though it took courage to do so, I let him know that Coralie had been with Buwalda in the stock broker's office on Exchange Place.

My fear had been that the hot-blooded Armenian would be moved to an insane anger by these revelations, and so become useless to me. But Peter was pierced to more sombre depths. An expression of awe seemed to fix itself upon his face like a mask. "What does it all mean?" he muttered.

"That Buwalda practices magic. I admitted as much to you last night. I cannot say how he practices it. I am trying to find out—for the protection of Coralie Griffin, and you, and myself, and every one in the world."

"Would it not be simpler to kill him, as you had the chance to do just now?"

"It is easy to say that. But you will observe that, by one means or another, he escapes from dangerous situations. Besides, it is our duty to try to penetrate his secret."

He bowed his head. "Do you suppose I could meet Coralie socially?" I asked, after a while. "She is evidently important in Buwalda's scheme of things, and I want to study her at first hand. I'd take a chance on her not remembering me from the séance on Baltic Street."

"It can be arranged, Hugh," he answered gently. "She is to come to tea tomorrow at our uncle Stefan's, in the strictest family intimacy. She wants to get away from the atmosphere of her house of death. I will find an excuse for taking you to tea."

"Is your uncle Stefan the old gentleman who introduced me to you at the Ararat coffee shop?"

"The same. Four charming granddaughters live with him. You will enjoy meeting them."

WE found little more to say to each other on the journey back to Brooklyn. I was possessed by gloomy forebodings, and Peter appeared to be in the same state of mind. Yet a sense of trustful friendship which did not need to be expressed in words, made itself felt between us.

At Boro Hall, I asked to be set down and continued on foot towards Columbia Heights. I was taking a chance on finding Owen at home. Night had fallen, and although the fog had thinned somewhat, the streets were darker than usual. The corner lamps resembled great yellow glow-worms veiled by shifting gauze.

I punched the bell of Owen's apartment, and an instant later an answering click assured me that I had not made the trip in vain. My brother leaned over the railing of the top landing to see who was coming, but after his glum fashion he gave me no greeting until he had closed his door behind me. Then he nodded, smiling almost imperceptibly, and placed a second chair at his center table. He had been about to have supper. I perceived that I was invited to join him.

Owen believes that dried figs, biscuits and a few leaves of lettuce constitute a fine repast. He seldom eats meat. Yet when he is suffering from overwork I have seen him drink strong tea to excess, and

he habitually smokes too many cigarettes. On the material plane, he had his inconsistencies, like the rest of us.

As I started to nibble at one of his figs, he asked curtly: "The news?"

It struck me that my middle position between Peter and Owen was singular and far from comfortable. With the Armenian, I was the leader, the psychic initiate, the one depended upon to solve all knotty problems. But as soon as I found myself in Owen's company, my rôle was reversed. I knew him to be a great adept, and his wisdom gave me a feeling of inferiority. To a considerable degree, he intimidated me. I feared to hear him say I had blundered.

However, I took a grip on my faltering ego and gave him a full report on everything that had occurred since we had last seen each other. It was his first chance at the details of Buwalda's activities downtown, for I had been forced to omit much when talking to him on the telephone. Anna Wagner's hypnotic trance and my adventure at the funeral were wholly new to him.

He listened silently until I had finished, then threw himself back in his chair and fiddled with the fingers of one hand at his up-pointed chin.

"According to that theory of throughth I advanced the other day," he said at last, "Buwalda, in the back office on Exchange Place, must have been causing solid objects to penetrate each other, as a necessary accompaniment of his mind reading and mind control. Coralie doubtless was his passive assistant, as at his séances. The conditions were perfect, for he was able to get his information about the stocks, and he created a deadly hallucination in the brain of your friend Peter. At the cemetery, on the other hand, he was impotent. He ran like a rabbit. There is nothing to indicate why that should have been so."

"Perhaps he cannot work without an assistant."

"That might be a weighty argument," answered Owen drily, "if you and I had not seen him apparently pass unaided through a truck, the morning we searched the house on Baltic Street."

"I give it up," I mumbled, abashed.

"But I don't, my dear boy. I collate the evidence, and sooner or later I expect to grasp the logic of seeming contradictions."

"Why do you suppose Buwalda was hanging around the funeral, any way?"

"It looks as if that might have been the simplest, the most normal, act of his that we have on record. He knew himself to be a murderer, and he could not keep away from the last rites. Now, regarding Anna Wagner's visit to you. I think you have analyzed it correctly.

Buwalda dropped her out of his plans. He blundered doing so. We can probably learn a lot about his habits from that girl, not to mention the fact that she has become a medium ready to our hands. I hope Griffin's spirit continues to communicate through her. It refuses to have anything to do with me."

"You have tried to get a message from Griffin's spirit?" I demanded, startled.

Owen yawned. "But of course! I'd hardly overlook as promising a lead as that one. I looked into my crystal globe, and tried automatic writing. The results were nil. Ghosts come or do not come, as they choose, in answer to such feeble calls."

"Surely a séance like the one you held with me—"

"Thank you!" he interrupted brusquely. "But I can't afford to repeat that kind of séance very often. The danger is too great. I reserve my strength for one more during this investigation. Mean-

"I am not surprised. She may find it helpful in her mystic performances with Buwalda. It is an ancient jewel, and the setting has astrological significance, as I mentioned before. Possibly, the old sorcerer who made it sees fit to return to earth when it is used to call him. I may attempt to summon him myself."

"Talking about Coralie, what do you think of my plan to meet her at her uncle's home tomorrow?"

"I approve. The lady impresses me—at second hand—as being quite stupid in every-day matters. She'll likely fail to recognize you, if you change your appearance a bit. But I warn you, Hugh, your life becomes more definitely at stake with each new step of the sort. Buwalda knows you are after him. He'll be keeping his eyes upon Coralie and every one who sees her. He'll not hesitate to kill you at the first chance."

I shuddered. "All the same, I shall go."

Owen arose and prowled the room restlessly. "I've had a damnable headache since I got out of bed this morning," he said. "Let's take a walk."

"It's a miserable night for walking."

"O, I don't mind fog! Rather like it, in fact."

Without consulting me further, he entered his bedroom and changed his old wine-colored dressing gown for a gray tweed suit. He put on an extremely baggy raglan overcoat and a crumpled cloth hat, and selected a gnarled stick from the rack.

"I like fog," he repeated absent-mindedly.

We stepped out on to Columbia Heights to find the streets deserted beyond their wont, and the section is at no time a busy one. Policemen are rare objects, because crimes are rare on the Heights. The old-fashioned residents slip in and out of their houses with a self-effacing air. There are no movie theaters and few shops to strike a note of modern life in the Nineteenth Century quietude of that part of Brooklyn.

On the night in question, we did not meet a single pedestrian as we strolled towards Montague Street. A light breeze was blowing, and the pall of fog had commenced to stir. A pronounced change in the weather was imminent, but it was still dank, oppressive. The nostrils palpitated as one breathed the thickened atmosphere.

At the Penny Bridge, Owen and I turned west to the observation platform built over the end of Montague Street, which at that point dips sharply down to an abandoned ferry. Ordinarily, the harbor and the skyscrapers of lower Manhattan are visible from the platform. We might as well have been standing, now, upon a mountain peak wrapped in clouds.

THE Awards to Readers for Opinions of GHOST STORIES, Issue of May, went to:

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while, I'm going to experiment along easier lines—some other night, when I feel in the mood—with Coralie's brooch on the table."

He drew from his waistpocket the opal and gold trinket we had picked up in the dismantled rooms of the medium, appraised it quizzically and returned it to his pocket.

"Why with the brooch on the table?" I asked.

"An object with which a departed soul was familiar in its lifetime serves as a magnet to draw it into a circle like ours. Surely you know that. It is commonplace."

"Coralie greatly values the brooch, according to Peter Kanarjian," I commented.

CASH FOR OPINIONS

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 suggestion for improving the magazine?

Ten dollars will be paid to the person whose letter, in the opinion of 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, c/o GHOST STORIES, 1926 Broadway, New York, N. Y. This contest closes September 30th, 1927.

Three awards will be made promptly. See that your opinion gets one of them.

"We don't seem to be in New York. It's a fascinating effect—" I began.

A sudden shuffling of feet behind us caused me to interrupt myself. Owen and I turned at the same moment, to see four huge, vague figures bearing down upon us. Their right arms were raised, which enhanced the illusion of their height. No sound came from their lips, as they speeded their ominous advance.

Amazingly, coming from him, Owen uttered one shout that must have been heard for blocks. "Thugs! Help!" he roared. Then, swinging his stick like a club, he rushed to meet the attack.

I was right behind him, but two of the men cut me off, while the others tackled him. I knew it to be a hopeless fight, unless help came to us. But I struck out for all I was worth. My fist connected with a jaw and my opponent went down. He was given the time to recover as his confederate wrestled me to the edge of the platform, and I again had both of them to deal with.

I could spare only occasional glances at Owen. He had established an early advantage, for he had lamed the arm of

one man with his stick. But when I looked again, I saw him being severely buffeted. He lurched sideways and fell, and both his assailants piled upon his prostrate body.

"This is the end of us!" I thought. Then a police whistle sounded shrilly through the fog. It produced an instant effect upon the thugs. Without striking another blow, they hissed incomprehensible signals to one another and scattered in different directions. They had disappeared a full minute before two bluecoats came blundering down upon us.

Owen had gotten to his feet and leaned, panting, against a railing. He had appeared unable to answer me when I asked him whether he had been hurt, but upon the arrival of the patrolmen he mastered himself with an effort and spoke steadily enough.

"Footpads assaulted us," he said. "Luckily, no harm's done. You got here in time."

"You were knocked down, huh?" a cop barked.

"Yes, but I'm all right."

"Anything stolen off you?"

"Nothing whatsoever," drawled Owen.

While one of the men took our names and addresses, the other started in vain pursuit of the thugs. Then the second policeman also vanished.

"Owen, is it true that you lost nothing?" I asked, a premonition tingling in my brain.

"It is not true," he answered calmly. "Coralie Griffin's brooch was stolen. I think it was the main object of this attack. The moment I was down, the fellow on top of me reached into my pocket for the brooch, as if he had known from the beginning that it was there."

What part does Coralie play in Burwald's schemes? In the next instalment, Hugh Purcell meets the beautiful woman of mystery—and experiences his most amazing adventure in the realm of "throughth." Then the mind reader tightens his grip upon New York, and the whole city seems to go stark, staring mad. Ruin and death stalk the streets, but the Purcells fight on. Read what happened in October GHOST STORIES. On sale August 23rd.

The Curse of the One-Eyed Buddha

(Continued from page 27)

"Shut up, Hogan," said the detective. "You ain't paid to have no opinion."

He turned to me again. "Just what do you want me to do?" he demanded. I looked at the detective in amazement.

"What do I want you to do?" I echoed. "I want you to find the murderer of this young man, of course—and the ruby."

"I guess you don't know nothin' about law," said the detective sergeant. "You cannot prove a man guilty of murder in this free country until you prove that a murder has been committed, and until you produce the body. What have you got to say to that?"

I shook my head. "Well, I don't believe I can oblige you with a body at this time, but I think that an investigation into the curious circumstances that surrounded the spiriting away of his body, would not be amiss."

"Well, I'll investigate it all right. Don't worry about that," he said, with a wave of his hand. "And about the ruby," he looked severely at the company—"Don't any of you try to leave this room until I come back." He turned to the policeman who had accompanied him. "You sit here, Hogan, until I come back. And don't let no one do no magic tricks, neither—nor take another drink."

He went to the door, commanding me to follow him with a curt motion of his head. "Come on," he said. "I am going to look over the rest of the house."

AS soon as we were outside the closed door of the dining-room, the detective turned to me. "Have you got a room where we can be undisturbed?" he asked.

I nodded. "We can go into my library. It is on the next floor."

"Come on, then," he said.

I motioned him up the stairs and followed him.

Once inside the library, he seated himself at my desk. I sat down in a chair opposite him.

"What did you say was the name of this here Hindu from whom you bought the ruby?"

"Rabindranath Kim," I answered.

"Give me the dope about him," he commanded.

I told him all that I knew about the Babu and related the circumstances of my first view of the gem. I told him of the Hindu's visit to this country, and of the discussion which ended in my acquisition of the matchless stone.

He was silent during the recital and did not miss a word. His mind, I thought, worked in a different fashion from that of the ordinary human being. He was accustomed to dealing with crime and had no compunction or hesitation in suspecting all connected with the affair until they could prove themselves innocent.

After I had finished my recital, he asked a terse question or two. "Who told you about the curse on this ruby?"

"Rabindranath Kim," I answered.

"How did he get hold of the stone?"

I shrugged my shoulders. "Who knows?" I asked.

"Weren't you a little afraid to buy a stone of such doubtful ownership?" he inquired, boring me through with his small eyes.

I colored slightly. "Yes, I was," I admitted. "But if I had not bought it, some one else would have. There are any number of people who would break their necks to get hold of that ruby. Don't you know that all stones of superlative value have changed hands, some time or other, in a similar fashion?"

The detective nodded.

"I am a collector," I continued. "And while I suppose I should have investigated

Kim's right to dispose of the stones, I was willing to let that go for the moment in order to obtain possession of the ruby. I intended to go a little further into the matter at my leisure but in the meantime I didn't want to lose my opportunity. This man, Rabindranath Kim, undoubtedly knew several good markets in this country, and he would have gone to a man like Stephen Whitney, or to some like fanatic on the subject, and disposed of the ruby without hesitation and without question. The morals of the transaction may not be exactly right, but it comes to the same thing in the end."

"Don't you think it likely," said the detective, "that in a case of this kind the temple authorities would take some steps to get back the stone?"

"I guess that's so," I said, "now that you mention it, but I haven't got to that point in my thoughts yet. Do you think that there is some agency—perhaps some agency that has followed the stone to this country and is trying to get it back?"

"I'll say I think so," he said explosively. "Have you got a picture of anyone owning a ruby worth half a million dollars who would let it go without kicking up a row?"

"I suppose that's so," I said. "Then you think—"

"I don't think—I know," cut in the detective. "I have had cases of this kind before, and if there really is such a stone"—he looked at me severely—"you can bet your last bean that there are people here who would not hesitate at murder to get it back."

"I guess so," I assented.

"Where is this guy, Rabindranath Kim, now?" he asked.

I shrugged my shoulders. "I haven't the slightest idea," I replied. "I suppose that he is on his way back to India."

"You never heard from him again after buying the stone?"

I shook my head.

"And this here young fellow, Sam—" he paused for a moment and I supplied the name, Winship—"that you claim was murdered tonight?" He looked at me inquiringly. "Did no one else see his body outside of those people in the room with you?"

"No one," I said, and then reflected suddenly. "There was one other person, the butler. I rang for him to have him send for the police. He opened the door and stood in the doorway, and I know he saw it."

"Let's have him in," said Moran, tersely.

I rang for the butler and he appeared in a moment. He answered all questions in a straightforward manner, but could add nothing to the information I had already given.

"Who else have you got working in this house?" asked Moran.

"Besides the butler," I replied, "there is only his wife, who does the cleaning, and Marguerite, the family cook, who has been with us for thirty years."

"Let's have them in," he said.

I sent for them separately and they were duly examined by Moran, but to no effect. They knew nothing of what had happened and had heard nothing, not even the shriek that had accompanied the murder. They were each dismissed after a few minutes.

"Let's look through the house," suggested Moran.

"What for?" I asked.

He looked at me with scorn for my stupidity. "What for! You have got things like this happening in your house and you ask, 'what for!' If there was a dead body in your dining-room it might still be in your house—and so might the murderers. And so might the guys what took your ruby, mightn't they? What for!" He snorted in his disgust.

I followed him and we examined the house thoroughly, beginning with the basement. But we could find nothing. Finally in the attic we stood before a closed door under the sloping eaves.

"What's in there?" he said.

I hesitated. That room was a forbidden place in the house.

"That's a sort of workroom and storeroom," I said. "No one goes in there."

The detective looked at me questioningly. "Why not?" he asked.

"Well, it's connected with our family history," I said. "My great-uncle committed suicide in that room, by hanging, and you can understand that people feel squeamish about going into a room of that kind. It is supposed to be haunted. Of course"—I added hastily—"I don't believe anything of the sort, but servants claim to have heard strange noises from the inside there."

"Is that so?" said the detective. "Well, we are going in there. Unlock it and let's take a look."

I shrugged my shoulders. "It isn't locked—there isn't a lock on the door. But there is no light in the room—it was just a store room, you know."

"That's all right," said the detective. "I have a flash."

He produced one from his hip pocket and put his hand on the knob. But the door did not budge. He turned to me.

"I thought you said it wasn't locked."

"It isn't," I said. "You can see for yourself there is no lock on the door."

"Well, maybe there isn't," he said. "But all I can say is that it is locked."

I tried the knob, pushing it inward forcibly. The door gave a fraction of an inch and I could feel some soft, heavy weight on the inside of the door holding it closed.

"I don't understand this," I said to the detective. "There is something piled up against the door inside."

"If there is," said the detective, "Whoever barricaded that door must have got out another way."

I shook my head.

"There is no other entrance or exit to that room. It has no window and is nothing more than a very large closet."

We were silent for a moment. Strange thoughts ran through my head. The things that were happening in this house were quite beyond my comprehension. What curious force was here at work? I shook my head in puzzlement and gave

up the problem temporarily.

"Well, we will have to force it open," I said at last.

The detective nodded. We put our strength to the door and pushed it open slowly. It opened much more easily than we had expected. We could hear the soft scraping of something across the floor as we pushed it back with the door.

"Now, let's take a look," said the detective.

The weight which had blocked the door was the body of a man.

There was a grunt of surprise from Moran. "This looks like business," he said.

He bent down and turned the body face upwards, and I stared into the sightless, dead eyes of Sam Winship.

"Is it the man who was killed downstairs?" questioned the detective.

"Yes," I said.

The detective looked around the room. It was the ordinary small storeroom piled up with trunks, old clothes, etc. There was no possible exit that we could see.

Moran looked at me in surprise. "Can you think of any way by which the person who did this could have gotten out of the room?"

I shook my head.

"Then whoever did this is still in this room," announced Moran.

The hand in which he held the flashlight was hanging loosely at his side, the light making a small white circle on the bare floor. I glanced down at it, trying to solve this puzzle; and what I saw there, edging into the circle of light, caused my heart to stand still and my blood to become frigid. For the moment I was powerless, but I recovered my voice.

"Look there!" I screamed. "Look out!"

What new ghostly menace has appeared in this house of horror! How could the dead body of Sam Winship be spirited from the lighted dining-room to this remote attic? Could Kim, the crafty Hindu—or the vindictive temple guardians—have had a share in the weird happenings? Read in October GHOST STORIES of the ever-widening trail of vengeance that follows the fatal ruby.

Spirit Hands

(Continued from page 51)

a receptive moment for the green waves to flow forth into that pit of blackness, and scarcely had the eye adjusted itself to this rippling lack-luster when the spotlight revealed the supposed apparition. The transition from total darkness to tremulous green and then to dazzling white was accomplished so flawlessly that the result was an optical bewilderment and illusion of the most deceptive and ghostly nature. Darkness followed again in a twinkling, and the curtain descended.

My interest in Windrath deepened, and I watched him closely. It seemed impossible to me that the constant repetition of the role could fail to have a pathogenic effect upon him in time. In spite of his assertion that he shed the character at the end of each performance, I was con-

fident that it clung to his sub-consciousness and must eventually produce a disturbing and unwholesome condition in both his spiritual and physical self.

We came frequently to exchange a few friendly words, and so it happened that one conversation between us was well-remembered by me in the fateful days and nights which followed.

"How are the nerves standing up under this characterization?" I asked him as he paused beside me one evening.

"Oh, my nerves are all right, Doctor," he replied, his smile perhaps a trifle less prompt and spontaneous. "But there's a different angle that may interest you professionally."

He seemed to hesitate a moment, and then went on quietly while I listened with attention: "It's odd that a curious

attachment for this role has grown upon me. I haven't consciously nurtured it, and the role itself would ordinarily incite repugnance rather than affection. Yet it has gradually and imperceptibly become as something precious in my mind.

"I had a peculiar dream the other night, which strikingly illustrates my point. I felt a subtle, insidious danger hovering about me. I was in peril and helpless to combat it, because I neither knew what the peril was nor why it existed. Then, suddenly, an unseen hand descended—and I was dead.

"My first thought in death was of this role. From some recess of my mind or soul there issued a summons that pealed across the quiet of the grave, awaking soundless echoes in a realm where all

was shade. It bade me rise from my dank couch and walk familiar ways once more. It bade me find the assassin personified by the vague peril I had felt in my last mortal moments, and settle the score with him. Until I did so I would know no rest.

The remainder of the dream was nebulous. Yet I remember remaining in my coffin after my body was laid out, as if waiting to keep some gruesome appointment, but whoever I expected did not appear. Later, I watched while the dirt was being shoveled in digging my grave.

"As the coffin, a plain grocery-box affair, was being lowered, one of the straps broke and it fell to the bottom of the pit, breaking out the ends and sides, and the cover falling off. The hands, folded over my lifeless chest, had lost their dignified position and appeared to be moving stiffly like frozen mittens on a clothes-line. And then I saw a strange thing—one of those stiff hands seemed to be pointing, as though to direct attention to something, or somebody.

"My brain was alive beyond human words to express, and I knew I was about to confront the one I had left the grave to find. It was the moment I had waited for—the moment that, even in death, I still lived for. I turned at the direction of that pointing hand and peered intently into the face of my murderer. I saw Morel, my understudy! He was gently waking me up.

"He had awakened me a split second before I would have viewed the unknown, and as a result I was rather rude to poor Morel. Sitting in my study and hearing me undergoing the throes of a nightmare, he had aroused me. That, Doctor, is the story."

"It was a decidedly unpleasant dream, Mr. Windrath," said I, "and usually there's a distinct relation between bad dreams and bad nerves. If you have any more such nightmares or dreams, let me know."

"I will," he promised.

But whether he had more of them or not, I can't say; for I never saw Eric Windrath again. That is, I never saw him again—alive!

The following day, an urgent summons from a Midwestern colleague started me on a trip half way across the continent. Although my intention was to return to New York immediately, the case in hand wouldn't permit it. As a result, several days elapsed before I started back. My every waking moment during this time had been taken up with my colleague's patient, which virtually shut me off from the outside world and its activities.

Once aboard the home-bound Limited, I looked over the first daily papers I'd seen for almost a week. I was reading myself into drowsiness when a headline seemed fairly to leap from the page before me:

Eric Windrath's Funeral Tomorrow

In a stupor of unbelief, I scanned the short story that told of Windrath's death two days before. The train boy, to my dismay, had no copies of earlier New York papers, so my information was meager indeed. The realization came

to me that even while I was reading, the body of my friend was in its last resting place.

I availed myself of the first opportunity, next afternoon, to see Charles Marsden. He told me that Windrath had complained of a cold, and that he had taken a drink from his own flask. He had never been a heavy drinker, and he had jokingly complained that the small libation had apparently gone to his head, as he had felt dizzy all through the last act. He was dead within the hour following the fall of the final curtain. The coroner had attributed the cause to heart failure.

"Which means," observed Marsden, regretfully, "that I'm now forced to pull off a sure-fire hit. But we're sold out for the next two weeks, so I'll keep it on that long. No longer."

"And Morel, his understudy, will—" I began.

"Oh, yes." Marsden nodded indifferently. "He's up in the part. He'll play it, but probably he'll be very bad. The poor fellow's all broken up. He couldn't bear even to see Windrath in his coffin, let alone go to the funeral. Considering what happened at the grave, I guess it's just as well he didn't go."

Something electric seemed to throb through me as though transmitted from an exterior agency. "What happened?" I asked in a voice constrained and a trifle husky.

"Oh, it was only a small incident," explained the producer sheepishly. "But you know how it is at the edge of a grave, watching the coffin go down. A fellow's nerves are taut, and the least little thing affects him. Well, as they were lowering Windrath, one of the straps broke, and the coffin fell to the bottom of the pit. I tell you, it—" He was interrupted by the ringing of his desk phone.

Sitting rigidly upon my chair, I recalled my last conversation with the actor, when he had told me about his gruesome dream. His words came back to me in unbroken clarity, like an echo from the Unknown Shore.

I found myself shivering, with a film of cold sweat upon my face. What mysterious manifestation, what awful augury had enabled Windrath to predict with such accuracy a happening after his own body was cold in death? Piecing together the portions of that conversation, I remained absorbed in my reveries until I became aware that Marsden had hung up the telephone receiver. Then, delivering some make-shift apology, I bade him good afternoon. But I paused with my hand on the door-knob.

"By the way," I asked carelessly, "were Windrath's hands folded across his breast?"

"Why, yes, Doctor, they were," answered Marsden. "But what of it? That's nothing unusual."

Thoughts, at first formless and hazy in my brain, slowly persisted until they took on the definite form of a disturbing self-conviction. Such a conviction was illogical and unreasonable in the face of my scientific knowledge and belief, but I became dominated by an assurance that confounded my practical learning. I must confess that I had come to

believe that Windrath's dream had been more than dream. Had some psychic power, some supernatural agency, permitted Windrath, a living, material being, to gaze into the Great Beyond, in his vision that night?

I recalled how in his dream he had realized, too late, that the unseen hand of an enemy had done him to death. This, if it were true, meant murder!

Vainly I sought to convince myself that the affair was merely a coincidence—an astounding, uncanny coincidence, but one that might occur. I couldn't dismiss the matter by logic, so strong was my impression of the supernatural. The impression had become a conviction, which was followed by a resolve to have Windrath's body disinterred in strict secrecy. That would enable me to see whether its position in the coffin had been disarranged, especially the hands.

My professional alliances made it not difficult for me to be granted an official permit from the authorities to disinter the body privately. So, with the necessary permission secured, I proceeded with as little delay as possible to the grisly task.

Past midnight on the appointed night, I found the sexton and an assistant waiting for me at the entrance to the cemetery. They led the way silently through the labyrinth of paths which were as shrunken streets in that hushed city of the dead. Row upon row of mounds were upon all sides of me, and white memorial stones stood like wan sentinels, reflecting the uncertain glimmering of the sexton's lantern. At last we reached a spot where recently turned earth and wilting flowers bore testimony to the newness of the grave.

It's better not to speak in detail of the proceedings which filled the next hour. To the sexton and his helper, laboring methodically with their spades, the undertaking was ordinary work; but I, in spite of my profession and my student experiences in a dissection room, had need of all my self-control to prevent me from fleeing the ghoully scene.

The only sound was the muffled impact of the spades against the sort earth, and in time this became so monotonous that it seemed to merge into the desolate quietness that hemmed us round and shut us off from all other living creatures. It was an awful stillness that I do not wish to experience again. Once when the lantern was accidentally overturned and went out, I felt as though I were waiting for the blood in my veins to congeal; and in the sulphurous flare of the match when the wick was relighted, the sexton's mud-smudged face added a touch of terror to the general unreality.

After what seemed ages, there came a thumping, scraping sound as the spades touched wood. A few moments later, the toilers skillfully maneuvered to the surface all that remained of what had once been Eric Windrath.

Their tools rasped as they opened the plain pine box enclosing the coffin. In another moment, they were gently sliding back the removable half-piece. With dread that clove my tongue to the roof of my mouth, I gazed down at my dear friend.

The body was lying on its back as if in peaceful sleep. But one hand, the

right, possibly through some freak of gravitation, was poised rigidly as though pointing at something!

"Fix that hand and cover him up!" I ordered huskily. "Put him back in his grave!"

I had scarcely spoken these words when again there surged through me something electric which seemed to be a counterpart of the sensation I had experienced in Marsden's office—but stronger, more positive now. And though the night was still, with not a breath stirring, out of the dank blackness about me there came a warm zephyr, lighter than thistledown. It seemed to enfold me and then pass on, with what might have been a peaceful sigh of benediction.

Long into the following dawn I pondered over the extraordinary matter, striving to make myself accept it as an unparalleled coincidence; but, more and more, I was compelled to believe that Windrath's dream had been the precursor of a tragedy that included myself as a subordinate, inconsequential character.

The next few days passed uneventfully, but toward the end of the week I visited Marsden's office in response to a call from him.

"I've sent for you, Doctor," he explained, "to straighten out Morel. He's the greatest find in years, and already he's made us forget Windrath. Our advance sale is heavier than ever, and, instead of this piece closing in two weeks, as I at first expected, it's on for an indefinite run. You never saw such acting, particularly in the ghost scene. But Morel can't seem to get over Windrath's death. He's brooding too much, so I've prevailed upon him to consult you."

I agreed to undertake Morel's case in his own apartment that night. But, obeying an impulse that was more than a whim, I decided to witness his acting.

When the curtain fell at the end of the third act, I was ready to admit that the praise of Morel's manager was merited. I had beheld a superb and flawless piece of work. The man's performance was a study in growing and culminating horror that could justly be classed with the work of great tragedians in *Macbeth*. His voice was the cry of a lost soul from the nethermost pit of gloom, and the agony he evinced was that of the damned. Small wonder that a tumult of approbation awaited him when the bright house-lights broke that awful spell.

As I examined him in his apartment, I found him thinner, with tiny lines about his eyes, giving an added look of strain to his face. He answered my questions dully, without a show of interest, but this I ascribed to a very evident preoccupation that absorbed him.

He seemed to be listening for something that he was both impatient and fearful to hear. A furtive expectancy dominated his attitude. It was as though he resented my questions because they broke the silence whose depth his straining ears essayed to plumb. Once or twice, he leaned forward, white and rigid, only to sink back in a moment, after a sidelong glance at me. I left him, resolved to delve as far as possible into his case.

The following night, I repeated my call. He was sitting in the small study off his bedroom. Several books lay on a table,

and the title of one of them caught my eye. The book was a translation of a medieval treatise on poisons. Commenting upon its rareness, I precipitated a lengthy discussion. Morel had a knowledge of alchemy that left me worsted in various differences of opinions which ensued. He talked animatedly, and when I looked at my watch the hour was almost three.

As I departed, he gazed after me wistfully. The animation had fled and his whole body sagged. When I opened the door on my way out, he cast a wild look up and down the long, deserted corridor, as though some dreaded visitor might be lurking in its oblique shadows.

I was shocked at our meeting the next night, so devastating a change had been wrought in him. His reddened eyes stared fixedly at first one object and then another, and the muscles of his jaws twitched uncontrollably, while ever and anon his body jerked with convulsions like those of a confirmed epileptic. His nails were bitten down to an uneven, bloody quick. At times he scanned the dark corners of the room surreptitiously, catching his breath with a short, hissing intake.

In spite of his desperate plight, he cowered into a forced semblance of amusement while I prepared the morphine.

"What's the idea of this?" he asked contemptuously, as I withdrew the needle from his emaciated forearm.

"So you'll get some sleep, of course."

"Sleep!" he cried, with a rattling laugh. "What do I want sleep for? I haven't slept for nights and nights. I'm saving up my sleep to get it all at once. What do a few hours sleep amount to here when there's centuries of it, eons of it, waiting for you afterward? Centuries and eons!" He ended with another laugh, even more nerve-shattering.

To divert his plagued mind into other channels, I resorted to flattery. "That was a wonderful ovation the audience gave you last night," I observed.

"You're right," he agreed greedily. "Every night has been wonderful—the curtain calls, the praise, the recognition. I knew I'd get it. The rôle was mine! It belonged to me! It was made for me—for me, and nobody else! But they don't know—the fools—that it's mine because I earned it, because I live it and—" He checked himself abruptly, cupping one hand behind his ear.

"Listen!" he whispered. "Don't you hear—something?"

Simultaneous with his utterance, the same indefinable sensation of warmth permeated me as it had last done at the grave of Eric Windrath. The curtains at an unopened window rippled slightly, though no air current disturbed the closeness of the room. Then the singular awareness of warmth left me and the curtains hung limp . . .

When I turned to look at Morel, he was on the bed, sound asleep. The morphine potion had proved effective.

After the performance that evening, we sat awhile in his study, chatting desultorily.

"After two or three more artificial rests, nature will take care of matters," I encouraged. "You should be yourself again by this time next week."

There was melancholy hopelessness in his haggard face as he surveyed me, but he spoke in a voice that was low and matter-of-fact. "There will be no next week

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for me," he said.

"Don't be absurd," I chided. "You're agitated and depressed, which is common in cases like yours. That will pass, and——"

"Quite right, Doctor," he interrupted, his eyes glassy. "It will pass, to be sure. You're correct there, but you're in error when you speak so lightly about cases like mine. Before this time next week, you're going to realize the truth of what I'm telling you now." Then he lowered his voice until the words came from his ashy lips in a croaking whisper: "Since mankind began, there's never been a case like mine!"

On Friday night, I dropped into the Imperial Theater by the stage door just as the third act was going on. In the wings, I joined Louie, the head electrician, who handled the all-important lighting effect for the big scene. We were gossiping in guarded whispers when he reached for the switch to dim the footlights, preparatory to darkening the entire house. He swore softly.

"Something's been the matter with these damned lights for the past couple of weeks. Fact is, ever since Mr. Windrath died. Now, I'm not superstitious—not a bit, but—well, it's mighty queer to have the same thing happen about the same place in every performance. They behave all right all through the rest of the show, but round this scene they get cursed balky. Believe me, I'll be glad when this spookey piece is called off!"

Nothing further occurred to justify his uneasiness, however, and the act was over in a few minutes.

Riding with Morel to his apartment, I suddenly asked him if he had observed anything unusual in the operation of the stage lights. He shrank farther back into his seat, buried his face in his hands, and mumbled a reply. However, the mood passed quickly, and we were discussing other matters when we reached his study.

Before retiring, after he had silently regarded me for some time with glittering eyes, he spoke abruptly. "You have been wise in not trying to force matters with me, Doctor," he said. "No human agency would have been effective. I knew what was in the back of your mind from the first, but I had no fear of you. Fear—fear of a human being! Why should I have when ——" He checked himself as abruptly as he had begun.

"You speak in riddles, Morel," said I, wondering if the moment I had been looking forward to had come.

He shrugged, smiling a sadly knowing smile. "It isn't really necessary for you to dissemble, Doctor," he told me, "but still I thank you for doing so. It was the better way, and you are soon to know the answer to the riddle. I have an important appointment tomorrow night—one I shall surely keep. But before keeping it, I'll explain to you about the lights back stage, providing an explanation is necessary—which I doubt."

I put him under the opiate, and departed shortly after he was asleep. Though I had been tempted to try it, there was now no longer a doubt in my mind but that I had been wise, as Morel had said, in not forcing matters. An agency above and beyond human fathoming was attending to that.

Morel phoned me at eight o'clock Saturday night. The message was brief, the words coming rapidly in a high-pitched voice. "It wasn't possible for me to see you before keeping my appointment tonight, Doctor, so I have penned you a short note of explanation that will furnish the answer you've been seeking. And now—good-by! For I must leave for the theater. Besides, my host is here, impatient for us to start." The phone clicked, shutting off a burst of spine-chilling laughter.

The line was busy when I sought to renew the connection. I finally got an unimpeded call through, but there was no answer. Then I rang the desk and asked if Mr. Morel had come down yet.

"Mr. Morel went out about a minute ago," was the answer.

"Who was with him?" I inquired.

"He was alone," came the answer that I had more than half expected.

I would have gone to the theater at once myself had I not promised to receive, around nine o'clock, an out-of-town patient who was passing through and could see me at no other time. My patient was late, and I spent considerable time with him. It was near ten o'clock when he departed, and he was barely gone when I had a phone call from the clerk of the apartment hotel in which Morel lived.

The clerk informed me that Morel, on going out, had left a letter for me, with instructions that it be delivered to me around eleven o'clock. He explained that he was now dispatching a bell-boy on another errand to a nearby point, and would include my missive. The letter arrived in a few minutes.

I read it hurriedly, and in spite of the suspicion that I had tried to keep hidden from Morel—in which attempt I had failed—I felt the hairs of my head rise and stand. The answer he had promised was there in all its horror. I have retained that missive and quote it below, word for word:

My dear Doctor: I have timed the sending of this so that I shall be gone when you receive it. And then nothing matters.

I killed Eric Windrath because I coveted the rôle he was playing. I did it by adding to the liquor in his flask a few drops of a potent poison, the formula of which I had worked out. It paralyzed the heart action, but left practically no trace of its deadly presence.

When Windrath's death was pronounced due to heart failure, I enjoyed a hearty, private laugh. I have never enjoyed a laugh since.

For Windrath has come back to me every night since his death. He came sometimes as I was putting on my make-up in my dressing room. Sometimes he has visited me in my study. Once he came while you were at my bedside. Of course you didn't see him, and that was just as well for you. He doesn't look the same.

At first it was his intention to destroy me at once. But I pleaded with him—with it—whatever you call the dead Thing. Somehow I persuaded him to let me live until tonight, basking in the adulation of my audiences, with him always at my side.

Do you wonder that the critics called it such wonderful acting? You must also understand other things more

clearly now—such as the action of the switch-board lights.

For all you did in my behalf, and for your restraint toward me when I knew I was under your suspicion, I thank you. In return, I leave you and your science this confession.

John Morel.

As I stared at the paper, once more Eric Windrath's words came back to me of their own accord. I remembered his description of that subtle, insidious peril from an unknown enemy who hovered near him. And when the soul within him came face to face with his murderer, the man he confronted, even as he woke up, was Morel!

Gathering my wits, I consulted the mantel clock. The letter had been delivered sooner than Morel had meant for it to be, yet it was nearly ten-twenty, and the third act must be well under way. Spurred to activity, I seized my hat, dashed out, and hailed a passing taxi.

Arriving at the Imperial Theater, I bounded up the stairs leading to the region back stage. The act was almost over, but the first voice I heard was Morel's. He was beginning the soliloquy that ushered in the great climax, and even thus early in his speech a note of stark fear rang appallingly. In the semi-darkness, I brushed against somebody who gave a low gasp. It was Louie, the electrician, and his face was frozen in fright.

"Push over, Doc, and let me outa this place!" he exclaimed. "And get outa it yourself, too, for there's a curse on it!"

Tense though my own nerves were, I tried to calm him. "Get a grip on yourself, man," I whispered. "What's the matter with you?"

He pointed to the switch on the adjacent board. "I can't throw it, sir!" he panted. "The damned thing won't go! I oiled it this afternoon till a baby could work it, but it won't work now! Something's holding it!" Then he scuttled down the steps to the alley.

Without pausing to consider, I sprang to operate the abandoned switchboard. At first, I pulled the switch gently, and then, as it wouldn't budge, I used all my strength. As well might I have tried to dislodge the foundations of the building. Some tremendous power held the switch in a grip like a colossal vise, defying the puny strength of any mortal. I tightened my grasp on the handle just as my benumbed faculties became aware that Morel had given the cue for the lights.

"Get back to your grave!" he muttered, and groaned in agony.

With his words, the blackness of midnight descended over the stage and the auditorium. As this occurred, a sickening sense of catastrophe assailed me—for the switch had not moved!

My hand was still on it, but the thing was exactly where it should have been to have all the lights on! I tried to tell myself that some accident had happened to the power system, but this notion was banished immediately.

From somewhere in the coolness about me, a warm breeze rustled by. It galvanized me with its touch, and for the last time I was electrified by that indefinable wave. This time, however, the whole atmosphere was surcharged with it. I sensed that the world fairly crackled with

it, though not a sound was to be heard.

Then Morel's voice came from the stage, raucous with impending doom: "Get back to your shroud and your worms." Stay there this time, for tonight I am joining you!"

From directly above my head, an ashen, almost hueless, emanation cut its way into the blackness of the stage with a deathlike touch indescribably terrifying. But it came from no bulb, for no bulb was there! And still, as my hand upon it testified, the switch had not moved!

Petrified with awe, I was aware that the crackling atmosphere increased in volume, though my awareness of it was not brought about by the effect of sound upon my eardrums. Morel's voice was the only sound I heard. I didn't hear the crackling, but I sensed it as if it mounted in a silent uproar like a thousand Niagaras. Shockingly, in the midst of this noiseless

din, Morel mouthed his closing lines.

"I can see your dead eyes—your bony hands stretching out for me! You've come for the last time! The—last—time!" He concluded with a maniacal scream.

At that moment a blinding, bewildering flash of light seemed to burst on the boards beneath my feet. Probably it lasted no more than a fraction of a second, but in that infinitesimal space of time my eyes photographed all the unforgettable horror of the tableau. Morel, shielding his eyes with a bent forearm, crumpled horribly. That much the audience saw as the curtain was falling.

Next day, of course, members of that audience also saw in the morning papers the articles which told how Morel was found dead on the stage at the end of the third act.

But on that stage had appeared some-

thing which they had not seen—something, I am confident, that was beheld by no human being now alive, save myself.

As Morel fell, my eyes were turned upon the spot he had shrunk from in his last breath. The property men had placed there an ordinary tailor's dummy, around which, filmy white robes fluttered. At the end of the act, the dummy was still there, not disturbed in its original position by so much as a fraction of an inch. But what Morel saw and what I saw in that eye-searing whiteness was not a tailor's dummy. It was the awful avenging face and the form of the dead man who had been buried a month before—Eric Windrath!

And equally real to me is the remembrance of the spirit hands that held that switch against all force I could exert. To this day I occasionally recall that hour, with a shudder.

Spirit Tales

(Continued from page 61)

flesh and blood. She smiled and chatted with the people around her as though she were a living being, but there was something unnatural about the scene that I cannot find words to explain. It was a kind of moving picture. I was in the midst of this scene but none of the people appeared to see me, and then it all faded out as if it had been a dream."

The farmer is only one of a score of persons who have claimed to see this vision at different times.

AN extraordinary story of how a murderer overcame his victims by pretending to occult powers is repeated by Harry Price, foreign research officer of the American Society for Psychic Research, in the *Journal of the Society*, Leon Tauzin, 72 years of age, who kept a grocer's shop, in Nice, has been murdered in his bed and his wife seriously injured.

A short time ago a well dressed young man arrived at the shop and offered to buy the business. An agreement was reached as to the terms, but the purchase could not be effected, the man said, until the arrival of his wife. The young man called frequently at the shop and entertained the grocer and his wife with stories of spiritualism. He told them he had made the acquaintance of two American doctors, who had taught him how to acquire the gift of second sight. All that was necessary, he said, was to bind the wrists and legs and to place a bandage soaked with strong vinegar over the eyes. Late in the evening he offered to try the experiment. The grocer was in bed, and declined to take part in it, but his wife and daughter readily permitted themselves to be bound.

When the binding operation had been finished a shot rang out followed by a groan. M. Tauzin had been shot in bed. Another shot was fired and the grocer's wife sank to the floor wounded. The "spiritualist" then emptied a box in which were National Defence bonds

and money amounting to 14,000 francs, and hurried away. Besides his revolver he had brought with him a razor and a butcher's knife, and it is believed that he escaped in a motor car.

AN egg supposed to contain a message from her dead husband in "the other world," was the device by which Francesca Pelissero was swindled of her entire fortune, says a British United Press Turin message.

A man and a woman came to her with the tale that they bore a message to her from her dead husband. In front of her they broke an egg, from which they "extracted" a paper signed with her husband's name. The message stated that she was to do whatever his representatives, the bearers of the message, instructed her. These instructions, of course, related to the handing over of money, and the widow is now poorer in pocket if richer in experience.

Is it any wonder that fraudulent "mediums" flourish like the proverbial bay-tree when "psychical phenomena" of this type are so easily assimilated by the gullible?

CAPTAN KOGELNIK of Braunau sends the following interesting report of an alleged poltergeist case which has been disturbing the good people of Munich. The account has been translated from the *Bayerische Zeitung*:

"Since Sunday doctors and policemen have been occupied with a case of haunting which is not yet solved. It is a case very similar to that which occurred two years ago in Dietersheim. It is in a private flat in the Augustenstrasse near its crossing with the Brienerstrasse. The extraordinary occurrences commenced on Saturday last at 5 P. M. and ended on Sunday about 10:30 A. M.

"Our reporter, who has inspected the place, gives us the following information: The second floor of the house comprises a flat of four rooms, which,

for many years, has been occupied by an elderly lady, the widow of a doctor. She has let one room to a chemical student, and eight days ago she engaged as a maid servant a girl of fourteen years. Her previous servant had been dismissed on account of her "malevolence." On Saturday afternoon, when the lodger and the maid servant were at home (the lady had gone out for a short period), the front door bell rang. The girl opened the door and saw a tall man with a dark cloak and blue hat standing before her. The man asked for the girl who had just been dismissed. The maid servant, for a reason which she could not explain, became frightened and started trembling. When the strange man was informed that the girl he wanted was no longer at the house he became abusive. The maid servant quickly closed and locked the door and reported the incident to the lodger, who at once went to look for the man, but could not find him.

"At 4 o'clock the widow returned and was informed of the visit of the strange man. At about 6 o'clock the same afternoon, when all the occupants of the flat were at home, various noises were heard which continued the whole night. At first the front door bell was rung though no one was to be seen at the door; the ringing lasted more than an hour. Then there followed a violent drumming on the door, though the 'drummer' was invisible. After this last manifestation all sorts of curious things began to happen. Various articles were thrown about. Glasses, plates, vases, tumblers, spoons, etc., were flung in all directions by an unseen hand. Doors and windows opened by themselves, and the mirror in the wardrobe was demolished. Through the letter-box of the door a reel of thread was thrown and as suddenly disappeared.

"During the examination of the rooms and their contents the maid servant's trunk was opened and in it was found the missing reel of thread which

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had so mysteriously found its way through the letter-box. In the widow's bedroom a tumbler of water filled itself, flew across the room, the contents falling on the lady's bed. When the lady picked up the tumbler and placed it on the table it again flew across the room, smashing itself against the wall. In the student's room were found shoes, plates, and a bowl, filled with water; in the maid servant's bed was found a bottle of water and a branch of a fir-tree which belonged to a bunch in the hall.

BEHIND a curtain were found several valuable vases which in some inexplicable manner had been removed from their usual positions. The commotion lasted until Sunday morning, and the various noises were heard by the policemen who came to investigate at 10 o'clock. A knife was thrown at and struck one of the policemen and a glass fell on his head.

"Two high officials from the principal police station in Munich visited the scene of the disturbances. Herr Sedlmayr, police commissioner, and a doctor also visited the haunted flat and made a report. It is said that the mysterious stranger was again seen at the flat early on Sunday morning, but quickly disappeared.

No explanation of the extraordinary occurrences has so far been forthcoming."

The above article was answered by Professor Bumke, of Munich University, who argued that all the manifestations could be traced to the maid servant, but admitted that he knew nothing whatever of psychic matters. Professor Bumke's theory drew a rejoinder from the doctor and one of the policemen, who published a report of the phenomena they had seen. This report was signed also by Dr. A. Baron von Schrenck-Notzing. Kapitan Kogzelnik writes me that the phenomena witnessed at Munich were almost identical to those he experienced in his own house at Braunau with an Austrian girl named Johanna Plesnik about whom he wrote in *Psychic Science*.

EVERY one really interested in psychic research should support the work of the American Society for Psychic Research. It is doing a great work. The purpose and scope of the society was recently announced as follows:

1. The investigation of alleged telepathy, visions and apparitions, dowsing, monitions, premonitions, automatic writing, and other forms of automatism, (as speaking, drawing, etc.) psychometry, coincidental dreams, clairvoyance and clairaudience, predictions, physical phenomena (such as materialization, telekinesis, rapping and other sounds), and in short all types of mediumistic and metapsychical phenomena.

2. The collection, classification, study, and publication of reports dealing with the phenomena designated above, from first-hand acquaintance and seemingly in good faith. Members especially, but also non-members, are asked to supply data or to give information where such may be obtained.

Names connected with phenomena must be supplied, but on request these will be treated as confidential.

3. The maintenance of a Library on all subjects embraced in psychical research, and bordering thereupon. Contributions of books and periodical files will be welcomed and acknowledged in the *Journal*.

4. Encouragement of the formation of local groups in all parts of the country which will cooperate with and report to the American Society; and the encouragement of qualified individuals disposed to give attention to investigation with like cooperation. The address is American Society for Psychical Research, Inc., 15 Lexington Avenue, New York City.

QUEER—how the skeptics continue to doubt, in the face of a multiplicity of evidence that grows, year after year.

Here are two weird cases that date some while back but which recently came to our attention:

"Since reading those accounts in the *Ghost Magazine*, I have heard the following: Dr. H. is our family physician. He has a wife whom it was necessary to put under the care of a private hospital for the insane. While she was there a son, John, was killed in some railroad accident in Colorado. Dr. H. went himself to Batavia to break the news to his wife, fearing the result of telling her. He found her calm and cheerful.

"At length he said, 'I have news which I must tell you.'

"'Yes, I know,' she said.

"'But this is news which may give you pain.'

"'I know all about it; our son, John, has been killed,' spoken with perfect composure.

"'How do you know? Who has told you?'

"'John himself came and told me.'

"'No one else had told her.

"'A singular affair happened here the other day.

"'Several men were standing by the post-office, when one of them, our chief of police, said:

"'I have a strange sensation in this arm, and can feel the blood running down,' and he bared his arm for examination. There was no blood, no bursting of a vein as was feared, no bruises. At that very time, his son, a brakeman on the Illinois Central railroad, was killed by catching his foot in a 'frog' and being run over. A strange coincidence—"

Queer—isn't it?

WATER divining recently had a remarkable recognition in India, when Major C. A. Pogson was officially appointed as a Government water diviner, and is stated to receive a salary and expenses of 4,500 pounds a year.

Seventy-six new wells for agriculturists, including thirty for drinking water, is the record of a year's work by Major Pogson, whose work is evidently of a useful nature, through which large irrigation schemes may be successfully undertaken.

LUMINOUS PAINT

Make Your Watches, Clocks, Etc., Visible by Night

The very latest discovery in the scientific world. Hitherto, practically unobtainable except at an exorbitant price, we have at last succeeded in producing this remarkable LUMINOUS PAINT, which, applied to the surface of any article, emits rays of white light, rendering it perfectly visible in the dark. THE GREATEST ADVANCE IN THE HISTORY OF CHEMISTRY. Quite simple to use. Anyone can do it. A little applied to your watch, clock, or any other article, will enable you to tell the time by night. You can coat the push buttons or switch of your electric lights, match boxes, and innumerable other articles; make your own Luminous Crucifixion, Luminous Crosses, etc. Bottle containing sufficient to coat several small articles. Price 25c. Largest glass 50c and \$1 postpaid. Johnson Smith & Co., Dept. 863 Racine, Wis.

Microphone Transmitter Button

You can easily make a highly sensitive detectorphone by using this Transmitter Button to collect the sound waves. You can build your own outfit without buying expensive equipment. It is simple and inexpensive. You can install an outfit in your home and hear conversations being held all over the house. You can connect up different rooms of a hotel, or a rooming house, and by means of a service operator, during the war, it is being used on the stage. It is ultra-sensitive and is the greatest invention on a microphone. You can mount a button almost anywhere—on board boxes, store pipes, still calculators, on the wall behind a picture frame, etc. Button is so light and small it cannot be detected. Persons can be overheard without suspecting it. You can listen in on conversations in another room. A dead person in the chair can hear the speaker. Connected to phonograph, piano or other musical instrument, music can be heard hundreds of feet away. Button may be used to receive telephone transmitters; often makes an old line "talk-up" when getting away with it. The ideal microphone for radio use carries heavy current and is extremely sensitive. Experimenters find hundreds of experiments along the lines of telephones, amplifiers, loud speakers, etc. Many fascinating stunts may be devised, such as holding the button against the chest to reproduce speech without sound waves. \$5.00 is given to anyone who sends in a new suggestion for the use of the Button provided the manufacturer find it suitable for use in their literature. PRICE \$1.00 POSTPAID ANYWHERE.

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Exact reproduction of a real pistol; actually fires full BLANK CARTRIDGES of miniature size. Illustration is actual size. 1 1/4 inches long, with ring at end for attaching to watch chain. Looks like a regular pistol. Pull the trigger and it goes off with a loud bang. Pistol is break-apart. Illustration shows position for loading. Made entirely of high grade steel, nickel plated, octagon barrel, highly finished engraved handles complete in box with cleaning rod. PRICE \$1.75. or \$1.50 postpaid.

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More fun than fighting with your wife. Look just like ordinary matches. Put up in boxes just like regular Safety Matches. As the victim tries to light one he gets quite a surprise. PRICE 10c per box, 3 boxes for 25c, or 12 for 75 cents. By express.

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One of these glass vials dropped in a room full of people will cause more consternation than a hamburger cheese. The small one directly disappears in a short time. 30c a Box, 3 Boxes for 25c

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The most confidential messages can be written with this invisible ink. The writing MAKES NO MARK. Cannot be seen unless you know the secret. Invaluable for many reasons. Keep your secrets and other delicate communications away from prying eyes. Great fun for playing practical jokes. Only 15c Bottle

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Smallest Bible in the world. Size of a postage stamp. 200 Pages. Said to bring good luck to the owner. A genuine work of art. Must be seen to be appreciated. Make good money selling them to friends, church acquaintances, etc. PRICE 15c each, 3 for 43c, 12 for \$1.35, 100 for \$7.50. Also obtainable in Leather Binding, with gold edges. Price 50c each, 3 for \$1.25, \$4.50 per doz. Magnifying Glass for use with Midget Bible.

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Everything about the Ku Klux Klan told in a clear fearless manner. Book tells all—How it started and was suppressed in 1871—The New Ku Klux Klan—How organized—How members are enrolled—Oath of the Klan—Objectives for Candidates—Grand Dragon—Order of Obedience—Fidelity—Pledge of Loyalty—Ku Klux Klan and the Nations—The Jews—The Masons—Real K. of C. Oath—The New Ku Klux Klan, etc., etc. Latest and most complete book on the Klan published. Price, 25c, postpaid.

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Apparatus and Directions for a Number of Mysterious Tricks Enough for an Entire Evening's Entertainment ANYONE CAN DO THEM 75c

It is great fun mystifying your friends. Get this Conjurer's Cabinet, and you will be the closest fellow in your district. It contains the apparatus for seven fantastic tricks, including The Disappearing Rose, that when placed on the lapel of your guest, disappears from sight at will; The Magic Van and Ball Trick (a Wooden Ball is placed inside, and upon replacing the lid has disappeared and is found in someone else's pocket); The Magic Hat, with which you can apparently cut your finger almost in two; the Wonderful Card Trick (a card is opened an entirely different card altogether is found); The Disappearing Coin Trick (a coin is placed in the little wooden barrel, and when opened again, is found to have vanished entirely); one can be made to disappear into a coin of another denomination; The Famous Disappearing Penny Trick; The Glass Goblet and Disappearing Coin Trick (a coin is dropped into a glass of water, and when the water is poured out the coin has vanished). With the tricks described above we send full printed instructions for performing each trick, so that anyone, no matter how inexperienced, can give the greatest amusement of their friends or the public. Any boy of ordinary intelligence, with this Cabinet of Tricks in his possession, can give a picnic entertainment not inferior to even regular magicians. Besides the tricks contained in the Cabinet, there are many other feats and illusions fully explained with full printed instructions, for which you may easily make or procure the necessary apparatus. ONLY 75 CENTS POSTPAID

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JUST LIKE ORDINARY CIGARETTES, BUT SUCH REAL STARTLERS! The box contains ten genuine cigarettes of excellent quality. They cannot be real, but when each cigarette is about one-third smoked, the victim gets a very great surprise as it goes off with a loud BANG! Great fun for playing practical jokes. Price 25c per box.

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Roll your own and save money. Make them better and quicker than ever, and more than half. Use your favorite brand of tobacco. Neat, useful and handy. Metal, nickel-plated. Price 25c postpaid.

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The Magic Flute, or Hummer Flute, is a unique and novel musical instrument that is played with nose and mouth combined. There is just a little breath in playing it. Careful attention after a little practice will enable you to play it. It produces very sweet music, the same as flutes. There is no fingering, and once you have mastered it you can play all kinds of music with facility and ease. When played in an environment, it produces a pleasant or any other musical instrument, the effect is so charming as it is surprising.

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A skeleton 18 in. in height, will dance to music and perform various gyrations and movements while the operator may be some distance from it.

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a little instrument, fits in the mouth out of sight, used with above for Bird Calls, etc. Anyone can use it.

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This is another good practical joke; the intense discomfort of your victims to everyone but themselves is thoroughly enjoyable. All that is necessary to start the itching is to deposit a tile of the powder on a person's hand and the powder can be relied upon to do the rest. The result is a vigorous scratch, then some more scratch, and still some more.

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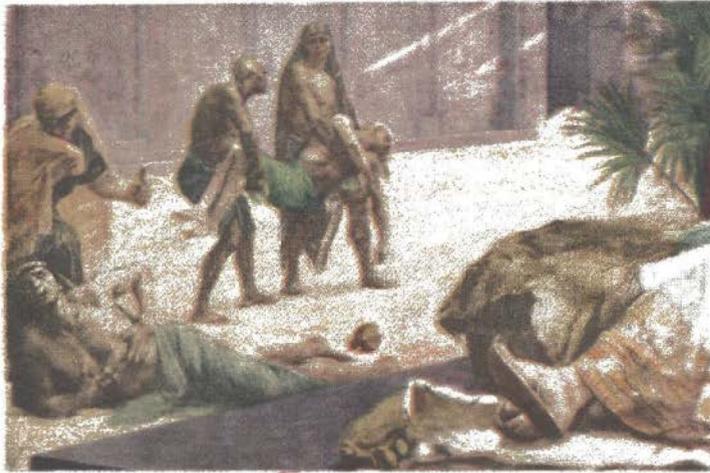
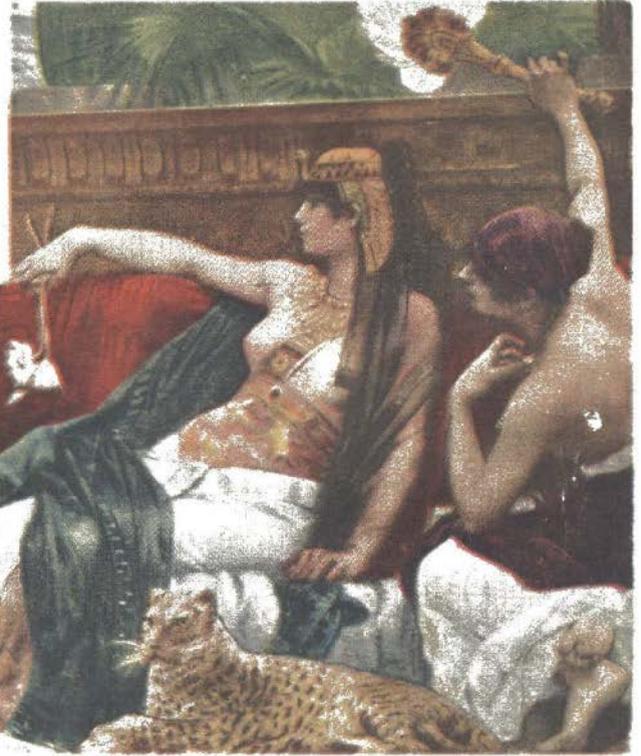
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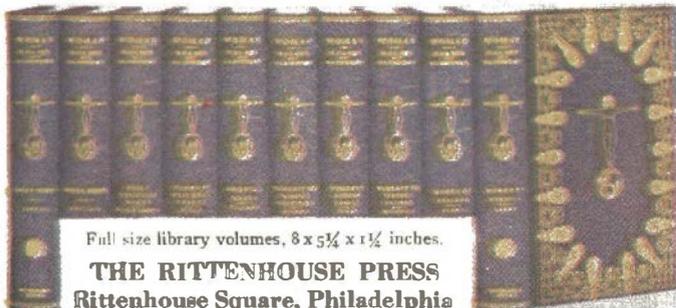
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