

UNCANNY, SPOOKY, CREEPY TALES

MAY

Ghost

STORIES

PRICE
UNITED STATES
25¢
CANADA
30¢

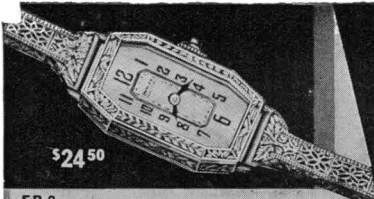
THURSTON'S FAVORITE
GHOST STORY

HOW TO READ
YOUR HUSBAND'S MIND

SAN FRANCISCO'S MYSTERY MANSE

MASTER
OF
DARKNESS





\$24.50

EB 9 The "Princess Pat" —14K Solid White Gold engraved case, guaranteed 15-jewel movement. Engraved genuine "Wristocrat" flexible bracelet to match. \$1.96 a month



\$2750

EB 31 . . . Nationally advertised and guaranteed Elgin or Waltham movement; engraved white or green gold filled 20 year case. Latest, flexible mesh, wrist band. \$2.21 a month.



EB 34 . . . \$25 Richly hand-engraved 18K Solid White Gold solitaire mounting; fiery, genuine blue-white diamond. \$2 a mo.



EB 35 . . . \$50 18K Solid White Gold ring; large size, genuine blue-white diamond and 2 smaller diamonds. \$4.08 a month.



\$50

EB 7 . . . Gentlemen's massive ring of 14K solid green gold with latest style 18K solid white gold top; fiery, genuine blue-white diamond. \$4.08 a month.



Guaranteed Savings
Direct Diamond Importations

How to Order—Just send \$1.00 with your order and your selection comes to you on 10 Days' Free Trial. No C.O.D. to pay on arrival. After full examination and free trial, pay balance in 12 equal monthly payments.

Satisfaction Guaranteed

10 Days Free Trial

You have the privilege of 10 days free trial—if not completely satisfied return shipment at our expense and the entire deposit will be refunded. Written guarantee bond with every purchase.

All Dealings Strictly Confidential

A whole year to pay! No extra charge for credit—no red tape—no delay. You take no risk—satisfaction absolutely guaranteed or money back.

Gift Case Free. Every article comes to you in a beautiful and appropriate gift case.



\$4850

EB 12 . . . Dazzling cluster of 7 expertly matched genuine blue-white diamonds; hand pierced 18K Solid White Gold, lady's mounting. Looks like a \$750 solitaire. Big value. Only \$3.96 a month.



\$2750

EB 6 . . . gent's ring of 14K Massive White Gold. Imported black onyx set with genuine diamond; any carved initial or emblem desired. \$2.21 a month.



\$75

EB 37 . . . New "Link o' Love" solitaire. Hand engraved 18K solid white gold ring set with dazzling genuine blue-white diamond in center; 2 genuine diamonds on sides. \$6.16 a mo.



\$4250

EB 36 . . . Exquisitely new, 4 fiery, genuine diamonds and 4 French-blue sapphires set off this beautifully hand engraved case of 14K Solid White Gold. Guaranteed 15 jewel movement. Pierced flexible "Wristocrat" bracelet with sapphires to match. \$3.46 a month.



\$2750

EB 19 . . . Nationally advertised 15-jewel Waltham movement; warranted 20 year. White Gold filled, 12 size, thin model, decagon case. Tested, regulated. White gold filled knife, fine Waldemar chain. All complete in fine gift case. \$2.21 a month.



\$3750

EB 8 Diamond wrist watch. Engraved 14K Solid White Gold case, 2 genuine diamonds and 8 emeralds or sapphires. Guaranteed 15-jewel movement. Pierced flexible "Wristocrat" bracelet with sapphires or emeralds to match. \$3.04 a month.



IT'S A BULOVA
\$2975

Established 1895

EB 5 . . . Nationally advertised and guaranteed 15-jewel Gent's Bulova watch. White gold filled case, "dust-tite" protector; radium dial and hands; latest style woven mesh wrist band to match. \$2.39 a mo.



ROYAL DIAMOND & WATCH CO.

ADDRESS DEPT. 83-E
170 BROADWAY, NEW YORK

New Catalogue
FREE To Adults
Write for it now



Completely illustrated new catalog of genuine diamonds, Bulova, Elgin, Waltham, Hamilton, Howard, Illinois watches; fine jewelry and silverware at special prices.

The Man I Pity Most

POOOR OLD JONES. I see him now, standing there, dejected, cringing, afraid of the world. No one had any use for him. No one respected him. Across his face I read one harsh word—FAILURE. He just lived on. A poor, worn-out imitation of a man doing his sorry best to get on in the world. If he had realized just one thing, he could have made good. He might have been a brilliant success.

There are thousands and thousands of men like Jones. They, too, could be happy, successful, respected and loved. But they can't seem to realize the one big fact—that practically everything worth while living for depends upon STRENGTH—upon live, red-blooded, He-Man muscle.

Everything you do depends upon strength. No matter what your occupation, you need the health, vitality and clear thinking only big, strong, virile muscles can give you. When you are ill, the strength in those big muscles pulls you through. At the office, in the farm fields or on the tennis courts, you'll find your success generally depends upon your muscular development.

Here's a Short-cut to Strength and Success

But, you say, "It takes years to build my body up to the point where it will equal those of athletic champions." It does if you go about it without any system, but there's a scientific short-cut. And that's where I come in.

30 Days Is All I Need

People call me the Muscle-Builder. In just 30 days I can do things with your body you never thought possible. With just a few minutes' work every morning, I will add one full inch of real, live muscle to each of your arms, and two whole inches across your chest. Many of my pupils have gained more than that, but I GUARANTEE to do at least that much for you in one short month. Your neck will grow shapely, your shoulders begin to broaden. Before you know it, you'll find people turning around when you pass. Women will want to know you. Your boss will treat you with a new respect. Your friends will wonder what has come over you. You'll look ten years younger, and you'll feel like it, too. Work will be easy. As for play, why, you'll realize that you don't know what play really means.

I Strengthen Those Inner Organs Too

But I'm not through with you. I want ninety days in all to do the job right, and then all I ask is that you stand in front of your mirror and look yourself over.

What a marvelous change! Those great, squared shoulders! That pair of huge, lithe arms! Those firm, shapely legs! Yes, sir. They are yours, and they are there to stay. You'll be just as fit inside as you are out, too, because I work on your heart, your liver—all of your inner organs, strengthening and exercising them. Yes, indeed, life can give you a greater thrill than you ever dreamed. But remember, the only sure road to health, strength and happiness always demands action. Fill out the coupon below and mail it today. Write now!

SEND FOR MY NEW 64-PAGE BOOK

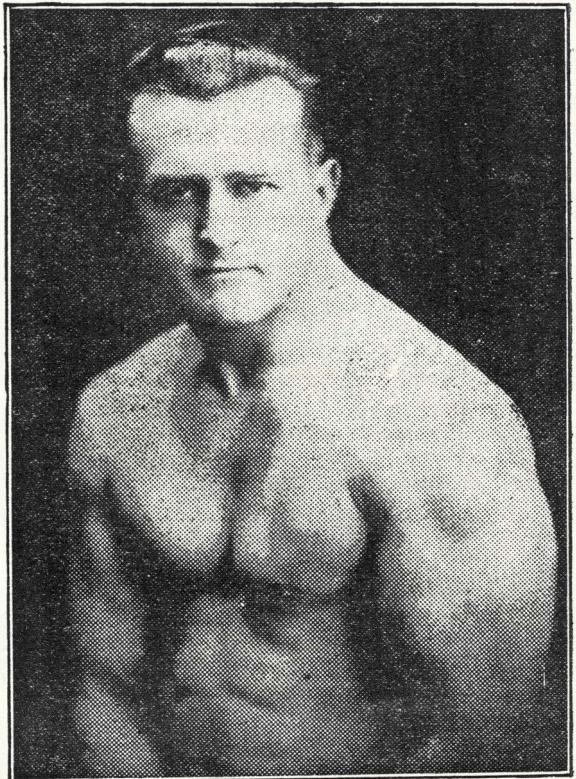
"Muscular Development"

IT IS FREE!

It contains forty-eight full-page photographs of myself and some of the many prize-winning pupils I have trained. Some of these came to me as pitiful weaklings, imploring me to help them. Look them over now and you will marvel at their present physiques. This book will prove an impetus and a real inspiration to you. It will thrill you through and through. This will not obligate you at all, but for the sake of your future health and happiness do not put it off. Send today—right now before you turn this page.

EARLE LIEDERMAN
DEPT. 5804 305 BROADWAY, N. Y. CITY

Please mention GHOST STORIES when answering advertisement



EARLE LIEDERMAN, The Muscle Builder

Author of "Muscle Building," "Science of Wrestling," "Secrets of Strength," "Here's Health," "Endurance," Etc.

EARLE LIEDERMAN

Dept. 5804, 305 Broadway, New York City

Dear Sir:—Please send me absolutely free and without any obligation on my part whatsoever, a copy of your latest book, "Muscular Development." (Please write or print plainly.)

Name Age

Street

City State.....



PUBLISHED BY HAROLD HERSEY

Vol. 8

MAY, 1930

No. 5

Contents

Cover Design by Dalton Stevens

SAN FRANCISCO'S MYSTERY MANSE.....	Nell Kay	8
<i>A story of the haunted house on Russian Hill</i>		
WHO PLAYED THE FOURTH ACT?.....	Edwin A. Goewey	12
<i>The audience received him riotously—but Who Was He?</i>		
HAVE YOU EVER SEEN A GHOST?.....	(Contest)	21
<i>Win a Prize by telling GHOST STORY readers about it!</i>		
MASTER OF DARKNESS.....	Arthur T. Jolliffe	22
<i>A fearless youth joins a fiend in the study of Demonology</i>		
CAN THESE THINGS BE?.....	Hereward Carrington, Ph.D.	33
<i>Impossible!—But they actually happened</i>		
THE FLINT KNIFE.....	E. F. Benson	35
<i>He discovered the secret of the hidden garden—too late?</i>		
THE HOUSE OF SINISTER SHADOWS.....	Samri Frikell	42
<i>Keene takes a long chance—and the Terror strikes again</i>		
"MY FAVORITE GHOST STORY".....	Howard Thurston	52
<i>IV—The Dream Woman, by Wilkie Collins</i>		
SUMMONED FROM THE DEAD.....	John Randall	65
<i>In the gloom of the morgue, a faithful spirit brings hope</i>		
THE MASTER STROKE.....	Guy Fowler	75
<i>A phantom artist guides his friend's hand</i>		
GAMBLER'S GOLD.....	Jack D'Arcy	83
<i>The tragic Ace of Spades haunts "Lucky" Chambino</i>		
SPIRIT TALES.....	Count Cagliostro	91
<i>Ghost ships still sail the Seven Seas</i>		
HOW TO READ YOUR HUSBAND'S MIND.....	Norman Frescott and Bebe Stanton	94
<i>Psychic rules that work both ways</i>		
STRONGER THAN DEATH.....	Wilbert Wadleigh	100
<i>The strain of guilt brings Masterson to the breaking point—and beyond</i>		
WERE YOU BORN IN MAY?.....	Stella King	111
<i>Your future in the stars</i>		
THE MEETING PLACE.....		116
<i>Our reader's personal experiences with the Supernatural</i>		

Published monthly by GOOD STORY MAGAZINE COMPANY, INC., 25 West 43rd Street, New York, N. Y. Harold Hersey, President; Miss Pauline Sandburg, Secretary; Arthur Martin, Treasurer. Entered as second class matter April 30th, 1926, at the Post Office at Dunellen, N. J., under the act of March 3rd, 1879. Additional entry at New York, N. Y. Copyright, 1930, by Good Story Magazine Company, Inc. Manuscripts will be handled with care, but this company and magazine assume no responsibility for their safety. For advertising rate address H. D. Cushing, 67 West 44th Street, New York City.

YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION: In United States, \$2.50; (In Canada, \$3.50).

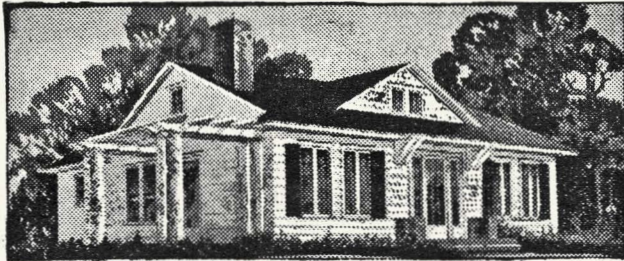
SINGLE COPIES: In United States, 25 cents; (In Canada, 30 cents).

PRINTED BY THE ART COLOR PRINTING CO., DUNELLEN, N. J., U. S. A.

Name This House

**\$500.00
GIVEN!**

**We Will Pay \$500.00 Cash
For the Most Suitable
Name For This Beautiful
Six-Room House**



**ANY NAME
MAY WIN!
Offer open to
everybody. Nothing
to buy or sell. No
Obligation.**

**WHOEVER SENDS THE MOST SUITABLE NAME WILL
WIN \$500.00—NOTHING ELSE TO DO!**

This is a new Colonial Bungalow--cozy, convenient--yet a roomy house. It is meeting with such popularity that we are desirous of obtaining a suitable name for it for use in connection with our building program, and will pay \$500.00 cash for the most suitable name suggested. There are no strings tied to this offer. Sending us a name for this house does not obligate you in any way. Nothing to buy or sell. We merely want a suitable name and are willing to pay \$500.00 in cash for the best one

sent in. Surely you can think of an appropriate name for such a beautiful home. Do not use more than two words. Any word or words may be used or any combination of words, such as Ridgelawn, Shadynook, Hearthome or names like Sunshine Inn, Journey's End, etc. No matter how simple your suggestion is, you cannot afford to neglect sending it in at once. Any name may win. Possibly you may have the most suitable name right on the end of your tongue this minute. If you have, send it in at once, and \$500.00 in cash is yours.

\$100.00 EXTRA FOR PROMPTNESS

We want the name for this house quickly, and will pay the winner an extra \$100.00 cash just for promptness—or a total of \$600.00 in all. Send your suggestion today! The very first name you think of may be worth \$600.00 cash to you.

FREE! In appreciation of your suggesting a name for this house real quickly, we will send you FREE and POSTPAID, the floor plans and blue print of this beautiful house. Understand, this does not obligate you in any way. Rush us a name for this house TODAY—QUICK. A postal card will do.

FOLLOW THESE RULES

This offer is open to everyone, excepting members of this firm, its employees and relatives. Each participant may send only one name. Sending two or more names will cause all names submitted by that person to be thrown out. Contest closes June 28th, 1930. Should two or more persons submit an equally suitable name for this house, the full amount of the prize offered will be paid to each one so tying. To win the \$100.00 CASH PROMPTNESS PRIZE, the winning name must be mailed within three (3) days after this announcement is read. This \$100.00 CASH PROMPTNESS PRIZE will be added to the \$500.00 prize and paid to each one submitting the winning name, provided suggestion is mailed within (3) days after this announcement is read. Rush name today.

HOME BUILDERS' SOCIETY, Box 4674, BATAVIA, ILLINOIS

MOLDING A MIGHTY CHEST



Get a 46 Inch Chest
Complete Course on Chest Building
ONLY 25c

Learn the real secret of powerful chest building. Know all about the muscles that lift, widen and deepen the chest and broaden the shoulders. Practice the specialized exercises which will make YOUR chest massive and powerful. The greatest analysis of vital, vigorous chest development ever written. Learn the Hindoo religious system of exercises that makes their wrestlers and strong men invincible. A Hindoo strong man and wrestler threw Zybyso in two seconds. Many other methods unknown to the American body builder, are explained. Complete with anatomic illustrations on which are indicated the little known vital spots in creating vital internal strength. You can build for yourself a Herculean chest. The author, George F. Jowett, built his chest from 32 inches of weakness to 48 inches of colossal muscular strength. Develop your chest with straps of big steel muscle. Fill it full of unresisting vital strength energy.

WORTH ITS WEIGHT IN GOLD—GET IT TODAY

To each purchaser will be given a FREE COPY of *THE THRILL OF BEING STRONG*. It is a priceless book to the strength fan and muscle builder. Full of pictures of marvelous bodied men who tell you decisively how you can build symmetry and strength the equal of theirs.

REACH OUT—GRASP THIS SPECIAL OFFER

JOWETT INSTITUTE of PHYSICAL CULTURE
422 Poplar Street, Dept. 46D, Scranton, Penna.

Dear Mr. Jowett: I am enclosing 25c. Please send me the course "MOLDING A MIGHTY CHEST" and a free copy of "THE THRILL OF BEING STRONG."

Name _____

Address _____

What Do You Want?

Whatever it is we can help you get it. Just give us the chance by writing for free literature. You will be delighted. Act today. Write NOW!

The Brotherhood of Light

Dept. K, Box 1525 Los Angeles, Calif.

MONEY FOR YOU

Men or women can earn \$15 to \$25 weekly in spare time at home making display cards. Light, pleasant work. No canvassing. We instruct you and supply you with work. Write to-day for full particulars. **The MENHENITT COMPANY Limited**
246 Dominion Bldg., Toronto, Can.

THE BROTHERHOOD OF THE HOLY PENTAGRAM

A Brotherhood of Mystics

TEACHING

Occultism, Psychology, Ancient Magic, Metaphysics and Comparative Religions.

For information address Desk G

SECRETARY GENERAL, Box 391, Plattsburg, N. Y.

Let Me READ YOUR CHARACTER from your handwriting. Learn your strong and weak characteristics as well as those of your friends and relatives. Sample reading 12c. Refunded if dissatisfied. **Graphologist, 2309-MG Lawrence, Toledo, Ohio.**

BE a RADIO EXPERT

Many Make \$50 to \$200 a Week

Amazing Growth of Radio

is making thousands of big pay jobs every year. You can learn at home in spare time.

J. G. Dahlstead, 1484 S. 15th St., E., Salt Lake City, Utah, is making \$400 a month in Radio, much more than he could make in other fields. Geo. W. Page, 1807 21st Ave. S., Nashville, Tenn., made \$935 while learning. Radio needs more spare time and full time men. Hook up with this live-wire field. Make bigger money. Assure your future. N. R. I. will show you how to make \$5 to \$25 a week on the side while you're learning and help you find a good job after you graduate. Free Book "Rich Rewards in Radio" gives full information. It tells where the good jobs are, how to get one.

NATIONAL RADIO INSTITUTE WASHINGTON, D. C.

CLIP AND MAIL FOR FREE INFORMATION

J. E. Smith, Pres.,
National Radio Institute, Dept. OD-34
16th & U Sts., N. W., Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Smith: Without obligating me, send your big free book, "Rich Rewards in Radio."

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Is a High School Education Worth \$2.98 to You?

A 60-volume High School Educational Course, complete and up-to-date, thoroughly reliable and authentic, for only \$2.98, postpaid! Think of it! Read the titles below. Is such a course worth this low price to you? It is excellent for home study—for reviewing forgotten subjects, or for informing yourself in new fields. Seize this opportunity. More than 250,000 sets of these books have been sold. These have gone to ambitious people everywhere in the United States and in many foreign countries. Order your Educational Course today!

TEACH YOURSELF

This High School Educational Course is entirely self-teaching—no instructor is necessary. With determination and application you can secure the essentials of a High School education from these 60 books, as listed at the right. Every book is written so you can understand it easily. You can begin anywhere—read or study any book at your convenience, for each subject is complete in itself. Never has there been a chance like this—a complete High School Course for only \$2.98, which is positively all you pay!



HANDY FORM

These 60 books are pocket-sized volumes, measuring 3½ x 5 inches each, and running to 64 pages or 15,000 words of text per book. The type is 8-point—the size used in the average daily newspaper—clear and easy to read. The handy size of these volumes is one of their most desirable features, for you can carry them in your pocket or bag with ease. Make spare moments count! Get this set and make a habit of keeping some of the volumes always nearby!

Owing to urgent demand from the public we have decided to keep this course in its present form of 60 volumes for a short time to enable others to enjoy this amazing opportunity and bargain.



SEND NO MONEY

Send no money unless you wish to! This High School Educational Course will be sent C. O. D. (at an extra cost to you of only 7c., the post office fee), if you prefer. However, remit \$2.98 with the order blank if you like. Canadian and foreign customers must always remit in full with order, by draft on U. S. bank or international postal money order.

Haldeman-Julius Publications

Dept. W-206

Girard, Kansas

Please mention GHOST STORIES when answering advertisement

Here are the 60 books

60 Volumes—3,488 Pages—825,000 Words

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| English | 32. Business Letters |
| 1. English Faults | 33. Typewriting Guide |
| 2. Spelling Guide | 34. How to write Telegrams |
| 3. Grammar Guide | Science |
| 4. Punctuation Guide | 35. Chemistry Self Taught |
| 5. Words Pronounced | 36. Physics Self Taught |
| 6. Conversation Helps | 37. Astronomy Self Taught |
| 7. Vocabulary Helps | 38. Psychology Self Taught |
| 8. Letter Writing | 39. Riddle of Human Behavior |
| 9. Preparing Manuscripts Properly | 40. Evolution Explained |
| 10. How to Argue Logically. Schopenhauer | 41. Great Scientists |
| History | 42. Zoology Self Taught |
| 11. United States | 43. Woodworking |
| 12. Story of the American Revolution | Mathematics |
| 13. U. S. Civil War | 44. Plane Geometry |
| 14. Lives of Presidents | 45. Curiosities of Mathematics |
| 15. U. S. Dry-Law | 46. Arithmetic (1) |
| Literature | 47. Arithmetic (2) |
| 16. Facts to Know About the Classics | Reference Manuals |
| 17. 100 Books to Read | 48. Quotations |
| 18. Reading Guide | 49. Shakespeare's Lines |
| The Arts | 50. Classical Mythology |
| 19. Painting Facts | 51. Biblical Allusions |
| 20. Sculpture Facts | 52. Foreign Words |
| 21. Music Facts | 53. Famous Authors |
| 22. Musical Terms | 54. Gazetteer |
| 23. Architecture Facts | General Helps |
| Languages | 55. How to Get a Liberal Education |
| 24. Latin Self Taught | 56. Self-Development |
| 25. French Self Taught | 57. Comments on Life |
| 26. Spanish Self Taught | 58. How to Study |
| 27. German Self Taught | Quizzes |
| Business | 59. What Do You Know? Questions |
| 28. Economics (Wealth) | 60. General Information, Quizzes |
| 29. How Wall Street Works | |
| 30. U. S. Commercial Geography | |
| 31. Commercial Law | |

HIGH SCHOOL COURSE FOR \$2.98!

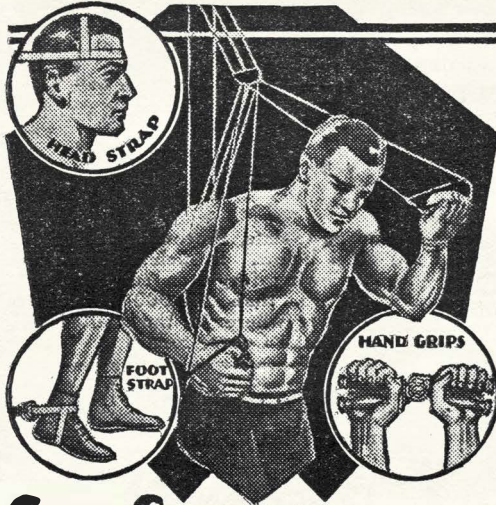
**Haldeman-Julius Publications,
Dept. W-206, Girard, Kansas.**

Send me your 60-volume High School Educational Course. Unless my remittance for \$2.98 is enclosed herewith, I agree to pay the postman \$2.98 (plus 7c. C. O. D. fee) on delivery.

Name

Address

City State.....



GET STRONG with these 6 improved Muscle Builders—All for \$5.00

Realize your ambition and develop muscles of a super-man. Get strong! Easily master feats which now seem difficult—or if you want physical culture for your health's sake, this equipment is what you need. With this special offer you save at least half. We furnish 10-cable chest expander adjustable to 200 lbs. resistance. Made of new live extra strength, springy rubber so as to give resistance you need for real muscle development. You also get a pair of patented hand grips for developing powerful grip and forearms. We include wall exercising parts which permit you to develop your back, arms and legs—a real muscle necessity. The head strap permits you to exercise muscles of your neck. Develop leg muscles with foot strap furnished. This gives speed, endurance. In addition you get specially written course containing pictures and diagrams showing how to develop any part of your body. Act now!

SEND NO MONEY

Sign name and address to coupon and rush to us. We send every thing by return mail. Pay postman \$5.00 plus postage. (If you desire, send money order now and we pay postage.)



GUARANTEE MONEY BACK IF NOT SATISFIED

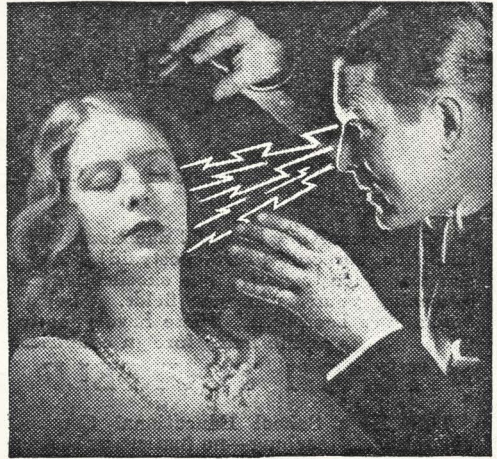
CRUSADER APPARATUS CO.

Dept. 4305, Maplewood, N. J.

I accept your offer. Send me everything described in your advertisement by return mail. I will pay postman \$5.00 plus postage on arrival. It is understood if I am not entirely satisfied after examination I can return the goods and you will refund my money.

No C. O. D. Orders to Foreign Countries except Canada.

Name.....
 Street.....
 City..... State.....



See How Easy You Can Learn HYPNOTISM TRY FREE 5 DAYS!

SEE for yourself how easy it is to master the great science of Hypnotism—how quickly you can learn to bend people to your will—banish fear, worry and opposition—increase your earnings—and force others to give you the recognition, power, and admiration you deserve. I'll show you how to use this great force to help you master every situation or **The Five Day Trial is FREE!**

In just a few hours I'll teach you the hidden secrets of Hypnotism—the methods used by the great operators—the amazing things you can accomplish once you understand this mighty power. You can use it to overcome obstacles, achieve your fondest ambitions and become MASTER of yourself, friends and acquaintances—either sex. Now you can quit being just one of the crowd—now you need not be unpopular, lonesome or unhappy a minute longer. Through this strange power you can learn how to stand out—dominate—to make your life what you want it to be!

In his startling NEW book, *The Science of Hypnotism*, the world famous hypnotist—Prof. L. E. Young—reveals the most carefully guarded secrets of this fascinating subject. He not only explains the methods of noted hypnotists, step by step—but tells clearly all about the nine stages of Hypnotism, the Hypnotic Mirror, Mental Telepathy, how to select your subjects, magnetic healing, methods of hypnotizing, how to waken the subject, how to make money out of hypnotism!

Try 5 Days FREE—Send No Money

So confident are we that Prof. Young and his great book will quickly teach you the science of hypnotism, that we will send you a copy without one cent in advance! Simply clip and mail the coupon below. When the book arrives pay the postman the special low price of \$2.50 plus five cents postage. Then test the powers of Hypnotism 5 days! If not amazed and delighted return the book and money will be refunded at once.

FRANKLIN PUBLISHING CO.

600 N. Clark St., Dept. D-80, Chicago

Mysteries of Hypnotism Revealed

- How to Hypnotize at a Glance
- Susceptible Subjects
- How to Hypnotize by Telephone
- How to Give an Entertainment
- How to Make Others Obey You
- Overcoming Bad Habits
- How to Do Dozens of Hypnotic Feats
- Use of Hypnotism in Operations



Franklin Publishing Co., Dept. D-80, 800 No. Clark St., Chicago, Ill.

Please send me your amazing new book—*The Science of Hypnotism*—by Prof. Young. When the book arrives, I'll pay the postman only \$2.50 plus postage. If I am not satisfied after 5 days' trial, I may return the book and you are to refund my money.

Name.....
 Street and No.....

Town..... State.....
 If you are likely to be out when postman calls, send \$2.50 with coupon and we'll pay delivery charges. Customers outside U.S. must send cash with order.

Please mention GHOST STORIES when answering advertisement



New Moisture Humidifier & Carbon Eliminator

for all Makes of Cars, Trucks, Tractors and Engines

An amazing Scientific Humidifier has been patented throughout the World that beats any ever got out. It makes engines run ALL THE TIME with the same wonderful efficiency they do on a cool moist nght. It gives MORE pep and power, HIGHER top speed, eliminates hard carbon, and gives AMAZING mileage. Fords report 28 to 42 miles per gallon. Other makes (both American and Foreign) report marvelous increases of 1/4 to double mileage. Some of the best records are:

Miles	Miles	Miles	Miles
Buick.....28 1/2	Ford (Model T) 42	Oakland.....31	Pierce Arrow...22
Cadillac.....21 1/2	Ford (Model A) 40	Oldsmobile....34 1/2	Pontiac.....31
Chevrolet.....41	Hudson.....23 1/2	Overland.....41	Reo.....26 1/2
Chrysler.....30 1/2	Hupmobile....24 1/2	Packard.....21 1/2	Star.....47 1/2
Dodge.....31 1/2	Marmon.....21 1/2	Plymouth.....29	Studebaker....29
Essex.....32	Nash.....30	Graham-Paige.23 1/2	Willys-Knight.29

And Hundreds of Other Wonderful Records on ALL American and Foreign Makes

Big Profits to

Man with Car Spare or Full Time
 \$350 to \$1500 a month
 1 man \$4,939.66 in 3 1/2 months
 Another \$1,666.60 in 68 days
 \$6,150.00 in 6 months to another. **BIG MONEY** can be—**IS** being made
Fitting Motors with Vix
 One man sold 8 first morning
 Another sells all 3 men can install
 Another's profits as high as \$100.00 a day.
 VIX sells itself by 8 STARTLING demonstrations—**BIG, STUNNING, ASTOUNDING DEMONSTRATIONS**. Successful VIX men make **MORE MONEY** than they ever made before.

Free Trial TRY This New Principle Gas Saver AT MY RISK



Try this wonderful VIX Moisture Humidifier and Carbon Eliminator AT MY RISK on YOUR OWN CAR to prove that VAPOR MOISTURE (drawn from Radiator to Engine) gives you that wonderful night driving effect ALL THE TIME with MORE mileage from gas and oil—eliminates hard carbon accumulation—gives MORE power, a SNAPPER, PEPPER motor, FASTER acceleration, a SMOOTHER, QUIETER running engine and HIGHER top speed.

VIX will PROVE ITS MONEY SAVING MERIT on your own car by 8 DEMONSTRATIONS—conducted by yourself AT MY RISK—the most SENSATIONAL, most ASTOUNDING, most CONVINCING DEMONSTRATIONS you ever saw. If you don't find from your tests that it does MORE than I claim; return it and it COSTS YOU NOTHING. I want wide-awake hustling, County, State, Province and National Agencies everywhere, part or full time, to make \$350 to \$1500 per month filling the great DEMAND for this wonderful invention wherever introduced. Write for my FREE TRIAL and MONEY MAKING OFFER. Use coupon below.

WALTER CRITCHLOW
 Inventor and Manufacturer, 420-B Street, WHEATON, ILL., U. S. A.

FREE VIX Mail Now offer



WALTER CRITCHLOW, INVENTOR and MANUFACTURER, 420-B Street, Wheaton, Ill., U. S. A.
 Please send me without obligation or charge your FREE TRIAL and MONEY MAKING VIX OFFER.

Name.....
 Address.....
 Town..... State.....

Pictures here and at top show Model "B" VIX attached to my own New Model A Ford. This car is wonderfully improved in performance with the VIX Moisture Humidifier. So is every Auto, Truck, Tractor, Taxi, Bus, Marine, Stationary and Aircraft Engine, both American and all Foreign makes.

GUARANTEED TO SAVE { 1/4 to 1/2 Gas Carbon Cleaning Engine Repairs } **or Costs You Nothing**

Please mention GHOST STORIES when answering advertisement

*The actual facts
behind the famous
haunted house on
Russian Hill*



*Bell and the
others rushed
back to find
his bride*

San Francisco's

THERE is a strange history woven around a certain mansion-house which stands on one of the sloping streets of Russian Hill, in the city of San Francisco, California.

It is a three-story house, verandas on the first and second floors, with an old-style square tower or cupola on the top. It stands on a large lot—a whole block of ground, to be exact—and is of frame construction, having been built in the Seventies.

I came to hear about it when making inquiries about rooms there a few years ago. As I awaited an answer to my knock on the door, a sour-visaged old man who was seated on the lower balcony with his pipe, started to laugh.

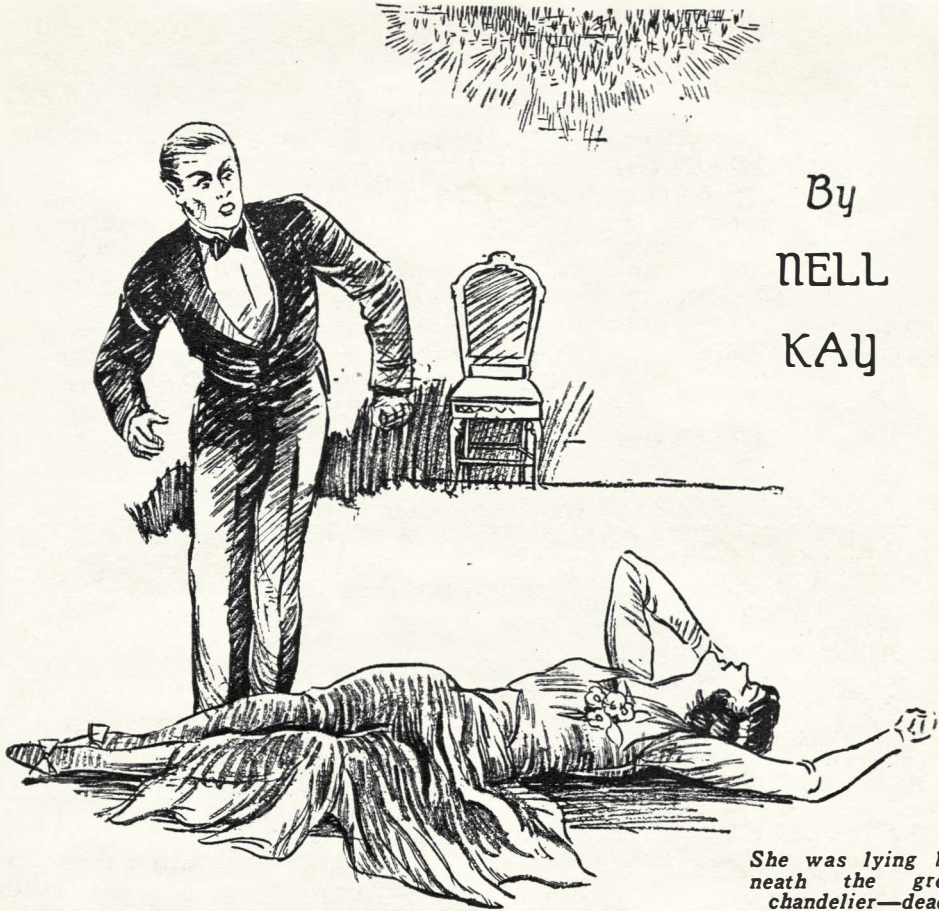
Puzzled, and wondering if he were laughing at me, I turned to look at him. He said: "Ye won't be staying here long. I'm thinking, miss, if ye are as much of a coward as

the rest of 'em that comes to this place."

"What do you mean?" I naturally asked him.

"Well," he said drily, "there's all sorts of things I might mention, but there h'ain't time. The place gets closed up every now and again, because the folks all leaves: and then some other enterprisin' pusson comes along and opens it up again, and for a while she runs along all fine: and then everyone starts to get out again. It's sort of a nuisance to me, because them things don't bother me none, and I hates to have to keep up and moving every time the place changes hands. But I always come back and take my old room again each time it opens. I'm sort of fond of the old place, and got used to settin' out on this piazza, and there don't seem another place in town just suits me."

"But what makes the people leave?" I



By
NELL
KAY

*She was lying be-
neath the great
chandelier—dead*

Mystery Manse

asked him. My curiosity was aroused.

And it was partly from him, and partly from other inquiries I made in the neighborhood, as well as from certain data obtained from police records—which any of you may read for yourselves—that the following incidents were made known to me:

In 1820-36, a band of Russian settlers laid claim to the State of California. Their possession was disputed by the Indians then inhabiting that part of America, who in a savage battle massacred these Russian settlers. The scene of this tragedy has ever since been known as Russian Hill.

The old mansion—known as the Bell Mansion—was built upon that ground, on land where many of the Russians were buried. One of the small tombstones, or grave markers, was taken from one of the graves, and made into a sun-dial for the garden. This, though badly broken, still

stands in the long since deserted grounds.

It is of black onyx, and had a Russian cross—an upright with two cross-arms instead of only one—and an inscription (in Russian) upon it. After two European stone-cutters had refused to desecrate this tombstone by turning it into a sun-dial, a third man was found willing to do the work; and it is a remarkable fact that very shortly after he completed the work, he died suddenly.

TO this mansion, built upon the old Russian burying-ground, the man Bell (for whom it was built) brought his bride. Bell was a man who had made millions in mining, and had bought up part of Russian Hill along with other lands.

On the night of their arrival, Bell and his bride gave a big house-warming party, and the house—then in its pristine newness—

was all aglow with bright lights and moving figures. The sound of dancing feet and captivating music came from the open windows, and the dark verandas were studded with the fairy glimmer of Japanese lanterns. It was a night to be remembered—not only for its enjoyment, but far more because of the strange and tragic way the party was brought to a close.

In the early hours of morning, the guests began one by one to take their departure. The host was standing outside in the driveway, bidding the last one God-speed; the house servants still clustered around after bringing up the horses, and for the moment, the mansion itself was empty.

The bride herself stood on the lower veranda, watching the departure of her friends. Her slight figure was silhouetted against the bright gas lights of the still illuminated building, the light on the porch making a halo of her blowing hair. Then, suddenly, without warning, the porch light went out. Simultaneously, the bride emitted a startling, terrified shriek.

Bell and the servants, rushing back into the house, discovered the young woman inside the front room, lying in disarray beneath the huge chandelier—dead. The expression on her face was one of fright and horror, but not a mark was found upon her body to give any clue to the manner of her death. Her bridal veil, which she had worn, was found torn from her hair, and thrown into one corner of the room.

Bell, completely heart-broken, locked up the house and betook himself back to his mining, as a means of stifling memory and easing his mental suffering. He left strict orders that the house should be left as it was, and no one should enter or disturb it. But, on the outside, there were to be patrols, to prevent trespassing. So, though the grounds were kept in good condition, the interior of the house slowly began to deteriorate.

On rare occasions, Bell would be seen in the town, where he stayed at the Palace Hotel, and made surreptitious visits to the old house. Light would then be seen in the windows, but no one ever went in with him, nor knew in what manner he occupied himself while there. In all probability he was going over old scenes and memories, and mourning the loss of his young bride.

After some years, Bell died, and there was a squabble among his relatives over his will. Some of his nephews and nieces

got this particular piece of his property on Russian Hill, and some of them went to live in it. After about one week, however, they left, leaving behind reports that strange cries and moanings were heard in the rooms and soft rustlings as of unseen presences, for which no reasonable cause could be found. Caretakers were installed, one after another, each one leaving after a short stay.

One strange fact seemed to be that no dog could live there. Any dog that was taken there was sure to be found dead: and one or two, noted for their fidelity, refused even to stay there with their owners, but took to their heels and fled.

THERE came a night which, as far as could be gathered, was about the time of the anniversary of the bride's death, when several passersby saw light throughout the house. This, occurring at a time when the place was empty of caretakers, was reported to the police, who entered the house. But the lights immediately went out, and not a sign of a human being having recently been in the place could be found.

One of the caretakers died in a rather peculiar manner, when he made an attempt to remain there. He had formed the habit of going up to the square cupola to look at the sunset over the Golden Gate. He was found, one morning, lying on the lawn below, dead, with an expression of terror upon his face. His death was brought in as sui-

Harvard Has a Ghost

Incredible—but true!

And stranger still, this is no phantom of a former Harvard student revisiting his old "dorm." It's the presence of a woman—a girl—in one of the university's newest buildings!

Read the diverting facts about "The Lady Ghost of Langdell Hall" in the June number, on sale May 23rd. You'll be surprised—and pleased!

cide, though it was quite evident that he could hardly have jumped clear of the house to the spot where he was found, but would undoubtedly have dropped upon one of the lower verandas. It would therefore seem that he must have been thrown. There being no proof, however, nor any record of anyone but himself having been there at the time, the verdict was suicide.

A woman with more nerve than the average, opened the house as a boarding house; but one after another her boarders left, and she was forced to close it up. The house became shunned and fell into decay. Yet, strangely enough, it remained standing, decrepit though it was, even through the earthquake of 1906, with its resultant fires.

At various intervals it was opened up and closed again, and it was in one of these intervals, when it had been newly renovated and seemed to be in for a run of success in its way, that I applied for a small suite of rooms. After learning its history, however, I may add, I looked elsewhere!

One of the last tragedies to be enacted in this ill-fated house was during the stay of a Russian roomer. The fact that he was a Russian, and that the house had been built upon a Russian burying-ground, was strangely significant.

This Russian frequently complained to the then lessee of the house, that people entered his room at night. He could hear them quite plainly, but never saw them, for the reason that when he turned on his light they were gone. And then, suddenly, one Sunday, the tragedy occurred. The Russian, apparently demented or beset with some kind of terror, rushed up into the cupola, carrying a rifle, a shotgun, and two pistols. No one dared follow him in, armed as he was, and he shot at all who tried to approach through the windows.

WHEN the police arrived, they saw him turn and stand with his back toward the front window, apparently fighting with someone or something which tried to shove him backward through the window. He was crying out something in Russian which nobody could understand. As the only way to subdue this apparently demented maniac was to shoot him, they shot at him through the window, and he was killed.

When they broke into the room, nothing was there other than usual, nor signs of any human being other than himself. And,

one especially strange thing was noted. *He was found to have been locked in the room from the outside, the key being on the outside of the door!*

The house, again locked up and deserted, began to fall to pieces. The city grew around it, children played in its gardens—but never at night. Finally it was sold to a man who said he intended to fix it up, subdivide the ground, and sell. He renovated the house and ran it as a rooming house again. But, strange to relate, on several occasions mysterious fires started up in the house—*always starting from the corner where the bride's veil had been thrown!*

ON some of these occasions, roomers were in the house, and had narrow escapes from being burned. But at other times the fires occurred when the house was empty—always starting from the same corner. Some who stayed in the very room where the bride was found dead, reported that her misty figure appeared to them rising from the corner where her veil was flung, and that she spoke warning words to them, to take their departure.

The consensus of opinion seems to be that because the house was built on the ground where the Russian settlers were buried, the spirits of the massacred dead are wandering, restless and unhappy, around the premises, seeking rest; and that the Russian in particular whose grave marker was desecrated and chiselled into a sun-dial is either seeking vengeance or giving warning to all who come to live there.

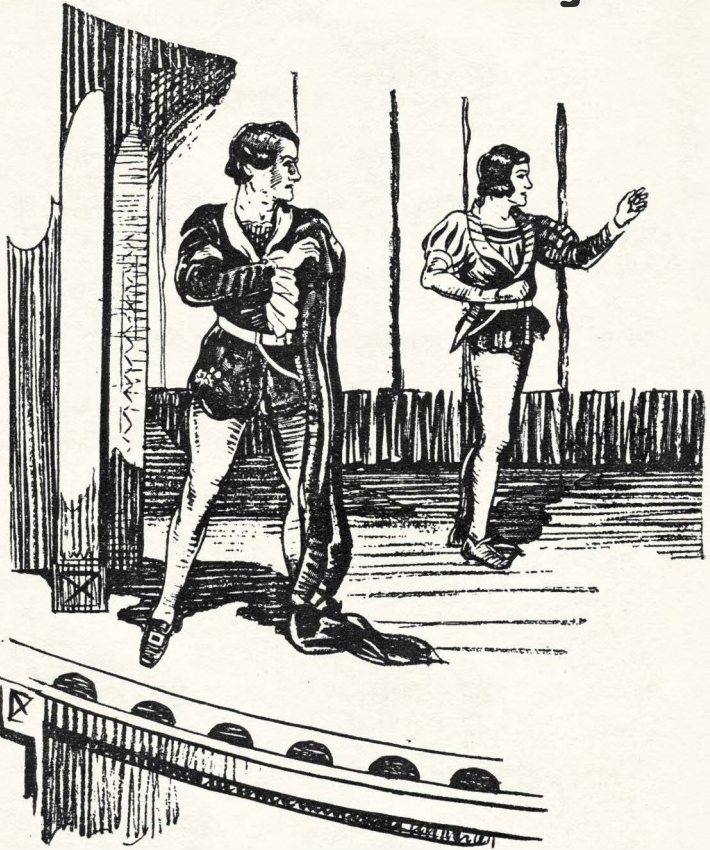
The Russian whose tragic and unaccountable end occurred on that fateful Sunday, is supposed to have met with this doubly evil fate, on account of his nationality—it being surmised that he was considered a traitor to his own people in living on the ground so ruthlessly disturbed—ground which had been consecrated to the burial of his own ancestors.

The day on which I took my final look at the old Bell Mansion, the then resident roomers were already beginning to take their leave, and it would seem that once again the old man of the pipe and porch-rocker would have to "up and move," leaving the place once more to desolation.

The rattling of the cable cars a block away shook the ground beneath my feet as if, it seemed to me, in prophetic warning; and the fog drifted in from the Golden Gate and wrapped the old house in a shroud.

WHO Played

The
audience
rose en masse
to cheer
him—
but not one
among them
guessed the
staggering
truth!



Standing's features were drawn and ugly, his eyes burning with malignant hate

ALL that remains of the old Theater Royal, which veteran playgoers will recall was located just east of Madison Square, is about to pass out of existence. At the time it was erected, nearly two generations ago, it was the most beautiful playhouse in America and for a few years enjoyed exceptional financial success, being patronized principally by the socially prominent in New York. However, when the business center of the city moved northward from the Square, the Royal lost its vogue and, after a period of severe reverses, was converted into a warehouse. Recently, the antiquated structure was sold to a syndicate which will tear it down and erect an office building on the site.

AS I read the foregoing in my morning paper, I was plunged into a long period of reflection upon the past of this ancient theater—with which, in its heyday, I was prominently identified—and upon one incident in particular which has always kept the old *Royal* fresh in my memory.

And as a result of my reflections I have decided finally to break a silence of forty years and tell the story of this happening, the most amazing which ever took place within the walls of that world-famous playhouse.

In beginning, I must turn back the pages of time forty five years. The *Theater Royal* was then nearing completion; its owners had decided to devote it to the revival of the older and more familiar plays—particularly those of Shakespeare—and through their London attorneys they had closed a long-term contract with Wilbert Lawrence, the foremost English producer. He was to have complete charge of all productions and was to have a free hand in selecting his company.

At the time Lawrence agreed to go to America, he had just completed a series of

The FOURTH ACT?



By
GEORGE
MALCOLM

As told to
Edwin A. Goewey

*Rodney bowed,
seeming unaware
of us, while the
applause swelled
to a roar*

Shakespearian revivals in London with John Fare—whom I always considered the greatest tragedian of his time—playing the leading heavy rôles. I also was in the company, serving as assistant stage director to Lawrence and doing character parts, as also was Fare's nineteen-year-old son, Rodney, an unusually clever youngster. We three were among the few whom Lawrence decided to take with him in his new American venture.

HERE I must pause a moment in my tale to give an intimate picture of Fare and his son, not only because of the parts they are to play later on, but because theirs was the most beautiful relationship I have ever known. The youth's mother had passed on soon after his birth, leaving the task of rearing him to her trouser husband.

Because of his profession it was necessary for Fare to place Rodney with relatives during his earlier years. But when the lad was

five he took him with him, determined to begin coaching him at once, that he might carry on his father's tradition in the theater. And they never separated from that time on.

FARE and I had been in the same companies for years, and shared the same living quarters whenever we played in London. I was with the lad from the time his mother died, learned to love him as if he were my own son, and knew that his affection for me was second only to that he felt for his father.

I never encountered a youngster who absorbed things as he did, and at the age of seven he began his professional career. From then on, his advancement was rapid until long before he accompanied his father to New York he was looked upon as one of the best young actors in all England.

At the opening performance at the *Royal* we scored a tremendous hit and not only was

the house packed nightly thereafter with enthusiastic audiences, but Fare, Rodney and some of the other principals who enjoyed being entertained socially were welcome visitors at the homes of the theater's leading patrons and accompanied them on coaching and yachting trips and the like. My protégé was a particular favorite, especially among the younger people. Had he desired, I believe he could have married any one of several heiresses who made much of him. But he never encouraged them.

THIS pleasant and prosperous life for the Lawrence Players continued for more than a year. Then came a tragedy which, for a time, threatened to wreck our organization. John Fare, while a week-end guest on a yacht, disappeared from the vessel in the night. His hosts believed he had been taken ill and, going upon deck for more air, had tumbled overboard.

I was the first to learn of the tragedy, but in a manner which all but snapped my reason.

My amazing adventure occurred on the very night of Fare's disappearance. I had been asleep for some hours when something aroused me with a suddenness which caused me to sit up in bed, trembling and in a cold sweat. It was some seconds before my eyes became accustomed to the darkness. Then, standing near the foot of my bed, I beheld the figure of John Fare, shadowy but still sufficiently distinct for me to recognize him instantly.

For a moment I believed I was the victim of a nightmare. I rubbed my eyes and looked again. The figure was still there. But as I gazed, trying to marshal my scattered wits, it extended its arms in a helpless gesture and appeared to be coming toward me, as though floating through the air.

Then—I don't know why, for never to that time had I believed in the supernatural—the thought came to me that I was not dreaming but was looking upon the spirit of John Fare . . . that John was dead!

And the next morning, when a telegram announcing Fare's disappearance arrived, I was positive I had seen the phantom of my old friend; that he had come to me to bid me a final good-by. However, I told no one, partly from fear of ridicule and partly because I did not wish to alarm anyone, particularly Rodney, with a declaration I could not support with anything but my word.

It was a week before Fare's body was washed ashore, and in that time Rodney was almost mad with fear and anxiety, though like some of the others, he clung to the hope that his father had been picked up by some vessel.

Once he learned the inevitable truth, young Fare broke down completely and was in a sanitarium for several months before he recovered sufficiently to be about again. Then he refused to rejoin the company, insisting it would kill him to continue in the theater where he would be constantly reminded of his father. I actually believe he would have lost his reason had he remained in America and, much as I hated to part with him, I felt it was better that he return to England.

Of course the company continued at the *Royal* but, despite the fact that actor after actor was tried out in an effort to replace the elder Fare, we failed to find his equal. However, Lawrence was a master craftsman and he managed to stage such splendid performances that we did not want for paying patronage.

The man the producer finally brought to New York in the hope of obtaining another Fare was Geoffrey Standing. This I regretted. For, though I never had played with him I was familiar with his reputation. No question he was a clever and experienced performer, for he had spent most of his forty-odd years on the stage, but the stories told of him credited him with being a man of vicious passions and an ungovernable temper, when crossed.

When he finally joined the company I disliked him more than ever. For, though he did not look his years when in make-up and was really quite handsome, his features betrayed him when he forgot the set smile he usually wore.

LAURENCE first assigned him to play Macbeth. But, though there was much to commend in his performance, somehow he did not seem to entirely suit the rôle. The manager and I both agreed he would be much better in lighter characters, so we finally decided to put on "As You Like It," with Standing cast as Orlando.

When Geoffrey learned of Lawrence's plan, he made the suggestion which, in time, brought trouble, crime and tragedy to the *Royal*. It was that the producer should at any cost get Adrienne Sheldon, who was creating a sensation in London in Shakespearian rôles. Lawrence had seen Adrienne

perform shortly before coming to America, remembered her as a very beautiful and charming young woman, and when I backed Geoffrey's suggestion, cabled her an offer which was accepted.

I had never seen the girl, but I had played with her mother for some time before her death, so both Standing and I were at the pier to meet her.

She greeted him warmly and thanked him whole-heartedly for his effort in her behalf. My acquaintanceship she welcomed as that of an old friend, saying her mother had often spoken of me and that while she remained in America she would come to me for advice and guidance. I happened to glance at Standing when she made this declaration and his black look caused me both amazement and uneasiness.

ADRIENNE'S connection with the company was a success from the outset, for she was as clever as she was beautiful, and she soon became as popular with our patrons as John Fare had been. This pleased me greatly, but I was more interested in noting the close watch Standing maintained over her. In the theater he did not obtrude to the point of annoying her. But he insisted upon accompanying her to and from the playhouse and, whenever she would consent, took her to supper after the final curtain.

Of course he was unable to prevent Adrienne and me from seeing each other in private occasionally. And though, for a time, I asked no questions and she said but little about him, I judged from remarks dropped now and then that she was not at all pleased with his attempts to monopolize her time. Finally, however, his persistence annoyed her to a point where she decided to rebel. Then she sent for me and blurted the truth.

In the days when she and Standing had played together in London, he had made love to her and had frequently asked her to marry him. But she had not loved him and refused, finally joining another company to be away from him. Then Geoffrey had come to America, and from the letters he wrote to her she judged his infatuation had cooled.

"When I reached here," she said, "I was most grateful for what he had done for me and told him so. But I soon realized his true purpose. Again he resumed his love-making, has asked me more than once to marry him and becomes so angry each time I refuse that I am actually afraid of him. I am beginning to think I had better return to Eng-

land before he makes some violent trouble."

"I know he has a terrible temper," I replied, "but I cannot believe he actually would harm you——"

"Well," she said, "let me think it out for a few days more and I may hit upon some plan which will relieve the situation. You can think, too, if you will, and I won't make any drastic move without consulting you again."

I don't know what might have happened had not Fate suddenly intervened. But from the time that fickle lady decided to take part in our game, the *Royal* was the scene of one disconcerting happening after another until the tragedy which marked the climax of the maddening adventure which revolved about Adrienne and Geoffrey.

The girl made her first move to obtain more freedom the following evening when she left the theater by the front instead of the rear door, thereby avoiding Standing. When Geoffrey learned she had eluded him he came to my room, raving and declaring I was using my influence to set Adrienne against him. I told him bluntly I had done nothing of the kind and left him, still storming.

I had immediate business with Lawrence, who was waiting for me in his office. The actor who had been playing the part of Jaques had been taken very ill during the performance, and I knew the producer intended asking me to take over the rôle. This I didn't want to do, but I was saved from all argument on the matter.

WHEN I pushed open the door, I was brought up gasping. For seated near the manager was Rodney Fare. His features had matured and in his eyes there was a tragically tired look. If anything, he had grown handsomer in the two years since I had seen him. In an instant we were in each other's arms. Then he drew me into a chair and, in response to my queries, said he had been drifting about England. But he had been lonesome for us. And finally, when the passage of time had somewhat dulled the hurt of his father's death, he had decided to return to America. He concluded by stating that he had witnessed our performance from the balcony, had been particularly struck by the beauty and ability of Adrienne, and had then come to Lawrence, who had immediately engaged him to play Jacques, a part with which he was familiar.

The producer announced he would call a

rehearsal for next afternoon, and then we headed for my quarters, which I intended Rodney should share with me. On the way he talked but little and from his expression I judged he was engaged with some thought which troubled him. However, once he had been made comfortable, he took me into his confidence.

"Listen, George, and carefully, for, as in the past, I shall hold no secrets from you. I did not tell the full truth to-night concerning why I returned here."

I was seized with a sudden spasm of fear which turned me cold all over.

"I shall be brief," he said. "Tell me, do you believe the dead ever return to this earth?"

IN a flash I thought I comprehended what he was going to tell me.

"Yes," I whispered hoarsely, "I am certain I once beheld a phantom. . . ."

"I don't want to frighten you, but I must confide in someone, for my secret is one I can no longer carry alone. I returned to America because I was told to do so by my father."

My pulses began pounding so I could not speak.

"My father appeared to me three times," Rodney went on, controlling his agitation with a supreme effort, "and each time he directed that I go to New York. The first and second times I thought I had dreamed. But the last time all doubt vanished, for he appeared to me in my room in the daytime, so close I could almost reach him. His words fairly burned themselves into my brain. 'Return to America,' he said. 'Fortune and happiness await you there. And, though you may never see me again, I shall be near, always.'"

It was some time before I regained a sufficient measure of calmness to discuss his revelation rationally. Then I assured him I believed his statement, urged him to forget his great sorrow and advised him to permit nothing to turn him from success. Perhaps, had I realized then all that was to follow my promptings, I would have tempered my suggestions with some words of caution.

It was at the rehearsal next day that Rodney met Adrienne and, as later events proved, they were attracted to each other at once. That night, after young Fare had won acclaim from an unusually large audience which flocked to the *Royal* because of the newspaper statements that he had rejoined the company, Adrienne praised his

success so that the entire company could hear and, to my amazement, suggested that he and I take her to supper to celebrate.

Standing was close to me when she did this and his features expressed such anger as to frighten me. I understood Adrienne's motive. She was determined to rid herself of Geoffrey's unwelcome attentions, and had taken this open stand in the hope of shaming him into a proper understanding of his position.

However, he had not given up yet. Next morning he went to her home, demanded that she marry him at once and, when she refused, threatened to kill any man who obtained her promise to become his wife. She confided this to me under promise not to tell young Fare.

But, though I held my peace, others warned Rodney to be on his guard against Standing. Finally he sought my advice. And then I, too, warned him. The youth's reply was what might have been expected. He and Adrienne loved each other and he would never permit Standing to interfere in their affairs. But he assured me he had not, as yet, asked her to marry him and would not do so until he was able to support her.

Outwardly Geoffrey appeared to accept the situation as one beyond his control. He even made a pretense of giving the youthful lovers free reign by avoiding them, except when upon the stage. But I didn't trust him and was on the alert for the first danger signals.

Then came a new twist to our affairs. Lawrence announced he would soon produce "The Merchant of Venice," with Rodney cast as Shylock, a rôle in which his father had won exceptional favor. At first young Fare wanted to decline the honor, but he finally changed his mind when I pointed out that success would enable him to marry Adrienne without much further delay. During the rehearsals he surpassed anything I ever had seen him do. Adrienne made an ideal Portia, Standing was splendid as Antonio, while I repeated what I often had done in the rôle of Gratiano.

THE night of the opening performance was a gala occasion in New York, and long before curtain time the *Royal* was packed to the doors.

All of us did our utmost to make the performance a success from the rise of the first curtain. That is, all but Standing. For, though he had played his rôle frequently in the past, his speeches lacked fire and there

was not the usual snap to his gestures.

After the first and second acts the audience was most enthusiastic. But it was after the third that they became wildly demonstrative and to cries of, "Bravo, Fare, bravo!" the young star was compelled to respond to repeated curtain calls. Standing, disobeying all the rules of the theater, left the stage after the first encore.

Following the final lowering of the curtain, the others crowded about Rodney, voicing congratulations. But he only laughed happily, left us chattering and hurried away toward his dressing room to change for the next act. When I followed a moment or two later I saw him, without his wig and beard, hurrying toward the rear of the stage. Deciding he was a bit shaken and was going out for a cigarette, I turned into my own quarters without speaking.

Shortly after, when I had changed my costume, I went to Rodney's room. He was not there and his dresser, who had been unable to locate him, was on the verge of collapse, for the star had a complete change to make. Fear seized me and I returned to the hallway to find Lawrence, Standing and the other performers waiting to escort my protégé to the stage. When I told them of his disappearance, they became excited to the point of panic and separated to continue the search begun by his dresser.

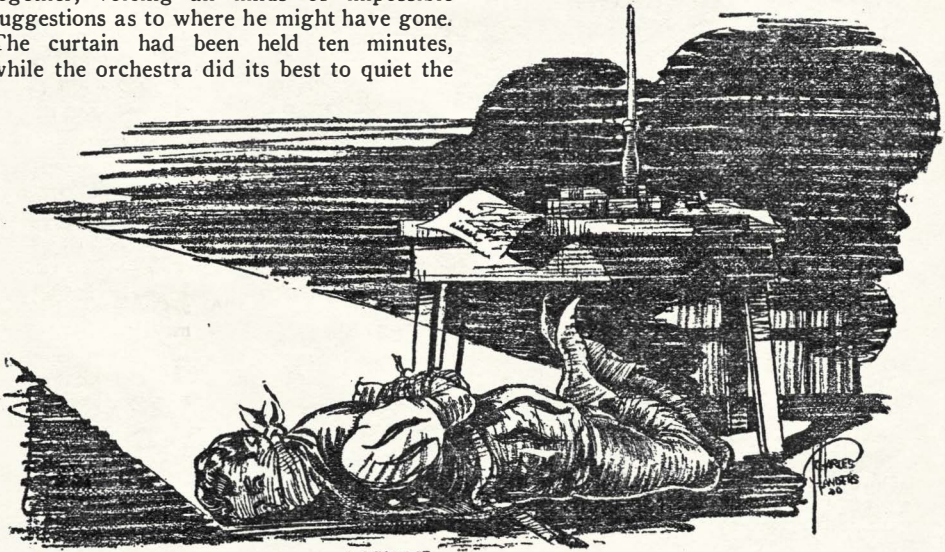
But we failed to locate him, though the watchman assured us he had not left by the stage door. Dazed and fearful we huddled together, voicing all kinds of impossible suggestions as to where he might have gone. The curtain had been held ten minutes, while the orchestra did its best to quiet the

impatience of the over-excited audience.

I don't know what would have happened had the strain been protracted another few minutes. Suddenly the shout of a stage hand caused us to turn and, coming from the rear, we saw Rodney, fully costumed. Sighs of relief went up all about me, while I wondered dazedly how he had managed to slip into his room and don his wig and beard without our seeing him.

"Let us proceed," he said in a commanding tone. Then he walked upon the stage with a majestic stride and an assurance of bearing which caused me to think of his father in his most confident mood. Lawrence immediately began herding us to our places, at the same time pleading that we fight down our nervousness. Then came the signal which silenced the orchestra and the curtain arose on the great courtroom scene.

RODNEY went ahead as if nothing out of the ordinary had happened, and as the act proceeded, I all but forgot my surroundings. Only my actor's instinct enabled me to voice my speeches at the proper times. For, despite my long experience behind the footlights, Rodney's performance thrilled and held me as though I were under a spell. I had never imagined the youth could do so well. To be sure he had shown cleverness at the rehearsals, but nothing like this. He had seen his father in the part hundreds of times, but even so it seemed incredible that he could have memorized the manner in



Lying on the floor, bound and gagged, was—Rodney!

which the elder Fare had enacted it so that he was able to duplicate, if not surpass the other's characterization!

Finally the act approached its tragic climax. Rodney no longer appeared to be acting. He was living the part. He was to the very life the baffled wretch stripped of all hope of vengeance, sniveling, groveling, moaning and shrieking at the realization he was surrounded by enemies who would extend him no mercy.

IT was then that a weird thing happened. I had become so engrossed that my brain tricked me and for some minutes I actually imagined I was watching the father and not the son. But my reason quickly asserted itself. It was Rodney whom I had been watching, but such a Rodney as I never had known. If he could continue as he was doing, he would reach acting heights never achieved by his father.

I was snapped back to the business of the moment by a thunderous outburst of applause. The act was over. The curtain was descending. The great audience arose en masse, men and women beating their hands together, cheering and shouting his name. "Bravo, Fare, bravo!"

I swung to grasp my friend's hand. Others also started toward him. But not Standing. He held his position as though paralyzed beyond movement, his features drawn and ugly, his eyes burning with malignant hate. However, Rodney moved beyond our grasp and waved us back with a deprecatory gesture as the curtain arose, then bowed repeatedly to right and left while the pandemonium beyond the footlights seemed to increase in volume.

As the drop came down he smiled, stepped aside and motioned us front to take the next call, while he hastened to the wings.

The audience, however, was disappointed at not seeing him again, and his name was shouted anew. But when we looked for him he had disappeared. So Lawrence directed that the curtain remain down, believing, like myself, that Rodney had gone to his dressing room, probably on the verge of collapse from the strain of his performance.

A crash of melody from the orchestra finally stilled the uproar in the auditorium and we made way for the stage hands who were waiting impatiently to set the stage for the final act. Sensing that something was amiss, Adrienne came to my side, her eyes wide with troubled questioning.

"Everything is all right," I said, though

I was in a chill sweat of apprehension, dreading I knew not what. "Rodney's been under a fearful strain tonight and is resting in his room. We'll take him home later, just you and I. He's lucky he doesn't have to go on again."

"I will do as you wish. But—I do so want to see him now—to tell him how wonderful he was. Why I could scarcely believe he was my Rodney. If you see him first, tell him what I have said, that he has won in a single night more than most of us achieve in a lifetime—"

"I know the greatest prize he won tonight," I interrupted with a forced smile. She nodded understandingly and turned away.

I decided to use the few minutes at my disposal to see Rodney in his dressing room, for I couldn't down the feeling that he was in some kind of trouble.

I passed Standing as I crossed the stage in the rear of the back drop and was astonished at the change in his expression. He appeared suddenly to have grown very old and haggard, and in his staring, unseeing eyes and twitching lips I believed I noted agonizing fear rather than hate.

BUT all thoughts of him were almost immediately driven from my brain. For, pushing open the door of Rodney's room which stood ajar, I found it empty. Turning back to the hallway I encountered Jason, his dresser.

"You are looking for Mr. Fare?" he questioned.

"Yes. Where is he?"

"I don't know. A few minutes back he came from the stage and passed me here without a word. He seemed much disturbed and went down the stairway. I thought he was going to the rear door to smoke, but then I recalled his disappearance after the third act and hurried after him, fearing he was ill."

"And—"

"I don't know what to say, sir. Although I saw him go down the steps, the doorman did not see him. And he insists he did not leave his post for a minute. Thank God, Mr. Fare is not needed for the last act!"

At that moment the warning bell sounded. I was needed in the wings at once. "Find him and keep him here till I return," I whispered hoarsely. Then a thought that he had met with violence at Standing's hand flashed into my muddled brain to further frighten me. But, as I staggered toward

my place, I recalled that Geoffrey had remained near me until the final curtain and afterward, I believed, had remained near the stage.

This thought eased my fear for a moment. But only for a moment. The indefinable something which kept warning me that my friend had not disappeared of his own volition, that he needed my help, would not down.

SOMEHOW I managed to blunder through the last act, recalling my lines only with the utmost effort. But distraught as I was, I was able to note that Standing was even more confused.

The final curtain was hardly down when he hurried away. I tried to overtake him, calling his name. But he paid no heed, slammed his door in my face and I caught the click of the lock. With a shrug I crossed the narrow hallway and entered Rodney's room. Jason shook his head disconsolately and made a significant gesture toward my friend's street clothing which still hung upon the wall.

At that moment I heard the voice of Lawrence, Adrienne and others, obviously coming to learn why Rodney was avoiding them. And, though my nerves were at the breaking point, I determined to prevent any further excitement in the theater that night by attempting a bold stroke.

"Lock the room and admit no one until I return," I said to Jason; then I closed the door behind me and faced the others.

"Don't be alarmed," I said, speaking to all, but clasping the cold hand of Adrienne. "Rodney was completely upset by his efforts to-night and his man tells me he went home, saying he would see no one until to-morrow."

The hand I held gave a spasmodic clutch and Adrienne looked at me with eyes which expressed doubt and fear. The others voiced expressions of regret, coupled with praise for Rodney's brilliant performance. Then all separated toward their dressing rooms, except Adrienne and Lawrence.

"Let us have the truth, George," said the latter when the others were out of ear-shot. "If Rodney had failed there would be a reason for his strange conduct tonight. But he didn't fail. He made a magnificent showing, the greatest performance I have ever seen from a man playing a great rôle for the first time." His tone had become angry. "He's no woman that he has to give way to temperament. Good heavens I've been under enough strain without this. And if he

isn't able to appear to-morrow night——" He lifted his hands high in a despairing gesture.

But although I knew nothing definite to tell him, I wasn't going to confide my wild misgivings. They listened to my argument that he probably had slipped from the stage door unnoticed and taken a cab to some hotel, where he could pass the night quietly, and agreed to leave the search to me.

As I changed into my clothing, calm reason asserted itself. Beyond question, had Rodney gone into the street in costume, he would have been questioned by some policeman and word of his whereabouts would have reached us. Therefore he must still be somewhere in the theater. My final deduction was that he had become temporarily deranged and with madman-like cunning had concealed himself in some place we had overlooked.

I waited until all was quiet outside my room, then located the watchman at the stage door. Telling him I was going to make a final search for Fare, I borrowed his lantern and directed him to remain where he was in case some message came.

Deciding to begin in the flies and the upper loft where scenery was stored, I headed across the littered space in the rear of the stage toward the stairway leading above. With the lantern flashing its tiny circle of light, I had almost reached it when I was brought up short by what seemed to be a faint groan. Trembling all over, I listened. Again I caught the sound, coming from behind the pile of scenery at my elbow.

Instantly I recalled something we had all forgotten. Behind these strips of canvas was a tiny room in which bundles of manuscripts and old costumes were stored. Striving to hold in check the dread which clutched me, I stooped and pushed my way to the hidden door. It yielded to my touch and I stepped inside and swung my light. Then I almost dropped it. For lying upon the floor, gagged and bound, was Rodney. But he was alive and his eyes were open.

WHAT happened immediately thereafter I never was able to recall fully. I know I freed him and pulled him to his feet. But I refrained from questioning him, for he slumped against my shoulder and I literally had to drag him to his dressing room. Seating him upon a trunk with his back propped against the wall, I lighted the gas. Then I noted for the first time a great lump upon his head.

"In heaven's name, Rodney, what happened to you?" I gasped.

"It was Standing. He was determined to ruin me, the crafty devil, and he's done it!"

"Standing? What do you mean?"

"I was unstrung after that third act; wanted to be alone. I went into the little room to smoke. He followed me. As I lighted the gas I heard something, turned and saw him. But before I could defend myself he knocked me unconscious. When I recovered my senses, it was too late. Why didn't he adopt some other method to vent his hate, the cur! Now I am ruined."

"NONSENSE," I interrupted, believing his mind was wandering. "You have suffered a severe shock, but matters would have been infinitely worse had he attacked you before the fourth act; before you scored a triumph that will——"

"Don't try to deceive me, George, I can't stand much more tonight. I know I am ruined with Lawrence, the critics—and Adrienne. What did he tell the audience when I failed to appear for the fourth act?"

I did not answer, for I believed his experience had temporarily shattered his reason and my thought was to get him to a hospital, without delay. But as I tried to pull him to his feet, he pushed my hands away, then wrung his own and repeated his query.

"Rodney, you must be calm," I said. "Your head has been injured and you have forgotten. You played in the fourth act!"

"Don't lie to me!" he whispered hoarsely. Then he rose to his feet, his features alight with a new understanding. "Tell me truthfully, George, who played the fourth act for me?"

"Rodney, boy, won't you understand? You played Shylock! It was after the fourth act we failed to find you."

His hands shot out and his fingers gripped me till I winced. "Look at my costume! It is the one I wore in the third act; you know that. I never changed. But everything is clear to me now. It came to me in a flash. Think, think! You remember my telling you what made me return to America. Now can't you understand—don't you realize who it was played my rôle when I was lying helpless in that little room?"

I was so bewildered by the sudden change in his manner that for a moment I failed to grasp the significance of his words. But, as their meaning filtered into my muddled brain, I leaned weakly against the wall. What he had suggested to me was too fan-

tastic, too impossible for belief. And yet—hadn't the portrayal of Shylock in the fourth act made me think for a time I was looking upon the father and not the son?

I tried to speak, to tell him I was beginning to grasp the truth. But at that moment the door opened and banged shut and Standing stood before us in street clothing, a pistol in his hand, his features distorted. I started forward, but he had me covered.

"Keep out of this, Malcolm, and I won't harm you," he snarled. "It's you I'm after," and he turned toward Rodney. "I planned to ruin you tonight by keeping you from appearing in the fourth act and chance favored me when you went to the little room. But you were too clever for me. In some way you freed yourself; set the audience wild with your damnable imitation of your father. But you shan't have Adrienne, even though you became a star in a night. For I'm going to kill you—here and now."

As he voiced the final word he raised a revolver. But he never fired. Just as I set myself for a leap, hoping to deflect his aim, the figure of John Fare—as all of us had known him in the life—seemed literally to spring from the air and stood between the would-be murderer and his son.

Standing gave a low cry, his eyes going wide with deadly fear, his lips sagging. Next the pistol slipped from his fingers, he rose stiffly upon his toes, spun about, then crashed to the floor.

Instantly my gaze shifted from the crumpled heap to the place where I had seen the apparition of John Fare. It had vanished.

But Rodney held his position erect and assured, his features radiating happiness.

"Now, George, you understand who took my place?" was all he said.

"It seems incredible," I gasped, "but I can doubt no longer. Your father's spirit has watched over you as it promised—has seen you safely through your darkest hours. But for God's sake take me out of here before I go mad!"

AFTERWARD Rodney told me I fainted and that he and the watchman worked over me for a long time before I recovered sufficiently for him to take me home in a carriage. Geoffrey was dead—from heart failure it was later ascertained.

Lawrence closed the *Royal* for a week out of respect to Standing's memory. In that time Rodney and I recovered sufficiently to resume our rôles, and six months later the youthful lovers were married.

ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS

In Prizes

Each Month for

YOUR

TRUE GHOST STORIES

Have You Ever Seen a GHOST ?

Hundreds of people, faced with that question, will answer immediately, "Yes." But there are as many, we know, who will flatly deny that there is any such thing as a ghost.

Which group is right?

That is the question upon which we hope to throw some light through the medium of this contest.

If YOU have had any experiences with the supernatural—experiences which to the best of your knowledge, are true and capable of full acceptance—let us hear about them.

We will pay **ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS EACH MONTH** for the best True Ghost Experiences submitted to this magazine.

The contest rules are simple and easily followed. Stories should not be more than five thousand or less than one thousand words in length. Manuscripts should be typed, if possible, on one side of the paper only, with the writer's name and address and the total number of words written clearly at the top of the first page.

No contributions will be returned unless accompanied by sufficient postage to carry them. And while every effort will be made to return unavailable manuscripts, we do not hold ourselves responsible for such return.

The contest opens officially on May 1st, and runs for one month.

Three prizes will be awarded each month, as follows: First Prize, Fifty Dollars; Second Prize, Thirty-five Dollars; Third Prize, Fifteen Dollars. Stories will be judged upon the basis of convincingness and human interest.

In the case of all prize-winning stories printed from this contest, the authors may stipulate whether their real names or pseudonyms be used. The names of writers winning prizes for manuscripts not published will appear in each issue of **GHOST STORIES**.

In case of ties, each tying contestant will receive the full amount of the prize tied for.

All contest material will be entered by us in the calendar month in which it is received at this office, the prize-winners to be announced in the issue of the third month following. Each monthly contest will close on the last day of the month.

Address all manuscripts to **MY OWN GHOST STORY EDITOR, 1926 Broadway, New York, N. Y.** Unless so addressed, no manuscript will be entered in the contest.

Here is your chance to prove what you believe and to make money, too!



MASTER of

Wherein a
fiend incarnate sets
a trap—
and a guileless youth
steps in

All my insouciance vanished, and I stared at her in astonishment

THEY say, Señor, that angels and demons fought for the soul of El Toroso on the night that he died. There he lay alone, in the great upper room of his *casa*, while the storm that since dusk had swept down from the eastern mountains howled in grim cadence with the shrieking which came intermittently from his death chamber.

I say that angels as well as devils strove for his spirit, for the good saints in their mercy would not condemn even such a black soul as that of El Toroso to utter perdition if by chance it still contained the smallest spark of grace. But that one was wholly bad, and there is no doubt that even the divine compassion of Our Lady herself could not avail to save him from the clutches of the Evil One, his master.

Such an end as his is too horrible to contemplate. What hideous watchers must have thronged around the bed of that sorcerer, waiting inexorably for his passing? None can tell, although Fra Bonito (may he rest in peace!) swore that with the dawn those shrieks were silenced, that at the same moment he saw a vague, monstrous, bat-like form rise from the *casa* roof and wing its way swiftly out into the gray western sky.

So passed El Toroso. Not until midday

did the young men of the village, well fortified with the *aguardiente*, summon enough courage to climb the hill to the *casa* and force its strong doors. It was my predecessor, the good abbot Emmanuel, who headed them, and he alone who was brave enough to enter that room of death.

What he saw there no man knows, but those who waited, trembling, outside the chamber said that when he came thence his face was that of one who has looked on unutterable horrors. So they put a torch to that place and there was an end of it. Nothing remains of it now but a pile of blackened ruins. You can catch a glimpse of it if you care to walk to the end of the cloister. It is an accursed spot. Even the birds do not go near it.

You will hear many tales about El Toroso, Señor—such tales as make the hair stand upright on a man's head, but it is I alone—I who have grown old, and gray as the cassock I wear—who can tell you the truth of the matter, the evil of his life and the terror of his dying.

That was nearly two-score years ago, but it is as fresh in my mind as though it had happened but yesterday. Time means little here. It brings change only to men—and it leaves unforgettable memories. This sleepy little village of Santa Ysabel has changed not at all since El Toroso invoked nameless spirits in his *casa* on the hill.

I WAS twenty years old when I first met the man—or shall I say devil? For there were strange tales whispered about his ancestry. It was popular rumor that his sire was more than human, that his mother, after the mysterious death of her doddering husband, had found solace in the embraces of demon-lovers whom she had called from the Pit by her magical arts.

However that may be, it is certain that El

DARKNESS

By

ARTHUR T.

JOLLIFFE

"Go, señor," she entreated, "—at once, I implore you!"



Toroso himself was born more than a year after the death of him whose name and title he inherited. But then the whole history of that strange family abounds in weird legend. The first of the name was exiled from Castile on being convicted of practicing certain horrible rites, and for three hundred years his descendants held lonely sway in this little province by the sea.

Secretly they lived in their thick-walled *casa*, only occasionally showing themselves in our village when it was necessary to purchase supplies, or to force unwilling peons to work on their stony fields.

And El Toroso was true to his family traditions. Only twice had he shown his face in Santa Ysabel before that memorable day on which I met him. Once as a boy of twelve he had come unannounced to the gates of this monastery, and had told of the death of his mother with as little emotion as one would use in speaking of the weather. Nor would he allow her to be buried in consecrated ground—though the abbot, pitying him, offered him that consolation—but with two laborers whom he hired he returned to his *casa*, and had a grave prepared in the garden which already harbored the bones of so many of his monstrous race.

He came to the village the second time, a man of thirty, taking the stage to La Paz, whence, it was said, he later sailed for Europe. And when he returned ten months later he brought with him a bride, a slight, blue-eyed, flaxen-haired woman, whom he packed off with little ceremony to his grim house on the height.

All who had seen her pitied her for her beauty and because of the manner of man to whom she was wedded, and this pity was heightened when the stage-driver spoke of her nervousness and fear during the journey from La Paz. Everyone predicted that she would not long survive her marriage.

AND so it proved. One night the dogs bayed dismally under a stormy moon, and the next day the peons who dared to labor in the fields adjoining the *casa* reported in subdued whispers that there was a new grave in the orchard of gnarled apple trees. *Pobrecita*—poor little one! One wonders what manner of death was hers.

I have digressed, Señor, from my subject, although that was necessary in order for me to give you an idea of what kind of

lineage El Toroso came from and what were his relations with us of Santa Ysabel. It is now that I come to my meeting with that one—a meeting that changed my whole life, that brought me to the very portals of death and hell, and because of which I have spent these many years of penance within the walls of this monastery.

You who see me now would hardly guess that my youth was so ill-spent. Left orphaned in the care of a rich and indulgent uncle, I was a shining example of the truth of the proverb, "Satan finds work for idle hands to do."

NOT that I was vicious, Señor. But sobriety and Mexican youth are ill-consorted. Ah, when one is young the taste of red wine is sweet, and the taste of red lips sweeter still!

Behold me then, Señor, one early morning forty years ago, sitting in the little plaza of our town with my back against the old bell tower, nursing a splitting head and a thick tongue, and wondering how on earth I came to be there. For my last recollections were of a squalid hill-tavern in the neighborhood, and the roaring of a drunken chorus in company with my cronies.

Even at this early hour the cobbles of the plaza danced in the sunshine, and from my cool shadow I watched them, loth to move. Besides myself there were none abroad except a sleepy donkey-driver, a merchant opening his shutters, and a lazy peon going to his work with his water skin over one shoulder.

And then Fate stalked into my life. Suddenly the sunlight was darkened; a somber, motionless statue loomed before me and called me by name. And as I gazed unsteadily up at the bulk of the man my heart gave a leap of excitement—for I recognized El Toroso.

El Toroso! Well was he named that—The Bull-like! For his black, clinging cloak which he wore close wrapped about him, despite the heat, could not conceal the giant breadth of his body, nor could his slouch hat pulled low over his face shadow the piercing luminescence of his eyes.

Would that I could paint him for you, Señor! One might capture the noble height, the straight and arrogant carriage, the turn of muscular leg, the massive shoulders, the aquiline nose, the firm, cruel lines of the mouth and jutting jaw, the heavy eyebrows continuous in one straight line above the blazing, cavernous eyes; but no picture

could hope to portray the latent power that surged from him, the iron will and resolution that stamped his features, and, above all, the subtle exhalation of conscienceless evil that clung about him. He stood with arms akimbo and legs wide apart and looked at me with a slow, ironic smile.

"You know me?" he asked. His voice fitted him. It was sonorous, measured, suggestive of a force and determination that would brook no opposition.

"Of course. Who does not?" I returned. "You are El Toroso." The bravado of wine was in me still; and in those days, even when sober, I feared neither God, man, nor devil.

His smile was that of a fallen angel. Then—

"A brave gamecock indeed! And you are not afraid of me?"

"No."

For a while he considered me, his eyes boring into mine, reading my mind as one does a book. What he saw there apparently satisfied him, for he said suddenly:

"I need a servant—no, a companion rather. You will come with me?"

The sentence was more command than question. I looked at him, and instead of fear I experienced a sort of queer exaltation, a kind of unholy kinship with his spirit.

Something in the situation was vaguely familiar. I felt as though all my days had been spent in preparation for this moment, that Fate at last had given me the opportunity which unconsciously I had long wished for. I strove to rise, but nausea swept over me. The fumes of the wine swam in my head, and I fell back on the stones.

IN a moment his hand was under my head and he was kneeling beside me. I felt the mouth of a flask pressed against my lips. My nostrils filled with a strong, fragrant, indescribable odor.

"Here . . . drink this. It will not hurt you. It will do you good."

I gulped it down. The strong liquid—I knew not what it was—coursed down my gullet like fire. A miracle! In an instant the fogs were swept away. Strength flooded through my limbs. My brain cleared. Power, elation, life, thrilled me as if by magic. I sat up and regarded my benefactor in amazement. He was on his feet, smiling.

"Ah, you like my elixir? You are better—yes? Good! And now we will talk, or

rather I will tell you why I have chosen you. Listen well, for I am one of few words."

Chosen me! Why did the phrase thrill me so with its import? What could this great, this evil, this mysterious El Toroso want with me? I knew not, but surely no neophyte heard the call of his master with more gladness than I heard mine.

"I am all ears, Señor," said I.

"Then let me be brief. I said that I had chosen you. You wonder why and for what. But you overlook the fact that you are well known to me, that I have had many opportunities to study you. . . . Ah, do not interrupt. I know that you have never met me before, that you know me only by the occasional glimpses that you have caught of me as you have passed my dwelling.

"But I know you, and many times I have been at your side, watching your folly, your mad escapades. That is not all, though. I go deep. I search the heart and soul. Thus I know you . . . as you may know me some day. *Quién sabe?* And I tell you this—that the great El Toroso is not too proud to say that he needs your help. You smile. You do not believe me. But it is true. One can do much, but two of one mind can do infinitely more.

"You know my reputation, and although these simple-minded fools exaggerate, much of what has been said about me is true. But what of it? I accomplish my ends through agencies that the world knows nothing of, and because it knows nothing of them it calls them evil. But what is good, and what is evil? In my heart, as in yours, there are both of these qualities; should not a man use the one which is the stronger? If he does not he is untrue to himself.

"So I have sought you. I have been enraged to see you wasting your time in your idiotic pleasure-seeking, when within you you have that which under proper direction will make you great. It is because of these

qualities which I see in you that I ask your aid. And in return I will give you—much!"

"Señor—" I began. But his hand restrained me.

"Wait! Your choice must not be hastened. If you follow me, do you know what it means? It means isolation, it means study and work, it means that you will be a man set apart, feared, hated and shunned, even as I am hated, feared and shunned. When you walk down the streets of cities men will avoid you, they will cross themselves as you pass, and hurry on lest you cast the evil eye upon them.

"YES; you will attain power, but your initiation will not be easy. You will find me a congenial companion, but a hard taskmaster. You shall learn to use tools that men know little of, to control forces of whose existence they do not dream. Will you tremble if I tell you that most of these partake of that quality which men call evil? Or are you strong enough to believe as I

do—that mind is more than good or evil; that the end justifies the means; that power, power, power—mighty, invincible, sweeping all before it, is the only thing worth having?"

I could only stare at him in stupefied amazement. The deep voice went on unhurriedly:

"By nightfall you must decide whether or not you will be my disciple, my companion, and—at last—my equal. It is perhaps merely a whim of mine that I have chosen you,

and if you delay I shall look farther afield. Opportunity knocks on your door; open it or keep it fast closed as you will. But know that if you do not open, it will never knock again—to you! Let me have your answer before midnight tonight. Come alone to the *casa*, and knock three times on the outer gate. I shall be waiting for you. *Adios!*"

He was gone. The skirts of his black

A Man's Best Pal

It's his dog, every time!
And that's why we can't
recommend too highly a story
that's coming next month—
the story of a miner and his
dog.

Buddies in life—and after-
ward. . . . But why go on?
Watch for Kittinger and his
dog in the June issue, on sale
May 23rd. It's a swell story!

cloak whisked around the corner, and I was left alone, gazing at the sunshine flooding the plaza, and half inclined to believe it all a dream. But, pshaw! . . . I knew it was no dream. The thrilling fire of the elixir I had drunk still burned within me. The draught had liberated something new and strange and exultant within my breast. I was a new man.

Decide, indeed! That new voice in my heart was clamoring for expression, would not be denied. If that hidden voice was evil, what cared I? I would at least be true to myself. Decide? My course had been decided for me before I was born. Welcome, then, Opportunity! I would go to my uncle's house for food and sleep, and in the evening start upon my enterprise.

MY reflections were cut short as a thick voice hailed me from across the plaza. I looked up. Enrico, my friend of last night's tavern, was making his way unsteadily toward me.

"*Hola, amigo!* Where have you been? I have searched all the village for you since you left the cantina last night. Ha, ha! Who says that my friend cannot carry his wine? *Dios!* You look as though you had not touched a drop for a week. . . ."

I looked at the fellow with contempt. Dirty, dishevelled, bleary-eyed—what could he know of the future which awaited me? I resolved to silence him.

"Enrico," I said grandly, "did you not see me talking with my friend El Toroso just now?"

"*El Toroso?*" he repeated. His face paled slightly, and he made an unsteady sign of the cross on his breast. Then with drunken quickness his mood changed, and a fatuous grin came over his face.

"El Toroso, indeed!" he said. "What would he—the devil take him!—be doing with you? I tell you what, my friend—you are drunk. I have been watching you as I walked up the plaza, and you have been sitting on this stone for goodness knows how long, looking up at nothing just like a fool, and talking to yourself. El Toroso—bah!"

"It is you who are the fool, Enrico," I cried, enraged. "And if you cannot see what I have seen it is because you are drunker than I. Look there!" And I pointed to the pavement at my feet. In the thick dust were the broad tracks that El Toroso had made with his great boots.

Enrico looked, stuttered, and went white again. He stared at me with dawning ter-

ror as I got to my feet quickly.

"But . . . but, I saw no one," he managed to articulate.

"Fool again," I returned curtly, yet all amazed at this strange occurrence. "El Toroso was here. And tonight I go to live with him in his *casa* upon the hill." I pushed by him as his mouth gaped open in stupid fright.

But as I walked rapidly down the plaza a thought struck me. Enrico was drunk. Perhaps he . . . I stopped and accosted the little shopkeeper who by this time had succeeded in taking down all his shutters.

"Señor Moreno," I said, "How long have I been lying there beneath the bell-tower?"

"All night, I expect, you young rascal," he said good-humoredly. "At any rate you were there half an hour ago when I came out to open shop."

"But have you seen no one stop and speak to me?" I asked.

"Yes, Señor—your friend Enrico Gonzales whom you left just a moment ago."

"No one else?"

"Why, no, Señor. I have been watching you out of the corner of my eye for some time and no one has come near you. But you have been acting strangely. It looked from here as though you were talking to yourself. Ha, ha! Really, I should let the wine alone for a little while if I were you."

I walked on.

That night, with my most cherished belongings in a bundle on my back, I climbed the long hill to the *casa*, and rapped three times on the great door. It swung open. Silhouetted against the blaze of light from within, the man I sought stood somber and huge.

"Enter your house," he said. "I was expecting you."

* * *

A GENIAL warmth striking across my closed eyelids roused me from deep sleep. I half opened my eyes and closed them again, dazzled by the bright gleam of morning sunlight that bathed my face, and for a while lay in that delicious state between sleeping and waking that knows not time nor place nor anything.

As I lay, making no effort to move, there came to me a strange feeling of well-being, of anticipation, as if this bright morning was to see the start of a hoped-for journey. And then by degrees memory returned to me; hazily I began to recall the experiences of yesterday, the heat waves swimming in the

plaza, a dark form and a haughty voice, a question and a resolve—my flight—the *casa*—El Toroso!

At the thought I sat up in bed, wide awake, and looked around me with interest. The long low chamber with its arabesque tapestries on the stone walls; the mahogany floor covered with the skins of animals; the massive furniture; the antique, four-poster bed in which I was reclining—all these brought back vividly to my mind last night's adventure. I recalled my admission to the *casa*, my short talk with El Toroso after the excellent dinner that stood ready in his immense library against my coming, my yawning journey up a massive flight of stairs, my retiring in this noble room and my falling asleep as soon as my head touched the pillow.

I stretched in luxurious abandon. Truly my novitiate was beginning auspiciously.

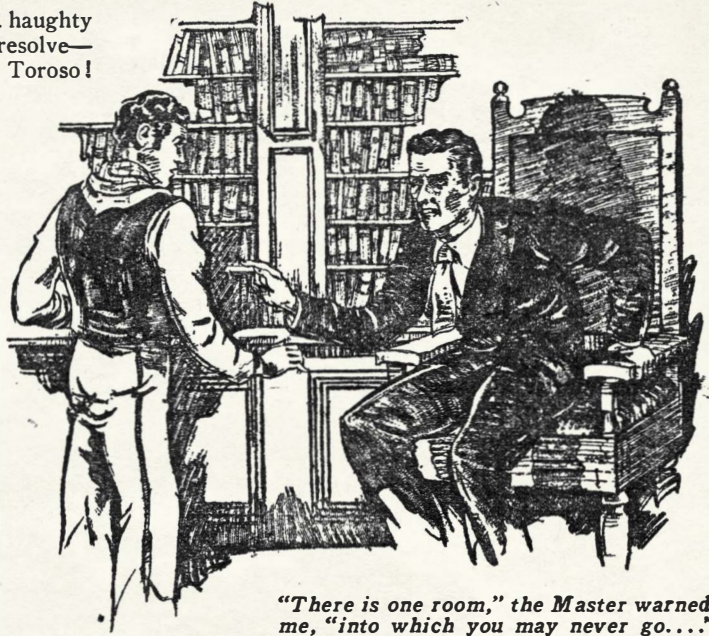
There was a light knock on the door.

"Come in, Señor," I cried.

But it was not El Toroso. In amazement I watched the door swing open, admitting one of the strangest figures I had ever seen. A little humped and distorted body, supported on a pair of skeleton bowed legs, advanced into the room, carrying in its disproportionately long arms a tray steaming with food.

The head that surmounted this surprising apparition was even more striking. It was long and narrow, the face of an elf, with little, deep-set eyes under bushy eyebrows and a receding forehead. The nose was hooked and pointed, and almost met the projecting chin over a pair of thin and twisted lips.

So ludicrous was this invader that I almost laughed aloud, but to the feeling of merriment there quickly succeeded one of astonishment. Long as I had been in Santa Ysabel I had never heard that El Toroso kept a retainer in his house, nor had anyone suspected such a thing. I was struck with the admirable secrecy with which my prospective master conducted his affairs.



"There is one room," the Master warned me, "into which you may never go..."

What other denizens inhabited this strange place?

The creature advanced toward me, set down the tray beside my bed on a little carved table, and retired to a respectful distance, standing deferentially, his eyes cast down.

"Who are you?" I asked.

Beyond a quick glance at me my strange visitor made no acknowledgement of my question.

"Who are you?" I demanded again. "Have you lost your tongue?"

"Right the first time!" boomed a voice from the doorway. Looking up I saw El Toroso. He strode into the room and for the first time I saw his magnificent form disencumbered of his eternal black mantle. He was dressed in some close-fitting brown material, resembling velvet, which set off his heroic build to great advantage.

"GOOD MORNING, Señor," I said respectfully. "What was it that you said?"

El Toroso sat down upon the foot of the bed. He was smiling, quite unceremonious.

"I said you were right," he answered. "Pedro *has* lost his tongue. He is a mute and a more excellent servant because of that. You may go, Pedro," he continued, turning to the ungainly figure. "The young man does not need you any more this morning."

With an inclination of his head toward me and his master the dwarf turned and passed silently out of the room. I watched him go with interest.

"A dumb servant," I said. "Most interesting, Señor. I thought that you were alone in the *casa*."

El Toroso smiled.

"EVEN a magician needs food and sleep, *amigo*," said he, "and for that a servant is indispensable. I have had Pedro a long time—twenty years to be exact. He looks old and wizened to you, but in reality he is only about thirty. I came across him in Southern Sonora. He was tied to a stake and a band of Apaches were practicing their interesting tortures on his body.

"When the *vaqueros* with whom I was riding had finally driven off the savages I found that the little fellow still had life in him, although his tongue had been torn out and his limbs mutilated in the fashion which you have seen. Thanks to my skill he recovered, and I have kept him ever since. He is quite devoted to me—altogether a paragon of a servant. Then again he amuses me; I have a taste for the grotesque, you know."

El Toroso was evidently doing his best to put me at my ease. This morning I could hardly believe that the smiling gentleman before me was the same man as the stern, forbidding figure who had delivered his ultimatum to me twenty-four hours ago. I turned to my tray and began pouring out coffee.

"Twenty years," I repeated. "And you have kept him hidden here all that time? You are most secretive, Señor. May I ask if there are other members of your household?"

"You have slept late," he replied, "otherwise you would have met the others at breakfast downstairs. Yes; there are three in my household; four, counting yourself. The other one . . . you shall meet her when you come down. And now go on with your breakfast. I shall wait for you in the library."

He rose to his feet and strolled out of the room, leaving me in a state of considerable curiosity. Another—a woman too! What was a woman doing in El Toroso's house? I thought of his wife, and the ugly surmises concerning her death that were current down in the village. All agog, I hurried through my meal, plunged into the cold water of my bath, and came down the stone stairway into the library where El Toroso stood fingering the musty pages of a great Latin tome.

"You have been quick," he greeted me, snapping the book shut. "And now let me make you acquainted with the fourth member of my poor house. Serena, I present to you Don Cezar Montresa of the Montresas of Santa Ysabel, now my pupil. Señor, this is my—er—daughter, Serena."

I wheeled. Risen from the recesses of a huge, straight-backed chair which up to now had concealed her effectually, was the most entrancing figure I had ever seen.

Ah, Señor, old as I am, my blood even now runs warm in my veins as I think of that first sight of her—that tall, slight form in its demure dark dress, with her pale oval face lighted by serious brown eyes, and crowned with an aureole of sunny hair, all too rare in this land of olive-skinned people. The proud blood of Castile betrayed itself in the straight carriage, the mobility of expression, the gravity of look.

I stood amazed, and then, remembering my manners, bowed low to her.

"Señorita," I said with all the calmness I could muster, "I am your servant."

And then there occurred a startling thing. The red lips began to tremble, the pride in the eyes softened to a look of appeal, and these astonishing words came from her lips:

"Señor, I beg of you to leave this house immediately."

My jaw dropped, all my insouciance vanished, and I stared at her.

"What?" I ejaculated as rudely as any boor.

"Go, Señor!" she entreated. "Leave here at once, I beg—" Before she had quite finished the great hand of El Toroso fell on her shoulder. I saw her wince, her eyes dropped, and she stood submissive, trembling with some emotion that I could not understand.

"COME, Serena," said El Toroso banteringly, although I sensed the grim displeasure beneath his lightness, "you must be strangely over-wrought this morning. Would you have Don Cezar think that we are ignorant churls, that you so welcome him? Or is it because we have so seldom been able to exercise the hospitality of this house that you have forgotten the courtesy due to an equal?"

A tremor passed through the girl's body. Slowly she raised glorious eyes to me. They were misty with unshed tears.

"I—I apologize, Señor," she whispered. "Forgive me. In my surprise I did not know what I was saying. I—greet you for my

father's sake. You are welcome here."

Scarlet, ashamed, not knowing what to say, I bowed again.

"That is better," smiled El Toroso. "And now, girl, I must ask you to leave us. Perhaps a walk in the garden will calm you somewhat. If you wish, Cezar shall join you there later, and you may explain to him the reason for your strange reception. Now—go!"

He gave her a little push, and without another word she ran hastily to the window and disappeared in the greenery of the patio outside. I stared after her. El Toroso turned to me, still smiling.

"Sit down, Cezar," he said, pushing a chair toward me and himself taking one opposite. "I have a few things to say to you before I leave you to yourself."

As I seated myself he went on: "First of all, I must apologize for Serena's conduct just now. . . . Ah, no—" as I made a deprecatory gesture—"I know that one of your birth and breeding is tolerant of the little foibles of the other sex, but this case really requires an explanation. It was a surprise to you—this meeting of such a girl in my lonely house; judge then of my daughter's surprise at seeing you. In fact, although I hardly expect you to credit it, you are the first young man she has ever met.

"Yes—" at my start of surprise—"I know you are incredulous, but it is the simple truth. You have heard of my marriage? It was one that ended unfortunately for me. Despite the evil tales that are told about the Señora's death I must ask you to believe that she died in childbirth. All the affection that I had for her has been lavished on Serena.

"On her mother's death-bed, I swore an oath that I would keep the child apart from the world until she came to the age of twenty-five, and I have religiously fulfilled that promise, educating her myself, amusing her myself, always warning her of the dangers of the world that lies beyond the walls of the *casa* garden. So far I have been successful, and Serena is, I believe, quite contented with her

secluded life. She is an accomplished horse-woman and I believe that the long rides which she takes at night, guarded by my faithful Pedro, are her greatest diversion.

"The result is that she is unsophisticated and unspoiled; really, as a certain Book says, 'unspotted by the world.' I intend to keep her thus. This, you see, accounts for her strange conduct at meeting you. And now that I have made this disclosure I have to ask you to aid me in my scheme, and refrain from filling Serena's head with tales of the glamor of the outside world which I have so carefully cloistered her from."

"Of course I will, Señor," I said impulsively.

"Good," he smiled. "I hold you to that. And now—to business."

HE settled himself comfortably in his chair.

"You understand, Cezar," he went on, "that by entering my house last night you definitely placed yourself under my guidance."

I nodded assent.

"Good again," he continued, "but what I wish you to be alive to now is the fact that by so doing you have cut yourself off from the world for a season. For six months you are never to leave the grounds of the *casa*, except on such midnight rides as you may take for exercise in company with Serena and escorted by Pedro. This I command, and it is well at the beginning to remember that my word is law to all who dwell under this roof.

"I have told you that I should be a congenial companion but a hard taskmaster. This you will find to be true. I flatter myself that in my company you will find stimulation, that I can find much to divert you during your hours of leisure. But I expect you to work and study—hard, relentlessly. There will be equal division of these two things: four hours each day you will devote to study, four hours to



experimenting with the things you have learned, and working with the tasks I shall set you.

"This program you must keep to religiously. There will be much that is wearisome to you, but I assure you that it is necessary. Obey me implicitly and you are sure of success. I have faith that your interest will not flag; I have long observed you, and my probings into your character satisfy me that I have made no mistake in taking you for a disciple."

"I SHALL do my best to satisfy you, Señor," I responded warmly.

"I believe you. Well then, a few instructions before I leave you—for I have urgent business to attend to. When you return to your room you will find there a book in manuscript which I have written myself. It is to be your guide, a synopsis of all the studies and experiments which I have outlined for you during your six months of probation. At the end of that time you will be put to a test to see if your awakened powers are strong enough to satisfy me.

"The house and its grounds are yours. In this library you will find all the books I wish you to read and many others besides. Here is the best fiction of the ages, and here too all the abstruse works on strange and forbidden subjects that have been written by masters of magical arts since the dawning of civilization.

"Here are the writings of all time, from manuscripts translated from the cuneiform writings of Babylon to the secret treatises that I received from the Satanists of Paris in this modern age. Study them well, meditate upon them, separate the esoteric from the obscure, and you have taken your first step toward that mastery which I have obtained.

"And then there are your experiments. In the laboratory which I shall presently show you, you shall perform feats of thaumaturgy that would astonish the greatest minds of the world. All this house is yours—with but one exception. There is a room opening off the laboratory into which you must never go until your time of test has ended. I do not say this to stimulate your curiosity. To go into that room without due preparation is highly dangerous; to such a one as you, undeveloped as you are, it would certainly mean death. Say then—will you obey me in this?"

"I promise, Señor," I said.

He put out his hand as we rose, and I

grasped it firmly in mine—both of mine.

"Farewell then for a little while," he said. "This day is your own. Do with it what you will."

That morning I spent in making myself acquainted with the *casa* and its vicinity. The house itself was a great square barracks of a place, enclosing a spacious patio, wherein dwarf palms, eucalyptus trees, and myriads of flowers bordered little paths that plunged into its cool interior.

The house of El Toroso had evidently seen palmier days. None of the rooms on its upper floor were occupied except a large chamber above the laboratory, that was my master's sleeping place and sanctum, and the room that had been put in order for my occupancy. All the rest were dusty and vacant.

On the ground floor there was the library that I had just quitted, and opening out of it a great stone-floored room fitted out as a laboratory. I did not linger here long. The strange furnishings and atmosphere of the place bewildered me; the room reminded me of old pictures I had seen in my uncle's house depicting the interior of an alchemist's cell. Alembics, stuffed animals, electrical apparatus, books, retorts, crucibles and a thousand objects which I could not name littered the floor and bench.

At the end of this chamber there was a low portal, guarded by an iron door fastened by immense padlocks. Beyond that lay my forbidden ground, and at the time I had small wish to venture into it. I left the place and poked my nose into a large, old-fashioned kitchen where I had a glimpse of Pedro, the dwarf, sweating over a wood fire in the wide fireplace.

And then, turning a corner in the passage, I came upon another door. Something white lay on the floor before it. I picked it up. It was a fragile lace handkerchief, and as I turned it over in my palm a sweet, elusive perfume was wafted to my nostrils. I thanked the Fates that they had sent me this little messenger to prevent my blundering into Serena's chamber.

SILENTLY I turned again, thrusting the handkerchief into my pocket, and continued my explorations on the other side of the patio. Here the atmosphere was more homelike, and I guessed that this was where most of the domestic business of the place went on, the part presided over by Serena, leaving the library and laboratory to the regime of her father.

Several hours passed in this interesting

tour of inspection, and it was not until I had explored everything thoroughly, that I bethought me of the book which El Toroso had said he had placed in my room. I decided to go and find it, and, taking a short cut, stepped out of one of the long windows near the entrance hall, and followed one of the paths across the little, lovely wilderness of the patio.

It was thus that I came upon Serena. She was sitting on a little bench under a huge eucalyptus tree that cast a grateful shade from the hot sun. Close by, a tiny fountain tinkled musically into a mossy old stone basin. The girl was absorbed in thought, and for a moment I stood in the shadow, watching the graceful curve of her cheek and the tantalizing ringlet that seemed to cling to it lovingly.

Then there was a sharp bark, and a wretched little spaniel that I had not before observed, jumped from her lap and came toward me, yapping furiously. The girl jumped up, startled. As she saw me a delightful flush crimsoned her ivory-white cheeks.

"Oh, Señor, you surprised me!" she said in a low, hurried voice. "Down, Cezar!" she called to the bristling dog, and then as I grinned, her blush deepened and she became more confused than ever. "Oh Señor . . . I beg you to forgive me. Cezar—that is your name too, is it not? A thousand pardons—I did not mean—"

I took advantage of her distress to become magnanimous. Advancing toward her I bowed and extended the handkerchief.

"Señorita," I said laughingly. "I have the honor to return to you something which I believe you have lost. As for the dog,"—with a silent malediction on the head of the noisy little brute—"I am honored that both your pet and myself have the same name. It is a happy augury."

It was easy to see that this was the first time that the girl had encountered banter from one of her own age. Timidly she took the piece of lace from my outstretched fingers.

"Thank you," she said sweetly. "Will you not be seated, Señor?"

"Willingly," I answered, taking my place beside her on the bench, "but I must decry all this formality. If Cezar is good enough

for your dog may I not hope that you will call me that, too, and dispense with the everlasting 'Señor'?"

"Yes; if you wish it, Señor—Cezar," she returned seriously. "My father has told me of you. And he has told me that I must apologize for my conduct in the library."

"There is no need for that," I said hastily, but she shook her head.

"Ah, Señor," she exclaimed, "it was my discourteous manner I must apologize for, not my words I meant them then and I mean them now. I implore you to leave this house at once and never return to it again."

"Why?" I asked uncomfortably.

"Oh, how can you ask me why? Do you not know what your presence here means?"

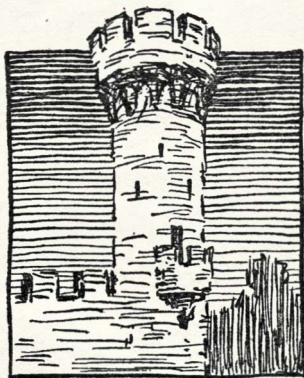
"It means that I am honored by your father's taking me as a pupil," I answered, adding boldly: "and it means too that I have had the good fortune of finding the most beautiful girl in all Mexico."

Serena made a little gesture of impatience but I noticed that the compliment had taken effect.

"I thank you, Señor," she said. "But you are pleased to joke. It is true that you have come here to be my father's pupil, but a student of what? Oh, my father—" she continued. "Do you not know that all the tales that the village tells about him are true? Yes; he boasts about them. Señor—Cezar—in this house you are in a net of evil and you will soon be caught inextricably in its toils if you do not fly."

"COME, Señorita," I smiled. "You are certainly over-wrought as your father said. I know what I am here for; I know quite well what I am about, and I am not frightened at the prospect. Really, I think you do your father an injustice. You talk of evil. With all due respect, I cannot think that a girl like you is qualified to talk of evil.

"If the things your father does are accomplished by what the world calls evil does that make them so? The world is an ignorant place, full of superstitions. Good and evil are only relative terms. As for myself, I believe that evil consists merely in the violation of one's personal code of



ethics." And, rather proud of my epigram, I leaned back airily in my seat.

But the girl jumped to her feet, and turned blazing eyes on me.

"Señor—you—you to tell me that I do not know what evil is! I tell you that this house is accursed, that it is beset by demons. My father—may heaven pity him!—is a monster who stops at nothing to reach his ends. True, he will teach you—he will teach you to become like himself, but in the end he will turn against you. He whom you call El Toroso has no love or companionship in his heart for any of God's creatures. He is inhuman. For God, for good, and for all men he has nothing but hate or cold contempt!"

I STOOD dumbfounded at this outburst. The beautiful, tragic voice went on:

"Oh, Cezar, be warned in time! You have not bound yourself to him yet. Go—go while there is still time. I cannot bear to see you or any other become as he is. I would do anything to save you from such a fate."

"Anything?" I asked. An idea was working in my brain.

"I—I—yes, Señor—anything!" she answered bravely.

"Even," said I, feeling for words that should not be too blunt, "even to leaving your father and going with me into the world outside where I come from? Even to letting me be your protector?"

For a moment she struggled with her pride. Then she raised her eyes to me.

"Yes, Señor," she whispered, "even to that."

I rose, bowed to her, passed by the fountain and halted.

"Señorita," I said, "I must think. Perhaps—who knows?—I may yet follow out your wishes."

In my room a turmoil of emotions assailed me. The discovery of Serena in the house of El Toroso had put a very different complexion on affairs. For the first time misgivings began to raise their ugly heads. I knew little, after all, of El Toroso. It was possible at least that all his overtures had been like those of the spider to the fly.

What guarantee had I that he would keep his word, that he would teach me his art, rewarded only by my poor help in his diabolical experiments? How did I know that this man had not decoyed me here in order to destroy me in some horrible essay of magic?

Was I in a trap? Cold fear chilled me for a moment. But then there was Serena. Spaniard as I was, I felt my emotions stirring at the thought of her whom I had known for barely a dozen hours, and soon my disquiet melted away into day-dreaming in which I saw myself winning this lonely girl, taking her from her seclusion and proudly exhibiting her to a dazzled world as my wife. Could I teach her to love me?

But then my hand fell upon the thick black book of instructions that El Toroso had placed in my room, and all that passionate thirst after mysterious and forbidden things rose up in me again. And only El Toroso could impart them to me. . . .

Thus I stood by the window undecided, the conflicting emotions of awakening passion, fear, and the lust of occult power making a battle ground of my mind until the door was flung open and El Toroso entered, his face as black as a thundercloud.

"So!" he cried, "even at the outset you are not proof against a pretty face. Behold my willing pupil, he who swore to overcome all obstacles in the attaining of his ambition—behold his quivering with fright because of a woman's hysterical words!"

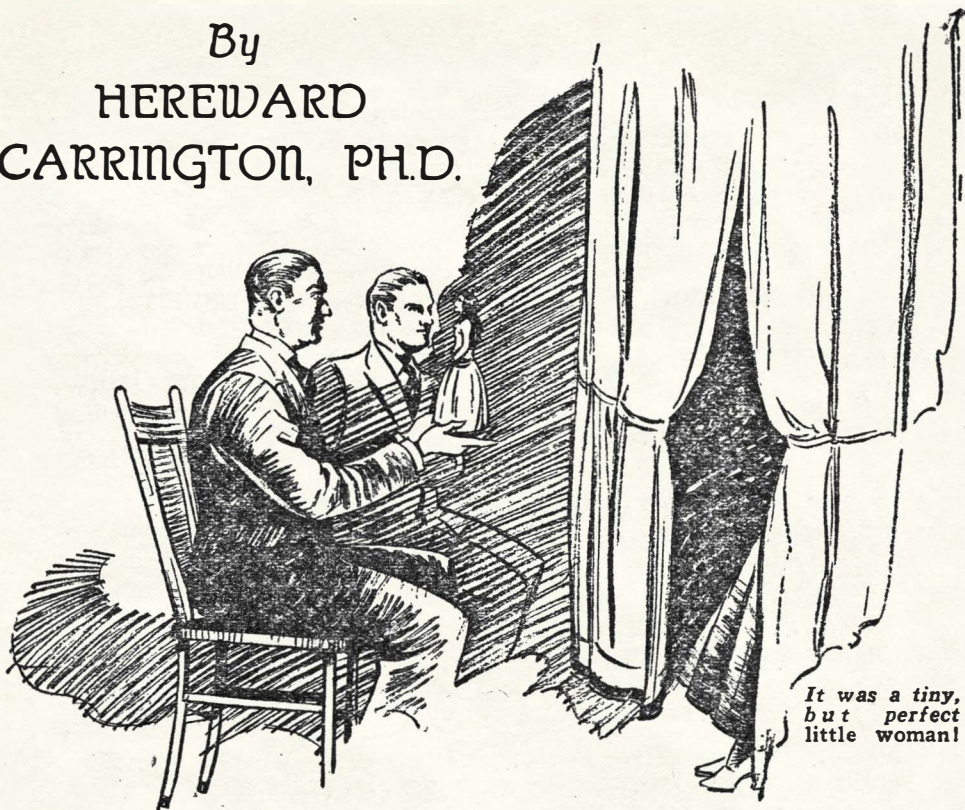
I writhed beneath the lash of his scorn.

"But Señor, what do you mean? I——"

"MEAN? I mean that what I thought a man is a vacillating nincompoop. Even had I not chanced to overhear your conversation with Serena in the garden I should have known from your scared face what was in your mind. Are you afraid of me? Do you think I am a sort of ogre who would feed on your flesh? Are you thinking that I have brought you here to sacrifice you to the Devil? Bah! Hell has no use for a craven and neither have I. Since you have doubted my words leave my house and go your way. The door is open!"

All is lost—all Don Cezar's brave dreams, all his hopes of probing the secrets of heaven, yes and of hell. And all because of a woman's plea, a trembling lip, an imploring look. But El Toroso has his highest card yet to play. Will he let the lad go—or has he some more diabolical trick in mind? That is what you'll find out in the next episode of this unique tale. Watch for it in the June issue, on sale! May 23rd!

By
HEREWARD
CARRINGTON, PH.D.



*It was a tiny,
but perfect
little woman!*

Can These Things Be?

IN the course of practically a lifetime spent in psychic investigation, I have naturally encountered all manner of remarkable supernatural—and supernormal—occurrences. But never have I come across any so startling as the two I shall narrate here. No tale in all the *Arabian Nights* surpasses them for incredibility.

These happenings are vouched for by competent observers, who have studied these subjects for years and who assert that their observations were certain and accurate. I shall not demand that my readers believe these accounts: that would be asking too much! Indeed, I can hardly credit them myself.

Nevertheless, here they are. I merely give them, as narrated to me, asking the reader to remember that scientists witnessed these phenomena—skeptical, level-headed observers, who were accustomed to see somewhat similar occurrences every day of their lives, though in a less startling degree!

The first account, in outline, is as follows:

The usual small group of researchers had gathered together on this occasion, and examined the room and the medium's "cabinet" as they always did. Nothing suspicious was detected; the séance room was in the private home of one of the investigators.

The medium, a young Pole, was then introduced and thoroughly searched. At the conclusion of the examination, he proceeded to lie down on a couch which had been provided for him, *outside* the cabinet; the curtains of the cabinet were shut; the light was lowered, and the séance began.

NOW, please observe that the medium did not enter the cabinet on this memorable evening. Throughout the séance he remained visibly on the couch, outside, where he could be *seen* by all present. No one was in the cabinet, as everyone could testify. The light in the room was a red globe, sufficient to enable the sitters to see one another and the medium; and at no time was there complete darkness. The medium did not enter the cabinet at any time, and

never did he leave his cot during the materializations, which were observed by all present.

Now, under these conditions, the following extraordinary event occurred:

A female form, shrouded in a filmy white substance, but obviously a woman, emerged from the cabinet and stepped into the room. It remained visible for some seconds; and then, in the red light, and before the eyes of all present, the figure repeatedly changed its sex, back and forth several times; becoming first a man, then a woman, then a man again, and so on, several times!

At the conclusion of this performance the form instantly vanished and dematerialized, leaving nothing visible. An examination of the cabinet showed it to be empty. The medium was asleep, entranced, on the couch where he had lain throughout the séance, visible to all.

WHAT do you think of such an extraordinary narrative?

Indeed, it is hard to say! Granting, for the sake of argument, that the manifestation was genuine on this occasion, it would certainly seem to bear out, to some extent, the "occult" teaching with regard to such phenomena. That is, that these forms are built up for the time being by powers liberated during the séance, and do not represent the "spirits of the departed" at all. We can hardly believe that the ghosts of a man and a woman could thus really merge into, and become one another in this startling manner, at will!

If, on the other hand, the phantom form on this occasion represented merely a temporary, evanescent creation, constructed somehow by the thoughts, images, wills and unknown biological powers possessed by the living persons forming the circle, shaping and moulding the plastic matter exuded from the body of the medium—then such an account as the above becomes somewhat more comprehensible.

This view of the matter is still further borne out by the second incident I have to relate—an account of a relatively recent séance, where a still more surprising and incredible thing occurred!

On this occasion, the medium was "Eva C.," justly celebrated Frenchwoman whose powers have baffled all the continental savants. During the séance, there was seen to issue from the medium's side a stream of white "plasma," which built itself up into a tiny but perfectly formed *little*

woman! She stood about eight inches high, with arms, legs, a head that moved, living eyes that looked at the sitters, and long, black hair which reached to her waist! This little creature sat upon the hands of the medium. Eva then tossed "her" into the hands of the nearest investigator, where she sat for some seconds. Then, to prove that "she" was really living, the little creature turned a complete somersault in the hands of the sitter! The little woman was then again placed in the hands of the medium, and *instantly* disappeared—leaving not a trace of herself in the room!

"Do I sleep, do I dream, or are spirits about?"

Indeed, it is high time to ask ourselves such a question!

The incredible nature of the fact should not in itself justify our immediately rejecting it on that ground alone. Certainly, such a narrative staggers our belief and our credulity. As I have said before, I do not ask my readers to believe it merely because I have reported this occurrence. I can scarcely credit it myself, though I have seen very similar materializations of larger forms—in which hands, faces and bits of bodies certainly materialized and melted within my grasp. How much more incredible must such an account be, therefore, to one who has *not* seen such things!

We do not know what is possible and what is not. It must remain for the future to decide the truth of these occurrences.

ACTUALLY, we do not know whether such forms of life are possible or not. We have very little proof of it, but on the contrary no actual *disproof*. It is possible that thousands of varied forms of life exist in our universe, of which we have no knowledge—beings with semi-material bodies and mentalities quite different from our own.

We know that such forms of life exist in the animal world, in the air and in the sea; for the mentalities and forms of birds, beasts and fishes are totally unlike our own. We know that other forms of life, differing from anything existing upon our earth today, existed at one time in the past, upon our globe, and may exist in the future. So that, it is possible—not probable, nor proved—but *possible*, that other forms of sentient life may exist upon our earth now; and that we may yet come into contact with them through the researches of psychic science, as well as through actual experiments conducted in the séance room.

The Flint Knife



*One of its hands grasped
Harry's hair, bending
his head back. . . .*

*Too late he learned what ghastly thing
lurked within that secret garden!*

By E. F. BENSON

WE were philosophizing about gardens, Harry Pershore and I, as we sat one warm, serene June evening on the lawn outside his house, and the text of our observations was the scene in which we talked. The Pershore house, at which I had arrived that afternoon, was set in the very center of a little country-town: its Georgian front looked out on to the main street, but at the back was this unsuspected acre of green lawn and flower beds, surrounded on all sides by high walls of mellow brick, over which peered the roofs and chimneys of the neighboring houses. To me, weary of the heat and roar of London, it was indescribably delightful to sit, cool and at ease, in this green place, which to the inward sense seemed soaked in some peculiar tranquillity.

Just as old houses have their "atmosphere" which has been distilled from the thoughts and the personalities of those who have inhabited them, so this garden seemed to me to have absorbed into the very soul of it the leisure of the generations whose retreat it had been. It was, I said, as if the spirit of that leisure had soaked into the darkling garden where we sat. . . .

Harry was not encouraging about these mild sentimentalities.

"Very pretty indeed," he said, "but for myself I find your theory too fanciful."

"Have it your own way," I retorted. "But I refuse to give up my theory that the inhabitants of houses create a special atmosphere in them. Walls and floors get soaked with them, and why not lawns and flower-beds?"

He rose from his seat and came to me. "I don't believe a word of it," he said. "How can wood and stone receive qualities other than their own? But your remarks, though erroneous, are *à propos*, for we shall have an opportunity of testing their truth. There'll be a new atmosphere let into this garden to-morrow, and we shall see if it has any disturbing effect. Come across the lawn with me, and I'll show you what I mean to do."

THE lawn lay on a gentle slope, and to the west, where it declined down the side of a hill, there ran one of those tall brick walls which gave the garden so delightful a privacy. Harry set a ladder against this, and bade me mount it and look over.

"You won't be peering into the privacy of any neighbor of mine," he said, so up I went and leaned my elbows on the top of the wall.

I found myself looking down into a small square plot, some eighty feet across, of wild uncultivated ground. It was thickly overgrown with weeds and wild flowers and rank seeding grasses, and though it lay on the slope of the hill, it instantly struck one that it must once have been levelled, for it was perfectly flat. All around its four sides ran high brick walls as tall as that over which I was now looking, with never a doorway or means of access in any of them: the square was completely sealed on every side. It had been grilled, of course, all day in the blaze of the sun, with not a breeze to stir the enclosed atmosphere, and now it was like leaning over a furnace, so heated was the air that met my face. Though the place lay naked to the sky, this warmth was not like that of the open; there was some indefinable taint about it, as of a room long shut up.

"But what is it?" I asked as I descended again. "Why is it entirely closed?"

"Rather an odd affair," he said. "Only last week I was grubbing about in a box of old papers which I ought long ago to have sorted out, and I came across a diary of my mother's, written in faded ink and treating of faded topics. It began more than fifty years ago, soon after my birth. I did little more than glance at it, for it seemed to be occupied with the mere trivial chronicle of the days; how she walked one day, and hunted on another, and so forth.

"There were records of the arrival of visitors who came to stay with her and my father, and of their departure; and then I came across an entry which puzzled and interested me. She spoke of the building of a

wall in the garden here, something to this effect: 'I am sure it was only wise to have had it done,' she wrote 'and though it looks rather unsightly at present, it will soon get covered with creepers.'

"That struck me as odd: I couldn't understand to what wall she referred."

We had strolled back to the house as he spoke, and had entered his sitting-room. A shabby calf-bound volume lay on the table, and he pointed to it.

"There's the book," he said. "You might like to look at it, as it is most atmospheric. But I must finish my story: By one of those odd coincidences which mean nothing, on the very day on which I found and glanced at that diary, there was one of those summer gales which detached a big shoot of a climbing rose from the wall over which you have just been looking. My gardener had already gone home when I noticed it, and so I got a ladder and secured it again.

"Naturally," he went on, "one doesn't climb up walls and peer into one's neighbor's garden and I had always supposed that the garden of the next house to mine lay behind that section. But since I was already at the top of the wall, I looked over, and there saw what you have just seen—a little square overgrown plot with high walls and no access whatever to it from any side. At that, what I had read in my mother's diary about the building of a wall occurred to me, and later I found in the same box in which I had found the book, an old plan of this house and garden. This made it quite clear that the square plot had once been part of the garden, for there was no indication on the plan of the wall that now separates it.

SO next I called in my builder to examine that section of the wall. He told me that it was certainly much later than the rest and had probably been built fifty or sixty years ago, for he found at either end of it the straight perpendicular line where it joined the older walls. The date therefore is correct, and no doubt that is the wall mentioned in my mother's diary. Finally I consulted my good friend, the Town Surveyor, and he agreed that the square plot is quite certainly part of my estate."

"So you're going to throw it in again?" I asked. "Is that the new influence you spoke of as entering your garden?"

"Yes, that's it," he said, "though I shan't demolish the wall altogether, but only cut an arched doorway through it. I shall make a little secret garden of the place; it is abso-

lutely sheltered, tall walls on every side, and it must be a wonderful sun trap. I shall have a little grass lawn in the middle of it, and a path of crazy pavement running round that, and deep flower beds against the walls. It will be a perfect gem of a place, and the builder is to begin cutting the doorway to-morrow."

I TOOK up to bed that night the diary of Harry's mother, and feeling disinclined for sleep I read in it for a considerable time. A very pleasant impression emerged of this lady who, in the early days of the seventies, had found life so absorbingly filled with small interests.

She was just eighteen when Harry, her only child was born, and his remarkable precocity soon became an almost daily entry. But then I began to pick out certain scattered sentences which somehow seemed to be connected with each other: "A lovely morning, but something rather uncomfortable about the garden" . . . "Baby cried dreadfully in the garden this morning, but he was as good as gold when Nannie took him out in his perambulator into the street" . . . "I sat on the square little lawn in the sun, but wasn't very happy. The flies were horrible. They buzzed continually round me, and yet I couldn't see them" . . . "Something drove me in from the garden this evening, such an odd feeling, as if there was something looking at me from the little square lawn, and yet there was nobody there. Dick says it is all nonsense, but it isn't quite. . . ."

Then after some interval was recorded the building of the wall, and following that came the entry which Harry had told me of, saying that she was sure it was wise. After that there was no more mention of the new wall, or of trouble in the garden. By this time I was drowsy with the deciphering of those faded lines, and I put out my light and went to sleep.

Now dreams are, of course, only a nonsensical medley of impressions lately received, or of those which in some stirring of

the subconscious mind break like bubbles on the surface of the sleeping senses, so it was no wonder that I had vague and disquieting adventures in the garden, after I had fallen asleep. I seemed to be out there alone in some cloudy twilight; the wall over which I had peered that evening was gone, and in the center of the small lawn that lay beyond was standing a tall upright figure toward which my steps were drawn.

In this veiled dimness I could not make out whether it was a man or some columnar block of stone. But the terror that began to stir in me was mingled with a great curiosity, and very stealthily I advanced toward it. It stood absolutely still, and, whether stone or flesh and blood, it seemed to be waiting.

There was the sound of innumerable flies buzzing in the air close about me, and suddenly a cloud of them descended on me, settling on my eyes and ears and nostrils—foul to the smell and loathsome to the touch. The horror of them overpowered my caution, and in a frenzy I beat them off, still keeping my eye on that silent figure.

But my movements disclosed its nature: it was no stone column that stood there, for it slowly raised an arm, and made passes and beckonings to me.

A stricture of impotence was closing in on me, but the panic of sheer nightmare broke in on my dreams, and suddenly I was sitting up in bed, panting and wet with terror. The room was peaceful and silent; the open window looking out on the garden let in an oblong of moonlight, and there by my bedside was the closed volume which no doubt had induced this unease.

NEXT day the work of cutting a door in the garden wall began, and by the afternoon we could squeeze in through the slit of aperture and examine more closely the aspect of the new plot. Thick grew the crop of weeds and grasses over it, but underneath the northerly and easterly walls there was mingled with the wild growth many degenerated descendants of cultivated plants,

Berlin's Miracle Man

Has Herr Josef Weisenberger discovered the key to the Unknown?

That is what thousands are asking — thousands who, in his presence, have beheld miracles performed.

Read the story of this fascinating man and his wondrous powers, as told exclusively by Ruprecht von Storm in the June issue of GHOST STORIES.

showing that at one time (even as the diary had indicated) there had been flower beds there. But otherwise the wild growth was rank and triumphant, and a deep digging over of the soil would be necessary before the plot could be reclaimed.

Sun trap indeed it was: the place was a stew of heat, and though on the outer lawn close by it had been pleasant enough to sit out in the unshaded blaze of the day, thanks to the steady north-easterly breeze, here no faintest stir of moving air freshened the sultriness. Coming from that ventilated warmth outside, there was something deadly and oppressive about this hot torpor; the air was stagnant as the heart of some jungle, and there hung about it a faint odor of decay like that which broods in deep woodlands. I thought, too, that I heard the murmur of large flies, but that perhaps was an imagination born of the pages which I had read last night, and which had already worked themselves up into a most vivid and unpleasant dream.

I HAD not mentioned that to Harry, nor, in returning the diary to him, had I alluded to those curious entries I had found there. I had my own reason for this, for it was clear that his mother had felt there was something queer and uncanny about the spot where we now stood, and I did not want any suggestion of that from outside to enter Harry's mind.

Evidently there was nothing further from his thoughts at present, for he was charmed with this derelict little plot.

"Marvelously sheltered," he said. "No east wind can get near it; it will pass right over it. One could grow anything here. And so perfectly private; not a roof or a chimney looks over the walls—nothing but sky. I love a secret place like this! I shall have a door fitted with a bolt inside, and no one can disturb me. As for the rest, it is all in my head, ready to be realized. Beds, deep flower beds where the old ones have been, a square of grass, and a round bed in the center. I can see it; it will turn out precisely as I want it."

Next morning, while the bricklayers were finishing the doorway, Harry got in a couple of men in addition to his gardener, and all day barrowfuls of weeds and grasses were carted away for burning. The position of the flower beds was staked out, and that of the path, but all had to be deeply dug in order to get rid of the burrowing roots of the old vegetation, before the crazy pavement

and the turfs of the lawn could be laid down. That afternoon as I lazed in the hot sun, Harry came out from his labors, hot and grimed, and beckoned to me.

"Come here!" he called, "We've hit upon an odd thing, and I don't know what it is. Bring your archeological knowledge to bear."

It was indeed rather an odd thing: a square column of black granite, some four feet high and about eighteen inches across. In shape it somewhat resembled one of those altars which are not uncommonly seen in collections of Roman remains. But this was certainly not Roman; it was of far ruder workmanship, and looked far more like some Druidical piece. Then suddenly I remembered having seen, in some Museum of early British remains, something exactly like it: it was described as an altar of sacrifice from an ancient British temple. Indeed there could be no reasonable doubt that this stone was of the same nature.

Harry was delighted with this find.

"Just what I want for the center of my flower bed in the middle of the lawn," he said. "I've got the place marked; let's haul it into position at once. I'll have a sundial on the top of it, I think."

I was strolling that evening in the garden waiting for Harry to come out. The sun had just set behind a bank of stormy red clouds in the west, and as I came opposite the yet doorless archway into the new plot, it looked exactly as if it was lit by some illumination of its own. The tall black altar now in place glowed like a lump of red-hot iron, and as I stood there in the doorway, wondering at this lurid brightness, I felt something brush by me, just touching my shoulder and left side in its passage.

THIS was startling, but there was nothing visible, and immediately I heard—this time without any doubt whatever—the sonorous hum of many flies. That certainly came from the new garden, and yet in the air there was no sign of them.

And simultaneously with both these invisible impressions, there came to me a sudden shrinking and shuddering of the spirit, as if I were in the presence of some evil and malignant power. That came and went: it lasted no longer than the soft touch of the invisible thing that had pushed by me in the doorway, or that drove of hovering flies.

Then Harry appeared, coming out of the house and calling me to our usual diversion

of piquet which we both enjoyed playing.

The laying of the lawn and the replanting of the old beds went on with great expedition: strips of turf from the downland were plastered onto the fresh-turned soil and rolled and watered, while against the walls for autumnal flowering Harry planted sunflowers, dahlias and Michaelmas daisies, and in the bed around the black column a company of well-grown young salvias.

A couple of days sufficed for this, and one evening we strolled down there in the dusk, marveling at how well the turf was taking, and how vigorous and upstanding were the young plants. . . .

There were heavy showers that night; blinks of lightning glared through my panes; distant thunder reverberated, and later, in the hot hours of the darkness, I had to get up to close the window, for the rain was spattering on the carpet within. Having shut it, I stood there for a few moments looking out on the shrouded dimness and listening to the hiss of the thick shower on the shrubs outside. And then I saw something that curiously disquieted me.

The door into the new garden had been fitted that day, but it had been left open.

The archway was thus visible from my windows, and now it stood out in the darkness as if there was light within. Then a very vivid flash zig-zagged across the sky, and I saw that in the doorway there was standing a black-draped figure.

It seemed hardly credible that a human being had got into the garden: why should a cloaked and living man be standing out there in the storm? If he was a burglar why should he be waiting out there, for the house had long been wrapped in quiet? And yet, supposing that in the morning it was found that someone had broken into the house, I should cut a very foolish figure if, having seen him before any damage was done, I went tranquilly back to bed again without investigation.

But I know that I did not really believe this was a man at all. What then was to be done? I decided that I would not wake Harry until I had carried my investigations

a little further by myself, and I started to go downstairs. But as I passed Harry's door, I saw a chink of light underneath it, then a loose board creaked under my foot, and next moment he came out.

"WHAT is it?" he said. "Did you see it too? Someone coming across the lawn from the new garden? Look here: I'll go out by the back door into the garden and you go through the dining-room. Then he'll be between us. Take a poker or a big stick with you."

I waited till he had time to get around to the back, and then, pulling aside the curtain in the dining-room, I unlocked the door that led into the garden. The rain had ceased and now through the thunder-laden canopy over-head there shone the faint light of a cloud-beleaguered moon. There in the center of the lawn stood the figure I had seen in the archway, and on the moment I heard the click of the lock of the back-door.

Was it after all only a living man who now stood within ten yards of me? Had he heard the unlocking of the two doors? At any rate he moved—and that swiftly—across the lawn toward the archway where

I had first seen him. Then I heard Harry's voice:

"Quick; we've got him now!" he cried, and while he took the path, I ran across the lawn toward the doorway through which the figure had disappeared. There was light enough to see, when we got there, that it stood in the center of the garden; it was as if the altar was one with it. Then a near and vivid flash of lightning burst from the pall overhead, and showed every corner of the high-walled plot. It was absolutely empty, but the stillness was now broken by the buzzing of innumerable flies. Then the rain began, first a few large hot drops; then the sluices of heaven were opened, and before we could regain

the house we were drenched.

Of all the men I have ever known, Harry Pershore has the profoundest disbelief in 'the unseen and the aware', and in the few minutes of talk before we turned in again, and at breakfast next morning he was still absolutely convinced that what we had both



seen was real and material, not ghostly.

"It must have been a man," he said, "because there's nothing else for it to be; and after all, the walls are not unscaleable for an active fellow. Certainly we both thought we saw him in the center of the garden. But the light was dim and confusing, and I haven't the slightest doubt that we were both staring at the altar while he was shining it up the wall. Come down and look."

We went out. The garden was still dripping with the rain of the night, but the vigorous salvias planted yesterday in the bed around the altar were scorched, as if a flame had passed over them. Withered, too, though not so sorely burned, was the new-laid grass, and the sunflowers and Michaelmas daisies were drooping and yellow of leaf. It was as if some tropic day, instead of a warm night with copious showers of rain, had passed over them; or rather as if from the altar had emanated some withering ray, completely scorching all that lay nearest to it. But all this only stiffened Harry into an angry stubbornness when I asked him what explanation he offered.

"GOOD LORD, I can't tell you," he said, "but you've got to find the connection between a man who popped over the wall and my poor withered plants. I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll bring out a ground-sheet and a rug and sleep here tonight, and we'll see if anyone comes round with a warming-pan again. No, don't be alarmed; I'm not going to ask you to keep me company. That would spoil it all, for you might somehow infect me with your nonsense. I prefer a revolver. You think there's something occult and frightful at work. So let's have it: bring it out. What's your explanation?"

"I can't explain it any more than you," I said. "But I believe there is something here in this garden, some power connected, I imagine, with that altar you found. Your mother also believed there was something queer, and had the place walled-up. You've opened it again, and set the thing free, and I expect it's vastly intensified by your having disinterred that which lay buried."

He laughed.

"I see," he said. "An instance of your theory that material objects can absorb and give out force they have derived from living folk—"

"Or years ago, from the dead," said I.

He laughed again.

"I really think we won't talk about it," he said. "I can't argue about such monstrous

nonsense. It isn't worth that much to me."

During the day I made several efforts to dissuade him from his scheme, but it was perfectly fruitless. Indeed I began myself to wonder whether I was not the prey of ridiculous imaginings; whether my mind was not reverting to the bygone beliefs and superstitions of primitive man.

A lump of stone like that altar was just a lump of stone. How could it possess properties and powers such as those which I was disposed to attribute to it? Certainly that figure which we had both seen was difficult of rational explanation; so, too, was that withering and scorching flame that had passed over the garden. But it was a flight of conjecture, wholly unsupported, to suppose that a rough-hewn block of granite had any connection with them.

My fears and forebodings receded and dwindled till they lay far back in my mind, cloaked with the darkness that common sense spread round them, and became no more than a tiny spark smouldering there. And so it came about that when, about eleven that night, Harry went forth from the house with his pillows and blanket and ground-sheet, revolver in hand, to spend the night on the new-laid lawn, I soon went up to bed.

The door from the dining-room into the garden Harry had left unlocked, for again the night was thickly over-clouded, threatening rain, and he laughingly said that though he would gaily face the fires of the powers of darkness, a downpour of common rain would certainly rout him and send him running for shelter. Throwing open my window, I leaned out into the night, and in the stillness heard Harry shut and bolt the door into the little garden.

I WENT to sleep at once, and from dreamlessness awoke suddenly to a consciousness of terror and imminent peril. Without waiting to put on a coat or slippers I ran downstairs and across the lawn toward the door in the wall.

I stopped outside it, listening and wondering why I had rushed out like that, for all was perfectly still. Then, while I stood there, I heard a voice—not Harry's—from within. I could not distinguish any words at all, and the tones of it were level, as if it were chanting some prayer, and as I listened I saw above the wall a dim red glow gradually brightening.

All of this happened in a moment, and with some swift onrush of panic I called aloud to Harry, and wrestled with the handle

of the door. But he had bolted it from within. Once more I rattled at it and shouted—and still only that chanting voice answered. Then, exerting my full strength and weight, I hurled myself against the door: it creaked, the bolt snapped and it gave way, falling inward. There met me a buffet of hot air tainted with some rank smell, and round me was the roar of hosts of flies.

Harry, stripped to the waist, was kneeling in front of the altar. By his side stood a figure robed in black; one of its hands grasped his hair, bending his head back, the other, stretched out, brandished aloft some implement. Before the stroke fell, I found my voice.

"By the power of God Almighty!" I yelled, and in the air I traced the sign of the Cross.

I HEARD the chink of something falling on the altar; the red light faded into the dusk of earliest dawn, and Harry and I were alone. He swayed and fell sideways on the grass, and without more ado I picked him up and carried him out past the shattered door

and through the archway, not knowing yet if he was alive or dead. But he breathed still, he sighed and stirred like one coming out of deep trance, and then he saw me.

"You!" he said. "But what's been happening? Why am I here? I went to sleep, and I dreamed something terrible. A priest, a sacrifice. . . . What was it?"

I never told him what had happened beyond that I had felt uneasy about him, had come out and called him, and getting no answer had burst in the door and found him lying on the grass. He knew no more than that; but for some reason he took a dislike to the altar which had pleased him so much. Somewhere in the dim recesses of his subconsciousness, I imagine, he connected it with the very terrible "dream" which he could only vaguely recall, and he said he would have it buried again: it was an ugly thing. As we looked at it next morning, talking of this, he took up from it something that lay on the top of it.

"How on earth did that get here?" he said. "It's one of those early flint knives, isn't it?"



A Jovial Ghost

A REMARKABLE story was related last year by Miss Helen Kohn, of London University, speaking before the National Laboratory of Psychical Research. Miss Kohn astounded that assemblage by her accounts of her young nephew, Damodar Ketkar, a Hindu youngster who was adopted by her sister when he was four.

This lad of ten, who lives in Poona, India, has as his inseparable companion, a ghost! Not a malignant or harmful ghost, but a jovial, kindly one—at least so it is now.

"But," said Miss Kohn, "there was a time when it seemed that this mysterious spirit was making an attempt on the boy's life.

"Things were smashed so rapidly with no human explanation possible, that Damodar had to be fed by hand and all glass objects

had to be removed from his vicinity, lest the boy be fatally harmed."

For some reason, however, the ghost's attitude changed, mysteriously, unaccountably. The first sign of the change was a gift.

"A five rupee note," Miss Kohn said, "suddenly appeared in the air in the middle of a dinner party. Nobody claimed it, so it was marked and put away in a trunk. When we looked for it, it had disappeared and was never found again."

Stranger still is the following incident reported by Miss Kohn:

"Once Damodar put out some fruit for his ghost-companion. In a few moments it had disappeared; and later the skins were flung at him from nowhere—bearing the marks of teeth!"

In which
the shrewd
detective
takes a
long chance—
and
The Terror
strikes
again!



"Now!" cried
Keene

The H O U S E of

AT three o'clock one morning Gordon Keene, ace of detectives, was aroused by his man-servant, Blake, announcing two callers—Professor Rust, Keen's old friend, and a charming girl. While he dressed to receive them, Keene wondered whether Professor Rust had come to claim a wager they had once made; that if the professor, a psychic expert, could produce a fool-proof supernatural manifestation, Keene would fall in love—a state of existence he was equally skeptical of.

But when the detective heard from Professor Rust the horrible story of Marian Dale, his lovely companion, all thoughts of the wager left him. Here was a case indeed!

Marian, it developed, dwelt in the apartment of Professor Rust, her guardian; and it was just after she had broken her engagement to an undesirable youth that weird things began to happen.

One night, as she was about to retire, a square of eerie light appeared on her bedroom wall, and silhouetted against it was the shadow of a dog—her very own Ching-

Ling-Foo! And next morning her pet was found dead outside her bedroom door.

The body was disposed of without an autopsy, however.

Another night the same luminous rectangle appeared and now it held the shadow of a highwayman. To Marian's utter horror, she was brutally attacked by this very thug next day! It was weeks before she recovered from this experience, and then she and Professor Rust exchanged rooms. But all in vain.

The uncannily light appeared again, and this time in the square there coiled a huge serpent, writhing venomously. In terror Marian had called the professor and together they had speedily come to the apartment of Gordon Keene. This last experience had been almost more than they could bear.

On hearing their story, the detective was inclined to skepticism. There could be, he assured them, no supernatural agency involved—when, from the corner of his drawing room there sprang a gigantic, loathsome cobra, hissing, writhing, fangs out, ready to strike at the helpless girl!



By
SAMRI
FRIKELL

*Instantly, from
out the hanging
draperies darted
a long riding
whip*

Sinister Shadows

"DON'T move!" cried Gordon Keene.

The detective's voice was low and tense, but in the quiet tone was the stern accent of command—an over-note of power and authority at a moment when panic filled that room.

Over Marian Dale and Professor Rust had fallen a paralysis of blanched horror and dread. White with fear, the Professor sat on the edge of his chair, like a frozen image of cataleptic terror. Marian Dale, who had been first to see the coiled snake in the far corner of the drawing room, now clung to the back of the big chair, her eyes fixed upon the serpent as if all nature and legend had reversed itself; as if the slimy creature were itself the charmer—as if, indeed, the cobra had fascinated her and brought her under the dominion of some mysterious and deadly influence.

Keene remained standing, transfixed, his eyes on the reptile, completing the tableau. After that one sentence of command, no one spoke. The sickening odor of the snake filled and dominated the atmosphere. The

sleepy, wicked eyes, under the flat head of the cobra, seemed to stare at Marian and at her alone. In its thick coils, all the body of the snake quivered and trembled; its forked tongue moved in lightning darts. Its flat head was drawn back, and the yellow spots that marked its greenish-black coat gave it a sinister and yet motley appearance—devilish and terrible.

"Don't move!" crooned Gordon Keene a second time.

SOMETHING in the lullaby intonation of the detective's voice struck a familiar vein, and raised a faint hope in Professor Rust, whose eyes had been rolling upward in his head out of sheer excess of physical fear. The detective had spoken those two words as if he were talking to a restless babe, lulling it to sleep. Perhaps the detective knew how to charm snakes! Professor Rust remembered that Keene had spent some years in India; he knew about many things of which most other people knew nothing at all—perhaps, indeed, Keene could charm this serpent.

The Professor looked curiously at the detective. If he could charm snakes—why didn't he do something? Why did he delay? The suspense was getting beyond endurance. There was the snake, ready at any moment to make its deadly spring. And all Gordon Keene had done was to caution them not to move! Second after second ticked away and not one of the three had stirred until the reptile made a sudden hissing noise and a long, lithe movement of its neck.

"Now!" cried Keene.

The result was instantaneous.

OUT of the shadows of the hanging draperies, a foot or so behind the snake, darted a long riding whip, looped at the end. With a swish, it came down over the squirming neck of the snake. There was a short, horrible, straining struggle—the strength in that monstrous reptile was prodigious, and was now fully opposed to the invisible wielder of the whip-lash twisted around its neck. With sudden ferocity, the unseen rescuer turned the loop and pushed it downward.

Then Gordon Keene sprang forward.

In one bound he leaped across the room and snatched from its hanging place upon his wall a medieval sword. Its blade was strong and keen, polished and sharpened; in the dim light it glittered and filled the room with lightning-like flashes as Keene swung it whistling through the air and brought it down with a merciless blow across the snake.

Then he stepped back from the gruesome trophy at his feet and turned his back upon it and smiled.

"We must thank our deliverer," he said, to Marian and her frightened guardian. "Come, Blake!"

In response to this imperious summons, Blake, the man-servant, stepped from behind the curtains, his composed features betraying by not the slightest twitch how heroically he had served these three.

"Thanks, Blake!" said Keene, with a smile.

"Yes—thank you, *dear* Blake!" breathed Marian, like one who speaks in her sleep.

"Thanks a million times! You were just in the nick of time!" boomed Professor Rust.

As Blake, with a stiff bow, and a slight flush on his almost immovable features, turned, Keene spoke again to his guests:

"All this is a bit messy," he said, with

a grimace. "Suppose we adjourn to the library."

They left Blake standing sentinel over the remains of the cobra as if in deep prayer to some very proper and reserved Deity all his own.

What a relief it was to escape from that drawing room—until then such a cheerful and pleasant place—into the library, where Keene's extraordinarily varied collection of books covered the walls. Both Marian and the Professor were now trembling with the after-excitement that found release in quivering hands and lips. Keene realized that the best course open to him, if he was to help these distracted people, was to plunge with eager interest into their problem.

"This preposterous mystery can be solved!" he firmly began.

The eyes they turned upon him then in their bewilderment were almost comic. If the situation had not been so serious, Keene would have been tempted to smile. There was incredulity and yet a flicker of almost superstitious hope in their worried stares.

"Solved?" croaked Professor Rust unhappily.

"Why not?" demanded Keene, his voice strong and challenging. "In fact, I don't believe it will be such a difficult problem as you imagine."

Marian breathed heavily, whether with relief, or with hopelessness it would have been impossible to surmise. But there was enough of irascibility left in Professor Rust to make him ask, in a querulous voice:

"I certainly would like to know, Keene, why you think it will be so easy!"

Keene forced a smile of confidence he was far from feeling.

"Because it is so bizarre!" he explained earnestly. "It is so weird, so grotesque, so far removed from the ordinary experiences of the criminologist that there must be a dozen, aye, perhaps a hundred clues left lying around loose—and I propose to find them."

"Please explain that!" entreated Marian in a low voice.

"If someone dropped poison in your drinking water, it might be impossible to find out the guilty one," argued Keene. "The very simplicity of the crime would make it all the more baffling. But look what has been necessary here? A cobra! Good God! How many cobras do you think are in New York? A cobra is one thing that you still can't buy at the corner drug store. Some-

body had to buy a cobra from somebody else. Right there is a point of departure.

"Also, somebody had to follow you here. Somebody had to carry the cobra here, and gain secret entrance to this apartment, still with the serpent concealed. Somebody had to release the cobra in my drawing room. All that means a great deal of managing, let me tell you. And with all the managing that such a preposterous scheme did require, there were countless opportunities for discovery. I should consider myself a poor sort of detective if I couldn't track down that cobra within a few days, even, perhaps, within a few hours!

"WE may all be dead within a few hours," shuddered Professor Rust.

"Why? Why do you say that and alarm Marian any further?" said Keene, his voice crackling with rebuke.

"My God! Suppose she sees another shadow. It didn't take long for that snake to get after us—even though we were in the safety of your rooms," brooded the Professor.

"But you were saved," Keene reminded him mildly.

"How did that ever happen?" asked Marian, with a grateful glance at the detective. "How did Blake happen to be there just in time?"

"A man who is playing with crimes and criminals all day long," explained Keene, "must be forever on the watch. I am guarded night and day. If not, I would soon cease to figure as a leading light in my profession. You see, Blake is more than just a valet; he is my confidential aide. He has been my comrade in a hundred devilish adventures, and more than once he has saved my life. He is brave, faithful and sometimes infernally stupid. He served fifteen years for forgery, and when he came out of prison, I took him over. You can never tell where Blake is—he's likely to turn up most any place, for he is always on the job."

"I owe my life to him!" cried Marian. "I am sure I did not thank him sufficiently, but later on—"

Keene went to her and squeezed her hands to reassure her. It seemed to the detective that she turned to him now—to whom else? For Professor Rust seemed in an absolute funk. He sat, hunched, depressed and staring in his chair, as if his universe had tumbled about his ears.

"This thing comes from the devil!" he murmured, over and over again.

"Not that snake," retorted Keene, lighting a cigarette and talking idly in order to give himself a chance to think. "That was an ordinary snake, except that it was unusually large. No—the more I see and hear of all this, the more I am satisfied that we are dealing with a very human agency. And, being human, it will make mistakes. And when it makes mistakes, I shall be there to take advantage of them."

He sat back now and regarded them with a pleasant and reassuring smile.

"The thing for us now to do," he said, "is to decide on our next step."

They both faced him anxiously and waited.

"Three shadows—three disasters," mused the detective. "Each one worse than the one before. By the way, Professor Rust, what was done with the carcass of Ching-Ling-Foo?"

"The dead dog? We had the authorities remove it."

"Ah, I am sorry to hear that."

"Why?"

"Because," replied Keen thoughtfully, "a post-mortem examination of the body of Ching-Ling-Foo, an autopsy on that unfortunate little animal might easily have led to the swift discovery of the guilty person. I am assuming, of course, that the little dog was poisoned. How he was poisoned, what chemical was used, are questions which, if they could be answered clearly, would throw a great deal of light on all the phenomena.

"HOWEVER, we cannot cry over past mistakes. We have a situation facing us—a condition, as one of our presidents remarked, and not a theory.

"What are we going to do?" he went on confidently. "It is now four o'clock in the morning and Miss Dale has already suffered one extremely harrowing experience. Certainly, it does seem that her own apartment is unsafe; and yet, what retreat can be safe for her if she finds herself attacked in these well-guarded quarters? It will take time to follow through all the ramifications that this case will certainly open up and, meanwhile, we cannot expose Miss Dale to any further danger. I, therefore, wish to suggest a plan; that Miss Dale telephone for her maid and ask her to come here and that she spend the night, if she will, as my guest, using my bed-chamber. Oh, it is no trouble at all, I assure you, Miss Dale; but we must be careful and I cannot be responsible

for your safety unless from now on you do exactly as I tell you."

"I think it is an excellent plan," said Professor Rust with a glance of authority, if not of actual command toward Marian Dale.

"Very well, Mr. Keene," she assented, "if you and Professor Rust think that is the best thing for me to do, I shall be happy to follow your orders. But I want to make it clear that I am not afraid to go home, nor do I think there is any danger for the rest of this evening."

GORDON KEENE did not linger to argue this point with his charming client. Instead, he clapped his hands, Oriental fashion, and from behind the curtains of the library appeared the seemingly omnipresent Blake.

No one could have guessed from looking at Blake that he had recently carried through the library the carcass of a cobra that had been found loitering in his master's drawing-room. Attentive and calm as ever, Blake stood awaiting further orders as if nothing exceptional had occurred.

"Prepare my room for Miss Dale's occupancy at once," said Keene quietly. "See that her bath is started, put a selection of *robes-de-nuit* out for her and two or three pairs of pajamas in case none of the gowns should prove acceptable. Bring three bowls of water of different warmths to Miss Dale so that she may decide on the temperature of her bath. See that supper is ready for her, with something for her maid. Be ready here when I need you."

Blake bowed and vanished.

"Do you feel up to telephoning your maid?" asked Keene, turning to Marian.

She nodded a quick affirmative and Gordon Keene went to a teakwood console table set into the bookcase and removed from its fragrant interior a portable telephone of small and delicate design. There were no wires attached to the instrument.

"Just speak into it," said Keene.

With a glance of wonder toward him, Marian took the telephone in her hands and said, "Hello". Then the phone nearly fell from her hands, so astonished was she. A voice—unmistakably Annette's—had answered her from the transmitter end of the European instrument. She gasped in astonishment.

"Your maid is on the phone," replied Gordon Keene. "Blake made the connection. Ask her to come here."

The look which Marian bestowed on the detective indicated a deep feeling of relief, as if here, in such surroundings and under the protection of a man who seemed to exercise such power, mysterious and sure, she need have nothing more to fear.

An hour later, a great change had come over the bachelor establishment of Gordon Keene.

In his Louis Quinze bed, amid lacy pillows and downy coverlets, which the miraculous Blake was able to produce instantly in this wonderful apartment, lay Marian Dale, sleeping profoundly under the influence of a mild tablet, which the detective had suggested. With Marian was Annette, a brisk, tall, bony girl, with a perpetual frown, who offered her young mistress a determined and competent devotion.

Somewhere in that elaborate suite of rooms was Blake—the quiet phlegmatic Blake—who came and went like a phantom in the strange service of his beloved master.

In the library there remained Professor Rust and Gordon Keene.

"And now," said the Professor with an unctuous smile, "now we can talk face to face and man to man. What are we going to do? I am ready for anything."

Gordon Keene stood up and extended his hand.

"We are going to say good-night, Professor," he said amiably.

"Good-night? But my dear Keene——"

"*Au revoir*," insisted Gordon Keene.

Professor Rust shrugged his shoulders in full surrender.

"What time will you want to see me in the morning?" he asked.

"I do not want to see you in the morning," replied Keene crossly. "I will let you hear from me—before or after—when I am ready!"

"Good God, man! Good-night!"

It was thus that Professor Rust took his departure.

HARDLY had the door closed behind him than Gordon Keene again clapped his hands. Blake, the impenetrable, stood before him like a genie summoned from the *Arabian Nights*.

"Well?" asked Keene.

Blake cleared his throat hesitantly.

"My dear Mr. Keene," he said, "may I make so bold as to offer a little suggestion for our future operations?"

"What is that?"

"I knew that you were drumming me a

message with your fingers on the arm of your chair, but I could not rely on the sound, sir, because the Professor's voice was so loud whenever he interrupted. I had to depend on my eyes, sir, and they are not so young as they once were and you *did* keep your hand in the shadow, so that getting the message was very difficult, sir. If I may make so bold as to criticize anything at all, sir, will you keep your hand in the light when you are sending me a message by the finger telegraph?"

Gordon Keene lit a cigarette.

"NEVER mind, Blake," he said, "perhaps the time will come some day when we won't have to do such vulgar things as to communicate secretly with each other for the investigation of a crime. Enough! What have you found out?"

"Very little, sir. I am afraid at this hour——"

"No trace of anyone hiding on the premises?"

"No, sir."

"Was it possible for Professor Rust to carry that snake in here with him when he came?"

"No, sir."

"Why not?"

"He carried no valise of any kind with him and besides, I do not believe the old gentleman is strong enough to lift that snake. It weighed almost as much as a man."

Master and servant looked at each other.

"Then how did it get in here, Blake?"

"Ah, sir! I am waiting for you to tell me that."

"You telephoned Brummel?"

"The animal dealer? Yes, sir. He was very insulting, sir."

"Insulting?"

"Yes! When I told him I had found a cobra in your apartment, he expressed himself, very profanely, sir, and allowed that the current supply of synthetic gin must be of a low order."

"That was an insult, considering the quality of my cellar," agreed Gordon Keene. "Did you make it clear to him that you were telling him only sober fact?"

"Yes, sir, I did; and he then said that he hadn't had a cobra in his shop for two years and he did not know how anybody not in the zoo business could lay their hands on a cobra in New York today. He said it was the craziest thing he had ever heard of."

Gordon Keene laughed heartily at Blake.

"But Brummel is in the zoo business himself," he mused. "Ah well, I cannot believe that anybody in New York today can walk around town with a man-sized cobra in his vest pocket without someone else knowing about it. We are bound to find out about that cobra. Such a thing couldn't be kept a secret. But at this hour in the morning—by the way, did you talk to Annette?"

"Oh yes, sir!"

"What is her last name?"

"Bouchage."

"Annette Bouchage?"

"Yes, sir."

"What is her real name?"

"I don't know, sir, but my guess is Ginsburg or O'Farrell or anything except French——"

"Accent?"

"No, sir. She speaks French like a native."

"Native of what?"

"Of Provence."

"Of the Rhone Valley? I see. Did you get anything out of her?"

"Only that she lives in the east Bronx with her mother."

"Communicative?"

"Oh no, sir! Shut up like an oyster."

"Blake——"

"Yes, sir——"

"Did you get from her what I asked for?"

"Yes, sir—without her suspecting in the least."

"Let me have it."

From his vest pocket, Blake produced a shining metal object and placed it deferentially in the palm of the detective.

Keene held it up and surveyed it through half closed eyes.

"So this is the key to Marian Dale's apartment," he said softly, "and also to Professor Rust's apartment—and perhaps also the key to the whole mystery."

HE closed his eyes and thought for a moment.

"Blake——"

"Yes, sir."

"Did you—as I telegraphed to you—put that sleeping powder in the last cup of coffee you gave Professor Rust?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then, Blake, my overcoat and hat and stick. There are still two hours more of darkness. That should be enough even for an amateur burglar like myself. Good-night, Blake."

Did Gordon Keene suspect his old friend, Professor Rust?

It would be unfair to say that he actually suspected him. But it would be untrue to say that he did not take into account that seemingly incredible possibility. Keene never allowed emotion, not even the deep-rooted and, to him, sacred feeling of friendship, to intrude into the merciless intellectual study he applied to any problem, once he embarked upon it.

HE hailed a taxi, and gave to the astonished driver the Soldiers and Sailors Monument on Riverside Drive as his destination. That point of land was but a brief distance from the apartment, facing the Hudson River, where Marian Dale lived with her unofficial guardian, Professor Rust—that mysterious set of rooms in which she had seen the three shadows which had portended for her such curious disasters.

Within a few minutes the cab was rushing the detective across Central Park, and thence through a deserted stretch of upper Broadway, into Riverside Drive. Meanwhile, Keene was busy reviewing all that he had heard and considering what he hoped to find in prowling through the apartment of Professor Rust.

It was a daring course on which he had decided and yet one not altogether without foundation.

His first reason for suspecting Professor Rust was a psychological guess; the second was much more common, more human. But both reasons, Keene knew, possessed definite evidences of possibility, if not probability. There was, to Keene, strong reason to suspect that Professor Rust was mad. Because Keene was of such an intensely practical nature, all dabbling with the occult, the weird, the supernatural, seemed a little mad anyhow. His mind was not closed to anything, but he had seen nothing to convince him, in the whole evidence of psychic phenomena, of anything except a great deal of fraud and a large residue of hysteria.

Suppose that Professor Rust were mad on the subject of the supernatural? Then might he not perhaps be trying to make his own beliefs in the occult seem to be true by the series of amazing coincidences that were taking place in his household? The fact that he had brought Marian Dale to Keene so promptly—yet not so promptly, after all, Keene then reflected—might prove something. It might show that Rust wanted to convince Keene, his favorite skeptic, by

some such spectacular and melodramatic evidence.

If Professor Rust were a lunatic, and secretly responsible for what had happened, then Marian Dale might be in grave danger. Her life might be threatened by the insanity of her guardian.

At this thought, Keene was conscious of a shudder of dread. It was an appalling consideration. All his life he had known Professor Rust as a kind and lovable old fanatic—but a fanatic, just the same. There didn't seem a bit of harm in the man. Yet Keene's experiences had taught him that the most dangerous lunatics sometimes seem the most harmless. At all events, he must take this dreadful possibility into full account. If it were true, he must follow the trail through to the full proof—and if his old friend were the final victim of his quest, no one would be sorrier than Keene.

The second possibility also was reviewed by Keene as the cab turned into the Drive and they scurried northward, past the dark river and the parked hill that runs beside it.

Marian Dale was an heiress. Not to a large fortune, but to a sizable sum of money—a sum bigger than Professor Rust had ever owned, even in his fondest dreams. Men of a much kindlier disposition than Professor Rust had succumbed to such temptations. But what could he hope to gain from such a crazy course as all these shadows? Keene smiled grimly to himself as his mind instantly formulated a possible answer to that question.

Suppose that Rust for his own criminal purposes was bent on making it appear that Marian was insane? Suppose he were actually trying to make her insane? Then his guardianship of her—and her money—could be made legally permanent—and he would have the use of her money for the rest of her life, or his! There, too, was a motive!

AT such monstrous conceptions, Keene recoiled. It was a miserable business, this career of crime solution. It made a man suspect his oldest, his dearest friends of the most awful crimes.

And there was still a third possibility! Rust might even be in love with Marian. His attitude, on the disappearance of the young man to whom she had been engaged, had been definitely hostile. Certainly, he would not be the first old man to fall in love with a pretty girl one-third his age.

This hypothesis assumed all the more fantastic garb of possible truth when Keene recollected that Rust formerly had been in love with Marian's mother.

"Here we are!" said the chauffeur.

Keene paid him, and stood on the pavement of the Drive, alone in this, the darkest hour before the dawn. Opposite him, a few hundred feet, where the Drive curved and slanted downward, was a new apartment building in one suite of which Professor Rust was sound asleep. Keene knew that the old psychic researcher would be sound asleep, for he had drugged his coffee. Also Keene, through Blake, had ascertained that there was no one else in the apartment. The way was open to him to explore those rooms from end to end—even the bed-chamber in which the Professor would be sleeping.

SUPPOSE he were discovered?

Keene again smiled grimly. He would not be discovered. In the morning, he would tell Professor Rust exactly what had been done. If he were innocent, it would not matter. The Professor was enough of a scientist to forgive any search for truth. But if Rust were really guilty, Keene felt sure that he would already have the evidence, and need not care.

The hall-boy was asleep in the corridor, stretched out prone on a wall-bench of red plush, his head covered with a newspaper. Most of the hall-boys in all the thousands of New York apartment houses are asleep at that hour; it is amazing that there are so few burglaries. Keene walked quietly across the heavily carpeted foyer to the staircase and patiently climbed, unmolested and unobserved, up twelve flights of steps, until he reached the floor of the Rust apartment.

A bit breathless, he paused, for a moment, and reached for the key. Then, as if it were his own home, he approached the door, fitted the key and turned the knob.

The door opened and a moment later he was an intruder—a burglar, safely inside the house of his friend.

He carried no flashlight, for he felt that he did not need one, so soundly would the drug make the Professor sleep. Instead, he calmly felt around the wall for the switch and turned it on. The pleasantly furnished reception hall was softly illuminated at his touch.

From this point of vantage, Keene stood and fixed the layout of the apartment in his

mind. There was a long corridor, proceeding directly from the entrance hall in which he stood, with doors to rooms opening off each side of the passage. To his immediate left was a closet door, standing partly open—and beyond this another door that was closed.

This was the first door which Keene investigated. It led down a short hallway into a kitchen, with a pantry opening off one side of it. With only a casual glance around him, Keene came back to the entrance foyer, and walked boldly down the hallway. An observer would have said that he reposed the most profound confidence in his sleeping potion.

"Put up your hands!"

At the sound of these words, spoken suddenly, boldly and angrily, Keene turned.

Professor Rust stood at one of the doors, pointing a revolver at the intruder. He was in dressing gown and slippers, but he was wide awake.

Keene laughed and put up his hands.

"Oh, my God!" barked the Professor. "So it's you, Keene. What the devil does this mean?"

"Put down the revolver!" snapped Keene.

"What are you doing—sneaking in my apartment like this?" demanded the Professor bitterly. "Do you suspect me?"

"Yes," answered Keene quietly.

The Professor lowered his revolver and put it inside the pocket of his dressing gown.

"I knew it," he said, with a shrug of his shoulders. "You do not believe in telepathy, Keene—and yet your suspicions were perfectly apparent to me. As a scientist, I cannot feel insulted. You should suspect everybody and everything. But why——"

"Why are you not asleep?" asked Keene testily.

The Professor came down the hallway, slipping along in his carpet slippers with an energetic motion, and smiling a crafty smile.

"I KNEW that coffee was drugged, too, the minute I tasted it, and I took measures to counteract its effect as soon as I left your place," he exclaimed. "If I am guilty, you have a foeman worthy of your steel, Keene. Eh?"

Keene shrugged his shoulders.

"That remains to be seen," he temporized.

While appearing to take the affair as a good joke, Keene was, nevertheless, racking his brains to find a method of meeting the situation. Professor Rust had been

shrewd enough to foresee what Keene would do and fully protect himself. What next?

"I want to search this apartment from end to end," added the detective.

The older man cackled with an ancient's relish of his own superior wisdom.

"Do so, by all means!" he invited with a mocking sweep of his right hand. "Peer into all closets. Lift all the lids, slide all the panels, pull open all the drawers, uproot all the neatly bestowed clothing—peek behind curtains and under sofas, divans, couches, beds, cupboards, highboys—or what you will. Search for secret openings behind the oil paintings. Inspect every fireplace. In fact, conduct yourself as does every actor cast in the rôle of detective in the modern, so-called Broadway mystery play. Meanwhile, begin at my bedroom—for I want to go to sleep. A *natural* sleep!" he barked, with a final imprecatory note.

"THAT suits me!" said Keene, thoroughly discomfited and trying his best to hide it. A great deal of the accustomed assurance of the detective had departed when confronted with such exasperating mockery as Professor Rust poured upon him. Face to face with the old psychic researcher, the detective was forced to feel the mad improbability, the silly disproportion of the theories he had entertained, the suspicions he had studied, while driving up in the taxicab.

Professor Rust was laughing at him.

That made matters difficult—but it did not cause Keene to change his course in the slightest. He might feel that Professor Rust was innocent, and his own entire course in the investigation might seem absurd—but he could not be sure of that until he had completed his inquiry; not, in fact, until he had actually found the guilty person and eliminated all other suspects.

Professor Rust had taunted Keene with the prediction that he would imitate a detective in a Broadway mystery play. That was an insult; nevertheless, Keene meant to begin his investigation just the way he had intended to, in spite of taunts and ridicule.

"Your bedroom first then, Professor?" he proposed, and the old psychic researcher slapped his way down the hall again until he had reached his own door, already open.

"Make yourself at home!" sneered Professor Rust.

"Come and watch me," said Keene, with just a glint of mischief in his eye.

Between them, now, the mood was extra-

ordinary—and quite detached from the routine of ordinary emotions. Here the situation was more like a tense moment in a first-rate game of chess. Keene no longer remembered the shocking melodrama of the cobra in his own apartment, nor the other tragic details told to him by Marian Dale and her guardian. His sole interest was in making the next few moves successful against the grinning old scientist—or pseudo-scientist, as Keene preferred to believe—who had already brilliantly out-thought him by several important plays.

"I shall stand on the threshold and watch you. It will be an education!" said Professor Rust dryly.

Keene glanced around him.

Bed! Bed-table and candle! Bed-lamp hanging above the pillows. Old-fashioned wardrobe of cherry wood with a panel. Full-length mirror in the door. Easy chair. And for the rest—

Books! Shelves and shelves of books! Probably three thousand volumes in this one room. Keene knew that he was in the midst of the most important library on psychical and allied subjects in the entire United States—a collection surpassed only by the books in the Library of the National Laboratory of Psychical Research in Queensberry Place, in London.

"You sleep among your books," reflected Keene. Then suddenly he was struck by a thought.

"How long have you been in this room?" he asked suddenly.

"Tonight?"

"No! No! How long have you occupied this room as your own?" asked Keene.

Professor Rust smiled.

"You are becoming forgetful, my dear Keene. Don't you remember that Marian spoke to you on this very point?"

KEENE nodded, with a rueful feeling in his heart. It was a reach in the dark—that question by which he had inconsequentially hoped to trap this diabolically watchful and astute old fellow. After Marian had seen the second shadow, her room had been changed. She had exchanged rooms with Professor Rust.

This, then, was the room, in which Marian had seen the first shadow—the silhouette of a little dog, like a specter announcing the death of her poodle.

And this, too, was the room in which she had seen the shadow of the highwayman.

Keene looked around him, his interest at

once deepened and intensified. The walls—

"On which wall did the first shadows appear?" asked Keene, without looking at Professor Rust.

"There!" said Professor Rust, pointing to the wall just opposite the bed.

It was out of the natural range of projection.

Keene's mind had never completely abandoned the problem of those shadows, even when he was wrestling with the angel of doubt with regard to his old friend, the professor. He had insisted to himself that some natural explanation for the shadows must be necessary—that they were probably accomplished by a pocket flashlight from which the images were cast upon the wall. Keene half imagined that a little piece of paper, cut in the desired shape, had been pasted on the lens of the pocket torch and this transferred to the wall. He remembered that the patch of light was always described as square, instead of round, and for this, too, his at times too-agile mind had fashioned an explanation. The guilty person had been shrewd enough to remove the suggestion of a pocket flash by making the area of light square instead of circular. All sheer surmise, of course, and yet Keene's mind had certainly been busy with the problem.

BUT now Keene could throw all that away as so much mental waste—for as a theory it was quite useless to him in the face of realities.

If anyone had stood where Professor Rust had stood now and held a flashlight, he could not have cast a direct image on the wall opposite the bed—for the wall slanted inward there and made that impossible. Moreover, the brilliance of the rays from the pocket torch would betray the holder—

Or would they?

"Professor Rust," said Keene lazily, "do you own a pocket flashlight?"

"I do not," replied the old man with malicious and unctuous dignity. "I have never owned one in my life."

"Do you think there is one on the premises—that might belong to someone—else?"

"Your search will demonstrate that," snapped the Professor. "But, unless you

have secretly introduced one into this house—what the police call planting evidence—"

"Now, Professor Rust!" protested the astounded Keene.

"Unless you have planted the evidence," insisted the Professor implacably, "there is no pocket flashlight in this apartment. But why talk such drivel? Do you, for one moment, seriously believe that Marian was deceived by an image conveyed to the wall by the simple mechanism of a pocket flashlight. My dear Keene, don't be an ass."

Keene laughed.

"It all sounds very unreasonable," he replied. "And yet—I would like to try an experiment. I have here a pocket flashlight. While I was driving up here tonight, I amused myself by cutting out a silhouette of a snake—just with a little sliver of paper. I can moisten that paper now, make it adhere for a moment to the lens—and I would like to see what happens."

"By all means!" mewed the Professor hopelessly.

Keene's pocket torch was a thin, flat affair, about the size and thickness of a cigarette case. The lens folded flat against its side; it took only a moment to adjust, and then to attach the paper to it.

"Suppose you try it and let me see," he said, with an amused smile, as he placed it in the Professor's hands.

"Willingly," replied Rust. He snapped off the lights.

The next instant there came a terrified cry, strangled in its fullness, from the throat of the professor. Invisible in the dark, he was heard struggling desperately for a moment—and then there was a thudding fall, a gasp, and silence.

Keene groped madly for the light switch. At last he found the button and pressed it. . . .

Professor Rust was already dead—stabbed to the heart and lying in a pool of his own blood at the feet of his friend.

Who had struck that sudden and murderous blow?

And where was the murderer that instant?

Gordon Keene's gaze lifted from the dead body to the open door.

What is this thing—that takes such hideous, remorseless toll of lives? Baffled as Keene is by the mysterious murder of his old friend, what will he do when he realizes his own predicament—alone in the rooms of a man stabbed to death? Meanwhile Marian Dale is left defenseless. What will her fate be? Read the next instalment of this baffling tale in the June issue of GHOST STORIES on sale May 23rd.



The DREAM WOMAN

By
WILKIE
COLLINS

*A sudden chill
ran through him
as a shadow dark-
ened the window*

"My Favorite

I HAD not been settled much more than six weeks in my country practice when I was sent for to a neighboring town, to consult with the resident medical man there on a case of very dangerous illness.

My horse had come down with me at the end of a long ride the night before, and had hurt himself, luckily, much more than he had hurt his master. Being deprived of the animal's services, I started for my destination by coach (there were no railways at that time), and I hoped to get back again, toward the afternoon, in the same way.

After the consultation was over, I went to the principal inn of the town to wait for the coach. When it came up it was full inside and out. There was no resource left me but to get home as cheaply as I could by hiring a gig. The price asked for this accommodation struck me as being so extortionate, that I determined to look out for an inn of inferior pretensions, and to see if I could not make a better bargain with a less

prosperous establishment for a conveyance.

I soon found a likely-looking house, dingy and quiet, with an old-fashioned sign, that had evidently not been repainted for many years past. The landlord, in this case, was not above making a small profit, and as soon as we came to terms he rang the yard-bell to order the gig.

"Has Robert not come back from that errand?" asked the landlord, appealing to the waiter who answered the bell.

"No, sir, he hasn't."

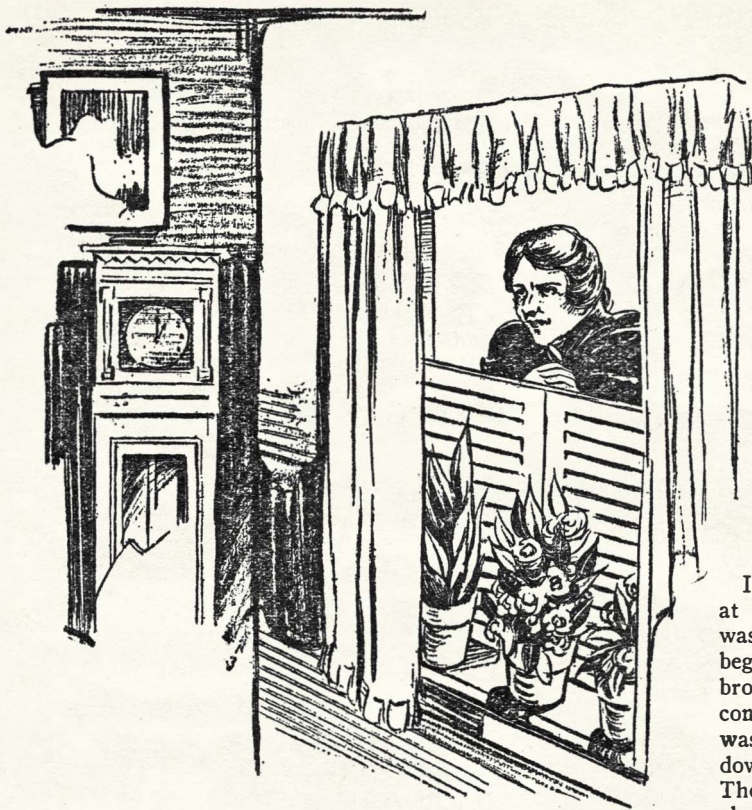
"Well, then, you must wake up Isaac."

"Wake up Isaac!" I repeated. "That sounds rather odd. Do your hostlers go to bed in the daytime?"

"This one does," said the landlord, smiling to himself in rather a strange way.

"And he dreams too," added the waiter. "I shan't forget the start it gave me the first time I heard him."

"Never you mind about that," retorted the proprietor. "You go and rouse Isaac. The gentleman's waiting for his gig."



... Rebecca
Murdoch had
come back

doors, and waiting outside himself, told me to look in.

I found myself in a two-stall stable. In one of the stalls a horse was munching his corn; in the other an old man was lying asleep on the litter.

I stooped and looked at him attentively. It was a withered, woe-begone face. The eyebrows were painfully contracted; the mouth was fast set, and drawn down at the corners. The hollow wrinkled cheeks, and the scanty grizzled hair, told their own tale of some past sorrow or suffering. He was drawing his breath convulsively when I first looked at him, and in a moment more he began to talk in his sleep.

"Wake up!" I heard him say, in a quick whisper, through his clenched teeth. "Wake

up there! Murder!"

He moved one lean arm slowly till it rested over his throat, shuddered a little, and turned on his straw. Then the arm left his throat, the hand stretched itself out, and clutched at the side toward which he had turned, as if he fancied himself to be grasping at the edge of something. I saw his lips move, and bent lower over him. He was still talking in his sleep.

"LIGHT gray eyes," he murmured, "and a droop i. the left eyelid; flaxen hair, with a gold-yellow streak in it—all right, mother—fair white arms, with a down on them—little lady's hand, with a reddish look

Ghost Story"

As Selected by

Howard Thurston

The landlord's manner and the waiter's too expressed a great deal more than either of them had said. I began to suspect that I might be on the trace of something professionally interesting to me as a medical man, and I thought I should like to look at the hostler before the waiter awakened him.

"Stop a minute," I interposed. "I have rather a fancy for seeing this man before you wake him up. I'm a doctor, and if this queer sleeping and dreaming of his comes from anything wrong in his brain, I may be able to tell you what to do with him."

"I rather think you will find his complaint past all doctoring, sir," said the landlord, "but if you would like to see him you're welcome, I'm sure."

He led the way across a yard and down a passage to the stables, opened one of the

under the finger nails. The knife—always the cursed knife—first on one side, then on the other. Aha! you she-devil, where's the knife?"

At the last word his voice rose, and he grew suddenly restless. I saw him shudder on the straw; his withered face became distorted, and he threw up both hands with a quick hysterical gasp. They struck against the bottom of the manger under which he lay, and the blow awakened him. I had just time to slip through the door and close it before his eyes were fairly open, and his senses his own again.

"DO you know anything about that man's past life?" I said to the landlord.

"Yes, sir, I know pretty well all about it," was the answer, "and an uncommonly queer story it is. Most people don't believe it, but it's true," he continued, opening the stable door again. "Poor devil! He's so worn out with his restless nights that he's dropped back into his sleep already."

"Don't wake him," I said. "I'm in no hurry for the gig. Wait till the other man comes back from his errand; and, in the meantime, suppose I have some lunch and a bottle of sherry, and suppose you come and help me to get through it?"

The heart of my host, as I had anticipated, warmed to me over his own wine. He soon became communicative on the subject of the man asleep in the stable, and little by little I drew the whole story out of him. Extravagant and incredible as the events must appear to everybody, they are related here just as I heard them and just as they happened.

Some years ago there lived in the suburbs of a large seaport town on the west coast of England a man in humble circumstances, by name Isaac Scatchard. His means of subsistence were derived from any employment that he could get as an hostler, and occasionally, when times went well with him, from temporary engagements in service as stable-helper in private houses.

Though a faithful, steady, and honest man, Isaac got on badly in his calling. His ill luck was proverbial among his neighbors. He was always missing good opportunities by no fault of his own, and always living longest in service with amiable people who were not punctual payers of wages. "Unlucky Isaac" was his nick-name in his own neighborhood, and no one could say that he did not richly deserve it.

With far more than one man's fair share of adversity to endure, Isaac had but one

consolation to support him, and that was of the dreariest and most negative kind. He had no wife and children to increase his anxieties and add to the bitterness of his various failures in life.

It might have been from mere insensibility, or it might have been from generous unwillingness to involve another in his own unlucky destiny, but the fact undoubtedly was, that he had arrived at the middle term of life without marrying, and, what is much more remarkable, without once exposing himself, from eighteen to thirty-eight, to the genial imputation of ever having had a sweetheart.

When he was out of service he lived alone with his widowed mother. Mrs. Scatchard was a woman above the average in her lowly station both as to capacity and manners. She had seen better days, as the phrase is, but she never referred to them in the presence of curious visitors; and, though perfectly polite to every one who approached her, never cultivated any intimacies among her neighbors. She contrived to provide, hardly enough, for her simple wants by doing rough work for the tailors, and always managed to keep a decent home for her son to return to whenever his ill luck drove him out helpless into the world.

One bleak autumn morning when Isaac was getting on fast toward forty and when he was, as usual, out of place through no fault of his own, he set forth from his mother's cottage on a long walk inland to a gentleman's estate where he had heard that a stable-helper was required.

It was then but two days before his birthday and Mrs. Scatchard, with her usual fondness, made him promise, before he started, that he would be back in time to keep that anniversary with her, in as festive a way as their poor means would allow. It was easy for him to comply with this request, even supposing he slept a night each way on the road.

HE was to start from home on Monday morning, and, whether he got the new place or not, he was to be back for his birthday dinner on Wednesday at two o'clock.

Arriving at his destination too late on the Monday night to make application for the stable-helper's place, he slept at the village inn, and in good time on the Tuesday morning presented himself at the gentleman's house to fill the vacant situation.

Here again his ill luck pursued him as inexorably as ever. The excellent written

testimonials to his character which he was able to produce availed him nothing. His long walk had been taken in vain; only the day before, the stable-helper's place had been given to another man.

Isaac accepted this new disappointment resignedly and as a matter of course. Naturally slow in capacity, he had the bluntness of sensibility and phlegmatic patience of disposition which frequently distinguish men with sluggishly-working mental powers. He thanked the gentleman's steward with his usual quiet civility for granting him an interview, and took his departure with no appearance of unusual depression in his face or manner.

Before starting on his homeward walk he made some inquiries at the inn, and ascertained that he might save a few miles on his return by following the new road. Furnished with full instructions, several times repeated, as to the various turnings he was to take, he set forth on his homeward journey and walked on all day with only one stop for bread and cheese.

Just as it was growing dark, the rain came on and the wind began to rise, and he found himself, to make matters worse, in a part of the country with which he was entirely unacquainted, though he knew himself to be some fifteen miles from home. The first house he found to inquire at was a lonely roadside inn, standing on the outskirts of a thick wood. Solitary as the place looked, it was welcome to a lost man who was also hungry, thirsty, footsore and wet. The landlord was civil and respectable-looking, and the price he asked for a bed was reasonable enough. Isaac therefore decided on stopping comfortably at the inn for that night.

He was constitutionally a temperate man. His supper consisted of two rashers of bacon, a slice of home-made bread and a pint of ale. He did not go to bed immediately after this moderate meal, but sat up with the landlord, talking about his bad prospects

and his long run of ill-luck, and diverging from these topics to the subjects of horse-flesh and racing.

Nothing was said either by himself, his host, or the few laborers who strayed into the tap-room, which could, in the slightest degree, excite the very small and very dull imaginative faculty which Isaac Scatchard possessed.

At a little after eleven the house was closed. Isaac went round with the landlord and held the candle while the doors and lower windows were being secured. He noticed with surprise the strength of the bolts and bars and iron-sheathed shutters.

"You see, we are rather lonely here," said the landlord. "We never have had any attempts made to break in yet, but it's always as well to be on the safe side. When nobody is sleeping here, I am the only man in the house. My wife and daughter are timid, and the servant-girl takes after her

mistress. However, there is nothing to fear.

"Another glass of ale before you turn in? No! Well, how such a sober man as you comes to be out of place is more than I can make out, for one. Here's where you're to sleep. You're our only lodger to-night, and I think you'll say my missus has done her best to make you comfortable. You're quite sure you won't have another glass of ale? Very well. Good-night."

IT was half past eleven by the clock in the passage as they went upstairs to the bedroom, the window of which looked out on the wood at the back of the house.

Isaac locked the door, set his candle on the chest of drawers, and wearily got ready for bed. The bleak autumn wind was still blowing, and the solemn, monotonous, surging moan of it in the wood was dreary and awful to hear through the night-silence.

Isaac felt strangely wakeful. He resolved, as he lay down in bed, to keep the candle



Cheiro's Favorite

And none other—will be one of
the big surprises in the June
issue.

We'd like to tell you "Cheiro's"
choice of a favorite ghost story—
but that would never do.

Look sharp—for "Cheiro"—on
May 23rd!

alight until he began to grow sleepy, for there was something unendurably depressing in the bare idea of lying awake in the darkness, listening to the dismal, ceaseless moaning of the wind in the wood.

Sleep stole on him before he was aware of it. His eyes closed, and he fell off insensibly to rest without having so much as thought of extinguishing the candle.

The first sensation of which he was conscious after sinking into slumber was a strange shivering that ran through him suddenly from head to foot, and a dreadful sinking pain at the heart, such as he had never felt before. The shivering only disturbed his slumbers, but the pain woke him instantly. In one moment he passed from a state of sleep to a state of wakefulness—his eyes wide open—his mental perceptions suddenly cleared, as if by a miracle.

THE candle had burned down nearly to the last morsel of tallow, but the top of the unsnuffed wick had just fallen off, and the light in the little room was, for the moment, fair and full.

Between the foot of the bed and the closed door there stood a woman with a knife in her hand, looking at him.

He was stricken speechless with terror, but he did not lose the preternatural clearness of his faculties, and he never took his eyes off the woman. She said not a word as they stared each other in the face, but she began to move slowly toward the left-hand side of the bed.

His eyes followed her. She was a fair, fine woman, with yellowish flaxen hair and light gray eyes, with a droop in the left eyelid. He had hardly noticed those things and fixed them on his mind before she was round at the side of the bed.

Speechless, with no expression in her face, with no noise following her footfall, she came closer and closer—stopped—and slowly raised the knife. He laid his right arm over his throat to save it but, as he saw the knife coming down, threw his hand across the bed to the right side, and jerked his body over that way just as the knife descended on the mattress within an inch of his shoulder.

His eyes fixed on her arm and hand as she slowly drew her knife out of the bed: a white, well-shaped arm, with a pretty down lying lightly over the fair skin—a delicate lady's hand, with the crowning beauty of a pink flush under and round the finger-nails.

She drew the knife out, and passed back again slowly to the foot of the bed, stopped

there for a moment looking at him, then came on—still speechless, still with no expression on the blank, beautiful face, still with no sound following the stealthy foot-falls—came on to the right side of the bed, where he now lay.

As she approached, she raised the knife again, and he drew himself away to the left side. She struck, as before, right into the mattress, with a deliberate, perpendicularly-downward action of the arm.

This time his eyes wandered from her to the knife. It was like the large clasp-knives which he had often seen laboring men use to cut their bread and bacon with. Her delicate little fingers did not conceal more than two-thirds of the handle which, he noticed, was made of buckhorn, as clean and shining as the blade.

For the second time she drew the knife out, concealed it in the wide sleeve of her gown, then stopped by the bedside, watching him. For an instant he saw her standing in that position, then the wick of the spent candle fell over into the socket. The flame diminished and the room grew dark.

A moment, or less, if possible, passed so, and then the wick flamed up, smokingly, for the last time. His eyes were still looking eagerly over the right-hand side of the bed when the final flash of light came but they discerned nothing. The fair woman with the knife was gone.

The conviction that he was alone again weakened the hold of the terror that had struck him dumb up to this time. The preternatural sharpness which the very intensity of his panic had mysteriously imparted to his faculties left them suddenly. His brain grew confused—his heart beat wildly—his ears opened, for the first time since the appearance of the woman, to a sense of the woeful, ceaseless moaning of the wind among the trees.

WITH the dreadful conviction of the reality of what he had seen still strong within him, he leaped out of bed, and screaming, "Murder! Wake up, there! wake up!" dashed headlong through the darkness to the door.

It was fast locked, exactly as he had left it on going to bed.

His cries on starting up had alarmed the house. He heard the terrified, confused exclamations of women; he saw the master of the house approaching along the passage with his burning rush-candle in one hand and his gun in the other.

“What is it?” asked the landlord, breathlessly.

Isaac could only answer in a whisper.

“A woman, with a knife in her hand,” he gasped out. “In my room—a fair, yellow-haired woman. She jabbed at me with the knife—twice.”

The landlord’s pale cheeks grew paler. He looked at Isaac eagerly by the flickering light of his candle, and his face began to get red again; his voice altered, too, as well as his complexion.

“She seems to have missed you twice,” he said.

“I dodged the knife as it came down.” Isaac went on, in the same scared whisper. “It struck the bed each time.”

The landlord took his candle into the bedroom immediately. In less than a minute he came out again into the passage in a violent passion.

“The devil fly away with you and your woman with the knife! There isn’t a mark in the bedclothes anywhere. What do you mean by coming into a man’s place and frightening his family out of their wits about a dream?”

“I’ll leave your house,” said Isaac, faintly. “Better out on the road, in rain and dark, on my road home, than back again in that room, after what I’ve seen in it. Lend me a light to get my clothes by, and tell me what I’m to pay.”

“Pay!” cried the landlord, leading the way with his light sulkily into the bedroom.

“You’ll find your score on the slate when you go downstairs. I wouldn’t have taken you in for all the money you’ve got about you if I’d known your dreaming, screeching ways beforehand. Look at the bed. Where’s the cut of a knife in it? Look at the window—is the lock bursted? Look at the door (which I heard you fasten yourself)—is it broke in? A murdering woman with a knife—in my house! You ought to be ashamed of yourself!”

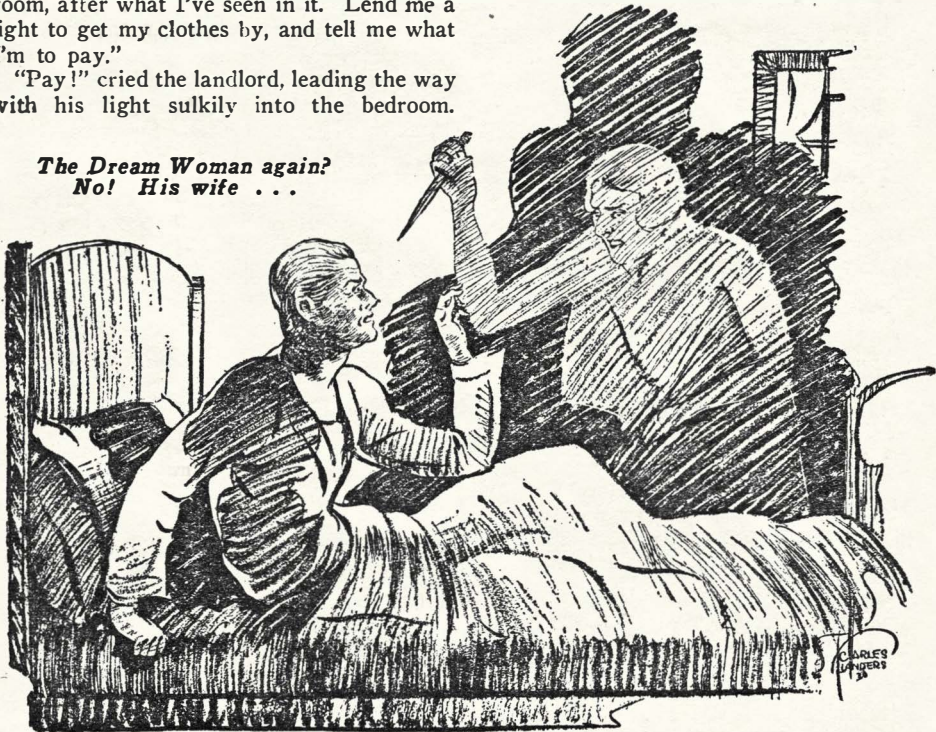
Isaac answered not a word. He huddled on his clothes, and then they went downstairs together.

“IT’S twenty minutes past two!” said the landlord, as they passed the clock. “A nice time in the morning to frighten honest people out of their wits!”

Isaac paid his bill, and the landlord let him out at the front door, asking, with a grin of contempt, as he undid the strong fastenings, whether “the murdering woman got in that way.”

They parted without a word on either side. The rain had ceased, but the night was dark, and the wind bleaker than ever. Little did the darkness, or the cold, or the uncertainty about the way home matter to Isaac. If he had been turned out into a wilderness in a

*The Dream Woman again?
No! His wife . . .*



CHARLES
LUNDERS
32

thunder-storm it would have been a relief after what he had suffered in the bedroom of the inn.

What was the fair woman with the knife? The creature of a dream—or that other creature from the unknown world called among men by the name of ghost? He could make nothing of the mystery—had made nothing of it, even when it was mid-day on Wednesday, and when he stood, at last, after many times missing his road, once more on the doorstep of home.

HIS mother came out eagerly to receive him. His face told her in a moment that something was wrong.

"I've lost the place, but that's my luck. I dreamed an ill dream last night, mother—or maybe I saw a ghost. Take it either way, it scared me out of my senses, and I'm not myself again yet."

"Isaac, your face frightens me. Come in to the fire—come in, and tell mother all about it."

He was as anxious to tell as she was to hear. It had been his hope, all the way home, that his mother, with her quicker capacity and superior knowledge, might be able to throw some light on the mystery which he could not clear up for himself. His memory of the dream was still mechanically vivid, though his thoughts were entirely confused by it.

His mother's face grew paler and paler as he went on. She never interrupted him by so much as a single word; but when he had finished, she moved her chair close to his, put her arm round his neck, and said to him:

"Isaac, you dreamed your ill dream on this Wednesday morning. What time was it when you saw the fair woman with the knife in her hand?"

Isaac reflected on what the landlord had said when they had passed by the clock on his leaving the inn. He allowed as nearly as possible for the time that must have elapsed between the unlocking of his bedroom door and the paying of his bill just before going away, and answered:

"Somewhere about two o'clock in the morning."

His mother suddenly quitted her hold of his neck, and struck her hands together with a gesture of despair.

"This Wednesday is your birthday, Isaac, and two o'clock in the morning was the time when you were born."

Isaac's capacities were not quick enough

to catch the inflection of his mother's superstitious dread. He was amazed, and a little startled, also, when she suddenly rose from her chair, opened her old writing-desk, took pen, ink and paper and then said to him:

"Your memory is but a poor one Isaac, and now that I'm an old woman, mine's not much better. I want all about this dream of yours to be as well known to both of us, years hence, as it is now. Tell me over again all you told me a minute ago, when you spoke of what the woman with the knife looked like."

Isaac obeyed, and marveled much as he saw his mother carefully set down on paper the very words that he was saying.

"Light gray eyes," she wrote, as they came to the descriptive part, "with a droop in the left eyelid; flaxen hair, with a gold-yellow streak in it; white arms, with a down upon them; little lady's hand, with a reddish look about the finger nails; clasp-knife with a buckhorn handle, that seemed as good as new." To these particulars Mrs. Scatchard added the year, month, day of the week, and time in the morning when the woman of the dream appeared to her son. She then locked up the paper carefully in her writing-desk.

Neither on that day nor on any day after could her son induce her to return to the matter of the dream. She obstinately kept her thoughts about it to herself, and even refused to refer again to the paper in her writing-desk.

Ere long Isaac got weary of attempting to make her break her resolute silence, and time, which sooner or later wears out all things, gradually wore out the impression produced on him by the dream. He began by thinking of it carelessly, and he ended by not thinking of it at all.

THE result was the more easily brought about by the advent of some important changes for the better in his prospects which commenced not long after his terrible night's experience at the inn. He reaped at last the reward of his long and patient suffering under adversity by getting an excellent place, keeping it for seven years, and leaving it, on the death of his master, not only with an excellent character, but also with a comfortable annuity bequeathed to him as a reward for saving his mistress' life in a carriage accident.

Thus it happened that Isaac Scatchard returned to his old mother, seven years after the time of the dream at the inn, with an annual sum of money at his disposal suffi-

cient to keep them both in ease and independence for the rest of their lives.

The mother, whose health had been bad of late years, profited so much by the care bestowed on her and by freedom from money anxieties, that when Isaac's birthday came round she was able to sit up comfortably at table and dine with him.

On that day, as the evening drew on, Mrs. Scatchard discovered that a bottle of tonic medicine which she was accustomed to take, and in which she had fancied that a dose or more was still left, happened to be empty. Isaac immediately volunteered to go to the druggist's and get it filled again. It was as rainy and bleak an autumn night as on the memorable past occasion when he had lost his way and slept at the road-side inn.

ON going into the drug store he was passed hurriedly by a poorly-dressed woman coming out of it. The glimpse he had of her face struck him, and he looked back after her as she descended the door-steps.

"You're noticing that woman?" said the druggist's apprentice behind the counter. "It's my opinion there's something wrong with her. She's been asking for laudanum to put to a bad tooth. Master's out for half an hour, and I told her I wasn't allowed to sell poison to strangers in his absence. She laughed in a queer way, and said she would come back in half an hour. If she expects master to serve her, I think she'll be disappointed. It's a case of suicide, sir, if ever there was one."

These words added immeasurably to the sudden interest in the woman which Isaac had felt at the first sight of her face. After he had got the medicine-bottle filled, he looked about anxiously for her as soon as he was out in the street. She was walking slowly up and down on the opposite side of the road. With his heart, very much to his own surprise, beating fast, Isaac crossed over and spoke to her.

He asked if she was in any distress. She pointed to her torn shawl, her scanty dress, her crushed hat; then moved under a lamp so as to let the light fall on her stern, pale, but still most beautiful face.

"I look like a comfortable, happy woman, don't I?" she said, with a bitter laugh.

She spoke with a purity of intonation which Isaac had never heard before from other than ladies' lips. Her slightest actions seemed to have the easy, negligent grace of a thoroughbred woman. Her skin, for all

its poverty-stricken paleness, was as delicate as if her life had been passed in the enjoyment of every social comfort that wealth can purchase. Even her small, finely-shaped hands, gloveless as they were, had not lost their whiteness.

Little by little, in answer to his questions, the sad story of the woman came out. There is no need to relate it here; it is told over and over again in police reports and paragraphs about attempted suicides.

"My name is Rebecca Murdoch," said the woman, as she ended. "I have ninepence left, and I thought of spending it at the druggist's across the way in securing a passage to the other world. Whatever it is, it can't be worse to me than this, so why should I stay here?"

Besides the natural compassion and sadness moved in his heart by what he heard, Isaac felt within him some mysterious influence at work all the time the woman was speaking which utterly confused his ideas and almost deprived him of his powers of speech. All that he could say in answer to her last reckless words was that he would prevent her from attempting her own life, if he followed her about all night to do it. His rough, trembling earnestness seemed to impress her.

"I won't occasion you that trouble," she answered, when he repeated his threat. "You have given me a fancy for living by speaking kindly to me. No need for the mockery of protestations and promises. You may believe me without them. Come to Fuller's Meadow to-morrow at twelve, and you will find me alive, to answer for myself. . . . No!—no money. My ninepence will do to get me as good a night's lodging as I want."

She nodded and left him. He made no attempt to follow—he felt no suspicion that she was deceiving him.

"IT'S strange, but I can't help believing her," he said to himself, and walked away, bewildered, toward home.

On entering the house his mind was still so completely absorbed by its new subject of interest that he took no notice of what his mother was doing when he came in with the bottle of medicine. She had opened her old writing-desk in his absence, and was now reading attentively a paper that lay inside it. On every birthday of Isaac's since she had written down the particulars of his dream from his own lips, she had been accustomed to read that same paper, and ponder over it in private.

The next day he went to Fuller's Meadow. He had done only right in believing her so implicitly. She was there, punctual to a minute, to answer for herself. The last faint defenses in Isaac's heart against the fascination which a word or look from her began inscrutably to exercise over him sank down and vanished before her forever on that memorable morning.

When a man, previously insensible to the influences of women, forms an attachment in middle life, the instances are rare indeed, in which he is found capable of freeing himself from the tyranny of the new ruling passion.

THE charm of being spoken to familiarly, fondly, and gratefully by a woman whose language and manners still retained enough of their early refinement to hint at the high social station that she had lost, would have been a dangerous luxury to a man of Isaac's rank at the age of twenty. But it was far more than that—it was certain ruin to him—now that his heart was opening unworthily to a new influence at that middle time of life when strong feelings of all kinds, once implanted, strike root most stubbornly in a man's moral nature.

A few more stolen interviews after that first morning in Fuller's Meadow completed his infatuation. In less than a month from the time when he first met her Isaac Scatchard had consented to give Rebecca Murdoch a new interest in existence, and a chance of recovering the character she had lost, by promising to make her his wife.

She had taken possession, not of his passions only, but of his faculties as well. All the mind he had, he put into her keeping. She directed him on every point—even instructing him how to break the news of his approaching marriage in the safest manner to his mother.

"If you tell her how you met me and who I am at first," said the cunning woman, "she will move heaven and earth to prevent our marriage. Say I am the sister of one of your fellow-servants. Ask her to see me before you go into any more particulars—and leave it to me to do the rest. I mean to make her love me next best to you, Isaac, before she knows anything of who I really am."

The motive of the deceit was sufficient to sanctify it to Isaac. The stratagem proposed relieved him of his one great anxiety, and quieted his uneasy conscience on the subject of his mother. Still, there was some-

thing wanting to perfect his happiness, something that he could not realize, something mysteriously untraceable, and yet something that perpetually made itself felt. Not when he was absent from Rebecca Murdoch, but, strange to say, when he was actually in her presence!

She was kindness itself with him. She never made him feel his inferior capacities and inferior manners. She showed the sweetest anxiety to please him in the smallest trifles, but in spite of all these attractions, he never could feel quite at his ease with her. At their first meeting, there had mingled with his admiration, when he looked in her face, a faint, involuntary feeling of doubt whether that face was entirely strange to him. No after familiarity had the slightest effect on this inexplicable, wearisome uncertainty.

Concealing the truth as he had been directed, he announced his marriage engagement precipitately and confusedly to his mother on the day when he contracted it.

Poor Mrs. Scatchard showed her perfect confidence in her son by flinging her arms round his neck, and rejoicing at his having found at last, in the sister of one of his fellow-servants, a woman to comfort and care for him after his mother was gone. She was all eagerness to see the woman of her son's choice, and the next day was fixed for the introduction.

It was a bright, sunny morning, and the little cottage parlor was full of light as Mrs. Scatchard, happy and expectant, dressed for the occasion in her Sunday gown, sat waiting for her son and her future daughter-in-law.

PUNCTUAL to the appointed time, Isaac hurriedly and nervously led his promised wife into the room. His mother rose to receive her, advanced a few steps, smiling, looked Rebecca full in the eyes—and suddenly stopped. Her face, which had been flushed the moment before, turned white in an instant. Her eyes lost their expression of softness and kindness, and assumed a blank look of terror. Her outstretched hands fell to her sides, and she staggered back a few steps with a low cry to her son.

"Isaac," she whispered, clutching him fast by the arm when he asked alarmingly if she was taken ill, "Isaac, does that woman's face remind you of nothing?"

Before he could answer—before he could look round to where Rebecca stood, astonished and angered by her reception, at the

lower end of the room, his mother pointed impatiently to her writing-desk, and gave him the key.

"Open it," she said, in a quick breathless whisper.

"What does this mean? Why am I treated as if I had no business here? Does your mother want to insult me?" asked Rebecca, angrily.

"Open it, and give me the paper in the left-hand drawer. Quick! quick, for Heaven's sake!" said Mrs. Scatchard, shrinking further back in terror.

Isaac gave her the paper. She looked it over eagerly for a moment, then followed Rebecca, who was now turning away haughtily to leave the room, and caught her by the shoulder—abruptly raised the long, loose sleeve of her gown, and glanced at her hand and arm. Something like fear began to steal over the angry expression of Rebecca's face as she shook herself free from the old woman's grasp.

"Mad!" she said to herself, "and Isaac never told me." With these few words she left the room.

Isaac was hastening after her when his mother turned and stopped his further progress. It wrung his heart to see the misery and terror in her face as she looked at him.

"Light gray eyes," she said, in low, mournful, awe-struck tones, pointing toward the open door, "a droop in the left eyelid; flaxen hair, with a gold-yellow streak in it; white arms, with a down upon them; little lady's hands, with a reddish look under the finger nails—the *Dream Woman*, Isaac, the *Dream Woman*!"

That faint cleaving doubt which he had never been able to shake off in Rebecca Murdoch's presence was fatally set at rest forever. He had seen her face, then, before—seven years before, on his birthday, in the bedroom of the lonely inn.

"Be warned! Oh, my son, be warned! Issac, Isaac, let her go, and you stay here with me. Please!"

Something darkened the parlor window as those words were said. A sudden chill ran through him, and he glanced sidelong at the shadow. Rebecca Murdoch had come back. She was peering in curiously at them over the low window-blind.

"I have promised to marry, mother," he

said, "and marry I must; I will marry."

The tears came into his eyes as he spoke and dimmed his sight, but he could just discern the fatal face outside moving away again from the window.

His mother's head sank lower.

"Are you faint?" he whispered.

"Broken-hearted, Isaac."

He stooped down and kissed her. The shadow, as he did so, returned to the window, and the fatal face peered in curiously once more.

THREE weeks after that day Isaac and Rebecca were man and wife. All that was hopelessly dogged and stubborn in the man's moral nature seemed to have closed round his fatal passion, and to have fixed it unassailably in his heart.

After that first interview in the cottage parlor no consideration would induce Mrs. Scatchard to see her son's wife again or even to talk of her when Isaac tried hard to plead her cause after their marriage.

This course of conduct was not in any degree occasioned by a discovery of the degradation in which Rebecca had lived. There was no question of that between mother and son. There was no question of anything but the fearfully exact resemblance between the living, breathing woman and the spectral woman of Isaac's dream.

Rebecca, on her side, neither felt nor expressed the slightest sorrow at the estrangement between herself and her mother-in-law. Isaac, for the sake of peace, had never contradicted her first idea that age and long illness had affected Mrs. Scatchard's mind. He even allowed his wife to upbraid him for not having confessed this to her at the time of their engagement, rather than risk anything by hinting at the truth.

The time of waking from his delusion—the cruel and the rueful time—was not far off. After some quiet months of married life, as the summer was ending and the year was getting on toward the month of his birthday, Isaac found his wife's manner altering toward him.

Rebecca grew sullen and contemptuous. She formed acquaintances of the most dangerous kind in defiance of his objections, his entreaties, and his commands. And, worst



of all, she learned, ere long, after every fresh difference with her husband, to seek the deady self-oblivion of drink.

Little by little after the first miserable discovery that his wife was keeping company with drunkards, the shocking certainty forced itself on Isaac that she had grown to be a drunkard herself.

He had been in a sadly despondent state for some time before the occurrence of these domestic calamities. His mother's health, as he could but too plainly discern every time he went to see her at the cottage, was failing fast, and he upbraided himself in secret as the cause of the bodily and mental suffering she endured.

THEN, to his remorse on his mother's account, was added the shame and misery occasioned by the discovery of his wife's degradation, he sank under the double trial—his face began to change fast, and he looked what he was, a spirit-broken man.

His mother, still struggling bravely against the illness that was hurrying her to the grave, was the first to notice the sad alteration in him, and the first to hear of his last and worst trouble with his wife. She could only weep bitterly on the day when he made his humiliating confession; but on the next occasion when he went to see her she had taken a resolution in reference to his domestic afflictions which astonished and even alarmed him. He found her dressed to go out, and on asking the reason received this answer:

"I am not long for this world, Isaac," she said, "and I shall not feel easy on my death-bed unless I have done my best to the last to make my son happy. I mean to put my own fears and my own feelings out of the question, and to go with you to your wife, and see what I can do to reclaim her. Give me your arm, Isaac, and let me do the last thing I can in this world to help my son before it is too late."

He could not disobey her, and they walked together slowly toward his miserable home.

It was only one o'clock in the afternoon when they reached the cottage where he lived. It was their dinner hour, and Rebecca was in the kitchen. He was thus able to take his mother quietly into the parlor, and then prepare his wife for the interview. She had fortunately drunk but little at that early hour, and she was less sullen and capricious than usual.

He returned to his mother with his mind tolerably at ease. His wife soon followed

him into the parlor, and the meeting between her and Mrs. Scatchard passed off better than he had ventured to anticipate. He observed, however, with secret apprehension that his mother, resolutely as she controlled herself in other respects, could not look his wife in the face when she spoke to her. It was a relief to him, therefore, when Rebecca began to set the table.

She laid the cloth, brought in the bread-tray, and cut a slice from the loaf for her husband, then returned to the kitchen. At that moment, Isaac, still anxiously watching his mother, was startled at seeing the same ghastly change pass over her face which had altered it so awfully on the morning when Rebecca and she first met. Before he could say a word, she whispered, with a look of horror.

"Take me back—home, home again, Isaac. Come with me, and never go back again."

He was afraid to ask for an explanation. He could only signal to her to be silent, and help her quickly to the door. As they passed the bread-tray on the table she stopped and pointed to it.

"Did you see what your wife cut your bread with?" she asked, in a low whisper.

"No, mother—I was not noticing—what was it?"

"Look!"

He did look. A new clasp-knife with a buckhorn handle lay with the loaf in the bread-tray. He stretched out his hand shudderingly to possess himself of it. But, at the same time, there was a noise in the kitchen, and his mother caught at his arm.

"The knife of the dream! Isaac, I'm faint with fear. Take me away before she comes back."

He was hardly able to support her. The visible, tangible reality of the knife struck him with a panic, and utterly destroyed any faint doubts that he might have entertained up to this time in relation to the mysterious dream-warning of nearly eight years before.

BY a last desperate effort, he summoned self-possession enough to help his mother out of the house—so quietly that the "Dream Woman" (he thought of her by that name now) did not hear them departing.

"Don't go back, Isaac—don't go back!" implored Mrs. Scatchard, as he turned to go away, after seeing her safely seated again in her own room.

"I must get the knife," he answered, under his breath. His mother tried to stop him, but he hurried out without another word.

On his return he found that his wife had discovered their secret departure from the house. She had been drinking, and was in a fury of passion. The dinner in the kitchen was flung under the grate. The cloth was off the parlor table.

Where was the knife?

Unwisely, he asked for it. She was only too glad of the opportunity of irritating him which the request afforded her. "He wanted the knife, did he? Could he give her a reason why? No! Then he should not have it—not if he went down on his knees to ask for it."

FURTHER recriminations elicited the fact that she had bought it at a bargain, and that she considered it her own especial property. Isaac saw the uselessness of attempting to get the knife by fair means, and determined to search for it, later in the day, in secret. The search was unsuccessful. Night came on, and he left the house to walk about the streets. He was afraid now to sleep in the same room with her.

Three weeks passed. Still sullenly enraged with him, she would not give up the knife; and still that fear of sleeping in the same room with her possessed him. He walked about at night, or dozed in the parlor, or sat watching by his mother's bedside. Before the expiration of the first week in the new month his mother died—ten days before her son's birthday. She had longed to live till that anniversary. Isaac was present at her death, and her last words in this world were addressed to him:

"Don't go back, my son, don't go back!"

He was obliged to go back, if it were only to watch his wife. Exasperated to the last degree by his distrust of her, she had revengefully sought to add a sting to his grief, during the last days of his mother's illness, by declaring that she would assert her right to attend the funeral.

In spite of all that he could do or say, she held with wicked pertinacity to her word, and on the day appointed for the burial, she forced herself—inflamed and shameless with drink—into her husband's presence, and declared that she would walk in the funeral procession to his mother's grave.

This last outrage, accompanied by all that was most insulting in word and look, maddened him for the moment. He struck her.

The instant the blow was dealt he repented it. She crouched down, silent, in a corner of the room, and eyed him steadily. It was a look that cooled his hot blood and

made him tremble. But there was no time to think of a means of making atonement. Nothing remained but to risk the worst till the funeral was over. There was but one way of making sure of her. He locked her into her bedroom.

When he came back some hours after he found her sitting, very much changed in look and bearing, by the bedside, with a bundle on her lap. She rose, and faced him quietly, and spoke with a strange stillness in her voice, a strange repose in her eyes, a strange composure in her manner.

"No man has ever struck me twice," she said, "and my husband shall have no second opportunity. Open the door and let me go. From this day forth we see each other no more."

Before he could answer she passed him and left the room. He saw her walk away up the street.

Would she return?

All that night he watched and waited, but no footstep came near the house. The next night, overpowered by fatigue, he lay down in bed in his clothes, with the door locked, the key on the table and the candle burning. His slumber was not disturbed. The third night the fourth, the fifth, the sixth passed, and nothing happened. He lay down on the seventh night, still in his clothes, still with the door locked, the key on the table, and the candle burning, but easier in his mind.

Easier in his mind and in perfect health of body when he fell off to sleep. But his rest was disturbed. He woke twice without any sensation of uneasiness. But the third time it was that never-to-be-forgotten shivering of the night at the lonely inn, that dreadful sinking pain at the heart, which once more aroused him in an instant.

His eyes opened toward the lefthand side of the bed, and there stood—

The Dream Woman again? No! His wife, the living reality, with the dream-specter's face, in the dream-specter's attitude, the fair arm up, the knife clasped in the delicate white hand.

HE sprang upon her almost at the instant of seeing her and yet not quickly enough to prevent her from hiding the knife. Without a word from him—without a cry from her—he pinioned her in a chair. With one hand he felt up her sleeve, and there, where the Dream Woman had hidden the knife, his wife had hidden it—the knife with the buckhorn handle, that looked like new.

In the despair of that fearful moment his brain was steady, his heart was calm. He looked at her fixedly with the knife in his hand, and said these last words:

"You told me we should see each other no more, and you have come back. It is my turn now to go, and to go forever. I say that we shall see each other no more, and *my* word shall not be broken."

He left her, and set forth into the night. He asked the first policeman he met what hour that was of which the quarter past had just struck.

The man referred sleepily to his watch, and answered, "two o'clock." Two in the morning. What day of the month was this day that had just begun? He reckoned it up from the date of his mother's funeral. The fatal parallel was complete: It was his birthday!

Had he escaped the mortal peril which his dream foretold? Or had he only received a second warning?

As that ominous doubt forced itself on his mind, he stopped, reflected, and turned back again toward the city. He was still resolute to hold to his word, and never to let her see him more. But there was a thought now in his mind of having her watched and followed. The knife was in his possession, the world was before him; but a new distrust of her—a vague, unspeakable, superstitious dread had overcome him.

"I must know where she goes, now she thinks I have left her," he said to himself, as he stole back wearily to his house.

It was still dark. He had left the candle burning in the bedchamber, but when he looked up to the window of the room now there was no light in it. He crept cautiously to the house door. On going away, he remembered having closed it. On trying it now, he found it open.

He waited outside till daylight. Then he ventured indoors—listened, and heard nothing—looked downstairs and found nothing; went up at last into the bedroom—it was empty. A picklock lay on the door, betraying how she had gained entrance in the night. That was the only trace of her.

Whither had she gone? That no mortal tongue could tell him. The darkness had covered her flight.

Before leaving the house and the town forever, he gave instructions to a friend and neighbor to sell his furniture, and apply the proceeds to employing the police to trace her. The directions were honestly followed,

and the money was all spent, but the inquiries led to nothing. The picklocks on the bedroom floor remained the one last useless trace of the Dream Woman.

AT this point of the narrative the landlord paused, and, turning toward the window of the room in which we were sitting, looked in the direction of the stable-yard.

"So far," he said, "I tell you what was told to me. The little that remains to be added lies within my own experience. Between two and three months after the events I have just been relating, Isaac Scatchard came to me, withered and old-looking before his time, just as you saw him to-day. He had his testimonials to character with him, and he asked for employment here.

"Knowing that my wife and he were distantly related, I gave him a trial in consideration of that relationship, and liked him in spite of his queer habits. As for his restlessness at night, and his sleeping away his leisure time in the day, who can wonder at it after hearing his story? Besides, he never objects to being roused up when he's wanted, so there's not much inconvenience to complain of, after all."

"I suppose he is afraid of a return of that dreadful dream, and of waking out of it in the dark?"

"No," returned the landlord. "The dream comes back to him so often that he has got to bear with it by this time resignedly enough. It's his wife keeps him waking at night, as he has often told me."

"What! Hasn't she been heard of yet?"

"No. Isaac, himself, thinks that she is alive and looking for him. I believe he wouldn't let himself drop off to sleep toward two in the morning for a king's ransom. Two in the morning, he says, is the time she will find him, one of these days. Two in the morning is the time all the year round when he likes to be most certain that he has got that clasp-knife safe about him.

"He does not mind being alone as long as he is awake, except on the night before his birthday, when he firmly believes himself to be in peril of his life. The birthday has only come round once since he has been here, and then he sat up along with the night-porter. 'She's looking for me,' is all he says when anybody speaks to him about the one anxiety of his life; 'she's looking for me.'

"He may be right. She *may* be looking for him. Who can tell?"

"Who can tell?" said I.

SUMMONED

from the

By
JOHN RANDALL

DEAD

*How a shadowy Presence averted the catastrophe
that threatened two loving hearts*

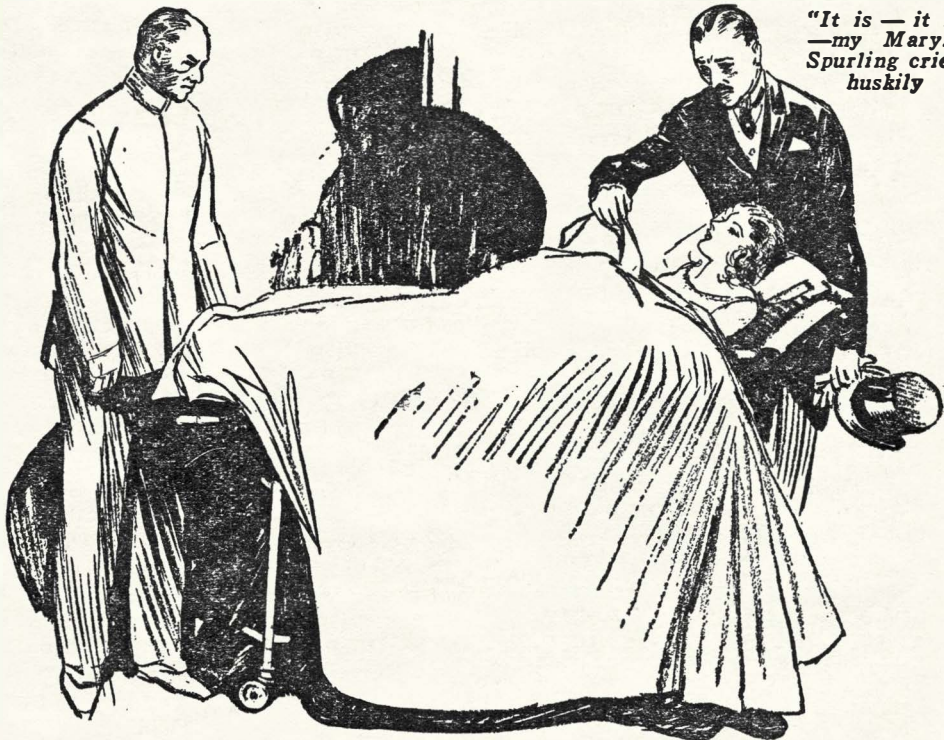
I AM the attendant at the City Hospital morgue. You might think that an uninviting job, but I don't mind it. I've never had any of the dead population rise up and speak to me, except—well, that's the one strange experience I want to tell you about.

Our Massachusetts city is so located that it's a crossroads to the White Mountains at the North, the Berkshires on the West and Cape Cod and the Boston resorts to the

East. Consequently we have plenty of accidents on the highways—too many.

On the Sunday afternoon in question the City Hospital morgue—the only one for miles around—was filled and I was so busy, with weeping relatives and all, that I didn't know which way to turn. So it wasn't with any sweet smile that I looked up to see a slip of a nurse put her head in the door and heard her hoarse whisper:

"That woman has been seen again!"



*"It is — it is
—my Mary!"
Spurling cried
huskily*

"What woman?" I snapped impatiently. "That queer one who's been haunting the corridors lately."

I got peeved.

"Listen, sister," I said, striving to keep my temper, "this is no time for kidding. I'm busy. If you and the others out there in the hospital haven't anything better to do than cook up tales of spooks walking the corridors, you'd better get a job elsewhere. You don't frighten me one bit."

"But I mean it," she put in. "They saw her a minute ago, tall and stately, with gray hair and a lovely smile. Never saying a word to anyone, but slipping silently along the corridor without any sound of footsteps!"

"Beat it, sister," I motioned with my head. "I haven't any time now. Come back some other time and tell me another."

She gave me a disgusted look and went away. And about that time up wheeled the ambulance with a new victim. But this time the big policeman who was the attendant on the ambulance was crying.

"Ah, it's a shame," he said, blowing his nose hard. "Just a kid, and pretty as a picture. So young to die. I—I'm thinkin' she's me own daughter, Jack."

"Put her over there on the table, Mike," I said quickly. "The ice-box is full."

He turned on me, furious.

"Ain't ye got any respect for the dead?" he barked at me, getting hot. "Have ye been so long here, ye old gray-headed rat, that ye're gettin' cold and callous?"

"I didn't mean that, Mike," I returned. "I'm being rushed to death this afternoon—and on top of that, the nurses and internes have been trying to kid me about a ghost walking the corridors."

And then I asked him where the surgeon was on the ambulance.

"NO surgeon," he said shortly. "Every-thing's busy today. I had to go out on this by myself. She was hit crossin' the street. I've got her name—Mary Spurling. She's gone all right—the poor kid. I'll have the doctor send up the report later."

Big Mike went out after leaving his sad burden and I had a minute to look at the girl. I didn't blame Mike for snapping at me about the seemingly casual thing I had said. The girl was, I judged, about twenty, with soft brown hair done in a small knot at the back, and a face that in death looked like one of these marble goddesses in the museum. She had on a summery, floating

sort of dress in colors that all the young girls were wearing.

But the face—so lovely and sweet. As Mike said, she was the kind you'd like for a daughter. Long, delicate fingers—the sort that ought to linger over the keys of a piano or over a beautiful silver tea service.

I'd just about got her straightened out on the table and pulled a sheet over her pretty face, for the ice-box—excuse me, but "ice-box" is what we call it in the morgue—was full, when the door leading to the hospital proper burst open and two men entered. They were both intensely agitated and the older of the two appeared just about driven to insanity.

"Have you—have you—" he could hardly say it—"a young woman here named Mary—Mary Spurling? The police said—"

HEAVEN knows I try to make it easy for the folks. I'm not so callous as you might think. I have to meet them when the tragedy is fresh and it's no simple thing.

"I'm mighty sorry to say she's here, Mr. Spurling," I said, for I recognized him at once as the leading corporation counsel of our city. "It's going to be hard on you, sir. She was a lovely girl."

He stared at me a minute. My sympathetic reference to her that way took him by surprise, I guess, but it gave him a chance to get a grip on himself.

"Thanks, my man," he said simply.

Then I led him over to the table and uncovered her face. He stared at her a long time before he uttered that low cry that seemed wrung from his very soul. His face worked, and his fingers clenched and unclenched.

"It is—it is—my Mary," he said huskily, after a while. "Oh, God!"

He turned and staggered to a chair and buried his face in his hands. I let him alone for a minute and then I put a hand on his shoulder.

"I'm awfully sorry, Mr. Spurling," I said. "Death comes to all of us like that sometimes, and we don't know the reason why. We're not given to understanding it always—not at first, anyway. I'm mighty sorry, sir."

He looked up gratefully and grasped my hand.

"Thanks," he said again. "God bless you. I—I'll have someone come and take care of—of the body."

He got up as though he were going out.

But he turned suddenly and spoke, as though he wanted to talk with someone, to ease his soul for a moment.

"You don't know how awful this is," he said vehemently. "She was all I had—my only child. Her mother—as lovely and sweet as Mary—left us—died—two years ago. I thought I couldn't live any longer then. But I tried to keep up—for Mary's sake. Now—now she's gone. My wife is—is over there—in the cemetery." He pointed out of the window to the tiny little old churchyard across the street, lost in the midst of the city's growth. A queer little old churchyard still used by a few of the older families.

Suddenly the man uttered a cry like that of a stricken animal. Then he breathed deep, by sheer will power getting himself together again.

"This hospital will have sad memories for me," he spoke slowly.

"Your wife—she died here?" I asked.

"Yes. Out there—in the hospital. We—we thought everything was going nicely. She—she went suddenly. They sent for me, but she—she died before I could get here. God!"

But all this time the younger man had stood beside the table, staring at the girl's face. He hadn't said a word, but his face seemed almost as bloodless as the girl's lying there so still.

"Who is he, Mr. Spurling?" I asked.

"Her—her sweetheart. Henry Brent. They were engaged to be married. Desperately in love. God—I'm thinking about myself; how it's hitting me. But look at him! Poor fellow!"

Young Brent stared at the girl stupefied. He was in a daze. His jaw was set so you'd think it never could be opened. All the horror, all the grief in the world sat carved in his face. Good-looking chap when himself. But now—I don't think I ever saw such an agonized expression.

Spurling went up and took him by the arm. The young chap moved like a wooden man. He didn't resist. He stared ahead of him without seeing. Spurling moved with him toward the door. But suddenly the father moaned again and turned to me.

"I'd give anything in the world to have her back again," he cried. "Isn't there any power, here or beyond, that will bring her back?" he pleaded. "God, man! Must she lie there—dead? Isn't there—some way?"

I shook my head sadly. "It comes to all of us," I said.

Taking young Brent by the arm, leading him as though he were a child, Spurling went out of the room, his head bowed on his breast. I watched them go, my heart full of pity for them.

Tragedy. My world is full of it. But somehow this got under my skin more than anything else I'd ever seen. And as I went back and drew the sheet up over the dead girl's

lovely face, I felt as if I myself had lost a friend, or a kin—a beautiful daughter of my own. I felt my eyes smarting . . .

At that moment there came the slip of a nurse again, with wide eyes and flushed face, putting her head in at the door.

"She's been seen again—that strange woman who walks the corridors," she said.

And because I needed some vent for my feelings, I shouted at her:

"Will you get to the devil out of here and stop that nonsense! If you come over here again, trying to kid me about that woman, I'll report you to the superintendent. Now, beat it!"

She gave me a hurt look that time, and disappeared.

I felt like letting go a nice string of curses.

TWILIGHT came—summer twilight—and I switched on the lights. A few people drifted in, asking for missing relatives, but I didn't have them. It had been a hard day and I was tired. I had until midnight when I would be relieved by the other attendant and could go home.

I sat down in a chair in a corner of the room to rest a minute. Maybe I dozed; probably I did. But all at once I came to with a start. I had the feeling that someone was in the room—not any sense of sound, but just a feeling.

I opened my eyes and blinked. I stared



around. Sure enough, there was a woman, a tall and stately woman with gray hair and dressed in some kind of dark outfit, standing beside Mary Spurling's body! The sheet was drawn back and the woman stood there, her face in the shadow so I couldn't see her features very well.

Well, sir, I was knocked cold. Generally visitors seeking some lost person would ask me first, before they went peering around, pulling sheets off the dead. I didn't know what to make of it.

THEN another queer feeling suddenly came over me. I might have been glued to my chair. My legs felt all sort of numb and useless and when I tried to get up I couldn't. I thought they were asleep, first, like the rest of me had been. But it wasn't that. There was no prickly sensation. They felt like lead, so heavy I couldn't stir them at all.

Meanwhile the woman stood there, her gaze riveted on the girl's face. She wasn't touching the body. She stood there, her hands clasped in front, her gaze intent. Strange tingling sensations went up and down my spine, for no reason at all. I began to be afraid. I felt as if I wanted to run from that place. Then I started to ask the woman who she was.

But I couldn't do that, either. I was absolutely dumb! I suddenly discovered I was numb all over—everywhere except my brain. I could think. But that was all. The rest of me wouldn't respond.

And that woman! Staring at the girl as though she was trying to hypnotize her—or bring her back to life. But she couldn't do that. The girl was dead, right enough. The nasty wound just back of her ear was cause enough. White, no pulse, no breath—she was dead all right, and anything that strange woman appeared to have in mind wouldn't be a bit of use.

Then suddenly she heaved a deep sigh—a sigh of satisfaction, I thought. It wasn't loud. A sigh like a breath of wind in the trees, or a faint whisper coming from some far-off corner of an empty house. Then she moved back and her action caused me involuntarily to look at the floor near her feet.

If I had been held motionless before, I was frozen solid and utterly without speech this time—without even thought.

For I had discovered something that gave me the horrors!

In the light of the electric wall lamp just beyond the table, I could see a shadow cast

by the table itself and the girl's body on it. There were shadows of other articles around—another table, a wheel-truck, the corner of an instrument case. But where the woman stood—where her shadow should have been—there wasn't any!

Before I could say or do anything, once more the woman turned toward the girl and began to stare at her, and once more I was held spellbound by that strange feeling sweeping over me like an invisible power. And as I watched the woman, it seemed to me she was transferring some force from herself to the girl, as though she were commanding her by sheer will power to get up off that table and walk!

To this day I don't know what gave me that impression, unless it was the tenseness of the woman's attitude. But as surely as if I had seen it with my own eyes, it seemed to me that some intangible something—some force, some vital element, passed—or rather, flowed—from the figure of the woman into that of the girl.

Then came that soft, fluttering sigh once more and suddenly the woman moved back and without a word or a look at me, left the room. She floated, rather than walked. She made no more sound than if she had been her own shadow, not even when she crossed the floor.

For several seconds I stared at the empty doorway through which she had vanished out into the corridor. Then, still in surprise, I glanced back toward the girl.

Believe me, right at that moment I wouldn't have been surprised if all those boxes on the wall had opened their doors and all my dead charges had suddenly stepped out.

For when I staggered over to look at the girl, *she was breathing!*

MY eyes weren't lying to me. My mind wasn't playing tricks. In the light of the lamp I could see her breast slowly rise and fall. Not much, you understand. Not rapidly. I could hardly detect it at first. But she was breathing, just the same.

She was breathing, and that meant she was alive! And in a second I saw her throat convulse and relax as she swallowed. Then slowly her left hand, hanging off the edge of the table, began to rise. God, it gave me the creeps! Yet rise it did, not like that of an automaton, but slowly, as though gathering strength, and the fingers touched the wound behind her ear as if in her unconscious state she realized the pain

there and strove to lessen the agony.

I've seen strange things in the morgue. I've heard bodies grunt and groan from the gases that form in them. I've seen muscles contract and relax, causing grotesque movements that would have caused a nervous person to jump out of the window.

But never anything like this. That girl wasn't dead. She was alive—living! As surely as I was.

It didn't take me long to stir myself then. I jumped to the button on the wall and jammed my thumb into it until I might have pushed it through. After what seemed ages an orderly came.

"FOR God's sake, get a doctor," I cried, "and get that girl on the table out of here and into a bed. She's alive!"

The orderly stared at me a minute and grinned.

"Cripes, Jack," he said. "You're going nuts. Calm yourself. You'll be in Ward J next."

I couldn't stand any bantering from any young squirt like that—not at such a time.

"Damn your hide," I yelled at him. "Get a doctor, I tell you, and—and be quick, or by heaven I'll—"

His eyes opened as though he thought I truly had gone mad. He ran. He didn't wait any longer. He went for a doctor, more for me, I guess, than because he thought anybody else in that morgue needed one.

The doctor came at once, a young chap, with a serious look on his face. I don't know what the orderly told him. But the doctor had an inquiring look as he came in in his white uniform and said:

"What's the trouble here? What's happened?"

"This girl," I said breathlessly, pointing. "They brought her in for dead. The police ambulance. She's living. Look at her. Look at her—breathing!"

The doctor went over to her immediately. Instinctively he caught her hand and tried her pulse.

"Who examined her?" he asked brusquely.

"Nobody," I replied. "The police surgeon was busy. A policeman picked her up and brought her in. He said the report would come later."

"How long has she been here?" he snapped.

"An hour, or an hour and a half."

He signalled to the orderly.

"Get her to the women's ward right

away," he ordered. "Tell the nurse to undress her and get her to bed."

We all helped lift her off the table to the wheel-truck. Even the orderly was stirred into action and quickly he whisked her out of the door and off up the corridor, followed by the doctor.

I stood in the middle of the floor and passed a hand over my forehead, wondering if I'd gone absolutely daft and asking myself if it hadn't been a dream. And just then I saw something else that made me start.

It was dim, out there in the corridor. Up at the other end was a light somewhere, but in front of my door there was very little. And as I stared out, unthinking, a shadow passed. It seemed to me that somebody went by—a tall, stately woman, with gray hair—the very one who had been in the room!

I wanted to talk to her. I wanted to ask her if she had anything to do with the condition of that girl. I ran to the door.

"Wait a minute, if you please—" I began.

Then my mouth fell open. Again I felt that creepy sensation up my spine.

The corridor was empty!

Somewhere, far up around the corner, I could hear the retreating footsteps of the orderly and the doctor, and the muffled rumble of the truck. But otherwise there wasn't a sound—or a person! Nor were there any doors close by where the woman could have entered, for the corridor was nothing but a long passageway.

"For crying out loud!" I said to myself. "Are you going crazy? Is the job getting you?"

I staggered back into the room and half fell into my chair. I hadn't been there long before the doctor came back.

"What do you know about that case, more than you told me?" he asked.

I GOT my thoughts together and told him exactly what had happened—how Mike had brought the girl in, how she had lain on the table apparently dead, and how I woke up to see the woman standing there, and the impression I got of some force passing between them.

The doctor did not laugh or anything. He just stood there, thoughtfully, turning things over in his mind.

"How's the girl?" I asked presently.

"She's alive all right," he said. "She's on the dangerous list and it's a question whether or not she'll live. I think she will. But we've had to resort to a blood transfusion."

He didn't say anything more for a minute, and then, "That woman—" he began. "What do you think about her? Have you heard about a woman that's been seen frequenting the corridors of this hospital in the last day or so?"

I nodded.

"Just after the girl was brought in, a nurse came in here and said the woman had been seen again. I bawled her out and told her to get on about her business. I thought she was kidding me. They do, you know. They try to make me nervous and afraid."

"I know," he said. "But that woman—?"

"What about her?" I asked, when he hesitated. "She's getting my goat. God, she isn't real! She can't be, when she didn't cast any shadow. Say, what the devil is there about her?"

He turned and looked me straight in the eyes. Suddenly he seemed to give way, as a young man does before an older one.

"I swear I don't know." He shook his head. "I'm just a beginner in the game. I haven't had such a devil of a lot of experience and I'm not qualified to say. But—" he seemed to feel his way—"there are a lot of queer things written in medical books—things it's hard to understand, put down by doctors you're taught to take damn seriously. They're things about forces we don't know about and don't understand. The men who write about them don't understand them either, and don't try to explain. They simply set them down as strange experiences. They tell about influences that seem to come from nowhere—unless it's the other world. They tell about the dead seeming to come back, until you wonder if the whole lot of them haven't gone absolutely batty. And then something like this crops up to start you wondering all over again."

HE stopped, toying with a pencil he took from his pocket.

"A woman who doesn't cast a shadow," he meditated. "A woman who haunts the corridors—tall and stately, with gray hair. She doesn't do any harm. In this instance she seems to have been waiting for the girl to be brought here and apparently has done some good. That girl might have been buried alive, or killed by the jab of an embalmer's needle, if it hadn't been for her. Well," he added, turning to me, "keep it to yourself, Jack. We'll see what happens."

The hour was getting late and soon I'd be leaving, I thought with relief, but I was counting ahead of things. In just a few

minutes matters broke loose again—with a bang!

I had just sunk back into my chair when hurried footsteps sounded in the corridor and before I could say a thing, into the room burst Mr. Spurling. He was a wreck. He had aged years in the hour or so since I'd seen him last.

"For God's sake, tell me!" he burst out. "Where is she? They say she's alive. Where is she?"

"She *is* alive," I cried, springing to my feet, glad of the chance to reassure him. "It was a mistake. She's alive. She's hurt pretty bad. But they've taken her to the women's ward, and the doctor thinks she'll live. Aren't you glad?"

IF I had hit him, he couldn't have gone into a chair with a heavier thud. Once more he covered his face with his hands. One minute he was thanking God, and the next, of all surprising things, he was crying like a kid. I couldn't understand it. I'd seen them cry for joy. But this was different. This man was crying in grief and disappointment with one breath and thanking God for the life of his daughter with the next. I thought for a minute his mind had cracked. I moved over to him and he caught my hand, squeezing it and weeping like a child.

"Quit it, Mr. Spurling," I said harshly. Sometimes being stern does them good. "Quit it. Aren't you glad about your daughter?"

He struggled with himself. At last he ceased his crying, but when he looked up at me, still clinging to my hand, his face was gray with grief and horror.

"Of course I'm glad," he whispered. "You don't know how glad—about her! But something else has happened. The boy—Henry Brent. He couldn't stand it to think of Mary lying here—dead! Something snapped. He tried to commit suicide. He threw himself under a truck. I've just brought him to the hospital, in my car. He—he's alive—but—oh, God!"

Again he buried his face, sobbing one minute, almost laughing the next, like a hysterical woman.

Well, sir, there was tragedy for you!

The girl who was thought dead, now alive and with a fighting chance to recover. But the boy, who had been alive, now badly hurt and in a fair way to die.

There wasn't a thing to be said. I just let the old man sit there and cry. With his

nerves frayed and jangling, I thought that was the best thing to do.

It was. In a few minutes he seemed to feel better. After a while he arose, weakly, and caught my hand again to shake it.

"Thanks, for all you did for Mary," he said slowly. "I—I appreciate that. Thanks—ever so much."

"Oh, that's all right," was all I could say.

Stooping wearily, his head sunk on his breast, with heavy footsteps he crossed the floor and went out into the long hallway.

And, I'll be damned—if not far behind him I didn't see the shadow of that woman again! And when I went to the door and looked out, there wasn't a soul there, except the old man making his weary way up the corridor toward the rooms where his daughter and her sweetheart lay, each very close to death.

I didn't hear anything from the patients for several days after that—any more than that they were clinging to life somehow. Matters of my own kept me busy. Nor did I hear or see anything of that

strange woman haunting the corridors. I got to thinking a lot about her—who she was and where she kept herself, and why she didn't cast any shadow on the floor.

I got to thinking, too, about that little cemetery across the street and wondering if the woman could be. . . . But what the devil! You don't accept things like that!

The young doctor came over occasionally and we chatted about strange occurrences that happen in the medical profession and whether or not you could explain them all with logical reasoning if you only knew how. And so the weeks went by.

Then one glad day, when the air was getting chill with fall, the doctor dropped by with news for me. He said the girl and boy were strong enough to go home. They were leaving that morning. I was glad to hear it,

of course. I'd like to tell you that they were all well, and everything, and that neither of them was the worse for the experience. But I can't. That only happens in fiction. The girl was all right, according to the doctor. But the boy hadn't come off so easily. The truck under which he threw himself had got his left arm at the elbow. They had to amputate. And it was pretty certain he'd always be lame in his right leg.

Too bad, of course. But the father said he didn't care. He said if a fellow liked his

daughter well enough to die with her, he was the fellow to live for her, injured though he was. As for the girl—well, it didn't dull the spirits of either of those kids. They were more madly in love than ever. And one morning I looked up to see her in the doorway, laughing a little nervously as she glanced over at the table on which she'd lain.

She'd come to thank me, she said in a minute. Evidently nobody had said a word to her about the strange woman, so I didn't either.

"But what I really came for," she announced, blushing prettily despite the hospital pallor, "was to invite you to our wedding. Henry and I are going to be married next week. Dad says you did so much for me, that I want you to come."

"WELL, thanks a whole lot," I responded, "but I guess not. *You* would understand it all right, of course, but if your guests knew that the keeper of the morgue was at your wedding—well, it might add an embarrassing note that would spoil the party. Thanks just the same, but I guess I better stay away."

But she wouldn't take no for an answer. "If you feel that way," she asserted, "we won't say anything about your—ah—vocation. But I want you to be there just the



same. Please! Oh, do say you'll come."

Funny kid. She wouldn't let up until I promised. Said that anybody who snatched her from death ought to be there to give his influence for a long and happy married life.

I consented at last. I had to. Still a little pale, she was like a pretty picture. I couldn't do anything else than promise.

I GOT my partner on the job to come in early that evening. I changed my clothes and made myself as good-looking as a gray-haired old fellow could. Then I started out from the morgue, intending to be at the wedding about nine o'clock, just in time to see the bride given away and hear the clergyman pronounce the words that made them one.

But I got as far as the end of the corridor, intending to go out the front way, when I stopped short with a gasp.

Right in front of me, standing in a dim corner of the passageway, was that strange woman who had hovered over the girl. Tall and stately, she was, with luxuriant gray hair. I could see her features quite plainly now, and she was a mighty good-looking woman. I don't remember how she was dressed. As I think back on it, her clothes didn't have any definite detail. They were just dark.

But the thing that struck me so forcibly about her was her face. It seemed all sort of radiant and glowing, as though a spotlight from somewhere shone on it. The light seemed to flow from her face and radiate out into her hair and then off that so it formed a sort of halo about her head. Nor was that all. Somehow her whole body seemed to glow, as though another spotlight behind her threw its rays each side of her.

And I'll be doggoned if the light didn't appear to shine through her too! All I could think of was an angel standing there, "in bright robes," as the Good Book says.

I started to speak, but my throat was as tight as a drum. I stared at her, while tingles chased themselves up and down my spine. I wanted to ask her who she was, why she was standing there, and what made her look so bright and shining. But I couldn't say a thing. I gulped. The sweat began to pour out on my forehead.

It wasn't that I was scared. Rather, I was just plain amazed. No, you couldn't really be scared by looking at her, astonishing as she appeared, for there was the loveliest, kindest smile on her face, as though she had attained at last the thing she wanted most.

I started to speak again, and gulped again—and suddenly had a great desire to keep right on, as though her presence there was none of my business. Which I did.

I just kept walking, right on up the corridor. Just before I opened the door that would let me out into the hospital proper, I looked back. The woman still stood there. But she appeared to be fading, dissolving, like mist floating away through the darkness. Dimly I could see her, but it looked as though she were a long way off, instead of about fifty feet from me.

I jumped through the door and shut it quickly. I straightened my tie—that didn't need straightening—and pulled down my vest—that didn't need pulling down. All the way to the wedding I couldn't get my mind off that strange scene.

Up to this time, you understand, I'd accepted supernatural things—so-called—as a lot of hokey, believing there was an explanation for everything, as I'd told the doctor. But after what he had told me about strange, unexplainable things encountered in the medical profession, I had begun to think maybe I was a little too skeptical.

Anyway, the wedding was lovely and went off without a hitch. The young couple looked great, though they still were somewhat pale from their convalescence. But they were properly showered with rice and ran away, hand-in-hand, amid the laughter, and the tears and good wishes of the guests.

When it was all over, Spurling hunted me out and got me by the arm.

"Do you—ah—take something?" he asked.

Well, I wasn't quite sure what he meant by "something," but I was willing to find out. He led me upstairs into his den and when the glasses and cigars were set out, he seemed to relax and fall into a talkative mood.

"BY the way, Randall," he began after a while, and I knew he was leading up to the thing most on his mind, "what did you ever find out about that strange woman who stood over Mary, there in your place?"

"I wish I could tell you, Mr. Spurling," I replied. "I never found out a thing, and what's more what I saw tonight makes her stranger than ever."

"What was that?" he snapped, setting down his glass and eyeing me with new interest.

I told him what I had seen just before I came away.

He sat for a long time deep in thought.

"How long have you heard about this woman?" he asked. "It's true, isn't it, that she's been seen before?"

"I've been at the hospital about a year and a half," I said, "and I never heard about her until a few days before your daughter was brought in. Then I began to hear that she'd been seen occasionally in the corridors—that people had come on her suddenly. They thought she was someone a little out of her head, who might have lost a relative by death in the hospital, and stole in at odd times to search for them. But when they began to get mysterious about her, I thought they only were kidding me, to get me nervous on my job—ghosts, and all that sort of business, you know."

He nodded, smoking meditatively the while.

"About a year and a half ago, you came?" he mused.

"Yes," I said. "But somebody thought they recognized her as a former patient, though they weren't sure."

"Interesting," he remarked. "Then if she were a patient, that would place her in the hospital—say, two years or so ago?"

"It might," I agreed.

"—really possible?" he whispered, as though talking to himself.

"What?" I asked.

Suddenly he laid down his cigar, and sprang to his feet as though coming to a decision.

"Could you recognize her again?" he asked, staring hard at me.

"Why, yes, I think so," I said. "I got a pretty good look at her face tonight."

Quickly he went to his desk, flung it open and took out a plush frame that had a cover on a hinge. He opened it, stared at it a minute, and handed it to me. Inside was a photograph.

"Did you ever see that woman before?"

God above! It gave me the creeps again. Out of that photograph was looking the face of the woman I'd seen in the corridor hardly two hours before—the woman who had stood there with that strange glow about her, like an angel!

For a minute I couldn't speak. I just

stared back at the photograph, my hands trembling, the sweat standing out on my forehead again. Then it came over me.

"This—this—?" I couldn't say what I wanted. "Then—this is—"

He didn't wait for me. He took the photograph out of my trembling hands, reverently closed the cover and put it back in his desk. When he looked at me again his face was white and haggard.

"Do you think—if I went back to the hospital with you," he asked, sort of pleading like, "do you think—she might still—be there?"

HE seemed so much to want me to say yes that I couldn't refuse him. His whole heart was set on my answer. So I nodded.

"At least we can try," I suggested.

He called his car and we set out. I knew he was tense as a taut string. I could feel it, as he sat next to me. But he didn't say a word and only pulled deeply at his cigar while his chauffeur wove his way through the traffic. I wondered if we were going on a fool's errand. That would be too bad, for Spurling evidently wanted with all his heart to see the woman. If she wasn't there—

Poor fellow! His daughter was gone. She belonged to another man now. He was all alone in the world, you might say. Felt mighty lonely, on this night of nights, when he'd just given his daughter away. Wished

he could feel the hand of his wife in his—just this once. . . .

We whirled up to the hospital entrance. I guided him through the hallway, though he didn't need much guiding, for he had come to know this place mighty well. Then we arrived at the door that would lead out to the morgue building—the door that opened into that long corridor where I'd seen the strange woman at the turning.

Would she still be there? Was this man who had been through such sad experiences and so much worry, and now had bade his daughter farewell, to have his quest rewarded? I almost hated to open the door, for I knew his disappointment would be awful if she weren't there.



Then at last I pushed it open. My gaze went down the corridor. Was that the woman? Or was it only a shadow in that dim corner? I blinked my eyes. I shook my head to clear my brain. Then I reached back and took him by the arm.

She stood there, a vaguely welcoming smile on her face, I thought.

With a low, glad cry he brushed past and ahead of me.

"Mary!" he called. "Mary! Sweetheart! My own dear wife!"

He sank on one knee before that strange figure, like a knight waiting to receive her approbation, or blessing. I think he reached for her hand. I don't know whether he took it or not—things were so vague and shadowy in that corner. Besides, somehow it seemed too sacred a moment for me to intrude. I turned the other way, walking back to the door, waiting.

AFTER what I thought was a long time, I looked again. If there had been any Presence in that corner, it was fading—mingling itself again with the shadows. Spurling was rising to his feet. As he approached me his features were glorified with a far-off look of happiness that rarely comes to us mortals. He put a hand on my shoulder.

"It was Mary, my wife," he said in an awed voice. "She died here in the hospital two years ago. I couldn't get to her in time—I think I told you about it once. I—I've always wanted to say good-by to her. Not good-by, really, but *au revoir*.

"Somehow—" he hesitated and then

squared his shoulders, "I can go on now. I'm a better man for this night. I can go on, facing the world, happy again, waiting patiently now for the time I can go to her. No suicide—as the boy attempted. Waiting, making my life full, until it's time to go. Would you—would you care to come with me to the—the place across the street?"

I went, of course. The little churchyard was very quiet. We found our way along until we came to a stone marked "Mary Spurling."

Maybe you think this was all a mirage. Maybe you'll say we two old fellows hypnotized ourselves into believing all we saw and did and that from a stress of emotion we conjured up things in our brains. Put it any way you like—but I'm stating the facts as they appeared to me.

Frost had seared the foliage and the sharp breath of the wind told us winter was just ahead. But on the grave of Mary Spurling the light from a neighboring street lamp showed a small green vine creeping up the stone, with a tiny pink blossom on it, fully open. Spurling bent and picked it, folding it reverently in his wallet.

"In memory of her," he said, half apologetically.

He straightened and turned.

"Shall we go?" he asked. "Mary's work is done on earth. I'll wait gladly now until it's time to go to her. We—we've said *au revoir*—until we meet again. We—we won't see her anymore."

And we never did. The strange woman who haunted the corridors never was seen there again.

PLAGIARISM Is Literary or Artistic THEFT

So widespread has this evil become that the publishers of GHOST STORIES Magazine take this means of announcing that they will prosecute to the limit of the law any person or persons found guilty of this offense.

Stories submitted to this magazine come through the *United States Mail*. Before acceptance the author sends *through the mail* an affidavit, sworn to, attesting to the fact that the story is an *original literary composition*. The check in payment for an accepted story also transmitted *through the mail*, when endorsed by the author, contains a similar warranty as to *authorship and originality*.

Despite these safeguards there are some people bold enough to deliberately copy stories from other publications and submit them as their own.

Those who have been or will be guilty of such practice *will be prosecuted to the hilt*. Any co-operation from our readers is invited.

The publishers of GHOST STORIES Magazine will not permit you to be cheated.

What was the one unfinished task
that kept the phantom genius
earth-bound?



"Mon dieu!"
Fanchon cried.
"The thing is
—hellish!"

The MASTER STROKE

As told to GUY FOWLER

IN the spring of 1929 I came to the United States from Paris, bringing back to his own beloved country the paintings of my friend, the late Bruce Glendon. I kept for myself a single canvas, unfinished at the time of his death ten years before.

The story of Glendon's tragic end in a duel with Jean Fanchon, the art critic, is known even now to only the few who were his most intimate acquaintances. Among them, of course, is Denise Latour, the exquisite model for whom he fought and died that morning in the secluded woods of the Bois.

In the records of the Paris police his death is attributed to accidental shooting by his own hand. Even that is a forgotten episode to all except myself and Jean Fanchon. We two have reason to remember.

It was then, on the morning of Monday, July 18th, as I was preparing to return to Europe, that an *Associated Press* cable appeared in *The New York Times* with arresting news.

This amazing dispatch reported that the ghost of John Singer Sargent, the great American portrait painter, was believed to have returned to haunt his old studio in the Chelsea district of London. The story intrigued me for various reasons.

For one thing I, myself, am an artist of sorts and in my younger days was privileged to know Sargent rather informally. Added to this, of course, was the possibility that in that vague netherworld, the spirit of my friend, Bruce Glendon, might at last have gotten in touch with that of the genius he had so admired in life.

The reliability of *The New York Times*,

as well as of the *Associated Press*, is so well known and generally acknowledged that a hardened skeptic could scarcely question them in a matter of such significance.

I knew, for instance, that the cable was correct when it mentioned the unfinished portrait of Princess Mary, upon which Sargent had been engaged when he died. And by a natural association of ideas, I remembered vividly the one canvas which Glendon had left not quite complete.

The account from London stirred me to the depths. But its true significance was not to overwhelm me until I arrived in Paris, there to learn more of Glendon's greatness in life—and afterward. . . .

I HAVE said that I am an artist. The fact is that I am an unknown failure. Nevertheless, I have continued to maintain the studio in *Notre Dame Des Champs* on the left bank of the Seine, where Glendon shared with me the Bohemian life of our kind.

Accordingly, when my ship landed at Cherbourg, I immediately hastened to these quarters so hallowed by memory.

The familiar disorder greeted me. Glendon had always flung his belongings about with that charming abandon which was so essentially a part of his character. His last canvas stood on the easel covered by a drape. I drew the dusty cloth away and stepped back to study the subject. The significance of the scene was poignant, alive with the sympathetic understanding that was Glendon's greatest asset.

I recalled his words the morning he died. We were standing together before the canvases which yet required the finishing touches of his magic brush. He had titled it ironically—"Peace."

"I saw it once in Flanders, Paul," Glendon had said. "The woman was carrying on. Her man was buried somewhere at the front. She still had the cottage—what was left of it—and the baby."

I studied the scene again with new interest. In the foreground it showed a woman planting a strip of barren earth. She was amber-skinned and the peculiar quality of light which Glendon had worked into the oils was reflected in her tawny eyes. Her peasant dress could not conceal the grace of her body, nor her lowly occupation obscure the glory of her spirit.

In the background a plow horse drooped in the sunlight. The furrows the woman had turned lay open and raw. Close by there was a tree, its trunk and limbs gro-

tesquely severed, as so many were in France after 1914. There was a thatched cottage supported by leaning timbers and in its roof there gaped a shell hole. A child was playing on a heap of straw.

I remembered now how my voice choked when I first saw it.

"Denise Latour was the model supreme, Bruce, was she not?"

He had laughed softly.

"Strange," his voice came back to me again, "that she had exactly that expression in her eyes—that same tragic courage."

The studio, when I first entered it on my return, was heavy with the warmth of Paris in July. Now, suddenly, while I stood before Glendon's canvas the room became oddly chill. I half turned.

A voice like a whisper that was Glendon's spoke in the shadows. I gasped and whirled.

"Steady, old man. Don't be disturbed."

Glendon faced me from the gloom.

"*Mon Dieu!*" I cried out. "You—Bruce—it cannot be!"

He raised his hand in a familiar gesture.

"It is I, Paul. My work—you understand, it is not finished."

"But—"

My voice failed. My body trembled and I felt vaguely ashamed of the uncanny fear that possessed me. Perhaps, I thought swiftly, that story of Sargent had gone to my brain and this was madness.

"Yes," the steady voice wafted on the still air, "it is the same with Sargent, my friend. He, too, left work unfinished. But I—" he hesitated strangely—"I have more than—a painting to consider."

Still I could not speak.

"You can help me, Paul." The shadowy figure moved closer and halted a dozen feet from the canvas.

"I—I will do anything in my power," I managed to say.

"GOOD." The tone lifted. "You can begin here—where I left off." He indicated the unfinished painting.

"I?" My voice rose feebly. "Bruce, I would ruin it. I haven't the talent."

He waved my protest aside with a gesture.

"Come, I shall show you. Later," he turned great somber eyes upon mine, "there is a bigger task. This will give you the trick of it, my friend."

I went to work mechanically. The indistinct shadow stood over my shoulder; the voice gradually soothed me into a vague sort

of coma in which my hand and eyes strangely coordinated.

"A touch of sepia on the shadow of the woman, Paul."

At length I finished. I turned, half expecting to stare into a void, to discover that I had gone mad. But the tall figure remained. He nodded gravely.

"Now the signature."

"But Bruce, you wrote your name. I can't—"

"Just remember the long down stroke on the G. You'll do it."

I bent down to obey. The brush stroked the canvas swiftly. I stared at Glendon's signature done by my hand. It was perfect. It would defy detection by the most skilled art connoisseurs in Europe.

"Excellent."

That calm voice now carried warm approval.

"Say nothing of this, Paul." He stood over me, gazing down at the finished work with friendly eyes. "I will return presently—for a greater purpose."

"Bruce," I dropped the brush and struggled to my feet. "Tell me—"

But the ghostly vision melted into the shadows and vanished. I was alone, staring into the silent depths of the studio. I went to the couch beside the wall and threw myself upon it, exhausted and sick with dread.

When I awakened I went swiftly to the easel. The finished painting, the perfect signature, were convincing proof that I had not been lost in the fantasy of a dream. I determined to exhibit the canvas as the last work by Bruce Glendon, brought to light a decade after his death.

I scarcely need to remind those familiar with art that this Glendon canvas, "Peace," created something of a sensation in Paris. The critics, with a single stunning excep-

tion, were unanimous in their lavish praise.

The one dissenting voice came harshly from Jean Fanchon.

"The subject," he proclaimed curtly, "was too tremendous for the hand that stroked the canvas. Unfortunately, the late Bruce Glendon was swept by his theme into the mediocrity of melodrama. His detail is tiresome and minute."

I READ the words through a mist of rage. The injustice of Fanchon's attack was fiendish. My thoughts swept me back to the scene that morning in the *Bois*—to the duel between Bruce and Fanchon. I thought, for a desperate moment, of challenging Fanchon myself.

Oddly, as it had on that first occasion, my studio became suddenly cold and fearful. There was an unearthly quality in the draft and again I spun about.

"You must not take it so hard, Paul."

The tall wraith stood between me and the fireplace, yet through the shadowy form I could see the andirons and the metal shafts of the grate.

"I know of a better way, my friend."

He shrugged—a gesture I remembered perfectly.

"I have no interest in the sayings of Jean Fanchon." The voice sounded hollowly in my ears. "But the thing he is *doing*—that is different!"

My hot rage against Fanchon

gave me a sort of strength. I spoke savagely.

"He is a beast, Bruce. He should be made to suffer."

The ghost of Bruce Glendon came toward me. I knew it for what it was and steeled myself for what was coming.

"Yes," the voice murmured, "he is a beast."

There was a brief silence, so intense that my heart throbbing in my breast, drummed in my ears.

It was this item in the *New York Times* which, as Paul Du Bois says, "stirred him to the depths" and subsequently caused the weird events which are here narrated.

LONDON, July 17 (A.P.)—The ghost of John Singer Sargent, the American artist, in his grave these last two years, has returned to haunt the Chelsea studio where he died, in the belief of the present occupants of the house.

Frequently his footsteps are heard by Alfred Orr, his American artist friend, who took over the studio sixteen months ago. He says that they descend from the second floor workroom to the ground floor room in which Sargent died, and which now is used as a bedroom by Mr. and Mrs. Orr.

The latter also has heard footsteps which she recognized as Sargent's heavy tread. The American master was tall and heavy set and had a distinctive walk known to all his friends in the Chelsea artists' colony. Mr. Orr has no explanation for the mystery other than that Sargent has come back to the studio in which he rose to fame and in which he died while painting a portrait of Princess Mary.

"Sometimes when I hear footsteps," he said, "I call out 'Come in, Pop!'—we all used to call him Pop Sargent—but then they cease and I do not hear them again for several days."

"He has found Denise Latour. It is that which brings me back."

I sprang to my feet.

"I'll kill him, Bruce!"

The gaunt face was lowered so that I could see the thoughtful eyes, the seamed cheeks. He slowly shook his head.

"No, Paul, not that. I have a better way."

I waited in silence.

"To-morrow night," he said, "I will come to you at this hour. We will begin then. Have a canvas on the easel, Paul. Clean my old brushes. We will try an experiment."

THERE crept into the voice a note of triumph that was almost like the quality of joy that always sounded in the old days when Bruce spoke of his work.

"Think over the past," he told me quietly.

"Remember how Fanchon and I first quarreled—and why. Then, to-morrow, Paul, I shall have work for you—great work—and later, a story you have never heard."

I shrank back aghast.

"Do you mean, Bruce, that I am to attempt your work again? I tell you, I cannot—"

But the figure already was vanishing, misty as a breath of fog in the wind. The voice floated back distantly.

"Ah, but you can, my friend. I'll see to that."

I sank into my chair beside the easel. What did he mean, I questioned myself, by that admonition to trace the past? I knew, of course, that Bruce had considered the girl, Denise Latour, second only to his work. That was why he had never taken her. Moreover, she was then but a child of seventeen.

"She will always be second to my work," he had said to me. "Nothing can come before it. So you understand, old man, I couldn't subject her to that. It is not enough—a woman must have all."

He had pondered thoughtfully, in wistful sadness, and then added vehemently:

"But I would do anything to save her from Fanchon!"

It was soon after this that the climax came. There were whispers in the boulevard cafés when Bruce and Denise appeared together. Vile whispers they were and baseless, that had originated in some evil mind. Then, on an evening so gentle that it seemed impossible for hatred to exist, Glendon and Fanchon came face to face.

"You are a liar, Fanchon," said Paul abruptly. "Also, you are a poor loser."

The debonair critic had smiled.

"Surely," came his cutting reply, "one may scarcely consider Denise Latour a loss."

"Don't speak her name again. You're not fit!" Glendon's eyes had gleamed like the points of bayonets in the sun. "If I ever hear that you've mentioned her name again, I shall give you a real American beating."

That was the beginning of the tragic end. Those who saw and heard it brought the facts to me as I have described them.

"Bah," Fanchon had sneered, "you forget yourself—you and your model."

Glendon struck swiftly. His open palm left a crimson mark on the critic's cheek. Fanchon stepped back, his narrowed eyes glittering.

"A gentleman," he said, touching his face, "does not fight with a pig. He butchers the beast."

And then Glendon said a cryptic thing. I did not understand it at the time I was told of it, but now I do.

"Perhaps," he replied, smiling, "you remember a pig crawling in the mud."

Fanchon's challenge came in the morning. I was aghast. He was an expert with the pistol and notorious with the foils.

"Bruce" I pleaded, "this is outrageous. We are in the Twentieth Century. Come, let us laugh at him and forget it."

But Glendon only laughed at me instead.

There were five of us in the party, including the surgeon, for whom there was no need. Fanchon, confident and smiling, his second—a man with whom I was unacquainted—Glendon and myself, met in a secluded section of the *Bois* at sunrise.

We had taken precautions to avoid the police. It was agreed that whichever of the two was hit would be carried swiftly to his own quarters. If explanations became necessary, it would be said that the shooting was accidental.

IT was quickly done with. At the signal, Fanchon wheeled and fired. It seemed impossible that he could have sighted along the barrel of his weapon. Bruce faced him stiffly for an instant, smiling.

Then he tossed the pistol aside and fell forward. I caught him and lowered him to the ground. His eyes already were veiled with the curtain of approaching death. He died in my arms before the surgeon could bare the wound.

There was no thought of work in my heart as I awaited the return of that gaunt shadow from the world beyond. I stood before the blank canvas half in fear. It was

much the same as when I sat idle at a table, or at a telephone. I suddenly found myself stroking the expanse of white canvas with crayon. It was done subconsciously, with no thought of subject or design.

From the top of the canvas to the center I swept across in long curving strokes a horizontal arc of shadow. Beneath it I blocked in a heavier darkness, in perpendicular strokes now, which gave the illusion of a black pit in the brooding gloom of night.

My studio was dim in the yellow glow of the gas flame which burned fitfully above my easel. The chill breath of the night struck my back. It was damp, like a fog on the Seine. From the shadows behind me I heard the voice.

"You have it there, Paul. You must deepen the shadows in the foreground. The light must come from overhead, you remember."

I spun about involuntarily. There was nothing to be seen, but the room was full of his presence. Then gradually Bruce appeared. Tonight he wore his old smock as he had when he worked.

"Steady, old man. You have an excellent start. Go on, I shall watch you." The voice was soothing.

I turned to the canvas. My hand was steady enough, though my nerves recoiled and my brain was seething.

Studying the thing I had commenced, I suddenly recognized the blocked mass of crayon shadows for what it represented. Those sweeping horizontal lines became a troubled sky. The deeper shadows in perpendicular strokes now formed a ragged scar in the earth.

"The barbed wire fence in the background, Paul. Just a suggestion, you know."

My hand responded to a power not my own. "Now the figures."

The masterful voice seemed far away and again I felt the dank draft on my back.

"Watch the lights, Paul. You remember how a bayonet gleams—high up on the blade. Get your shadows low—that's it. You've got it!"

I did not trust myself to speak. Like a man under the spell of a hypnotist I worked on through the night. Sweat poured from

my body. My legs trembled, but my hand, strangely enough, was steadier than it had ever been when I tried to set my own ideas down. There was magic in the crayon and all the while the voice kept drawing the scene as I reproduced it stroke by stroke.

"An excellent beginning, Paul. It will be an amazing thing."

I faced about. Glendon stood thoughtfully with his chin cupped in one hand. My gaze followed his to the sketch. Rough



"Now—" the inexorable voice went on—"for the masterstroke"

though it was, I realized that its detail was beyond my talent.

"The figures," he said dreamily, "are not quite true. The one must be inert—no action whatever."

Life seemed to flow into my fingers at the sound and understanding coursed through my whole being.

"THERE is a scattering of papers," the voice suggested. "The man on his knees has been reading them. There is a map sketched on one—a chart of our sector."

I found myself filling in the scene with swift skill.

"That is it, exactly, Paul. You have caught the atmosphere. Now—the color."

"*Mon Dieu!*" I cried. "Color! Do you expect me to lay it on—in the night light?"

The shadowed head bent quickly.

"You have something more than human power tonight. Go on. The whole *motif* is indigo and green. Even their flesh is touched with it."

Driven by a strange force, I again took up palette and brushes. I worked as I had

never done in all my life. My eyes burned and my legs faltered. As the last gray moments of approaching dawn wore on, the insistent voice came nearer.

"That blue is perfect. The green highlights, too. You've got the glitter of the 'Very' light remarkably."

He bent over my shoulder to study the figures in the pit.

"Now," he slowly straightened, "for the master stroke."

I returned to the task. With a genius that was never mine I fashioned the face of the kneeling soldier. Suddenly I cried out and sprang away.

"BRUCE, Bruce, *Mon Dieu!* I am going mad. I have painted—your face!"

"Quite so, Paul. A good likeness, too. Now the other."

Some secret strength stole into my veins and again I bent to the canvas. At length I straightened. My nerves were tingling with some grotesque dread that I could not understand.

Never had I touched brush to canvas with such deft certainty, such sureness in minute detail. Never until now had I been able to make a sheet of stretched rag and a daub of oil become a living thing.

"Those faces," said the voice of Bruce Glendon, "are portraits in miniature. You have put them down as they were, Paul."

I stared at the painted faces. The kneeling figure was Glendon beyond a doubt. The other, likewise in the horizon blue of France, was, to my amazement, indisputably—Fanchon!

"Paul," I gasped. "It is a picture of—treachery! You have made him a—a traitor!"

"Yes," said the voice quietly. "I shall call it—'The Light of Truth'."

My hands fell to my sides.

"No one will believe I did it," I spoke aloud and the voice sounded unlike my own.

"Ah, your signature—in the lower left."

I obeyed mechanically.

There it stood, a creation of the nether-world, an amazing thing beyond any inspiration that had ever been mine. Yet it bore my name and my hand had created it. I found the strength to face him.

"Is it—true, Bruce? What am I to do now?"

He continued to study the painting. Directly he turned to me.

"You will ask Fanchon to come here to-night, Paul. Tell him there is a document

that he should see. That will bring him. I shall return."

I sank down into a chair, too overcome for speech.

"*Au revoir*, my friend. You have done well—in a noble cause." The voice broke. "You know, Paul, how much I loved her."

The voice died away as the faint, rose-colored dawn climbed up behind the turrets of *Notre Dame*.

Late in the evening I awakened from the sleep of exhaustion. Haggard and unkempt though I was, I walked across the *Pont Neuf*. A suspicious taxi driver eyed me doubtfully as I gave him Fanchon's address on the *Champs Elysées*. Presently, I was admitted to the luxurious apartment. Fanchon himself met me in the drawing room. He gazed at me questioningly, amused by my appearance.

"You wish to see me, *Monsieur?*" His tone was cool, insolent.

"I have to ask you to my studio," I replied. "There is a certain document you should see. I am unarmed."

I flung my hands out from my sides offering him the opportunity to search me, for I could see that he thought me on the verge of madness.

"You may carry your own weapon. I mean you no harm," I added.

His expression changed. He studied me intently.

"A document," he repeated. "What interest can it have for me?"

"It will have, *Monsieur.*"

"Very well, I will go."

We returned to my garret studio in Fanchon's car driven by his chauffeur. He would not trust himself with me alone. His coat pocket bulged sufficiently to indicate the outline of his pistol. We were silent on the journey. I could see that he was immensely curious and a little uneasy.

I PRECEDED him into my shabby quarters. Night had come and the room was in gloom. It smelled of stale tobacco and coffee. Fanchon paused at the threshold. His eyes traveled quickly about, making sure that we were alone. His chauffeur waited just outside, within easy call.

"This document," he demanded curtly.

"Yes," I told him, "in a moment."

He was gazing at the easel over which I had draped a faded shawl from the Orient. The voice of Bruce Glendon seemed to speak in my brain, though his shadowy image was nowhere to be seen.

"Pull down the rag, Paul. Show *Monsieur* Fanchon your masterpiece."

I moved involuntarily. Fanchon too, was startled, but his emotion was caused by my sudden gesture. Swiftly, I drew the shawl from the easel.

Fanchon stood before it transfixed. His body stiffened. For a long minute he stood tense like a carven image. I saw his gaze dart over the canvas from the high white light in the indigo sky down to the shadowed ground and at last to the crater that was a shell hole. As he stared at the faces of the figures there, pale in the greenish glow of that strange light, he gasped.

His eyes caught the scattered papers beside the kneeling figure. His hands clenched at his sides and his face became a mask of agony. He bent down to study the minute tracery of a map on one of the scattered sheets; my work had been that fine in detail. His mouth fell open as he gazed at the face of the kneeling soldier on which there was neither fear, nor pain, but only contempt.

Suddenly Fanchon raised a hand before his eyes. He staggered and with his other hand outflung, braced himself against the wall.

"It is—terrible," he cried. *Mon Dieu*—the thing is—hellish!"

"I thought it a very fine piece of work, *Monsieur*," I spoke quietly. "I had hoped that as a critic you might agree with me."

But Fanchon had no words for the moment. He leaned back against the wall and his little eyes fled from the canvas to my face.

He pointed suddenly to my signature.

"Glendon did this." His voice trembled.

"No," I told him. "It is mine."

"You!" His tone had a quavering note of anguish. "How could you—the likenesses—the scene—"

"But I assure you, *Monsieur*, it is mine."

His shoulders sagged and he clutched at a chair for support. His throat was working convulsively. I became aware again of Glendon's voice as though it spoke inside my brain.

"Warn him, Paul. Now is the time. Tell him he must never see Denise Latour again."

Fanchon was on his knees suddenly, staring at those weird figures in oils. He

raised one hand and shielded his eyes. I bent down and touched his quivering shoulder.

"*Monsieur*," I said quietly, "I have a warning for you."

He looked up at me without attempting to rise. I have never seen a human so abject. "You must never see *Mademoiselle* Latour again. Have I your promise?"

A moment passed before he grasped the meaning of my words. Then he struggled to his feet.

"Will you then destroy this?" he pointed to the canvas I had just shown to him.

I hesitated.

"Yes," said the voice of Bruce Glendon.

I nodded.

Fanchon's hands clutched at mine. His face was working in a spasm of torture.

"Ah, *Monsieur*, I will do anything—anything—if you will destroy

this—thing!" he answered.

"You will let Denise Latour go her way forever?" I persisted.

"On my honor."

I smiled sardonically.

"Very well, go."

He continued to hold my hand.

"Now, *Monsieur*, now I beg of you, destroy—that thing."

"I have given you my word," I told him sternly. "Very well."

He bowed his head and drew himself up. He started heavily toward the door.

"It is ungodly," he muttered. "It is Glendon's—detail."

I stood alone. The strange glow of the painting seemed to cast a vague unholy radiance. A dank breath of air struck my face. I stared into the shadowed depths and once again was gazing into the brooding eyes of Glendon.

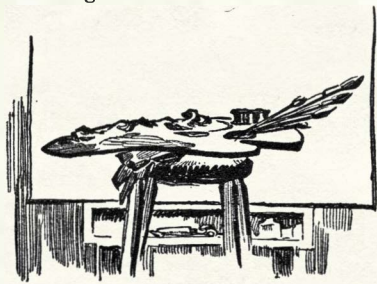
"PAUL," the voice drifted thinly, "you have done well. I shall be in peace now—forever."

"Will he keep his word?" I asked wearily, too exhausted for emotion.

"Yes," there was conviction in the tone. "He will—this time."

I leaned against the wall as Fanchon had done, not entirely certain that I myself was not the victim of some awful nightmare.

"I promised to reveal the story," the voice added. "the story of—our painting."



"Yes," I breathed as I sank into a chair. There was a lingering silence before he spoke again.

"You knew, of course, that Fanchon was a lieutenant in my regiment?"

"Yes." I recalled that Bruce had become a sergeant in the French infantry early in 1914.

"Naturally," he resumed in a reminiscent tone, "we had a great deal in common. He knew everything about art. I had high hopes, if I got out of the mess with my hands and eyes unmarred. That was before the States came into the war at all."

I WATCHED his face in the shadows. His head was bowed and he seemed old and worn by the memory.

"I was at a listening post alone." He seemed to be back again in the rumble of artillery, the harsh rattle of machine guns and the hell of the front line.

"You remember how it was out there, Paul. Anything that crawled got your attention instantly."

I nodded swiftly, remembering.

"Well," he resumed, "I heard something crawling. I watched in the 'Very' lights and directly I saw it."

The air in the studio was vibrant as I waited for him to go on.

"The fellow was crawling on his belly like a lizard. He was going toward the enemy lines. In the mud and slime he was coated so thickly that I couldn't make out his uniform. He might have been a German getting back to his trench—or one of our men reconnoitering."

Again he paused.

"Anyway," he resumed, "the thing was taken out of my hands. A light flared up and a sniper caught him. He rolled over in the mud and squealed. I went out to get him—to make sure."

I stared up to find those burning eyes on mine.

"It was Fanchon. I managed to drag him into a shell-hole. But a sniper got me while I was doing it. Not bad, though. I tore Fanchon's blouse away to examine his wound. It was in his chest. Some papers fell from his pocket."

I saw the shoulders beneath the filmy cov-

ering move in a contemptuous shrug. The voice resumed.

"He was babbling—in German. Thought he was in their lines. I looked at the papers under a 'Very' light. There was a map of our sector. Figures on our strength and all that. For a moment I thought of letting him have another bullet—but I didn't. I destroyed the papers."

Now the ghostly voice came in broken jerky sentences, staccato and harsh.

"After all—he had been my friend. I started back—dragging him. We got across finally. I fainted as we fell over the sand-bags."

I stared at him in shocked realization.

"Fanchon and I landed in the same base hospital," he added. "Denise Latour," he halted over the name, "was a student nurse."

He shrugged again.

"The rest you know, Paul. I've never told anyone. You see now, why Fanchon was so anxious to put me out of the way."

"*Mon Dieu!*" The exclamation burst from my lips. "But tell me," I begged, "why have you protected him these ten years—and before?"

"Because, my friend, it was a slip. He was never a traitor again. And I thought, at first, that he loved Denise—purely. I knew, you understand, that I could never have her. I did not wish to betray him and ruin her. Do you understand?"

Slow comprehension flooded my brain.

"Then only when you knew that he was evil—that he meant to harm her—you did this?" I indicated the canvas.

"Exactly, Paul. And that is why Fanchon will keep his word. He knows I did it."

There was silence.

"And that," said the voice wearily, "is all. You have done me a great service, Paul. And now, *mon ami*—farewell. . . ."

I was staring into the blank gloom. I tried to speak, but words choked in my throat. My eyes were blinded with sudden tears. The phantom figure had vanished.

Very deliberately, then, I picked up a scalpel knife from the tray. Its glittering blade reflected the greenish light that flooded from the painting. I ran the steel through the canvas and struck downward.

I have done no painting since.





"Say you lied," I screamed in fear and anger, "—or I'll kill you!"

GAMBLER'S GOLD

How a dead man's curse and a fatal card ruined "Lucky Chambino"

I RELEASED the pulse of Fernande Chambino, and his arm fell listlessly back on the white sheet. He spoke with extreme difficulty.

"Go ahead, Doc, you can tell me."

I regarded him speculatively.

"Yes, Chambino," I agreed, "I can tell you. You'll live an hour, maybe two, but that's all. You've enough oxalic acid in your system to kill you twice over. But knowing you as I do, I can hardly believe that you would do a thing like this—commit deliberate suicide."

"Suicide?" Chambino's voice held a sardonic note. "Well—maybe. You say I'll live an hour. Then listen and decide for yourself whether it's suicide or—well, listen—"

My story begins with an ace of spades—and ends there. Just the black-pipped ace of spades—that one card out of the fifty-two.

By
JACK D'ARCY

To anyone else, it's just a good card to hold, or money in the bank when held along with two others, but to me, well, it's just a spade. A spade to dig with—to shovel with. Every time I turn the card I hear it rattle the first shovelful of dirt on my coffin. But thank God I've seen it for the last time tonight.

As you know I'm a gambler. I lived that way all my life, until the first coming of the black ace, and I'll die that way, too. There was no one more flashy or quick with a pack of cards than I; and I had a hand that was just as quick on a gun. This was back in the days when Nevada was a waste of dusty desert, with a hell-hole gambling town around every well of water.

I was called "Lucky Chambino." I was lucky. Dame Fortune smiled on me, gave me hunches, backed up my bluffs, froze out the other guys. And if at times I forced

my luck a bit in a pinch, with a cold deck or a fast pass—well, what of it? It's too late for regrets.

There are still quite a few old timers who can remember the day when Mino was a ramshackle, dusty, flea-bitten collection of shacks, every one of them dedicated to that unholy trinity—Cards, Rum and Women. There was always a fair amount of play. Though the stakes were never tremendously big, the games were pretty regular and there was always, some new sand-bitten man trekking into town with a fresh run of yellow gold.

I WAS pretty comfortable. Lucky Chambino was sitting in clover. Nothing to do all day but loll at the bars and match for drinks between yarns. And when this would pall it was the easiest thing in the world to turn the corner to the row of houses beyond, there to entertain the girls with a few clever passes from a deck of cards. They were an appreciative, goggle-eyed bunch and I liked 'em all.

For two years I made money, spent it and still had some left over. Pretty regularly, my pile was growing down in the Express Office safe. As my stakes grew larger and the luck of Lucky Chambino became a byword, it became harder and harder to get the boys to play against me.

"Too lucky," they said jokingly.

One night, things were pretty slow. I sat at my table and ran the chips through my fingers. After a spell of this, I riffled the deck a few times, slapping the two halves together after the cut with a sharp, clear, staccato flip. But the bait drew no one to my table and I had made up my mind that it was time to pull up my tent stakes and haul—when it happened.

The swinging doors were pushed slowly open and a tall, gaunt, cadaverous figure walked noiselessly into the room. A profound silence was punctuated by an audible gasp here and there as the man's features were recognized. A dancing girl giggled nervously. Someone dropped a poker chip and the resultant click sounded like a roar of thunder. The bartender wiped his brow with a beery bar cloth. Simpkins, a man we still called "Sheriff" because he had been that fifteen years ago, reached for his gun, stopped and said hoarsely. "It's Swenson, or—or his ghost."

The tall stranger opened his skeleton-like jaw and spoke. His voice was a grating monotone.

"Yes," he said. "It's Swenson, back from the grave."

That's exactly what his voice sounded like—as though it were being projected from the tomb.

Again the ex-sheriff broke an awesome silence.

"You died fifteen years ago, Swenson, when I lost you on the desert."

Swenson's laugh sounded like an echo from a dank cavern.

"Maybe I did, and maybe I didn't. Anyway I've got some gold that's real enough."

He strode to the bar and tossed down the fiery liquid that the pallid bartender set before him.

Oscar Swenson was a Swede. One of the old-timers. He had prospected over Nevada's deserts for the past twenty years and there was no one who knew their trackless wastes better than he. He had been a bad man too, in his day, and with a two-gun Sheriff and a lynching posse close on his heels, had started off on foot over the great stretch of sand, with nothing but a pint of acrid water. The Sheriff lost three of his men in the dazzling, burning waste, before he gave up the hunt for Swenson as a hopeless task.

Yes, everybody had thought Swenson dead. As time went by his name became but a memory, a tradition. And then that night, years later—he came calmly walking out of the desert into our bar.

No one knew where he had been. . . . No one knew how he had come out of that baking hell alive. But there he was—tall, gaunt and emaciated. And he had brought back with him in the deep pockets of his shirt—gold, the finest nuggets I had ever seen.

THAT was his first visit and thereafter he came and went unmolested. He would be away days and weeks—and then just as suddenly he would return. And he always brought back with him more and more of those dull, yellow nuggets.

There were men in those early days who tried to discover his secret but Swenson didn't seem to mind. He knew they couldn't follow him. He had a peculiar mastery over the uncharted desert sands. Many a man trekked doggedly after him, only to return a day or so later, disgusted, distraught and disappointed. They told strange, fantastic, unbelievable tales. That sun, that terrific sun! No man's sanity could withstand it. With men close on his heels Swenson would lose himself like a pillar of sand.

The particular night of which I speak was the occasion of one of the periodical returns of Swenson.

No sooner had he entered the door than everyone crowded round him to see again the color of his treasure. Hilarity and happy anticipation prevailed; for the hangers-on knew from long experience that Swenson was soon parted from his crude wealth.

He did not disappoint them. He bought and bought and none went thirsty who had the tongue to speak. It seemed to take gallons of the raw whiskey to wash down the dust in Swenson's throat.

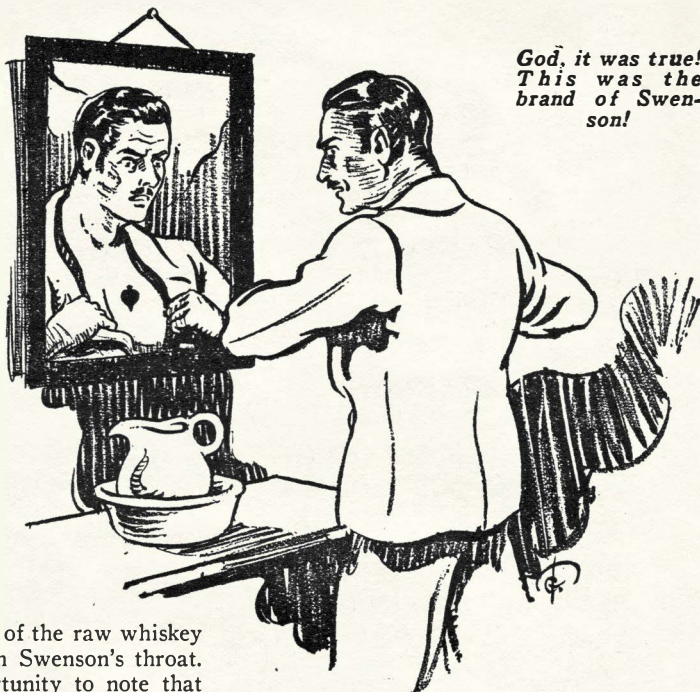
I had plenty of opportunity to note that Swenson had returned with a much greater store of gold than usual. The drinking had gone far enough. It was my turn for a share of the spoils. I went over to the bar, drank a few rounds with him and then suggested we cut for drinks. He agreed. From there, it didn't take me long to get him to the table.

For the first half hour, the play was pretty even. I saw to it that the other players won a few dollars. I was taking no chances of the game breaking up for the lack of money or interest on their part. Swenson's gold was what I wanted.

It didn't take much to arouse his gambling instinct. The stakes increased and I played my cards for what they were worth. Slowly my store of gold increased and again and again Swenson's hairy hand disappeared into the dark recess of some concealed pocket, to pile on the table more and more nuggets.

The smoke of vile tobacco hung heavy over the table and, as the stakes increased, a grim, silent tension gripped the players. They hitched their chairs closer to the table and their low, terse phrases were only broken by the crisp flick of cards and the seductive music of a stack of chips run through the fingers of a nervous player.

Fortune favored me. I won. Heavily. Never before had I such a night. Purpose-



*God, it was true!
This was the
brand of Swenson!*

ly, I would lose an occasional small pot to one of the other players. Swenson lost more and more heavily. He tried the foolish thing of forcing his luck by playing desperately, wide open. He only succeeded in hurrying his downfall.

The inevitable came at last. The last hand.

The cards were dealt. Swenson looked at his and shoved across the green felt the last of his poke. I looked at my own hand and found a king-high inside straight to draw to. I needed a jack to fill. I stayed and matched Swenson's pile on the table. The other three threw down their hands. I filled. As Swenson had no more gold we immediately showed our cards. As I had expected he, too, had a straight—but mine was just one card higher.

FOR a long time Swenson stared fixedly at the cards. No word was spoken. The two hands remained face up on the table. Then slowly, Swenson raised his head and glared directly at me. His deep set burning eyes sought mine and held them. I felt that he could see into my very soul. I shuffled my feet uneasily and dropped my eyes. I could still feel his piercing stare stabbing into my brain. Then a chair scraped as one player rose nervously.

Through the swinging doors in front, the

sky was showing a pale gray in the East. The yellow oil lamp overhead reeked and smoked in the over-heated room and as its garish light fell on Swenson's ashy face he looked like a ghoul. I shuddered. Another chair scraped. Still Swenson did not move. I started pocketing my winnings when I was arrested by his hoarse, cracked voice.

"Wait," he said.

I paused.

"**WAIT.**" Again he repeated the word. He was thinking hard. At last he took his eyes from mine and without another word he reached into his pocket and pulled forth a crumpled bit of parchment. Everyone felt that something momentous was in the air. Looking hard at me, Swenson slowly unfolded the paper and spread it out, face up, on the table. He immediately covered it with his large hand, but not before every man of us had seen that it was a map or chart of some sort.

The same thought burned into all our minds at once. Here was the secret of Swenson's gold mine! That bit of parchment spelled fortune to its possessor.

He must have read our thoughts.

"Yes," he said. "This is the secret."

Every man at the table held his breath. All eyes were strained at Swenson's wide-spread hand.

"We will play for this as stakes?" It was a question and Swenson directed it at me.

My heart raced faster as I slowly nodded. Here at last was a fortune—a real fortune—untold wealth to be decided by the turn of a card.

We agreed to deal two hands face up on the table, the higher to take all. A depressing, ominous silence filled the room. My hands were clammy as I prepared to play for the highest stake for which I had ever gambled. Dancing girls and hangers-on crowded around the table. The tension in the air became positively physical. Swenson alone remained unmoved. He gazed straight before him—past us all—through the very wall back of the bar.

"We'll cut," I said. "High card gets the deal."

Swenson nodded.

The Sheriff shuffled the deck for the cut. He put them down in front of Swenson.

The Swede, without removing his fixed stare from the wall, cut.

"Ten of diamonds," he said. I started. *He hadn't even looked at the card!*

I nervously reached across the table and

cut a king. The silence grew more ominous.

"Deal," said Swenson.

I summoned every ounce of my will to steady my rebellious fingers. I shuffled. I dealt.

The trey of diamonds went to Swenson. I got the jack of hearts. Swenson drew a queen; I, the ace of hearts. On the fourth card Swenson had no pair with queen the high card. My top was the ace.

The air was electric and my pulse hit a steady 160.

Swenson's last card was the trey of clubs. A fortune was slipping from my grasp. I fingered the cards nervously. Swenson ignored me and studied his pair of treys. With a deft flick that defied the keenest eye, I whipped the ace of spades, which was third from the bottom, onto the table. I glanced quickly around. Had anyone noticed? Swenson still studied his pair. I was safe. He hadn't even watched me deal.

The tension broke in an audible outletting of breath.

"You win," said the ex-sheriff to me.

Swenson's eyes remained fixed on the table.

"He doesn't," he said in a voice that penetrated my very marrow. "He cheated."

My brain whirled. How did he know I had cheated? He wasn't even watching me.

He reached over the table and picked up the ace of spades.

"This," he went on, "was the third card from the bottom."

Panic seized me. Was the man human? The ex-sheriff surveyed me doubtfully. Instinctively I reached for my gun.

"Say you lied," I screamed in fear and anger, "or I'll kill you."

"You can't kill me," said Swenson, but his hand was on his gun.

MY fingers clamped on the trigger before Swenson had completed his draw. He fell on the table silent—dead.

I sank to my chair weak from strain.

"Can't kill you?" I muttered triumphantly. "Well, I have."

But—had I?

"Doc," said Chambino, regarding me intently as I lifted his wrist again, "You've seen death. What do you believe?"

"When the heart ceases to beat," I said, "we pronounce a man dead. When a man is dead, he cannot die again. Whether he can live again. . . ." I finished my sentence with a shrug.

"Doc," said Chambino, with an unearthly

shadow in his eyes, "I have seen a dead man live. Swenson, dead, has lived with me since the night he fell across that table. But did I kill him then? Was he alive for me to kill?"

There was a silence, during which the man on the bed seemed striving with all his seeping strength to penetrate the unknown—that black abyss into which his waning pulse was soon to plunge him.

For a moment, he tottered on the edge of eternity, then his pulse rallied, and he began to speak again.

That night, I went to bed early. I was exhausted. I tossed on my bed for a short time and then fell into a fitful sleep. How long I slept I do not know, but I awoke with a choking constriction in my throat and a strange sound in my ears. My spine prickled with an icy sensation and yet my body burned with fever and the sheets were damp where I had lain.

What had awakened me? The dim outlines of furniture which I knew so well had suddenly become unfamiliar. I glanced across the room and was horrified to see two round burning orbs in the corner. I pulled away to the outer edge of the bed with a start.

Then in a flash I realized that it was my cat, but never before had I seen her eyes so luminous and ghastly. Her back was arched. Every hair on her spine stood separate and distinct. My panic-stricken eyes saw the arc of her back rise still higher till it seemed the spine beneath the bristling hair must crack.

Then, beginning with a demoniac hiss the cat screamed. That is the only word for it. The hideous sound pulsed far back in her throat and grew. And as I watched, her hairy body grew with it—expanded with the rising snarl till it seemed that the volume and the venom of that sound must utterly destroy her. Then it tore out of her throat—a terrified, human scream that beat

through my ears to my brain. I shall never forget it! With an effort I pulled my straining eyes away from the beast.

You will say I woke from a troubled dream and saw a frightened cat. You will say that what followed was the mad imagining of a murderer. But say what you will! Believe what you will! I *know*.

That night, Oscar Swenson came to live with me. And he has lived with me ever since.

THAT night, he was in my room, I tell you. The cat knew it. So did I. I saw him. The beast in the corner screamed again. And as she screamed, she jumped straight for him. She jumped for him—and straight through him, hissing and clawing. Then the screams within my distended throat were unleashed. She landed on my bare chest and clung there. One claw dug a stinging rut in my flesh. Even then I could not lift a finger to remove her.

It is a wonder that I did not die in the madness of that moment. I have wished to

God many times since that I had. But the relentless thing that was Oscar Swenson held me to life and horror, as he has held me ever since.

Oscar Swenson advanced toward my bed. I sensed rather than saw the gray film floating toward me. The courage of agonized desperation came to me, and I flung the screaming cat from me and struggled to rise—to escape. . . .

Then came the culminating horror. Every muscle of my body was paralyzed. Even the lids of my eyes were held wide

open over the dilating pupils.

Oscar Swenson stood beside me. Somewhere in the gray film of horror was the ace of spades! Clutched in unseen fingers, it was slowly and surely pressing down upon me. The single sable pip was growing, enormously, as it approached me, till it seemed that its expanding blackness must cover me, blot me out. . . .



But even oblivion was denied me. Oŝcar Swenson spoke. His voice had the cold hollow ring of the grave.

"Chambino," he said, "The Ace of spades shall mark your breast. You shall carry it through life . . . and after. . ."

The card of death descended. And though the pip upon it had the blackness of unburned coal, a searing, scorching fire bit into my breast.

"It is well, Chambino," said Oŝcar Swenson, and his voice seemed to trail and die as he spoke. "You are branded."

LAY rigid for a long time after I knew he had left me. The gray of dawn was blotting out the moonlight before I dared to lift first one finger, then another.

Someone was sobbing in the room, the deep, tortured sobs of exhaustion. I listened a long time before I realized that the sobs were coming from my own vitals.

Gradually, the sobs slowed and ceased. I could move. I was alive. Perhaps, then, it had all been a horrible dream?

I felt something warm upon my breast. Blood! Involuntarily, I screamed the word. *Blood!*

With a wild leap, I was out of bed. I struck match after match before I managed to light a lamp—and then I staggered to the cracked mirror over the wash-stand.

God! it was true! I smeared away the few drops of coagulating blood, under my heart, and stood rivetted by what I saw.

You will say a terrified cat clawed me and my fevered imagination did the rest. That is what I tried to tell myself. I tore my eyes away from the glass and saw the carcass of the cat sprawled in a corner, where I had flung her. I stood a long time, looking at the broken thing. Had these stiffened claws, then, made that dreadful scar? Had some malevolent intelligence guided the crazed beast to tear into my breast the perfect replica of . . . ?"

I went back to my mirror, and stood before it with closed eyes for a long time. . . .

Then I looked again. On my breast, seared into the flesh, perfect in outline, unwavering, was the ace of spades! This was not the clawing of a frightened cat. This was the brand of Oscar Swenson.

Chambino's long, gaunt fingers were plucking at the covers under his chin in the inevitable gesture of a man doomed to die, but his eyes were burning.

"You do not believe?" he asked, "Look!"

And he tore away the bed clothes, re-

vealing upon his breast a mark I swear I had not noticed when I examined him—a perfect image of the ace of spades, burned into the flesh.

Chambino saw the dawning horror in my eyes.

"Ah," he cried, "You are at last beginning to believe."

[I could not tell him that I had glimpsed what he could not see—the edges of that brand beneath his heart were turning black. I, a doctor, knew that death's decay could not attack his body until it was cold, and yet the impossible was there before my eyes.]

I turned away and he drew the covers up. "What about Oscar Swenson's mine?" I asked. "Did you never . . . ?"

"Ah, the mine," sighed Chambino. "No, it was never found—if it ever existed in a living world."

For days after that horrible night, Oscar Swenson left me in peace. I began to believe that I might escape. I made plans. There was the prospect of untold wealth before me. I sent two men I trusted out into the desert with the map I had purchased from Oscar Swenson with the ace of spades.

Weeks passed. Oscar Swenson returned to me but no word came from the men. I could not play cards. I lost, and lost heavily. Hearts, diamonds, clubs—all changed before my burning eyes—to the ace of spades.

A month passed—two months. Sometimes Oscar Swenson would leave me. Then my luck would change and I would be deliriously happy in the thought that my two men would return at any moment, laden with gold. They never returned—but Oscar Swenson did.

The two men were found long after I had fled Mino. Found in a sun bleached rattling heap—over a pack of cards, and the top card was that damned ace.

"Coincidence," you say. But was it a coincidence that when Oscar Swenson stood behind my shoulder, and he stood there often—was it coincidence that I always held the ace of spades—and lost?

WAS it a coincidence that—but I am tired, too tired to tell you how he followed me, relentlessly—remorselessly—from town to town, from game to game. Once I had been Lucky Chambino. Now I was Unlucky Chambino.

My losing streak never left me. There was no hope. I was growing old. And the periods when Oscar Swenson abandoned me, to go God knows where, grew fewer and

fewer. There had been a time when to realize he was not there was a blessed relief—a chance for hope. Now the days and nights when I was alone were long, agonizing hours of dread.

And always, I bore that terrible scar upon my breast. It held a sinister fascination for me. I would go for days, refusing to concede its existence, but then would come the inescapable moment when I must see it.

IT was so with Oscar Swenson. I would defy him—deny him—the living dead man. I would tell myself he was not, and never had been. Then after summoning enough courage I would gamble. I would stake my small all—and lose. Because Oscar Swenson was standing at my shoulder.

I tried everything. I put my money in banks. They failed. I opened bars, and was burned out. I raised wheat, only to have it ruined by rust. I bought land, to find it under water. Then I gave up. I quit cold. I lost my nerve entirely. I sank lower and lower. . . .

Well, you know the rest. I was picked up on the street as a vagrant. I was starving, so they sent me here to the hospital. You were good to me, fed me, and I regained some of my lost strength. I was bothered no longer by the ghost of Oscar Swenson. I had some faint glimmer of hope, and thought that by now I had suffered enough, and that the curse was at last to be lifted.

Then some devil prompted me to ask for a deck of cards to pass the time away. That was the end. Swenson's ghost has come here every night and haunted me. That's the secret of my troubled sleepless nights. You thought it was the drains under the floor that made this room so dank, so cold; that caused the peculiar flat, dead odor. No, I tell you, *no!* That is the ghost of Oscar Swenson!

As I lay here to-night, I dreaded the fearful hours ahead. If Swenson came, with his mocking laugh, and revengeful eyes, I knew that I should go mad. And greater even than the fear of death, was the fear of insanity.

I collected my shattered faculties and came to a decision. I decided to gamble with death.

The fiend could undoubtedly read my mind, for even as I was formulating my plans, the preliminary gray luminous film that I had come to abhor, materialized. And there swayed Swenson, a mocking sar-

donic grin upon his ashen, lifeless lips.

With a determined effort I refrained from screaming, and spoke.

"Swenson," I said. "I'll gamble with you. I'll play a game of solitaire. If I get it out, you must swear to leave me forever. If I lose, I'll kill myself and join you."

The specter's lips contorted horribly.

"Yes, gamble," he said, in a low husky voice that seemed weighted with the evil of the ages. "Gamble, Chambino, for the last time. Yet all your skill, dexterity and cheating will be of no avail."

"I'll play it straight," I answered. "Do you agree to the terms? My life if I lose. Freedom from you if I win?"

His eyes glowed like dying embers.

"Agreed," he said in that throaty whisper. "But, first, do as I say. The attendants are at dinner. The medicine room is unlocked. Go there. On the second shelf as you enter, you will find a bottle of oxalic acid. Take it, then play. If you win, hurl it out the window and be free. If you lose, drink it—and our score will be settled."

The apparition blended slowly into the whiteness of the wall and was gone.

A moment I waited, fighting for breath. Then I rose and went to the medical room. As Swenson had said, there on the second shelf reposed the bottle. I took it and returned to my bed. Placing the small hospital table next to me, I riffled the cards slowly, and counted them, to make sure the deck was complete. Fifty-two. I shuffled. I laid the cards down, and turned to adjust the lamp. When I faced the table again, I stared in amazement. The cards had been cut. In place of the one pile I had left, were two smaller ones. *The ghost of Oscar Swenson had cut the cards!*

Fighting my jumpy nerves, I proceeded to deal the seven cards for solitaire. Slowly and clumsily, like the veriest tyro, I, Fernando Chambino, played my last game—with death.

AT first my heart beat high with anticipation. The chances of winning seemed close to even. I played on, slowly, cautiously—overlooking nothing. But at last the spades were my undoing. The deuce, trey and others were at hand waiting to be played. But that grim unlucky ace had not turned up. As I played the last card, I trembled. It was the six of spades—useless without that ace!

I had played with death and lost—I flung the cards on the table and picked up the

bottle. Oscar Swenson had won at last.

Somehow, I was quite calm. I accepted death, knowing full well that it offered me a peace that I had not known on earth for twenty years—ever since that memorable night when I had cheated Swenson. I lifted the bottle to my lips, and drank deeply. Then I relaxed on my pillow, gazing at the cards while I tried to make my peace with God.

Somehow I felt surcease, ease and a sense of triumph. The ace of spades could not cheat me of death. For once I had overcome that dread symbol. As a final gesture, I reached over the table, intending to tear the card into a thousand pieces before I died.

I turned up the cards that were still face down—then gazed, thunderstruck. *The ace of spades was not there.* I counted the cards—fifty-one. The ace was missing.

HE cheated me! *He cheated me,* I tell you! Just as I had cheated him twenty years ago. He took that ace, knowing it was impossible for me to win without it. I cursed him and raved, but it was too late. I knew, even before I sent for you.

You think this is the raving of a madman—of a man who is dying and whose

nerve is gone. Very well. Count those cards. Count them before I die. For when I am gone, he will replace that ace. Count them, I say!

CHAMBINO half sat up, wild-eyed—the picture of a dying lunatic. More to humor a dying man, than because I took stock in the fantastic story, I picked-up the cards and counted. There were fifty-one, with the ace of spades missing.

"See, I was right! Do you believe me?" he gasped.

"You were right, Chambino," I agreed, making the mental reservation that the ace had dropped on the floor during his clumsy deal.

He sank back on the pillow.

"I'm trying to die like a gambler, Doc," he said huskily. "Trying to die—"

His voice broke off in a horrible rasp, and he fell back on the pillow. I leaned over and put my hand to his heart. It was still.

Before I could straighten up, I was suddenly aware of a swift chill in the room. Apprehensively, I turned around. My eye fell on the cards. There, face up on the table, where, I will swear it had not been two minutes before lay *the ace of spades!*

\$10 for a Letter!

WHEN you have read this issue of GHOST STORIES Magazine, let us know what you think of the stories it contains.

Which story is best? Which is poorest? Why? Have you any suggestions for improving the magazine?

Ten dollars will be paid to the person whose letter, in the opinion of the judges in charge of this award, offers the most intelligent, constructive criticism; \$5 to the letter considered second best; \$3 to the third.

Address your opinions to the Judges of Award, care of GHOST STORIES, 1926 Broadway, New York, N. Y. This contest closes May 25, 1930.

Three awards will be made promptly. See that your opinion gets one of them. No letters, however, will be returned.

PRIZES

for opinions on the January GHOST STORIES were awarded as follows:

FIRST PRIZE \$10

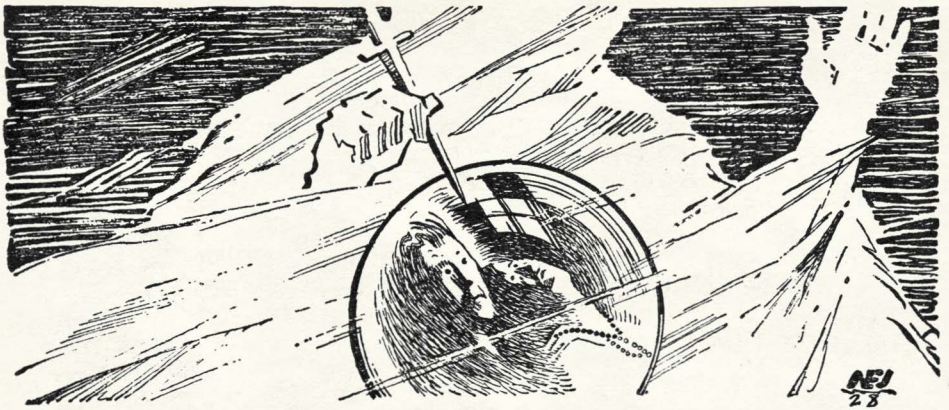
HAIDEE BROOKS,
2541 Caseyville Ave., East St. Louis, Illinois.

SECOND PRIZE \$5

MRS. DORA DEAN HUGHES,
R. D. Box 62; Armos, California.

THIRD PRIZE \$3

NEVA HAZLEHURST, 7655 Kingston Ave., Chicago, Ill.



SPIRIT TALES

Ghost Ships Still Sail the Seas

By COUNT CAGLIOSTRO

FAST ships and ether waves have downed many bygone terrors of the deep, but the silently-scudding ghost ship still rides the seven seas.

Whether boding certain disaster or warning in time to avert trouble, phantom vessels of earlier days are still seen and their warnings heeded by the wary seafarer.

Only last October one of these phantoms of the sea was reported off the coast of Ireland. A fishing boat from Inishborin, Galway, went out one night on one of its usual fall expeditions. A strange wraithship drifted silently up, and refused to answer the fishermen's tremulous hails. In spite of the repeated attempts to lose her, the ghostly vessel stayed by the fishing ship all night, vanishing only when the fishermen returned to shore, for in spite of uneasiness which at times gave way to terror, the men stuck to their task. But when they had landed, the entire crew refused to go out again, interpreting the ghost ship, in the age-old way of the sea, as a sign of coming disaster.

Nor were they wrong. The very next week a terrific gale swept the west coasts of Ireland and Great Britain, taking a terrible toll of lives from the fisher folk. Three separate fleets of boats off Galway and Mayo were overwhelmed, resulting in the loss of seventeen boats and many men. The tiny dories of Irish fishermen, many of which were only tarred canvas, oar-pro-

pelled, were dashed against the rocks in sight of the men's families. During all this terrible storm, one of the worst in many years, the men whom the ghost ship had visited remained safely ashore.

The recent death at Fishermen's Snug Harbor of John Winters, the last of the crew of the Gloucester schooner *Charles Haskell*, recalls another ghost ship of even more sinister omen. Winters was close to one hundred years old when he died, and for long years he carried the blood-freezing memory of the persistent ghost ship which, he said, pursued the *Haskell* as long as she followed the sea.

During a heavy storm in March, 1869, Winters related, the *Haskell* ran down a Salem schooner on the Banks. The schooner and her entire crew were lost. Next year, when the *Haskell* was off Eastern Point at the mouth of Gloucester Harbor, an eerie vessel sped down the wind alongside her. A strange-looking crew climbed the schooner's rigging, with all the unsubstantial appearance of phantoms. And ghosts they admitted themselves to be—shouting to the terror-stricken crew of the *Haskell* that they were the spirits of the Salem fishermen, sailing the foundered ship, which was sheathed in white from keel to topmast, as if covered with sheets of foam.

The next voyage many of the crew of the *Haskell* refused to sail. A new crew was shipped. These men returned with the same story of a spectral vessel. With ashen

faces they took their sea bags ashore to the safe haven of dry land there to remain. The third trip the same thing happened, and a fourth crew was signed on. But to no avail. Every crew came to port with the same tale of a phantom ship and a spectral crew. So the *Haskell* finally had to abandon fishing and become a sand freighter. From the time she left the sea the lost ship of Salem was reported no more. The ghosts were laid.

The Cruise of the "Bacchante"

FEW reports of sighting a specter ship have as good authority as the word of a king. Yet in "The Cruise of the *Bacchante*" compiled from the private journals of Prince Albert Victor and the Duke of York (now King George V of England), who served as midshipmen on the H. M. S. *Bacchante's* voyage between 1879 and 1882, just such an occurrence is reported.

An entry of July 11th, 1881, while they were off Cape Horn, tells of "a strange red light as of a phantom ship all aglow, in the midst of which light the masts, spars and sails of a brig 200 yards distant stood out in strong relief as she came up on the port bow."

Thirteen persons saw it, according to the report and, of course, bad luck followed. The lookout man who first sighted the ghost ship fell from the foretopmast and, so the entry says, "was smashed to atoms."

Some of the startled crew thought they had sighted the famous *Flying Dutchman*, long known to the mariners of the Seven Seas. But if that were true, she was far off her course, for the *Bacchante* was a long way from the Cape of Good Hope, where poor Vanderdecken and his *Flying Dutchman* have warned many doomed vessels of impending disaster.

"The Flying Dutchman"

THE story of the *Flying Dutchman* has many variations. The version most generally accepted is that Captain Vanderdecken, encountering unfavorable weather off the Cape of Good Hope, against which he struggled vainly, swore to round the stormy cape in spite of God and the Devil. But his crew was stricken with a plague, and when Vanderdecken tried to approach the shore he failed. Every port refused entry to his plague-ridden ship.

What actually happened to her seems to

be lost in the seas of legend, but every sea-going mariner knows that the *Flying Dutchman* was doomed to eternal wandering while trying to round the Cape of Good Hope. She never succeeded. Disaster strikes all those who see her, and there are many stories of ships who have seen her and gone to their doom. Others who escape total ruin are certain to meet with accidents of a serious nature. Many believe that when death confronts a sailor he alone of a crew may see a ghost vessel such as this.

One of Wagner's operas is founded on the *Flying Dutchman* and the famous Captain Marryat in "The Phantom Ship" told the sequel, dealing with Philip Vanderdecken's successful yet disastrous search for his wandering father and his spectral ship.

The Mad Buccaneer

IN the town of Medford, Massachusetts, there is a dark legend harking back to the time of the Spanish Main. When pirates of those old bold days still roamed the seas in search of plunder, a little ship laden with gold left Medford bound for the West Indies. When she had been a few days at sea the wind fell. Food and water dwindled as the ship lay becalmed, and in the end all hands perished miserably.

Shortly after this, a buccaneer found the craft. He lightly lashed her to his own vessel and was the first to jump aboard. No sooner had he done so than a stiff breeze came up, breaking the line and driving away the ship and its cargo of dead, with the lone living man aboard. In the gathering murk the pirate ship was unable to close with the lightless vessel fleeing before the wind, and soon she was lost in the darkness.

Alone on board, and with no possible chance of escape, the pirate captain went mad. From that time he was doomed to cruise the Caribbean in command of his valuable but gruesome prize. The ship is said to sail the sea-lanes even today, but not being as famous a ghost as the *Flying Dutchman*, she is seldom reported. Some day, perhaps, the voice of the mad buccaneer will be heard over the radio, calling vainly for assistance.

The Caribbean and the West Indies have had many a terrible wreck, and more than one of these lost vessels rose from the depths to cruise as a phantom ship. Thus the story of the American collier *Cyclops*, whose inexplicable disappearance during the

World War is one of the most unaccountable in war time history, is rapidly acquiring legendary proportions. It may be, some day, that she will be spoken on the seas between the West Indies and Hampton Roads.

"In Song and Story"

EVERY seacoast has its lost ships and many are preserved in song and in story. Henry Hudson's visits to the Catskills with his crew has been preserved in permanent form by Washington Irving. But historians of ghost lore well know that the *Half Moon* may be seen on auspicious nights, drifting slowly down the Hudson River, her sails all set and gleaming with an unearthly silver sheen.

Then there is the legend of the phantom boatman who may be seen on stormy nights working his way through the East River's Hell Gate by the weird illumination of lightning flashes.

Longfellow in "The Ship of the Dead" told of a vessel that sailed full-rigged from New Haven in 1647 and was never heard of again, save as a ship that vanished into the night.

Whittier sang of the schooner *Breeze* which became a sea-phantom, and of the specter ship of Salem "with dead men in her shrouds."

Though many have spoken these ghostly vessels, few indeed have brought away a token with which to clinch their tale. But near Quaddy Head there once lived an old fiddler whose white violin was a ghostly gift from a sunken ship. This was the story he told:

One misty moonlit night off the Grand Banks a wraith-like schooner appeared suddenly before the bow of a passing brig, and was almost cut in two amidships. The brig stopped as soon as possible, but though the mate lowered a boat and put back to the scene of the disaster, the schooner had sunk like a stone. The ship and all of her ill-fated crew had utterly vanished.

Finally the boat put back to the brig, and on the way the mate saw a small white object tossing on the waves. It proved to be a fiddle, with the bridge gone and the catgut strings trailing in the water. Its whiteness may have been due to long immersion in the briny deep, but it might have been made from a perfectly white wood.

Andy Hollister was the only man on

board who could play it, and the "ghost-fiddle" promptly became his by common consent. His superstition and its remarkable arrival made him a little afraid of it at first, but he soon came to accept it as a personal gift from a lost—and perhaps a phantom—sailor.

When he retired from the sea he found that the fiddle so strangely bestowed upon him brought in a fine income. He was able to afford many a luxury not possible in the days when he was sailing the high seas. So for him, at least, an apparition of the seas proved friendly, and his "ghost-fiddle" brightened many a gathering of seafaring folk.

A Mystery Ship

BUT what must be one of the strangest stories ever told of "mystery ships" is that of a boat which was sighted by the captain of the French sailing vessel *Emilie Galline*.

It was in 1922 that this captain was rounding the Horn when he encountered a field of icebergs. A safe outlet seemed almost impossible to find, and it was while creeping his way along into open waters again that the navigator sighted a gigantic berg, so huge it seemed to dwarf the others. But it was not alone its size that made the captain stand aghast on the bridge. It was what he beheld as his eyes moved upward to the berg's towering height.

For there, in a cleft on its summit, some one hundred and twenty feet above the surface of the sea, was frozen a large three-masted schooner!

The vessel appeared to be intact, and although none of its boats were missing, no human beings were sighted, either on the ship or on the berg.

A fitting companion to this weird encounter is the tale reported by a whaler from Peterhead. While passing through the Barentz Sea, the lookout sighted a strange, battered-looking vessel. All her boats were gone, but when she was boarded, the body of a young and very beautiful woman was found on the floor of the cabin, perfectly preserved by the cold. Beside her was the body of a young man, preserved in the same way. He was kneeling and still held flint and steel which he appeared yet to be striking.

No facts ever came to light to explain this mysterious derelict.



HOW TO READ

*Some intimate
advice from a
charming couple
well known to
America's
theater-goers*



**Norman Frescott, Miss Stanton's
celebrated partner**

WE were slipping out the stage door of a Washington theater, one night not so long ago, when a couple passed us—two middle-aged women—who had just come from the show.

They were talking about our mind-reading act.

"Be-lieve me," said the stouter of the women energetically, "if that woman would teach me that trick, I'd sell my victrola to pay her. If I could read what was in my old man's mind sometimes when he sets and looks at me, I know I'd have grounds for divorce. I wonder how she does it!"

"Uh, huh," replied her companion. "But suppose the men found out how to read *our* minds? Lord, if my old man ever got wise to what I was thinking about him, he'd shoot me! Maybe we better let things rest as they are."

We are inclined to share in the views expressed by the smaller of the two ladies regarding the desirability of mind-reading as

a general proposition. Perhaps it is well that we do not know the thoughts of those around us, or that our dearest friends should remain ignorant of what now and then creeps unbidden into the sanctuary of our minds.

Yet presently that may come to be a very serious problem. Some day a new task may confront science—the necessity of inventing a mind-protection device which shall screen our thoughts from the intrusive prying of curious neighbors. Mind-reading may soon be as generally used by humanity as are the telephone and the electric light to-day.

All this in spite of the fact that we, as vaudeville mind-readers, make no direct claims regarding the origin of the phenomena which we display daily before the public. When you enter the theater where we are performing you are at perfect liberty to form your own conclusions, and though, with Miss Stanton blindfolded on the stage, and Frescott in the audience, there is demonstrated connection of thought, we make no claims for its method. You present a playing card to Mr. Frescott; he holds it in his hands, without speaking, and Miss Stanton reads it aloud from the stage as clearly and as correctly as if it were held before her eyes.

For this we advance no claims. If it is genuine telepathy, the scientists before whom we have given tests, will testify. If it is a trick, it is so good a trick that it has yet to be detected.

What we want to make clear is that, regardless of whether our work is genuine or not—and that we leave to the scientists to determine—our own interests lie directly in

Your Husband's Mind

By
NORMAN FRESCOTT
and
BEBE STANTON



"We can all be mind readers," says Bebe Stanton

the psychological aspects of the question. In the genuine scientific spirit we have pursued a long investigation, and we are ready to assert that mind-reading is not a gift of specially favored individuals. It is a heritage of every person with a normal brain. Anyone can learn to practice telepathy with a high percentage of success; those who are more adapted to its practice than others can register almost uniform success.

It is our purpose in this article to suggest certain experiments which can be tried by the reader at home. By these means a wife can actually read the mind of her husband—and *vice versa*. The tests are thoroughly practical, and when tried they will open new vistas of scientific truth to the imagination.

Before explaining these experiments, however, it may be well to interject a remark on the attitude of science toward the subject. Time was when anything savoring of unexplained, and especially telepathic phenomena, was looked upon with unconcealed hostility and suspicion by reputable savants. All telepathists were charlatans, in their opinion; all mind-reading was a fake. With great glee they saw the exposure of the old code tricks and the other methods by which Robert Heller and some of his contemporaries and successors gulled the public.

Later this attitude changed somewhat. Writing fifteen years ago, the late Frank Podmore very cleverly remarked that "while spiritualism was still an alien in the domain

of science, telepathy has taken out its first papers of naturalization." To-day it might well be said that telepathy had been admitted to the full right of citizenship. And while there are old-fashioned scientists who do not give the time of the day to the alien who has come into their field, the newcomer has been taken up by some of our best people—notably by Thomas Edison.

IT may surprise you to know that the same Thomas Edison who invented the phonograph, the electric light, the motion pictures, has given his complete endorsement to telepathy, as an established fact in science.

This came about after a series of experiments which Mr. Edison conducted with a celebrated private mind-reader. Mr. Edison had watched this man make telepathic tests, using some of his employees as subjects and achieving remarkable results.

"And then," Mr. Edison relates, "I asked him to let me try. In my case, I went into another building, wrote down the words: 'is there anything better than nickel hydroxide for an alkaline storage battery?'"

"At that time I was experimenting with my storage battery and felt a little dubious about being on the right track. In the meantime as I folded my paper, I filled my mind with a problem and kept working on its solution so that he could not, by mind-reading, decipher what I had written on the slip of paper, and returned to the room. . . ."

"At the moment I entered the room, he said, 'No there is nothing better than nickel hydroxide for an alkaline storage battery.'"

Mr. Edison added that his question had been answered correctly; that to this day he is satisfied there *is* nothing better than nickel hydroxide.

It is the viewpoint of Mr. Edison, publicly expressed, that "the psychic forces" are merely words for perfectly natural things which as yet we do not understand. Our experience has made us concur in this. When he says, however—"The human brain, without doubt, will do in the future many things which it is incapable of doing now," we feel that, in justice to what is already being demonstrated, he should add that every day brings fresh evidence of increasing and developing human brain power.

Before leaving Mr. Edison—whose opinions are shared by a notable array of scientists of America and Europe—let us quote one additional phrase of his which perfectly expresses our own views. Says Mr. Edison, in the course of a discussion on the future of psychic phenomena and their study:

"Great forces are already at work and exist right around us *which we cannot discern with our five senses.*"

The italics are ours.

What we want to emphasize is that this second-sight, or mind-reading in which we, personally, are so deeply concerned, and some practical experiments which we intend to divulge here, are not related in any manner to the five senses. The impressions received in telepathic practice—impressions which the reader may test for himself—come through a new channel. One neither sees them nor hears them. They do not reach our consciousness through the sense of touch; we do not taste them or smell them.

IT is our contention that in developing his power to read the thoughts of another the reader is actually developing a new sense.

Whether we are right in this contention or not we shall leave to the scientists who are probing into the heart of the phenomenon—and to the reader. And this brings us to the real point of the article—how the

average sane, common-sense, normal individual can prove to his own satisfaction the truth of telepathy. Immediately we find ourselves confronted with the question:

"Are we all mind-readers? Can any prosaic business or professional man—or his wife—develop himself so that he can receive and transmit ideas without the use of a medium so gross as the spoken or written word?"

The answer to that question is unmistakably—"yes."

OF course, this does not mean that one can hope to immediately duplicate our feat of transmitting a name by thought waves—your name, anyone's name; a name we have never heard before in our lives. There is naturally a wide gap between the potential state in which most of us live and the acquired perfection of the expert. But there is not a man or woman alive today who has not actually been, at some time or other, the "receiver" or "transmitter" in a telepathic experiment.

Let us explain that more definitely.

At times it may have been wholly unconscious; at others the source may dimly have been guessed; then again, it may have been thoroughly recognized, but attributed to that convenient old invention, coincidence. One is talking to a friend, perhaps; he stops and when his friend replies, he realizes that he knew beforehand just what his friend was going to say, and the exact language in which he would clothe his ideas.

All of us have felt that, day after day, many times.

Again, we may have the thought of someone firmly fixed in our minds—the memory of someone who has been on a long journey—and suddenly, unexpectedly, the traveller returns, or we hear from him. We remark on the coincidence again. We have not learned yet, with all our Western cunning, that there is no such thing as coincidence.

Again, we have a dream of someone we know, and from whom we have not heard in a long time. The next morning we find a letter from that someone, and we think, "how curious!" Not curious. Merely natural, if we but knew how to contact naturally with the laws of telepathy.

That is telepathy working automatically, erratically, independently, but none the less effectively in our daily lives. The more one studies the subject, the more one is impressed with the fact that for success in its

conscious practice, one must have two minds closely attuned. When you have absolute harmony, usually you have absolute success.

THUS lovers, or wives and husbands make ideal partners in mind-reading experiments. If they can be both, failure is impossible.

Such instances as I have mentioned are found in their greatest frequency in husband and wife. And this is natural because of all persons in the world, husbands and wives are most closely associated, and bound by the closest, dearest and most binding ties.

"Two minds with but a single thought; two hearts that beat as one," really expresses the idea in perfection; it is, we might say, the philosophy of telepathy crystalized in an epigram.

Husband and wife, or any two persons whose souls are completely in harmony, can develop their telepathic powers wonderfully by constant trial and experimentation. Here is one practical example of

how these powers can be built up:

Wait until your husband, for example, is passively engaged in reading, let us say; smoking his pipe or cigar, and letting his mind completely relax. Then stand near him, but not so as to attract his attention, or impress him with the nearness of your presence. Concentrate your mind on a single idea. Fix it firmly before your mental vision. Determine that this single idea shall be projected into his consciousness.

Various influences may militate against immediate success. But keep on. Concentrate. Picture him doing the thing you want him to do. Suppose it is to get up from his chair, come over to your chair and kiss you.

If he hasn't done such a thing in years, you may have to try the experiment a number of times before it succeeds. But eventually it will succeed. If he has sworn off kissing, he will break his oath to obey that mental command.

This, of course, is only a beginning, but it is a very practical beginning, the possibilities of which can be ascertained very easily by an honest trial. Now, to describe a much more surprising effect—a direct transmission of a message—under test conditions. We say this, as distinct from the former experiment, because it seems to comply completely with the test conditions ordinarily laid down in scientific inquiry.

SELECT for the receiving end of this experiment one of the most retiring of your friends. If it happens to be your wife or husband, so much the better. You must not choose a person with a strong, assertive manner, who always wants his own way. If you do, your experiment will fail. Choose a quiet,

reserved sort of person, who is willing to give you his co-operation. Do not tolerate levity or frivolity, as that will surely ruin the experiment. There must be earnestness, seriousness, a desire to succeed before you can hope to get good results.

Seat this receptive, whom we may term the "psychic" at one end of the room. Blindfold him securely, just as Miss Stanton is hoodwinked during our stage performances. Instruct the psychic to fold his hands in his lap, and try to place himself in a mood as passive and receptive as possible.

Instruct him just to wait and watch for developments.

Now shuffle a pack of cards and select one, taking care that you do not get a



**"The Wizard of the Lamp",
Mr. Thomas A. Edison, whose
statements concerning telepathy
furnish valuable corroboration
of the theories set forth on
these pages.**

glimpse of any of the cards. Shuffle them with their backs toward you, and do not look at them. This is important, for it prevents distracting images from interfering with your attempts at concentration.

Having thoroughly shuffled your cards, lay them on the table, face downward, and draw out one card.

This is the only card that you should allow yourself to see during the experiment.

PLACE this chosen card in an upright position against some article, so that it can be seen plainly by yourself, but not by your subject. Let us suppose that the card you picked at random is the seven of diamonds.

Long schooled in telepathy as we are, we can definitely state here just what will happen next. If you, who sit watching the card, concentrating on it, and determining in your mind that its pictured image shall be transmitted to the psychic—if you have really concentrated all your mental energies on that object, to the exclusion of all other ideas—results will follow quickly.

The psychic would see before his closed and bandaged eyes a drifting, chaotic picture. It would weave and twist and wind but finally it would adjust itself into a position where it could be seen—as if an invisible hand were testing the slide of a stereopticon. The mental picture might take various forms. It might be a direct portrait of the card itself. Or it might take some figurative or symbolic shape, as for instance, seven platinum rings set with diamonds. But of this you may be sure—the psychic, all the conditions having been observed, would get the message.

This we would suggest as a beginning experiment, because it is the easiest. Later, when you have acquired greater powers of concentration, after a year or even more of practice, you will reach the stage where the process is instantaneous; where it is not governed by time, place, or conditions; where quiet, solitude, darkness are not necessary; where telepathic waves become the willing tools of mortals, as they go about their daily business.

But that, of course, will be a long time coming, as we can testify from actual experience. You will first succeed in projecting only isolated names, and only after considerable time—say five or ten minutes.

What we do wish to emphasize most particularly, however, is that the unruly manifestations of telepathy can be broken, trained and, so to speak, made to drive in

harness like electricity and other well-behaved phenomena. Those who have followed the efforts of scientists to accomplish this result may recall that when F. Meyers, E. Gurney and Frederick Podmore were in the thick of their researches, Meyers declared that the “rationale of thought transference we do not clearly understand; insensibility and the near approach of death are apparently some of the most effective conditions”.

We believe Mr. Meyers inserted the word “apparently” with judicious deliberateness.

We are accustomed to think that only when persons were dying, and their loved ones were far away, did they summon up sufficient spiritual and mental resolution to project a message through the air, to reach them and warn them of the end that impended. But to make telepathy of any practical use to humanity, it must be reduced to such absolute certainty that “insensibility and the near approach of death” are removed as necessary conditions; there must be such ease of operation that thoughts may be transferred from mind to mind, under any circumstances, without spoken words, anywhere and at any time.

We believe that the way for men and women to attain this ideal is to begin now with just such experiments as we have outlined.

The objection may be raised, however, that projecting a thought by deliberate experiment previously agreed upon is not all there is to mind-reading. As outlined, the experiments require that two persons shall sit down and agree to try the experiment. Our reply is that this is necessary in the beginning and is the only method we know of by which results can be obtained. But it must be obvious that as this is developed and continued over a long period, the operation is accomplished with more and more ease, until finally an almost constant *rapport* is established between the two people concerned.

AS the experiments are kept up, you will be surprised at the growing sensitiveness to impressions each will have for the other. You will begin to understand each other's thoughts before they are spoken, not just now and then, apparently by accident or coincidence, but consciously. Then you are on the road to being a real mind-reader—but by that time you will have found out some things for yourself; some psychic secrets which we dare not reveal here for all

to read, and which are disclosed only to those who pay the price of initiation and development in psychic power.

Meanwhile, we like to dream in prophecy, of a time when mind will converse with mind by the new telepathy.

But that, we must candidly admit, is a time far off.

Once this experiment we have outlined has been successfully carried through, its practice may be very considerably extended. An effort should be made to develop thought projection—the sending of a psychic message through the air without previous announcement to the person to whom the message is directed, as for example a wife sending a message to the husband without telling him that she intends to do so. This, of course, is a step higher in the development of the telepathic power and as such deserves careful description.

Yet the student who has arranged the card-reading experiment already outlined, and found that eventually he could produce the desired effect with comparative ease, will not find the next stage too difficult.

What should the aspiring telepathist do after having developed the card-reading effect?

The important thing to do is to hold the desire to be always *en rapport*. With this harmony established, many strange things are possible. Without it, nothing is possible. With the spiritual bond of sympathy undisturbed husband and wife may go forward with perfect confidence of success. Being thus insured against failure by a condition of perfect spiritual agreement, the wife—to whom more directly this article is addressed—may continue the experiments without telling her husband that she intends to do so. While he is at the office, and she in her home, let her begin to concentrate upon one central idea.

In advanced experiments such as these, concentration is exceedingly important. In the card-reading experiment, you will remember we advised you to see only one card. This was to prevent the intrusion of any

other extraneous and disturbing card image. The same principle applies to the higher order of experiment which we are now describing.

EXCLUDE every other idea from your mind. Remember that you cannot get your message across if you are thinking of the milliner's bills, or the report your young son brought home from school. Utter calm, complete poise and detachment, and direct concentration upon the immediate thought in mind, to the exclusion of every other thought, hope, or aspiration, is absolutely essential. Hold the thought just as long as you can, fix it in your mind, and then consciously will that it leave your brain as a bird on the wing—straight to the mind of your husband.

At first this experiment will not succeed. Except in rare cases such a development comes only after prolonged and determined effort. However, the results are sure, if persistence is combined with concentration. The husband will come home and say that he was thinking of a particular thing in the course of the day, and that particular thing of which he was thinking will be the idea which was in the mind of his wife.

Once this has happened, it will recur with greater and greater frequency, until husband and wife will find themselves constantly *en rapport* and therefore thought transference between them will be an exceedingly easy matter indeed.

To sum up, mind-reading, so far as science now knows, is a passive rather than an active operation. You cannot, by force of will, pry into your husband's mind and find out what he is thinking of

against *his* will. But you can so train yourself that by relaxing all tension and effort, putting yourself as nearly as possible into harmony with him, the thoughts from his mind will drift into yours; and he can learn, by the same process, to know your own best and deepest self, as you yourself know it.



STRONGER

*With the guilt of years heavy on his soul,
Masterson takes the one way out*

THE worst gale I ever encountered as ship's captain struck the Silver Gull, Harvey Masterson's motor schooner, on that fatal trip to Honolulu. God knows, the storm was bad enough, but in the thick of it every hand on board was paralyzed with fear at the sight of a dread phantom on our decks! Scarcely a man aboard but recognized that apparition—the ghost of Bill Nason, captain of the ill-fated Frances Lane, one of Masterson's freighters that had vanished in these waters four years before!

Masterson himself, as hard as flint, refused to believe any of us. His wife, who had once been in love with Bill Nason, saw his ghost and collapsed. His daughter, pretty nineteen-year-old Leila, had seen the specter, as had her fiancé, Cyril Grovenor. In fact, the latter's cowardice had made Leila break their troth. (That was when we learned Leila was really the daughter of Bill Nason and only Masterson's by adoption.)

Then our radio operator began picking up faint SOS signals from the Frances Lane; another liner caught them too and signalled us. Masterson accused the radio operator of being in a conspiracy with the first mate, Nick Guffey, who had been a pal of the dead Nason. The whole crew was on the verge of mutiny when the specter appeared to Masterson himself and with an ominous leer, pointed toward the stern of the ship.

Hardly had the thing vanished when we struck something astern and our rudder was washed away! I ordered the sea anchor dropped while I investigated.

We had struck an old derelict freighter, reefed there for years. I set all hands to work and went after Masterson.

Suddenly we heard a cry from the derelict—Masterson's voice! Leila and I sprang aboard her and found—we were on the lost Frances Lane. When we got to Masterson he was crazed with fear. The whole hulk was alive with phantoms—Nason's ghostly crew!

In the terrible moments that followed, Leila and I saw the specter of Nason try to kill the old man to avenge some secret wrong. Desperately I interceded. I bar-



*An impulse seized me
to jerk the safety-line
—but I could not move*

than DEATH

By CAPTAIN HUGH LARSEN
As told to WILBERT WADLEIGH

gained with Nason's ghost for Masterson's life—and won, on the toss of a coin. But I had promised to string the old man aloft to the rigging at midnight and—skin him alive. And as the crew of the Silver Gull came to rescue us, Nason's ghost vowed to make me keep my word!

MASTERSON was the first to break the silence—by succumbing to a fit of madness, apparently.

"This has gone far enough!" he screamed, raising his fists above his head, his lean features convulsed. He wheeled on

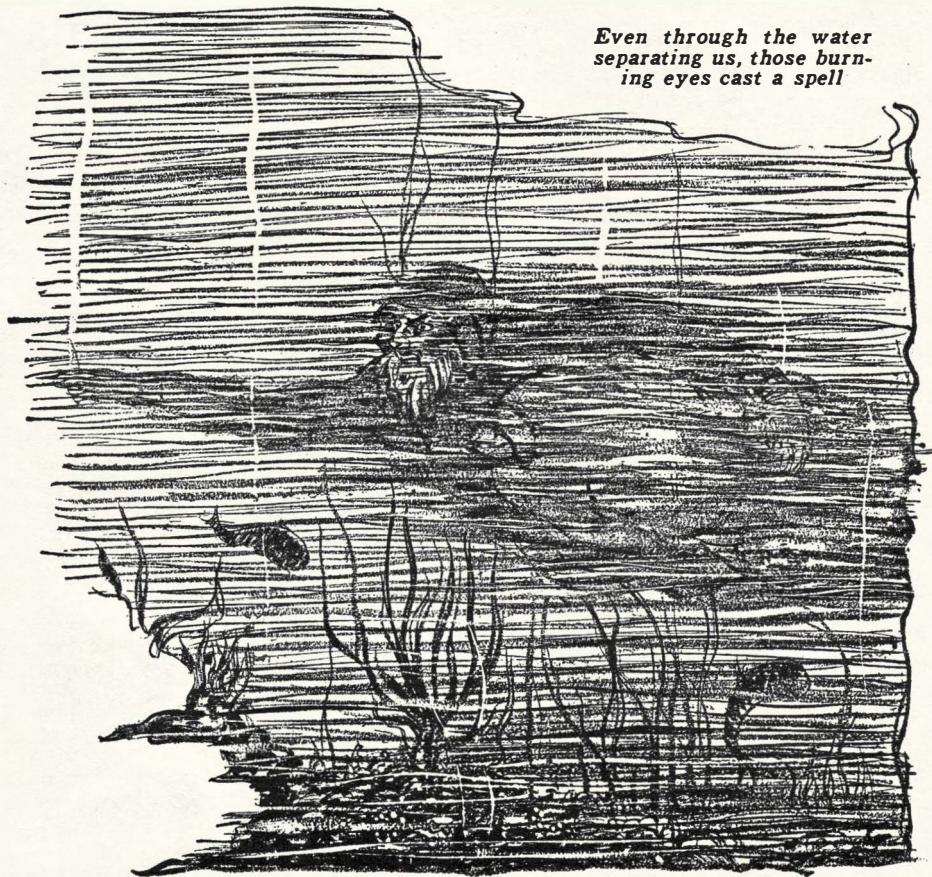
Guffey. "Nick, bring up some gasoline—carry it aboard that damned hulk. Then we'll shove off, and let her burn. *Burn! BURN!* Ha, ha, ha—burn her; burn those cursed bones; give them a Viking's funeral!"

We stared at him in horror. Guffey took an involuntary step backward.

"Blast your mangy hide, Guffey," the old man roared, shaking a gnarled fist in the mate's face, "do you hear me? Go below—bring up two tins of gasoline——"

His voice broke; his face turned an apoplectic red, and he toppled forward. Riggs and I caught him. For a moment I thought that the phantom crew of the ghost

Even through the water separating us, those burning eyes cast a spell



ship had been cheated of their victim, but his heart was still beating.

"To his cabin, Riggs—easy now," I said to the engineer.

Leila followed us, opening the door. Mrs. Masterson was in the lounge-room and greeted our appearance with horror, jumping to her feet and hurrying to regard her stricken husband.

"He—just fainted, Mother," Leila murmured, opening the door of his bedroom.

We deposited the limp form of the old tiger of the sea on his bed, and Leila brought smelling salts from her mother's room, while Mrs. Masterson joined me in rubbing his hands. It was all of two minutes before the old man's eyes fluttered open.

"I—what happened?" he gulped.

"There, there, Father," Leila exclaimed. "You mustn't excite yourself—"

"**HUGH,**" Masterson addressed me, sitting up, "hurry those repairs; fire that damned hulk, and shove off! Hear me?" he choked, his features working with passion.

I saw then that the idea obsessed him; that he was near the breaking point, at last.

"We must make the repairs first," I said. "But I have an idea. We'll consign those bones to the sea—at once!"

Masterson's features relaxed, and he nodded quickly.

"Good! Yes, Hugh—give them decent burial, according to the Book. The Book—I have never believed in it," he laughed harshly. "It's too late now! Too late!"

He gnashed his teeth, lying back on the pillow, his big, bony hands clenching spasmodically. With a shudder, his wife turned, staring out through a port-hole at the derelict. I met Leila's blue eyes, and they were filled with horror, and nodding to Riggs, I hurried out.

"Captain," Riggs faltered, "did you mean—that? You're going to throw over those skeletons?"

"Yes," I said grimly. "Riggs, we've seen enough, heard enough to know that the ghosts of Nason and his crew haunt these waters, and are bent on exacting some horrible vengeance upon Masterson. I'm not sure, but it seems to me that if we consign their remains to the sea in the proper way, we might lift this curse—free those tortured souls."

Riggs shot me a sidelong glance, his lips trembling.

"Then for God's sake, let's lose no time!"

he gasped. "But—we'll all join in the—work?"

"Yes."

Nick Guffey and Porter were making a pretense at repairing our damaged stern rail, and I acquainted them with my purpose. Both—Nick especially—were loth to board the derelict, but like Riggs, they felt that my plan might rout the ghostly menace that hung over us. I called the cook, Peti, and seeing Grovenor, directed him to accompany us, much to his aversion.

The drizzle had stopped, but the rail and deck of the old hulk were slippery with verdigris and damp. The sight of the disjointed skeleton that lay in the lee of the bulwarks, nearly hidden by the tangle of rigging, turned me sick.

"This poor devil may as well be the first," I said. "Tear off strips of that mainsail, Porter," I directed the second engineer. "The rest of you, clear away that rigging—come on," as Guffey and Grovenor hesitated, viewing the skeleton in awed horror, "It isn't going to bite you."

Riggs was less timorous, falling to work. I joined him, and then Nick and Grovenor pitched in.

I have no wish to describe our gruesome work in detail. Even now, years later, I look back upon it with a shudder. The work of gathering those skeletons and sewing them up in strips of canvas was repulsive enough, but that intangible atmosphere of oppression which seemed to pervade the weather-beaten hulk was infinitely worse.

Five skeletons we found on the main deck, two of the skulls bearing gaping bullet wounds. But it was in the galley that we found ghastly evidence that sickened our very souls. Rubbish littered the floor and tables. Here and there on the floor were human bones, *some of which had been hacked in pieces!*

GROVENOR fainted, and had to be carried to the deck. Heaven knows that the rest of us felt like abandoning our task then, but we had gone too far. Somehow, I steeled my nerves against the horror of that galley, and made Guffey, Riggs, and Porter assist me in bundling those outraged bones together in one square of canvas.

Then we gathered enough courage to explore the cabins and fore-castle. In the saloon, near Nason's old piano, we found an automatic pistol bearing the initials W. T. N. It was Nason's, and the magazine contained one bullet. Near it on the carpet was a dark,

irregular stain, with smaller splotches leading off to the port companionway.

"Blood!" Nick said hoarsely, voicing my own thought.

Who had met his death here? Had it been Nason? We were soon to learn.

We viewed the piano with awe—the piano, with its yellowed keys, that under Nason's ghostly fingers had struck terror in our souls with its fearful, discordant music.

But another shock was in store for us; the radio room. We found both the outside and inner companionway doors secure. With fire axes we attacked the panel, finally breaking through—to find a broken section of spar wedged between both doors, both of which opened inward. On the floor, in a huddle of tattered clothing, lay a disjointed skeleton.

"Larsen," Riggs articulated, "he barricaded himself in here!"

"Yes," I muttered. And then a square of paper caught my gaze, on the desk under the radio panel, weighted down with a small, nickel-plated revolver.

Gingerly, I picked up the revolver, and the others peered over my shoulder as I read the pencilled scrawl on that age-stained paper:

If my body is found please give it a decent burial. It is the end. I am going to shoot myself, while I still have the strength. I have barricaded the doors so Darell will not drag me to the galley like he did poor Nason the other day. His strength is going, thank God; he is mad from thirst. He will be the last to give up the ghost on this hell ship. God bless you, mother.

JERRY C. HAINES.

"Haines—the radio operator!" Guffey choked. "My God—then Frenchy Darell, Nason's first mate, killed Bill! And he——"

Guffey dropped to a chair, covering his eyes. Porter and Riggs bent over the skeleton, peering at the bullet hole in the skull, and Grovener staggered outside.

I folded the tragic message carefully, and put it in an inside pocket. And then a faint humming sound focussed my attention on the radio set. To my amazement, I saw that the switch was on, and that the instruments indicated that a feeble current coursed through the set!

Could it be possible that, after four years, the batteries possessed even a spark of life? I thought of those mysterious distress messages that had reached us. Had a ghost—

the ghost of Haines—sent them? No one will ever know.

Not counting the scattered bones, we consigned six skeletons to the sea that morning, and returned to the *Silver Gull* after a long but vain search for the log of the *Frances Lane*.

While Nick and the others brought up material and started repairs on the damaged bulkhead and rail, I lowered myself over the rudder and examined it. It had been wrenched away, the collar broken, and hung by the tackle and the skeg at the bottom of the stern-post. Somewhere in our stores was an emergency collar, thanks to the fore-sight of old Masterson, and after a search, Porter found it.

A false sense of security had come over us with the consignment of those bones to the sea, and we were all becoming more and more convinced that by this gruesome work we had cheated those vengeful phantoms of their intended victim, Masterson, and freed them from that old hulk, at one operation.

Masterson appeared while we were cleaning the rudder, accompanied by Leila. The girl seemed more self-possessed, and though Masterson looked haggard, he appeared calmer. They had both witnessed the burials from the ports in the cabin, and I added the other particulars, exhibiting the unfortunate radio operator's message.

Leila bore up better than Masterson, who dropped to a seat on a hatch, trembling, staring up at the derelict, his hawk-like features taking on a color of parchment. It was some time before he took a grip on himself. Then he pointed out that it was our duty to locate the log of the *Frances Lane* before complying with maritime laws and destroying the derelict.

"But we made a search for the log," I said, detailing our efforts.

"WELL, you didn't look below," Masterson said shortly. "Never mind, Larsen; get that rudder ready. I'll take Guffey along."

I suppose it was because my mind was obsessed with the thought of getting away that I never guessed why Masterson wanted to make a final search for that log, attended only by Guffey. But Leila insisted on accompanying them, despite our protests.

"The derelict can't be haunted now," she said firmly, "and I want to take a few snapshots of it."

It was a month later that she told me her real reason for insisting on accompanying

them. Knowing that the ill-fated Captain Nason of the *Frances Lane* had been her father, and not Masterson, she had felt an urge to pay her last respects to the old hulk, in his memory.

Though the clouds had thinned and sunlight beat down out of the tropical sky, I watched her slim figure, in duck trousers and sweater, disappear after Masterson and Guffey with something of a tremor.

WE caught glimpses of the trio now and then, and for several minutes they were lost to sight, somewhere forward. We had made the rudder ready for suspension, and I was directing the assembling of the diving apparatus, preparatory to donning my suit and going below to receive and hang the rudder, when a faint feminine scream from the derelict brought us erect. Grovenor gasped:

"Leila!"

Again the scream sounded—a brief, shrill cry, fraught with terror. In a bound, I reached the rope ladder; another, and I swung over to the slimy deck of the derelict, hurrying to the door of the deckhouse opening into the saloon, from which direction the scream had seemed to come.

Riggs and Porter dashed in after me, Grovenor following.

"Sure it was from here, Captain?" Riggs panted.

"I'm not sure—it may have been below——"

Then:

"*Help—Captain Hugh——!*"

Leila's voice, muffled, from somewhere down the passage! I grabbed Porter's flashlight, running toward the sound as it ended in a high-pitched scream. The door leading to the engine-room gaped open, and I half fell down the steps, sweeping the place with the beam of the torch. No one was there, but beyond was an open doorway that led to the after hold; behind me, under the steps, another that led to the forward hold.

"Leila—Masterson!" I shouted.

Faintly, I heard a low moan—somewhere in the after hold. A veritable army of rats fled before us as we gained the gloomy, ill-smelling hold and made our way around through a knee-deep wash of water to the higher, starboard side. And then the beam of light illumined a prone, twitching figure, swarming with rats—Masterson!

We drove off the rats and bent over the old man. He was nearly dead. Blood trickled down his gaunt face from a bruise on

his forehead, and that horde of savage rats had inflicted numerous slashes on hands and features. But he was conscious.

"Don't—mind me——" he gasped faintly. "Leila——"

"Where is she? Where is Guffey?" I fairly shouted, taking him by the shoulders. "Quick—what happened?"

"Nick—went crazy," he articulated. "Hit me over the head—dragged Leila forward——"

"Take care of him, men," I muttered, hurrying back toward the engine-room. Guffey—gone crazy! Was the old hulk still haunted? Had some ghostly intelligence, perhaps Nason's, obtained control of the mate?

I gained the forward hold, finding it flooded. Through water that reached to my arm-pits, I waded to the starboard side, where it was over a foot deep. In the center was a great pile of lumber; along the sides were stacks of packing cases, containing some of the mercantile shipment on which the insurance had long since been paid. It was a veritable labyrinth of shadows and murky water that confronted me. All I could hear was the lapping of the water against the pile of lumber and cases, the creaking of timber.

"Leila!" I called, advancing, playing the flashlight in all directions, straining my ears.

There was no answer. I became frantic. I realized that I loved her; that she might be dead, a prey to the maddened Guffey.

And then a faint movement betrayed itself in sound; a swish of water, and a scraping as a packing case was bumped—somewhere on my right.

I WHEELED, just as a huge, shadowy figure lunged at me. The next moment muscular fingers were about my neck and my assailant and I toppled into the water. My flashlight had fallen, and all was pitchy darkness as I grappled with my adversary, half strangled, my head just above the water.

It was Nick Guffey, I knew; this was no ghost, but a human being—a savage, crazed human. Teeth sunk into my shoulder as I managed to tear one hand from my throat, and with a desperate effort, I squirmed free and struck out with both hands. One of the blows landed against Guffey's chin, and with a snarl like a wild beast, he pitched backward.

I heard the splash as he fell; heard him gurgle, and then let loose a stream of pro-

fanity. Again he fell upon me, now swinging his fists like flails. A blow caught me on the side of the head that sent me hurtling against the pile of lumber, and the horrible, insane laugh that burst from Guffey's throat chilled my blood.

His hurtling body missed me by inches, and my head went under; I swallowed some of the water before I managed to get my head up, and secure a hammer-lock on Guffey's left arm.

I had him, then. Screaming with pain, he rolled facedown into the water. There was no need to break his arm; he nearly drowned before I dragged his limp body across a packing-case, and leaned against a support, panting.

"CAPTAIN HUGH—" a faint voice reached me.

"Leila!" I cried, tensing. "Where are you?"

"Oh, thank God—you—you got the best of him!" she quavered from somewhere among the packing cases ahead of me.

I staggered toward the voice, groping in the shadows—and found a sweated wrist. The next instant she was in my arms, and I was hugging her close. She was wet from head to foot, and strands of dripping hair brushed my face as she laughed hysterically, gasping an account of her horrible adventure. It was as Masterson had said; Guffey had suddenly become possessed; had attacked Masterson, and borne her off.

I shouted at the top of my lungs for the others, and only when I repeated my call did a faint answer come from astern.

But the sound had hardly been swallowed up by the lapping of water when the pitchy darkness was broken by a luminous, grayish form!

Leila moaned, and I held her tight, staring in horror as the ghostly form of Captain Nason took shape before us, standing with the massive arms folded, the bearded features leering. Those eyes! Like pools of fire they gazed upon us. The lips writhed, and faintly came the deep voice:

"Go—both of you! I spare you this time, Larsen, because of Leila; because Guffey got beyond my control and went insane, and instead of killing Masterson, bungled the job and carried off—my daughter."

For a moment—a moment only, those ghastly, emaciated features softened, as the specter gazed at the girl.

"You are my daughter, Leila. You will know what Masterson did to me—to my

crew—when you—read the log. Larsen," the specter addressed me, "the log of the *Frances Lane* is in my piano in the salon. Masterson tried to destroy it. Get it; see that it is given to the world."

The specter began to fade as the reflected rays of a flashlight pierced the gloom, and the sounds of voices drifted to us. Faintly I heard:

"But you will keep your bargain, Larsen; you will kill Masterson as you promised, at twelve midnight—eight—bells—or—"

The voice faded into silence. Abruptly, the shape was gone. Leila was sobbing against my shoulder. Cold sweat streamed from my features.*

"Larsen—Larsen!" came Porter's shout, and the beam of a flashlight found us.

Somehow we got on deck, dragging the senseless Guffey with us. Masterson had already been taken above, and lay near the rail, staring up at the sun and muttering to himself.

Guffey came to before we got him to the deck of the *Silver Gull*, and we saw that he was still out of his mind. We had to put him in irons, and lock him in his cabin.

Masterson managed to get down the ladder, but collapsed as he gained the deck, and we carried him to his cabin, where Leila and her mother joined me in treating his wounds. He said absolutely nothing, nor did I tell him of seeing Nason's specter again, and the ghostly warning.

Grovenor tried to butt in, begging Leila to forgive him, but she paid no attention to him, and followed me to the saloon.

"We are going to try and get away before midnight," I said grimly. "Are you afraid?"

Her blue eyes met mine steadily. Tremulously:

"No—Hugh."

SHE was no longer a girl, but a woman—my woman. I saw it in her eyes—in her sweet face. For an ecstatic moment she was in my arms, her lips responding to mine, and then I released her.

"Get some—dry things on, Leila," I said huskily.

I hurried to the galley, directing Peti to serve lunch in ten minutes, and then joined the crew aft, my pulses racing. No longer did I fear that old derelict or its ghostly crew. The men must have seen the change in me, for they stared as I gave orders for the work on the rudder in a cheerful tone,

and prepared to get into the big diver's suit.

Lunch was sounded, and we had ours on deck, after which I had Riggs screw on my helmet. It was an improved Fleuss diving dress, with a cylinder of compressed oxygen at the back, regulated by a jamb screw-valve, thus eliminating air-hose and pump. I gained the ladder, Riggs playing out the safety-line, and waited until the rudder was suspended over the stern. Then I gave signals and directions, and Riggs screwed in the front glass of the helmet, and I proceeded below the surface.

WORKING under water, suspended by a line, every movement cramped by the heavy diver's suit, is no fun. For two hours I toiled at that rudder, and no few cuss words found their way into the caustic tank, or came up in bubbles.

Ever conscious of the sheath knife at my side, I watched for sharks, never forgetting the desperate encounter I had once had with a huge man-eater in seven fathoms off Manila.

But something infinitely more terrible confronted me, just as I completed the suspension of the rudder and was adjusting the tackle!

At first, I thought it was a shark as that long, gray thing appeared out of the gloom under me, floating slowly, brushing the submerged reefs. I reached for my knife, and then saw, with a start, that it was one of the canvas bags of bones we had thrown over. Apparently, it was caught in a current and was too light to settle, but the appearance of the thing gave me no little shock.

I was about to return to my work when the thing slowly turned, the end lifting, and came upward at me. Here was something no current was responsible for. I hung to the ladder and stared through the glass. On it came! When it was but twenty yards away, I caught sight of something beside the bundle; something that grew in clearness, until, with pounding heart, I saw that it was Nason's ghost! The specter was drifting beside that ghastly bundle, one hand on it, regarding me with a hideous grin.

An impulse seized me to jerk the safety-line, but I could not move. Even at a distance, through the water separating us, those burning eyes had cast a spell over me. A lifetime seemed to pass before the canvas bundle brushed past me, and the specter paused, its leering face inches from the glass. The mouth moved, and though I could hear nothing, there was no mistaking what

words formed on those ghastly lips: "*Remember your bargain!*"

And then the thing drifted on, fading until it was gone. Beyond, the bundle of bones was dropping into shadows, and I watched it until it had disappeared, conscious that faintness was overcoming me. My grip on the ladder slipped, and I dropped a short distance, to be brought up by the suspension line—and then oblivion stole over me.

I came to on deck. My helmet was off, and Riggs, Porter, and Grovenor were bending over me. Had they, too, seen?

I was soon aware that they suspected nothing.

"What's the matter, Larsen—valve stuck?" Riggs asked anxiously.

It was then I realized the truth. Fascinated by that specter, I had forgotten the constant necessity for regulating my air supply. Had I not been pulled up, a minute or two more, and my ghost would have joined Nason's and those of his crew!

"It's—not working quite right," I managed to say. "Never mind—I'll fix it."

So they never knew. There was nothing wrong, of course, and after a pretense at adjusting, during which I summoned back something of my strength, I went below again. Twenty minutes of close concentration on my task brought it to a conclusion, and it was with relief that I emerged and got back into my uniform.

Dusk was settling over a sea as smooth as glass, and the moon shone through the few cloud wisps that remained.

"Perfect weather now, sir," Riggs observed. "We should have no trouble getting away, after we repair that hole."

No trouble? My expression almost betrayed me, when Leila appeared.

"**Y**OU didn't join us at lunch," she said reproachfully. "Dinner is nearly ready, Hugh. Can't you—rest a while?"

"But there are hours of work ahead on that hole astern, and this battered rail. . . ." I parried. All thought of food was forgotten in my now frantic haste to get away.

And she knew it; she saw from my features that I had received some new scare.

"You've—got to let up a bit, Hugh," she said softly. "Please! Besides, I—want to talk with you."

I saw that she was repressing some emotion, so I directed the men to swing a light over the side, and knock off for dinner. Then I followed Leila to the chart-room.

It was about Masterson. He was either a

bit out of his head, or had a touch of fever. "It—may be fever," she said, "for his temperature is high. Mother won't go near him, and if you—will go to him?"

I went to the old man's bedroom alone, finding him lying fully clothed on his bed, tossing and muttering. It was several moments before he saw me, and then he regarded me fixedly.

"Hugh!" he choked, "it's the end for me! I can't escape; it's written. Oh, I'm not mad, Hugh," as I felt his forehead. He snatched my hand away, sitting up. "Hugh—I tried to find that log. It must be somewhere on that derelict——"

"It is," I said, remembering the revelation Nason's ghost had made to me in the hold.

"Huh? You—know where it is?" Masterson croaked, gripping my arm.

"Yes, I—think I know," I answered, studying him. "I suppose you want to destroy it?"

He closed his eyes.

"No—not now. It doesn't matter—now." He leaned back against the pillow, opening his eyes again. "Get it, Hugh—guard it," he muttered. "Hide it somewhere."

He was broken. I knew that he had something on his conscience—he who had no conscience.

"Very well," I said.

He made no reply. I reached the deck; stared at the derelict, now a deepening shadow in the dusk, and, taking a deep breath, I felt for Porter's flashlight, and then realized that I had lost it in the forward hold. I secured another from my cabin, and hurried aft. No one was in sight, and I clambered aboard the derelict and made my way to the salon.

"You told me to get the log, Nason," I muttered as I stepped into the dark deck-house.

My light soon found the piano, and with a haste bordering on panic, I lifted the top. Sure enough, there it was! I grabbed it, and hurried back to the yacht with the feeling that that whole ghostly crew was leering at me. Gaining my cabin, I started to thumb

through it, when the dinner gong sounded. I tucked it under the bunk, and went to the dining-room, trying to preserve some semblance of calm as I took my seat at the table.

Little was said during the meal. Leila and I did what little talking there was. Her first remark was concerning Grovenor.

"Cyril needn't eat with the crew, just because—I broke our engagement," she said. "Of course, I'll never speak to him again, as long as I live," she added with emotion.

Masterson grunted. Somehow, I felt that Leila was, like myself, conscious of a growing feeling of oppression; felt the need of conversation to dispel the invisible menace.

A long silence followed—a silence that became intolerable. I was ever conscious of that derelict behind us; ever conscious of the fact that I was expected by that ghostly horde to kill Harvey Masterson at midnight. I found myself watching Masterson's hands in fascination. They were twitching; once he dropped his fork. I was glad when Leila's soft voice broke the silence again, asking me when I thought the repairs could be completed, and we could weigh anchor and resume our course for Honolulu.

"It may take four hours or so," I replied grimly, meeting her eyes.

Masterson put down his cup, and rose shakily.

"Come, Hugh; I want to—talk to you."

LEILA and her mother stared at him, but made no comment. I followed him to the chart-room, closing the door. Masterson dropped into his chair at the desk, motioning for me to take the seat opposite him. For a full minute he kept silence, his pale, hawk-like features grim, his lips writhing, eyes fixed on the blotter. Then, without looking up, he muttered:

"Larsen, there's no use mincing matters any longer. All my life I have been an atheist. But I know now that there must be a God—that there is another life beyond this one."



His features worked; his fingers twitched. There he sat, the old sea tiger who had broken men, who might still break the best of them with those great, hairy hands, broken himself. It was awe-inspiring.

"Yes, Hugh," he went on, barely audible, "there are powers beyond finite human understanding. I have sinned; yes—I have taken lives."

He lifted his face. I returned his gaze in horror.

"I SEE that you despise me, Hugh. No matter; others have before you. I didn't care. I don't care now." He exhaled wearily, leaning back in his chair, still looking at me.

"You know about Leila, now. But I may as well begin there," he continued. "Twenty years ago, Hugh, when I married Frances, I took her away from Bill Nason. She was his wife. We had both loved her, and she favored me, but one day Bill told her a pack of lies about me—well, not all lies, I guess—" He laughed harshly. "They ran off to Los Angeles and got married. Within a week, she found out that he drank a lot, to say nothing of gambling, and they quarreled; she left him—sought refuge with my sister at Vallejo.

"Nason was then my first mate, and we were due to sail in three days. He couldn't find Frances, and hunted me up. We met in a saloon on the Barbary Coast, and we fought. I—broke him."

The knuckles of his hands gleamed yellow; his eyes glittered, and his barrel-like chest heaved. I had heard of that awful fight; it is still history on the San Francisco waterfront.

"I had known for some time that Nason had been smuggling in opium, above that which we jointly smuggled in. I also knew that he and Nick Guffey had subsidized and were the brains of a fleet of oyster and shrimp pirates, operating on the Bay. In a set-to between this fleet and patrol boats, a patrol officer was killed.

"Well, I had broken Nason physically, and I now held all this as a club over him—and over Nick, for Guffey was his crony. Nason agreed to let Frances divorce him, and do a fade-out to the East coast. In those days, divorce was a simple matter. Within a fortnight, Frances was my wife. But—shortly afterward, Hugh, she told me that she was going to bear Nason a child."

I nodded dully. He chewed at his cigar, staring at the carpet.

"When Leila was born, we were at Pine-

ville, Washington. She was christened Leila May Nason, and the matter kept quiet. Later, I as quietly adopted her. Understand?"

"Yes," I managed to say.

"So to the world at large, she has been my own daughter. Now—Nason. He wasn't a vicious man, Larsen, until he met me. He was eighteen, then, and I was a bad influence for him. After that fight, he pretended to go his way, but he had secretly determined to have his revenge—and get back Frances.

"He had Guffey spy on me, and collect evidence—and I found it out. I already had Guffey where I wanted him; that patrol officer killing; the oyster fleet. Same with Nason. I showed my hand, and they accepted service under me on long term contracts. I had money; they were paupers. Well, later, Nason and I scuttled the *Golden West* for the insurance, and yes—Nichols, the second mate, caught us at it. I killed him with a belaying pin—and made out that a falling block struck him."

I shuddered. He was not looking at me.

"But in justice to Nason, he had nothing to do with that killing. He has never really had blood on his hands; that patrol officer was really killed by one of his pirates, a Greek named—well, never mind; the Greek's dead."

He closed his eyes for a moment, while I squirmed.

"For years I held Bill under my fist. I bought the freighter astern of us, naming it the *Frances Lane*, after my wife, and made Bill skipper of her. . . . Are you—listening, Bill?"

HE stared about the room, smiling grimly. I could not repress a shudder. Was the ghostly Nason listening?

"A few months before the *Frances Lane* was out of dry-dock, ready to sail on that fatal trip." Masterson resumed in a sepulchral voice, "I learned that my wife had ceased to care for me—that she still loved Nason. It was my fault; I had not given her the affection she craved. My passion was my ships, and Leila. And in a weak moment, Frances had written Bill the truth about Leila being his.

"He demanded that I divorce her; give them up. I threatened to expose him, but he countered by threatening to expose me, and take the fall with me on the opium angle, the scuttling, and murder of Nichols, if he couldn't have Frances and Leila."

Masterson squashed out his cigar.

"You know what a gambler Bill was—when we were trapped in that cabin on the derelict, you gambled for my life, and won; you promised to—kill me with your own hands tonight, at midnight."

His eyes twinkled, and I looked away. God—he deserved killing!

"Nason and I decided to play a single round of stud poker. If I won, matters were to remain as they were and he was to go his own way. If he won, I was to give Frances and Leila up within a year; and half a million dollars to boot. Well, Hugh—he won."

M ASTERSON bowed his head. His next words came thickly, barely audible.

"Damn it, Larsen," he choked, "just before the freighter was to sail, he went on a spree—blabbed to his crew about the whole ugly business!"

His head went up; his lean features became convulsed, and his muscular hands gripped the edge of the desk.

"Do you understand, Hugh?" he cried hoarsely. "Nason got drunk—sent rumors flying up and down the waterfront! Damn him—*damn him!* He hadn't been a sportsman! He'd won; I would have gone through with my bargain—yes, I would have! But when he told that stinking crew. . . . Well—I tampered with those pumps; tapped the bulkheads. And the *Frances Lane* disappeared in that storm four years ago today. Yes, *I did it!* I DID IT! And I—collected the—insurance." His voice dropped to a whisper. "That's all, Larsen; now you know. Nason must have—put the whole horrible business in the log."

He rested his elbows on the desk, burying his face in his hands. Paralyzed with horror, I gaped at him.

"Go," he whispered hoarsely. "Leave me—alone."

Somehow, I got to my feet and went to join the crew aft. Even the weird sight of the derelict, now a true ghost ship with its bulwarks, deckhouse and broken masts glowing with phosphorus, could not contend against the awful horror that gripped my very soul.

My feelings found expression in a savage impatience. I swore at the men; urged them to hurry at the work, and pitched in myself like a madman. I knew it was late. I knew that twelve o'clock meant doom, unless we got away—perhaps meant doom even then. And I knew I could not keep that ghastly bargain made with Nason's ghost. I could not murder Masterson.

Lord, how we toiled! The damaged rail was abandoned; we concentrated on the jagged hole above the waterline, while the breeze wafted the stench of rot from that old hulk above us. Peti, the cook, appeared, shouting to me that Nick Guffey was begging to be set free from his irons; that the mate had apparently gained his senses.

"To hell with him!" I shouted back. "Lend a hand here, Peti, we've got to get away."

And Peti joined us. Leila appeared, and took a seat on a capstan, watching us apathetically, glancing now and then at her wrist watch. I had forgotten her presence, in the trouble we were having on the job, when she leaned over the rail and called to me.

"Hugh," she choked, "it's—eleven-forty!"

Eleven-forty! Riggs shuddered, and I nearly fell from my perch. Twenty minutes! We couldn't make it. I climbed over the rail.

"The devil with the hole; we'll take a chance. The bulkhead will hold!" I cried. "Riggs—to the engine-room! Porter, make up a charge of dynamite, ready to fling over to that hulk—ten-minute fuse. Move, damn you!" as they stared at me—and they moved. "Leila, go inside—please. Come on, Grovenor; Peti—up forward!"

I raced away, Grovenor and Peti following. Peti knew how to weigh the anchors, and I bawled at him to show Grovenor how to assist him at the winches, while I sprang to the wheelhouse.

Impatiently, I signalled Riggs. Cold sweat streamed from me as I waited. It seemed hours before the ship throbbed to the engines.

I gave orders to weigh anchor, and ran aft. Porter appeared as I gained the after deck, staggering under the heavy charge he had hurriedly made.

"THIRTY-FIVE sticks, sir," he quavered. "This fuse—long enough?"

I examined the fuse with shaking fingers. "Yes—I guess so. Come on, Porter; keep your nerve!"

I hurried to the rope ladder that hung from the rail of the *Frances Lane*; scrambled up it, and straddled the rail.

"Up with it!" I shouted to the trembling Porter.

He lifted the charge, nearly dropping it; I caught the wire wrappings, and hauled it over the rail.

"Come up; help me cast off," I cried.

"Don't you stand there like a damned idiot!"

He clambered weakly up the ladder. I made Porter keep a few turns on one, while, with courage of desperation, I picked up the charge and carried it to the outer door that connected with the engine-room. The engine-room was dry.

I lighted four matches before that fuse would ignite, and then I heaved the bundle into the shaft and played out the line. As it struck bottom, and I turned away, the piano in the salon awakened to a ghastly, discordant music!

FOR a moment I came near dropping. Swiftly, those ghostly fingers fled over the yellowed keys, crashing out chords; swiftly the damnable thing the specter was playing grew in volume, mocking, challenging. . . .

And then I caught sight of Leila, her features illumined by the working light that still hung on the after deck of the yacht; saw her peering into the shadows where I stood—and the lethargy that gripped me departed. I gained the rail, crying to Porter to let go the hauser. He needed no second bidding, and fairly tumbled after me to the deck of the *Silver Gull*.

"Hugh," Leila cried, "It's—midnight—"

"Yes—get inside," I said hoarsely. "Down with Riggs, Porter—" and I raced forward, fairly leaping up the steps to the wheelhouse. In another instant I had signalled full speed ahead; the acknowledgment came, and the twin screws began churning; the schooner began moving.

Still that discordant music sounded, now at a high crescendo, racing, with tinkling arpeggios that sounded like derisive laughter. Swiftly the *Silver Gull* swept into her magnificent stride. The music faded, slowly; was lost.

God knows what I expected. But nothing happened! All was still; the moon glinted on the smooth sea; the spray flew under the prow; no spectral horde descended, athirst for vengeance. Peti and Grovenor stood at the port rail, staring back.

And nothing happened! The suspense was maddening. Slowly, I swung the ship northward, until I could see the derelict, squatting like some monster in the distance. The vitreous glow of the phosphorus that lined her bulwarks and shattered masts seemed like ghostly flames.

The telephone rang, and I answered. It was Riggs.

"Everything—all right, sir?" he quavered.

"Yes," I articulated, and hung up, staring again at that derelict. Swiftly, it was dropping behind. Suddenly a figure rose to the bridge and, as I recoiled involuntarily, I saw it was Leila. Her face was pale, and her blonde locks waved in the breeze as she hurried to the door and burst in, sobbing.

"Oh, Hugh!" she cried, "I—"

At that moment the dynamite went off on the derelict. The flash lit up the sky. It was an awesome sight. And then the concussion hit us; set the vessel to shuddering.

For a long time we stared out at what was left of the hulk; at the flames licking the fragments that remained above water. Then Leila, her face wet with tears, turned to me.

"Oh, Hugh," she sobbed, "he—he's gone!"

I stared at her. She handed me a slip of paper, and slumped to a seat on a locker.

"He—left this on the bed, in his cabin," she whispered.

I held the message up so the light fell on it. It was scrawled in pencil:

Good bye, all. When you read this, I will have gone to join Nason. It is the best way. A jump over the rail, and it's over. Don't look for my worthless body; I have crammed weights in my pockets. I am off on my last adventure.

HARVEY MASTERSON.

THE paper fluttered from my grasp, and I leaned against the wheel-post. So he had taken his life—perhaps shortly after our meeting in the chart-room! At last I knew why that ghostly horde had not descended upon us. . . .

At three in the morning we encountered the *Cleveland*, and we hove to while Freeman and three of his officers boarded us. It was daylight when they left, staggered by the tale we told. And a few days later, in Honolulu, the excited press representatives and maritime officials received confirmation of the story which the *Cleveland's* radio had broadcast to an astounded world.

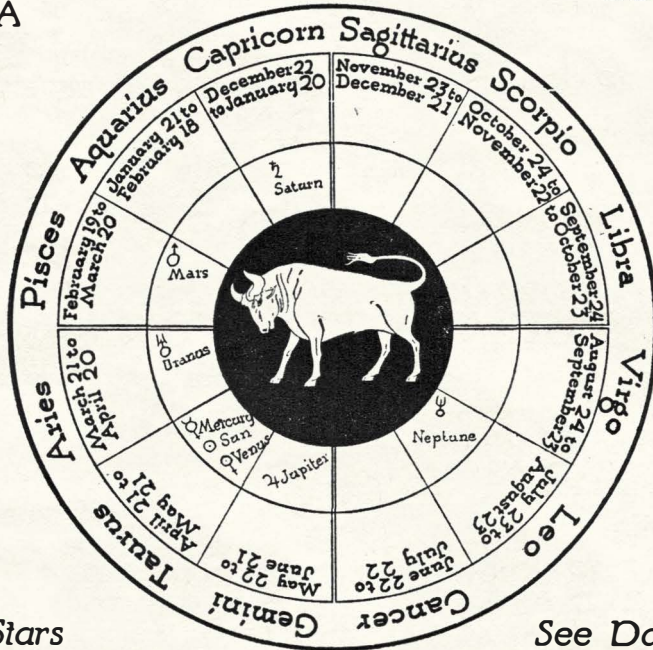
Of course, we had omitted the ghostly elements, for the most part, though Riggs and Guffey spoke of the specters. But the world in general took little stock in the supernatural angle, even if seafaring folk did. For the first time, in this account, the full story has been given to the world.

The log of the *Frances Lane* corroborated the confession Masterson had made to me. Thank God, Leila and I—she is now my wife—are far away from it all. But I don't think we will ever forget—completely.

THE END.

Were You Born in May?

By
STELLA
KING



Let the Stars
Indicate Your Fate

See Daily Guide
for May, Page 115

EACH year on April 21st, the sun passes from the adventurous sign of Aries to the more deliberate Taurus, the bull and the builder.

Taurus is one of the four fixed signs—the foundation signs of the Cherubim—the Ox, the Lion, the Eagle and the Man; or Taurus, Leo, Scorpio and Aquarius. It belongs to the Earth and is associated with possessions. It is the money sign. Moses burned the Golden Calf and thus spiritualized it and, after grinding the image to powder, made the Children of Israel drink it. This was to show them that material possessions are neither to be worshipped nor ignored, but to be used for spiritual ends.

The average Taurean is a practical person, fond of comfort and of the good things of this world. He loves his household gods and his food; sometimes he eats and drinks too much, but his besetting sin is laziness and an unwillingness to take sufficient exercise to keep himself fit. And, as is so often the case, the one thing he does not

want to do is really the only way of maintaining his health.

Taurean children should be trained to take regular exercise but should not be encouraged to take part in games that are too strenuous. The Taurean temperament requires regular exercise and plenty of it, but great haste and excitement frequently lead to collapse, which is cited as an excuse for self-indulgence when the individual does not wish to exercise in moderation.

With Taureans this training is of the greatest importance, as so many of them shorten their span of life by refusing to take any exercise. As a type, they are strong and robust; but, their circulation is sluggish and, if they eat too much fattening food, the blood soon becomes loaded with impurities, a primary cause of fatigue and indolence.

Regularity and moderation go hand in hand with good health, and this is particularly true of the Taureans. Though they feel things very deeply and are of an emotional and warm-hearted temperament, their

reactions are not as quick as those of most of the other types and sudden shocks of any kind are detrimental. For this reason, the Taurean should never plunge into a very cold bath. He possesses perhaps more endurance than any other type but he should call upon his forces gradually.

If you are a Taurean, you are not necessarily lazy or greedy. There are many Taureans who are quite the reverse. You should be a good cook and, as your type possesses a great deal of magnetism, you are likely to be a devoted nurse when there is sickness in the family. There is something restful about you. You are patient and not easily hurried or flurried. You are a mother-type; and even if you have no children of your own, you will find someone who needs the love and sympathy of which you have so much to give.

IF you are a man and run at all true to type, you are a good provider and you probably prefer to sit back and let others do the talking so long as there is no particular subject under discussion. But you have very decided opinions and do not hesitate to state them when occasion demands it.

You are conservative, reliable, and prudent in the management of your business. You prefer to do without luxuries rather than go into debt to obtain them, and will always do your best to protect the interests of those who depend upon you. Yet there are Taureans who will gamble away their last penny, but, fortunately, they are in the minority. Faults and their corresponding virtues are found in the same type.

Mathematics, building, banking, life insurance, the treasurership of a company, or any work connected with money left in trust are occupations in which you will find interest and success. Or, if you prefer an outdoor life, agriculture and horticulture are suitable fields for one of your temperament.

Taurean women are good mothers and housekeepers, and no matter how small the family income may be, they manage somehow to make ends meet.

It is said that your type learns only through personal experience. It is true that you are often incapable of seeing another's point of view. Until you learn better, you are obstinate and willful and have much to struggle against, including the shyness and self-consciousness that seems to afflict all earth types. Your strug-

gle, however, eventually leads to victory and is well worth while, for, when you have gained self-mastery, you will use your magnetism and the power you have won over conditions for the protection of the weak.

You know how often the whole family looks to the Taurean member for protection and help. It was in the Taurean Age that the Great Pyramid was built and the chief characteristics of the higher types born under your sign are stability of character and determination to do what is right. You build upon the solid rock of fundamentals and are rarely deceived by appearance or pretense.

Music and mathematics are the foundation of all art and all science, and both are associated with Taurus. It is the sign of song and, unless you have some throat affliction, you should sing. The breathing exercises alone are so good for you that you should sing, if only for the sake of health.

You are really musical. Many of you play the violin; and even if you do not play any instrument or sing, you must still have the love of music in your heart. You should be clever at mathematics.

Always remember that it takes time to build well and if other types seem to race through life more quickly than you, do not mind. Your business is to build well. The other man may have to come back and do his work all over again.

It is impossible to drive a Taurean but he can be led by love and kindness. He takes sudden likes and dislikes, and, as a rule, they are well founded.

The type is an amorous one and emotions are easily played upon. Considerable caution is therefore necessary in choosing a life partner. Scorpio is the true mate of Taurus, but Virgo and Capricorn are also well mated with the warm-hearted Taurus, especially when the birthdays come about the same day of the month.

VENUS, the goddess of love, is the Taurean star of destiny. Your talisman is the sapphire or the turquoise, and some authorities give the agate, attributed by others to Gemini. The turquoise was believed to take upon itself any danger that might befall its wearer. The soft pretty blues and yellows are your colors, both symbolizing the love and steadfastness of the Taurean nature when it has overcome indolence.

The Taureans have been under eclipse in-

fluence since 1928, when there was a total eclipse of the sun on May 19th. Those born between the 16th and 22nd of May have felt the full force of this influence and are not likely to experience a complete change of fortune until 1932.

Other birthdays which were affected by this eclipse are those between the 18th and 24th of November, the 19th and 25th of August, and the 15th and 20th of February. Those born between the 8th and 13th of January or September received the rays at harmonious angles and the effect on their general fortune has been and still is good. Unless there are other afflictions in their stars, they should be enjoying a four-year period of good fortune.

THERE was another eclipse in Taurus last year, affecting birthdays about May 9th; and on November 1st there was one in Scorpio which affected the fortunes of those born within three days of November 1st and April 30th.

Still another eclipse occurred in Taurus last month which affected the same birthdays as that in November 1929.

Without knowing the individual horoscope, it is impossible to estimate the effect of these eclipses. Sometimes the family fortunes are afflicted; at other times it is the health of the individual that suffers; or there may be a death in the family. A period under eclipse is unfortunate and risks of all kinds should be carefully avoided. Taurus being the money sign, finances should be specially guarded.

As eclipses fall in the same place every nineteen years, the individual may gain some idea of their probable effect by considering his general fortune during 1909 and 1911. Great care should be taken by those born on or about the dates mentioned in the years 1874 to 1881, 1892 to 1895, 1902 to 1903, or 1911 to 1913.

With the exception of the eclipses, the planetary vibrations are now favorable for the people of Taurus and they may anticipate a period of good fortune and success. Even those who are under the eclipse influence may enjoy success in one direction, though troubles may come from another.

During the next two and a half years Saturn will help all Taureans to do constructive work and improve their circumstances, but Saturn never gives much aid without hard work. The April Taureans will also have help from Neptune, especially in undertakings which involve an

element of chance or luck. In reality, however, we know there is no chance. The law of cause and effect always holds good, and the lucky ones are those who, in the past, have earned the good fortune they now enjoy.

It is the business of each of us to do the best we can, even when our efforts appear to be without their proper reward. Some day we shall reap what we are now sowing and then others may wonder why we have the lucky break while some rival toils in vain to secure the coveted success.

Uranus and Saturn are still unfriendly and bent upon stirring up strife and trouble, and on the tenth of this month the fiery Mars will mingle his high-powered rays with those of the explosive Uranus, thus creating a situation filled with danger.

During the second week in May, everyone should be more careful than usual, and those employed in dangerous occupations must not let their attention wander. Birthdays that come directly under this influence are the first few days of January, April, July and October. 1930 is called "The Year of the Great Test", and those who take chances with life or fortune run the risk of disastrous failure.

In a general sense, Uranus is the planet of progress and reform. When afflicted, as he is at the present time, attempts at reform are likely to be too drastic and to create antagonism. Trouble in India, when Saturn moved into Capricorn, has been predicted for some time, and it is to be feared that whatever is now suggested will be accepted in the wrong spirit.

An afflicted Uranus and an equally afflicted Saturn means anarchy, and sometimes even revolution. To the individual it means loss of judgment and the facing of unforeseen difficulties. When in doubt, it is often better to do nothing until conditions shape themselves. Unless the outcome seems very certain, it is wiser not to make changes. Better to put up with adverse conditions until the path shows more clearly.

JUPITER is still in Gemini and though he is not powerful in this sign, he is giving what help he can to those born between the 6th and 13th of June, the 9th and 16th of October and the 4th and 10th of February. If your birthday comes during any of these periods, you will receive something from Jupiter. It may be a present of value or a number of inexpensive

gifts. If your health is not as good as it should be, take steps to promote health while Jupiter is sending you vitality-laden rays; if you need work, look for it under Jupiter's guidance. You will find him a good friend and a wise leader.

The Leos born about August 5th and the Sagittarians born about December 5th may have an unexpected opportunity thrust upon them; but if it comes during the first two weeks of May, it is likely to bring a mixture of good and bad fortune.

Sagittarians born during the second week in November must take precautions against cold, particularly if they are subject to any form of rheumatism or sciatica.

Those born about the 13th of April or the 16th of October should protect themselves from danger during the third week of May.

The great cycles of time given in the sacred writings of India and mentioned by Madame Blavatsky in the *Secret Doctrine* seem to be based on the precessional cycle, which was mentioned in last month's article. A Great Age is 12,000 years multiplied by 360 days, or 4,320,000 years.

If the twilights or rest periods which separate one Great Age from the next are added, the figures become 5,184,000, which is twenty times 25,920, the number of years

it takes the sun to complete the celestial cycle. Everything in the Universe is subject to the great law of correspondences and in proof of this, it is interesting to note that we breathe about eighteen times a minute, or 25,920 times in a twenty-four-hour day.

The Chinese have a similar system of time measurement in which a Yuen consists of twelve Hwuy. A Hwuy is 10,800 years and a Yuen is therefore 129,600 years or five times the celestial cycle of 25,920 years. Both the Hwuy and the Yuen are multiples of 18 multiplied by 60, which is the number of times we breathe in an hour. Also, there are thirty degrees in each sign of the zodiac and in each house of the horoscope, and in thirty degrees there are 108,000 seconds, which again is a multiple of 18×60 . This is not chance but part of the great cosmic law.

A *Kalpa* or Great Brahmic Day is estimated at 4,320,000,000 years, which is still another multiple of eighteen. The length of *Kali Yuga*—the Black Age in which we are now—is given as 432,000 years. The periods are so vast that they cease to mean anything to us in our present state of consciousness, but the recurrence of the same figures and multiples proves that they are all part of the same great law.

Watch for it!

THE ELEPHANT AND THE HONEYMOON

in the June issue

of

GHOST STORIES

A graphic narrative of a young English bride and groom who go to India on their honeymoon. They go through the weirdest experiences while living in an old fortress there.

An ancient elephant, stirred by their appearance, re-lives the past to the utter horror of the young couple. All the mystery of the Orient and the terrors of bloody rebellion, with its accompanying cruelties, live again in this unusual and amazing tale—by Pauline De Silva.

On sale May 23rd!

What the Stars Foretell for Every Day in May

1. Favorable for business enterprise. For making changes and for invention and salesmanship. A fortunate day.

2. Beware of misrepresentation, sudden reversals and possible accidents. Take great care after 5 P. M. New York time.

3. Unexpected difficulties possible during morning. Avoid haste and changes. Great care needed in traffic and in dealing with explosives, electricity, and risky enterprises.

4. Favorable for young people, study, writing and travel. Go to church, visit relatives, listen to music. Should be a pleasant day.

5. A very good business day. Begin new undertakings and get things well started in morning. Avoid domestic discussions.

6. Do routine work.

7. Advertise and buy in morning. Shop for bargains. Ask favors of elderly people and attend to business relating to property.

8. Avoid haste and excitement. Social and artistic affairs should be successful if not on too big a scale.

9. An unfortunate day. Take great care not to run into danger.

10. Improvement in afternoon. Favorable for salesmanship, romance and entertainment.

11. A good day. Visit friends and elderly people. Danger of accidents late in evening and during night.

12. Great caution indicated. Avoid anger and excitement. Take no risk. Watch investments.

13. Fair business day but uncertain. Postpone important discussions and changes until early tomorrow.

14. Morning favorable for enterprise and change. Afternoon unfavorable for salesmanship and finance.

15. Uncertain, do not expect too much. Grasp opportunities quickly if they come.

16. A day of unexpected loss and danger. Be prudent.

17. Conditions improve in afternoon. Ask favors, advertise, seek promotion or employment and relaxation.

18. Favorable for writing, preaching, entertaining, and good-will.

19. A day of enterprise. Begin new work in morning and put new ideas into effect. Good for business, invention and friendship.

20. A day of friction. Avoid argument and gossip. Beware of misrepresentation. Adverse for anything that seems to depend upon chance.

21. Look for bargains.

22. Adverse for money values and investments.

23. A day of opportunity if extravagance and risk are avoided. Get work done but do not begin new ventures.

24. Morning adverse. Unexpected developments probable. Evening favorable if excitement and risk are avoided.

25. Seek romance and enjoyment.

26. Unimportant.

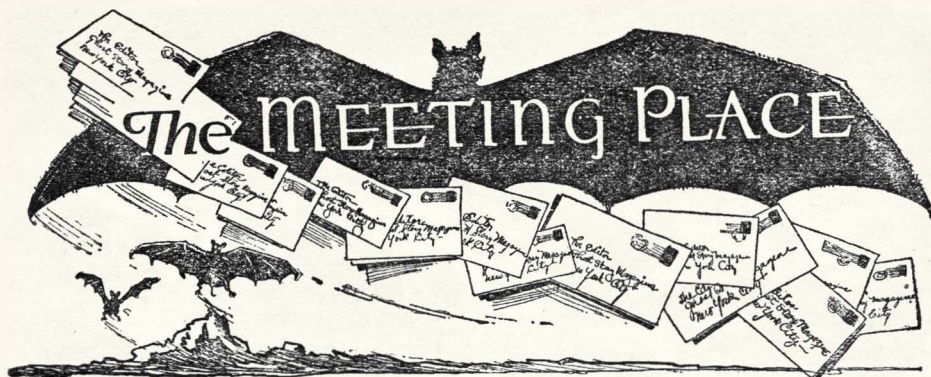
27. Morning favorable for writing and correspondence and for dealing with the public. Vibrations unfavorable after noon, especially for games of chance. Evening better.

28. Changes for better. Begin new work in morning, make changes, attend to inventions and mechanical work. Sell. Hold conferences and see those in position of authority. Seek promotion.

29. A very good day. Attend to important matters that require energy and intuition. Evening favors love and friendship, social affairs, drama, and new clothes.

30. Another adverse day. Be prudent and watchful. Evening favorable for writing and study.

31. Spend day quietly and avoid risk and argument.



READERS are invited to send brief accounts of personal experiences with the occult to *The Meeting Place*. The correspondent's full name and address must be signed to each letter but we will print only the initials or pseudonym if it is requested. No payment will be made for these contributions.

Here is a chance to get in touch with persons all over the world who are interested in the supernatural!

My Spirit Guide

I AM an ardent reader of *GHOST STORIES*, deeply interested in your department—*The Meeting Place*. The sincerity of these articles has always impressed me, and although I have long regretted that I had no experiences of my own to offer, I feel that now I may come among you.

Nearly a year ago I lost a dear friend and a valuable counsellor. His sudden and untimely death was a great shock to everyone, and to none more than myself. Our acquaintance had begun in a business way and thus I soon learned that he had greatly helped another of his employees. Later, when I felt greatly in need of sound advice, I took my problem to him, and though he but confirmed my own judgment in this matter, it gave me much greater confidence.

It so happened that frequently thereafter, during the several years I was in his employ, my affairs needed a guiding hand. I was forced to take action with far-reaching consequences and I inevitably found the reasoning and opinions of my employer of great service to me. Ill health forced me to take a two-year rest finally, and late in the second year my good friend and adviser died.

I had, meanwhile, been reading *GHOST STORIES* regularly—never doubting, but always feeling a rank outsider to the experiences of its contributors. I simply felt such knowledge could never be mine. The death

of my friend changed all that. *GHOST STORIES* became a companion. I searched its pages for some circumstances similar to my own, longing to learn the conditions under which those from Beyond may become known here.

Another powerful incentive at this time was that my affairs threatened to shape themselves in such a way that I should be confronted with a situation in which legality must be cloaked in diplomacy and tempered with mercy. Remembering how my lost friend had always been able to place himself in another's position, I longed now for his guidance.

An article in *GHOST STORIES* by the sister of Albert Payson Terhune gave definite direction to my endeavor. No reader would dare insult a name that stands for such integrity, with disbelief. It is one thing not to doubt, but quite another to believe, and it was through the reading of this article that I finally came to *know* that there are times when those of the two worlds meet.

This conviction came quietly. It did not disrupt my whole being or bring with it an element of fear. With others, I share a distaste for all that borders on the neurotic. We should apply but one term to whatever originates from such a source—"imagination." But I think I can safely assert that my nature is essentially practical. If Nature did not design me to face facts, subsequent

happenings have been such that no other course was left open to me. And so, in studying the above-mentioned article, I knew it had been written by a beautifully balanced mind; a mentality capable of weighing and classifying experiences.

Accepting as fact the possibility of receiving a message from my departed friend was only the first step. I was aware of an inward urge, an assurance that I had but to go on. For several weeks I sought definite enlightenment from him as to how I should approach what was to be a gravely vital experience of my life. I thought much and often of my friend, of his powerful personality, used always for good—and for the good of others. I believed he knew of my need and if it were best would make himself known to me and help me. Holding myself in readiness for such a happening, I became in a receptive mood, in harmony, as far as possible, with my friend as I had known him.

Gradually but surely I came to know he was near me. I felt his presence, as in life we often sense the nearness of another person. As yet, I have had no visual evidence to support this assertion, but there is no mistaking the fact that he is known to me. My spirit responds to his. He has not come to me in dreams, but always during waking hours, often when I am busy at work.

As yet I have received only the consolation of knowing that my friend is near. But I am content. I know that if I am to have some specific word from him, it will come when it is needed. For he is very near to me, and I feel that his repeated coming is but to prepare me for what is in store.

I am more than sorry that this is as much of my experience as I may share. If I might only have written a complete account of my difficulty and of the help I expect and anticipate! But the matter is of such a confidential nature that even to disguise it would be to betray a trust. To confide in my friend's spirit is my only hope of help.

GHOST STORIES has placed my feet along a path I never expected to travel. Had I not read this magazine a very precious experience might never have been mine.

FAYETTE SKILLMAN.

Willoughby, Ohio.

A Dream That Happened

A MOST mystifying occurrence which has caused me no end of speculation, took place only a short time ago. But before I go into it in detail I should explain

that it has always been my ardent wish to become a successful writer of fiction, and that I have spent most of my waking hours building up plots for stories and setting them on paper.

One night about three months ago I dreamed a most unusual plot from beginning to end. It was a story about a beautiful woman, and although I saw her distinctly in my dream, I could not place her as anyone I had ever known. On awaking I seized pencil and paper and set my dream down while it was fresh in my mind.

Six weeks after this took place I was attending a house party. There were several guests there whom I had never met, among them a strikingly beautiful girl whose face seemed oddly familiar. She had come from Mexico only a few days before and had never been in our city prior to this, so I was puzzled to account for my recognizing her.

We were at once attracted to each other and have since become the staunchest of friends. I am now engaged in writing the story of her life, which though true in every detail, is certainly "stranger than fiction." Need I add that this girl was the woman of my dream and that her life story coincides in every particular with the plot of my dream?

PATRICIA COLE.

Detroit Mich.

Was This a Revelation?

ONCE had an experience at once terrible and beautiful, and yet so fantastic that the memory of it will never leave me.

I thought—or dreamed—I was caught up to a great height and found myself on a cloud-like ledge. Far below I saw airships being emptied of strangely shaped objects which exploded, pouring out gasses that assumed grotesque forms as they floated upward and sailed along.

Multitudes of human beings surged this way and that, their faces distorted with terror, wringing their hands and screaming hideously. Buildings great and small crashed to earth. Tumult reigned as the smoke and gasses, in ever-increasing volume, swept relentlessly on, until the earth seemed a veritable ball of fire.

Against the black pall of smoke I beheld in letters of fire the words "Man's Inhumanity to Man." I sobbed aloud for the woes of the world, and then, utterly exhausted, I stretched myself out on the downy ledge and went to sleep. How long I slept I do not know.

When I awoke, golden sunbeams filtered through a purple mist—very beautiful and soothing to the eyes. The garments I had previously worn were gone and in their stead I was enveloped in a robe of gauzy, silky, very white material. I stepped out of this and plunged into a nearby pool whose waters bubbled and sparkled as if charged with electricity. I swam around in high glee, with every stroke feeling more alive. Coming out, I combed my hair with my fingers which seemed to make it dry and fluffy immediately. I had just donned the robe, which fell around me in shimmering folds, when the ledge glided with a gentle slope toward earth.

Great spreading trees decked the intensely green sward, birds of exquisite plumage flew about, singing like nightingales, their notes intermingling with the cooing of doves. I, like a bird myself, glided about by the power of thought directed by some Supreme Will, and thus I came in sight of other creatures in a huge park. Some reclined on vast flower shaped couches; others chatted joyfully in groups, wearing robes of every hue, each according to his taste. I was hailed by them with great gladness, but with no excitement.

As we glided along we came on crystal streams, their banks a mass of primroses and forget-me-nots. Flowers of every description grew in oddly shaped beds, their odors perfuming the air. Jets of water sprang out of the ground like fountains spraying tinklingly.

No one thought of food, for we seemed to be nourished from the atmosphere round about. At intervals a note was struck, the like of which I had never heard. I wondered if it could be the symbol of discord, which now at last had become in tune with the Infinite and had taken its place in the symphony of the universe.

B. C. B.

Daytona Beach, Fla.

A Prisoner and a Prophet

I was in the German Prison Camp at Bad Colberg that the following incident took place, and it was characteristic of my friends and fellow-prisoners that they received my account of it as they did.

"Cheers, boys, Hank's been drinking!" was all the satisfaction I could get out of them.

The four of us—Lieutenant "Jock" Anderson, of the Seaforth Highlanders; Second

Lieutenant Swift, of the Manchester Regiment; Second Lieutenant "Bunny" Cook, of the King's Royal Rifles and myself, Flying-Officer Observer Harry Price, were sprawled on our bunks when I chose to relate my dream experience.

It was mid-June of 1918, shortly after Swift and I had completed three weeks of solitary confinement after an attempt—our eighth—to escape.

Swift had awakened me with the customary wet sponge thrown from his washstand, and the water trickling down my face broke my dream just at the point where someone had hit me in the face with a snowball.

So vivid was the memory of the dream, however, that I forgot to return Swift's compliment. "'Morning, everybody," I bel-lowed, "we're in for a cheery Christmas this year!"

"Stow it!"—"Shurrup!"—and the like greeted my salutation.

Nevertheless, undaunted, I went on. "Listen, you nit-wits," I sallied, "I'm serious. From now on I'm Hank, the prophet, so listen well."

I will admit that even then I recounted my dream as something of a joke and also to get even with the others for that wet sponge. At any rate, something made me go on and finish my story.

"Boys," I said, "Santa is going to be good to us this year. We're to be feted. There'll be music and dancing and a Christmas tree. The scene will be a large hotel and as we enter, the orchestra will be playing a tune something like this—*La-la la, La-la la. . .*"

But that was as far as I got. More wet sponges and a concerted rush by the others ended my dream-revelations.

That summer and autumn passed, and then, as we know, November of that year saw the end of the war. Not for us, however.

It was December twenty-third when we finally broke camp and Christmas Day found us near Munster, en route for Holland. You can imagine the blackness of our feelings when, despite our thirst and to the amazement of the guards, we threw from the train window four unopened bottles of champagne!

Evening of Christmas Day brought us to Enschede, a frontier town of Holland. Small, but heavens, how hospitable! The cheery, smiling Dutch folk were there en masse to welcome us—even the kiddies.

But if that was good, our reception in

Rotterdam was even better. Crowds at the railway station, porters breaking their backs to carry our luggage and insulted if we offered them a tip. And then—

What was my amazement when we were taken to the KING EDWARD HOTEL, the largest one in Rotterdam—when a reception committee came out to lead us into the huge lobby—and when I saw a towering Christmas tree around which couples were dancing to the tune of "Over there, over there" (the *La-la la, La-la la* of my dream)!

"Jock, Herb, Bunny!" I yelled. "Remember my dream? Didn't I tell you—a hotel, a tree, music, dancing. . ."

They, too, were as amazed as I and talked about it for days.

Yet you might say, "Nothing strange about that. Mere coincidence."

Possibly. Yet is it any more strange than the fact that in 1913 I dreamed that my brother Bob and I were fighting with guns and swords against men uniformed in gray; and that afterward, when the war broke out, it was my fate to fight against the gray-clad German troops?

Perhaps none of it is strange to you, but anytime, anywhere, anyhow, the strains of "Over There" take me back to an incident in my life that still passes my comprehension.

CAPT. HARRY J. PRICE.

New York City, N. Y.

Why I Believe in Mediums

I KNOW that some people believe and that others do not; and I know that this applies especially when it comes to the subject of mediums and the after-life. For myself, I cannot disbelieve, and I will tell you why.

When I was twenty-eight years old my married life was very unhappy. My husband and I had just about decided that we could never get along. But I had three young children and did not know where to turn for guidance.

Then I heard about a medium who lived three miles away from our home. Somehow I managed to get to see her and could hardly believe my ears at what she told me. She seemed to know all about my troubles at home; she knew my parents were dead and said that both my mother and father were with me in spirit. She could see them both with their hands resting lightly on my head and could hear them saying: "Poor child! Poor child!" She then went on to prophesy just how my life would take shape. She said that my husband was to die soon; that

he would go "like a puff of wind, without time to say a prayer."

My husband did die, just as she had predicted, and in just that manner; he dropped dead most unexpectedly.

Two months after his death I went to bed one night but couldn't sleep. I had the strangest feeling that someone was in the room with me. I could even feel someone pushing my bed. I got up and looked all around, but couldn't find anyone or anything to account for my feeling, so I lay down and stayed awake until morning.

I was just going to get up at daylight, when I heard, as plain as if he had been in the room, my husband's voice. It had always been his custom to get up first and then call me, and now I heard as plain as day, his call: "Get up, May! Get up!"

I was terribly upset and sprang up and ran downstairs where I fell into a chair and cried and cried. One of my sons insisted it was my imagination, but I know what I heard. And who should have recognized that voice better than I?

MRS. MAY A.

Baltimore, Md.

Lucky Dreams

IN the July number of GHOST STORIES, C. V., of Albany, makes the request that if any of your readers have ever had any prophetic dreams of fortunate events, he would certainly like to hear about them. Here is my answer to C. V.

I have had both kinds of dreams, lucky and unlucky ones, and have been able to get a pretty good slant on my future through them. The first I shall relate goes back to the time when I was fourteen years old. Everyone in the family but myself was ill—my stepmother, my father, the twins—and while we had a nurse for my stepmother, I had to take care of all the others. At the same time I was taking examinations, writing and memorizing orations for my graduation from Grade School.

When it was all over I was so tired I would fall asleep standing up, and worst of all, the outlook for further schooling was most discouraging. Nevertheless, I was continually dreaming of going on to a school where I had to go up a number of steps! And actually, it came about that I did go to a High School in a distant city which answered exactly to the one I had seen in my dream!

While there I was often dreaming of at-

tending another school where I had but one flight of steps to climb, and that only on special occasions. Then, unexpectedly, my father came for me, and I went East to live at my birthplace. And there I attended the school of my dreams!

Before leaving there I became engaged to a young man, yet all the while I kept dreaming of returning to California where I should go to a school which was immense; learning its rooms was like learning the streets of a strange city. That, of course, was not according to my waking plans. But sure enough, my folks sent for me on account of my father's poor health—so I did return to California. I went to the State Normal School in Los Angeles and I think I learned the streets of that city before I found my way around my classrooms.

While there I told my room-mate I would never marry the man I was engaged to, for in my dreams the church persisted in falling down on the wedding party before the words were spoken. I did not marry him, and I have never regretted it!

My next persistent dream was that I was married and had a baby whose tiny clothes I seemed to be hanging out on a line at my childhood home. And so it has been, and many times I recall those dreams, for I am at home, and have the darling baby of my dream.

Meanwhile, I still go on dreaming ever so often of continuing my studies later in life. For the last three years I have been taking courses in Theosophy and hope to complete another which I have begun.

Is this answer enough for C. V.?

K. D. M.

San Pedro, Cal.

A Will and the Ouija

IF I may, I should like to submit some experiences of mine and of my family, in the hope that some one will offer an explanation.

The first occurred about seven years ago when we were living in an apartment in New York City and were all packed up to move the next day to a suburb. It was late when we all retired, and Mother lay awake for a long time, planning for the morning and wondering about the future in our new home. As she lay there she was idly gazing out the window up at the sky, mentally noting how clear and blue it was.

Then all of a sudden the heavens seemed to open at one spot and there stood a snow

white horse all hung with fancy trappings! It was poised as if for a spring or a hurdle, but whether it bore a rider or not my Mother could not say, for it vanished immediately.

Some, I know, are sure to say that this was an over-excited imagination. But I can assure them it was not. My mother is a learned woman, not given to fancies of that kind, and this experience frightened her almost to death. She thought it must mean the end of the world or something equally dreadful.

The next incident concerns an Ouija board. Someone left one at our house and Mother and I sat down to try it. We asked a question, but the pointer just went wild all over the table. This kept up for about an hour, then Mother asked: "What do you mean, Ouija, that we can't understand?"

Immediately the pointer went slowly and steadily through every letter of the alphabet from a to z. Then it spelled clearly: "Australia . . . wool . . . wool . . . wool." This did not answer any of our questions, but we let it go on. It proceeded to tell us about "a relative dead over a hundred years", who was a native of Australia and wished us to have the property he left, but it explained that the will was forged. The name of the relative was spelled accurately on the board and my mother recalled having heard her grandmother speak of him.

Mother also was reminded of a visit she had paid to a medium once, before her marriage, and this woman had told her of this same relative and said something about hundreds of sheep. So we decided there must be something in the Ouija after all.

There were days following this first communication, when messages on the board came so fast that my husband could not write them down. In order, we were told, to claim this Australian property, we would have to have papers. But how we were to get these papers, the Ouija would not say. It spoke on this subject every day for weeks, and would never be switched to any other until it had said all it wanted to for that day. Then it would go on about other things and so many of them came true that Mother grew afraid of the thing and burned it.

I was terribly disappointed, and finally bought another board, but though I tried working it with various people, I never got any results at all. And to this day I have never persuaded Mother to sit with me at it again.

H. M.

Flushing, L. I.

R. T. I. QUALIFIES YOU TO MAKE MONEY AND ITS SERVICE KEEPS YOU UP-TO-THE-MINUTE ON THE R. T. I. NEWEST DEVELOPMENTS IN RADIO, TELEVISION AND TALKING PICTURES



Big Money quick—the chance to more than double your salary—is offered to you now. RADIO has leaped from the experimental stage to a gigantic industry, employing many, many thousands and loudly calling for MORE TRAINED MEN to fill the Big-Pay jobs. TALKING PICTURES have taken the larger cities by storm and will sweep the entire country, opening up many new good jobs everywhere. TELEVISION now comes with even greater promise of a large number of good paying jobs and big profits for those who are prepared.

BIG MONEY NOW! MORE TO COME

Here is an entirely new field of profitable employment—Big-Money Jobs—\$2500—\$3500—\$5000 and up, right now—lots of money easily made in spare time—increasing pay for you and more and more money as this new industry grows bigger and bigger.

EASY WAY TO BIG PAY

The "R.T.I." famous "3 in 1" Home Training in Radio, Television and Talking Pictures makes it easy for men, young men and boys to get into this new field quickly. R. T. I. home training is practical and easy to understand. It trains your head and hands at the same time. Your opportunities for money-making are unlimited. Your age, amount of education, or experience make no difference. If you are interested and ambitious you can succeed. Are you willing to use a little spare time at home? That is all you need to quickly start making money with R.T.I. material and home training. You will be ready for a good job or profitable business of your own even before you finish the training. Remember—you learn at home in your spare time on actual equipment included in fine, big outfits sent you. R.T.I. with all its connections in the industry, keeps you up-to-date and pushing forward all the time.

R. T. I. Wonderful Free Book Nothing Like It Ever Published

No one can fully realize the amazing size and future growth of the Radio, Television, and the Talking Picture Industries unless they know all the facts revealed in this R.T.I. book. It will open your eyes to the vast number of new money-making jobs—enormous spare-time profits—all within easy reach of ambitious men.

Big R.T.I. Book Free—While They Last

LET F. H. SCHNELL AND THE R. T. I. ADVISORY BOARD HELP YOU.

20 years' Radio Experience. First to establish 2-way amateur communication with Europe. Former traffic Mgr. of Am. Radio Relay League. Lieut. Com. U. S. N. E. Inventor and Designer. Cons. Radio Engineer. Assisting him is the R. T. I. Advisory Board, composed of men prominent in the Radio Industry—manufacturing, broadcasting, engineering and servicing. All these men know Radio and will help you succeed in their field.

RADIO & TELEVISION INSTITUTE
Dept. 644, 4806 St. Anthony Ct., Chicago

RADIO & TELEVISION INSTITUTE
Dept. 644, 4806 St. Anthony Court, Chicago
Send me Free and prepaid your BIG BOOK "Tune In On Big Pay" and full details of your three-in-one Home Training (without obligating me in any way.)

Name
Address
City State,.....

\$500 in 2 Months
Hasn't Finished this Course
Your radio course enabled me to
earn over \$500 in two month spare
time work.—J. Noffsinger, R. I.
Box 57, Greenville, Ky.

\$60 a Week—Through R. T. I. Training
I am earning \$60 per week and another \$20 a week in
spare time Radio Work. Your Course was the best investment
I ever made.—W. W. Mead, 915 W. 25th St., Indianapolis, Ind.

**STEP UP QUICK TO A BIG-MONEY JOB THROUGH R.T.I. training in Broadcast-
ing, Sales, Service, Manufacturing, Repairing, Ship and Station Operating, Installing,
in business for yourself.**

**R. T. I. R. T. I. TRAINS YOU AT HOME FOR A GOOD JOB OR A PROFITABLE
PART TIME OR FULL TIME BUSINESS OF YOUR OWN**

Please mention GHOST STORIES when answering advertisement

BIG MUSCLES For Only **\$3.98**



Reg. \$15 Value

Limited Low Price Offer

Send No Money



SAVE OVER HALF ON THIS OFFER

But you save still more if you buy now. Everything's to be included in this special low price offer. Big, rugged 10 Cable Exerciser adjustable to 200 lbs. resistance. Complete Wall Exercising Parts for Back and Shoulder development. Hand Grip that builds husky Wrists and forearms. Head Gear to bring out those dormant Neck Muscles. Foot Stirrup and Harness that develops sneaky Calf and Thigh Muscles. Regulation Heavy Skip Rope for Speed, Endurance and Wind. And a completely illustrated Course of Instruction. All This—For Only \$3.98! Take advantage of this temporary low price offer NOW. Just send your name and address. We'll ship everything out by return mail. Pay postman only \$3.98 plus postal charges. Outside United States Cash With Order.

INSTITUTE FOR PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT, Inc.,
13 East 22nd St., Dept. D-5, New York, N. Y.

NEW SCIENTIFIC WONDER
"X-RAY" CURIO



Reg. U.S. Pat. Off.

PRICE 10c

3 for 25c

BIG FUN BOYS You apparently see thru Clothes, Wood, Stone, any object. See Bones in Flesh.

MARVEL MFG. CO. Dept. 66, NEW HAVEN, CONN.

NEW LOW PRICES
ON **GOOD YEAR** Firestone - FISK AND OTHER U.S. TIRES

Lowest Prices in History!
This big company, because of its immense buying power, will supply you with reconstructed standard make tires at these unheard of low prices—whole year's service guaranteed. Thousands of satisfied customers reorder year after year.

ORDER NOW—SAVE MONEY

BALLOON Tires		REG. CORD Tires	
Size	Tires Tubes	Size	Tires Tubes
22x4.40	\$2.20 \$1.10	30x3 1/2	\$2.20 \$1.00
22x4.50	2.40 1.15	30x3 3/4	2.25 1.10
30x4.60	2.45 1.20	31x4	2.95 1.15
30x4.75	2.90 1.35	32x4	2.95 1.15
28x5.25	2.95 1.35	32x4 1/4	2.95 1.15
30x5.25	2.95 1.35	32x4 1/2	3.20 1.45
31x5.25	3.20 1.45	33x4 1/4	3.20 1.45
30x5.77	3.20 1.40	34x4 1/4	3.45 1.45
32x6.00	3.20 1.40	30x5	2.60 1.75
32x6.00	3.20 1.45	32x5	2.60 1.75
32x6.20	3.65 1.75	All Other Sizes	

Send only \$1.00 deposit with each tire ordered, balance C.O.D. If you send cash in full, deduct 5%. You are guaranteed a year's service or replacement at half price. **MIDLAND TIRE AND RUBBER COMPANY** Dept. 173, 1000 West Sixty-third St., Chicago, Ill.

12 MONTHS SERVICE GUARANTEED

What Made His Hair Grow?

Read His Letter for the Answer



"Two years ago I was bald all over the top of the head. I felt ashamed for people to see my head. I had tried to overcome this, but I remained bald until I used Kotalko.

"New hair came almost immediately and kept on growing. In a short time I had a splendid head of hair, which has been perfect ever since—and no return of the baldness.

This statement is by Mr. H. A. Wild. He is but one of those who voluntarily attest Kotalko has stopped falling hair, eliminated dandruff or aided new, luxuriant hair growth.

Women also report new hair growth through KOTALKO. Many testimonies

als from men and women whose health was undoubtedly good and whose hair roots were not dead.

Is your physical condition equal to theirs? And are your hair roots alive but dormant? If so, they may be stimulated into growing hair through Kotalko, the right sort of invigorant. Sold by busy druggists.

Free Box

To prove the efficacy of Kotalko, for men's, women's and children's hair, the producers are giving Free Boxes.

Kotal Co., C-681 Station O, New York
Please send me FREE Proof Box of KOTALKO.

Name

Full Address

Better Boats
At Lower Prices

Inboard and Outboard Motor Boats, Canoes, Rowboats and Dinghies.

Catalog Free! Save money—order by mail. Please state kind of Boat you are interested in. Two big factories. Prompt shipment.

THOMPSON BROS. BOAT MFG. CO. 119
227 Ann St., BOSTON (W-15 15) 127 Elm St., CHICAGO
WISCONSIN (Other States) NEW YORK

BE A DETECTIVE

Make Secret Investigations
Earn Big Money. Work home or travel. Fascinating work. Experience unnecessary. **DETECTIVE Particulars FREE.** Write to **GEO. M. WAGNER, 2190-G, Broadway, N. Y.**

AGENTS—NO COMPETITION for YOU

BIG MONEY "THE YEAR 'ROUND"

Sell **GOLD MEDAL UNIFORMS** to Doctors, Dentists, Nurses, Hospitals, Restaurants, Cooks, Barbers, Manicurists, Clerks, Housewives and thousands more—**Untouched Field.**

A NEW FIELD TREMENDOUS DEMAND!

SAMPLE OUTFIT FREE!

ACT NOW!

GOLD MEDAL UNIFORM CORPORATION
116 FIFTH AVE., NEW YORK—Dept. F

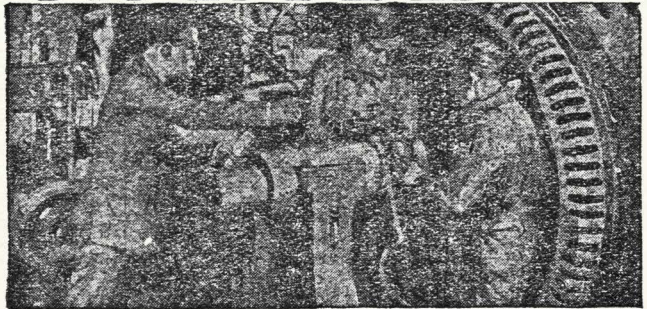
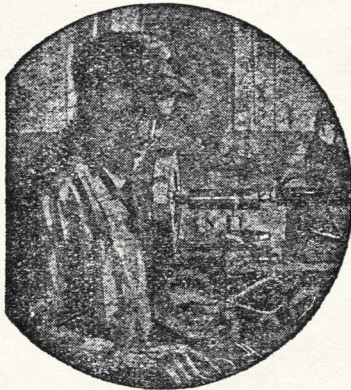
Let Me In On This—Send Free Outfit.

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____

Mail Coupon Below

**Men who work
with their hands**

WANTED!



for well-paid positions in
ELECTRICITY

We have placed machinists, carpenters, masons, plumbers, railroad men, office clerks, farmers and even laborers in fine Electrical Jobs under this plan. Mail coupon for details of our remarkable offer.

—and we'll back them with this amazing Employment Contract

We are looking for more ambitious young men with factory, building-trade or even office experience to prepare for well-paid Electrical positions. Right now Electricity offers you unusual opportunities. You may have read in the newspapers that the big Electric Utility magnates have promised President Hoover to spend TWO THOUSAND MILLION DOLLARS on new hydro-electric power plants, super-power transmission lines, electrification of railroads, new buildings and other gigantic new projects. All that means tens of thousands of new positions open in the world's most prosperous industry—one of the very few lines today that never suffers from hard times or unemployment.

Get in touch with me and I'll tell you how you can cash in on your past mechanical or business experience, by adding to it a knowledge of wiring, motors and generators, power-plant equipment and other Electrical subjects.

JOBS! When You're Only Half-Way Through

It's easier to break into Electricity than you think—easy to learn at home in spare time by our "job-ticket" method of practical work—easy to get a good job when you're only half-way through your training—with our help. During the past few months we have placed hundreds of men, no smarter than you, no better educated—with big Electrical Companies, or in power plants—some in the factory, others in drafting, or radio, or telegraph or telephone or the selling or radio or office end. (A few typical letters are shown at the left.)

Get My No-Risk Plan

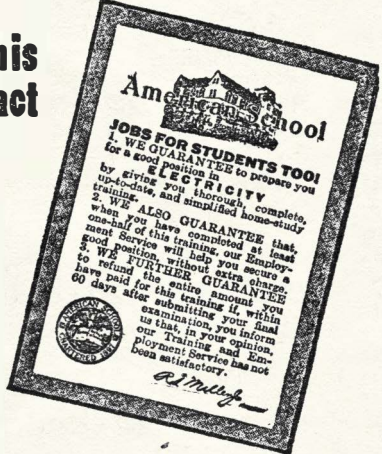
Right now we are making an interesting proposition to men who are willing to devote a part of their spare time to getting ready for a real future in the world's biggest, fastest-growing industry. Read our guarantee above, and mail coupon today for the most remarkable offer ever made to ambitious men.



Chief Engineer Dunlap — Electrical Division

American School

Dept. E-574, Drexel Ave. & 58th St., CHICAGO, ILLINOIS



HERE'S PROOF



Gentlemen:
Thanks to the constant effort of the American School I have found an entirely satisfactory job doing Electrical construction and maintenance work.
(Signed)
W. B. McClellan, Mason
City, Iowa



"I have accepted employment with the Iowa Railway and Light Corporation starting at \$125.00 per month, who wrote me a letter suggesting an interview."
Thanking you very much for your splendid cooperation, I remain, Yours truly,
(Signed)
Glen Vandelaar,
Leighton, Iowa

AMERICAN SCHOOL, Dept. E-574, Drexel Ave. & 58th St., Chicago, Ill.
Please tell me, without cost or obligation, about your training and employment service in line marked X below.

ELECTRICITY

- Architecture
- Building Drafting
- Business Management
- Accounting
- Mechanical Engineering
- Shop Superintendent
- Foremanship
- High School in 2 years
- Structural Steel
- Civil Engineering
- Auto Engineering

Name.....

St. No.....

City.....State.....

Age..... Occupation.....

Please mention GHOST STORIES when answering advertisement

RUPTURE IS NOT A TEAR

Your physician will tell you that hernia (rupture) is a muscular weakness in the abdominal wall.—Do not be satisfied with merely bracing these weakened muscles, with your condition probably growing worse every day!—Strike at the real cause of the trouble, and

WHEN—

The weakened muscles recover their strength and elasticity, and—

The unsightly, unnatural protrusion disappears, and— You recover your vim, vigor and vitality,—your strength and energy,—and you look and feel better in every way,—and your friends notice the difference,

THEN—

You'll know your rupture is gone, and You'll know why for almost a quarter of a century numerous sworn statements report complete recovery and freedom from uncomfortable mechanical supports, without delay from work.

SEND NO MONEY

A Test of the scientific self-treatment mentioned in coupon below is now available to you, whether you are young or old,—man or woman. It costs you nothing to make this test.—For your own good mail the coupon NOW—TODAY.

FREE TEST COUPON


Plapao Laboratories, 833 Stuart Bldg., St. Louis, Mo.

Send me a Free 10-day test supply of the remedial factor Plapao and 48-page illustrated book on Rupture; no charge for this now or later.

Name

Address

DO YOU WANT TO STOP TOBACCO?



Banish the craving for tobacco as thousands have. Make yourself free and happy with Tobacco Redeemer. Not a substitute, not habit forming. Write for free booklet telling of injurious effect of tobacco and dependable, easy way to relieve the craving many men have.

FREE BOOK

Newell Pharmaceutical Co. Dept. 906 Clayton, Mo.

X-RAY KATHOSCOPE, Pocket Detector Everybody wants it

See your best girl and all she's doing. No one knows; you see everything. Periscope operates in all climates; lasts lifetime, ready for use. \$100 cash with order for this wonderful instrument and 8 astonishing French pictures.

KATHOS CO., P. O. Box 830
City Hall Post Office Dept. GH New York City

DU-TEX THE NEW WONDER TABLE CLOTH

New 10,000,000 a year Market-SHARE ITS PROFITS

FOUND GOLD! UNDER-SELLS AND OUT-SELLS ALL OTHERS. LOOKS LIKE REAL LIFE LINEN.

AGENTS—Cash in Now! Highest daily Commissions. Lowest Prices. De-luxe Samples Free. Take orders for DU-TEX, the Genuine, Forever immaculate, Linen-like Tablecloth. Nationwide Demand. Sells on Sight. All colors, all sizes. Wonderful opportunity, Mail coupon.

COUPON

DU-TEX CO., 116 FIFTH AVE., NEW YORK
Send me Free Samples of DU-TEX Tablecloths. 68-F

Name

Address

SAMPLES FREE Mail Coupon At Once!

BIG MUSCLES QUICK

Complete Home Gymnasium

ALL FOR \$5.00 Send NO MONEY



Wall Exerciser
Chest Expander

- SAVE \$23.50**
Look what you get
1. 10-Cable Progressive Chest Expander, worth \$5.00
 2. Wall Apparatus Attachment, worth..... 1.00
 3. Patented Progressive Stirrup for Leg Muscles, worth..... 2.50
 4. Scissors Grips, two, for developing wrists, hands, arms, worth... 2.00
 5. Patented Progressive Head Gear, adjustable, no chafing, no slipping, worth..... 3.00
 6. 12 Weeks' Home Instruction Course in Scientific Muscle-Building, worth..... 15.00
- Total Worth \$28.50**
- Special Adjustable Head Gear develops powerful neck muscles
- Patented McFadden nonslip stirrup builds powerful legs and thighs.
- All Yours For Only \$5.00

Any of above may be purchased separately at prices shown

6 OUTFITS IN ONE

The chance of a lifetime! The complete genuine McFadden Outfit for only \$5.00! You need send no money in advance. First come, first served. You'll almost see your muscles GROW, new energy, new strength—inside and out—at a SMASHING BARGAIN. Try it ten days at our risk. Read what you get. Remember, everything's included and everything's GUARANTEED.

Rush The Coupon

Come on, friend, you want muscles, vigor, pep, health, strength. Here's your chance to get them—at a tremendous saving. Shoot the coupon along—BEFORE YOU GO TO BED TONIGHT. Money back if you want it. Get that coupon off NOW!

MICHAEL MCFADDEN, Dept. 0-149
55 East 11th Street, New York City

FREE! You can make a Rowing Machine EASY with the McFadden Outfit. And boy, how it builds the MUSCLES.



Mail this coupon—No money needed

Michael McFadden, Dept. 0-149, 55 East 11th Street, New York City.

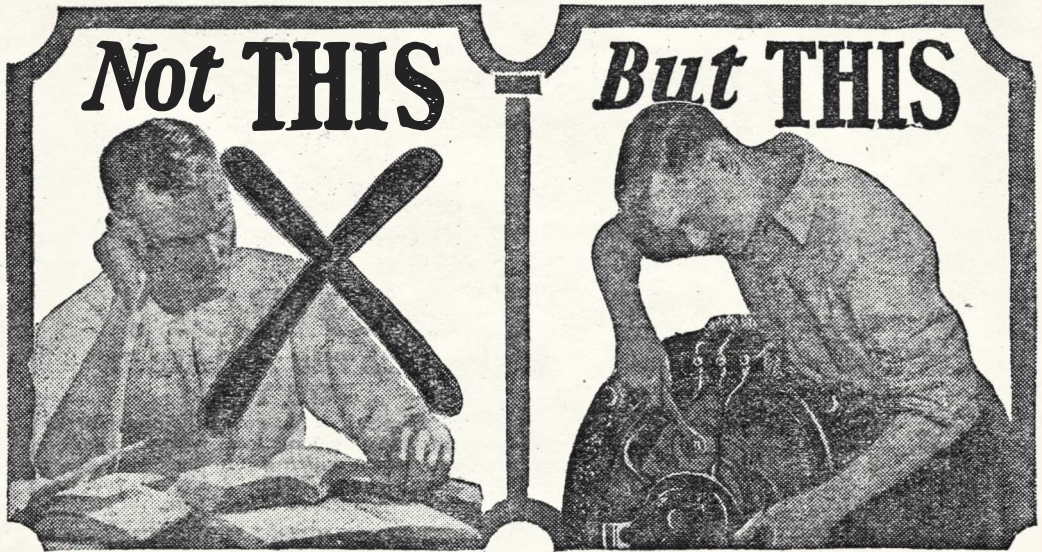
Dear Mr. McFadden: Please send me complete Muscle Building Outfit to try—Chest Expander, Wall Apparatus Attachment, Stirrup, Scissors Grips, Head Gear, 12 Weeks' Instruction Course. Also McFadden Encyclopedia of Health and Strength FREE. I enclose no money but will pay postman \$5.00 plus postage on delivery. (Or send \$5.00 and we pay postage). My Money back if I return outfit in 10 days.

Name

Address

Town, State

(Outside U. S. send cash with order)



Amazingly Easy Way to get into ELECTRICITY

Don't spend your life slaving away in some small-pay, no-future job. Don't be satisfied with \$20, \$30, or \$40 a week. Go into Electricity, where the Big Money is made today—where salaries of \$50, \$60, and \$70 a week are just the average.



Learn Without Books -- in 90 Days

Come to Coyne and learn Electricity in 90 days time. Not by books or correspondence, but by actual electrical work—building batteries, operating motors, wiring houses, constructing radio sets, working on airplane engines, etc. In one department alone we generate enough electricity to supply a small city with power!

Age—Lack of Education or Experience—No Drawback

You need no advanced education, because I don't teach you out of books. Nor do you need any previous experience. I don't care if you don't now an armature from a generator, if you're 16 years old or 46. It makes no difference. I will prepare YOU for a Big Pay Electrical Job in 90 days time.

Jobs—Pay—Future

Don't worry about a job. Recent concern called on me for 150 Coyne graduates. And calls for more men are coming in almost daily. My Big Expert Employment Department will help you and back you up as long as you live—without one cent of cost to you. And if you want part-time work while here at school, I'll help you get that, too.

Special Aviation Offer

Right now I am giving a special training in Aviation Electricity, Radio—and Auto Ignition without extra cost. Also I'm making a very special tuition offer, with a refund of your railroad fare to Chicago. But to get these big advantages you must act at once.

Get This Free Book

So tear out the coupon and mail it today. GET MY BIG FREE BOOK. Find out how easily and quickly you can land a Big Pay Electrical Job. It costs you NOTHING to investigate! Just mail coupon.



Prepare for Jobs Like These

Here are a few of hundreds of positions open to Coyne-trained men. Our free employment bureau gives you lifetime employment service.

- Armature Expert up to \$100 Wk.
- Substation Operator up to \$85 a Week
- Auto Electrician \$60 a Wk. & up
- Inventor Unlimited
- Maintenance Engineer up to \$100 a Week
- Service Station Owner \$60 a Week and up
- Radio Expert \$60 a Week and up

FILL IN-MAIL TODAY

H. C. LEWIS, President
COYNE ELECTRICAL SCHOOL
 500 S. Paulina St., Dept. 40-41, Chicago

Gentlemen:—Please send me free your big 12 x 16 Book with 161 illustrations and your special offer of Two Free Courses.

Name.....

Address.....

City.....State.....

COYNE Electrical School
 H. C. LEWIS, President Founded 1899
 500 S. Paulina St., Dept. 40-41, Chicago, Ill.

Please mention GHOST STORIES when answering advertisement



His "SAX"
set a million feet
in motion!

You, too, can thrill happy hearts and set feet into joyous action — with a Sax. You can have fun, be popular in lodge, school or church, and earn money on the side.

BUESCHER True-Tone
Saxophones

are easiest to learn, easiest to play. Simplified key arrangement makes fingers fall into position naturally. Insures rapid fingering and quick mastery of the Sax. In a week you'll play popular hits. Many jazz orchestras and bands in 90 days.

Easy to play—Easy to pay. A little down, then pay as you play. Write for free catalog and details of 6 day trial offer—today!

BUESCHER BAND INSTRUMENT CO., 3021 Buescher Bl., Elkhart, Ind.

**Don't Let \$19 Stand Between You
And A Good Head Of Hair**



For years I suffered from dandruff and falling hair, until a friend told me an old Canadian method. This treatment will stop falling hair, eradicate dandruff and grow new hair. My baldness has been replaced with luxuriant new hair. Dozens of my friends have had equal results. The method is simple, easy and positive. Send me \$1.00 to cover costs and I will mail you this prescription and method of treatment with my positive guarantee that you will be satisfied or I will return your money. A few cents at any drugstore buys the necessary ingredients. You will thank me many times, as my friends and I will return your money. Write for free booklet.

STED PITT, Dept. 20, 153 Court Street, New Haven, Conn.

**HOW TO OBTAIN
A BETTER LOOKING NOSE!**
IMPROVE YOUR PERSONAL APPEARANCE

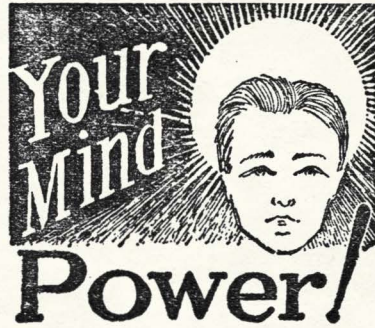


My new Model 25 Nose Shaper is designed to improve the shape of the nose by remodeling the cartilage and fleshy parts, safely and painlessly. This is accomplished thru the very fine and precise adjustments which only my patented Model 25 possesses. Results are lasting. Can be worn at night, or during the day. Money refunded if not satisfied after thirty days' trial. Write for free booklet to

M. TRILETY
Pioneer Nose Shaping Specialist
Dept. 168 Binghamton, N. Y.

TOBACCO
habit Overcome Or No Pay
Over 500,000 men and women used Superba Remedy to help stop Cigarettes, Cigars, Pipe, Chewing or Snuff. Write for full treatment on trial. Contains no dope or habit forming drugs. Costs \$2.00 if successful, nothing if not. SUPERBA CO. A-15 Baltimore, Md.

TRAVEL ON "UNCLE SAM'S" PAY ROLL
Railway Mail Clerks \$158-\$225 MONTH
FRANKLIN INSTITUTE Dept. J-188, Rochester, N. Y.
Slee: Rush to me, without charge, (1) 32 page book of Government positions, (2) List of Government jobs now open to men, women, 18 up. (3) Tell me how to get a position.
Name _____
Address _____
Mail Coupon Today, sure.



CREATES MIRACLES FOR YOU

Bring miracles into your life—happiness, health and freedom from worry. Don't waste years waiting for these things. Create them NOW. A key to your problems is offered here.

ASTOUNDING RESULTS

Harness your vast mind power to your problem—then watch results—learn to direct the creative forces of your mind.

Thoughts are material like bricks, lumber and steel. To build them you must have a definite plan—or they are wasted. Inspirations, ideas, originate in your mind, but they must be controlled, mastered, if you wish to make them serve you. A few rules, simple and practical, will be the means of showing you how to change the course of your life to one of happiness.

Are you willing to unlock the treasures of your mind—or gamble with luck and chance?

FREE BOOK EXPLAINS

Thousands in America today, and in many other lands, have demonstrated marvelous changes in health, peace, and joy by using their mind power. Write today for a free copy of the book, "Light of Egypt" and change the course of your life. Address letter to:

LIBRARIAN Z. F.
Rosicrucian Brotherhood
(AMORC)

San Jose, California
(Perpetuating the Original Fraternity)

SECRETS

AND MYSTERIES

The world's most amazing book, reveals hundreds of secrets hidden from the public for centuries. Exposes ancient magic, curious arts, conjuring, secrets of lovers, gamblers, money-makers; includes the Treasure Chest of Mystery, Ways to Wealth, Beauty Secrets, Dreams, Omen, Manufacturing Formula, Fortune Telling Methods, Magic Colors, Science of Kinesing, Hypnotism, Tricks, Talismans, Charms and Lucky Numbers. Sent sealed for 25c coin of stamps.

OCULT COMPANY, Box 59, Whitestone, N. Y., Dept. GS-4

**Did You Read That Book?
How superstition did beat the races!**

100 examples explaining why we believed mischievous ghosts of Oriental kings of thousands of generations past, controls the running horse on metropolitan race courses today and tomorrow, and collected \$12,398.00 at mutual pay windows in 12 days on \$60 investment, as shown by 100 examples. "Nutty," you'll say. "Nutty's right and still collecting. Examples explain how, to all, in 100 page book. Price \$5.00. Special examples \$1.00.

S. Franklin White, Box 382, Ontario, Calif.

Please mention GHOST STORIES when answering advertisement

Get Strong QUICKLY

Giant Chest Expander

Here's an unheaped opportunity for everyone to develop big muscles and obtain great strength by using our heavy-tensioned exerciser (approx. 100 lbs. resistance). Complete instructions with each exerciser. Also made in cable form in 4 convenient sizes, as illustrated below. Adjustable to 400 lbs. resistance.

ONLY \$1.00



- 5 CABLE EXERCISER \$2.00
- 10 CABLE EXERCISER \$4.00
- 15 CABLE EXERCISER \$6.00
- 20 CABLE EXERCISER \$8.00

SEND NO MONEY

Simply fill in the coupon below and mail it to the address given, naming the exerciser you want sent to you. We will mail you the exerciser and you can pay the postman plus a few cents postage on arrival. Get going on the road to health, strength and success today. Fill it in now.

PROGRESSIVE EXERCISER CO.,
1904 Langdon Bldg., Duane St. and Broadway,
New York City, N. Y.

Gentlemen: Please send me your \$..... exerciser. It is understood that I will pay the postman plus a few cents postage on delivery.

Name
Address
City State

SONG WRITERS!



Substantial Advance Royalties are paid on work found acceptable for publication. Any one wishing to write either the words or music for songs may submit work for free examination and advice. *Past experience unnecessary.* New demand created by "Talking Pictures", fully described in our free book. Write for it Today—Newcomer Associates
A-15, 748 Earle Bldg., New York, N. Y.



BEST SHIRTS AT LOWEST PRICES

AGENTS WANTED

To represent old established firm and take orders. Make Big Money every day! Big complete line direct to wearer. Shirts of all kinds. Neckwear. Underwear. Sox. Pajamas. Night Shirts, Sweaters. Balacosta, Coveralls. Pants. Riding Breeches and Children's Playsuits. Everything Guaranteed. Experience unnecessary. **BIG OUT-FIT FREE!** Write quick!
NIMROD SHIRT CO., Dept. 125,
4922-28 Lincoln Ave., Chicago.

QUIT TOBACCO

No man or woman can escape the harmful effects of tobacco. Don't try to banish the hold tobacco has upon you. Join the thousands of inveterate tobacco users that have found it easy to quit with the aid of the Keeley Treatment.



KEELEY Treatment For Tobacco Habit Successful For Over 50 Years

Quickly banishes all craving for tobacco. Write today for Free Book telling how to quickly Free yourself from the tobacco habit and our Money Back Guarantee.

THE KEELEY INSTITUTE
Dept. H-410 Dwight, Illinois

ELECTRICITY OFFERS BIG PAY

LEARN AT HOME

Hundreds of "Cooke" Trained Men are making \$60 to \$100 a week

Why don't you get into Electricity, too? It's today's great Opportunity for you and every other man who is sick and tired of struggling along on small pay. Hundreds of "Cooke Trained Men" who were no smarter than you when they started now make \$3,000 to \$5,000 a year—and some make even more.

LEARN AT HOME IN SPARE TIME

Learn with the famous L. L. COOKE "Work Sheet and Job Ticket" Method. It's simple, it's thorough, it's practical. It's just like actual shop experience, yet it's all done right in your own home with the Big Complete Outfit of Tools and Apparatus given to you without extra cost. And it's done in your spare time, without quitting your present job or losing a single hour's pay.

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE NOT NEEDED

You don't need previous experience—you don't need higher education to learn Electricity the L. L. COOKE Way. If you can read and write, that's enough. This great Training is amazingly clear and simple. There's nothing like it anywhere. It's the Training with hundreds of successful graduates: it's the Training that has put many men on Easy Street; it's the Training for you.

GET STARTED - - MAIL COUPON

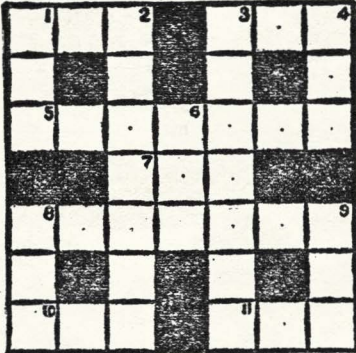
"Cooke Trained Men" are the "Big Pay Men" everywhere. \$60 to \$100 a week is what many of them are making. That's the kind of a job for you. Get started under the famous L. L. COOKE Money Back Agreement. Act today to increase your pay. Send coupon for Big FREE Book, "Secrets of Success in Electricity." Mail coupon now.

L. L. COOKE SCHOOL OF ELECTRICITY
Dept. 804 2150 Lawrence Avenue CHICAGO, ILL.

FREE BOOK COUPON-MAIL IT!

L. L. Cooke School of Electricity,
 Dept. 804, 2150 Lawrence Ave., Chicago
 Send me FREE and prepaid your book, "Secrets of Success in Electricity" and full particulars about your Home Study Course in Electricity.
 Name.....
 Address.....
 City.....State.....
 Residents of Canada send coupon to R. A. Farrow, Special Representative, 7 Medbury Lane, East Ontario, Canada.

WIN \$10 SOLVE THIS PUZZLE



REVIVE THE X WORD

We are ready to give away more than 500 of these \$10 checks. You, too, can win one of them.

**NOTHING TO BUY
NOTHING TO SELL**

NO RED TAPE ATTACHED

Merely solve this X word puzzle, send it in to us and YOU WIN!!!

HORIZONTAL

- 1—Beverage
- 3—Friend
- 5—Crystal gem
- 7—Used in baseball
- 8—Places of worship
- 10—Small vegetable
- 11—Upper side

VERTICAL

- 1—Theodore (nickname)
- 2—Southern State
- 3—To guard
- 4—Boy
- 6—Chart
- 8—Head covering
- 9—Tree fruit

ACT QUICK

These \$10 checks are to be applied to selections from our famous Jewelry Catalog, No. 10. Get to work at once. A few minutes of pleasant pastime and you can win one of these special \$10 checks.

CRYSTAL DIAMOND CO., Dept. C.G., 303, 4th Ave., N. Y.

**IF YOU WANT
ONE FOR A
FRIEND ALSO—
ENCLOSE
10c EXTRA**

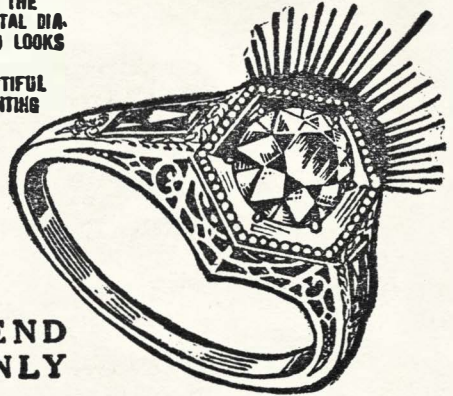
CRYSTAL DIAMOND CO., Dept. C.G., 303 Fourth Ave., New York.

Enclosed is the solution to your X word puzzle which entitles me to one of your special \$10 checks. I also enclose 10c to help pay the cost of handling and mailing the one carat FRENCH DIAMOND described above, to reach me by return mail fully prepaid. It is understood I do not have to make any purchase to get the \$10 check and I am under no obligation whatsoever.

IF YOU WANT ONE FOR A FRIEND ALSO, ENCLOSE 10c EXTRA, ONLY TWO TO THE SAME ADDRESS

NAME.....
 ADDRESS.....
 CITY..... STATE.....

HOW THE
CRYSTAL DIA-
MOND LOOKS
IN A
BEAUTIFUL
MOUNTING



SEND
ONLY

10¢

To Help Cover Cost of Handling and We Will Send you a Full Cut One Carat

Most Natural Artificial

FRENCH

DIAMOND

Nothing More to Pay

**Nothing to Sell—Nothing to Buy.
No Red Tape Attached**

We want Thousands of new owners and boosters of Artificial FRENCH DIAMONDS and we will distribute these gems only, FREE to readers of this publication.

Artificial FRENCH DIAMONDS are full 24-facet cut and are of such radiant beauty that even experts have commented at their likeness to the genuine.

WE ARE MAKING this unusual offer only to get Artificial FRENCH DIAMONDS into the hands of appreciative friends.

SLIP your name and address and 10c in stamps or coin (to cover cost of handling) in an envelope and get it right off to us. Your Artificial FRENCH DIAMOND will reach you by return mail, fully prepaid.

IF YOU WANT ONE FOR A FRIEND ALSO, ENCLOSE 10c EXTRA—ONLY TWO TO THE SAME ADDRESS.

**Be a
Winner
RUSH
COUPON**

reeling-staggering-wrestling
-they fought
with wolf-like fury

Round and round the room they went, man and maid, reeling, staggering, wrestling for the deadly hunting knife he had wrenched from her hand.

Then, as he felt her maddened strength give way, as her body became limp in his arms, his mind strove to solve this strange puzzle.

CHERRY MAID! SLIM, FIERCE TEMPTRESS OF THE FOREST, what secret errand had brought her HERE of all places? And why did she strive to kill HIM, of all people? What should he do with her?

Here indeed is an extraordinary story with an exciting and most unexpected ending.

To learn the outcome and to enjoy a host of other thrilling tales of love and high adventure, send the bargain coupon below for



THE GREAT HISTORICAL ROMANCES of Robert W. Chambers

11 Sumptuous Volumes—5000 Absorbing Pages—First Uniform Edition of the Greatest Historical Romances Ever Written—Now yours at a bargain IF YOU ACT QUICKLY!

HERE, indeed, are worthwhile tales of such outstanding merit that they have been translated into many languages the world over!

5000 Stirring Pages

If you would spend endless hours of rapturous delight—if you would meet and mingle with beautiful heroines, seductive villains, secret service agents, wily politicians, kings and royal princesses in the strangest situations and in convention-defying romance—if you would forget your worries and troubles and thrill to the sheer joy of living—here are stories pre-eminently made for YOU!

And all these slashing, dashing romances are based on historical fact. Nowhere else can you see

cure for so little money so much entertainment and education rolled into one. Indeed, good books are the most economical form of enjoyment.

Bound in red leather-grain cloth selected by Mr. Chambers himself, with titles in gold, these superb volumes make a proud adornment for your table or bookshelf.

Special Short-Time Offer

To secure quick introduction this special limited edition is being offered far below the usual price! Editorial and plate costs have been eliminated altogether, the books manufactured in the dull season, and Mr. Chambers has cut his own royalty to the bone. At this low price these sets are going fast. SO ACT TODAY!

10 Days Free Inspection

Don't send a cent. Simply mail the bargain coupon and these glorious

volumes will go to you immediately, all charges prepaid. If they fail to delight you return them in 10 days and you owe us nothing. But don't delay! TEAR OFF AND MAIL THE COUPON TODAY! This opportunity may never come your way again.

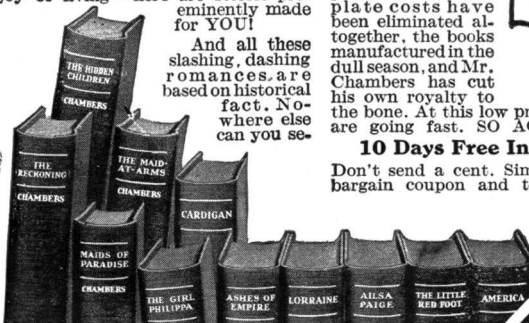
You have everything to gain and nothing to lose. It costs nothing to investigate. Why not mail the bargain coupon now?

Dept. 716
4-30

McKINLAY,
STONE &
MACKENZIE,
114 E. 16th St. N.Y.

Send me for free inspection, all charges prepaid, your new uniform edition of the Great Historical Romances of Robert W. Chambers in 11 volumes, handsomely bound in red leather-grain cloth. If at the end of 10 days I am more than delighted, I will keep them and send you \$1 promptly and \$1 a month thereafter for only 14 months. Otherwise, I shall return the set in 10 days at your expense.

DON'T WAIT! MAIL COUPON TODAY!



IT COSTS NOTHING TO INVESTIGATE—MAIL NOW

Name.....
Street.....
City..... State.....
Occupation.....

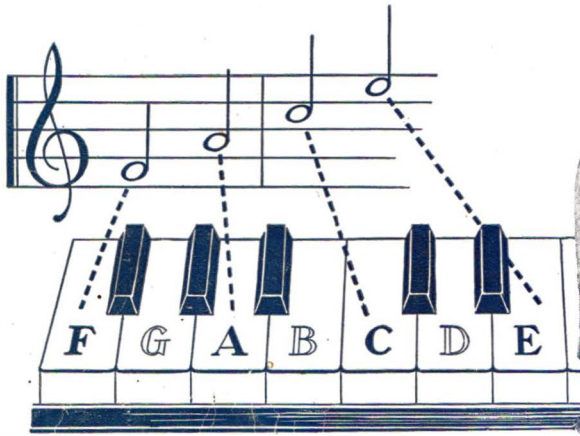
Age: Over 21?..... Under 21?.....

McKinlay, Stone & Mackenzie, Dept. 716
114 East 16th Street, New York, N. Y.

For rich Art Craft binding with gilt tops, change above to \$1.50 a month for the same number of months.

FOR CASH DEDUCT 5%

To those who think Learning Music is hard-



PERHAPS you think that taking music lessons is like taking a dose of medicine. It isn't any longer!

As far as you're concerned, the old days of long practice hours with their horrid scales, hard-work exercises, and expensive personal teachers' fees are over and done with.

You have.. no excuses—no alibis whatsoever for not making your start toward musical good times *now!*

For, through a method that removes the boredom and extravagance from music lessons, you can now learn to play your favorite instrument entirely at home—without a private teacher—in half the usual time—at a fraction of the usual cost.

Just imagine . . . a method that has made the reading and playing of music so downright simple that you don't have to know one note from another to begin.

Do you wonder that this remarkable way of learning music has already been vouched for by over a half-million people in all parts of the world?

Easy As Can Be

The lessons come to you by mail from the famous U. S. School of Music. They consist of complete printed instructions, diagrams, and all the music you need. You study with a smile. One week you are learning a dreamy waltz—the next you are

mastering a stirring march. As the lessons continue they prove easier and easier. For instead of just scales you are always learning to play by *actual notes* the classic favorites and the latest syncopation that formerly you only *listened* to.

And you're never in hot water. First, you are *told* how a thing is done. Then a picture *shows* you how, then you do it yourself and *hear* it. No private teacher could make it clearer or easier.

Soon when your friends say "please play something," you can surprise and entertain them with pleasing melodies on your favorite instrument. You'll find yourself in the spotlight—popular everywhere. Life at last will have its silver lining and lonely hours will vanish as you play the "blues" away.

New Friends—Better Times

If you're tired doing the heavy looking-on at parties—if always listening to others play has almost spoiled the pleasure of music for you—if you've been envious because they could entertain their friends and family—if learning music has always been one of those never-to-come-true dreams, let the time-proven and tested homestudy method of the U. S. School of Music come to your rescue.

Don't be afraid to begin your lessons at once. Over half a million people learned to play this modern way—and found it easy as A-B-C. Forget that old-fashioned idea that you need special "talent." Just read the list of instruments in the panel, decide which one you want to play, and

the U. S. School of Music will do the rest. And bear in mind no matter which instrument you choose, the cost in each case will average the same—just a few cents a day. No matter whether you are a mere beginner or already a good performer, you will be interested in learning about this new and wonderful method.

Send for Our Free Book and Demonstration Lesson

Our wonderful illustrated Free Book and our Free Demonstration Lesson explain all about this remarkable method. They prove just how anyone can learn to play his favorite instrument by *note* in almost no time and for just a fraction of what old slow methods cost. The booklet will also tell you all about the amazing new *Automatic Finger Control*.

Read the list of instruments to the left, decide which you want to play, and the U. S. School of Music will do the rest. Act NOW. Clip and mail this coupon today, and the fascinating Free Book and Free Demonstration Lesson will be sent to you at once. No obligation. Instruments supplied when needed, cash or credit. U. S. School of Music, 864 Brunswick Bldg., New York City.

U. S. School of Music, 864 Brunswick Bldg., New York City

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

..... Have you Instr.
 Name.....
 Address.....
 City..... State.....

Pick Your Instrument

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