

UNCANNY, SPOOKY, CREEPY TALES

# Ghost STORIES

JANUARY

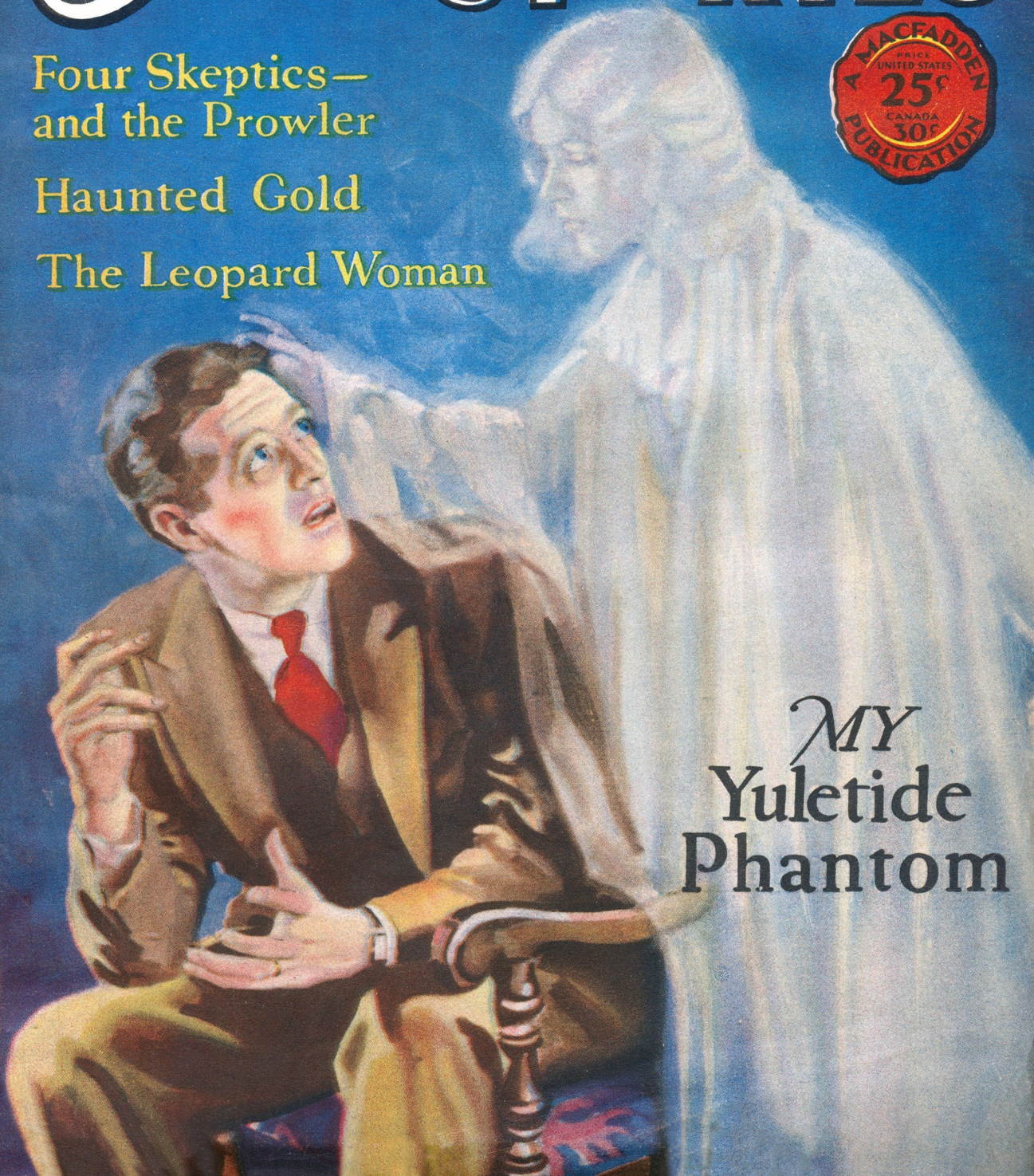
Four Skeptics—  
and the Prowler

Haunted Gold

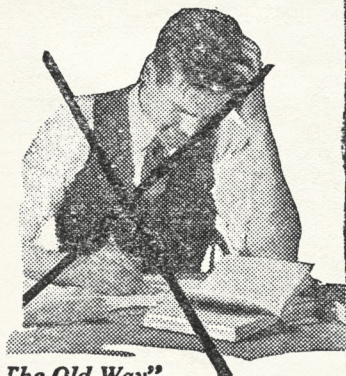
The Leopard Woman



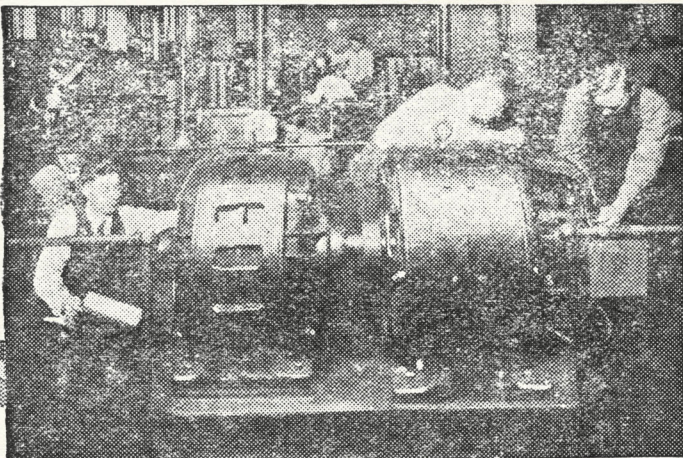
MY  
Yuletide  
Phantom







The Old Way



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### The Ghost on the Jury!

The story of the strangest murder trial on record is told by Dan O'Brien, court bailiff, in the February GHOST STORIES. It's a tale you won't be able to forget! Also, watch for these great stories: *When the Yankee Ace Came Back*, the facts about the phantom aviator of the World War, and *A Bad Half Hour*, a revelation of the weird price that one man paid for a séance.

Important announcement—the February GHOST STORIES will be placed on sale on JANUARY 23rd. Note the change of date carefully. It will be one of the greatest collections of creepy stories ever printed!

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# The Thing in

*The players whispered about a jinx on the show—but no one guessed the horrible truth until the night when a dying actor crossed rapiers with a phantom!*

"THAT you, Mark? This is Barnaby. I say, will you be in

for the next hour? If you're not busy, I'll run down and see you. Yes, on business. With you right away."

As I hung up the receiver, I wondered what business connected with my profession of adviser on psychic problems could be bringing the manager of the B— Theater to see me.

I had not long to wait for Barnaby. He arrived with his usual fussy regard for keeping appointments. He has been many years in this country but still retains his English mannerisms, though he does drop into New York slang when the occasion calls for it.

"There you are, my dear fellow. Kind of you to see me. How's every little thing? Swimmin', eh what? Whew! Let me get my breath. Those subways! Why the deuce didn't I take a taxi?"

I thrust him into a chair.

"Sorry I haven't managed to see your show," I said. "What's the name?"

"*Horror House*. Good show, though we do pull all the old mystery stuff—trap panels, murder in the dark, shrieks and squeaks. Packing them in, too. Capacity last week. Well, it couldn't last, I suppose."

"You seem contradictory, Barnaby. By the bye, what brings you here, may I ask? Haven't you a matinée today?"

"Yes, but the governor (by which he meant his famous employer) wouldn't rest till I saw you."

"It must be something urgent, then?"

"It is, Mark. The whole cast is ready to walk out at the drop of a hat, and the stage-hands are ready to follow them."

By

MARK SHADOW

You know I'm only a ghost hunter, as you once called me."

"You wait till I tell you my story, Mark. The governor said to me not more than an hour ago, 'If anyone can find out what is going on here, Mark Shadow can.'"

"Very nice of him to say so, but what is going on?"

For answer he fumbled in his pocket and, pulling out a letter, handed it to me.

"Addressed to the governor, as you see. Read it out loud."

I read the letter:

"Dear Sir:—I have always admired your staging, and it hurts me to have to question it at this late date. But I saw *Horror House* last night. Now, I don't mind being made to shiver legitimately when there is a logical reason for a ghost appearing, but I am still asking myself, as I ask you now, what earthly or rather unearthly reason was there for that sheeted thing which slid across the stage in the last act? It meant nothing to the story. In fact, sir, sorry as I am to say it, it was bad drama. I hope you will see that this particular ghost is returned to the graveyard."

"Hum! Quite facetious," I remarked. "But what of it?"

Barnaby leaped from his seat.

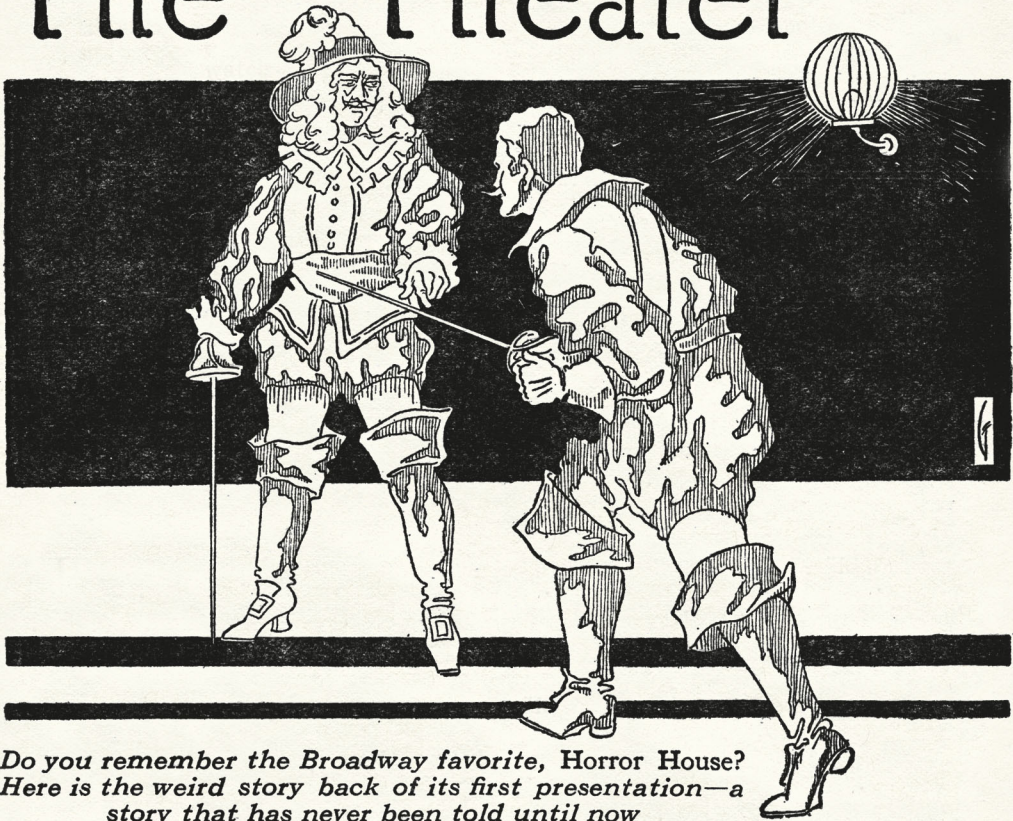
"What of it!" he echoed. "You don't get the point. There is no ghost in the third act! That ghost was real, man—it was an actual phantom! I tell you, there's something in the theater that shouldn't be there!"

"Anyone else see any sign of it?"

"I am coming to that. It nearly blew up the show last night. Miss Walters was going off in the second act. She opened the

"Hold on," I said. "This sounds out of my line surely. It is a case for Equity and the union to settle."

# The Theater



*Do you remember the Broadway favorite, Horror House? Here is the weird story back of its first presentation—a story that has never been told until now*

door, and there, against the backing—you know, the false wall you see when a stage door opens—was a Something. A long, thin Something! She couldn't see the face, for it whisked out of sight at once. Gave her such a scare that she all but let out a yell.

"Well, she nearly threw a fit. Shivered so she could hardly make her next entrance. She was positive it wasn't one of the stagehands. No, something in white, faded grayish-white—like a roll of old linen, she thought. Of course, I tried to explain it away. But today—this letter! What a mess! Suppose the thing gets into the habit of popping on the stage—we'll have half the house in hysterics!"

"Have you seen or heard anything yourself?" I asked. "I'd rather get impressions at first hand if possible."

Barnaby shifted uneasily in his chair.

"Yes, I have. You know me, Mark: I

may lose my temper and fly off the handle and all that sort of thing—God knows I have reason enough at times—but I have a pretty level head. Never touch a drop now since the doctor said, 'Drink and die; let alone and live!' I took his advice. So I can't blame anything on booze. Well, a couple of weeks ago I was coming down from the upstairs dressing rooms—never a thought of anything queer in my head—when just as I got to a closet door which stands between Dressing Rooms Number Three and Four, the door suddenly opened, and Something looked out. I got one startled peep at it—couldn't distinguish a face—then it popped in again and the door was shut."

"A sneak thief perhaps. Got past the doorman and slipped upstairs."

"That was my first thought—but just as I put out my hand toward the knob, I suddenly remembered. This door was nailed

up! Nothing short of a battering-ram could have opened it. Then I realized that something uncanny was involved, and I stood not upon the order of my going, but went. I bet you twenty-five dollars I hold the record for coming along that corridor."

"What then? Did you investigate?"

"I sent the carpenter up to look at the door. He said it was as tight as a drum. Every nail in place. Now, what do you make of that?"

"I can tell you more perhaps," I assured Barnaby, "if you tell me why the closet door is nailed up."

"I NEVER got the hang of that, old man.

Never occurred to me to ask. As far as I can make out, something happened there before my time—before the governor took his long lease on the house. I don't suppose he would know, either. You know how he is. Likes to leave things as they are—all for tradition, except when it comes to machines. God, we have all the latest fallalls in *Horror House* in the way of traps, swinging platforms, lighting effects—every gimcrack he can lay his hands on. I dare say Tom, the doorman, might shed some light on the door. He's been there umpteen years."

"You say the stage-hands are ready to quit. Why?"

"Someone always monkeying with the sets or the props. Why, Friday night, Carver Jones, our lead, tripped over an entrance. He swears he fell over a footstool. Now, there's not a footstool in the show. I spoke to the crew and they got ugly. Not one of them knew anything about a blankety-blank footstool. I looked, myself. Carver was bellowing all over the place. And then someone fools with the lights. I have a green 'spot' on Carver in the third act. Well, someone slips a crimson slide in, and Carver looks as if he were bathed in blood. That made him madder'n hell. And then, other things. I don't like it—and this letter!" he concluded gloomily. "The Governor says it's got to stop before the whole show is disrupted."

"But what on earth makes you think it isn't some joker—a rival, maybe, trying to hoodoo the show?"

"It isn't," said Barnaby decidedly. "I've watched. The governor has watched. The crew are all watching. It's something that shouldn't be there."

"What do you want me to do about it?" I asked. "What do you think I can do?"

"What is the usual thing to do? Don't you go through a performance with bell, candle and book? What d'ye call it—'exorcise' the demon."

"I'm not a churchman, Barnaby," I reminded him.

"Oh, I know, I know," he said, just a trifle testily, staring at his neatly spatted feet. "But you can do something. The governor has heard of some of your successes in laying ghosts; I believe that's the phrase—laying them, back where they ought to be instead of roaming the earth. Another few days of this preying on our nerves and the show goes blooey. What shall I tell the governor?"

"I'll be along tonight. Leave a couple of seats at the box-office for me. I might as well see the show, and then if you don't mind, Maurice and I will spend the night in your old barn."

"Who's Maurice?"

"He opened the door for you. My faithful Man Friday."

"Right, Mark. I'll beat it back to Broadway. Tonight, then. The governor will be delighted. He said—ah——" Barnaby fumbled in his pocket. "Thousand dollars be all right, eh? Worth it to keep the show running, I tell you."

"Ample," I assured him with a laugh. "I can always use it—I have two or three deserving friends with a run of bad luck."

He nodded. "Wish I could do more to help some of my pals. Well, see you later. Ta-ta, old man."

IT is a dull man who does not enjoy a mystery play and surrender himself to its cunningly devised plan to thrill and chill him. I am sure Maurice and I were among those who rose nobly to the bait of the old hokum.

Perhaps I was all the more ready to experience a shiver when I considered that among all these artificial phantoms on the stage, there perhaps moved a sinister and malevolent Thing, gliding from a shadowy corner, lurking in the dressing-room corridor, coming and going between the stage and its point of concentration.

Somewhere in the building, I knew, was some material object which was the nucleus or starting point of the mysterious and horrifying intruder from another sphere.

I saw Barnaby in the interval before the last act. He wore a harassed look.

"Dear people, dear people," he murmured,



"but they'll be the death of me. I'm losing weight daily. Notice we were late tonight? That's one thing the governor won't stand for. We've got to ring up on the dot and not keep his public waiting. Well, Carver Jones got some crazy idea in his head. Said last night in the dark somebody struck him over the heart, nearly knocked the wind out of him. He insisted we give him a dim light in this scene or he wouldn't go on tonight. Luckily his wife was with him. You remember Ethel Alders—corking actress, retired from the stage five years ago. She talked to him. He went on, you saw that, but the man's in a funk—bunch of

the distance. The door at the top of the stone steps opens and down the steps come Carver Jones and several others. There is some talk and then they prepare to lift the stone slab over the sarcophagus. Carver Jones—I forget his name in the play—holds a lantern. The slab is raised—you remember the uneasiness in the audience—and Carver Jones bends forward.

I thought he was a darn good actor, for if ever man displayed mortal terror, he did. The lantern wavered in his hand. I noticed others watching him. He seemed to be forcing words to his lips—words which never came—and then he uttered a most in-

"The leading man staggered back. The lantern clattered to the floor. The rest of the actors lost their heads for a moment. . . .

"Then, all at once, the star cried in a choking voice, beating with his fists at an invisible Thing: 'Back! Keep back!'

"The audience went wild! Some monstrous tragedy was happening before their very eyes—"

nerves. Take it from me, Mark, there are easier ways of making a living than shepherding a flock of actors."

The gong rang then, and he started nervously.

"Sorry to leave you, but I have to go back and keep an eye on everything. Come behind as soon as the curtain falls."

I am sure many of you saw *Horror House*. You remember the last act is laid in the crypt of a chapel attached to the old mansion. There is a kind of stone sarcophagus in the center where a vampire ancestor is supposed to have been entombed alive, and the much harassed people of the play have determined to open the tomb and settle the question and the hauntings for good.

A faint glimmer of moonlight makes the first view of the set eerie, and the empty stage gets the audience into a state of suspense in which they are ready for nearly anything to happen. Midnight strikes in

human screech. It made my blood run cold. What effect it had on the women about me, I can only imagine. I know one woman let out an uncanny gasp.

The leading man staggered back. The lantern clattered to the floor. The rest of the actors lost their heads for a moment. Carver was stumbling back—hands extended as though fighting off something in front of him—something which had risen out of the sarcophagus to confront him.

And then, all at once, the star cried in a choking voice, beating with his fists at an invisible Thing: "Back! Keep back!"

The audience went wild! Some monstrous tragedy was happening before their very eyes!

Then Carver Jones shouted, "Arthur! Oh, my God!"

There were shrieks all around me. I think most of us realized that there had been no mention of anyone called "Arthur" in

the play. I felt a cold shock of horror.

And then it was all over, as suddenly as it had happened.

I caught a sharp hiss. I am sure it was Barnaby signaling from the wings. Someone snapped his fingers. I saw the character man catch Carver's arm, give him a shake and whisper in his ear. Carver started, passed his hand over his eyes in a dazed way and shook off whatever was paralyzing his tongue.

**T**HE play went on—in the midst of a hubbub at first—but gradually the excitement subsided. Probably there were some people who thought this incident was part of the business of the play.

I, for one, was pleased when the end came. It was too much of a strain to be conscious of the difficulties under which the leading man was playing. I went backstage at once. Barnaby met me and caught me by the arm.

"Not a word to Jones—see? I want you to talk to Miss Walters. This way."

I was ushered into a hot dressing room.

"This is Mr. Shadow, Ellie," said Barnaby. "I want you to tell him in your own words what's been going on here."

She was a charming girl with a rather brisk, matter-of-fact voice offstage.

"I know I can speak freely to you, Mr. Shadow, because no doubt you're used to hearing things like this—you must be a sort of father confessor to people who imagine things."

"Well, I do hear some queer things, Miss Walters. I understand you believe you saw something out of the ordinary when you made one of your exits."

"Yes, I opened the door and stepped out—and there was this long, white-looking Thing standing there. I all but walked in to it, but before I could do a thing, it whisked—that's the only word to describe it—round the edge of the backing. One of the crew was just a few feet away and never saw a thing. He thought I was crazy when I began to shiver and shake and point."

"I wonder if you could describe this Thing you saw."

She puckered up her brows. "It was funny. It didn't seem like a human figure—more like—I know what!—like a sheet wrapped round clothes! You know, when you hang up a suit or a coat and put a sheet round it tightly to save it from dust! That's just what it looked like. A sheet moving

of its own accord! Ugh, I haven't got over the horror of it yet."

"You were on the stage tonight when Mr. Jones forgot his lines?"

"Yes, did you notice that? Was it very bad from the front? I know I simply felt weak in the knees."

"What do you think went wrong?" I asked.

She looked at me and bit her lip. "I think he saw something—in the sarcophagus. Do you know, I actually thought for a moment I saw something myself! There isn't anything there, really—but when Carver took the lantern, I had the most horrid sensation that there was something lying there, looking up, and that it moved. But of course there couldn't have been anything. Only—well—I don't know what to think. Mr. Barnaby tells me you can explain these things. I hope you can do something. If this goes on much longer, I'll be a raving lunatic. And I'll tell you something else, Mr. Barnaby."

"Go ahead, my dear. I'm here to hear you, and Mr. Shadow wants you to tell everything you can," Barnaby said.

"Well, Cathie—that's the tall, dark girl, Mr. Shadow—says she won't use Number Three. Last night something opened the door. She was sitting in front of the mirror and could see the door in the glass. And she says she saw a hand—like a wax hand, with a kind of frill on the wrist—creeping round the door. She tried to scream, and she couldn't; so she shut her eyes. When she got courage enough to open them again, the door was shut."

I rose to my feet.

"Don't worry, Miss Walters. Thank you, and please tell the others to be easy in their minds. I may have news for you in a very short time. No doubt we'll find some quite simple explanation."

"I hope you do, Mr. Shadow," she said sincerely.

**"W**HEW!" exclaimed Barnaby, as we came out into the corridor. "You see! All of 'em nervous as cats. Oh dear, dear, what next? A pox on this house! Sheeted ghosts squeaking and gibbering—and 'capacity' again tonight. If we close, it will break the governor's heart. This is a pet play of his—he spent a lot of good money on it."

"Cheer up, Barnaby," I comforted him. "We'll see what the dawn brings. I mean to spend the night here with Maurice. Is that all right?"

"Anything you please, my dear fellow. I don't envy you. But I'll tell Tom, the doorman. He'll have to lock you in. Where will you hold your—what d'ye call it—your vigil?"

"We'll prowl around, Maurice and I. I noticed a comfortable-looking couch in the first act. If we get sleepy, we can make out somehow."

"There's just one thing, old man. I can't leave you any lights. The electrician has to turn off all lights before he leaves. Turn them on in the morning, too, before we can do a thing."

"THAT'S all right. We have a couple of strong flashlights—Maurice has them. Just warn the doorman so that we shan't get into trouble."

I thought the doorman, an elderly man with a clean-shaven, wrinkled face, looked askance at us when Barnaby told him we were to stay all night in the theater.

"Just as you say, Mr. Barnaby, but it's the first time in my life I ever heard of anything like it—though I sometimes have wondered to myself whatever went on in a theater when the last door was locked for the night. However, orders is orders, sir. I'll see the gentlemen are locked in."

While the steel curtain was being lowered to shut off the darkened cave of the house, I looked into the imitation stone sarcophagus which stood on the stage. There was nothing in it but the framework upon which the papier-mâché was built.

I was still bending over it when Carver Jones passed across the stage in his street clothes. He looked at me, hesitated and then went on. At the other side of the stage a lady met him. Her face was somehow familiar to me. She slipped her arm through his and they went off.

One by one, the company drifted out. There was only a dimmed row of border lights burning overhead and the place was strangely quiet. Dust-cloths had been thrown over the furniture which stood in a huddled mass against the brick walls enclosing the stage. There is always a ghostly suggestion of lurking mystery under the shapeless veil of a dust-cloth.

The last two stage-hands exchanged their last story. Barnaby came from somewhere, his hat on the back of his head.

"I don't like it at all, leaving you here. Seems so inhospitable. Anyway, go anywhere you like. The whole establishment is yours for the night—but for God's sake,

old man, be careful. Ha, what was that? I'm as nervous as a cat myself now. Well, by-bye, and good luck. The electrician is ready to switch off the lights. All right, Joe!"

"Right, Mr. Barnaby! All out!"

We were plunged into darkness. I heard an iron door slam; and then silence, more eloquent than a thousand-voiced chorus, descending upon Maurice and myself. I heard him breathing beside me.

"Feeling all right, Maurice? Better get used to the darkness before we move about."

"It is dark, sir, but there's quite a glimmer of light from somewhere above us."

There is always something awe-inspiring in an empty building. Against your will, though there is no reason for it, you are inclined to lower your voice and to step lightly. It is almost as though you fear to arouse some ghostly Thing from its hiding-place in a corner. So it was with us, Maurice and myself. We were soon talking in hushed whispers.

"This won't do," I said sharply. "If we talk, let us speak up."

And for a little while we used our normal tones—only to let our voices sink again to that strange whispering. The darkness and the emptiness seemed to muffle our utterance and yet it magnified the inexplicable rustlings and sighings from the blackness about us.

"Let us move," I said at last. "We'll make a round of the dressing rooms. If we find one that looks comfortable, I fancy it would be a good plan to settle there."

WE looked at the bare, white cells which the temporary occupants usually convert into a good imitation of a junk shop. Carver Jones' room, however, was very neat, but that may have been the work of his dresser. On the dressing table was the photograph of a woman in a silver frame—it was the lady who had been waiting for him, no doubt his wife.

"I think we'll park here, Maurice," I decided. "If we leave the door open, we can keep our eye on the corridor. I don't know why, but that closed closet door interests me. I want to watch it. Just move that easy-chair nearer the door. Can you find one for yourself? Good."

We kept one of our flashlights burning. They're supposed to give continuous light for eight hours or so, which was long enough for my purpose. Maurice had seen

that both of our lights had fresh batteries.

I settled down in the easy-chair and opened my book. A most interesting book by all accounts, and its first pages led me to believe that I was to be well entertained for an hour or two—but I found to my surprise that I could not keep my attention on the pages. I would read a page, and have to glance over it again to find out what it was all about.

**S**UDDENLY Maurice gave a shiver, and murmured in French: "*Fait froid—birrh!*" He looked at his watch.

"What's the time, Maurice?"

"Ten minutes past one, sir."

"Why don't you try and get some sleep?" I suggested.

"Sleep, *dieu!*" he stopped short. "If it is possible—yes," he added meekly.

For a time I kept on with my book, but something was continually drawing my eyes from it to a dozen unimportant objects.

I looked at the photographs on the dressing-room table, at a row of telegrams and other congratulatory messages which must have been sent on the opening night of the show, at a number of pairs of immaculate shoes on a shelf, at dust-sheets over clothes hung upon pegs against the wall—but at the end of each examination my eyes would once more seek the shadowy corridor in which stood the sealed door.

At last, I gave up any idea of reading and placed the flashlight so that it would send a shaft of light along the corridor and illuminate the base of the closet door.

Suddenly I became aware of motion in the path of light! Dust particles were eddying and swirling in a most peculiar fashion. As I studied this sight, the particles gathered together in a little cloud which seemed to move forward and then retreat. It was a most puzzling phenomenon. And at the same time I began to feel a cold current of air.

It was not an ordinary draft, but the damp, penetrating chill of a stone tomb or family vault long unopened, redolent of mold and decay.

I had even the bizarre fancy that I could actually smell the odor of a burial crypt.

It was only a few moments later that I experienced the feeling of depression which is usually a forerunner of the unseen enemy.

To one who is unprepared for this sensation, the moment is one of grave danger. It is the moment when men contemplate

self-destruction in many cases. I have learned, however, at the first indication of the unseen presences to combat the attack, which is all the more dangerous because it is subtle and stealthy.

"Something comes," said Maurice, who is unusually sensitive. "I can feel it! I remember in the trenches once—in a dug-out—I had the feeling, and then a thing most curious appeared. Two feet—two bare feet came down the steps—two feet without a body! *Quel frisson!* Luckily my candle went out, and when it was lit again—the feet were gone."

I shot a quick glance at Maurice. He is a good American citizen but he has never lost his French attributes. He was staring along the path of light.

"Do you see a little cloud of dust—there by the door—making a circle?" he asked softly.

Before I could answer, he sprang to his feet.

"If I were to move, perhaps I could throw off the influence," he suggested. "A little exercise—"

He started toward the door, but stopped abruptly and pointed to the other end of the corridor.

I followed the direction of his finger but nothing met my eyes. Only there was a faint sound which resolved itself into a dragging noise—and then suddenly, without warning, there came a choking groan, almost at our feet!

Maurice drew back with a smothered exclamation.

"Hold tight! Courage!" I said quietly, as he staggered back. "We are perfectly safe—you know that—so long as we do not interfere. We are a little fortress of two strong personalities. Nothing can enter us if we do not open our gates."

"I am not afraid, sir," he said after a pause.

**T**HE test is coming very soon, Maurice,"

I went on, my hand on his arm. I was relieved to feel no tremor in it. "There is every indication that we may come into contact with the invisible in a very short time. We may even see the Thing. Everything is working out far beyond my expectations."

"I am ready, sir. Just tell me what to do."

"Sit down again, and breathe easily. Fill your lungs and expel the air regularly. Breathe in strength and power."

I need not tell you how much the tran-

quillity of the mind, as well as the physical well-being of the individual, depends on the proper control of breathing. It is a secret of the East which is now the common property of the rest of the world.

The next moment I noted that the eddy of dust had moved nearer to us, and that it was apparently touching the white corridor wall. Though I knew it was impossible, the particles of dust seemed to be attaching themselves to the surface of the wall, forming a dense shadow.

AND then, abruptly, as though a brilliant light were being cast through a film, *there were the silhouettes of two figures upon the wall!*

They were engaged in a life-and-death struggle, fencing. I could see the black line of their rapiers dart in and out! Quite plainly I could see the outlines of the two combatants. They were in costume, the doublet and hose of the period of Queen Elizabeth—of the Shakespearean dramas.

So swift was the play of the two men that I could not distinguish their features, but all at once Maurice gave a gasp.

"*Dieu!* It is Mr. Carver Jones, sir—on the side towards us!"

He was perfectly right. *The profile of one of the combatants was undoubtedly that of Carver Jones!*

I was startled. What strange, compelling power had drawn this simulacrum, this shadow, of Carver Jones back to the theater?

The two shadows closed in upon each other. Then Carver Jones, with one swift thrust, sped his blade through the heart of the other! I saw the point emerge from the back. The duelist fell, and then—the most horrifying spectacle of all—the shadow of the slayer stooped and dragged the other toward the closet!

Opposite the door both figures vanished. The wall of the corridor was bare!

Maurice gave a strange gasp. I heard him mutter to himself, and then he said sharply:

"He is back again! Watch!"

The shadow of Carver once more flashed upon the screen of the wall, coming apparently from the closet, creeping stealthily forward. About half-way to us, the shadow paused. It wavered uncertainly, shrank and expanded.

Suddenly from some hidden quarter a darker and larger shadow rushed upon it, covered it, swallowed and engulfed it!

There was a scurry of broken, shapeless shadows; then, as suddenly as it had come, the manifestation was gone!

"Ten minutes past three," I said to Maurice, as I looked at my watch.

"Right, sir. That's just what I make it." He yawned audibly.

"I guess we can both sleep now," I said. "I don't think anything more will happen tonight, and we are fortunate to have experienced so much."

So I dropped off to sleep in the easy-chair and slept so soundly in my uncomfortable position that I was astonished to hear Barnaby's voice in my ear. I opened my eyes—and there he was! Behind him was a strange figure, which I discerned to be a waiter carrying a loaded tray.

"There you are, Mark. Got up early for once. Worried about you, and besides—hum—I—I thought you'd like some breakfast. Nothing much—hope you can get along without marmalade—"

"I can," I assured him. I thought he looked perturbed in spite of his obviously cheerful greeting.

"By the bye," I asked, "how is Carver Jones?"

At this apparently innocent question Barnaby plumped down into a chair as though shot.

"What! What! I say! How did you know? Locked in here all night. Put that tray down, man—no, no, there. Here, take this. Come back for the tray in an hour. That's all right. Keep the change and run along—there's a good fellow."

I was somewhat amazed by this display of brusqueness so foreign to Barnaby, whose courtesy is an honor to Broadway.

BARNABY left me to a simple but satisfying breakfast, and I was just finishing it when he returned with a worried air.

"Had to ring up the governor. We are in the soup now—wallowing in it, old man, swimming in it."

"What's the trouble now?" I asked.

"Carver Jones is dead, Mark. Run down by a taxi last night—coming home from some night club or other. What the deuce did he have to go to a night club for! He stumbled, so they say, and a taxi hit him. Happened early this morning—"

"A few minutes past three, I think," I said quietly.

He jumped up and stared at me. "Eh, eh! I say, old man, this is too—too uncanny. How on earth did you guess that?"

"I got a pretty accurate message of his death last night," I told him.

He listened intently as I related what I had seen, and told him the exact time when Maurice and I had witnessed the engulfing of Carver Jones' shadow. There was no doubt in my mind that it was at this time the actor met his death.

"**F**ORTUNATE for us, we were rehearsing someone to step into Carver's shoes," Barnaby said when I had finished. "He was going to leave us—wanted to play the part in London—so the governor agreed to let him out. Young Mallock is letter-perfect, thank God—he can go on tonight. But, but—there's a lot I don't understand. Probably I'm dense, but then a fellow can't be an ace in everything. Now, who was Carver fighting—death?"

"Might be so. But the first thing I want to do is to rip open that closet, Barnaby. The trouble lies there, I am sure."

"Right you are! I'll get some tools from Tom. Just a minute."

The elderly doorman followed us up to the closet door with a fireman's axe. Maurice undertook to do the breaking open, so we stood clear as he swung the axe with workman-like efficiency.

Splinters flew wide as the panels crashed in. We could see dimly into the upper part of the closet.

Barnaby caught my arm nervously.

"Did you see anything move there? Or am I seeing things? Still, I could have sworn something moved."

Curiously enough, I had a similar impression but I said nothing.

The door gave way at the hinges and Maurice pulled the remains of the shattered woodwork out of the way. A musty smell came from the closet. There was an undistinguishable something against the back wall and I went forward towards it. Just within the closet my foot struck something sticking into the floor and I stooped and pried it up. It was a little round piece of metal with a jagged projection.

While I was examining this mysterious object, Barnaby had elbowed past me and pulled down a dingy, faded sheet.

"The deuce!" he said in surprise. "Look here! A costume—Romeo and Juliet stuff, man's doublet and hose. And damn-me, here's a footstool—a footstool!—and Carver said he fell over one! What—my brain is reeling, Mark—"

But he did not stop searching, for all his

talk. His face was tense with excitement.

"Queer business, by Gad! Queer all round. Surely it wasn't this sheet and costume Miss Walters saw slipping about the stage, but—bless my soul, my immortal soul—here's the frilled shirt and—" He paused and lowered his voice to a hushed whisper. "Blood—there are stains of blood on it."

Tom, the doorman, uttered a strange sound and came forward.

"So that is where the costume went! We all did wonder."

"What do you know about this, Tom?" Barnaby asked.

"Well, sir, it takes me back a good many years. Mr. Jones has gone from us, God rest his soul, but I can remember him when he was fifteen years younger, coming in this very stage door. Mr. F— was having a revival of Romeo and Juliet. Mr. Jones was the Romeo. Arthur Ellis was the Tybalt, and Miss Alder was Juliet. She was Mrs. Ellis then, sir, before she married Mr. Jones."

"Arthur Ellis!" murmured Barnaby. "Let me see—"

"Ah, when they die, Mr. Barnaby, they're soon forgotten if they're not stars," said Tom quietly. "Well, sir, Mr. Jones was crazy about Miss Alder as soon as he set eyes on her, even though she was another man's wife. He was mad about her, and—sad to say—she about him. Arthur Ellis was a fine fencer, sir, none better. I've heard he could hold his own with any swordsman in Europe. Now, what happened no one knows, for Mr. Jones was the only witness—but the story is that he asked Mr. Ellis to give him a bit of practice with the rapier, and of all places they chose the corridor.

"**T**HE boys were on the stage having trouble with some new sets, and paying no attention to anything else," the old man went on. "All at once Mr. Jones came down.

"For God's sake, boys," says he, 'come quick—one of you get a doctor at once. The point broke off my rapier unbeknownst to me, and I've hurt Mr. Ellis.'

"So we trooped to the corridor, myself included, and there we found Mr. Ellis lying, bleeding over the heart. I had seen wounds in my day, sir, and I knew he was done for.

"You had best send for Mrs. Ellis,' I says.

"You don't mean he's dying?" says he.

"He's as close to death as can be," said I.

"I put a little footstool under his head—that very stool you see there. Well, sir, before his wife got to him, he was gone."

"I suppose there was an inquiry," I said.

"There was. Accident, they called it. Maybe it was. Maybe it would be charitable not to say what it seemed to us. We all were fond of Mr. Ellis. Oh, a fine man, sir, who deserved a truer wife and a more faithful friend. Mr. Jones never set foot in this theater again till this engagement."

Old Tom paused a moment, then continued: "When I heard things was happening, it did come to my mind that maybe Mr. Ellis—may his soul be at peace now—was walking the old theater. He loved the stage, sir—it was his heart's blood—and pity it was indeed that he was cut off in the prime of his life. No doubt there was something on his mind. It was a foul blow, Mr. Barnaby, I fear, but Mr. Jones has paid for it. There's a line, sir:

*Romeo slew Tybalt, Romeo must not live.*

"I know my lines, you see; I held the prompt-book for Mr. F—. And here is Mr. Ellis' costume—all wrapped in a sheet—just as it must have been left after the tragedy. But who nailed up the closet, I cannot say. It's a very strange thing, sir: though search was made, the button broken from the end of the foil was never found."

I held out the little piece of metal I had pried up from the floor, and Barnaby and Tom bent to look at it a moment.

"That must be it," said Tom, "though

how they missed it, I don't know. In fact, there were some who said maybe Mr. Ellis, knowing his wife's love for Mr. Jones, contrived to fall on the sword. But he wouldn't have done that—never! Perhaps some little part of his soul could not rest and came back here, wandering—" He paused. "Might I examine the button, sir?"

HE looked at it carefully, and a startled look swept over his face. When he spoke again, there was suppressed anger in his voice. "It killed a fine man—in a foul, cowardly way, sir! Look you there: see the *file marks*? It only needed a touch to break it off!"

Barnaby rubbed his chin uneasily. "Oh, I say Miss Alder might— What if we say nothing—eh—" He was the picture of misery. It breaks Barnaby's heart to hurt a woman.

"I'll see that this little piece of evidence disappears, if that's what you mean, Barnaby," I said. "The lady need never know anything about it. She has griefs enough now, without adding to them. And, Tom!"

"Yes, sir."

"If you can quietly convey these clothes and the sheet to the furnace in the boiler room and get rid of them, I can promise you there will be no trouble hereafter." I turned to Barnaby. "Now, Maurice and I will go home. You can tell your governor that in the future the only phantoms in this theater will be stage ones."

## The Ghost of Jean Lafitte

FOR many years treasure-hunters have expended much effort and money, seeking pirate loot supposed to be buried on Padre Island, a 130-mile strip of land in the Gulf of Mexico near the coast of Texas. Recently, it was said, an independent searcher for the long-hidden gold was visited at night by the specter of the notorious pirate, Jean Lafitte. The ghost informed him of the location of the buried treasure. Whether there was any truth in the tale is debatable, but the man did succeed in digging up a few coins and two silver vessels for serving wine.

Reports of his success caused a swarm of diggers to rush to the Island with picks

and shovels, whereupon the finder of the articles ceased working, fearing the others would learn his secret and excavate at the point whose secret he alone held.

Search for the pirates' loot has been going on for years, it being alleged that if the real caches were located, jewelry and gold coins worth a million dollars would be uncovered. Many finds have been made, the most important being a metal sea-chest containing many thousands of dollars in old Spanish coins. This was uncovered, however, not by digging, but by accident. Wind and tides wore away the sands which had covered it, until a corner was exposed to the view of passers-by.

# The House that

*The TRUE STORY of the "blood feud" that followed the Winchester fortune—and of Mrs. Winchester's \$15,000,000 scheme to avert the wrath of the spirit world*

**O**N Christmas Day, 1925, a haggard woman, about seventy-four years old, sat in a richly furnished dining room at the center of the strangest house ever built in the United States, and ate alone from plates and dishes of solid gold. She was dressed in black and a veil was pinned back from her face to permit of her eating. A single Chinese butler waited on her. He was the only person—with three exceptions, to be noted later—who had seen her features for more than thirty years.

Neither the woman nor the butler uttered a word. Yet this weird Christmas dinner could hardly have been called a silent one. Through the closed doors and windows, there penetrated the sound of sawing and hammering and the shouts of carpenters as they worked on an addition to this house, which already comprised one hundred and forty-eight rooms. Labor of this sort on Christmas Day would have been extraordinary anywhere else. Here it was the usual thing. For the old woman had ordered that the extending of her house must continue night and day, Sundays and holidays. Since she had moved in, the noise made by building had never once died down.

She was the late Sarah Pardee Winchester, widow of William Wirt Winchester, the "firearms king," and the key to one of the greatest occult mysteries of the modern world is hidden in her fantastic house, which is located on the Los Gatos Road, near Cupertino, a suburb of San Francisco. This building is worth describing in detail, for nothing like it will probably ever be seen again.

The house was a fairly pretentious eighteen-room frame structure when she bought it. It stood in its own grounds of



several acres but was visible from the road. The widow's first act was to hire twenty-two carpenters and set them to building an ell. She was insistent that they start work before nightfall and continue in perpetual shifts. There were no blueprints to guide them and they were forced to go by her vague and rather impractical description of what she wanted.

The next day a squad of landscape gardeners arrived and began to plant a towering hedge which eventually shut off all view of the premises from the road. This hedge was kept in trim thereafter by seven Japanese gardeners, whose sole duty was to make



# GHOSTS Built

By  
ROBERT AINSLEE



it thicker and taller so no one could see through it.

Having launched this preliminary work, Mrs. Winchester retired forever from personal contact with her employees. She had brought with her as secretary her niece, Margaret Merriam, who conducted her business with the outside world until the day of her death.

She had also brought from her former home in the East some tapestries and pieces of antique furniture, and the celebrated Winchester gold dinner service valued at \$30,000.

It is extremely difficult to give an impression in words of the formless, sprawling barracks that grew up through the thirty-eight years of the widow's activities. Exact figures are lacking but it has been esti-

mated that more than five hundred rooms were built, only to be torn out again. A total of one hundred and forty-eight were allowed to stand. The place looks like a village, with tall trees scattered here and there in open spaces that have been left without rhyme or reason. But every part of it is connected by passageways or queer stairs that dip downwards before they start to ascend—and that sort of thing is not characteristic of a village.

There is an observation tower, built quite early in the game. It was blanketed by later structures until it ceased to command a view. A bell tower stands out more prominently. It contains a huge bronze bell but there is no way of getting to it except by climbing over adjoining roofs and using ladders. The inside of the shaft is smooth and unscalable. Down the center of it hangs the bell rope to a cellar and the latter can only be reached through a complicated underground labyrinth.

The interior arrangements of the house are simply bewildering. Innumerable balconies and a maze of stairs are the most obvious features. The balconies serve no apparent purpose. Some of them end in the air. Others turn corners and suddenly shrink in width from say three feet to as many inches. At one point you can step from a balcony through a window and find yourself back on another part of the same balcony.

The stairways are equally singular. In addition to the camouflage of the preliminary downward dip, there is wide variation in curves, steepness and the size and shape of the steps. One stairway is broken into seven flights, with a total of forty-four steps—but the mounting of all these seven flights elevates the visitor only about seven feet because each step is a bare two inches in height, although eighteen inches across.

Doors are another important factor in this incredible house. Dozens of one-way doors were constructed. If you close them behind you, they cannot be opened again from the inside and you are compelled to find some other means of escape. Practically all the doorways are fitted with cross-bars, some of which are built in, while others can be lifted.

The chief object, it is supposed, was to guard the approaches to Mrs. Winchester's

séance room. From the time it was completed by the carpenters until the day of her death, no living foot but hers stepped into the small bare chamber which rests like a pill-box above the main kitchen and the servants' quarters. The walls are painted blue. There are no windows, but the place is ventilated by oblique shafts and light-wells. It contains a cabinet, a table, an armchair, a planchette board, and paper and pencil, the last-named having probably been used for automatic writing.

WHEN Sarah Winchester set out for this room, she followed a course that twisted and turned from balcony to balcony, down blind stairways and up again until she finally landed in a certain apartment. She would then push a button, a panel would fly back and she would step briskly onto the roof, only to re-enter by means of a window and continue her meanderings. They occupied about half an hour. At the finish she found herself in front of a clothes-press in a bedroom. All the drawers of the press were dummies and so were the doors, with one exception. This door led into the séance room.

She never stated verbally or in writing what were her experiences in the mystic chamber. But it is clear from the orders she issued through Margaret Merriam that she went there to receive messages from spirits. These spirits told her exactly what to do about extending and furnishing her mansion. In one sense, they may be considered as the builders of the weird house.

To understand the terrible fate of this woman, it is necessary to study the known facts concerning the death of her husband.

William Wirt Winchester inherited the business that bore his name from his father, Oliver Fisher Winchester. The latter was the inventor of the famous repeating rifle and a very keen man of affairs. William married young, and shortly afterwards he contracted tuberculosis. Mrs. Winchester, at that time a gay and attractive woman, was deeply attached to her husband and stayed close to his bedside in Hartford, Connecticut. During his illness she witnessed the patient's periods of recurring terror when his condition would become suddenly and unaccountably worse. By slow degrees the conviction was forced upon her that his suffering was primarily mental—or spiritual. No one knows what strange revelation was made to her by the dying man, but it is certain that at the time of his death she had reached the

horrible conclusion that he was the victim of the disembodied spirits of those who had been slain by Winchester rifles. She also believed that the vendetta must inevitably descend to her.

One wishes it were possible to ascribe this terrifying idea to a mere delusion induced by grief and fear. But later events and the dispassionate statements of sober witnesses prevent the acceptance of any such easy solution. The serious student must go deeper into the mystery before he can hope to reach an explanation.

Winchester left twenty million dollars to the young widow. This wealth she now felt to be "nothing but blood money," as she expressed it to her niece, Margaret Merriam.

Immediately after the funeral, she went to Boston and consulted a medium. The records show that the verdict of this first seer so alarmed her that she made the rounds of practically all the mediums in Boston. They all agreed that she was a woman with a curse upon her.

She finally settled upon one Adam Coons (long since dead) and made him her adviser. As the result of many séances, she was instructed as follows:

The victims of the rifles were haunting her—yes. But the worst of them were ignorant redskins who had been killed in frontier warfare, and it would be possible to cope with them. She must, in the first place, develop her own mediumistic powers and get into touch with friendly spirits. The latter would reveal to her how to build and furnish a house along lines that would give them pleasure. The work must never cease, because the moment a house begins to get old, evil spirits are able to attach themselves to it. Even a new dwelling would be open to sudden assaults, but the friendly influences would help her to repel these. The financial cost was the last thing she must think of counting.

IT sounds like a fraudulent scheme, from which the medium expected to profit. Yet there is no proof that Coons ever received a cent, outside of his professional fees. Certain members of the family assert, indeed, that Sarah Winchester lost confidence in all mediums and migrated suddenly to California for that reason. The statement is not plausible. It would appear that she studied with Coons until he assured her that she had become an adept. Only then did she leave New England.

From this point on, there is startling evi-

dence to prove that she was not dealing solely with the imaginary and the invisible. The records are worthy of careful scrutiny.

ONE evening she was dining with her secretary, Miss Merriam, who was privileged to see her face and whom she admitted to her table. Wine was served, for Mrs. Winchester had a well-stocked cellar. During the meal she recalled a liqueur she was fond of and insisted on going herself to fetch a bottle of it. A few minutes later she rushed shrieking up the cellar stairs. A huge, black phantom hand had materialized, she said, and hovered above the bottles. The

both women witnessed the same phenomenon cannot be doubted. But Mrs. Winchester's principal concern seemed to be that Hattie Collins had seen her without her veil. She promptly discharged the girl, with a year's wages in lieu of notice.

We now come to the Christmas dinner referred to at the beginning of this article. That evening, a carpenter named Tomás Gomez, a native-born Spanish Californian, encountered Sarah Winchester in strange circumstances. I have the story from his own lips and he is my authority for many of the facts concerning the house. His testimony is more important than that of any other

"Mrs. Winchester screamed. I looked at the Chinaman's face and saw that his eyes were closed.

"Suddenly a shadowy figure rose up between them. It had a dark, cruel face like a Red Indian. Slowly it moved toward her, skeleton hands outstretched — "

print of an enormous hand was later found on the cellar wall. Explanations have been offered for this, of course, but they all sound fantastic.

At the earliest moment she consulted her familiars in the séance room. They told her that she had seen a demon's hand, and warned her that it would reappear unless she gave up alcoholic beverages. She thereupon walled up the cellar, demolished the rooms which had stood above it and erected a new building on the site.

Even if you concede that the phantom hand was a hallucination, it is not so easy to dismiss the next incident in the chain of evidence. A month later Mrs. Winchester was walking along a corridor after dark when she met a maid servant named Hattie Collins. The mistress, as usual, was veiled; but suddenly she uttered a piercing scream and clutched at her own head so violently that she tore her veil loose. Miss Collins, who had walked past her, turned and saw a monstrous gray phantom retreating backward down the corridor.

Its face—so the maid reported—shone with a greenish, phosphorescent light. That

witness and so I shall give it in detail.

Gomez had been a member of a gang which had worked on a new wing in 1918. Before the job was completed, he and several others had been fired. It was Mrs. Winchester's policy to keep the various artisans from learning too much about what was going on. To this end, she changed the personnel frequently.

**B**UT in the winter of 1925 Gomez was re-employed, possibly because his name had been forgotten. He says that the mushroom growth of the house had proceeded along such queer lines that it was like a new proposition to him, anyway. He had the greatest difficulty in finding his way around.

On Christmas Day he was one of the evening shift engaged in adding a useless sunporch to the main dining room. The job was nearly finished. A single piece of ornamental woodwork remained to be set in place, and around eight o'clock the foreman decided to slip away. He took all his men with him except Gomez, who was to drive the last nails.

At this moment Sarah Winchester was

eating her lonely Christmas dinner. The windows leading to the sun-porch were closed and heavily curtained, but Gomez could hear the faint clatter of dishes and the sound of knives and forks striking on plates of solid gold.

"I wasn't a bit interested in the old lady and her doings," he told me. "I wouldn't have given ten cents to see her. If anything, she scared me."

A few minutes before Gomez would have been free to go, however, he was overcome by a dreadful sensation of nausea. He dropped his hammer, staggered to a corner of the porch and lay down. His condition improved, but he was still a sick man and felt that he needed help. Knowing that it would be useless to call the servants, he decided to go and look for his comrades. Here, in his own words, is the story of what happened:

"THE minute I stepped off that porch, I lost myself in the windings of that crazy house. I got tangled up in some stairways, walked in and out of rooms I had never seen before, and couldn't find the outdoors no matter how hard I looked. At last I entered a sort of cabinet—it was too small to be called a room—which had drapes hanging in front of it. I pulled these aside and saw Mrs. Winchester standing by an open safe built into the wall. Her veil was lifted. She was a short, stout woman, and reminded me of pictures of Queen Victoria of England.

"Her Chinese butler was handing her gold dishes, which she arranged carefully on shelves inside the safe. I couldn't believe at first that they were real gold, but they seemed mighty heavy and glowed in the light. I thought to myself that it would make a grand haul for some burglar. And while I was thinking it, one of the dishes slipped from the butler's fist and clattered on the floor.

"Mrs. Winchester screamed. I looked at the Chinaman's face and saw that his eyes were closed. It was just as if he'd suddenly fallen asleep on his feet. His shoulders were kind of slumped against the wall. Suddenly a shadowy figure rose up between them. It had a dark, cruel face like a Red Indian, but the features were shifting around as though they weren't solid and I couldn't describe them. Slowly it moved toward her, skeleton hands outstretched—

"The old woman was yelling so, I thought she'd die of fright, but she wouldn't run away from her safe. The next minute an-

other shadow appeared. It was a monk. I could make out his robes and the shaved spot on his head. He wrestled with the first ghost and drove it away. I suppose it all happened very quickly. But I was scared myself and it seemed awful long to me. Mrs. Winchester was in a faint on the floor when I got enough strength in my legs to escape. She didn't know I had been there and I didn't tell the other carpenters a word about it when I found them at last. They'd have said I'd gone nuts.

"But I've always been sure in my own mind that I saw two spooks, one of which had come to harm the old lady, while the other defended her."

What is the unprejudiced inquirer to make of a report like this one? Gomez, by his own admission, was ill. His condition, however, may well have been an effect of his approaching contact with the supernatural and not the cause of a hallucination. And even the most hardened scoffer must see some significance in the fact that the *ghosts materialized shortly after this man dropped his tools.*

As the mistress had feared, the cessation of work on the house was followed by a psychic invasion.

THE incident seems to have been the beginning of the end for Sarah Winchester. Shortly afterwards she took to her bed on account of failing health, and within a year she was dead. A trained nurse had to be called in toward the end.

When the will was probated, it was found that the fortune left by William Wirt Winchester had shrunk from \$20,000,000 to a little more than \$4,000,000. The small residue was shared between Margaret Merriam and the General Hospital at New Haven, Connecticut. At least \$15,000,000 had been spent on the ghost house. The edifice was promptly dismantled, though the shell still stands. Before the furniture could be moved out, it was found necessary to make a map of the labyrinthine premises. Even so, the moving men frequently lost their way and it took six weeks to empty the one hundred and forty-eight rooms and the innumerable cellars.

Newspaper accounts of the interior arrangements and furnishings include dozens of bizarre details. There was a storeroom fitted with closets, lockers and huge chests riveted to the walls and floor. These receptacles were crammed with expensive fabrics from all parts of the world. Bolts of

silk, satin, velvet and linen—not to mention priceless laces—lay in ranks, precisely as they had come from the manufacturer. Some of the stuff had been there for more than thirty years. The owner had never mentioned wishing to make use of it, so it is presumed that the spirits must have instructed her to buy it for their satisfaction.

Hardwood floors prevailed throughout the house. The ballroom, which was large enough to accommodate a hundred couples, had a floor laid without the use of nails—a novel and costly process at the time Mrs. Winchester had it done. The floor of her own bedroom was exceptionally beautiful, with the hardwood set in patterns with alternate strips of dark and light coloring.

**T**HE bathroom doors were of silvered mahogany, the washbowls of inlaid mosaic, and all tubs of imported porcelain. Door-knobs were of copper or silver, with hinges of bronze. The hinges on her own bedroom door were gold-plated.

In addition to the many weird stairways there were five elevators, the cheapest of which cost \$10,000, but which lifted passengers only the height of a single story. Scattered around the house were six burglar-proof safes, set in concrete, and extremely costly. One of these, as Gomez the carpenter reported, was used for the gold dinner service. The others contained jewelry and valuable knickknacks of every sort.

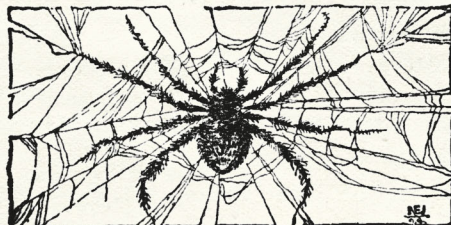
Thirteen, the traditionally unlucky number, was in evidence on all sides. The majority of the windows had thirteen panes, the chandeliers thirteen globes and the walls thirteen panels. Patterns on the hardwood floors and concrete squares in the driveway were in groups of thirteen. It is a commonplace, however, that while the number is supposed to bring bad fortune to the general run of persons, it is adopted by certain mystics as their favored symbol.

More difficult to explain is the fact that practically every post was set upside down by Mrs. Winchester's special orders. The long row of posts supporting the main veranda were inverted, as was a very beautiful mahogany newel post, inlaid with rosewood, with which she replaced an older support in the hallway of the original building.

Mirrors, for some extraordinary reason, were taboo. In the whole vast, rambling structure there were only three. The first of these was in Mrs. Winchester's bedroom, the second in the adjoining bathroom, while the third was in the ballroom. The last-named was set with its face to the wall, so it is perhaps more correct to say that her own private ones were the sole looking-glasses on the premises.

Despite the mild climate of California every far-flung room was thoroughly heated. There were hot water and steam furnaces, as well as gas and electric heaters, and fifty fireplaces. One of the sun-porches was provided with a radiator. It seems the fantasy of a maniac. But in judging Mrs. Winchester, the reader must remember that every act of hers was dictated by the planchette or by automatic writing in her séance room. Possibly it was her spirit controls who were demented or malign.

**A**T present it is still impossible to say positively whether her case is a genuine instance of supernatural visitations—or whether she was the victim of a hypnotic delusion so strong that it could hold her in subjection for thirty years and even communicate itself to the minds of those—like Gomez and the maid—who came in contact with her. Perhaps her grotesque mansion, standing silent and deserted in the California sunlight, will some day supply the key to the whole fantastic mystery. At any rate, it is a far more uncanny monument than any haunted castle in Europe.



# Phantom Lovers

By GRANT HUBBARD

THE first time that Robin Carr saw Detla Noone he knew that there was something strange about her. But that did not prevent his falling instantly in love with her—though he was only fourteen years old at the time, and she but twelve. After that, none of the things that he saw or learned could check his boyish adoration.

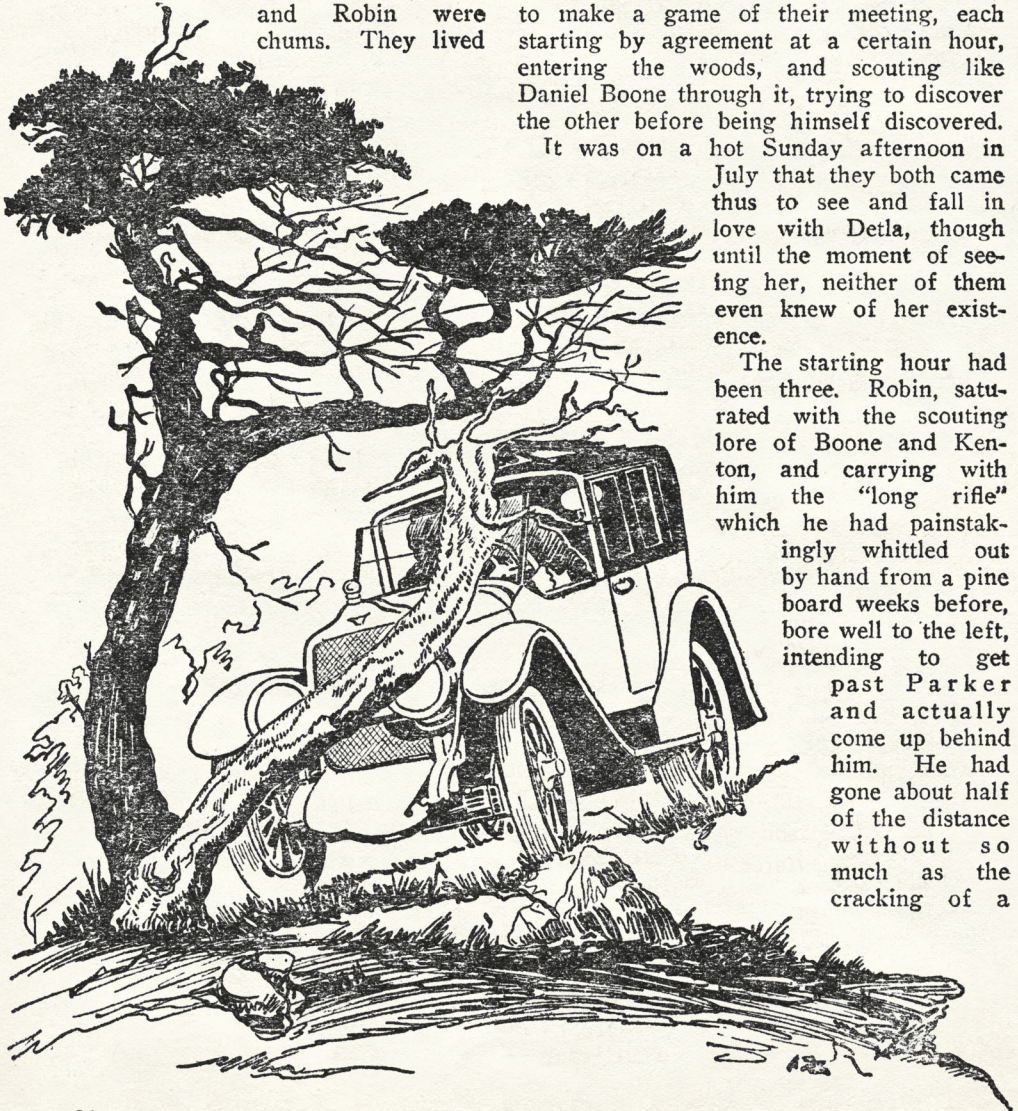
It was the same with Parker Storey. He and Robin were chums. They lived

two miles from each other and two miles approximately from Lancaster, the little town where they both went to school. That made the distance around by road four miles. On week days they always walked together back to the home of one or the other, playing till supper time, when the visiting boy cut across through Miss Powers' woods to his own home. On Saturdays and Sundays they were likely to make a game of their meeting, each starting by agreement at a certain hour, entering the woods, and scouting like Daniel Boone through it, trying to discover the other before being himself discovered.

It was on a hot Sunday afternoon in

July that they both came thus to see and fall in love with Detla, though until the moment of seeing her, neither of them even knew of her existence.

The starting hour had been three. Robin, saturated with the scouting lore of Boone and Kenton, and carrying with him the "long rifle" which he had painstakingly whittled out by hand from a pine board weeks before, bore well to the left, intending to get past Parker and actually come up behind him. He had gone about half of the distance without so much as the cracking of a



*What was the strange doom  
that followed the pretty  
co-ed? Why did she fear  
the touch of jewelry?*



twig and was creeping forward toward a clump of cedars on the edge of an open glade, through which a brook flowed, when suddenly his listening ear caught the sound of low singing.

He stopped and listened intently. The sound came from directly ahead of him. Also it was unmistakably a girl's voice, exceedingly sweet, with a funny little wistful, almost mournful note in it. The air was an unfamiliar lullaby, set in a weird minor key. The words themselves sounded like meaningless monosyllables, strung along together.

Slowly, still with the spirit of Boone and Kenton, Robin crept forward till he had reached the cedars on the edge of the grassy glade. The murmur of the brook now mingled with the girl's song. Wriggling forward on his stomach beneath the low, sweeping branches of the cedars, Robin reached a point where he could peep through the green curtain into the sunshine, and there a truly strange sight met his eyes.

Lying stretched on a patch of grass in the middle of the glade was a dark-skinned boy a little smaller than himself. He was lying face upward and motionless, the sun beating down on his closed eyes. He was dressed in the costume of a Hindu body servant.

Crouched cross-legged near the boy's head sat a fair-skinned, golden-haired girl wrapped in a loose-flowing robe of some soft, white material. She had both hands raised, with the backs laid against her forehead, the palms overlapping and faced outward. She was singing and, as she sang, she was rocking slowly and rhythmically from the hips. Her eyes appeared to be fixed intently on the Hindu boy's face. There was something rapt about her gaze that gripped Robin with mysterious force, boy though he was.

He lay still, watching the strange scene, listening to the weird, soft chant and never taking his eyes from the delicately beautiful face of the little girl.

Time passed, but he had no idea of its

passing. He had forgotten his clum, hunting for him somewhere out there in the woods. All his thoughts were concentrated on the girlish face before him. Its sweetness seemed to him like that of an angel. Something worshipful stirred in his breast—a feeling that was half awe and half adoration. He listened, and watched, and waited.

For some minutes the girl in the white robe went on singing softly. Then suddenly a smile broke out on her face as she sang—a sweet smile that added to Robin's boyish enthralment. Almost at the same moment he had the impression that there was something queer about the atmosphere just above the Hindu boy's head. There was a peculiar shimmer about it, so that a gray rock that jutted up just beyond him was distorted in shape as objects are distorted by heat waves on a scorching hot day.

Robin would probably have thought the strange phenomenon to be just this if the little girl had not stopped her singing to cry out:

**G**REETING, Neela Ki! I was afraid you might not come."

Robin thought for a moment that she was speaking to the little Hindu boy, and looked expectantly for him to wake up. The boy continued motionless, however. Robin could see his face clearly. His lips did not move. Yet Robin distinctly heard a thin childish voice answer:

"Greeting, Detla! Shall I not always come when you call me? Even to this strange far country."

The thin, tinkling voice had a peculiar foreign accent. The English was, however, pure. Robin had heard of people who could disguise and throw their voices. He wondered if the little girl in the white robe were playing a game of this sort all by herself.

He listened to the song renewing itself. Meanwhile he became more and more conscious of the shimmering in the atmosphere, which had now moved over and hung, al-

most human in its vague form, near to the girl in white.

A moment or two later a new shimmer began near the Hindu boy's head. At first it was only a tiny spot; but it grew and grew till it was as big as the first had been—roughly the size of the little girl herself.

Again the little girl stopped her singing and spoke joyously:

"Ah, Koob Baba, you have come, too. I am glad."

**A**ND again came a thin, tinkling voice in peculiar foreign tones:

"All happiness to you, Detla! I come because I love you."

This time Robin was watching the lips of the girl in white. He was sure that they did not move. The skin along his spine crept shiveringly. But he lay still.

Then it seemed to him that as the girl in white began to chant again, the second shimmering, transparent form moved over so that it was on her left side between him and her, blurring the outline of her head and shoulders. Also it seemed to him that to the girl's sweet, bell-like voice were joined two others, tinkling faintly in the fantastic chant. Again the skin crept with a shivery sensation along his spine. The thing was uncanny.

Presently the little girl ceased her chant.

"Mitha Soondar does not come!" she cried unhappily. "Oh, why doesn't she come to play with us?"

"Perhaps she has not slept," one of the thin, tinkling voices answered. "There is sickness in her house. She told me that she was to sit up with her baby brother."

"Let us dance and sing," came the other faint voice. "Perhaps she will still come."

The little girl rose and stretched out her two hands, half doubling her fingers as if grasping the hands of playmates; and it seemed to Robin's amazed eyes that the two shimmering, transparent forms joined hands with her and with each other. Then the little girl began dancing around and around the sleeping Hindu boy, always with hands outstretched as if holding the hands of those weird, half-seen, half-guessed playmates, her long, white robe fluttering in the air and showing her American dress of blue and white silk beneath it.

She sang, too, a gay little song and it seemed to Robin that the two tinkling voices joined with hers. He felt his heart pounding inside him. But he lay still and watched the sweet, almost ethereal face of

the little girl as she danced with her strange companions.

Suddenly her face blanched. Terror seemed to come into it. The dance ceased abruptly.

"No! No!" the little girl cried out. "Go back, Kala Neo! Go away! We don't want you. Go away!"

She stood, fascinated for a moment, staring at the air just above the little Hindu boy's motionless face. Involuntarily Robin followed her gaze and it seemed to him that a shimmering more intense and of greater bulk than before hovered just above the boy.

The little girl's face was all consternation. It worked with fear. Then suddenly she screamed:

"Bhanah! Bhanah! Wake up! Oh, wake up!"

The sleeping Hindu boy stirred but did not open his eyes. It seemed to Robin that the shimmering in the atmosphere near his head had taken the form of a man and had begun to move menacingly toward the little girl. The latter was certainly shrinking back in terror. At the same time Robin thought he heard something like the echo of a man's voice talking in a strange language.

The cowering girl cried out something full of distress, also in a strange tongue. The shimmering towered above her now. Suddenly she appeared to dodge desperately around the vague form and ran to the Hindu boy. Throwing herself upon him, she shook him and called his name with frantic appeal.

Immediately the three shimmering figures in the atmosphere faded into invisibility. A moment later the Hindu boy opened his eyes and sat up, his face beaded with perspiration.

"Did they come, Detla?" he asked.

**T**HE little girl had given a long, sobbing sigh and had covered her face with her hands.

"Yes, yes, they came," she said. "But Kala Neo came, too. Oh, I am afraid of him. His eyes are so wicked. He always smiles at me, but I am afraid of him."

A somber light came into the dark eyes of the Hindu boy.

"Some day I shall kill Kala Neo," he said—and, even while shuddering at the grim earnestness of the boy's threat, Robin noticed that his English had the same stilted purity but foreign accent that had char-



acterized the speeches of the thin, tinkling voices that he had thought he heard shortly before.

"You mustn't talk like that, Bhanah," the little girl said, pulling the white robe from her shoulders and handing it to the Hindu boy. "It's wicked, and it wouldn't do any good. You know it is Kala Nero's spirit that I fear most. His spirit would not die."

"I will die too, then, and drive his spirit to the place of torment, Detla. I swear it."

"Don't talk about it, Bhanah."

The Hindu boy inclined his head submissively. The little girl led the way from the glade and disappeared in the direction of Miss Powers' house, half a mile away through the woods.

Robin waited till they were out of sight and hearing. Then he rose and stepped forward into the open glade. At the same instant some hazel bushes on the far side parted, and Parker Storey stepped into view.

It was noteworthy that neither boy even started to give the shout of discovery which was their regular greeting. Each checked himself for a moment and then went forward till they stood within a few feet of each other, looking into each other's eyes with doubt and something approaching awe.

"How long have you been here?" Robin asked.

"A long time." Parker paused. Then added: "I've been listening to her singing—and—everything."

The ice was broken. They talked in a flood of excited, awe-stricken words. Curiously it turned out that, though Parker had heard everything that Robin had heard, he had seen nothing—not even the faintest sign of shimmering in the atmosphere. He told Robin that he must have been "seeing things." Robin thought so himself. But just what—he wondered—were those shimmering things that he had seen?

**A**LSO who and what was the terrible Kala Neo whom that beautiful golden-haired girl feared so intensely?

And who was the girl?

Before the end of the next week Robin's family moved away from Lancaster and settled in Boston. All Robin had discovered about the golden-haired girl was that she was Miss Powers' ward, just come from India where her parents had both died. Her name was Detla Noone. Miss Powers was her aunt. The dark-skinned boy was a little Hindu servant.

Robin went away unwillingly. The little girl's face haunted him, both in the daytime and in his dreams. He told himself that she was the kind of girl that he would marry some day.

Parker Storey wrote a week later that Detla Noone was attending the public school, and so was the Hindu boy, Bhanah. But boy-like he wrote nothing further. And Robin did not ask.

**F**OUR years later Robin and Parker met again, Freshmen in Harvard. It took them a little while to throw off the constraint of separation and growth. But presently they got to going over old times and Robin asked about the girl whose face was still vivid in his mind.

Parker blushed under his clear skin.

"We're engaged," he admitted with a mixture of shyness and great pride. "We haven't told anybody; and of course we can't be married for a long time—not till I'm out of college and earning my living."

Robin experienced a pang, but congratulated his chum. Shortly afterward he shifted the subject. Later, however, he thought with poignant regret of the little golden-haired girl with the sweet face that had haunted him so long.

It was not until their senior year, when Robin's plans were already made for the study of medicine, that he met Detla. Parker had brought her to a dance at the fraternity house. Robin had had to nerve himself for the meeting.

She was not the same girl. She had grown tall without losing her slenderness, but her face had matured. Its childish sweetness was gone. In its place was a wistfulness that was almost somber. The blue eyes were dark and seemed to hold an unfathomable mystery. Her white skin was clear and perfect, with a delicate flush underneath. There was a sweet, rich timbre to her voice. Yet somehow there was lacking the sense of vivid health that would have been expected in one of her youth and beauty. She seemed strangely tired.

Robin fell in love with her all over again. This time he knew it for exactly what it was, and for a little while it made him desperately unhappy.

He and Parker were roommates now and it hurt to think of his disloyalty to his friend.

He mastered all that, however, before it came his turn to dance with Detla—mas-

tered it only to have his mastery all swept from him as she laid her left arm on his and looked for a single instant up into his eyes. There was positive shock in that moment of meeting her eyes. It was as if he had looked in upon her spirit, naked, beautiful, troubled, pitifully wistful, yet strong and full of courage. His own spirit leaped up in him to meet hers, to answer the call for help and comradeship.

AND then he realized that they two were not alone in the world, that they were on the edge of a dance floor, and that Detla was engaged to Parker. He gripped himself tight and drew the girl into the dance.

Throughout that dance neither of them spoke at all. Yet at the end of it he felt that they understood each other. That he was right was proved by Detla's spoken words of gratitude when he led her out through one of the French windows onto the back veranda.

"Thank you," she said simply but with unmistakable earnestness. "I'm afraid I should have fainted if I had stayed in there another minute."

The uncanny thing about it was that he knew she was telling the truth, and yet that she was not ill in the ordinary sense. He found himself waiting, with his eyes fixed sympathetically on hers, for her to tell him more. And she did.

"Sometimes jewelry affects me this way," she said. "There are three girls here to-night with very valuable jewels, two pendants and a necklace. The sight of them makes me want to——"

She broke off then and gave herself a shake. He had a feeling that a curtain had come down between them.

"I'm talking silly nonsense," she said. "Let's go in and dance this encore."

All the sense of understanding between them was gone. He no longer felt that he knew her. And yet he had neither done nor said anything to break the spell. When he took her in his arms for the dance, he looked down at her eyes. They were veiled. She was not looking at him.

At the end of the dance she made an excuse and left him. Later he saw her dancing with Parker. It seemed to him that her face was drawn as if with some kind of mental suffering. After that, he scarcely took his eyes from her.

Just before the end of the party he had her for a partner once more. This time she met his eyes as before, and the torture

of her spirit was plain. For two or three minutes he couldn't speak.

Then he said, "You're disturbed about something. Can I help?"

"You—can take me——" there was a queer catch in her voice—"can take me out on the veranda again," she said. "It's that jewelry. I——"

But she didn't finish, and he didn't try to force her. Instead, with the thought of distracting her mind from its strange trouble, he told her of the first time he had seen her—that time in the woods near Lancaster.

"You know," he said, trying to speak lightly, "I really thought at the time that you were talking with spirits. I was all worked up about it."

Her eyes lifted and met his. The wistfulness in them fairly tore at his heart.

"Did you?" she said. And then with lips that seemed to quiver she asked him to take her back inside once more.

Wondering what strange trouble could be back of all this, he did so.

Robin was chairman of the dance committee of the fraternity and had used that as an excuse for attending as a lone man. He was therefore without a partner for the last dance of the evening and free to watch Detla as she floated through the dreamy waltz in Parker's arms. And, watching, he was painfully sure of three things; first, that Detla was really suffering some kind of mental torment; second, that Parker was in love with her with his whole soul; and lastly that he himself belonged to the girl to the last fiber of his being.

HE was glad to see the last of the boys out of the house and the chaperones ready to take charge, so that he could get away and think. He went striding down Quincy Street till he came within sight of the great, dark, Gothic pile of Memorial Hall, turned north, swung through the Common and out Concord Avenue to Fresh Pond. He circled the big reservoir twice at a rapid pace and then struck up and across to the Charles River. And during every second of the time he was a battle-ground for the struggle between his emotions of new-found love, old, established loyalty for his friend, and infinite pity for the girl in her trouble.

Loyalty finally asserted its supremacy over selfish love, but the longing to help—as he instinctively felt Parker was unable to help Detla—could not be smothered. Before he realized it, at the darkest part of the night

just preceding dawn, he found himself standing in front of the fraternity house once more, staring up at the window that he knew to be Detla's.

It was open. Even as he looked, he was startled to see a girlish figure in white come to it and look out.

The wild thought came to him that she wanted to speak to him and that by some weird mental telepathy she had let him know. He was just about to call her attention by moving, when suddenly he felt sure he saw a second figure in white beside her. He checked his impulse and waited, looking up and wondering.

AS he watched, it seemed to him that the figure at Detla's side menaced her silently—that she shrank from it. This struck him as very peculiar. Surely that other white figure must be the girl who shared the room with Detla. And why should the two be at the window, one menacing the other?

All at once Detla leaned out of the window, held out her hand as if to him and dropped something from it. Instantly she disappeared, and the other white figure, too.

Robin started toward the gate, meaning to enter and pick up what had dropped. But as he did so, a dark figure moved from the shadow of the privet hedge and crept to the spot where the object had fallen.

Robin felt a rush of chagrin. He had been deceiving himself, then; it was not for him that Detla had come to the window! But who was it? Parker, of course—a love note. With the instinct to save his chum the embarrassment of knowing himself discovered, he drew back into the deeper shadow of a great elm.

He was thinking how unlike Parker it was to be skulking about like that—creeping, as he evidently was, on all fours—when suddenly from inside the house there came a scream of utter terror. He was sure it came from Detla's room, too.

At the same instant the dark figure skulking along the wall jumped up and made a rush for the gate.

Frozen for a bare second with horror at that scream, Robin came to his senses in time to realize that the dark figure could not be Parker, and to make a plunge for it as it emerged from the gate.

To his amazement his arms had flung themselves about a slender girl, who writhed and twisted in his grasp, but made no sound. Inside, he could hear excited, hysterical voices in a growing tumult. Sud-

denly he realized that the girl he had captured held something in her left hand—the thing that Detla had dropped! He seized that hand with both of his.

The thing the girl held was a handkerchief filled with little hard lumps. What could they be? He was holding her wrist and trying to pry open the hand when all at once the other hand flew to her bosom and a knife flashed out.

Like a snake, she struck.

He saw the blow coming and leaped backward. The point of the knife missed his shoulder and grazed his forearm. At the same moment he wrenched away the bundle of hard things in the handkerchief and sprang back completely out of reach of the knife, releasing his grip on the girl's left wrist. Instantly she turned and disappeared in the darkness.

The hubbub inside the house had increased. Something was decidedly wrong in there—something that had begun with a scream from Detla's room. He ran up the steps and rang the bell furiously, over and over again.

Presently Mrs. Redfield, the older of the two chaperones, opened the door, looking both scared and disheveled, clad in a hastily donned negligée. Behind her were two girls, similarly disturbed and disheveled. From the head of the stairs two other girls peered down.

"What's the matter?" Robin cried.

"Who are you? Oh, yes—Mr. Carr. I didn't recognize you in the bad light. How do you happen—oh, I don't know exactly what's the matter. Miss Burpee just woke us all with an awful scream. Thought she saw a ghost near Miss Noone's bed. And now three of the girls say they've been robbed." Mrs. Redfield spoke nervously, almost hysterically.

"I DID see something," came the voice of Ethel Burpee from the top of the stairs. "It was a man—a Hindu all dressed in white with a turban and everything. I could see him by the light coming in from the open door into the hallway. He was stooping over Detla. I was just as much awake as I am now. Of course I screamed. Who wouldn't? I thought he'd run. But he didn't. He just melted away where he stood. He——"

"Don't be silly, Ethel," a companion on the stairs interrupted. "You were dreaming. Why not admit it?"

"Miss Noone didn't see it herself—did

you, Miss Noone?" another girl asked, as the group moved downstairs.

Robin looked up and saw Detla's face. It was white and strained and full of unhappiness. She plainly had to nerve herself for her reply.

"No," she said slowly, "I didn't see any man, or any ghost."

"Of course not," Ethel Burpee retorted. "You were asleep; but I tell you I——"

She was interrupted by a cry of horror from Detla.

"YOUR hand!" she cried to Robin. "Your hand! It's all blood!"

He gave a start. He had forgotten his own adventure in the mystery of the ghost. He was remembering the two white figures that he had seen at Detla's window—one of which he had felt sure was Detla herself. Brought back to himself, he lifted his hand.

Both it and the handkerchief-covered bundle were red with the blood that had trickled down his arm from the knife wound he had received in his struggle.

"That—oh, that," he stammered. "It isn't anything. I caught somebody sneaking out of the gate—with this. I made a grab. It was a girl. She pulled a knife and got me in the arm—nothing much. Then she got away. But I got this away from her. I——"

He broke off at the look of agony that had appeared on Detla's face. He had suddenly remembered that the little bundle had been dropped from her window.

But the excited girls had eyes only for him and the blood on his hand and the little bundle.

"What is it?" they cried. "What's in the handkerchief?"

"My necklace, I'll bet!" a tall girl in red negligée exclaimed, coming forward from the group. "Your ghost was a thief, Miss Burpee. Open the handkerchief, Mr. Carr."

With a sudden reluctance, which he was careful not to show, Robin untied the knotted ends of the handkerchief. There was a general gasp—revealed there were two necklaces and a pendant, all stained with the blood from his wound!

Involuntarily Robin's eyes sought Detla's face. It had suddenly drained clear of color. She was swaying unsteadily. At the very moment when he looked, she collapsed to the floor in a dead faint.

There was another hubbub, the girls crowding about with exclamations of amazement and concern. But Mrs. Redfield kept her head.

"It's the sight of the blood," she exclaimed. "Help me lift her onto the bench here."

The nearest girls did so, while all stared with a sort of fascinated horror from her to Robin's bloody hand.

Mrs. Redfield spoke to him, as she chafed Detla's hands: "You'd better leave us, Mr. Carr. Give the girls their jewels. Then clear out and go get your wound dressed. I suppose we ought to call in the police. I don't——"

At that moment Detla opened her eyes.

"Did I faint?" she asked unhappily. "I'm sorry. It was the jewels." She glanced about nervously. The owners of the jewelry had each lifted their own property from Robin's hand and were examining the stones. She shuddered. Then, swallowing hard two or three times, she said: "I've got to dress and go home right away. Yes, I've got to. It's—it's something you don't understand."

"Nonsense, my dear," Mrs. Redfield assured her. "You can't go home in the dead of night. No, no. Lie still."

Detla had sat up. She was pale but determined.

"I am going," she said firmly. "Mr. Carr, won't you have your hand taken care of and send me a taxi? I'll be ready in fifteen minutes."

Her eyes spoke to him as they had spoken earlier that night when they were dancing. He felt her distress and her need.

"I certainly will," he said, and left the place abruptly.

But he did not go to a doctor, and he did not call a taxi. Instead, he went straight to the garage where he kept his none-too-handsome coupé. Here he washed his hand surreptitiously with the hose that was used for car washing—he did not want to rouse the night man's curiosity by taking off his coat and looking at the wound in his arm. But he was sure that the bleeding had stopped and did not believe that the thing needed any immediate care.

FIVE minutes later Robin slowed up and stopped at the curb in front of the fraternity house. He rang the bell and told Mrs. Redfield to let Detla know he was waiting for her.

"Is that your car?" the chaperone asked.

"Yes. Miss Noone came to the dance with my best friend, Parker Storey. I can take better care of her than a taxi-driver."

"I'm glad. Miss Noone is terribly

shaken. She declares she saw nobody near her; but I really think she believes Miss Burpee's story about the ghost. Miss Burpee certainly sticks to it. But Miss Noone is the one most disturbed. I don't see why she wants to go home, though, at this time of night. I'll let her know you're here."

Three minutes later Detla came down, suit-case in hand. Gratitude filled her eyes at sight of Robin. But she said scarcely a word until they were in his car and moving off. She breathed a sigh of relief then.

"THANK you for taking me yourself," she said. "It—it makes all the difference in the world to me."

Robin took his eyes from the street long enough to look into hers. They were passing under a street light. He could see that her mouth was quivering with distress. Her eyes were big with fear. He wondered what it could mean. And, wondering, it flashed over him that as yet he had had no explanation of the dropping of that handkerchief of jewels from Detla's room by the white figure whom he had taken for Detla herself. He remembered, too, her perturbation about the jewelry during the dance. Could it be that she was a kind of kleptomaniac? Had she—but that wouldn't account for the girl under the window, the girl with the knife. The theft had been planned. But Detla—surely she could not—

His eyes were back on the road now, as he guided the car around a left turn. He had forgotten to answer her. When he looked again, she was leaning back against the seat. It seemed to him that her eyes were closed. Still puzzled and troubled, he headed the car toward Lancaster, nearly fifty miles away.

For half an hour he drove. And during all that time Detla did not speak. He believed that she was asleep. His mind absorbed itself in going over the whole chain of strange, almost uncanny happenings connected with her—from that first time years before when he had seen her apparently dancing with queer, shimmering forms there in the wood, to her fainting in the hallway of the fraternity house.

Had it been Detla whom he had seen at the window? How could it have been? Ethel Burpee had said she was asleep with a ghost standing over her. But, if not Detla, who? And who was the strange figure that had been taken for a ghost? Ethel Burpee had declared that it melted away right there. He remembered with a cold shiver that the weird, shimmering figures he had seen near Detla as a boy had melted away. Even as he shivered, he shook himself and told himself he was a fool, fastening his eyes on the road and accelerating the speed of the car.

Suddenly Detla roused herself and turned toward him impulsively, a great need for understanding sweeping away her reticence. She broke into a torrent of words.

"Don't you understand, Robin?" she asked, using his first name unconsciously. "It's a spirit—Kala Neo's spirit—that I'm afraid of. That's what I'm fighting! Kala Neo is a Hindu magician, a living devil, who knows all the secrets of the occult. He sends his spirit to me when I'm asleep—and he makes me do terrible things! He even makes me like to do them! Oh, I'm afraid!"

Her words sent a shiver through him. He thought she must be hysterical. Perhaps the strange occurrences that night had unbalanced her mind temporarily.

But he tried to comfort her and she leaned against him wearily, sobbing quietly. As the miles sped by, her sobs ceased and he thought she must have fallen asleep again.

A MOMENT later it seemed to him that Detla was breathing very hard. He turned his head ever so slightly—and a chill of horror passed over him!

Apparently standing on the running-board of the car on Detla's side was a tall figure, dressed all in white, with a turban on its head! It was a man—a Hindu. He was leaning over Detla, his face close to hers as if he meant to kiss her. His features were shadowy, insubstantial—and diabolically wicked!

Then Robin lost control of the car! There was a crash as it swerved down an embankment!

*What is the awful Thing that pursues this strange and beautiful girl? Is she actually the victim of a malevolent magician's spirit? You will be thrilled with horror as her astounding story unfolds in the February GHOST STORIES. Robin would willingly fight anything on earth or in hell for her sake—but how can a college boy struggle against a devil who knows all the lore of the East? Watch for this remarkable story! On the news stands January 23rd.*

# The Leopard Woman

By MARTA ST. CLAIR

As told to EDITH ROSS

WHEN I was engaged to Leonardo, I remember one of my friends said to me: "Marta, you have everything. You—why, you are a darling of the gods. But be careful—for when one has too much, the gods are apt to become jealous. Don't be too triumphant, too happy, or you may live to be sorry."

I laughed. Such foolishness! Who could help being happy with a man like my Leon for a lover? I looked back on the time before I had met him, and wondered how I had managed to live through all the years before I knew he was in this world.

He had not been in America very long before we met and fell in love. He was the representative of the Gianella Silk Importers, whose headquarters were in Naples. They sent him to New York to take charge of their American office, and it was there that I met him. I knew very little about him, beyond the fact that he was a descendant of an excellent old Italian family; that both of his parents had died while he was a little boy; and that he had been raised by an older sister named Fiametta.

There were moments during our acquaintance when he was overcome by an unaccountable depression. He would sit, chin on hands, a look of sadness and worry resting like a shadow of despair on his dark, beautiful face. But he refused to acknowledge any such feeling and laughed my questions away. Why, what was there to feel depressed or sad about? Should not a man be happy—with the loveliest girl in the world for his promised bride?

"Leon," I asked once, "will we ever go to Italy to live?"

He shook his head and his eyes were shadowy and somber as he answered.

"No!" he said. "A thousand times, no! If I can only stay here in America—here where I have at last found freedom—then, indeed, I will be happy. Italy? I love Italy! But never—never do I go there again!"

"But why?" I asked, puzzled. "If you

love Italy, why do you not plan to return there some day? Why are you so sure you will never want to go back?"

He shook his head. "That I may not tell you, Marta," he said slowly. "All that is important about me and about my family, you already know. Listen, dear heart—little white dove—listen! There is only one member of my family left in Italy. That is Fiametta, my sister. She is all of fifteen years older than I am, and she loves me. When I was a wee baby, she took me. She has given her life to my service—willingly, generously—because she loved me. And, for her kindness, I love her, too. But very jealously she loves!"

"BUT I will love her, too, Leon," I said. "Surely, if she loves you, she will want you to be happy. And if she comes to America, we will make her welcome and give her so much love between us, that she will have no room for any jealousy."

Leon spoke slowly.

"Pray!" he said—"pray every night, for both our sakes, that Fiametta stay in Italy! You do not know—you are not the type to know a love that can be both strong and cruel."

"Leon, you frighten me," I said. "Why, what could she do?"

But Leon refused to talk of it any longer. With his lightning change of mood, he was again the care-free lover, ardent and impulsive.

"See, little white dove! I love you! You love me! Forget the Fiametta! Think of me—or perhaps I grow jealous, too! You like that, yes? Smile, now, and forget to be frightened. See—I kiss you—again—again—"

And that continued to be his way of ending my questions. I dare say I was too much in love to be really very sane in those days—or to pursue a topic which I saw annoyed and worried him.

When we were married, Leon cabled the news to Fiametta. It was her first intima-

*Leon should never have left  
his bride alone with his  
jealous sister! He should  
have known that the waning  
moon gives power to the  
Things of Darkness!*

tion of our love affair. No doubt, it was a shock to her.

We were married in June. For our honeymoon month Leon had extravagantly leased a beautiful house in the hills. It had been built by an artist and was his home, but he was willing to let it for the summer, while he was abroad. It was situated on the top of a little rise called Misty Hill. The plan had been dictated by the fancy of the owner, and the house had grown to a lovely though somewhat fantastic completion. From a distance it seemed a tiny fairy castle, with softly tinted towers and arches. Surrounding it was a garden of roses, so that every stray breeze was laden with summer sweetness. Surely an ideal place for a honeymoon.

**E**VEN its name was in keeping with its fanciful beauty. "Waning Moon!" Just the name it should have had, I thought, the first time I heard it. Little did I imagine how hideous a thing that name and that setting was to become for me!

Leon and I had lovely rooms on the second floor. But had I been alone, I know I should have chosen the tower room for my own. It was reached by a little circular staircase, opening out of the second-story corridor. Situated high over the rest of the house, it seemed a dream room—something lifted from some old medieval story or poem. In such a room Elaine might have guarded the shield of Lancelot.

Octagonal in shape—and windowless—it was lighted by a huge skylight of tinted glass that threw an ever-shifting pattern of jeweled color across the gloss of the black, mirror-like floor. The walls were hung with dull scarlet-and-silver tapestries that fell in straight, still folds to the floor. There were only a few pieces of furniture—an old carved chest, two high-backed, massive



chairs; an old, time-dimmed mirror; a huge, silver-draped bed. Altogether, a most fascinating and unusual room. The few hours when Leon was absent, I went up there to read and dream.

But for some reason it did not appeal to Leon. He drew a sharp breath, the first time he glimpsed it. Then I heard him give a half-stifled exclamation.

"Why, what is it, Leon?" I asked.

He turned to me with a queer, twisted smile.

"Nothing to worry you, little dove," he said, "but—I have seen a room like this one, before. It—it reminds me—that perhaps I have bought my happiness with a price. Perhaps I have been a fool to dream, Marta! Come away from this place! It is not good! Lock the door, and stay away from this room!"

"Why, Leon, I think you are being foolish," I exclaimed. "This is the loveliest

room in the whole house! Nothing could be more beautiful! Nothing!"

"You are right, Marta," he answered softly; "nothing could be more beautiful—or more sinister. If I had known that the house held such a room, we would have gone to some other place."

"No other place could be as beautiful as Waning Moon," I said.

"Waning Moon!" he repeated musingly. "Waning Moon! If I had not been a fool, perhaps that name in itself would have held a message for me."

I stared at him in perplexity. And he, seeing my doubt and distress, laughed, shrugged his shoulders and, catching at my hand, drew me back down the stairs and out into the rose garden.

THERE followed dream days and nights of exquisite, almost heart-breaking loveliness. Honeymoon. Roses and June and blue-skyed noondays. Radiant, silver-flooded nights of moonlight and velvet warmth. A week and a half of heaven on earth!

And then—the cablegram from Italy. A black omen.

It was from Fiametta, announcing that she had sailed—that she would be with us in America—with us here, at Waning Moon, in a week's time! Leon read the cable and the blood drained from his face, leaving it a queer, greenish hue under the olive tint of his skin. He stood for a minute with the flimsy yellow sheet crumpled in his hand. His eyes, fixed unseeingly on me, had the hunted, hopeless look of a trapped animal. I was disappointed—upset—that she could not at least have waited until the end of our honeymoon. It was unfair, unkind of her, to intrude so abruptly. With a whole lifetime before her, surely she could have given us a few short weeks! Did she begrudge us our ecstasies? A premonitory shudder shook my heart.

"Oh, Leon—so soon?" I pleaded.

But Leon did not heed my words. He was staring straight ahead, and on his face was the incredulous, dazed look of a waking sleep-walker.

"I should have known," he half whispered. "I should have known! But I loved you so, little white dove! Surely love can protect its own from any harm! I had no right—no right to marry you. But I—fool that I was—I dared to dream—"

"Leon!" I was terrified and clung to him, questioning. "Leon, what is it? You are

afraid? Why, you talk as if you were! What is it? Why do you act in this strange way? What is wrong?"

My lover looked down at me. He gave me a little smile, forced, unnatural. But he put his arm around me and drew me close against him. Then he took from his pocket a little ebony cross, attached to a tiny silver chain.

"I'm afraid I have never been a very religious man, Marta," he said soberly, "but take this cross. It is the symbol of the greatest thing in the world—Christianity! That is the shining weapon which can hold at bay those powers of darkness that would encroach on this earth. You will wear it for me? For Leon?"

He clasped the chain around my neck and dropped the little cross inside my dress over my heart. But when I would have questioned him more, he turned my face up and looked deep into my eyes.

"It is best that you be in ignorance, Marta," he said gently, "so do not ask me questions. I know that you suspect something, of course—that you are curious and alarmed. But not knowing—that is your best protection now. This much you have a right to verify. It is true that I fear Fiametta. Oh, not for my own sake! She would die, rather than that any harm should come to me. But for yours! Her love for me may be a very terrible gift. I feel now that I did wrong to marry you—but I have no excuse except my love for you."

"I THINK you are being too excited about it all," I said, making a grasp at my practical common-sense. "I won't ask you any more questions if you don't want me to, of course. But if you are afraid that your sister will not like me—that she will try to hurt me—if that is what is worrying you, don't let it any more. For I'm perfectly able to take care of myself. There isn't a thing in the world she could do, if she wanted to. But, Leon, I'm going to make her like me so much that she won't even think of being jealous. And I'm going to like her, too. So there!"

But Leon shook his head doubtfully.

"I hope you may," he said. "Yes, there is a chance that she may love you, too. Oh, little white dove, who could keep from loving you? You are so sweet—so sweet! And if she should love you, therein lies your protection."

"I hope she will—I know she will," I an-



swered. "But, Leon, we have a week left—alone. Let us be happy now, together, and when she comes, we'll treat her in the loveliest way we know. Everything will work out all right. Leon, don't look so worried, so unhappy, dear heart! There's nothing to be upset about! We're worrying over something that can't happen. Come down to the little lily-pond with me and bring your book, and you shall read and I'll sew and we'll pretend we've been married for—oh—ages!"

shuddered as though a winter wind had chilled me to the marrow. The sunlight looked bleached and devoid of its gold, like the bleak, dreary light of late winter afternoon.

I TURNED from the garden and went slowly into the house. Something whispered to me that our happiness at Waning Moon was a thing of the past—an idyll that had ended.

I was upstairs when Fiametta and Leon returned. I had arranged the lovely tower

"On the lowest step of the winding stair crouched a great, black, emerald-eyed leopardess! The weird, unholy moonlight revealed it plainly—showed the tiny ears laid flat and angry against the satiny head. . . . A vicious snarling came from those fiercely lifted lips.

"And yet I could not stop! The power drew me irresistibly toward it—toward certain death—"

The next week flew on gossamer wings. Leon had occasional moods when he struggled with the old depression, and I knew it was induced by the expected arrival of his sister. But, on the whole, he seemed fairly confident and I did not ask questions. Privately, I must tell you, I regarded it all as more or less ridiculous. I even derived a tiny secret amusement from the idea that a jealous older sister could so train and rule a small boy, that, when grown, he would still dread her presence and authority. I formed a mental picture of Fiametta: middle-aged, staid, perhaps—horror of horrors—even stout.

ON the day she was to arrive, Leon went to meet her. I stood at the gate of the garden and waved to him as he raced down the road at the usual breakneck speed he affected in our little roadster. And after he was out of sight, I turned back again to the midsummer riot of the flowers. Then, suddenly, for no reason, I was overcome by a sense of desolation and unhappiness.

Premonition is an odd thing. I stood in the midst of the great sunny garden and I

room for Fiametta, hoping that she might find in it the same charm and beauty that had appealed to me. When I had told Leon of my choice, at the same time voicing a protest against his foolish prejudice, he had looked at me oddly.

"Yes, it should please her," he had said—"or at least keep her from feeling homesick. You will not find Fiametta showing what you call my prejudice. For the room is almost a duplicate of one in which she dwelt when we lived together in Florence so many years ago."

I hurried down to the library. They were there, Leon standing near the door, Fiametta by the huge table in the center of the room. I stopped at the threshold, looking at the black-draped, darkly veiled figure of the woman. My lover turned and caught at my hand, drawing me forward; his voice was full of a sort of forced gaiety and welcome.

"Little white dove—Marta—see, here is Fiametta! Fiametta, you will surely love my wife? Oh, if you love me, you must love Marta!"

The somber figure advanced toward me

and threw back the floating folds of the veil. I drew a deep breath of amazement, Leon should have told me! For Fiametta was beautiful—radiantly beautiful!

She was tall, slender, graceful, with a lovely, heart-shaped face and the reddest lips that I had ever seen. A lovely mouth but a cruel one. But it was her eyes that fascinated me. Golden, gem-like eyes. I got the impression that in the night they would glow green, like a black cat's eyes.

"SO this is—your little white dove," she said in a voice of languid music—"your Marta! Child, since you have married my Leon, I must welcome you in my own fashion. Will you kiss me, Marta?"

She leaned toward me and I caught a whiff of a perfume, exquisite, faint, yet with a disagreeable undertone that repulsed me. Her face was close—close—to mine! Then her great golden eyes blazed into mine and I could have cried aloud at the flaming hatred that suddenly dilated them. It was as if inadvertently I had opened the door into a glowing furnace. I half uttered an exclamation and stumbled back. But Leon intervened. He caught my arm, supporting me.

"Be careful, Marta. You will fall," he said. "Come now. Show Fiametta her room. She must be very tired. See—it is only an hour until dinner. Then we will all meet again—to talk, to get acquainted. But first, rest—"

Fiametta shrugged her slim shoulders. From the table she lifted a curious little black casket and prepared to follow me. But Leon stepped between her and the door. His gesture was one of authority.

"Leave the casket," he said bluntly.

Fiametta turned on him, her eyes opening wide in surprise.

"Leave it!" she repeated, as if wonderingly. "But, Leon, I dare not. It is my jewel box."

"I will put it in the safe for you. Leave it here."

Leon's voice was harsh and commanding. Fiametta started to speak, then changed her mind and handed the box to him with a slight, indulgent smile playing about her beautiful lips.

"As you will," she said quietly, and followed me into the passage.

I tripped over something on the threshold—and it moved under my foot! I gave a startled half cry as it rose and faced me in the dim light of the hall. A little old

woman—preposterously old! Hideous, toothless, with rheumy eyes but half visible between the dried and shriveled folds of skin. She seemed more like a mummy than a human being.

As I stared amazed, Fiametta spoke to the creature in rapid, fluent Italian.

Then she turned to me. "I am sorry you were startled. She is my old nurse. I had intended to leave her at home, but she grieved so much that I brought her. Do not fear; she will not trouble you. She is with me constantly. She even sleeps beside my bed."

"I am glad you brought her if it will make either you or her more happy," I said slowly. And I led the way on up the stairs.

But I was not glad. I was afraid, with a childish, foolish fear of the poor, witch-like creature. A feeling illogical but too strong to yield to reason.

The hag-like creature seemed agile despite her apparent immense age and slipped along behind us soundlessly.

At the door of the tower chamber Fiametta drew a sudden breath. Her eyes, when she turned to me, were luminous.

"Marta," she said, "did Leonardo prepare this room for me?"

"No," I answered, "but he said it was almost a duplicate of one in which you once lived."

I thought it better to say nothing of Leon's dislike and fear of the room. Fiametta looked slowly about her. Her nostrils dilated and her eyes widened as she gazed.

"It is—ideal," she said softly.

She laid a hand caressingly on my shoulder. Then, as if the contact were too much for her self-control, her hand tightened relentlessly. Her face was again close to mine—again I gazed into the seething hatred and jealousy that inflamed the molten depths of those uncanny golden eyes.

HER voice was the hiss of an angry cat. "So—Marta—'my little white dove,' is it? And did you never hear that to a leopardess a dove is coveted prey? Leon—my Leon! And you! *You!* His 'little white dove'!"

The old woman plucked at Fiametta's skirt and burst into feverish, hurried speech. Fiametta hesitated, then slowly released me.

"I am sorry," she said, and her voice was again softly musical. "Oh, Marta, I am so sorry! But bear with me, child, bear with me! He was mine—mine alone—for so long a time! Leon says that in time I will

come to love you as well as I love him. Will you not teach me how? Will you not love enough that I shall learn, Marta?"

Her voice was so coaxing, so luring, that I responded in spite of myself with a faint smile.

"I wish you wouldn't be jealous, please," I said, "for Leon still loves you, even though he loves me, too. Rest now, and at dinner we will all be together. That is an hour from now."

I WENT on to my room after I left her. Somehow I did not care to face Leon just then. I was beginning to understand why he felt that he had taken a risk in marrying me. I was unhappy, stirred, apprehensive. But after a brief rest and a bath I felt more nearly mistress of myself and went on down to the library.

Leon was already dressed, standing by the window, gazing somberly out into the twilight. He turned as I entered—turned and regarded me soberly, questioningly. He held a paper in his hand.

"Marta," he said, "I have just gotten a message from Carver—and there is another meeting in the city. I must go—it is absolutely necessary! There is nothing else to do. I shall start immediately after dinner, and I will be back here by midnight. Trequil sails a week earlier than was expected and our plans must be accommodated to his. If it were anything else—oh, I'm sorry, Marta! It's bad to leave you alone on this first evening with Fiametta, I know. But surely—if I am back by midnight—Marta, have you your little cross?"

I drew it out silently and held it before his eyes. He nodded and I dropped it back inside my dress again.

He would have said more, but Fiametta was at the door—her queer, oversweet perfume enveloped us—she was in the room with us. Her costume of filmy, transparent black emphasized the charm of her scarlet lips and brilliant, gem-like eyes. She moved with the lithe noiselessness of a cat.

There was little of ease in the meal to which we sat down. Difficult, manufactured talk. Long, awkward pauses. Leon was absent-minded and worried. His brow was dark and though he stirred himself to courteous conversation with Fiametta, both she and I could see that it was with effort. Outwardly Fiametta seemed not to mind. She remained gracious, pleasant. But inwardly, I am sure, Leonardo's attitude must have hurt her, and she prob-

ably imputed it to me and my influence. Which was fuel added to the searing flame of her jealous hatred.

Leon was to start for town immediately at the close of the meal. The little roadster had been brought round and stood waiting on the drive before the house. Before he left, Leon took me in his arms and held me close, lover-fashion.

"Good-by, Marta," he said—"only for a few hours, though. I will be back with you by midnight. Kiss me!"

He gave Fiametta a grave salute on one cheek—a gesture probably taught him in babyhood by his sister. It was so little-boyish and stiff that I could have smiled. But Fiametta did not smile. Her eyes were dark and her face sober.

We both walked out onto the terrace with him. It was a dark, starry night.

"No moonlight for you to go," I said, "but plenty of light for your return. The moon will be up by then."

"It is the season of the waning moon," Fiametta said.

She said nothing more till Leon was gone; then, as we turned back to the lighted room, she added with a slow, mirthless smile:

"Tonight is the third night past the third night of the waning moon—the second third. Until the moon is full, it is for lovers. But after that it changes. You will see that I am right."

The first part of the evening passed in a commonplace enough fashion. Fiametta made every effort to be friendly. She was apparently trying hard to overcome her feeling of bitterness toward me and I tried my best to like her and make her like me. But we had no common meeting ground. Leon, whom we both loved and who should have been a bond between us, was the cause of our bitter antagonism. So the noble effort we made was more or less a failure.

WE separated early, to go to our rooms, Fiametta saying that she was still very tired.

After I had watched her climbing the stairs toward the tower chamber, I went into my own room and sat down on the broad window-seat. The cushions were soft and I sank back with a little sigh of fatigue. Then I started violently. Something moved in the shadows beyond the ring of light about the dressing-table!

Startled, I sprang to my feet, my heart leaping wildly.

It was the old woman, Fiametta's nurse!

She was crouching over the waste-basket, which stood in one corner, and was apparently searching among the few trifles thrown there. She rose when she knew that I saw her, and made an incredibly swift dart for the door. Indeed, she was gone before I more than realized her presence—before I could glimpse what it was that she had taken from the basket. But I could see that she held something tightly clutched in one skinny, monkey-like talon.

**I**T worried me a little as I sat there. But there was nothing in the basket of importance. Why should she search it? What could she want? Some torn sheets of note-paper, a powder box, a few strands of my hair, twisted into a little ring, after I had taken them from my brush. All equally worthless.

Soothed by the utter loveliness of the warm, star-jeweled night that rested over the sleeping summer lanes and gardens, I must have dozed at last, half reclining on the window-seat.

It was late when I woke, with a sudden strong feeling that I was being most urgently called. Still sleep-dazed, I sprang to my feet. Leon! Surely it was time that he had returned!

But I was still alone in the room. He had not come.

The little chamber was in shadow. The lamp on the dressing-table had been extinguished. Outside, the moon had risen. But not the cheerful golden lantern that lovers know. A great, leering, lop-sided moon that cast an ashen, bleached light over a world that seemed to be waiting in a sort of breathless pause. I shivered involuntarily.

Then suddenly, without any volition of my own, I took a step toward the door. It was as if I were walking in a dream. In a panic, I tried to stop. I could not will myself to stand still. I fought frantically for the control of my own body. But I still continued to advance deliberately toward the door. My forehead was bathed in icy perspiration. I laid my hand on the knob, turned it, flung open the door into the corridor. I tried to call out, to scream. No sound came from between my lips. It was ghastly. Terror leaped to life in my heart.

Slowly, draggingly, I walked down the hall. Pulling back, fighting desperately, I must yet have looked like a woman walking

calmly, quietly along. I went toward the stairs that led up into the tower chamber.

Then, at the sight before me, my voice returned in a sudden shrill cry of fright. On the lowest step of the winding stair crouched a great, black, emerald-eyed leopardess! The weird, unholy moonlight revealed it plainly—showed the tiny ears laid flat and angry against the satiny head, the threatening, snarling muzzle, the savage lashing of the long tail against the ebony sides. A vicious snarling came from those fiercely lifted lips.

And yet I could not stop! The power drew me irresistibly toward it—toward certain death!

But in spite of its menace and rage the great beast retreated before my advance, flashing noiselessly up the stairs. On each step it would stop to whirl in swift fury, threatening; then it would leap soundlessly on velvet feet in front of me.

I followed, struggling hopelessly with the invisible bond which dragged me so surely upward. Up, up, until I at last stood within the portal of the tower chamber.

And then I saw that there had been changes. Fiametta, clad in a straight black garment through which her flesh showed rose and snow, was seated in the huge carved chair. Before her on a table was a tiny iron brazier, in which glowed a hot red heart of fire and from which rose a thin spiral of blue smoke. On the floor, enclosing the chair and the table, a great triangle had been inscribed in broad, white lines. Touching it at one point was another and larger triangle. It was the old figure used by all the sorcerers down through the ages to protect themselves from those dark powers which they summoned—though I did not know that at the time. And surrounding these two triangles was still another mark, outlining an enormous pentagon.

**T**HE room was lighted only by the glow of the brazier and the pale moonlight that fell dimly through the colored skylight. But it was sufficient to show these things—and the old woman, huddled on the floor beside Fiametta's chair—and the black leopardess, crouched low just outside the pentagon, green eyes luminous in the dusk!

Fiametta looked at me and smiled—a smile that changed her face into a mask of dark, malevolent triumph.

"So!" she said softly, tauntingly. "Leon has not yet returned to protect his little

white dove. No, there is no one here! No one but Fiametta! Even though now she needs him as she never has before, he has not come. To Fiametta he leaves the 'little white dove'!"

She threw back her head and laughed, a hateful, screaming sound that tore at my heart. I shook with an uncontrollable tremor at its sound. Though I did not yet understand fully, already I knew enough to be certain of my doom—to see, all too late, the reason for Leon's doubt and mental agony.

"It is not that he does not love you, little dove," she mocked, "though soon—very soon—there will be only Fiametta for him to love again. Fool! To think that I would give him up! But tonight he is delayed. In spite of all his caution, all his goodness, he is not so clever, my Leonardo. He did not think—he did not know—this is the third night after the third night of the waning moon! Else he would not have left you alone for a second. So easy it was for me to do! So easy! Under such a moon and on such a night I may do my will unhindered!"

She paused to laugh again and the shrill cackling laugh of the old crone by her side broke and died with hers. She drew toward her an object on the table—the ebony box. From it she lifted a miniature image of the leopard at her feet and set it beside the brazier. The great animal on the outer rim of the pentagon rose and snarled menacingly, its eyes a blazing green. It rose and prowled swiftly up and down the chalked line, as at the bars of a cage. But it reached no clutching paw over that dead-line, for all its thwarted fury.

"SO much neither you nor Leon could know or dream," she went on, her voice soft and singing, "though Leon—I think sometimes he suspects. There was that boy at Cavalli—and the sister. Leon, he wondered at the time what became of them! So suddenly they went! But no—he does not know! Tonight, 'little white dove,' you suffer for the times you have made me suffer. Tonight you pay a long score—a long score of agony and tearing pain and loss. No, never shall anyone take from me my more-than-life—my Leon. Did I not say to you—the dove is the prey of the leopardess? Did I not tell you?"

And again she laughed. She stooped and scooped from the casket a handful of some powdery stuff and threw it on the fire of the

brazier. It leaped upward, flaming high, filling the room with a moving green light, scarlet-shot. I smelled the odor of the same perfume that Fiametta had worn, increased a thousandfold, overpowering in its deathly, cloying sweetness. The black leopardess seemed incited to frenzy by the action. It raced and turned ceaselessly, frantically, along the chalked line, and its snarl rose to a screaming fury. Fiametta, glancing at its sinister, flashing liteness, laughed softly. She looked across at me.

"SEE!" And she picked up something from the table. "See—this is your hair! The old nurse—oh, she helps her Fiametta! Hair—strands thrown carelessly away. Did you not know, fool, that each single hair would give me power over you! Power to slay—to annihilate you—consume you utterly, body and soul! Look, now! Watch, while you yet may."

She held one hair to the blaze. Instantly, released from its invisible leash, the great leopardess swerved from the line along which it ran and sprang in a great leap toward me. I saw its open, slaving jaws; its green eyes blazed down into mine.

I screamed, a feeble, futile sound.

But in mid-air the beast whirled and came down heavily in a jarring fall upon the floor. It sprang up, maddened, to dash insanely toward the edge of the great pentagon beyond whose bounds it might not pass. Fiametta shrieked aloud with shrill laughter.

Half fainting with terror, my heart pounding furiously, I caught at the back of the great chair.

Then Fiametta screamed her message above the snarling clamor of the great beast.

"Not yet, not yet," she cried. "Just death—that is too easy! First, we torture you—then you die. That is best, yes! See, then!"

Again she threw a hair into the green blaze. Again the black leopardess leaped, only to fall back thwarted. But this time the great claws raked me lightly in passing. Blood sprang out on my shoulder—trickled warmly down my arm—stained my sleeve with a dark blot.

The old hag joined her cracked cackle of mirth to Fiametta's laugh. Again and again the leopardess sprang—never quite close enough to attain its desire.

But at last Fiametta seemed to tire of even this royal sport.

"This time," she screamed, "this time—we shall end the 'little white dove.' This leap—it shall be the last! Think now of Leon, white dove, for never again—never again on this earth—or any other—will you meet——"

She did not finish. She picked up the little ring of hair and dropped it into the blaze. The light flared high with an explosive sound. The leopardess leaped in a great arc toward me as though released from its leash, and as it sprang—I remembered the little cross. I jerked it forth, held it up.

"LEON—Leon," I wailed, my voice a despairing prayer.

But before the little cross the black beast swerved aside—fell to the floor—lay there, groveling, snarling. Fiametta sprang up, enraged, uncomprehending.

And as she rose, I heard feet—frantic fear-spined feet—racing up the twisting stair!

"Leon, Leon!" I cried again.

And he answered me!

"I am coming—I am coming——" And then he stood beside me in the room! His clothes were torn and his breath came in the gasps of a spent runner—but out of his gray face his eyes glowed, courageous, unafraid. He spoke, and through his catching breath his voice was a frenzy of rage and fury.

"Fiametta—for God's sake—are you mad—insane—to do murder—to kill——"

He was holding me close in the curve of one steel-muscled arm. He faced his sister like a lion at bay, his face dark with horror, loathing—yes, with hate. He was quivering with rage and excitement.

Fiametta's eyes, full of wild unbelief, were fixed on him. Her face was set in lines of incredulity and amazement. Then, as she comprehended that he was really there in the room—as his presence became real to her and she sensed his white-hot hate and horror—it changed. I saw the despairing expression of one who has staked his all on a turn of the wheel—and lost. Her words were a wail.

"Leon—Leon—I love you! I could not bear to give you up! Mine—mine—you are mine! Leon—I will keep you always!"

Across the blazing brazier, in the weird light of the tower chamber, the two faced each other, forgetful of all else. Two stripped souls, looking at each other, longing, yet separated by the fires of hell it-

self. He spoke slowly, with awful scorn.

"Keep me—by destroying the one most precious to me, the woman I love! Oh, yes, I have known—maybe for years—that you still practiced the black art—that you consorted with unclean things! But—you were my sister! I never dreamed—I could not know—that you were a fiend! A murderess! But never again—never again—do you——"

He sprang forward, carrying me with him—inside that whitely outlined pentagon! Fiametta retreated before him—backed against the table—her eyes fixed on his face.

Swifter than thought, he snatched the black carved casket. He dashed it twice against the table edge, shattering it into fragments, scattering the contents over all the room!

In that instant it was as if a great gale was loosed in the tower chamber. A rising fury of sound, a yelling clamor—the rush of sinister, sweeping wings—of lashing, angered winds, unleashed and racing down from the outer darknesses of space! Outside the line of the pentagon it raged and rose, to beat in deafening, insane waves of sound. And the green, scarlet-shot air was filled with vaguely seen shapes, all swirling in furious motion. Scaly wings, dark, enormous, bat-like. Clawing talons—diabolic, staring eyes—faces, figures, too hideous to record. All caught in that mad, surging hurricane of sound and motion that rocked the tower chamber!

An odor, indescribably vile, as though from the opening door of a long-sealed charnel-house, reeked through the room. My mind reeled with shock and terror but I was unable to lose consciousness in that screaming uproar—that unclean pandemonium of sound.

I heard Fiametta shriek, "Leon—Leon—what have you done——"

I SAW the toothless crone spring erect, gesticulating violently—saw that she was swaying, falling—falling across the line—outside the protecting mark of the pentagon! She was gone—gone before she was half way to the floor—consumed utterly—sucked up to destruction by that maelstrom that swept in such mad circling around us. Gone!

And the uproar rose another tone in the screaming scale of its anger.

Now no longer did the line of the pentagon absolutely restrain them. Closer and closer they pressed; second by second they

became more daring. Ever the circle lessened. From the maze, snatching skeleton hands, gnashing fangs, vicious claws reached out, striking at us ever more boldly.

The fetid air stunk of decay. I lay in shuddering collapse against Leon's shoulder. Fiametta crouched back against the table, gazing with anguished, terror-stretched eyes into the midst of the madhouse chaos of elementals.

I saw a hand—long, ashen-white—grab at her shoulder. And then—the leopardess! Right from the center of the obscurity she made her lightning-like leap, across Leon and myself!

Fiametta! The demon, unleashed at last, had turned on its mistress!

They crashed to the ground together, and even above that hellish clamor I caught her desperate scream of agony and despair. Shrinking, sickened, I hid my eyes.

But Leon dragged the little cross from about my neck and held it aloft. He shouted words that I could not hear in the hideous din that surrounded us. Holding the tiny symbol of love and sacrifice above us, he lifted me with one arm and plunged outside the pentagon into the commotion.

The floor of the tower chamber was covered with an obscene slime and he slipped and almost fell. The hellish pack, balked of its victims, rose to even wilder clamor. But Leon, shouting his invocation, bore me safely, strongly. I felt the fanning of mighty wings, but we were not touched.

Half stifled by the stench, dazed, semi-conscious but safe, Leon carried me across the tower chamber and on down the stairs. The black-paneled door slammed shut behind us. Swiftly he raced along the hall, down the broad front stairs and out through the open door—out into the midst of peace and silence and sleeping, fragrant flowers.

In the little rose arbor at the end of the garden he dropped onto a stone seat and

held me close, cradled in his arms. Silence! Sweet, pure air! A hushed, dew-drenched midsummer night!

Incredible that such things should be, after the mad hell of the tower chamber. Unbelievable that we should live! A tiny fountain in the center of the arbor splashed and fell in its marble bowl with a soft, prattling music. A katydid shrilled at the grass-roots. A lacework of moon-shadows lay on the floor of the little court.

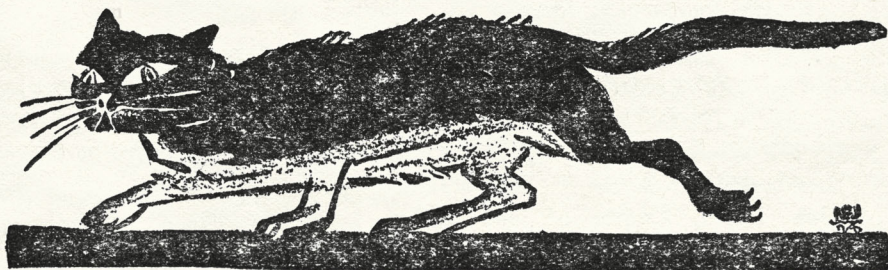
Leon drew a long, quivering sigh. He rested speechless until the first exhaustion was past. Then Leon stirred. He lifted the little cross to his lips. He looked down into my face.

"I did not know—I did not know! Little white dove, can you ever forgive me? I so nearly failed you—I so nearly lost you! If through all my life I love—I serve—can you forgive?"

We left Waning Moon that night. And I have never seen it since. But Leon told me later that the tower chamber was a scene of utter destruction and that the mutilated, torn bodies of Fiametta and the old nurse were found by searchers, half-buried in the slime and wreckage.

I never knew what steps Leon took to secure secrecy in the affair. But I know the consul of his country, after a long conference with Leon, bent all his efforts toward aiding him. And only a very few people in this world today know anything of that night of horror and death at Waning Moon.

Once, when I gathered courage to ask, Leon told me of the boyhood chum and his sister—the boy whom he loved so dearly, and who, with his sister, had disappeared so completely and so mysteriously. After all these years of doubt their fate was at last known. I wept at the pity of the little story—the tragedy of the two whose only offense was that they had loved Leon too dearly and that he had returned their love.



# What Happened in the Boston Schools?

**T**ERROR-stricken children put to flight—parents milling excitedly in the streets—police responding on the run: these were some of the incidents that followed certain strange happenings in the Boston public schools recently.

The first intimation of the weird situation came to light when a number of children refused to attend five Boston schools on Friday, September 28th, 1928.

What these children told their parents spread through the neighborhood like wild-fire and within a few hours each of the five schools was besieged by a frantic, surging mob of fathers and mothers. With the coming of the crowds, police alarms were sent in, and newspapers, scenting a riot call, rushed reporters and camera-men to the scene.

Precisely what they found is hard to imagine in the Twentieth Century, in the bustling city of Boston.

The children were in utter hysteria. The schools, they said, were "haunted," and they were frightened half out of their wits.

Ghosts had appeared in the class rooms—a shadowy arm had gripped a teacher by the hair—a phantom hand had jerked a button from another teacher's dress! The ghostly arm, appearing at another hour, had seized and held the wrist of an instructor, inflicting deep marks on it. At least, so the children said.

The facts are hard to trace because of the ages of the children and the natural skeptical attitude of the authorities. Certain it is that the pupils, especially the girls of grammar-school age, were in stark, mad panic from what they said they had seen, and instructors and principals gasped with relief when the school week ended Friday afternoon.

The explanation of the authorities is simple: they declare that one small girl started the trouble by telling "horror stories" and that her yarns frightened the wits out of students in five schools. This may be true.

On the other hand it is strange that the children's terror came not at night but in broad daylight. Again, ghost stories, as told by children, generally deal with the custom-

ary apparitions of fiction which infest so-called "haunted houses." The phenomenon of the shadow arm, which has been manifested in various foreign countries from time to time, is rather more advanced psychic lore than the average child's mind can grasp.

Investigation yields the following facts:

Thursday morning one girl, a bright but rather stolid child, declared she saw the vague, gray outline of a phantom arm emerging from the wall and reaching toward the teacher at her desk. The wall is solid at that point and there could be no chance of a practical joke.

**S**EVERAL other children in the same class corroborated her story. They all had seemingly seen the same thing.

The other apparitions—the phantom arm that snatched the button from a teacher's dress, and the claw that fastened itself in an instructor's hair and gripped the wrist of another teacher so severely that red marks were visible—were described in a straightforward manner by children in the various schools. In each case the apparition was the same—a phantom arm—and it always appeared in broad daylight.

Skeptics can and will say that the children were imaginative, that they were "seeing things"—and no doubt they are right in regard to some of the later stories, which may be explained on the basis of contagious fear.

In justice to Boston it must be also said that the schools are among the best conducted in the country, and that none of the school buildings have ever had the reputation of being "haunted."

On the other hand *something* must have started the panic. The stories of those who declare that they "saw" the phenomena are clear and circumstantial down to the detail that they were stricken speechless with fright as the unsuspecting teacher sat within a few inches of the "phantom fingers."

No teacher would admit seeing the "phantom," no teacher felt hands in her hair, no teacher bore marks upon her wrist—as far as can be ascertained.

The case must go down in history as another of those mysterious matters that can neither be fully probed—nor explained.





*Wherein a scar-faced specter  
answers King George—  
and a soldier is amazingly—*

# Conscripted by the DEAD

By Captain NEIL GOW

**A**DRIAN HAWKES had been my closest friend from early boyhood. At the preparatory school to which our respective parents had sent us at a tender age, we had occupied the same study, eaten from the same "tuck-box," shared each other's books, clothes, tennis-rackets and fishing tackle. We swam together, rode together, played truant together. In fact, we were as united as David and Jonathan. I loved him like a brother, and I know he would have gone to the torture chamber for my sake.

We were peculiarly unlike, Adrian and I. He was a brilliant, handsome daredevil—fearless, strong-willed and debonair. I, on the other hand, was always a cautious plodder, lacking in brilliance and having none of Adrian's iron will or good looks.

We both went to Sandhurst—which is to England what West Point is to the United States. From there Adrian passed out with honors and was commissioned into a crack cavalry corps. I achieved a moderate distinction in Military History and Tactics, and was gazetted into an undistinguished

line regiment. Thus our ways separated.

It was a wrench for both of us when we parted, each to our own separate sphere of duty.

Then came the Great War.

I will pass over my own obscure share in that awful massacre. Very briefly I may record that Adrian and I met several times. By the accident of war our regiments, for a time, lay close together so that meetings between us were quite frequent. He had received rapid promotion and was now a very junior captain; I was then a full lieutenant.

But fate separated us again, and when I next heard of Adrian it was to learn that he had been wounded in the face at Boiry-Ste.-Agnes. A fragment of shell had cut a brutal gash across his cheek from forehead to chin, a disfigurement which marked him for the remainder of his short life. Some months later he returned to the Front, gay and fearless as ever, but with his handsome face marred by that livid scar, a cruel memento of those grim days in the trenches at Boiry-Ste.-Agnes.

And the War went on and on and on.

Then, one day, the bells rang out, flags were waved and the world was filled with songs of thanksgiving. Peace was declared.

Then, one day, the bells rang out, flags remnants of my regiment, returned home—an obscure captain, prematurely old, financially crippled and permanently disillusioned. There was a medal waiting for me, I was told. Some act of mine, it seemed, had been deemed worthy of notice by my superiors who had recommended me for a military decoration and—crowning honor!—I was to be formally presented with this gaudy token by His Majesty the King at Buckingham Palace.

**T**HIS piece of news, however, left me cold. I was worried about Adrian, from whom I had had no news for many months. I was on a six weeks' furlough at that time and I set out to locate him. I found him eventually in a hospital on the outskirts of London, wounded a second time—a sniper's bullet through the lung.

I sat by his bedside and held his feverish hand. He was conscious, but very weak. He told me, half-shamefaced, that he, too, had been awarded a much-coveted decoration—far more rare than mine—and that he also had received the royal command to present himself at Buckingham Palace to receive his medal from the King's hand.

"The fool of a doctor says I shan't be able to go," he whispered.

"Rubbish!" I said, heartily, with more conviction than I actually felt. "There's three weeks to go. You'll be on your feet again, long before that."

But as I looked at his pale, scarred face, my heart misgave me. It seemed hopeless to expect this shattered wreck of a man to be fit enough to meet the King three weeks later.

After a few minutes a white-robed matron entered the ward and announced that my visit must end.

"Matron," I said, half-jokingly—though, Heaven knows, I felt in no joking humor, "you must get Captain Hawkes fit again at all costs. He is under orders to meet the King at Buck House." (I should add here that Buck House is Army slang for Buckingham Palace).

"I'm afraid he won't be there," returned the matron, with professional cheerfulness, as she rearranged Adrian's pillow.

"I shall be there, matron," said the patient in a feeble though obstinate tone. "Doctor says no. But he's a fool. I wouldn't miss meeting the King for a million." He looked at me with that daredevil smile I knew so well. "*I shall be there!*" he added solemnly.

Then I pressed his hand and left him, arranging to call and see him the next day.

Adrian's firmly expressed intention to go to Buckingham Palace on the date appointed had a cheering effect on my mind. I knew his strength of will, his unswerving obstinacy of purpose, the steel-like determination with which he always achieved his heart's desire. If Adrian had fully made up his mind to obey the royal summons, matrons, doctors, wounds—the Devil himself even—would labor in vain to stop him. Adrian always got what he went after!

These reflections raised my spirits. I felt convinced that my wounded comrade, stimulated by his intense will-power, would shortly be on the high road to health.

But when the next day dawned, Adrian Hawkes was dead. The sniper's bullet had done its work, and a very gallant gentleman had gone to join the Great Company that dwells in the land of shadows.

Adrian's death left an agonizing blank in my life. The prospect of facing the monotonous peace-time existence of the professional soldier, with its dull routine of drills, guards, maneuvers and occasional ceremonial parades, seemed drab and uninteresting. Life without Adrian had somehow lost its zest. Had I been a married man, perhaps I should have felt his loss less keenly. But I am a confirmed bachelor and, except for my dead comrade, have made few intimate friends during my life.

For some days after his funeral—his regiment buried him with military honors—I wandered aimlessly about London, bored and apathetic.

**A**ND then came the day on which I was supposed to present myself at the Palace to receive my medal.

I shall remember that day to my dying hour. I was living at the time in a small bachelor flat off St. Martin's Lane, my simple wants being attended to by Hopkins, my faithful *bâtman* (orderly). Hopkins was far more impressed by the importance of the day than I. He polished my Sam Browne belt till it glowed like mahogany; he burnished my buttons, scoured my spurs

and devoted an hour or so to the task of imparting a mirror-like gloss to my boots. And then, with solicitous hands, he helped me to don my uniform.

But I was feeling in a strange, confused mental state that morning. My mind kept turning upon Adrian and I was haunted by the stupid fancy that he was in the room with me. And then my brain began to play quaint tricks. Strange thoughts floated into my consciousness; I remember thinking to myself that I hoped it wouldn't rain—because Adrian had told me that his scar always ached in damp weather!

**A**T length my toilet was complete, and after glancing at myself in a full-length mirror to make sure that my uniform was correct in each detail, I hurried downstairs.

I hailed a taxi and bade the driver take me to Buckingham Palace. As we jolted along through Trafalgar Square, under the Admiralty Arch, and down the Mall, my mind again began its eccentric capers.

Somehow I seemed to recall an occasion when I had been driven along that same route in a Rolls-Royce accompanied by an elderly Admiral, who, in some mysterious way, was my uncle. An absurd fancy, as I have never been in a Rolls-Royce car and have no relatives in the Navy! But—and the realization staggered me—I suddenly remembered that Adrian had been the possessor of a "forty" Rolls and that his uncle was Admiral Sir Reginald Kent, R.N.!

Strange fragments of memory began to intrude themselves on me. I thought idly of polo ponies I had owned, of a favorite butler, Adams, who had been in my family for many years, of a dark-eyed girl who had returned my engagement ring—and then I remembered that none of these things belonged to my past! But Adrian had once kept a stud of polo ponies! Adrian's family butler, too, was named Adams! As for the girl, it may be that she, also, had been part of Adrian's life, though he had never mentioned her. Absurd, of course! You see, in some idiotic manner I was thinking Adrian's thoughts instead of my own!

The courtyard at "Buck House" was crowded when I arrived. Officers of many nationalities were making their way through the huge wrought-iron gateway, guarded by armed sentries.

Suave, polished functionaries marshaled

us in some kind of order in a large ante-room, and after a long interval I found myself in a silent queue of officers, sandwiched between a United States colonel of infantry and a killed subaltern of a Scottish Highland regiment.

And then, as in a dream, I realized that my turn had come for presentation. A cultured baritone voice announced my name. I took two paces forward, turned smartly to the left and stood rigidly at attention in front of a soldierly, bearded figure which I recognized as that of my royal chief.

A strange sense of unreality came upon me. Dimly I realized that the King was shaking my hand and asking me a question in his deep, rich voice.

"Where did you get your wound?" he said in a tone of kindly interest.

And I remember making the ridiculous answer: "At Boiry-Ste.-Agnes, sir!"

The moment these words left my lips I realized their utter stupidity. For—I had never been wounded, and as for Boiry-Ste.-Agnes, I was never within ten miles of that terrible spot! For a second I felt a panicky impulse to retract my words, to explain and apologize. But it was too late; for with a few words of sympathy and a friendly nod of dismissal, His Majesty had turned away towards the next comer.

**T**O say that I felt an utter fool is to express it mildly. I had told His Majesty a lie, a silly, senseless untruth. No doubt, it was the effect of my strange obsession, this mental rut into which my mind had fallen.

I made my way through the lofty, dignified apartment in company with a crowd of naval commanders, army officers, foreign attachés and soft-footed officials. Why, I asked myself, had I failed to give His Majesty the truthful answer: that I had never been wounded? It was not due to nervousness on my part, I'll swear to that. No, the words had sprung to my lips unbidden, unlooked for. It was as though another person had answered for me.

Some kind of functionary approached and directed me towards an adjoining room, where, he said, refreshments were being served. I thanked him, but declined the invitation. I wanted nothing—except, perhaps, to meditate.

It struck me suddenly that the King's question was a peculiar one—"Where did you get your wound?"

Evidently His Majesty mistook me for

someone else. A natural error, no doubt. But I—like a fool—had not corrected the error, but had falsely claimed to have been wounded on a battle-field I had never seen!

At the same time, the question *was* a strange one. I did not *look* as if I had been wounded. It wasn't as if I carried—as did so many of my comrades—the marks of sickness, the pallid face and sunken eye.

Half involuntarily I turned towards a handsome, gilt-framed wall-mirror—and then I stood transfixed with horror! Instead of reflecting my own ruddy, mustached countenance, *the mirror gave back the scarred, clean-shaven face of Adrian Hawkes!*

For a moment I stood there like a half-witted sheep, gazing blankly at the reflection of my changed face. My mustache had gone—my ruddy complexion was replaced by tanned, sallow skin—my eyes had changed from brown to steel-gray—and from forehead to chin ran an angry white scar! It was the face of the man who had passed away three weeks before.

Like a man possessed I dashed from the Palace, strode through the courtyard past a startled sentry and leaped madly into a taxicab.

As the swiftly moving vehicle drove me homeward, I had some leisure to reflect on this strange metamorphosis that had befallen me. My body—or, at least, my face—had changed, had become transfigured. But how? I touched the scar on my cheek gingerly and noticed that it was strangely sore!

**T**HERE was a tiny strip of silvered glass nailed to the window frame of the taxi, opposite my seat, and as we bowled along Trafalgar Square and up Charing Cross Road I stared at my face—Adrian's face—in its polished surface. I smiled, winked, grimaced; the face in the mirror did the same. Clearly, then, it was *my* face.

When we arrived at my front door I said to the taxi-driver, "Would you know me again, driver?"

He grinned respectfully. "I reckon so, sir," he said. "You see, that scar—you'll excuse me being personal, sir—"

"Say no more," I said hurriedly, throwing him half a crown.

So that settled *that!* Other people could see it, too. It wasn't a delusion on my part!

But, strangely enough, when I reached my flat—an operation that consisted of climb-

ing three flights of stairs and unlocking a door—the phenomenon had disappeared! When I looked at my reflection in my hall mirror, there was no trace of Adrian; instead, I saw merely the reflection of my own familiar and unbeautiful countenance. The scar had gone.

What is the explanation of my strange adventure?

I have discussed it with eminent psychic investigators, and from them have gleaned one or two possible theories to account for the mystery. In the first place, they point out, hallucination may be discounted; the taxi-driver saw the scar, and so this disfigurement could scarcely have existed only in my imagination.

**I**T might have been what the spiritualists call a Transfiguration Phenomenon. They claim that a departed spirit can (in certain rare cases) superimpose a simulacrum of its earthly countenance over the face of a living person. As to that, I can say nothing—I can only give the theory for what it may be worth.

Certain occultists say that "possession"—real or partial—can take place on occasions, a homeless spirit taking up a temporary abode in the body of some living person. Which means (if this theory is applicable) that apparently the spirit of Adrian had partially taken possession of my body. But this hypothesis scarcely meets the facts. It was not so much that his spirit had entered my body—though I admit that my mind was strangely obsessed by him—but rather that my face had changed to a resemblance of his.

Another theory put forward was that of self-hypnosis; that my intense concentration upon Adrian had set up a powerful hypnotic suggestion in my mind, strong enough to make me *seem* to see the face of Adrian instead of my own in the mirror, and sufficiently powerful to effect a "sympathetic suggestion" in the mind of the taxi-driver.

All the psychic experts I have consulted have agreed upon one thing: that the great comradeship between Adrian and me was a ruling factor in some way. Without it the phenomenon **could scarcely have** occurred.

I can give no definite explanation. But, for my part, I like to think that I was of use to Adrian—that I helped him to come back from the land of the shadows to obey the King's summons.



By STEPHEN WALLACE  
As told to  
EDWIN A. GOEWEY

*The striking miners at Clearview faced  
a bitter Christmas, with no toys  
or food for their children. Then came  
a ghost with a curious mission*

**S**LOWLY, deliberately, the gong of the great clock in the far corner of my office droned nine strokes. December 23rd would soon be numbered among the yesterdays. In just a little more than twenty-four hours, other bells, a myriad of them, would unite in proclaiming His message of good-will throughout all Christendom as a welcome to the day of days.

I glanced up from my desk, pushing aside the documents still to be read and signed. Nine o'clock was sufficiently late for any man to work—even one with my many business interests—particularly now that I had reached the threshold of sixty. I had scarcely known an idle waking hour since early boyhood and Time was beginning to claim his toll. Frankly, though I would not

have admitted this to another, I knew I was getting old.

Still, though my thatch was frosted and I was beginning to know the feeling of being tired in both mind and body at times, I felt no regrets for my long activities. For hard work had enabled me to reach my goal. I had battled up from poverty to a position of commanding financial power. The pinch of penury had long since faded into a hazy recollection.

From outside the doors of my office came the hum of tense activity, echoes of the Christmas trading which would continue for another hour or more in this great department store of which I was the sole proprietor. Much of my wealth was invested in other interests—banks, manufacturing plants, mines—but the store was my

hobby. I had begun my climb to power as an errand boy with the famous merchant who had founded the business. And when, after years of labor and self-denial, the store had come into my possession, I had built a modern structure to house it, one of the country's finest buildings, as a monument to my success, as a heritage to be passed on to—

**T**HEN, suddenly as though a heavy hand had fallen upon me, my chain of thought was interrupted. My throat hurt and tears made my eyes smart and burn. This store, everything I possessed, was to have gone to my son, Danny, when I passed out of the picture—or sooner, had he desired it. But he probably would not have wanted to take over the management of the business while I lived—unless to relieve me. For he possessed none of my driving business instincts; he thought too much about others to give strict heed to his personal interests. However, Danny—Mother's boy, perhaps, more than mine—had left us—forever—before my dream could be realized.

He had been such a fine lad, had Danny, straight and strong and sturdy. Mother and I had been very proud of him. But never more so than upon the day when, at the head of his company, with bands playing and flags flying, he had marched to the ship which had taken him "over there." And, as we knew he would, he did his bit like a man until— It was on a Christmas Eve that he led some of his men out into No Man's Land for the last time. He died as they carried him from the field.

I clenched my hands and groaned, as the agony of it all came back with full force. If one had to go, why hadn't I been taken—not Danny? He had come to Mother and me when we had almost given up our hope for a child. He had brought laughter and sunshine into a home that had become somber with loneliness; a loneliness for which I was responsible because of the time I devoted to adding to our material possessions. And how Mother had loved him—with all the passion of a woman whose heart had been starved!

In the years before Danny came, I had worked hard because I loved it—because of the thrills which achievement brought. Now I was working almost as hard to forget—my regrets. Merciful God, if only life's pages could be turned back—just a few years! But they couldn't.

A knock aroused me from my reverie. It

was Carlton, my very efficient secretary.

"Beg pardon if I am disturbing you, Mr. Wallace. But I have completed the program for the Christmas Eve broadcast from the store. I thought maybe you would like to look it over."

I shaded my eyes, as if from the light, but actually to conceal my tears.

"No, Carlton, I'm sure it is all right; that is, if you haven't forgotten the music for the boys in the hospitals—the songs they sang—in France."

"That portion of the program will be better than usual, sir. In fact, there's a surprise for them and for you. John Scanlon has promised to sing 'Roses of Picardy.' His boy, you'll recall, was one of Master Dan's buddies—"

"Thanks—Carlton," I interrupted, stammering as I struggled to overcome the gripping at my throat which seemed to choke me, "you have done splendidly. Good night. I shall go home now. I am—very tired."

I kept my hand over my eyes even after the sound of the door closing indicated he had gone. *Home*. The word seemed a mockery as I repeated it in a whisper. I would go there, however, because Mother would expect me to. But—I dreaded doing so; dreaded the long, empty vigil of this night, and the next.

For Mother would not be there.

Ever since they brought Danny back, Christmas Eve had meant more to her than anything else in the whole world. It was then she wanted to be alone with her grief, with the memory of her boy. She had asked me to grant her this privilege—probably believing it would lessen my hurt if I did not witness hers—and I had consented.

**O**N the 23rd, with a servant or two, she always left me to go to our summer home up-state. Not far from it was the little cemetery in which Danny had been laid for his long, long sleep. It had been her wish that this spot should be his final resting-place because it was at this country home, upon a hillside overlooking a wide-spreading river, that they had passed their happiest hours, while she watched the boy through the summers as he grew from babyhood to man's estate.

When Mother returned after her first Christmas visit to our boy's grave, I noted a great change in her. She appeared happier and more contented than at any time since Danny left us. She had again learned to smile. I was pleased but did not ques-

tion her. Finally, however, after some weeks, she confided the reason for the change—told me the most amazing story to which I ever had listened, watching me the while with anxious eyes to note whether I doubted or believed her.

On Christmas Eve, she said, she had gone to the churchyard alone, placed a wreath upon Danny's grave, then knelt and prayed. She had arisen when the chimes of a nearby church had proclaimed midnight—to find herself facing a shadowy counterpart of Danny! She had been startled but not afraid. For he had smiled; the same smile which had brought her joy and happiness in the unforgotten days. Then he had stretched a hand toward her. She had felt the cold touch of his fingers as he had stroked her forehead. She had tried to clasp him, but his shadow faded—and was gone.

I DID not believe. Her imagination, her mother's love, the associations of her surroundings, had tricked her into thinking she had seen the phantom of our boy.

But I managed to conceal all outward evidence of my disbelief. And I lied when she questioned me—lied as I took her in my arms and caressed her cheeks, wet with tears. And she was happy. For my assurance of faith banished all her doubts.

The next year she had again left me to fulfill her Christmas Eve vigil. However, when she returned that time, she did not delay her confidence but told her story with radiant face as soon as we were alone together. Danny's spirit had again appeared to her, for just a few flashing seconds, as the chimes were announcing the day of Christ's birth.

She had followed the same custom in each of the succeeding years. Always she had gone to Danny's grave to pray on Christmas Eve, and when she returned she insisted that he had appeared, had smiled and touched her lovingly. And, as the years came and went, and she remained steadfast in her faith in her boy's visitations, there were times when I wondered and questioned. Wasn't it possible that he did return once each year to assure the one he had loved most in life that he still was near and watching over her? Perhaps, some day, I told myself, I would ask Mother to let me accompany her; to let me see for myself if Danny's spirit did appear. Why hadn't I done so this year? Maybe I would go to her next day. There was still time—

Then something within my brain seemed to snap, forced me back to the realities of the moment with a suddenness which was stunning. I brought my clenched hands down viciously upon the arms of my chair. I was, indeed, losing my grip upon myself. Sober reasoning told me it was impossible for anyone to return from the world beyond the grave. With Mother, of course, it was different. She was only a woman—sensitive, high-strung, lonely. If she found comfort in what she imagined she saw during her Christmas Eve vigils, I would continue to be glad.

But, as for me, I must go on as I had always lived—laboring to keep the business machinery I had created moving smoothly—and trying to forget the blow which had made each succeeding effort a mockery.

Arising, I strove to put new life into my tired body by tensing my muscles, and tried to drive from my mind all wandering thoughts. No matter what my disappointments might be, many man-sized tasks confronted me and I must perform them like a man.

Crossing to a window, I looked down upon snow-covered roofs which reflected the light of a full moon as though they were of polished silver. Then my gaze went lower, to the streets cobwebbing from the square at the corner, with a great illuminated tree in its center, to the hundreds of flashing electric signs that gave to the thoroughfares the appearance of a gigantic carnival. A myriad of people, seeming scarcely larger than toys at that distance, milled about, while a glut of vehicular traffic in the roadways concealed any snow which might remain there.

The sight of this holiday panorama, these hurrying people intent upon the purchase of gifts for relatives and friends, set my blood to tingling. I must get outside, rub elbows with them, absorb some of the true holiday spirit which the scene below so vividly proclaimed. Such an excursion would put me in a better frame of mind to face the hours of loneliness which would come after I reached home.

HASTILY putting on my coat and hat, I left my office, stepping from comparative quiet into a maelstrom of noise and bustling energy. Crowds, crowds everywhere; a crush of eager buyers about the counters, worming through the aisles.

I smiled. The great Wallace store—my store—was maintaining its reputation as the

city's leading shopping center. I worked my way toward the employees' elevator in the rear. Here and there I caught a glimpse of a harassed clerk with drawn face and weary eyes. Too bad. The strain under which they were working surely was terrific. But it couldn't be helped, not at Christmas-time. Besides, I paid my employees liberally for those extra hours. I was not unfair to them. Why, I had even given my chauffeur the night off so that he might shop with his wife—which meant that I would have to go home in a taxi.

I THREW my shoulders back, more than a little proud because of these thoughts. Stephen Wallace did and always would appreciate faithful service. Those who did my bidding without complaint were always suitably rewarded. As for the shirkers, those who crossed me or sought to hamper the profitable operations of my interests—I dismissed the thought with a shrug and entered the lift, which carried me to an exit opening upon a side street.

As I emerged into the street, I paused to look about with increasing satisfaction upon the scene which confronted me. Packed and jammed into the thoroughfare was a mighty fleet of automobile delivery trucks, each bearing the name *Wallace* upon its sides; into these cars shouting, energetic men and boys were piling goods to be delivered next day. Holiday cheer from my store would be distributed far and wide.

Only an occasional employee of long service recognized me and saluted as I wriggled my way toward the square.

Then I was swept into one of the lines of animated, eddying human beings, most of them freighted with bundles, and I soon forgot myself almost entirely as the spell of my surroundings gripped me. Occasionally I forced my way to a shop window, gay with greenery and blinking lights, to note some unusually fine display. But, for the most part, I was content to permit myself to be carried along by my neighbors. It seemed good just to be alive then, to be a part of these ebbing and flowing throngs pulsing with holiday good humor.

Finally—I must have trudged a full hour before I realized it—I became conscious I was very cold. The sharp wind seemed to have penetrated to my very marrow. I set my lips hard, recognizing another evidence of my advancing years. Then I beckoned a taxi and headed for home.

Long before the front doors of my great

stone house had closed behind me and I had told Jameson he might retire as I intended to sit up for a time, the feeling of bitter loneliness had again gripped me. Never, it seemed, had I felt Mother's absence so keenly.

I went to the library, the haven in which we had spent most of our evenings for a long time, switched on the lights, then dropped into a chair before the fireplace. The warmth from the burning logs was comforting—I sensed that dully. But my real thoughts were not of myself, but of Danny, whose portrait hung before me above the mantel.

It was a splendid likeness, painted just after he'd turned twenty-one. And he was wearing his uniform, as he had when Mother and I had seen him last. He had been a handsome lad, truly. His good looks had been a heritage from his mother, together with his easy-going, kindly disposition. Too bad the artist had not caught a bit more of his customary cheery smile. But then, perhaps, Danny's expression had been serious at the time of the sittings. For the War—the slaughter of thousands—had worried him. He always grieved when others suffered. But he had gone with the others who had defended the flag, because it was his duty.

I crossed to the switch and turned off the lights. The logs gave off sufficient glow for me to see the picture of my boy. And I wanted to be alone with him that night, with everything else blotted out. What a mighty difference it would make if he only were with me—in the life! Then I thought of Mother and my gaze shifted from the fire. I wondered if this Christmas Eve would bring her the same comfort as those which had gone before; if she would again believe she saw the spirit of her boy.

*"You need not doubt, Father; I shall see Mother."*

THE words came in a low tone, from out the surrounding blackness. And they were in Danny's tones! For a full minute I sat stunned, my blood seeming to freeze within me. Then, with an effort, I managed to pull myself together. I had been dreaming of my boy; had imagined I had heard his voice.

*"No, Father, you were not dreaming. I am here."*

Deadly fear forced a cry from my lips, and I tried to draw myself to my feet. But I dropped back, limp and helpless. For



sitting quite near me, and still wearing his uniform, was Danny! And yet, it was a different Danny from the one I had always known—a sort of shadow of him—indefinite and—

*“Do not be afraid, Father.”*

A thousand times since, I have tried to recall my exact feelings after that. But I never could. However, I think I became calmer upon the instant; realized that, despite my former doubts, I actually was in the presence of the spirit of my son. And, thank God, I was able to talk with him.

I DON'T know what my first wild words were, nor can I recall his replies. But after a time—and my recollection is very vivid upon this point—I questioned him concerning his appearances to Mother and asked why he had not spoken to her.

*“It was better that I did not,”* he replied. *“She would have asked questions I could not have answered. But I know I have made her happier, and that is what matters most.”*

*“You are talking to me, though.”*

*“Yes, Father, because it is necessary. I have come to ask a favor—to have you right a wrong which, if permitted to go on, will cause terrible suffering and, in the end, bring you bitter regrets.”*

*“I’ll do anything for you, my boy, anything—”*

*“Then go to Clearview at once; see for yourself what is going on there. No, don’t interrupt, for my time is almost up. When you learn the truth I believe you will do what is right. For your heart is not hard, though business has made you callous to the hardships of others. For my sake, go—tonight.”*

His final word was but a whisper, and as it was uttered, his shadow faded into nothingness. For a time I sat staring, too numb to move, too dazed to think clearly. However, when I again was able to think, reason told me I’d been tricked by a dream; that my imagination had deceived me. But, somehow, I couldn’t accept this conclusion. And, finally, something which I could not define convinced me I had seen and talked with the phantom of my son. In support of this, I knew that no one except my boy would have suggested that I go to Clearview. Surely no promptings of my brain would have brought such a thought.

For just outside that city, in the coal regions of the adjoining State, were located the mines of the company of which I was the head, the actual power controlling its

destinies. Originally I had purchased my interest in these mines as a gift for Danny. And while he had lived, he had taken a great interest in them and the welfare of the workers. Some time previous the mines had failed to return the company more than a meager profit. A succession of mild winters had cut the demand for the company’s fuel. So, when we faced a situation which would require the dividends to be more than halved unless we could materially lower the costs of operation, I had attempted to reduce the wages of the men, who numbered several thousands.

My demand had been refused, largely because of the efforts of one man, Bob Gruger, whose ability for leadership had made him the voice of the miners. Again and again I had attempted to force him to my terms, but always he had resisted. So I had closed the mines, determined to let matters drift until the men came to me and accepted my terms.

But the coming of Danny’s spirit had changed everything. Even beyond the grave he had retained his interest in the miners and their families. My one regret was that he had not been more specific; told me exactly what he desired. But I would go to Clearview without delay and, after noting conditions, try to do the things which Danny would do if he were there in my stead.

Arrangements for my journey were completed within half an hour. First, from Jameson, I borrowed an outfit of old, but warm clothes and donned them. These would serve as a partial disguise when I visited the quarter where the locked-out miners lived. Next, I told him to inform Mother, upon her return, that I had been summoned out of the city on business and would not be back until late on Christmas day—and to telephone similar information to the store next morning.

AT the railway terminal I was fortunate and obtained a stateroom through to my destination. It was while I was purchasing my tickets that I had a feeling that the spirit of Danny was again near me. I looked about hopefully but saw nothing to support my belief. However, I continued to sense his nearness until after I had retired to my berth. And the comfort this brought me kept me from worry and doubt until I lost consciousness.

Next morning, when the train was still an hour’s run from Clearview, the porter’s

knock on my stateroom door awoke me. As I struggled to a sitting posture after as sound a sleep as I ever had known—I looked about bewildered, for a moment unable to comprehend the swaying of my narrow, unfamiliar quarters and the rumble made by the car wheels.

**T**HEN recollection of what had occurred the night previous came back with a suddenness which set me to trembling. And, though the sun of the new day was sending its bright beams into the stateroom and my brain was clear and capable of calm reasoning, no doubts came to my mind. I recalled my experience, recasting every phase of it, and was more than ever convinced that I had not been tricked by a dream or by my imagination. No, beyond question, Danny's spirit had come to me, talked and reasoned with me, and I now was speeding to fulfill the mission he had suggested: to visit the scene of the long lock-out and note conditions at first hand.

As I arose, I looked about eagerly. Perhaps he had remained with me throughout the night—perhaps he was still near me! But I saw nothing to encourage that hope. Then I whispered his name, several times. No reply came. For a few moments I was disappointed. But my reason told me I was expecting too much—that my boy could not appear to me in broad daylight. Perhaps, though, when night once more wrapped the earth in darkness, he would come again, to assure me he was noting my movements and would help me to do the right thing. I hoped so, with every fiber of my being. But, even if he did not come, if I never again beheld the spirit of my boy, I was determined to carry on, to make an earnest effort to do the thing which would please him, were he alive.

When I left the train at Clearview, I seemed to have recovered my full strength, to be mentally and physically fit for a day of hard work such as had been my delight in my younger years. Carrying my grip, I walked to the town's largest hotel with firm step. The nip in the air set my blood to tingling and increased my zest for the adventure ahead. I registered under an assumed name, fearful that if I disclosed my real identity, word of my presence there was certain to be broadcast and my purpose defeated. The clerk, noting my rather seedy appearance, looked a bit doubtful when I requested the best room. But his hesitancy turned to affability when I took

several bills from my wallet and offered to pay in advance—a suggestion he refused.

I dallied over my breakfast, then went to my room to smoke and read the local paper so that the town might be fully up and awake before I began my task. When I finally left the hotel, the sun was riding high in the sky and the streets were alive with people, most of them obviously intent upon making their final purchases for the morrow's holiday.

The district in which were located the homes of the miners was at the other end of the town, out beyond the factories. It was a wide-spreading section—the miners' shacks alone covering several acres. Even under the sun of a summer sky it never had been other than seedy and unappealing. Right then I knew it must be at its worst, with everything blanketed under snow and not a single patch of green to counteract the dismal stretches of shambling, unpainted buildings.

The first lap of my journey lay through the town's retail business district. It was a reminder, though on a much smaller scale, of the streets surrounding my own store. On every side were evidences of the Christmas spirit. Wreaths of holly and festoons of fir and pine decorated the fronts of the shops, while throngs jostled along the walks or paused to stare into the windows displaying all manner of holiday goods. There was even an occasional bewhiskered and scarlet-coated Santa Claus, jingling his tiny bell while he guarded a familiar Salvation Army kettle.

Most of those with whom I rubbed shoulders appeared gay, happy and eager, and were warmly dressed. But, now and then, I saw some whose scant clothing and set faces betrayed the fact that they were not beyond the pinch of poverty. I wondered if they were miners or members of their families.

**E**NCOUNTERING the first of these, I felt only a passing pity, forgetting my mission in Clearview. If they were miners and had chosen to go hungry because they would not accept my company's offer, they had only themselves to blame.

But, before long, the sight of these heavy-eyed, pinched-faced men and women, so inadequately clothed, got upon my nerves. Why, even my greatcoat failed to keep out the bite in the air. Then I tried to look away whenever I saw a scantily clad woman approaching. However, some-

how I just couldn't. Over and over again came the thought that these were the people Danny had sent me here to see, so that I might realize the miners' side of the lock-out.

The lump which came into my throat at the thought of my boy, swelled and seemed to choke me. Poor Danny! He never would have looked away or turned his back upon suffering! No, his thoughts had always been for others, those less fortunate than himself. And again I wondered why he, and not I, had been taken. Or—why hadn't he been spared to me? We would have talked over the mine troubles. Perhaps there would have been no lock-out.

I WAS jolted from my musing by running full-tilt into a man as I rounded a corner—a tall, thin fellow in a ragged overcoat, whose weather-beaten hat was drawn far down over his eyes. He stepped aside, looking at me sharply. I recognized him—Bob Gruger, the miners' leader, the man who on two occasions had defied me to my face when I endeavored to persuade a committee from the locked-out men to accept the company's terms.

With a gesture of apology I hastened on but not before I had noted the look of half recognition in his expression. No doubt he had recalled that he had seen me before, but in my shabby clothing he did not know me.

I was glad. For he probably hated Stephen Wallace more than any living person. I did not want to quarrel with him then or there.

The change which had taken place in the man was amazing. It was six months since I last had seen him. Then he had been in his physical prime, a bold-faced, robust, two-fisted fighting man, a born leader whose wish had been law to his fellow workers. Now his shoulders were stooped, his cheeks drawn and sallow, his eyes sunken—a shambling, beaten man.

But, somehow, a realization of this truth brought me no sense of elation—even though he had fought me as no other man had dared to for many years. I knew why. It was because of Danny's visit. As surely as I knew I was approaching the mining district, I realized that the spirit of my son had conquered the worst in me—that never again would I be able to batter down the men who opposed me, without considering the consequences to them.

At that moment as surely as on the night before, when I purchased my railway

tickets, I knew the spirit of my boy was near me! I felt his presence, though I could see nothing.

"Danny boy, help me to do the right thing!" I muttered, wiping away the tears which for the moment blinded me. Then, fighting down the emotion which threatened to overcome me, I pushed on.

Finally I reached the first of the miners' houses and glanced along the narrow, wretched streets. The scene was more desolate than I had guessed. Snow was piled high everywhere and the houses showed few signs of life other than the smudges of smoke which came from their chimneys.

Shoving my hands deep into my pockets, I trudged along. Here and there a few ragged, hungry-looking children made a show of playing, stopping frequently in their snowball-making to beat their bare hands together and stomp their feet. Men and women, all bitterly poor and no better clothed than the children, slouched across the roadways. Here there was no gaiety, no holiday greetings, not even a smile.

I studied the houses as I passed them. Not a wreath anywhere, no green of any kind to signify the coming of Christmas.

The settlement recalled some of the villages I had seen in France when I had gone there to bring back the body of my boy; just such another place of the living dead, all hopeless of the days to come. Because of the snow, ice and litter in the streets, it was a considerable time before I had traversed all the thoroughfares of the section. But at no point did I find any cheer to counteract the general air of gloom.

THEN, for the second time, I encountered Bob Gruger. He had just parted company with some men as shabby as himself and was turning in toward a house, no doubt his home. But, noting me, he paused and watched until I had passed. Obviously he still was uncertain as to my identity. But this second encounter with someone whose features he had recognized but could not place, was exciting in him a curiosity which might prove dangerous to my purpose.

Though reason prompted me to return to the hotel at once, before I encountered some other miner who might recall me and create a scene before I was ready for a definite move, I pushed on. I wanted to visit the stores, to learn if any holiday goods were being displayed, if any of the

locked-out men still possessed money with which to make a show of celebrating Christmas, at least for the sake of the children.

But, when I reached the shops, they presented almost as desolate an appearance as the miners' homes. Two of the larger ones were closed and their doors boarded up and padlocked. As for the others, nothing in the dimly lighted windows indicated that the most important of all Christian holidays was only a few hours distant.

**S**TOPPING a man who was leaving one of the stores, I stated I was a stranger and asked why the shops were either closed or practically deserted, with no evidences of holiday trade.

For a moment he eyed me suspiciously, then told me bitterly that the miners and their families had reached a point where "bread lines" must be the next means of existence. Everybody was without funds; many were near starvation. Only a few were able to obtain sufficient odd jobs to supply the most meager of their necessities. The larger stores had given the idle men credit until forced to the wall. Those still operating were taking in barely enough cash to pay the rents. Soon these, too, must close.

On the way back to the hotel I was more depressed than at any time I could recall. Because of the change in my mental attitude brought about by Danny's visitation, I was seeing this struggle between the men of the hills and the mining company in a new light. And the raw facts hurt and stung me. The policy which I had followed for years—the policy which had brought me wealth and independence—had been to make every phase of my business yield a handsome profit. Now that policy was dead. In the future it would be impossible for me to do anything which would bring suffering to others.

Back in my room, with the door locked, I tossed aside my coat and hat and flung myself into a chair. I was very tired, in both mind and body. And yet I just had to think of some plan to bring immediate relief to the residents of that drab hamlet out in the hills. Already I was determined to end the lock-out and send the miners back to work. There was plenty of coal to be moved and repairs to be made to keep all busy. But it would require a week, at least, for me to compel the other directors to come round to my

new way of thinking. What I desired right then was to fix upon some scheme which would bring the spirit of Christmas to the miners and their families next day.

To walk among them distributing money would not meet the situation. Such a course could be viewed by the miners in but one way—that their wealthy former employer was doling out charity to those he had impoverished. No, there must be a better way out. If only I could talk to Mother, she would be able to suggest the right thing. But I couldn't reach her in time. Then came a new thought—a hope. Perhaps, when darkness came, Danny would return again and advise me. I leaned back and closed my tired eyes, wondering what I would do if he didn't come.

I awoke with a start to find myself in pitch blackness. Switching on the lights, I looked at my watch. Seven o'clock. I had slept several hours—slept while precious time was speeding. Still, limited as was the time remaining, I must do something. I snatched up my coat and hat with trembling fingers, hurried to the door and switched off the lights. But, even as my fingers touched the knob, a voice from out of the darkness held me.

*"Father, go to Gruger."*

My boy's voice! I would have recognized it in a million. Turning, I looked about eagerly, but saw nothing.

"Danny, Danny boy," I cried, "let me see you—talk to me—tell me what I must do."

But only the echoes of my own tones came to my straining ears. Again and again I begged my boy to let me see him, to speak to me. But there was no response to my plea.

**W**HAT followed remains with me only as a sort of waking nightmare. With no thought that I had not eaten since morning, I rushed from the hotel and forced my way through the crowds in the streets who, to my tortured mind, seemed bent upon delaying me. It was only when I reached the edge of the mining settlement that I was able to think clearly. I realized then that a light, dry snow was falling and that a stiff wind was whipping the bits of ice into my face so they stung like needles.

But I paid scant heed to this discomfort. The thought which kept pounding through my brain was that I must reach Gruger's shack quickly. It was not greatly distant. And there were no crowds here to impede my progress. Soon I was before the house

I sought. The gate was open. A light shone from behind the frosted panes of the windows on the lower floor. Leaving the path and walking in the deeper snow to deaden the sound of my approach, I made my way close to a window, stooped and tried to peer within.

What I saw was Bob Gruger and a woman working over a tiny Christmas tree. They were tying something upon it—bits of bright-colored worsted, it seemed to me. I gulped as I appreciated this feeble effort to add some touches of color to the scraggy stump of green. Upon the floor lay a cloth doll—perhaps it had cost a dime—a little wagon, a homemade affair, and a few apples and oranges. These two poor creatures, human beings like myself, were putting aside their own misery in an effort to bring a semblance of Christmas cheer to their little ones!

AND right there the big idea came to me—what I could do to make the morrow a real holiday for those in the mining settlement! Stepping back, I waited a few minutes until my pulses stopped pounding, then went to the door and rapped. The woman opened it.

"I want to see Bob Gruger," I said.

"Come in, please. It is very cold outside tonight, but we have a fire—in there."

As I stepped into the living room, I faced Gruger. The light from the lamp fell full upon my features. For a moment he stared, puzzled. Then his eyes went wide and a flush came to his dull cheeks.

"I thought I knew you when I saw you today," he said slowly—"and now I'm certain! By God, you're Stephen Wallace!"

The woman, who had gone to her husband's side, gasped, then covered her eyes and sobbed aloud.

"I don't know what your game is, Wallace, spying around here in those old clothes. But if you wanted to learn just how near starvation we all are—if you think you've finally got us at your mercy and can force us to——"

"You're wrong, Gruger."

"Then what in hell are you here for?" He shook off his wife's detaining hand and came close, his fingers twitching, his eyes fairly blazing hatred.

"Sit down, Gruger, and permit me to do so. I want to talk with you, man to man——"

"What do you want here?" he cried, striking his hands together viciously.

"Please listen, Gruger, like the man you really are. The men have followed you until they have reached—well, almost the last ditch. If you will let me explain, I'll show you how you can lead them back, to plenty and comfort."

"I've told you before; we'd rather starve like rats than accept your offer, which at best wouldn't leave us much better off than we are now."

"I haven't come to suggest that you accept the cut."

"Not—take the cut?" he gasped, dropping into a chair and making a feeble gesture toward another.

The woman advanced toward me timidly, saying: "Please, Mr. Wallace, tell us what you came for. Bob will listen, won't you. Bob?"

I waited until the trembling woman was seated, then moved close to Gruger and nodded toward the old clock ticking loudly against the wall.

"It's after nine. We have less than three hours to do a full day's work."

"A full day's——"

"Don't interrupt, Bob; there isn't time. And while you're listening to me, think of this woman who has stood by you, and the little ones for whom you were preparing the tree. You want to give them a merry Christmas, don't you?"

"For God's sake, Mr. Wallace, tell me what you're driving at."

"I can't go into details; time is too precious. But something—never mind what—has caused me to change my mind about the mines. The men are going back to work at the old scale, as soon as I can arrange it—perhaps by New Year's. Winters here are always short. We'll begin by making the necessary repairs and sending what coal we have to market."

Gruger, his face as white as the snow outside, staggered to his feet. "You mean that, Mr. Wallace? You're not fooling——"

"I mean every word of it."

HE pushed out a hand to grasp mine, but his wife threw herself into his arms and began weeping on his shoulder.

"Come, come, Mrs. Gruger," I said gently. "This is a time to laugh, not cry. You'll wake the children."

She turned slowly, her face twitching with the many emotions which racked her. "They won't come downstairs, no matter what happens. We told them Santa Claus was coming, tonight. They'd be afraid

that they would frighten him away."

"Well, he is coming—by tomorrow, anyway. Nothing is going to keep him away. Now, listen to every word—you, in particular, Bob. You and I are going to town and I'm going to buy gifts, warm clothing and food for every man, woman and child in the settlement."

"You mean—now?"

"Yes; so they'll be delivered on Christmas. Get your coat and hat. Hurry. We can't waste another minute. We'll stop at the house next door and send the man in here to talk with your wife. She will explain. Then let this man spread the word that Santa Claus is coming to the mines tomorrow."

AS Gruger, his face alight with a new happiness, drew on his tattered coat, the woman grasped my hand. But she couldn't speak. However, the tears which coursed down her cheeks proclaimed her thanks.

"I know and understand," I said. Then I pressed a bill into her hand. "Maybe there is something you would like to buy—before Santa Claus comes. Good night, and a merry Christmas."

Bob stopped briefly at his neighbor's home, then caught up with me and together we headed through the increasing storm, our heads bent against the stinging sleet. Neither of us spoke until we reached the edge of the shopping district. Then he gripped my arm, forcing me to a halt.

"I don't know, or care, what prompted you to do what you are doing, Mr. Wallace, but I want you to know that I appreciate it. It is one of the finest things a man ever did. If you have children, I hope they will be as happy tomorrow as mine will be."

I didn't hear what else he said. For I turned away to hide my tears, then hastened on with him at my heels. Going to the largest department store, I sent my card to the general manager, whom I knew well. He directed that I be brought to his office, where he greeted me warmly, though his expression was one of questioning, for he could neither comprehend my shabby clothing nor the fact that I was accompanied by Gruger.

After telling him that the lock-out would be declared off within the week and that the men would return to work at the old scale, I explained the purpose of my visit. Gruger was to give him a list of the families to be cared for, and on the following morning all were to be supplied with Christ-

mas dinners, toys for the children and warm clothing for everyone, from the babies up. As Bob probably would be unable to list all the children, extra supplies were to be taken along so that none would be slighted. He listened in amazement, then protested that he feared his stock was not sufficient to fill the order.

"Then get what you lack from the other stores," I said hastily. "I must leave everything to you and Gruger. Send me the bill. I must be going now, for I want to reach home in time to spend a part of Christmas with—my family."

Pausing only for hurried hand-shakes and laughing aside Gruger's efforts to thank me further, I headed for the hotel, happier than at any time I could recall, wondering if Danny would appear to me again to assure me I had fulfilled his wishes. But Time had passed more quickly than I had guessed. Almost with the thought came the sound of church bells; chimes proclaiming that it was midnight, that Christmas Day had come!

And I knew Danny would not appear to me then. *He was with his mother.*

It was late afternoon next day before I reached my home—and Mother. She was waiting for me in the library.

"I saw our boy again last night," she said, after I had kissed her.

"Did he speak to you?"

"No, but his smile told me he was happy. Now, tell me what errand called you away at such a time."

I made a quick decision. I must not tell her—at least, not then—that I, too, had seen our boy and that he and I had talked together. She might not understand and it would hurt her. So I said only that I had become worried over reports I had heard concerning conditions at the mines, had gone there to note the situation at first hand and had decided to make a holiday for the families at the settlement and to end the lock-out.

THERE were tears in her eyes when I finished. "I am glad, Stephen. But I wish I had known last night. I would have told Danny."

"Perhaps he knew, Mother," I said, taking her in my arms. "Anyway, he knows now." I pointed to his picture. And—maybe it was my imagination, but it seemed as if the stern look was gone from the features—that our boy smiled as he looked down upon us.

# The Ghost of the

By  
LYON MEARSON

# Sideshow

*Why would the voice of a murdered man warn  
the police against investigating his death?  
Here is Coney Island's strangest mystery!*

**T**HE séance in the Gipsy's booth at Coney Island had a terrible result. After the table had tapped out a warning for Custor, the owner of the show, it refused to give any message to the others. The party started to break up. Custor was left alone in the room for only a moment—but when Celeste the Gipsy returned in company with Custor's son, Frank, the old showman lay stark dead on the floor, with the table on top of him!

Celeste's cry brought Sadie the snake-charmer and Long Tom the midget on the run. All were terrified and bewildered by the weird tragedy—and by the even stranger thing that followed. For the table disappeared! One moment it was there—the next, it was gone!

While the party were debating as to what to do, the room went dark, an uncanny shriek rent the air, and Celeste's bed-ridden mother appeared in the doorway, calling out, "Who has done this thing?"

Celeste and the others rushed into the back room, only to find her mother soundly asleep!

A few minutes later, however, the old lady wakes up, screaming that she has

just seen a specter. Celeste quiets her and puts her to sleep again.

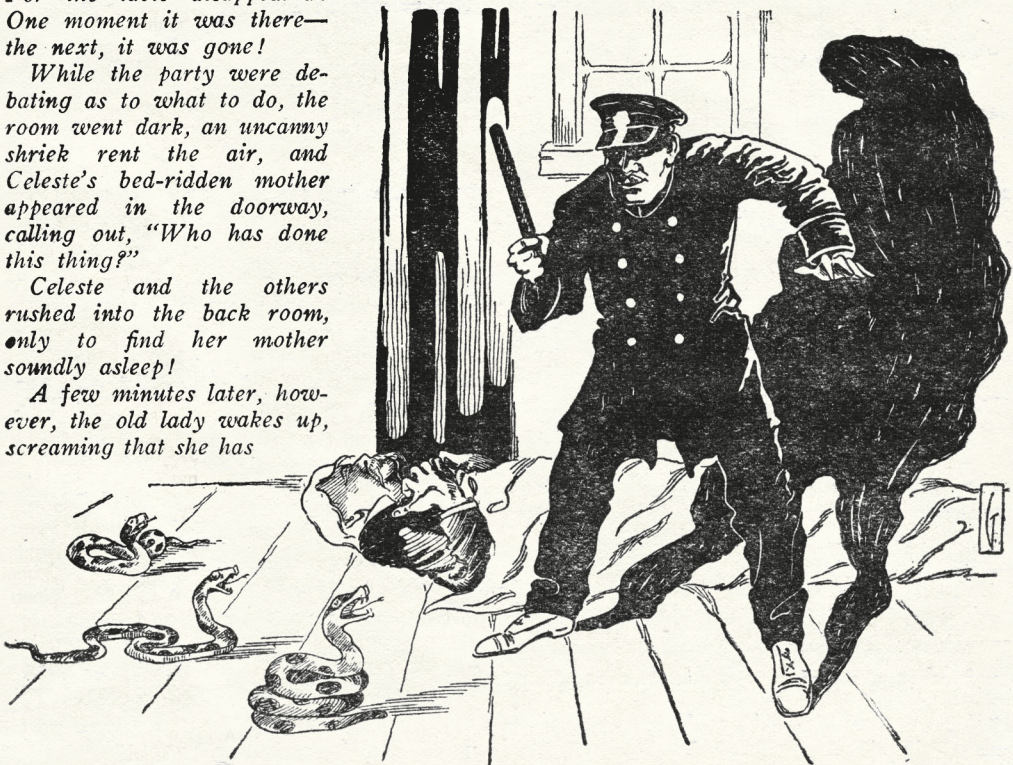
A knock is heard at the door.

**I**N a deathly silence the door opened slowly, as though propelled by no human hand.

"What's that?" came in a hoarse whisper from Sadie.

The others neither moved nor spoke, but they were just as wrought up, just as upset.

And yet the next instant they could have laughed in their relief. For the large figure of an Irish policeman came to view behind the door—a big, red-faced man who



was flesh and blood and sinew. He had been opening the door by the simple expedient of pushing it with his nightstick, while he himself stood back, waiting to see what might happen.

They knew him—or some of them did.

"Carrigan!" exclaimed Celeste, with a sigh of relief.

"**SAY!**" snapped the policeman, advancing into the room. "S-a-a-y! What d'ya think you're a runnin' here—a mystery movie, or what?"

"What do you mean?" asked Celeste.

"I mean these here screams, an' everything. You know what I mean, girlie," said Carrigan. "I heard a scream all the way down the next block. An' if it didn't come from here, I'm going to get an ear doctor to give me the once-over. So I'm here to find out what all the rumpus is about—beggin' your pardon, Mr. Custor," he put in, as he saw Frank.

"It wasn't anything, officer," Celeste declared hastily. "Nothing at all——"

She froze into silence as she followed his gaze, and the faces of all of them paled. His eye had been drawn to the white-sheeted figure lying on the floor.

"Well, I'll be——" He broke off in a short whistle as he looked at the still figure for a moment, before striding over to it.

"And is that by way of being nothin' at all, too?" he said to Celeste, as he stooped over the gruesome thing, one hand on the sheet.

"Don't touch that!" burst from Frank, as he strode forward impulsively—stopping himself suddenly, however, as he came face to face with the officer.

"Why not?" asked Carrigan sharply.

"Because—because——" Frank stammered and looked away, realizing how suspicious the whole proceeding was going to look.

The officer glared belligerently at the entire company. "Stand back, all of you, and don't interfere with me duty."

He jerked away the sheet—and stood transfixed in amazement at what he saw there! For a moment he did not move, though a low whistle came through his thick lips. Then he slowly turned the dead man's face in his hand and looked at it, recognizing it at once.

He turned to stare at Frank, without straightening up.

"Your father," he said to him, not in a tone of inquiry but rather in declaration.

Frank nodded, his face very pale and his motions as mechanical as though he were an automaton motivated by strings.

The policeman put his hand over Old Man Custor's heart. A moment later he straightened up, his mouth set in a thin, hard line.

There was an entire absence of sound or movement for the space in which one might count three slowly. Then the policeman mechanically replaced the sheet over the face of Custor. Finally he spoke.

"So it wasn't nothing at all, wasn't it?" he said sarcastically. "Nothing at all—just a murder, that's all." He looked around him. "Did ya think ya could get away with that?" he asked, pointing to the sheeted figure.

"No, we had no intention of trying to do that, Carrigan," came the calm, high treble of Long Tom.

"It looks like it," put in Carrigan.

"I know it looks funny," said Long Tom, "but we were just about to call the police——"

"What were you doing in the meantime? Trying to get up a good story?"

"Listen here, Carrigan," exclaimed Frank, "you know very well that none of us——"

The policeman stopped him with a look, then stalked over to the telephone on the sideboard and called the station-house. In crisp, business-like tones he reported the finding of the body. Even while he talked, his sharp eyes watched every movement of the group.

When he had finished and hung up the receiver, he faced them grimly.

"I'm going to ask you people one question, and I want a straight answer to it," he said. "Who killed this man?"

A heavy, uneasy silence descended upon the room again. It was the question they had all dreaded, yet which they had expected any moment—the question for which they had no answer that could be accepted by any policeman or detective.

It was Frank who answered him finally.

"We don't know," he said.

The policeman looked at him inquiringly.

"**YOU** don't know? Were you all here—or were any of you here?"

Sadie answered this time.

"Well, not exactly, Carrigan," she said.

"What do you mean—not exactly?" He looked at her. "Either you were here or you weren't, isn't that so?"



"Hardly," piped up Long Tom. "We were all outside the door."

The policeman digested this.

"Outside the door?" he said at last.

"Then who was left inside here?"

Frank replied. "Just my father."

"All alone?"

"All alone," answered Frank. And, after a pause, he went on, for the thing had to be said. "All alone . . . with a table. . . ."

CARRIGAN appeared puzzled. "All alone with a table?" He stared around him belligerently, and there was no reply, just a collection of faces looking white and blank.

"All alone with a table?" he repeated. And then, with an attempt at heavy sarcasm: "Oh, then I suppose the table killed him!"

Celeste looked him in the eye and said calmly, "Exactly!"

For a moment there was a silence, and one could see that the policeman thought they were joking with him. Then he broke out.

"Say, listen! A little more of that kind of bunk and you'll all find yourselves in the lock-up. What ya tryin' to do—kid me?"

"Listen, officer, we're not trying to kid you," Long Tom insisted in his childish treble. "That's really all we know about it. His skull was broken by a table."

The policeman looked around him and seemed to decide to listen to what they had to say.

"Well, all right," he said. "Where is this table you're talking about?"

Another silence. They knew that this would be even harder to make an Irish policeman believe than the other. But Celeste spoke up, at last, in her calm voice.

"It isn't here," she said.

Carrigan looked at her almost helplessly and his usually red face got still redder.

"I know it isn't here," he said. "I can see that. Where is it, then?"

"It disappeared, Carrigan," announced Celeste.

This simple statement was too much for him. With an exclamation of anger he faced them.

"Listen! Take my advice and don't try to tell anybody else that kind of bunk—if you know what's good for you."

He turned toward Frank and studied him with narrowed eyes. "I begin to see some kind of a motive here," he said harshly.

"What motive?" came from Frank, and a shade of pallor winged its way across his already pale face.

"Listen, young feller!" Carrigan tapped him on the arm—and kept his hand there. "Was everything all right between your father and you?"

Frank's delay in answering was almost imperceptible, yet it was noticed by all who were present.

"Of course," replied Frank.

Carrigan paused impressively before he spoke again.

"Everything was all right, huh? Then maybe you'll tell me something about the quarrel you had with him today——" He stopped Frank with a gesture as the young man was about to reply with a denial. "Oh, don't pull any of your 'all rights' on me! I'm doing the talkin' now—and I know all about it. You quarreled with your father about money—today—didn't you?"

Frank's face showed the pallor of death; he staggered back a step and his mouth worked convulsively. Sadie, unnoticed by the policeman, strolled over to the door and stood there, looking down the empty street and making an odd whistling sound that was not distinguishable above the excited voices.

"How did you know that?" Frank burst out.

"Never mind," said Carrigan. "I know lots of things you don't give me credit for. Then you admit that——"

"I don't admit anything!" cried Frank, taking a few rapid steps toward the door.

"Hey, you, none of that!" burst from Carrigan, who was upon him in a flash, holding him tight by the shoulder. "I thought you'd try to pull something like that!" he grunted.

"Let me go!"

Frank strained in his grasp.

"STEADY!" came from Carrigan. "Stand still!" He raised his nightstick menacingly.

There was a tense silence. Suddenly Celeste, who was facing the door, shivered and recoiled violently. Her gaze, as though fascinated, was riveted on the floor by the door. The others, with the exception of Carrigan, who was engaged in holding Frank, looked also.

"Good Lord!" whispered Celeste.

There was a slight swishing, like the southing of the wind in the willows, and through the door glided three snakes,

smooth as satin and noiseless as the night air!

As though they knew just what they were doing they moved swiftly toward Carrigan. He was addressing Frank.

"Now then," he began, "we'll just go—" He felt a slight tug at his trousers leg—and looked down at the weaving heads and beady eyes of three snakes that were even then coiling themselves about his legs!

"OH, my God!" he shrieked, his hand falling from the shoulder of his prisoner.

Frank was through the door in an instant, unnoticed by Carrigan! He vanished down the dark and narrow street.

"Take 'em away! Take 'em away!" the policeman shrieked, clawing and pawing at the coiling snakes in a panic of fear.

There was a sharp whistle from Sadie and the snakes glided away from Carrigan. Another whistle, and they sped through the door into the night and were gone.

The officer leaned against the wall, breathing heavily. The others stood still, saying nothing, waiting for the moment of reckoning which was sure to come. It came in a moment, just as soon as Carrigan was able to catch his breath and could use his limbs again.

"Say, that was your doings, wasn't it?" he shouted at Sadie, drawing his revolver.

"What was my doings?" she asked weakly.

"Them snakes was yours, wasn't they?" he rasped.

"Yes, they were mine," replied Sadie. "I couldn't help it if they broke out of their box and came to find me. Didn't I send them right back again?"

"Damn good thing you did, too," he grunted—and then suddenly he became aware that Frank had disappeared. "My God!" he shouted. "Where'd young Custor go to?" He faced them all, gun in hand. "So that's your game, is it? Get over into that corner there, all of you!" He motioned them into the far corner.

They moved into it reluctantly.

Without another word, but still covering them with his pistol, he backed to the telephone and called the station-house again, reporting the getaway of young Custor. Arrangements were quickly made to watch all cars and automobiles leaving the Island.

Almost before he had hung up the re-

ceiver, three men, two of them in uniform, pushed their way into the room. These were the officers who had been sent in answer to his first call. The third man was evidently the medical examiner; he carried a small black grip and had a professional and rather hurried air.

The leader addressed himself to Carrigan, after a quick glance at the room and its occupants.

"All right, Carrigan, you can put that gun down," he said. "I know all these people." He nodded to the medical examiner and motioned to the sheeted figure that lay on the floor. "Make your examination, doctor."

"Dugan," he said to the policeman who had come along with them, "stand outside the door. No one is to come in or go out, without my permission."

"All right, Sergeant." And the policeman withdrew to his post, while Carrigan hurriedly informed his superior of Frank's escape.

The doctor, meanwhile, had set about his business, first removing the sheet from the form of the murdered man.

One could see from his face that a glance was sufficient. His use of the stethoscope was a nominal and perfunctory matter, for the body was cold and stiffened in death. He looked at the wound in the head intently, and in a moment or two replaced the sheet and arose to speak to the Sergeant.

"Dead," he said. "It was instantaneous. A blunt weapon of some kind crushed the skull. Must have been wielded with terrific force. It's doubtful if he ever even knew what struck him." He turned to Carrigan. "Have you any information as to who wielded the weapon?" he asked.

Carrigan shook his head, glancing malevolently at the three who were clustered together near the opposite wall.

"I HAVE my own opinion—but they say he was hit by a table," he offered.

The doctor nodded. "That's quite believable," he said. "But who hit him with the table?"

"That's the point," said Carrigan. "They were trying to tell me that the table hit him by itself. Can you beat that? I told them that—"

"Wait a minute," said the Sergeant, as he and the doctor looked inquiringly at the trio on the other side of the room. "Let me get this direct from these people."

He turned to Celeste and motioned to her to go ahead with her story.

She did so, telling the facts in a calm voice and with the ring of truth in her tone. The men heard her through to the end without interruption, and there was complete silence when she had finished.

"You see," she said, "we know very well that a story of this kind would not appear credible. We could have invented a much better one, as your man here—" with a wave at Carrigan—"has been kind enough to suggest. But it happens that this story, difficult to believe as it is, is the truth. You *must* believe it, don't you see? You *must*!"

The Sergeant nodded, his face a mask. "And you say there was no one else in the room when this happened?"

She shook her head. "No one. But in the next room—" she pointed to the partition behind which her mother slept—"my mother was sleeping."

"And she heard nothing?"

Celeste shook her head again. "Nothing."

"A man was murdered in this room—and she was separated from him only by a partition that does not go up to the ceiling—and yet she heard nothing?"

"My mother is a very sound sleeper," answered Celeste. "She still knows nothing of all this."

"You are sure she did not get up?" asked the Sergeant. "She could have got up while you were outside—"

"You know my mother, Sergeant," broke in Celeste. "She hasn't walked for over ten years. She could not have got out of her bed—of that you may be sure."

"The thing that brought me here," said Carrigan, "was the fact that I heard someone screaming. And when I got here, they told me there wasn't nothin' the matter."

THE Sergeant continued the questioning. "Did someone scream here?" he asked Celeste.

She nodded. "That was my mother. She had been awakened by a bad dream—she thought she saw a ghost, or something. I calmed her down, and she went to sleep again. She still knows nothing of what has happened—I was afraid the shock would be too much for her."

"I'm afraid we'll have to take a chance on that," said the Sergeant kindly. "If, as you say, she was the only one here—why, we'll have to question her a little."

"All right," Celeste answered, realizing

that it would be impossible to postpone the investigation.

Followed by the Sergeant, she walked to the door and started into the bedroom—but on the threshold both paused in amazement.

*The bed was empty*—and in the room there was no trace of the old lady who had not walked for over ten years!

At the Sergeant's hoarse exclamation the others crowded into the room behind them.

"Mother!" Celeste cried, her hand flying to her throat in a nameless dread. She and her mother quarreled a great deal, but these were just family squabbles and under the surface was a basic love that nothing could disturb. Celeste felt a stranger sensation on seeing her mother's empty bed than any other occurrence could have given her.

Where could the old lady be?

SOMETHING must have happened to her! This was the first thing that flashed into Celeste's mind. And yet how could anything have happened? They had all been in the next room, and there was no possible exit except through their midst—nor was there any conceivable way for an intruder to enter that back room unperceived by them.

"Mother, where are you?" she called half hysterically. "Mother, Mother!"

There was no answer to her half strangled cry, and she turned to the people around her.

"My mother—where is she?" For the moment she was half crazed with fear and did not know where to turn. "Oh, find her, someone! Find her! I'm sure something terrible has happened to her! Oh, Mother!"

"There, there!" Sadie patted her arm with rough affection. "Nothing has happened to her. She'll turn up in a little while, I'm sure."

"Sure, she'll turn up," echoed Long Tom with an assurance that he could scarcely feel. "She must be around here somewhere."

"But where?" burst out Celeste, her eyes full of unshed tears. "She couldn't walk. I'm sure she needs me this minute—I should never have taken my eyes off her."

They turned to each other, baffled, and even the officers were silent and amazed. The Sergeant knew Celeste's mother well, and it was common knowledge that she could not move without assistance. They could see that genuine surprise and fear moved Celeste . . . they could see that she was not simply acting for their benefit.

The Sergeant took her by the arm gently and led her from the room.

"Here, let's take a look into this matter," he said, and his gruff tones were shaded with a kindness that was grateful to the harassed mind of Celeste. "Are you sure she was here? I mean, absolutely sure?"

"Of course," said Celeste. "Everybody here saw her. You know she was here, Tom . . . and you, Sadie. Isn't that so?"

"SHE sure was," said Sadie. "It's the funniest thing I ever saw. It gives me the creeps."

"She certainly was here," piped Long Tom. "It's the most amazing disappearance I ever saw. Why, just a few moments ago we were talking to her——"

"There's something funny goin' on here," said Carrigan. "I heard that woman scream just before I came in—I'll swear to that. I tell you, Sergeant, there's something very queer going on here!"

As though in direct confirmation of what the policeman was saying, the lights went out on the instant!

Thick, utterly impenetrable darkness filled the room!

There was a smothered scream from Sadie, and there were exclamations from the men. A cold wind seemed to blow through the room again, and everybody could feel a presence there . . . something they could not see . . . something that could see them . . . something that was not bound by the ordinary laws of human life. Above their heads they could feel a faint whirring that was like the beat of unearthly wings!

"Here, what's happening here?" came from the medical officer, who evidently had found his voice first.

"I'll know soon," said the Sergeant, taking out his flashlight and pressing the button.

"Well, I'll be——" His voice broke off in wonder at what was happening.

His flashlight had refused to work—in response to his pressure on the button there was no answering beam of light!

"Dugan, are you there?" he called to the policeman stationed outside.

"Yes, sir."

"Stand in front of the door and let no one out of this room until you hear from me. Do you get me?" he called.

The others could hear him moving around the dead black room heavily, bumping against furniture and other objects—and

once his foot could be heard thudding against something soft and yielding that could only have been the grisly object on the floor.

"All right, chief," came from Dugan.

"Now, who turned out that light?" asked the Sergeant, and they could feel his eyes boring through the darkness at them. There was no answer. "Who turned out——"

His words were frozen in his throat—for an answer came! It was a voice from somewhere in the room, but it belonged to no one who was alive.

"*The light was commanded to go out!*" it cried in a terrifying, wailing tone.

There was a smothered shriek from Celeste, for she recognized the voice—it was that of the murdered man . . . the man who lay on the floor, under a white sheet! The blood seemed to stand still in her veins as she listened, and there was a prickling sensation at the roots of her hair. This was impossible!

"*Go no further in your investigation!*" the relentless voice continued—and they felt as though the speaker were a disembodied thing . . . a voice with no body . . . a brain with no head . . . as though it were speaking across great distances . . . distances greater, almost, than the human mind could conceive of. . . .

"*It will mean death to continue! There will be no more warning!*"

THE voice ceased and they knew it had ceased for good.

Silent and rigid they stood where they were, and above their heads and on their cheeks they could feel the touch of cold air as it went past them to a place no one could vision—the place it had come from.

Carrigan broke the silence.

"Well, what do ya think of that?" he asked no one in particular, but it was as if a spell had been broken by the sound of a good, round Irish voice, and immediately the light came on full again.

They looked at each other quickly, blinking in the suddenness of the change from darkness to light, and for a moment saying nothing, each thoughtful behind a face of unnatural pallor. The Sergeant alone moved, mechanically pushing the button on his flashlight without realizing what he was doing.

The flashlight, which had not worked a moment or so previous, worked now as well as ever, and a small white circle of light showed itself on the white sheet at

the place where the head of the dead man made a round bump.

It drew the eyes of everyone to the sheeted figure, and for a moment, again, there was no word, but it was Sadie who finally voiced the unspoken thought of all of them.

"That voice!" she whispered, shivering. "It was the voice of——" She motioned toward the still figure on the floor.

"It was *his* voice!" said Celeste, nodding.

"I'll soon settle that," the Sergeant declared, having suddenly recovered the normal use of his limbs. He put his flash in his pocket and strode to the recumbent figure, jerking at the sheet until the head was disclosed.

The dead man lay in the same eternal sleep, exactly as they had seen him before—except for one thing. It was Long Tom who realized the dreadful truth first.

"The eyes!" he piped. "Look!"

"What's the matter with them?" asked the Sergeant.

"Why, they were closed before—and they're open now!" he whispered, shivering.

It was true, and their fascinated gaze rested upon the bulging eyes of the dead man, who stared at them with the unwinking, grotesque gaze of death.

"Don't pay any attention to that," said the medical officer. "That happens sometimes. . . just a reflex action, that's all." He soothed their tortured nerves with his calm voice.

"Maybe," said Celeste, as though she felt more than she could say, and they looked at her in inquiry.

"What do you mean?" asked the medical officer.

"Nothing," said Celeste, "except this: if a dead man can use his voice, he can use his eyes."

**F**RANK CUSTOR came to a full realization of his position the moment the snakes attacked Carrigan and the policeman's hand fell from his shoulder. Before him yawned the open door and the lonely, dark street and freedom. It came to him immediately that his best chance was to go, and to go at once. Once free, he had a chance to get at the bottom of this mystery. In custody, he would have to rely upon the work of others, and this, he felt, he did not wish to do.

These thoughts coursed through his brain with the swiftness of light, and in

that instant he was through that door and had made himself one with the darkness that lay heavily upon the Bowery. He was young and fast, and only a hundred yards down the street he had parked his automobile, which had a full gasoline tank and a reliable electric starter.

**I**N eleven or twelve seconds he had reached the side of the car, yanked open the door, turned on the engine and kicked the starting pedal. One or two seconds later he was in full flight, and it was only ten minutes from that time that he was going full speed through the heart of Brooklyn, intent on getting to the bridge and over it before he was stopped, for he knew that soon every policeman on the Force in all five boroughs would be on the lookout for him.

His car, he knew, would handicap him, for it could be identified as his, and he resolved to be rid of it at the first opportunity. But he believed he could be in New York before he was apprehended; and after abandoning the car, he would have a better chance of hiding himself there.

He applied all his attention to the business of making speed, which was very easy at that time of the night, or morning. In twenty minutes he abandoned his car in the darkened West Forties and proceeded on foot to the subway station at Times Square.

Times Square was well lighted, of course, and there was much movement there, so for the time he felt quite secure. He paused for a moment at an all-night soda fountain for a soft drink; his mouth was parched and dry and he wanted a few moments to think out a course of action.

"And now where?" he asked himself, as he waited for the clerk to mix a chocolate malted milk.

What should be his next move, and where should he go? He felt that, in escaping from the law, he had done a desperate thing—a thing that would certainly make his case look even worse than it was—but he also felt that he could have done nothing else.

How had Carrigan known that he had quarreled with his father about money? It was true. . . and it supplied the motive that the law felt it was always necessary to show in a murder case. The word "murder" made him shiver a bit, as he thought of his father lying stilled in a last, eternal sleep. . . a sleep that had come upon him suddenly and without warning.

But had it come without warning? He remembered with a sudden shock the sinister message that had been rapped out by the curious and deadly table that Celeste had picked up in a queer second-hand shop which did not seem to exist at all.

AND this brought him back to an idea . . . an idea that had been in the back of his mind all along, and that he now had an opportunity to act upon.

He knew the approximate location of this shop. Evidently it was connected in some way with the strange happenings of this night. The table had come from there—and then the shop had disappeared. At least such had been Celeste's wild story, but it was a story that was no stranger than the things that had occurred this night.

A queer feeling took possession of him. It was as though something from outside of himself was moving him.

He felt an impulse, a call to do something, and he put down his malted milk, untasted, and went out, walking over to the subway. At the subway he changed his mind—or, rather, his mind was changed for him—and he turned east and walked along Forty-Second Street to the Third Avenue Elevated.

He was fortunate in not having to wait long for a train, and he took a seat in an almost empty car and was lost in reverie. But he knew where he was going! He was going to the second-hand shop where Celeste had bought the table that had killed his father so mysteriously! He felt that he was being led, being guided, by some will that he could not fathom.

It was nearly four o'clock in the morning, the darkest hour of all the dark night, when he alighted from the train at a station far down on the East Side. He turned down the empty street to the left, his heels ringing loudly on the stone flagging. He went as though he were familiar with every step of the way—though the truth was, that it had been years since he had been on the East Side.

Street after street he crossed, and then

he turned into one street that was darker and lonelier than all the rest. Tenement houses lined its length on both sides, and nowhere was there a pedestrian—nowhere any sign of human life.

Finally he paused before a tenement house that seemed older than the rest. Dingy, tumble-down, with the mark of poverty and neglect heavy upon it, it stood back a bit from the street, wedged in between two more forward tenements; and under its high stoop, laden with garbage pails, there was an areway, and at one side was the leaded window of a small store.

Far back in the shop, as Frank could just see by straining his eyes and leaning forward, burned a dim light, so faint, so weak, that unless one looked for it, it could hardly be seen.

"This is it," said something within him—and he went forward to knock at the door under the stoop.

He had no chance to knock, however, for in the uncertain light the door swung open before him and a small, dried-up figure stood in the doorway.

"COME in," said a strange voice. "I expected you. You are late."

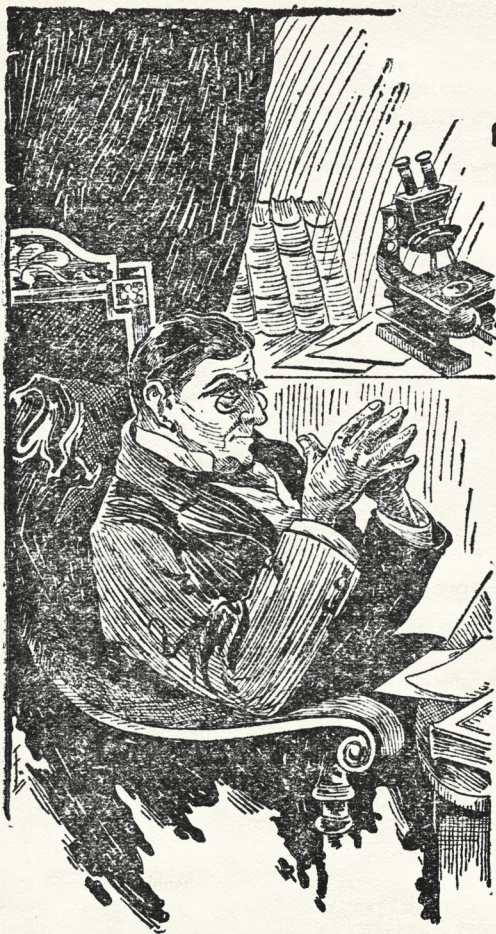
Wondering at this, yet being able to accept almost anything that came his way this night, Frank followed the small figure into the darkness of the shop, while the heavy grilled door clanged ominously shut behind him.

They came out into the back room, through the door of which glowed the light that Frank had seen from the street—and then his guide turned, so that Frank could see him.

He was a grotesque old man, with his coat collar turned up and a muffler around his scrawny throat. Frank tried to speak but couldn't. As he stood there in the grip of weird terror, his eyes suddenly fell upon something that sent the blood pounding in his veins.

There, beside the queer old man, stood the table that he was convinced had killed his father!

*Frank Custor, bravely trying to establish his own innocence, has plunged heedlessly into a situation of terrifying danger. Is the old man alive—or dead? And what monstrous Thing controls the murderous table? How can Frank possibly escape from this uncanny trap? The amazing climax of this story will carry you breathless through a harrowing battle with an unseen Thing—a ghastly séance with a dancing table—and will give you an astounding revelation concerning the identity of Custor's murderer! In the February number of GHOST STORIES—on all news stands January 23rd.*



# At the Threshold of the Invisible

*An interview with a  
world-famous  
German scientist*

By  
GEORGE SYLVESTER  
VIERECK

**N**EITHER Baron von Schrenck Notzing nor George Sylvester Viereck should need an introduction to the readers of GHOST STORIES. The Baron is known internationally as the author of *Materialization, the standard book on that phase of psychic research*. And Mr. Viereck has distinguished himself as editor, poet and man of letters.

**T**HE superstitions of one generation are the science of the next."

Baron von Schrenck Notzing, to whom I am indebted for this epigram, is the world's most eminent scientific investigator of occultism. He is the foremost spokesman of that group of scholars and students in Central Europe who attest the authenticity of table rappings, telekinesis, elevation, materializations from ectoplasm and other occult manifestations.

Schrenck Notzing does not call himself a spiritualist. He prefers to refer to him-

self as a student of "para-psychology" and "para-physics," the science devoted to the exploration of the borderland between the natural and the supernatural. He does not believe in "ghosts," but he maintains that the claims of mediums and clairvoyants may be genuine, even though they seem to contradict the known laws of nature.

Like his chief scientific opponent, Professor Albert Moll, who espouses science in its most skeptical mood toward the claims of mediums, Schrenck Notzing is a medical man. Both Schrenck Notzing and Moll have established world-wide reputations as students of sex psychology. Moll ranks in his special field with men like Forel and Krafft-Ebing. He is a practicing physician. Schrenck Notzing permitted the study of occultism to divert him from his medical practice.

In his student days Schrenck Notzing discovered that he was able to hypnotize three persons in succession with a few slight strokes of his hand. He concentrated upon

the investigation of what was then known as mesmerism, seeking enlightenment from the same French masters who supplied Sigmund Freud with facts concerning hypnotic psychic therapy and the influence of suggestion.

From hypnotism Schrenck Notzing turned to the study of occult phenomena and spiritualism. He worked with Richet in Paris, with Myers and Sidgwick in London. He conducted numerous telepathic experiments in Munich. A famous surgeon, Professor Esmarch, the royal oculist, Duke Charles Theodore of Bavaria, and the Queen of Naples participated in these experiments.

**T**HOMAS MANN, the celebrated German novelist, Willie Seidel, the exotic writer of fiction, and other literary men who are at the same time trained observers, frequently foregather in Schrenck Notzing's house today to attend séances with Willie Schneider and other mediums, conducted in a model psychic laboratory.

It is not easy to make Baron von Schrenck Notzing speak. He would probably not have received me at all if I had not been introduced to him by an intimate friend. In spite of the indorsement which I presented, Schrenck Notzing was inclined to be suspicious of my intentions. His behavior grew somewhat less frigid after I told him that many years ago, when he still practiced medicine, my father had been one of his patients. Once personal contact was established, he became more affable. But it is obvious that the many attacks to which he has been subjected and the avidity with which the press seizes upon the mischance or misbehavior of any medium in order to discredit his favorite science, have left the Baron in a militant mood.

Over forty years ago Schrenck Notzing founded the Psychological Society of Munich, which works along similar lines to the various organizations for psychical research in England and in the United States. He does not wish to be looked upon as a dreamer dealing with fanciful abstractions.

"I am," he said, as he faced me in the study of his palatial villa in Munich, "a scientist and a business man. I am a director in two great chemical factories. I am active in the management of a great publishing house and of a great metal concern. I am a member of the supervisory board of the greatest chemical concern in Germany.

"I cite these facts only to dispel any im-

pression that I am not a man of the world. One can stand with both feet in this world, without ignoring that other mysterious world which borders on ours—the world of metaphysics and para-psychology. It not merely borders on ours, it frequently collides with us.

"The history of mankind is shot through with miracles. It seems to me that these occult occurrences, harbingers of mysterious powers around and above and within us, deserve the same attention from science as the star dust and light waves which bombard our earth daily and hourly.

"When man's scientific equipment was more limited, he noticed only the crude phenomena, the comet that appeared in the skies, the shooting star that projected itself from the heavens. Today we explore stellar space and our astronomers can accurately analyze occurrences that may have taken place a million years ago somewhere in the universe.

"Invisible psychic forces, too, subject us to a constant bombardment which, for the most part, escapes our unaided and untrained attention. As our instruments and our power of observation grow, we may be able to interpret more adequately the phenomena of the psychic universe. Where we now hear merely raps or dimly vision more or less shapeless ectoplasmic manifestations, we may be able, in time, to formulate the natural laws of the unknown world. We shall learn to interpret their message."

"But, Professor," I interrupted, "it seems to me most unfortunate that the messages which reach us from the other world through alleged spirit manifestations are invariably so trivial. You yourself inspect haunted houses, but what new truth do you bring home for your trouble? Nothing, except reports of mysterious rappings in stables or the overthrowing of a bucket of water by some malevolent poltergeist!"

**S**CHRENCK NOTZING refused to admit the validity of my contention. "The music which is transmitted to us over the radio is often equally trivial. It is not the music that matters, but the fact of radio transmission.

"Communications of mediums may be lacking in depth or importance. That matters little to me. I am interested solely in the mechanics and in the physics of the transmission of thought and in other occult psychic phenomena. I am not an advocate of spiritualism. Neither do I affirm the sur-



vival of the individual soul after death."

"It seems strange to meet a student of the occult who does not believe in personal immortality!" I exclaimed.

Schrenck Notzing stroked his beard and smiled somewhat condescendingly.

"The soul," he said, "is like a bubble upon the ocean. Bubbles appear and reappear. Who can say that it is the same bubble? I am not a spiritualist. I am a para-psychologist."

"TO what extent," I asked, "is this new 'science' recognized by the universities?"

Von Schrenck Notzing gazed at me, amazed by my ignorance. "Para-psychology has a place in the schedule of lectures of many distinguished schools of learning. Gruber in Munich, Verweyen in Bonn, Oesterreich in Tuebingen, Dessoir in Berlin, Driesch in Leipzig, Fischer in Prague and Schneider in Riga, give regular courses of lectures in this new branch of science.

"Nineteen distinguished scholars are associated with the magazine for para-psychology published in Leipzig. These include Gilbert Murray of Oxford University and Gardner Murphy of Columbia University."

"What is your explanation of 'ghosts'?"

"I am interested solely in real problems. I have no ghost theory. I prefer to confine myself to the mechanics of ghostly manifestations. The trumpet medium is an American conception. You are interested in what the medium says; I am interested in ascertaining how the trumpet moves."

"Do you believe that spiritualism is based on a fallacy?"

"I hold no brief for or against the religion of spiritualism. It may be wrong or it may be right. But it is not a science. We approach our subject scientifically, after enlisting the aid of both chemistry and of physics. We collect the facts. We do not attempt to construct a philosophy until the basis of fact is definitely established."

"What is the mechanical equipment with which you explore the occult?"

Schrenck Notzing graciously conducted me to his laboratory.

"I have," the Baron explained, "five cameras with which I can take simultaneously five photographs of the medium or of any phenomenon that is taking place. There is flashlight apparatus with which the room can be immediately illuminated. A dictaphone records every whisper.

"The curtain in front of which the medium stands is phosphorescent. The pa-

jamias of the medium are supplied with phosphorescent stripes so that every move can be observed, even if the room is dark. We have phosphorescent ropes with which the medium is tied and little bells attached to his clothes as well as to the limbs, which enable us to detect any motion.

"The medium is subjected to a careful physical search to prevent the concealment of any articles upon his or her body. The precautions taken to prevent fraud include even a gynecological examination!"

"But how," I said, "can you prevent the medium from using his arms, hands or legs, in order to produce various spurious phenomena?"

"Krall, the owner of the famous calculating horse Hans, has devised a new system of electric control which is connected with the feet and with the hands of the medium. If he moves a limb, the electric contact is broken and his action is immediately betrayed on an indicator especially constructed for the purpose."

I NOTICED a number of thermometers near the experimental table. These, Schrenck Notzing explained, are used to determine the changes in temperature which seem to occur invariably in the environment of the medium. They are so arranged that they record the highest and the lowest temperature registered during a session.

"Do all your séances take place in the dark?"

"Not in the dark," he replied, "but mostly under a red light, which seems to be most favorable to psychic manifestations."

"What are the most important phenomena which you have observed under such circumstances?"

"The elevation of the medium, in which either the medium herself or a chair rose into the air, and the formation of ectoplasmic limbs. My files also record innumerable telekinetic manifestations. That is to say, an article far removed from the immediate environment of the medium would suddenly move or drop to the floor or a bell would ring. Frequently hands materialize out of space."

"Have you ever attempted to seize an ectoplasmic hand?"

"I have, although the greatest caution is necessary because such contacts subject the medium to nerve shocks."

"How do you explain the ectoplasm?"

"The medium exudes ectoplasm. When he gives out this matter he loses in weight

proportionately. But after a little while this matter is reabsorbed. You cannot hold it for any length of time. It evaporates, it disappears. The manifestation, in other words, is ephemeral. Nevertheless, an ectoplasmic hand was sufficiently robust to draw a ring from my finger right under the red lamp in the presence of all participants of the séance."

"What would happen if you did not let go?"

"The ectoplasm would vanish. It would somehow find its way back into the organism from which it came forth."

"What is ectoplasm?"

"Ectoplasm, or teleplasm, as we prefer to call it, seems to be a grayish white substance of varying density, somewhat slimy, but it is not, as some have suggested, mucus, and our chemical tests of such traces of moisture as are occasionally left, have not enabled us to identify it with any known substance."

"How do you explain the formation of faces and hands?"

"It seems to me that they are materializations of the memory of the medium. Ectoplasm, as Richet suggests, may be the basic substance of living matter."

"The caterpillar changes its form and becomes a chrysalis under the protection of its cocoon, which shields it from light and disturbances of external influences. The muscles, the largest part of the intestines, the nerves, all are reduced to the basic life stuff. The cocoon resembles neither the caterpillar nor the butterfly which will evolve from it eventually. It is merely living matter, life stuff, which some thought, some intelligence or some force which we do not understand, fashions into the likeness of a butterfly."

"In the same manner some manifestation of the subconscious thought or the subconscious will of the medium forms the ectoplasm into a limb or a figure. I cannot explain why, just as no naturalist can explain the miracle of the butterfly. Life itself is a miracle which defies analysis. We can only observe and record isolated physical phenomena."

"DO you think that some outside spirit aids the medium in this manifestation?"

"No. I have told you before that I am not a believer in spirits. A medium may honestly believe that a spirit is manifesting itself through her or through him when, as a matter of fact, the manifestation is di-

rected solely through a subdivision of his own ego in the subconscious."

"Who are your most interesting mediums?"

"At present, Willie and Rudi Schneider. In the past I obtained extraordinary phenomena with Eva C., who is now the wife of a wealthy French manufacturer. I have met most of the great mediums, including Palladino. I have also experimented with Professor Bert Reese and other mind readers, including the Polish clairvoyant, Stephan Ossowiecki."

"BOTH American and German investigators have repeatedly exposed and duplicated tricks of these mind readers," I interpolated. "If I am not mistaken, they ask you to write a number of sentences or words on various slips of paper which you can conceal on your person. They then tell you what you have written without apparently gaining physical possession of the paper. But Professor Moll and others have shown that these mind readers invariably manage to obtain the slips and to exchange them for others while they divert the attention of the observer with their patter and their tricks."

When I mentioned the name of Moll, Schrenck Notzing smiled.

"Moll," he said, "is impossible. He does not wish to be convinced. It is perfectly possible to duplicate some of the experiments to which you refer, by sleight-of-hand, but it is not possible to reproduce them all. And it is not possible to reproduce them under the conditions of the original experiment, upon which trained observers of the occult insist."

"Many of my observations are corroborated so completely that they would be accepted as evidence in any court of law. In fact, several spooks, including the spook in the Hofgarten Neuried in Munich, and at Grosserlach in Wurttemberg, have been subjected to legal scrutiny."

"It is surprising," the Baron continued, "to what extent the phenomena observed coincide with what was once called 'superstition.' For instance, in the Hofgarten case a dog was exceedingly disturbed and depressed whenever the phenomena manifested themselves. Dogs are known to have an extremely sensitive nervous organization. It is possible that they have perceptions which elude our more uncouth senses and our imperfect instruments."

"If I am not mistaken, both Palladino

and one of the Schneider boys were detected in fraudulent tactics?"

"It is curious," Professor Schrenck Notzing conceded, "that under certain conditions a medium is apt to lose his or her sense of moral responsibility. Fraud is sometimes practiced unconsciously. At other times it is provoked by the skepticism of unsympathetic observers, whose inimical attitude interferes with the delicate forces involved in producing occult phenomena.

"Even great scientists have occasionally resorted to improper methods, such as the changing of a drawing, in order to convey to others a truth which they had already established. There is no question, unfortunately, that the history of occultism is rife with fraud. Charlatans and swindlers of every stripe take advantage of human credulity."

"Even great scientists," I said, "have been duped."

"All this," Schrenck Notzing replied, "is true. I, too, have often exposed frauds. I have recorded my failures as faithfully as my successes. I had to learn the tricks of the prestidigitator in order to detect fraud and to forestall deceit.

"The object of those who study these problems must be to create conditions where fraud is practically impossible. You have seen my laboratory, which I constantly strive to perfect. We who have worked in this field for forty years have reached a point where we can detect fraud almost without instruments. With instruments, however, I believe that our observations are almost infallible.

**T**HE Schneider boys have never attempted any untoward action under my supervision. I am confining my experiments at present primarily to telekinetic phenomena, because these can be most easily checked and determined by scientific observation. They are associated in no way with superstition and are not distorted by any emotional reflex on the part of the observer."

"It would be easier for the ordinary man to accept your conclusions," I said, "if the psychic phenomena did not always take place

under extraordinary conditions, usually determined by the medium, and in the absence of illumination."

"You are mistaken," Schrenck Notzing replied somewhat indignantly. "The conditions are no longer laid down by the medium. They are laid down by us. It is true that we will not imperil the life and health of the medium by subjecting her or him to unnecessary shocks. I myself have not hesitated, however, to take drastic measures where I had reason to believe that fraud was practiced deliberately."

**W**HY is it necessary for the medium to stand in front of or behind a black screen? Why not conduct your experiments in broad daylight?"

"Why," Schrenck Notzing replied, "do we not gaze at the stars in broad daylight? The invisible universe, like the visible world, has its laws which we are unable to circumvent. The forces called into play are so subtle and so elusive, that it is impossible to observe them at all except under certain conditions established by experience.

"Various chemical changes take place only at specific temperatures. Others are profoundly affected by light. Your radio will not transmit except under very specific conditions. The equipment of the medium is far more complicated than any radio. He or she is subject to laws, the actions of which we observe, even if we cannot explain their cause and their nature.

"We know sympathy is a potent factor. Sex is another. The radiations of a person loved by the medium are apt to stimulate the hidden forces of the subconscious.

"We have only succeeded so far in lifting ever so slightly the transom that divides us from the unknown. I cannot tell if we shall ever be able to pass through the door that leads to the invisible world."

"Do you think that if para-psychology succeeds in opening the door, it will lead us to the abode of the World Spirit, the Life Force—God?"

"I do not know," Schrenck Notzing replied, shrugging his shoulders. "I am a physicist, not a philosopher."

*Baron von Schrenck Notzing has stated his case clearly—but what would his great opponent, Professor Moll, the "Sherlock Holmes of the Spirit World," say in reply? In the February number of GHOST STORIES we will print an answer from the famous Berlin skeptic—a startling exposé of the trickery of mediums. Don't miss it! On the news stands January 23rd.*

# FOUR SKEPTICS—

*These students issued a challenge to the ghost of  
Bloody Basil—and the weird result was  
more monstrous than any crime!*

**I**T isn't the scenery that keeps me here! Don't think I've stayed in Bermuda for seven years because I'm in love with its sunshine, its sea, its liquor or any of the other attractions the tourist agencies advertise. I hate them! There was passion in Weston's words.

"What the devil does keep you here?" I blankly asked.

We were sitting on the balcony of The Bermudiana, looking over the tropic sea, its surface a gleaming silver in the brilliant moonlight. The water in the distance was rippled by a breeze which had not yet reached us.

For a long moment Weston did not reply. But suddenly he straightened up in his chair and said, "I'll tell you why I've never left Bermuda since I came here seven years ago—and why I'll never leave!"

He spoke softly and determinedly. I had the instinctive feeling that here was a soul that desired to unburden itself, a feeling that must come often to doctors and ministers—father confessors to the mass of mankind.

Weston's eyes shone with the light of memory. I sat quietly and listened. This is the story he told me:

**T**HERE were four of us—Franz, Serge, Raymond and myself. We were all students at the University of Heidelberg and we were inseparable. We shared everything—our lodging, our food, our sports. Every evening found us in an old *bierstube*. Here, with great steins of foaming Munchener brew before us, we discussed, as students will, everything from women to immortality.

One night a few months before the outbreak of the War in 1914, we entered our favorite *bierstube* and found the gathered students in a state of great excitement. A young intern who had just finished his studies at the college of medicine had been found dead at the foot of the famous *achteckiger turm* (eight-cornered tower) of the old castle above the city. His crumpled body had been discovered by the caretaker that very morning.

"It's the work of Bloody Basil!" shouted one of the German students, a native of Heidelberg. His name was August, and because of his habitual funereal expression, we had nicknamed him Gloomy Gus.

"Bloody Basil! Who's he?" I demanded.

"If you spent a night in the *achteckiger turm* you would soon find out." The native boy spoke in a threatening tone.

Serge, who hailed from Kiev, came forward. He was big, powerful, raw-boned Russian. He glared down at the Heidelberg youth.

"Basil! That might be a Russian name," he thundered. "Does this Bloody Basil speak Russian?"

"I don't know what he speaks," Gus replied meekly. He was somewhat intimidated by Serge's bulk.

**W**ELL, who is he? Where does he come from?" Serge persisted.

Gus then told us the story of Bloody Basil. He was the bogey-man of Heidelberg. When parents wanted to scare their boisterous and mischievous children into quiet and good behavior, they threatened them with this terrible ghostly prowler.

It was shortly after the middle of the Sixteenth Century that Bloody Basil first appeared in Heidelberg. He was an itinerant magician and came from somewhere in the East, where he had mastered Oriental magic. He had a concession in the carnival and astounded the natives with his remarkable illusions.

At that time Heidelberg was torn by a feud between two rich merchants. One of these men was seen to visit Basil in his tent late at night—and the next day his rival was found dead, without the slightest indication of how he had met his end. It was rumored that Basil was responsible—that he had been hired to do away with the merchant's enemy.

The magician, so the story goes, soon had many visitors—and always the enemies of his visitors would die under baffling circumstances.

# and the PROWLER

By  
WILLIAM JOURDAN  
RAPP

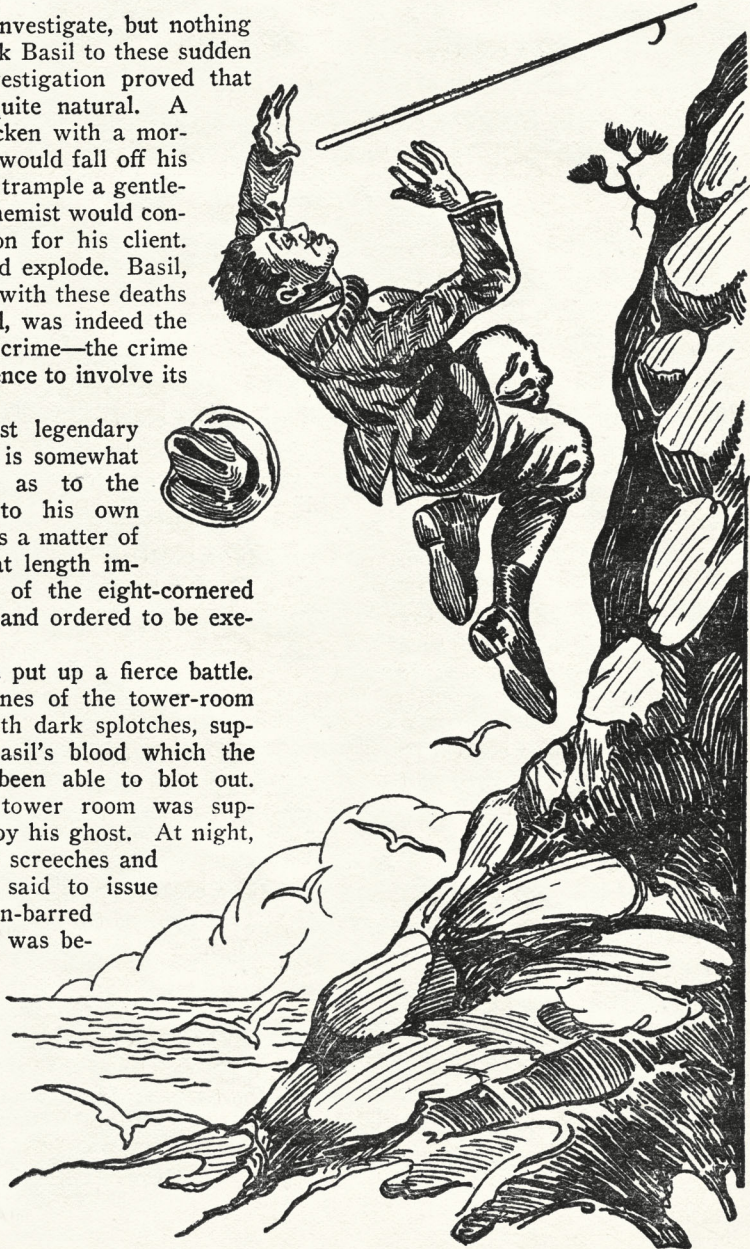
*Alone in the haunted tower, the four boys discussed "the perfect crime" and did not dream of the terrible aftermath! The facts in this amazing case are clearly established, but you are free to draw your own conclusions from them*

The police would investigate, but nothing was ever found to link Basil to these sudden deaths. In fact, investigation proved that the deaths seemed quite natural. A doctor would be stricken with a mortal disease. A roofer would fall off his roof. A horse would trample a gentleman under foot. A chemist would concoct the wrong potion for his client. A hunter's rifle would explode. Basil, if he were connected with these deaths as the public believed, was indeed the master of the perfect crime—the crime which leaves no evidence to involve its perpetrator.

As is true of most legendary stories, that of Basil is somewhat confused, especially as to the events leading up to his own death. However, it is a matter of record that he was at length imprisoned in the top of the eight-cornered tower at Heidelberg and ordered to be executed immediately.

He is said to have put up a fierce battle. To this day, the stones of the tower-room walls are covered with dark splotches, supposedly marks of Basil's blood which the centuries have not been able to blot out.

Subsequently the tower room was supposed to be haunted by his ghost. At night, deep moans, piercing screeches and hearty curses were said to issue from the tiny iron-barred window. The tower was believed to be haunted not only by Bloody Basil's ghost but by the ghosts of all his victims. The latter came there to torment him with their moans and screeches while he cursed them in a vain endeavor to drive them



away so he would be able to rest in peace.

Some skeptics had laughed at the whole story of Bloody Basil and the haunted tower, and to prove that it was all the product of public superstition they had gone to spend the night in Bloody Basil's execution chamber. According to Gus, these skeptics were severely punished. One threw himself from the balustrade outside in a mad rush to get away and his crumpled body was found hanging in a tree the following morning by the caretaker of the castle. Still another came away completely mad. And now there was this young intern whose broken body had been discovered this very morning.

WHEN Gus had finished his story, I looked at Franz, Raymond and Serge. They didn't seem impressed. They were pretty tough skeptics. Franz smiled and buried his lips in the foam of his beer. Raymond gave a slight sneer as if to say, "Amusing superstitions!" And Serge arose, threw out his chest and roared:

"Who's afraid of ghosts?" He glared at all of us. "I'd like to meet this Bloody Basil. I want to know if he speaks Russian."

Gus got up. "Well," he said in parting, "if you want to meet the midnight prowler, just spend a night in the tower. I'll be interested to know what he tells you. But I'm afraid your tongues will be tied." He was gone.

The four of us sat drinking beer and discussing Bloody Basil until the small hours of the morning. We decided that in the interests of science, truth, mankind and all the other things youth is so intent on uplifting, the legend of Bloody Basil had to be exploded. The four of us would spend the following night in the haunted room of the eight-cornered tower.

The next day towards midnight we left the city well-laden with bottles of beer and sandwiches. We also had two kerosene lanterns as well as a powerful electric flashlight. I must admit that as we mounted the tree-lined path to the castle, my heart beat more rapidly than normal, and it wasn't entirely due to the physical effect of the ascent.

We were all very quiet, as we did not want to attract the attention of the caretaker who lived in an apartment on the ground floor of the castle.

Finding the gate to the courtyard locked, we went around to the side of the castle where the eight-cornered tower loomed black against the sky. There was a small window, big enough for a man to squeeze through,

about ten feet from the ground. In olden days there had been a moat around the castle, but as this was now filled in, it was possible for us to get right under the window. Serge, who was by far the tallest, boosted up the other three of us. When we were safely inside, he threw us the beer and sandwiches. Then he took a run and a leap and two of us caught his hands and pulled him up.

Quietly we mounted the spiral staircase. On reaching the top, we found the door to the haunted chamber locked. We had anticipated this and Raymond had brought along a chisel, which he now used as a jimmy. In a few minutes the bolt of the lock was ripped out of its pocket in the stone sill and the door pushed open.

Serge had the flashlight. He threw its beam on all four stone walls, the floor and the ceilings. The room was totally bare. He walked in belligerently. The rest of us followed.

In his deep, powerful bass voice Serge began making a speech in Russian. He talked to the floor, the ceiling and each wall in turn. He made dramatic gestures. He was challenging. He was pleading. He was contemptuous. He was mocking. The three of us looked at him as if he had gone mad. Was Bloody Basil already playing havoc with Serge's sanity?

"What the devil are you doing?" I demanded.

Serge looked at me pitifully. "I'm trying to get this ghost to show himself. He came from the East. He ought to understand Russian. If he doesn't show himself now, after all I've said to him—well, he's no ghost that any of us want to know."

Franz laughed! A little nervously, I thought. Raymond snickered! And I had to smile, although I admit my hands were moist with a cold sweat.

WE spread out a newspaper in the middle of the room and laid the bottles of beer and the sandwiches on top of it. We then lit the two lanterns, placing one at each end of our improvised festal board. Squatting down around the newspaper, we started in to eat and drink.

We began to sing. It was a sort of whistling in the dark. In spite of our bravado, I'm sure we all were a bit scared. At any moment, we subconsciously expected some sign of Bloody Basil, although our intellects kept saying reassuringly, "All this stuff about Bloody Basil is nothing but superstition."

We sang all the student drinking songs we knew. Then we sang the German, French, Russian and American national anthems. Finally, when we had completely exhausted our repertoire, Serge began letting forth horrible moans, screeches and curses. He did not let up until he was exhausted.

Then he laughingly said, "I'll bet the whole town will be talking tomorrow about the fierce battle Bloody Basil and his fellow ghosts staged in the tower tonight. And I'll miss my guess if the old caretaker and his entire family aren't right now trembling in their beds with their heads under the covers."

AS the minutes passed and nothing happened, the air of expectation abandoned us. The beer, too, I think, made us a little drowsy. Soon we were discussing all sorts of things just as if we were around the table in our favorite *bierstube*.

The talk finally settled upon a murder that had been committed in Heidelberg, the accused having been put on trial that very day. Raymond had been present, along with some other law students, at the first day's proceedings in court.

Raymond had nothing but disgust for the murderer. He emphasized the crudity of the crime.

I remember his saying, "Why, the fellow left so many clues that he might as well have hired the town hall and staged the murder in full view of the assembled citizens."

This started an argument. The murderer was a German and Franz felt that, as a Teuton, it was up to him to defend the criminal intelligence of his race.

After listening to Franz's defense of the murderer's technique, Raymond remarked disgustedly, "If you think that was a skilful murder, I'd like your idea of the perfect crime—a murder where there are absolutely no clues to identify the murderer."

Franz thought for a minute, then replied, "If I wanted to kill someone—say you!" he glared good-naturedly at Raymond, "I'd take you on a little mountain-climbing expedition and on a difficult pass I would give you an 'accidental shove' which would send you a few thousand feet to—Hell!"

Raymond sneered. "So that's your idea of a perfect crime?"

Franz answered, "Yes! Scores of mountain climbers are killed in accidents. Why couldn't you be?"

Raymond continued the argument. "But

my friends"—he indicated Serge and myself—"would know that you disliked me, that you desired to get rid of me; and if I had a fatal mountaineering accident while with you, suspicion of foul play would rest on you. And also, if you were my enemy, do you think you could get me to go climbing mountains with you?" He concluded with the air of having won the debate.

Serge now butted in, with: "Let me give you an example of a real perfect crime. This is the way I'd dispose of anyone whom I felt the world was not big enough to hold, as long as it held me. I'd just drop a few typhus-infected lice down his neck."

Raymond demanded, "How'd you get them down his neck without his knowing it?"

Serge regarded Raymond as if he were a little child who had the bad habit of asking silly questions. "I'd do it in Carnival at a *bal masqué*. I'd take a paper cone and fill it with confetti and the infected lice. At the height of the ball, I'd rush up to my victim as if he were an old friend whom I had recognized and wished to josh. I'd throw a couple of hands of confetti in his face, and while he was brushing it out of his hair and eyes, I'd pour the cone of confetti with the lice down his back. Then I'd run away laughing as if it were all a good joke." He finished with his characteristic tonal flourish and a triumphant look at Raymond.

Raymond was not the least bit impressed. "As a medical man," he said pityingly, "you should know that just because a few typhus-infected lice are thrown down one's back, there's no assurance that one will contract typhus. And, then, too, my good doctor, people have been known to recover from typhus. I'll admit that typhus is a terrible disease, but it's mortality is not one hundred per cent. I hope, dear Serge, you become a better physician than you are ever likely to be a murderer."

IT was impossible to fully subdue Serge. He sarcastically asked, "How would my good lawyer execute the perfect crime?"

Raymond smiled confidently. "This problem," he explained, "has long intrigued my imagination. The fact that Bloody Basil was supposed to be the master of the perfect crime is what interested me in the story Gloomy Gus told us last night. It was the hope, perhaps, that Bloody Basil's ghost might speak and disclose some of his secrets, that brought me here tonight." He looked around the room as he continued. "Apparently the ghost of Bloody Basil is dumb. Let

us hope he is not deaf." He smiled with complete self-satisfaction. "If he listens, he might learn something about the art in which he was reputed to excel."

Serge interrupted. "Stop throwing bouquets at yourself and tell us how you'd commit a murder without leaving any clues."

Raymond continued in his even tone. He would not be flustered. "I have always regarded a telephone booth as the ideal setting for the perfect crime. A man goes into a telephone booth. He is alone. He is shut off from all the world—that is, shut off from physical contact. He drops dead! Could anything be more perfect?"

**S**ERGE regarded Franz and then me. Disgust was written all over his features. He pityingly asked Raymond, "And, my good murderer, what on earth is going to make your victim drop dead in a telephone booth?"

"I will explain," Raymond protested, "if you will stop interrupting me. You may have observed that the phone in a booth is screwed to the wall and that the lower part of the phone is just at the level of a man's heart as he puts his mouth to the transmitter. Often, as a man holds the receiver to his left ear, his left breast presses against this lower part of the phone. And have you not also noticed that occasionally one of the screws which hold the phone to the wall is missing?"

"Well, my plan is this. Go to the favorite café of your victim. Study the position of the telephone booth. Find out what is on the other side of the wall to which the phone is attached. If it is an alley, your task is easier than if it is a kitchen or a store. It may even be necessary for you to abandon the idea of destroying your enemy in a telephone booth in his favorite café and arrange for his death in some other telephone booth. The primary requirement is that you get your victim into the proper booth at the proper time."

Serge again interrupted. "But how are you going to make him drop dead when you get him into the proper booth at the proper time?"

"I'm coming to that!" Raymond went on calmly. "When you have selected the booth into which you are sure you can lure your victim when you want him, you begin boring a hole through the wall to which the phone is attached. This is done from the side of the wall opposite the phone, and no one in the shop where the booth is located need

know what you're doing. The hole opens up in the booth through one of the screw-holes at the bottom of the phone. If one of the screws is not already missing, it is easy enough to remove one while you are using the booth, ostensibly to make a call."

Serge was more impatient than ever. "I still don't see," he insisted, "how you're going to make the fellow drop dead."

This time Raymond totally ignored him. "Now," he concluded triumphantly, "you take a long, thin foil of the sharpest steel and standing behind the wall you put it through the hole. The foil need be no thicker than a hatpin. Your victim is called to the telephone. His left breast rests against the screw-hole in which the point of the foil reposes. As he is speaking or listening, you plunge the foil right into his heart. Voilà! He is dead! You remove the foil. You fill up the hole. You disappear."

"So that's your idea of a perfect crime?" Serge asked sarcastically. "Do you suppose nobody is going to see you while you dig that hole? And what about the wound? Won't the blood on the foil get all over the screw-hole? Then, too, how are you going to get the man you want into the booth just when you want him? Won't that require a confederate? I thought confederates weren't allowed in the perfect crime. You'd get your man all right, but you'd probably hang for it."

Raymond started to reply, but Serge shut him up. "You've had your say. We've all had our say but Jim," he motioned to me. "Let's give him a chance. He doesn't talk much, but when he does, he's usually worth listening to." He glared at Raymond as much as to say that the contrary was true of him.

**I** HAVEN'T ever thought of this question before," I began, "but a stunt I used to do as a kid has given me an idea. There was a swift-flowing river near our home, and one fourth of July when we were setting off fireworks, I had the brilliant idea of setting them off in the middle of the river. So all during the next year my spare time was spent in building a lot of little wooden floats with a small clock-like apparatus on each, fixed in such a way that after a certain number of seconds a piece of steel was struck against a piece of flint, making a spark which lit a powder fuse that exploded the fireworks. It worked beautifully. The next Fourth I was the envy of all the neighbor-



hood boys. I'd put a giant cracker on one of my little rafts, start it out into the stream, and when it was in the middle of the river, it would explode, creating a miniature geyser."

Raymond now interrupted. "How the devil are you going to kill a man with such a contraption?"

**SERGE** shouted, "Shut up! Give him a chance!"

I continued with a smile. "Well, I thought that one of these floats made extremely small, with the clockwork set to explode the fuse in a half hour or an hour instead of a few seconds, might be inserted in the gasoline tank of the automobile of the man you wished to kill, shortly before he intended to go driving. This could be done

conception of the perfect crime. And all the while the silence pressed closer about us, hemming us in.

Nothing happened. And yet—was there some unseen monster lurking in a corner, listening with fiendish merriment, biding its time to punish us for our desecration?

When our kerosene lamp sputtered and went out, we noticed with relief that the room was fairly light. We went to the window. Dawn was breaking. The sun would soon be rising. We hurriedly decided to leave, as we wanted to avoid running into the caretaker.

As we were going, I noticed on the walls the black splotches in the stone that were supposed to have been made by Bloody Basil's blood. They looked to me, an amateur geologist, like bits of iron ore oxidized

Bloody Basil was the most notorious criminal of the Middle Ages. He was the master of "the crime without a clue."

Today the eight-cornered tower in Heidelberg is believed to be haunted by him. Many recent crimes have been attributed to his ghost.

Is this possible? Do not answer this question until you have read the facts about the strange fate of the four skeptics.

easily in the garage or at the gasoline station. Of course, the tank would blow up, kill the man and incidentally wreck the car, destroying any possible evidence. Besides, gasoline tanks do blow up and the whole thing would probably be regarded as an accident."

As I finished, Serge slapped me on the back and shouted: "That's what I call a perfect crime. You've got to hand it to these Americans. They certainly lead the world in inventiveness."

Franz heartily seconded Serge's opinion and Raymond reluctantly admitted that my plan had possibilities. He, however, reserved judgment until he could give it substantial thought.

And so, with boyish bravado, we drank our beer in the haunted tower and discussed our

by exposure to the weather. Another bit of evidence, I recall observing, to explode the Bloody Basil legend.

That evening we met Gloomy Gus at the *bierstube*. We told him of our adventure and the absolute lack of the slightest sign of any ghost. At first he wouldn't believe us.

**FINALLY**, when we convinced him of the truth of our statements, he remarked, "You haven't heard the end of this. Bloody Basil often bides his time. You'll hear from him yet."

To this Serge replied, "What's the use of gathering evidence to destroy superstition? It's worthless. A man is superstitious or he isn't superstitious. It's just like a woman. She's either faithful or unfaithful. You can't do anything about it."

And Franz, Raymond and I, in our youthful wisdom, were in hearty accord.

A month later the Archduke Ferdinand was assassinated at Serajevo. War clouds rumbled all over Europe. Serge hurriedly left for Russia. Franz returned to Vienna. Raymond went to Paris. The semester was almost over, and as it was my last year, I returned to New York, arriving but a few days before hostilities actually got under way along the Franco-German frontier.

**T**HE first year of the War I heard from all three of the gang—Franz, Serge and Raymond. They were all in the armies of their respective countries—and who knows but perhaps they actually faced one another at various times on different fronts? War strangely twists the bonds of friendship.

After the middle of 1915 I heard no more from any of them. In 1917 I went over with the A. E. F. Following the Armistice, I served as a courier between Paris and Vienna.

On my first trip to the Austrian capital, I started out to find Franz—and learned that he had been killed but a few weeks previously. He had fallen while negotiating a difficult peak in the Dolomites.

To say that I was shocked is putting it mildly. Here was a man who had gone through the War unscratched after fighting on a half dozen fronts. Yet on his first excursion into the mountains after the Armistice, really his first mountain-climbing excursion since he had hurriedly left Heidelberg four years before, he is killed—*killed exactly as he said he would kill, on that night in the eight-cornered tower!*

For a moment I asked myself, "Could Bloody Basil have anything to do with this?"

I immediately dismissed the thought as unworthy of an intelligent person. Franz was one of the most daring climbers in the Austrian Alpine Club, and the Dolomites, which rise straight to the sky like so many chimneys, are dangerous to climb. It was quite a natural accident. At least, so I argued, and I succeeded in convincing myself.

The next year I joined the American Red Cross in South Russia. General Deniken was then fighting the Bolsheviks for control of the Ukraine. Towards the end of 1919, Deniken's forces, to which I was attached, entered Kiev. I at once looked up Serge. I learned that he had safely returned from the Front after the Revolution and that he had been practicing medicine privately in Kiev until a month or so after Car-

nival in 1918—*when he died of typhus!*

This news stirred panic in my heart. Serge, who had been the second one to describe his conception of the perfect crime that night in the eight-cornered tower—destroyed by the very disease he would have employed to kill! It was uncanny!

Of course, typhus was common in Russia at this time. But it had been common in the Russian army throughout the War and Serge had escaped. Why did he have to succumb right after the War and immediately after the first Carnival celebrated in Russia, or in any of the warring counties, since he had left us in Heidelberg in 1914?

Again I asked myself, "Could Bloody Basil have anything to do with this?" I trembled at the thought. I refused to consider it. I pushed it out of my consciousness. But it remained hidcously lurking in my subconscious mind.

The next summer—that is, the summer of 1920—I was on my way back to the States and was passing through France. I decided to sail from Bordeaux. This would give me a chance to look up Raymond, whose home was there. I could give him the sad news about Franz and Serge. I knew he would be anxious to hear of them.

It was with a profound feeling of trepidation that I called at Raymond's home. Instinctively I knew that the news of a tragedy awaited me, although actually I was thinking up a joyful greeting for my old friend.

A black crêpe hung on the open door of the house. The black forms of undertakers were gliding about. Weeping couples passed in and out. I was afraid to enter.

I asked a kindly old lady who came out drying her tears, "Who is dead?"

"Ah," she replied, "the good Raymond. It was so sudden. He had gone safely through all the years of the War and nearly two years of the Occupation, only to drop dead on his return to Bordeaux. Ah, his good mother; his poor father—they are terribly grief-stricken!"

"**D**ROPPED dead," I whispered huskily. "Where? How?"

She rattled on: "He dropped dead in his favorite café. He had not visited it since before the War. He has been away all these years."

"Café! Café!" I stammered. "Where, in the café?"

"That was the most peculiar part of it all. He was called to the telephone and he dropped dead in the booth." She sobbed

loudly and tears gathered again in her dim old eyes.

My head began to whirl. I thought I was going to faint. I stumbled down the street. I felt like a hunted man. Raymond, dead—killed just in the way he had described!

He had been the third that night to visualize the perfect crime. I had been the fourth. *Was it my turn next?*

I decided to return to the hotel. I hailed a taxi. I was about to step in when I suddenly realized that I might be stepping into an engine of death! I turned around and ran away as fast as I could. The driver must have thought I was mad.

When I had regained a bit of composure, I took a horse-drawn vehicle to the hotel, learned that a boat was sailing that afternoon for Havana, packed my things and got aboard. At sea I would be safe. There were no automobiles at sea.

All during the long voyage this chant kept ringing in my ears: *You are under the curse of Bloody Basil! You are under the curse of Bloody Basil!*"

At Havana I didn't even go ashore. In the harbor I transferred from the French boat to an English boat coming here. You see, there are no automobiles in Bermuda. There is a law against them. I came here in 1920 and I have been here ever since. I guess I'll always be here. There are other places in the world without automobiles, I suppose, but I can think of no other that offers the comforts of civilization that a man can find here.

AS James Weston ended his story, he smiled a bit shamefacedly at me, as if to say: "You may think me a bit nutty, but I am really quite sane."

I don't know! Is he?

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## Sweden's Uncanny Mystery

ACCORDING to a story which reached this country recently from Stockholm, the ghost of a man, dead since 1859, has returned to the lordly mansion of Norrkoeping, a village in the north of Sweden. Scientists insist they have solved the puzzle, but their explanations have not satisfied the laymen.

The Scandinavian countries have long been looked upon by many Europeans as one of the natural homes of ghosts, spirits and phantoms, so there was no great excitement at the outset when it was found that the face of the former landlord of this chateau was appearing at one of the windows of the ancient, wind-swept mansion, which stood by the side of a deep fjord. This man, Major Gyllenkrop, died sixty-nine years ago and no particular reason was known why he should come back to haunt the place. He had died a natural death at a ripe old age.

The villagers began to gossip, and when the word of the face at the window reached the cities, there came a rush of tourists anxious to view the uncanny spectacle. Their curiosity was not difficult to satisfy, for the apparition could be seen plainly from the main road.

Scientists in Stockholm who heard of the phantom were intrigued. The mind of the modern scientist works differently from the minds of peasants wrapped in generations of folk-lore and legends. Doctor Mohlin, a leading Swedish physicist, finally went to the place to investigate. Afterward he stated that the Major had been an invalid for many years and that during the last forty years of his life he had spent most of his time looking from that particular window because it gave him a view of passing friends. The Doctor's theory was that the glass of the window possessed some of the properties of a photographic plate. The Major's constant gazing from the window resulted, as it were, in his photograph being made on the window pane. A microscopic examination showed that a very faint likeness of the old man did appear upon the glass.

But this left many questions to be explained. The chief of these were—why could the features of the Major be seen clearly from a distant point in the roadway and why has the face become visible only now, sixty-nine years after the former landlord's death?

No one has yet answered these queries.



# The MEETING PLACE



## How a Woman Saved a Ghost

*An Editorial by* ROBERT NAPIER

IT is the purpose of this magazine to print the truth about psychic research. Wherever supposed supernatural phenomena can be traced to fraud, we are anxious to learn the facts and to print them in these pages. But we fail entirely to understand the blindness of those skeptics who claim that every "supernatural" happening can be explained on a natural basis. Nor do we share the common belief that the day of spiritual manifestations has passed.

On the contrary, it seems to us that we live in a time of psychic wonders—that the unseen world is pressing closer to us than ever before—that men, at last, are coming slowly to an understanding of the spirit realm. And the basis of this understanding is the *casting out of fear*.

This truth is clearly illustrated by a case reported in the Associated Press. High up on a lonely mountain near Henniker, New Hampshire, is a two-hundred-year-old mansion with a black history. Natives used to avoid this place like the plague, and chance visitors heard strange noises and saw strange sights. Some of them lived to tell of bobbing lights leading men to their doom, of a phantom that rose from the foul depths of an old well, of a spectral coach-and-four that drove up every night on the stroke of twelve. And the villagers whispered that there was a woman, with the face of a devil, who rode inside that coach!

But some of the reckless or unfortunate ones did not live to tell of what they saw; only their bulging, sightless eyes spoke of horror and ugliness in a way that all men understand. And so the proud old mansion fell into decay and its legend grew until all New England knew of it.

Not long ago Mrs. Roy, the wife of a famous physician, saw the house and she and her artist son determined to restore it to its former grandeur both for their own satisfaction and to bring peace to the spirits who haunted it. And because they were without fear, they were beyond the power of its supernatural visitants. Then miracles happened: peace came at last to this stately old house and the evil influence withered away.

At the present writing, the muffled sound of horses' hoofs and the squeaky scraping of a dry axle can still be heard in the dusty road at midnight. And still the phantom coach stops beside the old well under its gnarled apple tree. But the face of the woman inside is no longer that of a fiend—it is the face of a beautiful woman who has found peace.

Lowell Ames Norris, special writer for the Boston *Herald*, has made the pilgrimage to Henniker and has heard from Mrs. Roy's own lips the astounding story of this quaint little woman who is happy to live day-in, day-out, with the ghosts that haunt this old mansion. For the benefit of readers who would like to know the complete details of such an unusual and inspiring case, we are printing Mrs. Roy's narrative in the February GHOST STORIES.



**R**EADERS are invited to send brief accounts of personal experiences with the occult to *The Meeting Place*. The correspondent's full name and address must be signed to each letter but we will print only the initials or a pseudonym if it is requested. Answers to other correspondents' letters will also be printed.

*Here is a chance to get in touch with persons all over the world who are interested in the supernatural!*

I WOULD like to call your readers' attention to the case of Chester Kutzlub, of Detroit, who was recently tried for the murder of his wife. According to reports in the New York papers, Kutzlub testified that he was apparently walking in his sleep at the time he shot his wife. He said that the report of the gun awakened him and that he tried to commit suicide when he realized what he had done.

Three children of the couple testified that their father walked in his sleep on an average of three times a week and asserted that their parents never quarreled.

Of course, Kutzlub's defense was not the sort that the police were likely to accept. But I honestly believe that he told the truth. And, furthermore, I think it entirely proba-

ble that his sleeping body was actuated by some murderous entity from another world. I wish there was some way to help him.

I am aware that there may be important facts in the case that have not come to my attention—but my sympathy is instinctively with the unfortunate man who was the greatest victim of this terrible tragedy. I wonder what other readers of this department think of the case. Perhaps someone can supply me with more information about Kutzlub's fate.

M. M.

New York City.

At about ten o'clock on the evening of August 8th, 1928, a woman was at a shoe-

(Continued on page 122)

# The Spider

By  
GRACE OURSLER

ON that New Year's Eve when Chatrand, the great magician, discovered the unconscious body of a boy on a deserted road near Washington, D. C., he entangled himself in a strange mystery. For days the boy lay in a coma and when he finally regained consciousness, his memory was gone. He could not remember a single detail of his previous life.

Matters were greatly complicated by the fact that his clothing and the articles in his pockets supplied no key to his identity. The only clue was a photograph of a beautiful girl, and this was reproduced in the Washington newspapers along with a story concerning the boy. Due to Chatrand's prominence this notice was copied widely. A deluge of replies were received but the boy's identity remained as great a mystery as ever.

This bizarre situation aroused the interest and the sympathy of Chatrand, and he swore that he would take the boy under his own care and make a companion of him. On the first evening after the patient was permitted to leave the hospital, the boy and the magician had supper together in Chatrand's rooms in the hotel. After the meal the latter went into his bedroom to pack some valises.

A few minutes later Chatrand was startled to hear excited cries from the next room. With a shiver of unreasoning terror he recognized the voice of his dead father, Lord Ingle-Howriddle!

He staggered to the door.

It was the boy who was speaking—a mad



## The Story that

stream of words issuing from his white, expressionless face!

The magician stumbled forward and fell on his knees.

CHATRAND clutched the boy's arm tightly, shaking him. At this sudden attack the latter groaned softly; his head rolled slowly from side to side and his face twitched in a nervous strain.

The magician felt the quiver run through the boy's entire frame, and instantly all thought of himself fled. He shrank back as if he had been struck a heavy blow when he grasped the full meaning of what he was doing. He, who considered himself an expert in psychic matters! He, who prided himself on his sensitive reaction to all phenomena!

His grip on the boy loosened and he got to his feet slowly. But his eyes never once left the white, tortured face.

Almost immediately the boy grew quiet. His eyes still remained closed and his

NOTE: THE SPIDER is New York's most successful mystery play. It is presented here with the approval of Fulton Oursler, co-author with Lowell Brentano of the famous play.



## Thrilled Broadway

breath came heavily, but once more his body was motionless and relaxed.

"God Almighty!" murmured Chatrand thickly. "I might have killed him!"

For a moment his mind was paralyzed by the thought. In his own insane moment of shock he had committed a sacrilege which he would have found it hard to forgive in another. Suppose he had permanently injured the boy? Rough handling of an entranced medium might easily cause a long list of dreadful reactions. Heart-failure, a mental blow that might leave him demented, hysteria! And any one of those calamities would have been doubly dangerous to this particular boy.

Chatrand shuddered involuntarily. How strange he had not immediately recognized the boy's condition! He had been taken off guard. It was the last thing he had imagined; never once had it occurred to him that the boy might possess mediumistic powers. But here, alone in the sitting room, the boy's mind had been drawn into the very train of thoughts that the magician had been pursuing in the next room while he packed! And hearing his own thoughts—his own memories of the past—spoken aloud, Chatrand had so far forgotten himself as to act

*Did this hypnotized boy  
actually witness events a  
thousand miles away?  
If not, how did he become  
involved in the  
dreadful mystery of the  
tortured girl?*

like the rawest sort of novice imaginable. While these thoughts were whirling through the magician's brain, suddenly the boy spoke again.

*"I'll never go back to that house while that woman lives!"*

The words were uttered in a low, quiet tone, filled with venomous resolution. In a flash they brought before Chatrand the memory of that night when he had stood for the last time on the road outside the gate of his father's estate. He had been only a boy of fifteen, fighting for the memory of his mother—offering fist-battle to his white-haired father, who had dared to marry a notorious woman and offer her as a step-mother!

**N**OW, however, Chatrand was master of himself, in full command of a mind that was flaming with activity. He stepped forward slowly and stood slightly behind the armchair in which the boy half reclined. His eyes were burning with intensity at the high opportunity of the moment. Here was a medium such as he had never before come in contact with! He must not miss this precious opportunity which he had almost shattered so brutally a moment before.

Yet the first word he spoke, made the magician start again at his own inefficiency.

*"Alexander!"*

He had not meant to say that! He cursed the force of habit that caused him to call the name which he used for his mind readers in his stage performances. A rush of self-contempt came over him as he recognized the same sonorous, impressive tone of voice that he used before an audience. Was he, then, so much a creature of rou-

tine? Had he slipped so far from the world of experiment, of chance, of investigation? It was true! It had been nearly a year since he had felt the interest or the impulse—indeed, since he had had any worthy opportunity—to develop his psychic powers. Perhaps his astounding success in the theater, where he so frequently resorted to material means, had rusted his natural interest. . . .

But these thoughts involved only a momentary reaction. A sound from the boy interrupted them, and Chatrand leaned forward expectantly as the boy prepared to speak.

"Yes, Chatrand!"

THE magician drew an audible breath of relief. To his own complete amazement the boy responded perfectly to the name! An immediate accord—a complete unison of mind! Was it possible that the mental qualities that Chatrand had searched for so long and had almost abandoned the attempt to find—could it be that these things were here?

"Alexander—do you hear me?"

He spoke the words carefully, gravely, and touched the boy's shoulder lightly with his hand as he drew closer.

"Yes! Yes, master!"

"Tell me, then, Alexander, of whom you were speaking a few moments ago? Who was the Horace whose name you used?"

"Horace Ingle-Howridge, the first-born son of Lord Horace Brooking Ingle-Howridge."

"There are other sons?"

"Two, who are your half-brothers!"

"My half-brothers?"

"Yes, master. You, Chatrand, are really Lord Horace Ingle-Howridge, since your father's death six months ago!"

"It is true. You will forget this! You hear? You will never speak of these matters concerning my life?"

"If you wish it."

"Alexander!"

"Yes, Chatrand."

Chatrand drew closer, until his face almost touched the boy's and his breath struck the boy's face fully. The huge, brown eyes of the medium opened and stared without expression straight into the eyes of the magician.

"Alexander!" Chatrand spoke sternly. "You fear nothing?"

"I fear nothing—with you, master."

"You are right. You need never fear

when you are in my care, and I shall never desert you. You understand that."

"I am glad!" The boy's voice sounded weary.

"Now, do as I tell you. *New Year's Eve!* What do you see then? Remember! *New Year's Eve!*"

The boy's face contracted painfully.

"Come. Take it slowly. I want you to tell me about *New Year's Eve!*"

"I see——"

"Yes. Speak! What do you see?"

"I see Chatrand in a great car, riding alone. I see him stop suddenly. There is a figure on the road. Chatrand is frightened, but he goes and picks up the figure. It aches—I am hurt!"

The boy whimpered softly, as his hand went to his head.

"What had happened to you? How had you been hurt? Before I found you—what had happened?"

The boy's hands clenched together and he leaned forward, straining his eyes as if searching the very depths of Chatrand's steady gaze. For a full moment he struggled so, and then, with a groan, he sank back, exhausted. His eyelids drooped wearily.

Immediately Chatrand slipped to his knees, murmuring words of comfort. With his hands he massaged the boy's forehead, quieting him tenderly.

He was thankful for the natural control he seemed able to exercise over his ward. The boy opened his eyes again in a few moments. He was no longer in a trance and he spoke normally.

Chatrand adopted an air of casualness that completely dissolved any questions that might have been on the boy's lips. He pretended that he had finished packing and must leave for the theater. He had found the boy napping and had wakened him to say good-by and warn him that the pretty nurse would be coming in presently.

WHILE he spoke, Chatrand used the name "Alexander" in addressing the boy and rejoiced at the lad's natural acceptance of it. It seemed almost as if the boy had been called that from childhood. At last Chatrand had found a name that could be used without rousing painful suspicions or causing a dangerous strain on his memory.

At that particular time the boy suspected nothing. Fifteen minutes later Chatrand left him in the care of the nurse and went down to his performance.



All night and all the next day, however, the memory of that strange séance haunted Chatrand. He probed its possibilities from every angle. Certainly he now had a field for experiment which might yield rare success. Here was natural telepathy; here, surely, was a bond between two human beings, such as existed only in very rare instances. Just how should he proceed along this miraculous avenue of experiment? The boy, now named Alexander by such a strange accident, was ill and hyper-sensitive. It would be necessary to go carefully, to guard against all strain or shock. Perhaps it would even be best to permit each séance for the time being to come naturally, as it had that evening. Later, when the boy was well enough to grasp the full meaning of the experiments, they could work together purposefully.

This plan Chatrand adopted, though it sorely tried his patience. For three solid weeks the boy traveled with him wherever his theatrical engagements took him, living with him at the hotels as if he were his own son, obeying every suggestion Chatrand might make with absolute docility. The nurse, who had been engaged to travel with them and take sole care of Alexander, was dismissed at the end of those three weeks.

Chatrand felt the boy was now ready for more substantial care and hired a physical trainer to put him on a regular routine. Alexander's diet, his exercise and his sleep were scheduled with clock-like regularity. Two months passed in this way. Week by week they journeyed from one city to another, and in each city fresh stories were published about the boy and fresh false alarms were considered and rejected concerning the boy's identity. Alexander by this time had accepted his condition with a resignation that spoke well for the philosophy of life that Chatrand was slowly imparting to him.

**B**UT not once in all this time did Alexander show the slightest relapse into unusual silences or any suggestion of psychic powers. Chatrand began to feel that perhaps his continued physical improvement was depriving him of whatever psychic tendencies he might have. However, in spite of the fact that such an idea was a matter of personal chagrin, Chatrand insisted upon careful doctoring. Certainly he would not sacrifice the health and happiness of a boy he loved, to his experimental fever. Instead, as spring broke, he renewed his orders.

Alexander was to keep out of doors as much as possible. He was to take daily sun-baths and to consider walking as part of his routine. Sometimes Chatrand himself, when he had the freedom, went on five and six mile tramps with his young charge.

A strange psychological reaction developed in Alexander's attitude regarding his own mystery. For some time, at the start, he was restive about the matter, eagerly welcoming every claim that came either from the police headquarters at Washington, which still had the matter under consideration, or direct from the responses to newspaper stories in whatever city they happened to play.

**L**ATER the boy assumed an air of importance—almost as if he swaggered at the cloak of distinction his strange situation gave him. This amused Chatrand, and it was only with the greatest kindness and tact that he dissuaded Alexander from this attitude.

They ended the season's tour late in June in New England and returned to New York for a few weeks while Chatrand busied himself with plans for the fall, setting his time, signing contracts, engaging new people for his act and arranging for the building of new illusions which he had worked out that winter.

Then, at the end of June, Chatrand dismissed Alexander's trainer, and for the first time the two were alone—alone and normal, without any strain of physical illness or mental harassment between them. Alexander was "one of the family." He and Chatrand were able to meet each other on the pleasant basis of older and younger brother. The boy accepted Chatrand's mode of living—for he could remember no other. He was interested in the things that interested Chatrand, eager to study, to experiment, to observe and to learn. He imitated Chatrand in every move and gesture, adopting his social manners, copying his very walk and mode of speech. This delighted and flattered Chatrand, who, fortunately, was too big a person to resent the whispered insinuations that floated about that perhaps Alexander was Chatrand's own illegitimate son.

At the very end of June Chatrand and Alexander set sail for Europe. The magician had planned an extensive tour of the northern and central countries to delve into certain occult secrets that he had heard were worthy of consideration. They were to

visit Copenhagen, tour by automobile through Germany, cross over to Prague, Budapest and Vienna, and then go to England where Chatrand had recently made considerable connections with well-known "spiritualists"—mediums who excelled uncannily in spirit photography, in producing physical phenomena, and who possessed, or were credited with, the possession of high occult powers.

**T**HIS summer tour held for Chatrand three exciting interests. To begin with, he had previously given all his time and serious attention to the age-old mysteries of India, of Egypt and Asia, refusing to consider the childish dabbling of the modern countries worthy of investigation—and so he had a new field to explore. Secondly, he had a lingering hope, which he himself half ridiculed, that perhaps somewhere, somebody would be able to give a clue regarding Alexander's identity. Perhaps a spirit photograph—if such things could be accepted by an expert magician. . . . Still . . . Well, anything was worth trying.

And, finally, he was daring for the first time in twenty years to return to England. For obvious reasons he was not traveling as Chatrand the Great Magician, but rather as a tourist and amateur interested in psychic phenomena. True, his return to England after so many years and so many changes could hardly mean any risk; particularly with his father dead and gone, and more particularly still, since he did not intend to visit his own home town. Yet, personally, this visit to his own land held an indescribable thrill for him—a thrill that only those in a similar position could understand.

The trip over was delightful. For the first time Chatrand could give full attention to his young charge. He delighted in talking to the boy, probing the depths of his mind, and he thrilled at finding such responsive soil for his strange ideas. They cultivated a few friendships on board, entered into the holiday spirit of the trip and indulged in the festivities of the mask ball and the deck games.

Sitting together on deck, under a late moon one night, Chatrand first suggested the plan which was uppermost in his mind. Perhaps Alexander would like to be in the act this fall? Why not try working up the mind-reading act during this vacation, so that Alexander could take part in the performances? Chatrand had been so dissatis-

fied the past season that he had not signed up an assistant for the fall. Surely, if they worked together—in daily and constant exercise and contact—they would be able to establish a real telepathic bond? Why not experiment?

Alexander was carried away with enthusiasm. More than anything, he wanted to help Chatrand in his work. Nothing could ever interest him as much as the world of mystery in all its phases that occupied Chatrand's attention. He was fascinated with the subject; nothing else mattered to him. He believed, as he knew Chatrand believed, without any infallible experiences to quote as proof. If he thought it possible that he could strike any chord of response from the spiritualistic or psychic world, he would dedicate his entire life to the project.

They talked long and fervently of their plan that night.

The next day they quietly began their experiments.

If anything could have exceeded the intense, joyous interest of the boy, it was the gravity with which Chatrand now faced this great plan that had been simmering in his mind all the while he had been nursing Alexander into condition for accepting it.

The next morning Chatrand began a rigorous fast—a fast which was to last from ten days to eighteen, depending upon how successful the experiment might be. He decided that upon reaching Copenhagen they would seek out some quiet room overlooking a garden, or would journey forth to the woods each day in solitude, abandoning some of the plans for their tour in order to permit the full development of their experiment.

**A**LEXANDER was not permitted an absolute fast. His diet was reduced to milk and fruit.

The second day, in the great comfortable stateroom which Chatrand had provided for himself, they sat for their first séance together.

The boy was too eager, too excited, too intent. No matter how Chatrand tried, he could exert no control over him.

The next day they tried again and this time succeeded almost immediately in establishing a contact. The boy did not succumb to a trance, however. In full possession of his faculties he struck a swift, unflinching mental bond with his teacher. Chatrand was careful to refrain from any mention of the subjects which he hoped eventually to

clear up by means of this experiment. He questioned the boy steadily, quietly, in regard to impersonal things. What was hidden in the bottom of his trunk checked in New York at the Hotel Vanderbilt? The boy described the red velvet box in which were three rings, a medal and the gold hilt of a sword. What was the history of those rings? He answered that the rings had belonged to Chatrand's mother; she had given them to him just before she died. That was correct. Now, in Chatrand's pocket this moment, there was a small red leather note-book.

WHAT did it contain? Quietly and without effort Alexander replied that the note-book was half filled with psychic material—phrases, secret and mystic quotations, written in red ink, in Aramaic and Chaldean script. Could he read these? Alexander, whose conscious mind had no knowledge of these scripts, repeated the notations unflinchingly and with perfect accuracy.

Chatrand ended the sitting. Both were thoroughly delighted with the success of this first real trial. He sent the boy up on deck with instructions to join the various groups they had met, to swim, play shuffleboard and relax his mind completely. That night Alexander, dressed in one of Chatrand's silk turbans, attended the masquerade ball of the ship. Chatrand himself, however, sought quiet and seclusion, devoting himself to making a record of his experiment and to reading.

The next day at the same hour, in the same positions exactly, they attempted another séance. Alexander's response was immediate. Fully conscious of all he was saying, he repeated for Chatrand the nature of various contracts which he had never seen, and upon being given the name of a person he had never met, recited correctly the full details of the man's personality and background.

This time the séance was longer. Both were intensely absorbed. They had been sitting for nearly three quarters of an hour when Chatrand noticed that the boy's face and neck became flushed with excitement and effort, and his temples became blue with swollen veins. In his severest manner Chatrand attempted to quiet the boy, speaking sharply and intending to end the sitting.

But Alexander's reaction was as shocking as it was unexpected. He swayed forward, hands clenched, his teeth biting his

lips in a severe strain—and two minutes later he slumped back in his chair, pale and calm and relaxed. He was in a deep trance!

Chatrand deftly massaged the boy's forehead, speaking to him comfortingly, explaining that he was now in a trance and that he must put himself trustingly in Chatrand's control. Then, seating himself again, he began to talk quietly, describing to the boy some of the wonders and sacred mysteries of the occult. These were things which it had taken Chatrand years to acquire, but which he was able to explain fully to Alexander in his present responsive condition. Alexander would now be able to understand and grasp them. *And he was to remember them when the trance had passed!*

The boy listened gravely, without the slightest trace of emotion or expression passing over his face.

When Chatrand had imparted all the information he felt necessary—information which it would have been almost impossible for Alexander to contemplate or accept in his normal condition—he ended the trance by a method which he had mastered while studying in India.

To his complete satisfaction his method worked perfectly. This, then, proved his control over the boy in one regard. Carefully, during the hours that followed, he watched for the other proof. Once he had told Alexander to forget all he had heard in a trance, and that had worked. Now he had directed the boy to remember all he had been told while entranced—and to his utter delight and satisfaction, this, too, was successful!

The boy remembered every bit of instruction he had received—and what was more, he understood it in its full value exactly as Chatrand had understood it after years of application, study and effort!

THIS proved, beyond any doubt, the unquestionable psychic bond between the two. From this step forward they might be capable of any achievement, provided Chatrand were able to direct things carefully. Chatrand realized fully the delicate and sensitive instrument which had been delivered into his care; he was so impressed with his own responsibility toward the boy that the worry of it made him haggard and burdened him with sleepless nights and feverish anxiety. One wrong slip—one overstrain—and perhaps this power would be gone from him

forever. Furthermore, this boy's mind was not normal to begin with. Who could tell what a shock might do, when the boy hung by the merest thread between normality and probable insanity?

They took one day's respite in order to give Alexander rest and relaxation. The next day was the final day before the ship was to land. Both felt impelled to sit in séance again; to try once more their experiment before they touched land and were hustled into the confusion of a strange civilization.

**A**BOUT three o'clock in the afternoon they began. Alexander's trance was immediate, and for the first time was induced by Chatrand. Their contact was unstrained and Alexander seemed in a quiet, contented mood. This time Chatrand spoke of the countries which they were to visit. Did Alexander know anything about them other than what Chatrand had told him?

The magician was intent upon the boy's reply, for he had asked this question with the hope of perhaps touching something in the boy's past.

"Oh, yes," Alexander replied easily. He knew much more than Chatrand had ever described! Glibly he told details of various cities they were to visit—names and numbers of streets, descriptions of cafés, theaters and gardens, names of certain shops.

Chatrand frowned. The boy was, no doubt, merely reading his, Chatrand's, mind.

What did he know of other cities? Could he tell anything about Chartres, or Moscow, Rouen or Cannes or Dublin? The magician picked off the names of the cities at random—all cities which he himself had never visited.

The boy hesitated and thought deeply. Then—oh, yes, he could tell of Dublin: he could describe the university there; he also mentioned the name of some man who was a professor there. He could tell of Cannes, too. He described in detail the hotel, the beach and the gambling house!

At first Chatrand was thrilled with this response. Immediately, however, his mind discounted the performance. Perhaps the boy had read about these things, or perhaps someone had recently told him about these places. It did not prove that he had ever visited these cities in his former life. In his normal state the boy could remember no experience in any foreign city. No—nor in America, except those which he had shared since he had lived his life with Chatrand.

So eager and impatient was the magician to achieve the true purpose of these experiments, that he decided to wait no longer. This contact was perfect. It might be many days before they could sit again.

Therefore, Chatrand drew from an inner pocket, where he always kept it, the picture of the young girl which he had originally found on Alexander's person that fateful night of the accident, and which had so endeared itself to his heart. He spoke quietly to Alexander about it. Here was a picture which he had found and which meant much to him. He did not know who the girl might be, but he would dearly love to trace her. Would Alexander look at the picture and try to place it for him? Could he send out his mind to track down this particular girl, who, Chatrand understood, lived in America—probably in or near Washington?

Gravely Alexander looked at the picture, while Chatrand held his breath, waiting for the boy's reaction. Alexander, expressionless, studied it. Then he drew in his breath sharply and leaned forward, taking it into his hands. His lips went pale and his brow wrinkled as he stared at it in puzzled contemplation.

It was some moments before he spoke, and then his voice was slow and strained.

"I—I can't seem to tell, master! She is somebody very important—strangely important—but I can't tell just how."

"Quiet! Don't strain. Take your time, Alexander!" Chatrand urged gently.

The boy obeyed, holding the picture close while he gazed at it with troubled eyes. Presently his hands began to tremble.

"It is coming, master! I cannot tell much, but it comes to me so vaguely—as if there were a fog against my mind . . . but—"

Chatrand had been about to interrupt, again urging quiet, when suddenly the boy's expression changed to one of contracted fear. He spoke again in short, breathy gasps.

"**Y**ES! Yes!" he cried sharply. "I hear! Listen, master! Listen! She is calling—she is calling for help. She is in trouble. She is sad. She is frightened—so very frightened. . . . She is in some strange danger. . . ."

"Alexander!" droned Chatrand, using his regular monotonous tone, making a great effort to control his excitement. "Take time! Think! How is she in trouble? Who is she? Where is she? Think! I command you!"

But his orders did not have the usual full effect. The boy seemed to strain against his master's control. His eyes were burning as he still stared at the photograph that smiled so wistfully back at him.

"I cannot—I cannot tell her name—I can't find it! I cannot tell where she is. She did not live in Washington, I know. She came from New York, but she does not live there now. She—*she has no home now*. She, who always had such a beautiful home—"

The boy rose to his feet slowly, throwing back his shoulders, and still holding the picture before him.

"SHE is afraid about that! She wants to go back home for some terrible reason. She is sick—she has been very, very sick with worry. . . . She is afraid—that *she will be buried alive!* That is what it would mean! That's what she keeps telling herself—that she might be buried alive! Wait! She is afraid she might be put into an asylum—unfairly—by someone who hates her and who has her in his power! She lives in continual dread. . . . She has no friend to speak to. . . . And all this has happened very recently. . . . Poor child. . . . She is so unhappy. . . ."

"Where is she?" cut in Chatrand sharply as the boy hesitated for a prolonged period. "Tell me—who is she?"

"I don't know!" screamed the boy sharply. "I can't see! I—oh, my head hurts. . . ."

He fell against the berth, his hands against his head in agony, his lips trembling as he uttered groan after groan of anguish. The picture had fluttered from his hand, face downward, on the floor.

Immediately Chatrand was at his side, speaking sharply and with deepest authority, directing him to be quiet and sleep, rubbing the boy's temples and wrists as he spoke.

With a sigh of relief the magician noted the immediate effect of his words. The boy's face resumed its relaxed expression. Carefully Chatrand lifted him into the bed, loosened his clothing, moistened his lips and sat at his side until he heard the regular breathing which bespoke a quiet, natural sleep. He turned the boy over on his side, facing the wall, covered him with a light blanket and drew the blind at the port-hole.

He himself was more shaken than he would have cared to admit. He stooped and picked up the photograph and studied it anxiously. The boy had not been seriously hurt through this experiment, and how much it had revealed! Perhaps the next

time—or the next—they might be able to find the girl's name. Perhaps the boy's own memory would return through this contact. . . . Perhaps . . . perhaps . . . if they were only successful. . . .

Again Chatrand was struck with the charm of the girl's picture. He had grown to love that picture; it stood for all the things he had dreamed of in a woman—all the unspoiled, unselfish, wholesome qualities which he had looked for in vain in so many, many women he had met. Here, indeed, was a lovely, unspoiled flower of womanhood; here was a girl that a man would long to protect, to confide in, to fight for, to lavish with the goods of this world, and yet to trust and look to for tenderness and sympathy.

And she was in trouble! Somewhere, she was homeless—and in the power of someone who wished her harm! Somewhere, her soul was crying out for help—for a friend—and here on this ship far out at sea, perhaps thousands of miles away from her, they had heard her call!

Hardly realizing what he was doing, Chatrand lifted the photograph to his lips. In his heart was a prayer—a rich, deep prayer to all the powers-that-be—that she might be protected from harm, that some protecting sacred circle might be thrown about her, and that he, Chatrand, and the boy whom the girl had once known, might reach her in time to be of help.

He thrust the picture back into its usual place over his heart and began to consider his next move. He gazed at the figure of the sleeping boy pityingly. The disarray of the tousled head touched him, and he felt again that sweep of protecting love that the boy had always roused in him.

**T**OMORROW they would land in Europe.

For all that this experiment was so important, he must proceed slowly. For a few days they would devote themselves entirely to sightseeing and enjoying themselves. The boy was so eager to see Europe! He had suffered a strain through this sitting. It might be that some after effects might linger and, if so, he must sacrifice future experiments for at least a month to come. At any rate, the boy must play now and enjoy himself naturally.

It was getting late already. Alexander could sleep for perhaps a half hour longer. Chatrand was wrong to have permitted the sitting to last so long, and he upbraided himself fiercely in spite of its miraculous

result. As soon as the boy awakened, he must establish an atmosphere of joviality. He could control the boy's mood. This evening they would devote to festivity, to associating with the passengers on this last night on shipboard and to enjoying to the full the celebration of the Captain's dinner.

Chatrand began laying out his dress clothes and those of the boy. He would wash, shave and dress, before he disturbed Alexander.

Thoughtfully he set about his toilette preparations. As he stepped into their private bathroom to shave, his mind was still busy with the details of Alexander's revelations.

HE had been occupied so for perhaps a quarter of an hour when he heard a noise in his cabin that made him start. His first thought was that Alexander had awakened and risen.

His face was covered with lather, under which he assumed his brightest and most jovial smile of greeting, as he threw open the door of his bathroom and peered into the darkened room.

The sight that greeted him made his heart stand still with amazement!

The room was in semi-darkness as he had left it, and Alexander's sleeping form was still facing the wall in the berth!

But the cabin door was open—and on the threshold, dainty and dazlingly beautiful, dressed in softest white from head to toe, stood—the girl of the photograph!

There was no mistaking her, even in the shock of the moment! The same glorious golden hair, which the lamp in the passage-way lighted up into flecks of fiery glints,

the same inquiring, large, expressive eyes, the same tender mouth . . .

She seemed as shocked as Chatrand! She drew her breath in sharply in her surprise, and her right hand went up to her throat, as her left hand steadied her body against the cabin door.

Then, swiftly, she turned and fled, the cabin door closing of its own weight behind her.

"Wait!" cried Chatrand hoarsely.

He forgot that his face was covered with lather; he forgot that his trouser suspenders were hanging down, and that the upper part of his body was clad only in his undershirt. Like a flash, without a moment's hesitation, he darted after her. He yanked open the cabin door breathlessly and darted out into the corridor.

"Wait, please!" he called again.

Down the long corridor of staterooms to the right he glanced—no trace of her! To the other side—not a soul in sight!

Still bent only on the one thought, Chatrand dashed as far as the staircase salon, searching desperately, his eyes seeking even the flash of a white chiffon skirt as it might disappear behind a door.

The girl had vanished—like a wisp of fog.

Then, for the first time, he realized the fantastic truth! *He had seen a phantom!* Merciful God! Had the girl's enemies already triumphed? Was she *dead*?

He beat his clenched fists against his forehead in agony. He loved this girl—loved her with his whole soul, even though he had never seen her in the flesh. Life itself was worthless to him unless she was living—unless he could find her and claim her for his own!

*Can Chatrand save this unknown girl from her doom? Her very soul is at the mercy of living fiends! The terrible SPIDER holds her helpless in his web—and even now his black tentacles are reaching out to seize the boy whose life has become so precious to the great magician. This amazing story of magic and mystery moves to a startling climax in the next issue of GHOST STORIES—a weird, mystifying murder that takes place before the very eyes of a whole theater full of people. Presented as a stage play, this story was the sensation of New York last season. It is your privilege to read it in print for the first time. Don't miss a word of it! In the February GHOST STORIES—on all news stands January 23rd.*



# Haunted GOLD

*I dared to follow a phantom motor-boat—  
and it led me to a rendezvous of the dead—  
and to the only girl in the world!*

By ELLIS COLLINS

As told to KEN BATTEN

A FEW years ago I spent the summer with a pal of mine on the south shore of Long Island. We rented a bungalow on a creek about a quarter of a mile from the ocean. Also we rented two motor-boats so we could be independent of each other. There was a small landing-stage, jutting into the creek, where we tied our boats.

We had been there about a month when my pal made a trip to New York. He was gone three or four days. On the evening that I was expecting him back, I was sitting outside the bungalow, smoking my pipe and watching the moonlight on the waters of the creek. Listening for the sound of my friend's motor-boat, I could hear the murmur of the breakers pounding the distant beach. I was soothed by the peace and quiet of the night.

As I mused, I saw in the distance a boat approaching from up-stream. I had heard no noise of a motor. As it came closer, I

rose and walked out upon the landing-stage, cupping my hands to my mouth and calling: "Whoopee! Allan! Welcome to our city!"

I waited to hear his answering shout but only silence greeted me. The boat was now near enough to be seen more clearly. It was not Allan's motor-boat nor was its occupant Allan. In that deserted section, boats rarely passed by at night, and I wondered who it might be. Perhaps an unexpected visitor from the city who had come on the train by which I had thought Allan would arrive. But in that case why did the man in the boat not answer my greeting?

Then I noticed something that struck me forcibly. I had been watching the approaching boat for a full minute, and it had been going at the same speed, but still I could not hear the sound of the motor! It had come nearer as silently as if propelled by some mysterious and unseen power.

By now it was almost abreast of me and



I could distinguish the figure seated at the wheel. The moon shone directly upon the man's face. It was a hard and reckless face, yet young, and the shoulders were broad and sturdy. Obviously he was unknown to me. I was about to walk back to the bungalow when some impulse arrested me. There was something about the man and the stealthily moving boat that struck me as unusual and strange.

Filled with the desire to make the man turn and look at me, I waved my arms and shouted, "Ho there!"

But the figure did not turn, and the sleek boat continued on its way, noiseless and eerie.

**I**T was no business of mine and I should have returned to the bungalow and my pipe, but for some odd reason I wanted to follow the strange craft and discover whither it was bound and why. Acting on the impulse—with an idle desire for adventure—I ran to my boat, jumped in, and in a few minutes the throb of my motor bore me along after my quarry.

The boat ahead of me was going slowly and I kept mine at the same speed. We passed down the creek toward the sea, the long, waving grass on the banks rustling a ghostly greeting to me. With my gaze fixed on the boat ahead I observed another astonishing detail. It left no wash in its wake! As it glided along, the water remained calm and undisturbed. I could not believe my eyes!

I looked back and saw that my boat churned the water in normal fashion, creating waves which spread to the banks. But the other boat did no churning. I was strangely affected by what I saw, and I was quite sure that my eyes were not playing me tricks.

The boat reached the ocean and turned north. I kept it in sight but held back, not wanting to attract the attention of the man. Evidently I did not, for not once did he turn around. We followed the coast for about a mile. I could not recognize the locale because of a haze which seemed suddenly to have drifted in from the sea.

I wanted to keep the silent boat in view, and I speeded up my motor. Of a sudden I saw the craft ahead veer sharply and when I reached the spot where I judged the stranger had turned coastward, I steered in the same direction. I seemed to enter a narrow channel, for I caught a glimpse of land on both sides. Then the land disap-

peared from view and I judged I was entering a large bay or lagoon. The south shore of Long Island has many of these lagoon-like inlets.

Now I could see the other boat more clearly. It crossed the bay and I saw land to the left. The boat veered in that direction and entered a creek. Still at the same speed, and silently, it slid up the creek for some distance, finally coming to rest at a landing-stage which looked in the moonlight as if it were veritably crumbling to ruin.

I hugged the bank to keep out of sight, shut off my motor and leaned forward, intently watching the actions of the man. It was a desolate place, and the haze which enveloped the scene seemed to cut us off from the rest of the world. The odd thing about it was that the mist did not seem to hang between the man and myself. Nor did it conceal a hut that stood a short distance up the bank of the creek. But beyond this limited space everything was vague and shapeless.

In the same silent and preoccupied manner with which he had driven his boat, the man stepped upon the landing-stage, tied the boat and walked to the hut, still without turning his head in my direction. I saw him enter the hut and I thought that he carried something under his arm.

Suddenly I felt very foolish and with a boyish sense of shame I nosed my boat around and started for home. What business was it of mine to follow a strange man up the creek and spy on him while he performed some private errand of his own? Nevertheless, instinct overcame reason before I had gone very far on my way, and I *knew* that there was something very much out of the ordinary in this lonely night-rider and his silently gliding boat. It was the more peculiar that I should be controlled on this occasion by instinct instead of reason, for I had never been given to imaginative "hunches."

**I** FOLLOWED the creek downstream and soon entered a large bay. Curiously enough, the mist was lifting and when I reached the narrow channel connecting the bay with the ocean, the night air was quite clear. I found Allan in the bungalow. He thought I must be moonstruck, out in the boat at such an hour, all alone.

Half laughing at myself, I started to tell him what I had been up to—then I thought better of it and tried to speak casually.



"I got bored and went prospecting. A mist came up and I had trouble getting back."

"A mist!" he repeated, staring at me. "You're dreaming. Why, there hasn't been any mist."

I had an uncomfortable feeling that he was right, and yet I knew I had *not* been dreaming, so I laughed and changed the subject.

The next day Allan went off somewhere for golf and I made some excuse for remaining at home. As soon as he was gone, I started off in my motor-boat, determined to follow the same course the strange boat had taken the previous night. Coming from the creek into the ocean, I turned to the left and followed the coast until I thought I had reached the approximate point where I should turn into the channel.

**I** STEERED close to shore and studied the lay of the land. I detected a break in the shore line and guided my boat through it. But the channel did not broaden into a lagoon! It was only another creek, and after following it for some distance, I became convinced that I had entered the wrong inlet.

On my return trip I continued my search, and I found another channel which did lead into a large bay. But there were many creeks running into that bay, and many landing-stages—as I discovered after pursuing one creek and then another. Moreover, I came upon no hut nor any scene similar to the one I was looking for. There were camping tents and bungalows, but all the latter appeared to have been built recently.

Several times during the following days I repeated my futile attempt to locate the scene of my midnight adventure—if indeed the experience deserved so exciting a description—but without success. Heaven alone knew why I was so persistent regarding a matter that could be of no importance, but try as I might to treat the incident as a joke, I knew that it had taken possession of my thoughts, and that I could not rest until I had solved what had actually come to assume the proportions of a mystery.

About six weeks went by and once more Allan went to New York for a few days. That night, bored with my own society and with my book, and too restless and wakeful for sleep, I went outside and wandered down to the landing-stage. As on that other night, the moon shone on the creek. Sud-

denly my senses grew taut with excitement.

Far up the creek I saw the outline of a boat! I listened intently but not a sound broke the stillness.

Motionless and intent, I watched as the boat came ever nearer. It approached in the same stealthy manner as before—for I knew it to be the boat I had shadowed! The figure of a man sat rigid at the wheel. I was so close to the creek that I was sure he would turn and look at me as he passed my landing-stage. But apparently heedless of my presence he and his craft passed on. As I expected, there was no wash in the wake of the boat.

Obeying an impulse that I did not try to understand, I ran into the bungalow and seized my compass, a pad and a pencil. Then I jumped into my boat and followed down the creek.

The night had been luminously clear, and yet a haze or mist now seemed to be rising from the water, although it did not obscure my vision of the man and the boat ahead of me!

As far as I could figure out, we followed the same course as before, and the man drew up at the identical landing-stage. Scene and action were the same as on that other night. The man tied his boat and went into the hut, carrying what looked like a package under his arm. Even the mist was similar, obscuring everything but the hut, the man and myself.

**T**HIS time, however, I changed my own plan of action. I waited until the door of the hut had closed, then I started my motor, went swiftly past the landing-stage, and came to a halt a short distance above. I had determined to wait there, if necessary until morning, and should the man depart in his boat, I would investigate the hut.

It is impossible to say how long I waited, alert and watchful, keeping my eyes moving from the boat to the hut and back again. But suddenly, to my utter amazement, I realized that the boat had disappeared! I had not seen the man come out of the shack—I would have sworn that he had not left. Yet—if the boat was gone, presumably the man had gone with it. There might be other persons in the hut for all I knew, but I followed my original plan to the letter.

I had kept a record of the course I had taken, but I determined also to leave some identifying clue in case I should want to return. As I stepped upon the landing-

stage I saw a piece of driftwood which gave me an idea. On it I cut my initials, then jumped down and drove the stake into the soft soil underneath the landing. An instant later I had started for the hut.

It was a very rude affair, obviously built by inexperienced hands. The haze was still heavy and the only other landmark visible was a large, gnarled tree about fifteen feet from the house. The moon shone on the glass of a window and I saw it was thick with dust and cobwebs. The interior of the shack was dark. I circled it and found two other windows in the same condition.

**E**VEN had I lacked physical courage, I don't think that I would have hesitated for fear that the shack was occupied. However, I was impelled by something quite outside the realm of human courage or cowardice.

I found the door and turned the handle. The door swung inward. I tiptoed past the threshold. Suddenly I was aware of Something creeping toward me. I screamed. Then the Thing came very close and I felt a cold breath on my face!

The next instant I knew I was alone again and I tried to tell myself that I had let my imagination run away with me. Why, I was acting like a child afraid of the dark! I stood still, listening intently, my eyes straining to penetrate the darkness.

I took my cigarette-lighter from my pocket and pressed the spring. The tiny flame cast curious shadows about the small room. As I flashed the light from wall to wall, I saw a couch in one corner, a chair, and an old table on which were a few dishes and a cup without a handle. Everything was old and dilapidated. There was no living thing in the room except myself!

My glance, dropping to the floor, centered on the middle of the room where some planks had been torn up, exposing the earth underneath. This so arrested my attention that I dropped upon my knees to examine the hole more closely. At that moment I was distinctly conscious of someone watching me. I looked up quickly and flashed my tiny light about the room but I was utterly alone. I shivered—but I returned resolutely to my inspection of the exposed ground.

Again came the sensation of being watched. Curiously I now felt no sense of menace or danger, and yet my breath came in short gasps and I felt cold perspiration breaking out on my forehead.

A sense of unreality, of something beyond my understanding, took possession of my will and forced me out of the shack and into a run, down to the landing-stage. It took me only a moment to start my motor-boat speeding down the creek toward the ocean. For all my confusion of mind and trembling nerves, I noticed, once out of sight of the hut, that the haze swiftly disappeared, leaving the night brilliantly clear.

Back in my bungalow I upbraided myself for having run from the shack. I was sure some uncanny mystery was concealed in that dark and empty hut.

I tried to imagine what the man had been doing there. Was he a hermit with some terrible secret buried under those planks? Why did he make those mysterious trips in the dead of night? And who had been watching me in that empty room? Had I merely imagined the grisly Thing creeping toward me through the darkness?

Now, stronger than ever, came the impulse to solve the mystery of the man, the boat and the deserted shack. Something told me to return by day to the scene I had so precipitately left. This time, I assured myself, I would have no difficulty in following the course I had twice taken by moonlight.

The next day I set forth with chart and compass and followed the course without difficulty. At last I came to the spot which, according to my record, should be the place I was seeking.

My eyes roved over the countryside, which was flooded with sunlight. There was no old shack or any similar habitation! With surprise I observed that the land appeared to have been taken over recently by a development company! The bank of the creek was dotted with bungalows, some newly completed and some in the first stages of construction.

**S**URELY this was not the place I was looking for—and yet, just as surely, there was the dilapidated landing-stage that I had seen in the moonlight! And there was a tree, gnarled and old, that looked oddly familiar to my puzzled eyes. But in the place where the hut had stood was a new bungalow which had obviously just been completed!

Confused and irritated, I looked from the bungalow to the gnarled tree and back to the old landing-stage. Then sudden remembrance came to me.

In the soft earth under the landing I

searched for the stake that I had driven into the ground. With a cry of amazement I found it, and saw my initials freshly cut! What further proof did I want? Yet how could I explain the disappearance of the hut and, in its place, a newly built bungalow? Obviously the latter had not grown up like a mushroom in the night!

A cynic could quickly dispose of the enigma by assuring me that I had dreamed everything I have described, from start to finish. But how about the stake in which I had cut my initials? Considering that I was wide awake as I held it in my hand, such an explanation would hardly hold.

**T**HOROUGHLY mystified and baffled, I walked slowly to the bungalow. It was obviously unoccupied, and its fresh paint and shingles gave the lie to any suggestion of the eerie or mystic. I found it a two-room affair, built on the ground, without a cellar. I observed unfinished details in the interior and carpenter's tools in a corner. Then, as I crossed the room into which the front door opened, my foot struck something that slid across the floor.

I picked up the object and stared at it with a gasp of something that went deeper than astonishment. *It was my own cigarette-lighter!* There was no possibility of error, for it bore my initials. I had missed it that morning and feared that I had dropped it in the creek. Now I knew, with a conviction that nothing could alter, that I had dropped it in the shack the previous night, when I had left the place on running feet.

Yes—I had dropped it in the shack, but *not* in this shiningly new structure, into which I had never set foot before this instant!

I tried to think rationally. I even attempted to accept the explanation of my reason; namely, that in the moonlight objects are sometimes transformed beyond recognition, and that what I had taken for a hut, had actually been the very bungalow I now stood in.

Preoccupied with the vivid memory of the previous night's experience, the bungalow failed to interest me and I left it forthwith.

During the next two or three days I was literally haunted with thoughts of the man in his noiseless motor-boat and of the deserted hut with the hole in the floor. As to my sensations when the Thing crept toward me—would I ever forget them?

As the days passed, I began to wonder if I was developing a mania. I watched Allan to see if he observed anything queer about me, but apparently he did not, except that he accused me of having a grouch and suggested that I run over to New York for a few days, instead of reading and puttering around with the boat. He called me "Gloomy Gus" just often enough to annoy me, and it was that, perhaps, that spurred me on to put an end to my state of mind.

On the principle that like cures like, I decided to revisit the bungalow that stood where I would vow I had seen a shack. In fact, I went further than that. Telling my pal that I would follow his advice about going to town for several days, I departed with a few things tumbled into a bag.

I went direct to the development company that operated the new bungalows I had seen, and I rented the specific one I wanted to inspect at my leisure. I had not the faintest notion what I would do when I took possession, but I had some vague belief that familiarity with the scene would destroy my obsession. That was all I wanted.

About two in the afternoon I took up my abode in my new quarters. I had procured a cot, a chair and a table, for I purposed to remain in the bungalow until the mystery of the hut and the man was finally erased from my mind.

I had scarcely dropped my bag to the floor, when a new reflection seized me. I was suddenly overtaken by the conviction that the mystery could be solved only by discovering the secret of that gaping hole that I had seen in the floor!

**S**WIFT as thought, came my decision. I would tear up the flooring of the bungalow, for now I believed (as completely as I had formerly *dis*believed) that it stood where I had seen and entered the shack. My sensation of being watched when I examined the loose planks, meant just one thing to me now. Something had been buried there—and whatever it was, I was going to find it!

I procured a pickaxe and spade within the hour, and then I went to work. Tingling with excitement, I pulled up the boards in the main room of the bungalow. Then I began digging with an energy that was more than physical.

For half an hour I worked, the excavation growing larger and the heaps of dirt

mounting where I flung it on each side.

I had dug deep and was beginning to take a long breath and wonder just how many kinds of a fool I could be, when suddenly my spade struck something hard! I kneeled on the edge of the pit and, reaching down as far as possible, I managed to get hold of the object that my spade had encountered. It was wedged tight, but I worked it loose. The jerk of dislodging it threw me back violently.

WHAT I drew forth was a metal box, about ten inches long and five inches wide. I rubbed off the clinging soil and found that the box was locked. With a knife and hammer I forced open the lid. Inside I found a quantity of gold coins and a long, bulky envelope, sealed with red wax but bearing no address.

I stared at the money in stupefied amazement and then lifted the envelope to the light.

It was not morbid curiosity that impelled me to rip open that envelope. After all was said, did anyone have a better right to investigate the object than I had? Surely I had gone through enough to justify any attempt to solve this uncanny mystery! Furthermore, it was necessary for me to learn who was the owner of the gold. Inside I found:

*A letter addressed simply "Lila."  
Several bond certificates.  
A locket.*

The money and certificates I examined and found that they represented a small fortune—one hundred thousand dollars! The locket contained on one side a lock of reddish-gold hair, and on the other side a miniature, painted on ivory, of the most exquisite girl I had ever seen!

As I stood there, utterly dumfounded, holding the letter and certificates in one hand and the locket in the other, I forgot everything but that face of young and appealing beauty. The eyes were deep greenish-gray, the skin was a pale cream tint, and the mouth expressed character, tenderness and a compelling feminine allure. It was a face that no man could forget. It was a face that I was destined to remember to the end of time!

Entranced by the miniature, for a moment I forgot the import of the letter. Intuition told me that the money was meant to reach the girl whose face I gazed at

and to whom the letter was addressed. I decided to open the letter in the hope of finding a clue to the full name and whereabouts of the girl. Perhaps there was more than a praiseworthy intention of delivering the fortune to its rightful owner. So I opened the letter and read:

*Dear Lila:*

*If this letter reaches you, it will mean that you will never see me again in this world. I am 'hijacking' and in this racket you never know when the end will come. In case of my death, I am going to arrange to have this delivered to you, together with the locket you once gave me, and the bonds and money which are rightfully your father's. If I live, I shall give them to you in person.*

*Try to forgive me, Lila, and believe that I love you deeply. Good-by.*

*Will Brasely.*

So the letter gave no clue for the discovery of the girl "Lila"!

I dug deeper and wider in the excavation, but found nothing else. Then, with my thoughts and emotions confused, I replaced the dirt, put back the boards and cleaned up the floor. I had no further use for the bungalow, so I returned the key to the agent—to whom I had paid a month's rental—made some excuse for giving up the place and departed.

IN the course of a few days Allan and I were back in town. I had not confided to him the strange happenings that had led to the finding of the buried treasure. As a matter of fact, I began to question my own sanity in relation to the matter of the mysterious man, the boat and the hut.

I thought of going to the police a hundred times—but something warned me against it.

Curiously enough, although my pulses stirred at every glimpse of the face in the locket and although youth and romance called to me to find the girl for my own sake, I was actually even more anxious to discover her whereabouts—if she were alive—for the purpose of clearing up the mystery of the hut and the man. But how could I find her?

I racked my brain continually. I haunted public places, staring at every girl I saw, on the streets, in restaurants and theaters, in conveyances—anywhere and everywhere, but to no purpose. I saw no woman who

remotely resembled the girl in the locket.

One evening at a dinner party I heard one of the guests telling of an experience with a woman whose powers of mind-reading or clairvoyance were simply amazing. This man had paid her a visit in the hope of finding a woman who had dropped out of his life years before. He had sat in a darkened room with the clairvoyant and she had held in her hand a handkerchief belonging to the man's friend. The clairvoyant had told him far more than he had gone to her to discover; she not only told him where he could find his friend, but revealed facts about the woman's life which, as later developed, were absolutely true and known only to herself.

**T**HIS incident made a deep impression upon me. I knew that the man had told the truth and I believed that if this clairvoyant could locate a person through a handkerchief, surely a lock of hair would accomplish as much—and more.

It ended by my securing the name and address of the clairvoyant and calling upon her. She was a small, frail woman in the late thirties, and her home was clean but shabby. In these modern days such a person should have been living in luxury. But this woman was apparently not one to exploit the credulity of the human race, so she charged a trifling sum for her services and literally used up her vitality helping those who often came to her in despair.

When I gave her the lock of hair, I told her merely that it belonged to a girl whose whereabouts I was desperately anxious to discover. The frail little woman held the lock in her sensitive fingers and sat very still in the darkened room. I was almost afraid to breathe for fear of disturbing her. But I did not need to have such a fear, for as she sat there, her eyes closed, softly stroking the reddish-gold strands of hair, her spirit was far from me and from the room in which we sat.

I do not know how long we sat thus before I heard her speaking in a toneless voice.

"This girl lives at number — West Ninety-first Street in this city. Her name is Lila James."

Silence followed those few words, then I asked eagerly:

"Can you tell me something more about her?"

A brief pause, then the woman said slowly, "You and she have never met, yet

your lives will join, through a man who is no longer living."

Tense and excited, I asked her if she could describe the man.

"I cannot see him clearly," she said, "but he was killed in a boat while in the act of smuggling."

I felt myself grow rigid with amazement and something akin to horror. Then I managed to say:

"One more question, please. Can you tell me when he died—was killed?"

"It was sometime last January."

Then I heard the clairvoyant give a long sigh as if deeply fatigued, and following an impulse of compassion, I told her that she need not answer any more questions, as I knew she must be weary. When the light was switched on, I saw that the little woman looked white and spent, but she smiled kindly and told me that she hoped my search would be a happy one. I thanked her warmly, paid her double the fee she asked, and went my way.

As I hurried directly to the address she had given me, my mind was confused. I had seen the man in the boat in August, and she said that he had died the previous January! If this were so, then what of the hut that I had entered? Had that also been a vision—a myth—a *ghost* like the man himself? Unbelievable as it sounded, I preferred to accept this as the explanation, rather than to conclude that I had been out of my mind. And, after all, if the dead have the power to materialize themselves to the living, why should I deny the possibility that they can make the living see material objects that once actually did exist?

**T**HE address proved to be an apartment house in a good but not fashionable section of the city. It was Fate—not chance—that had led me there, and when the door of Lila James' apartment was opened by the girl whose face I could never forget, again I knew it was Destiny.

Strangely enough, she admitted me without question. It was almost as if she knew me and expected me—yet we had never met. Without preliminary comment or explanation I gave her the package containing her property. She examined the bonds, glanced at the miniature and read the letter with tears in her eyes.

I told her the story from the moment when I had first seen the noiseless motor-boat gliding downstream. Her eyes were

wide with amazement as she listened, and when I had come to the end, she said brokenly:

"It is—all—so wonderful—so astounding that I can scarcely believe—the evidence of my senses." She looked down at the letter in her hand.

Then she told me her side of the remarkable tale.

**S**EVERAL years before, her father had been persuaded to take William Brasely into partnership with him. Father and daughter had liked and trusted the young man, and when he had fallen in love with Lila, she had been gentle with him and compassionate, but she had not returned his love. She had given him the locket out of an impulse of tenderness, perhaps to take the place of all that he wanted and could never attain.

One day her father had been notified that Brasely was a crook and that detectives were on his trail. He had evidently known of this or had a premonition of it, for they found that he had disappeared. Unfortunately for the father and daughter, Brasely had power to sign checks and he had taken with him so large a sum of money that it had seriously crippled the business.

Briefly, that was what had occurred. Her father had been disillusioned as well as impoverished, and Lila had had to go to work. Brasely, evidently conscience-stricken, had decided to make amends. As a matter of fact, a hundred thousand dollars was slightly more than he had originally stolen.

Then I asked a question which was puzzling me. Why had not Brasely himself

delivered the package to Lila or her father?

"He must have been killed suddenly. Perhaps he had hidden the package under the hut, waiting for an opportunity to send it to me."

"But why," I continued, "did he select *me* as his emissary?"

"How can we tell?" Lila said thoughtfully. "You see, he had only the power to appear in the boat and the hut. Perhaps his selection fell on you because he knew that you were honest and courageous and would see the thing through to the finish. And perhaps it was because you are psychic and can see what others would be oblivious to."

There is little more to tell. The records proved the truth and accuracy of what the clairvoyant had told me. Brasely had been shot in a hijackers' fight in the previous January and he had been buried not far from the hut he had used as the base for his operations.

**A**S for Lila and me, we loved each other as inevitably as all the rest had come about, and we were married a few months later. It was as the clairvoyant had told me: Lila and I had found each other through the aid of a man who had passed out of this life. He had redeemed his honor, not only by giving back what he had stolen but by giving us to each other.

I have heard many tales of ghosts—good and bad—but my own experience is the only instance I have ever heard of, where the spirit of the dead united two human beings who might otherwise have sought one another in vain!

### Prize Winners for the Month

The awards to readers for opinions of GHOST STORIES, issue of September, went to:

1st award of \$10.00

Mr. J. P. Glass  
Aurora, Illinois

2nd award of \$5.00

Miss Laura Fenton  
Mansfield, Ohio

3rd award of \$3.00

Mrs. F. B. Gibson  
Columbia, South Carolina

Someone will collect the awards for opinions on this issue.  
Why not YOU?

# A Medium's Memoirs

By  
HORACE LEAF,  
F.R.G.S.

## A Dangerous Ghost



**M**R. LEAF is England's most successful ghost-layer. His amazing report of terrible happenings in a London house is written with scientific accuracy and extraordinary knowledge of the occult. It is worth reading and re-reading.

**T**RADITION indicates that benevolent ghosts are not so common as evil ghosts, and popular opinion, relying on authority, naturally accepts the judgment of tradition. Logic is on this side, too; what good purpose could induce the inhabitants of another world to disturb the unoffending inhabitants of this?

There have been occasions when I have found the popular opinion more or less justified, particularly in the case of an investigation I undertook in the west end of London in the summer of 1918. The circumstances leading up to this investigation were somewhat unusual. An acquaintance of mine, a graduate of Heidelberg University, a complete skeptic in all matters pertaining to the supernatural, unexpectedly

met me in Bayswater and immediately taxed me on my belief in ghosts. I assured him that my opinion remained unaltered. Then he confessed that his own belief was in danger of undergoing a change—his house seemed to be haunted.

His story was a strange one. He and his wife had moved into an old house not one mile from Marble Arch, and from the beginning they had been disturbed by extraordinary and uncanny phenomena. Their three pet dogs, of whom they were passionately fond, had been the first to be affected; they always refused to enter the house except by compulsion and, whenever possible, the animals would run out and stay away for days, returning only in response to the pangs of hunger. Finally one of them ran away and never returned, while a second, a fine young collie, died within a short time. The third, it is interesting to note, died soon after the ghost-laying experiment.

My friend had been ordered to the Front almost as soon as they had moved into the house and, while in France, received a series of distressing letters from his wife,

who insisted that the place was haunted by a terribly malignant ghost, which could be heard, felt and smelt, and, in a partial way, seen. As became a scientific skeptic, he had concluded that his wife was suffering from some nervous disorder due to the stress caused by the War, and he had determined to ignore her request to find another residence.

HE had been granted sick leave a few days before I met him, and on arriving home received a most unpleasant welcome. His wife and a lady friend were crouching in a corner of the dining room, the embodiment of fear, while the remaining dog shrank nervously against the wall, perspiring freely. The room smelled deadly unsanitary and seemed filled by a dark, glutinous cloud of vapor.

"The smell was awful," he assured me with a shudder, "and I could feel the cloud as well as see it."

The ladies declared it was the ghost—that it had frequently come in this form and appeared more powerful each successive visit.

Subsequently a strange and ludicrous habit developed in my friend, and this seemed to worry him more than anything else.

"Whenever I enter the house and reach a certain part of the passage leading to the foot of the stairs, I am seized with an irresistible impulse to jump. No amount of effort on my part can overcome this ridiculous practice, and on more than one occasion I have actually jumped before I have been aware of it." He looked at me despairingly.

Another curious feature of this haunting was that nothing but misfortune had befallen my friend and his wife since moving into the house. In addition to the trouble with the dogs, his wife had developed a serious internal disorder and he had met with a series of minor accidents at the Front. These had so affected him that at last he had to be sent home to recruit his health.

I suggested that the remedy might be to leave the house, but this he was loath to do. It was a very convenient location, near the center of the town, and it would savor of superstition if he gave in to the annoyances. "You believe in ghosts and profess to understand their ways," he said somewhat cynically; "why not try to lay this one?"

I fell in with the suggestion at once and invited him to make one of the company.

"I would rather not," he replied cautiously. "You would find me a poor help as I hate séances or anything connected with spiritualism, and could not give the kind of sentiment supposed to be essential to the success of these eerie things."

I really think, however, that he was afraid of the specter.

My preliminary investigations convinced me that the ghost was of a very malignant order and that to attempt to exorcise it alone would be dangerous. I therefore searched among my acquaintances, hoping to find a number of sympathetic and willing helpers. My friend's wife proved more courageous than her husband and readily consented to join the party. She was most anxious to get rid of the nuisance for several reasons. She was under the impression that the ghost, for some unaccountable reason, particularly disliked her and resented her presence in the house. She also believed that it was a "spirit in trouble" and, being of a religious disposition, felt it her duty to help it to appreciate "higher things." Furthermore, the effect of the haunting on her health had been extremely bad. Never very robust, she had been reduced to a shadow of her former self and contended that the ghost was living on her vitality.

At that time I was holding a post in the Admiralty and I found among my fellow employees two men sufficiently interested in psychical subjects to agree to join me in the proposed effort at exorcism. One of them, a Scotchman, had a sister who possessed mediumistic powers, and she was prevailed upon to make one of the company. My wife also volunteered to go. Our party therefore consisted of three members of each sex—an excellent psychic combination. The third gentleman was particularly interesting. He had good sense and was noted for his great courage, having received official recognition as Engineer-Commander of one of the first ships that landed troops at Gallipoli.

THERE was little to recommend the haunted house except its central position, we found. The rooms were dark, old and ill-formed, situated above and behind an antique shop.

We commenced our séance early in the evening and almost as soon as we had formed a circle, the sky became overcast and a storm threatened. We waited in silence for some time and as nothing un-



usual occurred we adopted the well-known method of singing and talking cheerfully, clasping each other's hands in chain formation. Harmonious sound vibrations are very helpful in the production of psychic phenomena, and we hoped in this way to induce the haunter to make his presence known. We continued thus for some time without effect and were beginning to think our effort would be useless when suddenly an atmospheric change took place. The room became extremely close and oppressive, the air seeming to grow thick and murky.

One or two of the company began to complain of an unpleasant odor, and then to our discomfort and chagrin the storm broke furiously. The room was plunged in stygian darkness, lit every now and then by vivid flashes of lightning. Lights were procured and the company, now very depressed, voted to relinquish its efforts until a more favorable time. The storm soon passed, however, and with some difficulty I persuaded my friends to resume their endeavors. We re-formed the circle.

Thunder-storms are notably destructive of psychic force and most phenomena would have broken down for a long time under the stress of the one that had just ended. But this ghost must have been particularly powerful, for almost immediately the suffocating heat and disgusting odor returned and we felt we were in the presence of an invisible and sinister influence.

The intentions of our unseen visitor were soon made plain: he was attempting to obsess or control one of the sitters. He first attacked our hostess, who trembled violently and complained of a fearful gripping sensation across her forehead. With a great effort she threw the influence off.

Then came the Scottish lady's turn. She was facing me and in the dim light I could discern a dark, formless cloud settling upon her! She commenced to twist and turn, groaning as if in pain.

**M**Y Admiralty friends, although new to this kind of experience, were behaving themselves with commendable fortitude, but there could be no doubt from their expressions that they were far from comfortable. I felt quite sure that if the nerves of the party did not give way, we should land our ghost—and if we did not succeed in laying him, we should at any rate have sufficient evidence to convince the most skeptical that

such beings exist. My hopes were soon justified.

Failing to make sufficient impression on his new subject, the wraith withdrew and for a few minutes nothing happened. Then another important change took place in the atmospheric conditions: the temperature dropped considerably and everybody present complained of experiencing the feeling known as "goose-flesh." It was obvious that the invisible operator was gathering considerable ectoplasm and that a final assault might take place at any moment.

**S**UDDENLY the ghost attacked the remaining "psychic" with terrific energy, forced him to his feet, and the next moment assailed the whole company with a flow of words that no Billingsgate porter could hope to surpass. He talked to that band of stalwarts in a way that they never dreamed a live man could do, let alone a ghost. He had hard words for all but reserved his purple patches for the inhabitants of the house.

Had he stopped at words, all might have been well; but when he flung himself violently at the throat of one of the ladies and attempted to strangle her, we all felt that we must resort to force, and in an instant the room was in a turmoil. The promptitude of the Engineer-Commander undoubtedly saved the lady from harm, although her nerves were much shaken.

After releasing the lady, the ghost attacked the Scottish gentleman and it required our united efforts to save him from injury. These violent efforts tired the invader and after a time peace was restored once more.

Some of the sitters were for leaving the ghost in possession of the field, and perhaps all of us wished that we had never attempted to oust him from his self-chosen territory. However, curiosity and the desire not to be ignominiously defeated induced us to persevere.

The entity controlled again. There was now little danger, as we had the medium under firm control and it appeared as if some invisible forces of a good character were assisting us to avert danger. He continued to curse and abuse us all roundly in broken English, and from his disconnected sentences we gathered sufficient to piece together a story, presumably of the ghost's past.

He claimed to be the spirit of an Italian who had once lived in the house, amassing

a fortune by using it as a gaming den and worse. Drink and evil living had brought him to an untimely end and, having died in the height of his passions, he found satisfaction only in visiting his old haunts. He regarded the house with the greatest jealousy as his own special possession and bitterly resented anyone else being in it.

WE felt helpless before these outbursts and thought that no amount of persuasion would cause the specter to leave the place. In this, however, we were wrong. After a while he quieted down and became more or less amenable to reason, his filthy oaths giving way to maudlin tears; and for a time he seemed to feel as helpless as ourselves.

This encouraged us to address him and point out to him the uselessness of his evil conduct. We endeavored to persuade him to try for something better. Nothing seemed more obvious than that the desires that chained him to that gloomy house were stupid and were bound to do him no good but only harm other people. At first these suggestions aroused his anger and he dismissed our counsels with an oath and a jeer.

"I will ruin that woman!" he cried, signifying the terror-stricken tenant. "She has led me into this and I shall not forget to repay her"—and much more to the same effect.

Notwithstanding his unrepentant attitude, we could discern an element of remorse that indicated he was not beyond redemption.

During the séance the dog, which had been permitted to remain in the room, had behaved in an extraordinary way. It lay under the table trembling, whining and growling, occasionally snapping in the direction in which the dark cloud seemed to move. It would often look up as if it could see something invisible to the rest of the company. The animal apparently never recovered from that séance and died a few days afterward.

Everybody was by now fairly exhausted and much shaken, and we decided to end

the experiment and leave the house. When the question arose as to whether a later attempt should be made to complete the work, the feelings of the company became evident. Each of the ladies offered some excuse for not participating in another séance and the Engineer-Commander spoke out in a blunt, sailor-like manner.

"I wouldn't go through such a hair-raiser again for a fortune," he said warmly. "Gallipoli was tame beside it! Why, fighting live men is mere child's play to laying dead ones."

When my scientific friend heard the result of our effort, he seemed disposed to give up the house as soon as possible. Had he done so, he might have escaped a great deal of trouble.

MY opinion was that the ghost really did live on the vitality of my friend's wife and that if the process continued, her health was certain to become permanently affected. I supported my arguments by references to eminent scientists who have testified to the fact that in the production of certain kinds of psychic phenomena the bodies of mediums are actually drawn upon, and that if the substance thus extracted is not safely restored, the individual's life or health will be endangered.

My conjecture proved correct. The poor woman's health grew worse and worse and finally she became an incurable invalid. The last I saw of her, she was lying—a physical wreck—in a London infirmary and, since then, has had one of her legs amputated.

The sad fate of these two people may have been due to the ordinary circumstances of life—but it fits in singularly well with the curses of the ghost.

Later the specter's influence gradually faded away and finally ceased altogether. It is my belief that this was the result of our séance—that the arguments we advanced that night had a slow but definite effect upon the unhappy wraith and helped eventually to set him free from his earthbound condition.

*What is "black magic"? How does it work? Can a witch actually KILL by pronouncing a curse? Read Mr. Leaf's startling exposé of witchcraft in Australia—in the next issue of GHOST STORIES. He will tell of a curse that destroyed seven lives—of the terrible results of "pointing the sticks"—of a magician who swore he would make a volcano erupt—and did it! Mr. Leaf's articles are TRUE accounts by an authority—a friend and peer of the greatest students of the occult in the world. Don't miss the next one. In the February GHOST STORIES—on the news stands January 23rd.*



# The Prisoner of LIFE

In the old tower Bungay faces the final horror—  
a battle with an invisible fiend!

By  
LESTER SHIELDS

As told to  
VICTOR ROUSSEAU

**P**AM, my fiancée, was kidnaped by Prince Uffizzi and carried to Europe. I followed them and tried to rescue her. Failing in that, I killed her as she stood at the marriage altar with the Prince. It was the only way that I could save her immortal soul from a terrible fate at the hands of that fiend in human form.

For this crime I was condemned to death. While awaiting execution, I was visited by Friar Bungay, a queer old monk who claimed that he had lived from the time of Roger Bacon and that he and the great scientist had discovered the two secrets of the ages: the philosopher's stone, which transmutes base metals into gold, and the elixir of life, which confers immortality. He also believed that Prince Uffizzi was none other than the black fiend known in legend as Faust, and that he had come to life through the aid of a mulatto medium, the half-witted son of Pam's maid.

The monk offered me a drink of the "elixir of life" but warned me that it con-

tained a sediment that might nullify its supposed effects. He also promised to claim my body after the execution, carry it to the crypt below the old church of St. Sulpice and there attempt to revive it. Thinking that I was merely humoring a madman, I drank the elixir.

When my day of doom arrived, I was unafraid. The officers placed me on the guillotine in the center of a public square, and I gathered my soul in one last defiance as the knife fell.

**T**HE end? No, this was not the end! I remembered dimly that something had happened to me but the memory of it was infinitely remote, as if a million years had passed.

Suddenly I heard a voice calling and I seemed to be floating toward it. At first I could not make out the words. Then, at last, this question penetrated to my numbed brain:

"Can you hear me, Shields?"

It was Bungay's voice, thin and piping as a spirit's and seeming to come across infinite space.

"Where are you?" I cried.

"I am here in the crypt of the church of St. Sulpice, Shields. One is apt to be blinded on first passing over, but you must see clearly if we are to help each other."

His words plunged me into terrible despair. "Have I *passed over*?" I screamed in anguish.

"YOU are dead, Shields. Try to understand. Many do not learn for weeks and months. Look at the light; be strong!"

Now, very far away, I seemed to see something like a dim light burning in the thick darkness.

"The experiment failed," Bungay's voice went on. "The elixir was not potent enough. You died on the guillotine—but you can still aid in our work. Can you hear me?"

"Yes, I hear you," I answered.

"It is night now. Faust has been working in the laboratory where my master and I worked long ago. He has left his body behind him and become a spirit for a while, in order to gain new strength, but he cannot see you because you are still only half dead. You died too quickly. Follow him! There he comes! Follow him!"

From the dense darkness that encompassed me I saw a shadowy form emerge. I saw the pride, scorn and cruelty upon the features and my heart leaped up in raging hate as I recognized the author of all my woes.

I leaped at him in blind, uncontrollable rage—but my fists beat impotently upon the air, and Faust passed on, seemingly unconscious of my presence there!

As he moved, he seemed to diffuse a faint luminosity, by the light of which I could see the outlines of the crypt about me. He passed through a doorway and started up a flight of narrow, winding steps.

I drifted after him. We seemed to ascend for an interminable time, until at length a faint light began to relieve the darkness. The steps ended in what appeared to be a platform.

"Don't dream, Shields!" I knew it was Bungay speaking again, though the old monk was nowhere to be seen. His words seemed to be registered on my brain without the aid of sound! Certainly Faust gave no sign of having heard them! "Try to see through your physical sight, which is

still possible, since your astral senses have not yet been destroyed by death. What do you see?"

With an effort of the will I threw off my lethargy and looked around. The city lay beneath me, clearly defined, but it was as if I were looking at its reflection in a mirror.

I was standing on a little ledge at the very summit of the belfry of the church. Below was the market square, and all about it gleamed the lights of the city. But the market square was shrunk to the dimensions of a playing-card, and in the middle of it was a tiny blur looking like a child's block.

I shuddered at the sight of it. I knew what it was. It was the guillotine, not yet removed, on which I had suffered death!

A shriek of fiendish derision from Faust broke in upon my frenzied thoughts. He was standing at the very edge of the little platform and, unconscious of my proximity, was leaning forth and shaking his fist at the city below.

"Curses on you," he cried, "and on the whole race of mortals! A few days more, and the secret of the stone will have become mine. Then, with my gold, I shall enslave you and all the cities of earth. Your gold, your jewels, your women, all shall be mine. Then I shall taste life again as I knew it in the old days, and with leisure and power I shall track down Bungay and his elixir and win back Pamela Rycroft from the infernal shades. Curses on you for having existed so long, while I was a tortured fiend in hell!"

OVER the platform a shadowy shape came into view. Gradually I began to make out what it was. It was a fantastic gargoyle, one of those figures of fiends that medieval sculptors used to carve upon the walls of churches, and someone had once told me that their purpose was to confound the devils who, always seeking to enter the building, would in some way become entangled in them and rendered powerless. And now I saw another and another—a whole row of gargoyles, extending all along the façade of the church tower.

Faust stood there, leaning out over the town, shaking his fist and chanting blasphemies and curses. He seemed drunk with power and success.

But as Pam's name came from his lips again, an anguished appeal formed in my brain: "I want life—and Pam! Where is

she? Cannot all your arts give me back my body, Bungay?"

"You—can—try." The answer came very faintly to my ears. "See if you can replace Faust in the body that he has left behind him. Try, Shields, though it will be difficult. But try!"

Suddenly the scene about me vanished. I was back in the crypt, and the light that I had seen was now burning brightly in front of me.

**B**Y its aid I could distinguish the dim outlines of Bungay. But the light itself seemed to come from within the body of a man.

*It was a man!* He was seated opposite Bungay at what looked like a small table, but he was hunched over and seemingly asleep. I could not discern any of the details of his appearance, but the light illumined the whole interior of his body! It burned most brilliantly in the region of the solar plexus, with a secondary light in the brain, and little threads of fire running from these two lights, ramifying in all directions through the body and limbs.

Suddenly it came to me that the light represented the principal nerve centers of the body, and that the threads of light represented the nerves themselves. And now I knew what I was asked to do!

I had sat at spiritualistic sessions before and had heard spirits describe the medium as a "light" that attracted them, but never had I dreamed 'hat I, a spirit, would ever attempt to take possession of a medium's body.

For a moment I hovered outside the form of the sleeping man, not knowing how to set about the difficult task before me.

"Courage, Shields," came Bungay's voice faintly. "Try with all your might! *Will* yourself inside!"

And at that I summoned all my energy and power of will to gain possession of the physical organism of the sleeping man before me.

I waded—that is the only word that seems to describe the process—into the light, which scorched me like a flame. Time and again I hurled myself against it, only to find myself baffled.

"Try again, Shields. Will with all your might," came from Bungay.

Suddenly, as I put forth an intense effort of will, I found myself inside the body. Then, for an instant, everything grew dark.

I opened my eyes. I looked out. I was

seeing through the physical organism. I had a body and limbs. I was a man once more! I was not at all disturbed by the fact that I was utilizing the body of some person unknown to me. I moved my limbs, and they obeyed me—stiffly, like a mechanism with which I was not quite familiar—but still they obeyed me.

And words of incoherent gratitude broke from me as I realized that I had once more come back to earth.

Bungay checked my stammering speech.

"We are a long way from success, Shields," he said to me. "The experiment did not succeed, because there was not enough of the elixir. But it succeeded in so far that your body has not undergone the changes of death. There is even the possibility that the virtue of the elixir will restore it to life later. At present, the balance swings. Within a little while, we shall know whether you are to regain possession of it or whether you must resign yourself to losing it forever—no great loss, since each body that we possess is the mere ephemeral expression of the spirit.

"Presently I will show it to you, but meanwhile I must tell you what I propose to do. Faust—"

"Tell me," I cried frantically, "shall I ever see Pam again in life or death? Is there no hope that I shall at least be able to come into touch with her and ask her forgiveness?"

Bungay's calm, pitiful look seemed somehow to convey consolation to me. "There is some hope, Shields," he answered, "if you will be patient and place yourself in my hands. Can you do this?"

"Yes—a thousand times yes," I answered gratefully.

"Then listen, Shields, for the night is passing swiftly and Faust will soon seek to return to bodily incarnation. I have a last plan to thwart him. Whether it will succeed or not I do not know, but it will need the utmost coolness and courage if we are to win.

**F**AUST is upon the verge of discovering the secret of the philosopher's stone," Bungay went on, "and he knows that, when he has succeeded, I shall be compelled to come to terms with him by giving him the secret of the elixir. For it is better that he should roam the earth immortal for many hundreds of years than that the world should be convulsed by the power that unlimited gold will give him.

"Once he has drunk the elixir, Faust will be able to perpetuate himself in mortal form. At present he is compelled to leave the body nightly, in order to regain his strength in the world of devils. I hope that you may succeed in retaining this body that you have entered, and thus preventing him from incarnating. But I doubt whether you will succeed, for at dawn he will return and the sight of his body in the possession of another will infuriate him. And you will have all your work cut out to frustrate his attempts to eject you.

"If he succeeds in ousting you, I have still a last card to play, of which I will inform you in due time. Meanwhile, strive with all your power to keep him from regaining possession of this body of yours."

"But whose body have I?" I cried. "And where is the mulatto whose body Faust was using?"

"Look at yourself, my dear Shields," answered Bungay.

Hitherto I had not attempted to examine myself but now I raised my arms and looked at them. To my horror I discovered that they were a tawny yellow!

A cry of rage and horror broke from me as I read the truth in Bungay's eyes.

*I myself was the hideous mulatto whom Faust had used as a medium for incarnating!*

"Steady, Shields! Think of all that is at stake! Think of Pamela!" hissed Bungay, recalling me to myself; for in that first moment of madness I had been looking about me for some weapon that I could use for the purpose of self-destruction.

"Must I retain this hideous shape forever?" I cried in despair.

"I told you there was a hope, though a faint one, that your own body might survive the ordeal to which it has been subjected," answered Bungay. "There is always hope while life lasts, Shields."

I looked at him aghast and speechless. Never had I dreamed that such a loathsome destiny might be reserved for me as to live in the mulatto's body.

Then the old blind rage filled me again as it seemed to me that Bungay was making use of me in his schemes. This was what he had brought me to!

"I wish I'd died on the guillotine!" I cried. "I wish I'd died and gone to hell, rather than have come back to the world in this hideous guise. Just now you held out to me some hope that I might come into touch with Pam. Make good on that! I

tell you, I care nothing for your plans of defeating Faust. Make good on your promise! Show me Pam, or by the living God I'll destroy this body I'm in, and leave Faust to seek another means of incarnation!"

Bungay put his hand on my shoulder. As he rose, I saw that he now towered above me. I was a hideous, yellow, repulsive dwarf. Yes, this was what he had brought me to. But Bungay checked the new outburst on my lips.

"You shall see her then, Shields."

"When?" I cried.

"Now! But do not waken her!"

"Waken her? Is she—alive?"

"She is not dead. I was keeping this from you because I did not want to arouse hopes that might not be fulfilled. Now I can tell you why I was prepared to assist in marrying Pam to Faust.

"Patience one moment, and you shall see her," Bungay continued. "I knew, by the horoscope I had cast, that Pam was destined to die at your hands before she could become Faust's wife. And therefore it would have been useless to have attempted to reason with you. Therefore, in the guise of a priest, I administered a draught of the elixir to her during the sacrament."

"Then—she lives?" I shouted.

"If the elixir had only been fresh as when we made it!" moaned Bungay. "It was mingled with the impure sediment, like the draught I gave you. And it had been exposed to the air. No! To all appearances she died, but I secured the body and had it buried in the crypt here beside your own. And she remains uncorrupted. I have even dared to hope that the potency of the draught will yet revive her.

"At present she is neither living nor dead. Her soul rests among the sleeping souls of the newly dead and is therefore secure against that devil and his crew, for, as the proverb says, neither heaven nor hell can approach the souls that sleep."

"I must see her!" I cried.

"ONE moment more! If she loves you, she may partly awake. Are you willing that she should see you in that body?"

Again I glanced down at the yellow claws, the twisted arms, the horrible deformity of my bowed legs and spindle shanks. And for a moment I hesitated. Dared I run the risk of Pam's seeing me like that?

My hesitation was but momentary. So long as I could look into Pam's face again, nothing else mattered.

"Take me to her," I cried, "and after I have seen her, I will serve you faithfully, even if I am compelled to live out the rest of my life in this dwarf's body."

Bungay, without a word, motioned to me to accompany him. He picked up a lantern glowing with some strange internal fire, and I followed, a hideous, shambling, yellow dwarf, groping my way behind him down the dimness of the vault. Here and there, where the subsoil had given way, we were compelled to climb down into pits half full of putrid water. For a few minutes we threaded a corridor beneath the earth, a mere tunnel propped up with ancient oaken timbers; then we were ascending a slanting passage lined with stone. And at last I found myself in the crypt proper of the church again.

WE passed between the rows of tombs, all centuries old, many having effigies with the feet crossed, indicating that the man whose bones lay underneath had gone on a Crusade. At length we stopped at a place where two unmarked slabs rested side by side.

Bungay looked at me as if to satisfy himself that I remained calm; then, setting down the lantern, he put his hands to one of the great slabs and, with an exhibition of astonishing strength, raised it from the stone coffin underneath and laid it on one side. Then, picking up the lantern again, he beckoned to me to step to his side.

I moved forward tremulous with emotion, fully expecting to gaze into Pam's face. Instead, I found myself looking into my own!

Yes, I was looking, with inconceivable emotion, *upon my own body*, lying within that tomb.

There I lay, as if asleep, the head joined to the neck by a thin red line, the eyes closed, the face a waxen white. If ever a man was dead, I was dead, and yet there was no putrefaction, none of the changes of death.

I turned away, overcome by the sight. "Pam!" I cried to Bungay. "Show me Pam!"

He bent his head in assent and, picking up the great slab, replaced it with hardly an effort. Then, in the same way and with the same apparent ease, he raised the slab from the second tomb.

And with indescribable emotion I looked down upon Pam lying within that ancient coffin, looking like a woman of stone.

Her hair was coiled about her head, her forehead was waxen white, and her eyelids lay so lightly over the eyes that it seemed as if they might open at any moment. Her hands were clasped over the wounds I had inflicted in her breast. And at the sight of her I lost my self-control. I forgot that in body I was the hideous mulatto, the cause of all her sorrows. I forgot that if she could awake, she must look upon me with loathing, if only because of my repulsive form.

I forgot all that—and, flinging myself upon my knees beside her coffin, I implored her to come back to life and forgive me! I cried that I had killed her only to save her from Faust's clutches; I begged her to give some little sign that her spirit heard me and understood.

And, as I kneeled there, my prayer was slowly answered. For at first I raved beside the effigy of a marble woman, motionless, inert, and seemingly gone beyond recall. Then—miracle of miracles!—I seemed to see the creep of carmine color into the pale lips, and next a little tint of rose in the white cheeks. Then I was sure of it.

My love had called Pam back from beyond the grave!

I saw her eyelids flutter and slowly unclosed. I saw her blue eyes, like deep pools of color, fix themselves upon mine. And then understanding seemed slowly to dawn in them.

It is impossible to describe the awakening of that inanimate body. I only know that one moment I was looking down at a woman of stone—and the next instant the whole form had become imbued with life. Pam was alive! She was looking straight into my eyes. And, more wonderful still, she knew me!

HER recognition of me is something I have never attempted to account for. By some strange alchemy of love I was changed, for her, from the hideous mulatto dwarf to the man she loved. She knew me for Lester Shields, despite my yellow skin and frizzly hair—and her fingers fluttered upon her breast and I could see, by the slight movement of her arms, that she would have flung them about my neck and drawn me to her.

I knelt beside her and, raising her icy hands in mine, I drew them to my lips passionately.

Yes, this was Pam, my Pam, restored to me in her own personality and miracu-

lously saved from the devil with whom we had still to reckon.

She said in a low, sweet voice: "Lester, where have you been? And where am I? I am so sleepy. Are we still on board the boat?"

I could see she did not know that I had shot her—and, after all, that was not to be wondered at, since it was the *other* Pam whom I had killed, not mine.

"You are safe, dear," I answered. "You have been very ill."

"Am I going to get better, Lester?"

"Yes, you are going to get well," I said.

"**T**HEN, when I am well, we must go away together and begin our new life," she whispered, as her eyelids fluttered down over her eyes again.

She slept. And slowly the cold marble usurped the living flesh. I watched her passing from me and looked up in despair at Bungay, who had been standing behind the head of Pam's coffin, watching us intently.

"She will live now," he said. "Have no fears as to that. She needs a little more rest, but the crisis has been passed. Come, I must place the lid over her tomb again."

I watched in despair while he replaced the heavy slab; it seemed as if he was sealing Pam away from me forever.

"And now we will look at your body again," he said and, stooping, once more lifted the covering of the other tomb.

I gasped with amazement! I, too, was coming back to life!

Yes, there was no doubt of it. My body had changed even as Pam's had changed. There was a little tinge of color in the lips. And there was that indescribable look of life about the form, in place of the waxen cast that I had seen a few short minutes before.

It was terrible to look upon this body that I had once possessed, and to realize that it was mine no longer. But suppose it awoke to life? Who would enter into it? A fiend?

Bungay turned to me and said:

"You will now have to make your choice, Shields, and upon that choice all your future hangs—your future and Pamela's, and perhaps many more futures about which you are at present ignorant."

I only looked at him. I did not know what Bungay was referring to, but I guessed from his words that the decision was to be more momentous than any I had ever made.

"I have the power to restore Pamela Rycroft to life, strength and health within a brief time," said the old monk. "It will be possible for her to leave her tomb and go forth into the upper air, knowing nothing of what has passed since the day when she stepped ashore from the boat, believing that you and she were to be married. Everything that has happened since the moment when Faust met her upon the quay and her alternate personality returned, will remain submerged beneath the surface of her consciousness.

"And you, my friend—it will be possible for you to step with her into that same upper light and air and forget the past. Only——"

"Only?" I cried, though I knew well what Bungay was going to say.

"You will do so in your mulatto's body."

And I cried out wildly though I had known what was coming.

Bungay continued: "And you must choose quickly, my friend, for the dawn is fast approaching, and Faust will be seeking the use of this body again. If you go forth in the guise you are now wearing——"

"Will Pam instinctively know me for Lester Shields?" I cried. "Do you believe that she will understand?"

"Her instinct may tell her, but her mind will never accept the truth. She will never know that you are Lester Shields," answered Bungay.

"Then what use will it be for me to return to life?" I cried. "Can I hope ever to win her in the fleshly guise of a half-imbecile mulatto? Faugh, the thought sickens me!"

"At least you will be near her, see her sometimes——" Bungay ventured. "If your love for her embodies the quintessence of self-sacrifice——"

"**B**AH, you are old and you forget that you ever lived as a young man!" I answered. "I reject your offer! I would rather find myself back in the condemned cell, suffer upon the guillotine again and sleep the sleep that knows no waking. What is the alternative?"

"The alternative," answered Bungay slowly, "is that you try to regain that body of yours that now lies sleeping in the tomb."

"Is that hard?" I cried.

"Harder than you imagine, my friend, for Faust will fight for Pamela to the last. He means to make her his own as soon as she leaves the place of sleeping souls."



"One question," I pleaded—"if Faust can seize this hideous body that I am wearing, and convert it into the appearance of Prince Uffizzi—if he can change this yellow skin to white, the negro features to those of the Caucasian; if he can so fashion it that he is acceptable as a wooer to Pam—why cannot I do the same?"

Bungay shook his head and smiled sadly. "Because of many reasons," he returned, "but the chief of them all is that between Faust and yourself there lie five or six centuries of diabolism. Remember, he sold his soul to the Evil One in return for many gifts, and among them was that of making himself attractive to the young women whom he made a practice of victimizing. Faust is a master of psychic knowledge, and beside him you are like a babe. Come, choose," he added impatiently.

"I choose, then!" I cried. "I'll fight to the end. And I'll leave this crypt as Lester Shields, or I'll never leave it at all!"

Bungay's hand fell upon my shoulder. "I think you have chosen well," he answered. "Come, let us return."

He picked up the lantern, and again I followed him through the underground passageways, forcing my way once more through the slime of the pits until, drenched with the putrid water, I stood beside Bungay in the old laboratory where Faust had been working. I saw the red eye of the furnace gleam somberly through the intense darkness.

"Now, my friend, you are going to need all your strength and fortitude," said Bungay. "Already Faust is returning to resume that body you are wearing. Put forth every effort to resist him, for if he wins, we have only one more hope. But if he fails, then he will be cast back into the night of hell for uncounted years, and you will be able to resume your natural body lying in that tomb. Fight for your sweetheart's sake!"

"I'll fight to the end," I told him; and so we waited.

But we had not long to wait. I felt the evil presence of Faust within the vault before I saw him, and it was not until I was torn half out of the mulatto's body that I saw him at all. I was conscious of a sudden rushing wind; I had the sense of overpowering evil, heard Bungay crying to me to stand fast—and then it was as if my whole organism was being wrenched asunder.

I struggled in mortal agony as each nerve and sinew seemed to be flayed. It was a pain greater than the human body was meant to bear. As I was pried loose from my fleshly covering, I saw Faust, his face twisted with diabolical hate, his claw-like hands rending me. And Bungay was fading. . . .

Then I heard Faust's cries of hideous mirth as, fighting in vain, I relaxed my hold upon the mulatto's body.

Faust had won. Once more I was a discarnate spirit, lost between earth and heaven.

**D**ARKNESS surrounded me, gross and impenetrable. But Pam was in danger! And at the thought of her a little light seemed to pierce the gloom. Suddenly I found myself beside her tomb again. And near me, as a spirit sees a mortal, I saw Faust faintly outlined.

But whereas I had been compelled to wear the mulatto's hideous body, Faust had transformed it, fashioning the repulsive flesh into the old likeness of Prince Uffizzi, the handsome, polished gentleman.

He stood there, the very incarnation of rebellious pride, like Satan himself exulting in his triumph. Suddenly he stooped and tore the great slab from the grave that held Pam's body.

I could see Pam clearly, by the force of the love I bore her. Again she lay there like a marble effigy. I saw Faust's hand go out toward her.

It leaped back as if he had touched a white-hot rod, and a snarl of baffled rage broke from the devil's lips.

Then I remembered what Bungay had said to me, that neither heaven nor hell can approach the souls of those who are newly dead.

Faust straightened himself and a hideous smile curved his lips. He was muttering something, stretching out his arms over Pam's body. I knew that he was putting forth all his powers to pierce those defenses that Nature places about the helpless souls of those new-born into the world of spirits.

And whether because Pam still remained suspended between life and death or whether by the power of his infernal arts, I saw a change come over her face. Just as when I had looked at her an hour before, I saw her lips begin to redden, a faint tinge of color come into her pale cheeks. Her eyelids fluttered and unclosed.

I flung myself at Faust, trying to tear him limb from limb. He remained completely unaware of my presence there. He was watching Pam and smiling like the devil he was.

Merciful heaven, that was not Pam's soul, looking out of those limpid eyes at him!

That was the soul of a devil, smiling back at the master devil in intimate recognition!

Then slowly Pam's limbs began to stir. She sat up in the stone coffin and stretched out her arms to Faust in adoration.

**A** MUTE cry burst from the very depths of my being. Spirit though I was, Faust seemed to sense the agony of that cry, for he turned sharply and peered into the gloom of the crypt.

Then, with a savage shout, he turned and tore the lid from the coffin beside Pam's. Again I saw my body lying there, white and motionless. He flung himself upon it, beating at the face with his hands, only to recoil.

Either Bungay's arts or the providence of God protected me. He could not touch my body.

"Lie there and rot!" he snarled, and turned to Pam. "You know me?" he cried.

"Yes, my love, I know you well. I have always known you," Pam answered.

"Tomorrow you reap the reward of your long waiting," said Faust. "Tonight the secret of the stone is mine. Tomorrow we begin our life of riotous joy on earth. Gold, gold, shall be ours, with all that it can buy! We waited long in the underworld for the day that is now at hand. Tomorrow you step forth into the world with me."

Suddenly I became aware of Bungay, standing at my side. Faust turned upon him savagely. Between the two was Pam, sitting up in her coffin of stone, that awful look of a devil on her face.

"Well met, well met, old friar!", shouted Faust. "The long duel between us ends tonight. I have the stone and the secret of using it, and the woman I wanted, too!"

"But not the elixir," answered Bungay.

Faust snarled. "The elixir? In the long life that stretches out before me I shall have plenty of time to discover the elixir."

"But if you fail," said Bungay, "you will go back to the shades at last, leaving your gold behind you."

A vicious spasm twisted Faust's face. "I have the means to force you to hand over the elixir," he yelled.

"You have not the means," said Bungay.

"Even now you cannot step within the circle that I have drawn. The elixir shall never be yours, unless— Come, a bargain, Faust. Shields, who has lost everything—"

"Yes, when mortals interfere with the affairs of the immortals, they are apt to lose everything," sneered Faust. "Yet there was a time when I offered him my friendship. I would have made him rich beyond the dreams of avarice, but he preferred to fight me, out of a sense of loyalty to you."

"And that is why I am prepared to relinquish everything out of loyalty to him," Bungay returned. "All that I have striven for, everything I have hoped, I will abandon, so that one mortal may be happy."

"Happy? What is 'happy'?" asked Faust with a puzzled frown.

"Here is my proposal, Faust. I will place the elixir in your hands, so that you may enjoy immortality as well as the gold, if you will surrender this woman to Shields and let them go free."

Faust's boisterous laughter seemed to fill the vault. "Agreed, agreed!" he cried.

"Come, then, swear on the pentagon, the oath that may never be broken without paying the penalty to the uttermost." And he muttered an Arabic formula, pausing upon the name of Allah.

I could not hear Faust's reply but evidently it was satisfactory to Bungay, for from beneath his robes he produced the ruby bottle. And that was clearer to my vision than either Bungay or Faust.

"Be careful not to drink the sediment," said Bungay. "It contains an impure element which seems to nullify the effects of the draught."

Faust drank and then handed the flask to Bungay. I could see that the turbid sediment lay thick at the bottom; Faust had drunk the last of the fluid. Again the aromatic odor filled the vault.

"**N**OW," said Bungay, "fulfill our compact and withdraw that devil of yours from the pure body of Pamela Rycroft!"

A shriek of mocking derision broke from Pam's lips. Sitting up in the coffin, she looked the very incarnation of diabolism. And louder laughter came from Faust.

"Get hence, old fool," he said, "before I find a way to destroy you."

"You mean to violate your oath, knowing well what the penalty has always been— final and utter destruction?" cried Bungay.

Pam's shrieks of mockery drowned the answer. Dimly I could see Bungay's hand upraised in solemn protest; the ribald cries of Faust came faintly to my ears; then, like a leaf blown by the wind, I drifted away.

"SHIELDS!" It was Bungay's voice. "Look at the light! Look at the light!"

Out of the pitchy darkness once more the light began to glow. I felt myself swept toward it, like a piece of thistle-down. Again I saw the body of the mulatto medium and understood that Faust had left it, probably for the last time before permanently resuming his place on earth.

But this time I was not the only spirit there, for, hovering about it, as moths about a candle, were a multitude of pallid forms, faintly outlined against the illumination that came from the mulatto's body. Spirits of the discarnate, spirits seeking birth, souls that had never come to life, and elementals of hideous shape and form, they fluttered about it, nosing at it and trying to take possession. So I have seen small fishes nose at a piece of bait in shallow water.

I thrust the motley crew aside and the gibbering phantoms yielded. Much more easily than before, I possessed myself of the mulatto's physical organism. There was only a momentary loss of consciousness, and then I emerged from it to see Bungay before me.

"Shields, were you present beside the tomb last night when Faust played his last trick?" asked Bungay. "I thought I felt your presence."

"Yes, I was there," I answered. "Pam—?"

"Is sleeping now, and upon the result of this last effort depends her future and yours, and the destiny of your immortal souls. He tricked me, as I had foreseen."

"She is—not—" I gasped.

"She is not now possessed by that devil whom Faust evoked in her. And if I succeed, the cursed Thing will never return from hell. But this is the last card, the very last, for now Faust holds everything. The secret of the gold is his. I am planning now to make it impossible for him to return to the body that you are wearing."

"I cannot fight him," I answered. "He will oust me as one throws a tramp out of a house."

Bungay did not answer me for a moment. Then:

"If my plan succeeds," he answered, "he will be imprisoned for centuries, so long as

stone endures. Remember that we hold the advantage over him temporarily, inasmuch as he has chosen to discard his physical organism and remains a disembodied devil. In hearing, sight, all the physical senses, we are his superiors."

"What of that?" I asked.

"You shall see, Shields. Come with me. We are going up to the belfry, where he is standing, surveying the kingdoms of earth that he thinks are to become his. Come!"

I accompanied Bungay across the crypt and up the flights of stairs that ran to the belfry of the church. This time I panted heavily, for to me, in the body, the climb was hard, the steps almost interminable. At last we reached the tower.

Bungay drew me back a little from the edge. I could not see Faust there, but I could feel him. I remembered his demoniac outburst of pride and wrath when I had stood there as a spirit and listened to him. Now I could only sense that I was in the presence of colossal evil. I knew also that he was unaware of our presence.

Bungay turned to me. "Climb up the front of this tower, Shields," he whispered, "and place yourself in that empty niche, from which the statue has fallen."

I looked up. A score of feet overhead I saw the row of hideous gargoyles, fashioned by the medieval craftsmen for protection against demons, in much the same spirit as their successors erected lightning-rods. There was one break in the row—an empty space where one of the ugly images had been torn from the wall.

"Climb up," repeated the monk in a low tone, "and seat yourself there. And whatever you see or hear, remain as still as death."

FOR a moment I hesitated. Underneath me the town lay extended in the first glimmer of the dawn, which was touching the tops of the surrounding hills with a faint glow. Terribly far beneath me I could see a huddle of houses, leaning together above a narrow street. And overhead the great church towered, with its row of grinning gargoyles and its spires and, high over all, the cross.

But I hesitated only for a moment. The next instant I had set my foot into a crevice in the weather-beaten façade, and then I had found another foothold in the crumbling stone, and so I mounted upward through the dizzy air, until I was able to seize an out-thrust arm of the leering stone image.

I got my foot upon the empty niche that had formerly contained the fallen gargoyle, and took my place as Bungay had indicated. I looked down at my yellow claws and somehow it seemed strangely right that I should be there. For my yellow mulatto's body, shrunken and twisted, and my hideous face, matched the creations in stone that I could see on each side of me.

And I began to think that it would be a fitter destiny than any other, if I should become stone, like those other monsters, and remain there forever or, at least, so long as the church stood.

**I** ROUSED myself to look down. Bungay had taken his stand in front of me and he was uttering an invocation, his arms upstretched to heaven.

What was he planning to do? I had not the least idea, but I knew that it somehow concerned that thing of evil whose proximity I could still sense upon the ledge.

It was lightening in the east but it was still dark in the hollow of the town. The pale luminosity that was spreading over the hilltops threw the houses into darker relief against the sky.

Suddenly Bungay turned; he swung about and for a moment seemed about to topple over the ledge into the market-place beneath. It was exactly as if he had received an impact from some heavy body. I knew that it was Faust, awakened from his reverie, and ready to resume my form for the last time. He had become conscious of Bungay's presence and, sensing some trick, had hurled himself against him. For a moment I watched a terrible struggle.

But quickly the old monk was forced to his knees, and he seemed to give up all hope.

"Take it, then, and leave us!" Bungay cried despairingly, pointing up toward me.

No, *not at me!* At the gargoyle on my left, in the next niche to mine!

I felt the rushing wind of Faust's approach. For an instant his hideous presence hovered over me. *Then he was gone!*

And the next instant a shout of triumph came from Bungay's lips, "I've got you, Faust!"

And he called to me: "Come down, Shields! There is nothing more to fear. I tricked him! We have won!"

I scrambled out of the niche and descended to the platform level. But already Bungay was growing faint and indistinct, and a feeling of physical dissolution was coming over me.

"Shields, what's—the matter?" I heard Bungay's voice. "I—can't—see you!" Then, "The elixir! My—long wait! It's that. I shall—go to my master!"

Suddenly his hand clenched my arm in a vise-like grip. "Shields, the elixir. The—impurity in the sediment. Death, not life. This is the end. But Faust——"

He paused, then seemed to summon all his energies for a last effort.

"In the spirit he—could not see distinctly. He thought the gargoyle—was your body—as I had planned he should think. A—psychic trap. Now he is locked away in stone, so long as the stone endures.

"This is the end. Good-by. We've fought together and won. Go back to your own body and your sweetheart, Shields. My comrade——"

But already the death-pangs were upon me. Bungay's voice faded, and I knew nothing more.

I came back to consciousness in the stone coffin within the crypt. Beside me was Pam's coffin, and in it Pam was sleeping. I rose—I gathered her into my arms.

She stirred, she woke, she looked at me with the old love in her eyes. She put her arms about my neck, pressing her cheek against mine.

"Lester!"

"My dear!"

The sun was shining through the broken masonry above. Our hearts seemed filled with light.

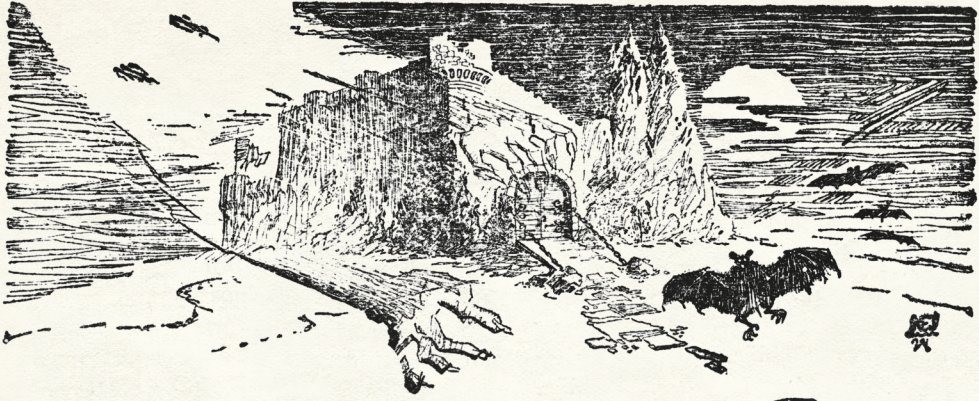
"Where are we, Lester? Ah, the cellar of the church that we were exploring! I fainted, didn't I, Lester? How long have I been here?"

"Not long," I answered.

**P**AM never questioned me. She always thought she had been ill, that her mind had wandered.

We went out, unobserved, into the sunlight. As tourists we traversed France on foot. We were married at a little wayside church many miles from St. Sulpice. Later we made our way back to America, to begin the new life together.

Pamela Rycroft, the heiress, vanished from the sight of men. But we grow closer to each other as the years pass. Nothing shall disturb our love, even though the imprisoned soul of Faust still watches impotently from the great gargoyle on the belfry tower above the market-place. It will be many centuries before he emerges from his crumbling prison to trouble the world anew.



# SKELETONS *in the* Closets of Famous Families

*Christo's ghastly experience, corroborated by the police records of Portugal, is the most astonishing ghost story of the modern world*

By GORDON HILLMAN

ONE of the most amazing supernatural incidents on record took place only a few years ago in a small city of Portugal. Three families in succession fled a certain house of horror, a specter was not only heard but seen, and several policemen were witnesses and victims of this weird ghost of Southern Europe.

If these phenomena had occurred in the Dark Ages or that holiday of ghosts and demons in the Seventeenth Century, they could be no more horrifying. Yet the year was 1919, the month October, the scene an ordinary house in an ordinary city, and the participants everyday people who had no interest whatever in psychic affairs.

In September, 1919, Homem Christo, a member of one of the most famous Portuguese families, was expelled from college for his revolutionary tendencies.

In October Mr. Christo took a house at Coimbra, a suburb of the city of Comeada, and promptly moved in with his wife and baby. There was nothing extraordinary about the house, and if Mr. Christo had heard that the two former tenants, one a

famous woman meteorologist, had fled the place, he probably would have scoffed at supernatural fears.

There is no evidence, however, that Mr. Christo knew anything of the house's reputation, and he says as much in his sworn statement made after the three nights of horror.

For a day or two nothing happened in the house. Then a second-year law student, Gomez Paredos, came as the Christos' guest. There was not the slightest warning of the ghastly events about to happen. When he went to his room on the second floor, he closed the shutters and quickly fell asleep.

At one in the morning he was awakened by a series of violent knocks and sat up to see the closed shutters flung wide open and the moon shining through. Paredos cursed in pure Portuguese, and got up to slam the shutters to. To his utter surprise he found that the shutters resisted "as if a crowd of people" were holding them. He became affected, too, with a certain giddiness and oppression, and seemed conscious of some strange presence in the room.

At last he forced the shutters closed by

main strength and bolted them fast. It is interesting to note that there was no wind at the time, and that the shutters were of the ordinary variety.

Paredos wondered precisely what was wrong with his friend's house and went back to bed. In fifteen minutes the bolt lifted on the shutters and they swung open wide. Paredos leaped up to close them, and as he drew them shut again by main strength, blows sounded upon them and screams resounded through the room.

**T**HE law student dived back into bed as fast as he could—and all through the night the screams continued, steps circled his bed, the key turned in the lock, and his door swung open, then shut again, and the key turned back. There was no one visible in the room. The key was on the inside of the door.

In the morning Paredos arose, very badly shaken by his experience, and told Christo of the mysterious phenomena. Christo promptly laughed and discredited them, saying he had heard nothing, but his friend hastily packed up and fled the house. One night of horror was sufficient for his nerves.

During the day the servants got wind of the mysterious occurrences—and left without their wages. Before they went, they told Christo that the house was haunted, and that the two former tenants had fled in terror after two nights there.

All this made Christo quite angry. He suspected that his political enemies were at the bottom of all the weird happenings, and he thought his friend, Paredos, was a timorous fool.

So that night he himself moved into Paredos' room, leaving his wife and child alone.

Until midnight nothing happened. Then, as in Paredos' case, the bolted shutters flew open, and when Christo went to close them, he could not do it. There were weird footsteps all about the room; screams resounded; and pry though he might at the shutters, he could not close them. He went wonderingly back to bed—and suddenly the shutters closed and the bolt was shot into place. Then, as mysteriously, the bolt was lifted and they opened wide again.

He got up and looked out. The room was thirty feet above the ground and there was no one in the garden outside. He turned back into the room again—and the locked door opened as its key twisted in the lock! Christo took up his revolver and went out into the dark hall. He heard footsteps all

about him, but he could see nothing, though once there was a sound as of heavy breathing near him.

Then came a crashing knock on the front door. So severe it was that it seemed to shake the house. A moment later he heard another knock—and another!

He went down the stairs, revolver in hand. He unlocked the front door, jerked at it—and found it resisted him as much as the shutters had done. Again, there was no wind, and that door had always opened easily.

Finally he wrenched it open wide and dashed into the garden with his revolver lifted. There was no one there, and as he turned, he saw the door slowly closing behind him. It did not slam. It closed slowly and methodically as if some Thing were drawing it to. And as he looked, he saw the key twist itself in the lock.

From the house there burst forth tremendous outcries, blood-curdling screams and a series of ghastly knocks. Christo dashed back to the door and added his own knocking to the din.

His wife, aroused by the racket, rushed to a window, saw her husband in the garden and came downstairs in her nightdress. By the time she had wrenched open the door and let her husband in, they were both horror-stricken.

The screams still resounded, they could hear phantom steps upon the stairs—and in a second-story room their baby had been left alone! Christo started hastily upstairs, with his wife close behind him.

On the fourth step she suddenly screamed, "Homem, help! Something has got hold of my feet!"

Christo turned to see the vague whiteness of his wife's nightdress being drawn *down* the stairs, though she was making every effort to climb and her nails were digging into the wood of the stair rail.

**H**E frantically clutched at her hands and found her as heavy as three women. He could not haul her upward; he could only hold her level as some awful force appeared to pull steadily against him. Then, despite all his strength—and he was a strong man—the pair found themselves being dragged slowly down the dark staircase.

Christo's own account of what happened next—he swore to it before a magistrate—is more weird and ghastly than any fictional ghost story.

"At that moment," he says, "in utter terror I loosed hold on my wife, who again

clutched the stair rail, but seemed to be slowly floating downward, as if some supernatural Thing had hold of her.

"My hands were trembling with fright, but I aimed my revolver with one hand and struck a match with the other. The match slowly guttered into flame and for an instant I could see as plainly as if it were daylight.

"**B**EFORE me was a wraith, a billowing white cloud that slowly resolved into the semblance of a face and gigantic body. From its nostrils came two wisps of whitish light, and there was a cold grip on my hand that held the match. Through the cloud, through the specter, I could see my wife as if there were nothing between us, yet there was something horrible.

"The whitish light grew, the pressure on my hand and arm was so intense that they

They lit candles, they called out, they hunted over the entire house, and finally they came down to the parlor on the first floor.

Screams still echoed from nowhere, there were heavy knocks upon the locked door—and in the middle of a marble table lay the child, stark naked!

All its clothes had been torn from it, yet it was sound asleep and there was not a mark on its body.

This struck the Christos with new horror. The child was too young to even creep, let alone undress itself. There was no other human being, besides themselves, in the house. There was no way from the upper floors to the lower save down the front staircase, and it was on the front staircase that they had had their struggle with the specter.

When Mrs. Christo left her room to let her husband into the house, the baby had

The weird experience of Homem Christo, biographer of Mussolini, has been often referred to in the newspapers. Here is the full story—a tale of horror that is more incredible than the dreams of Poe or Maupassant.

were numbed, and I raised my revolver and fired pointblank into that awful mass."

Then, though there was no wind, the match went out as if some phantom hand had struck at the flame.

Christo received a tremendous blow on the face, a blow as if fanged teeth had dug into him, and he reeled from the shock.

When he recovered, his wife was an inert white bundle on the stair. She had fainted.

He hastily carried her upstairs, and this time the Thing did not drag her down, though there was a tremendous noise of screaming from the inky darkness.

She revived at the head of the stairs and they rushed into the baby's room. *The child was gone!*

The same noise of screaming echoed from below, knocks came on the windows and shutters, the very house seemed to shake, and somewhere a clock slowly tolled the hour of one.

Christo and his wife were afraid of the specters—they were afraid for their lives—but they were more afraid for their child.

been fully clothed for the night and safe in its crib. How could the child have been brought downstairs? What unearthly force could have borne it down?

The Christos lighted the whole house, they searched for secret passages, they tapped the walls, and found nothing. The screams ceased at dawn and so did the knockings.

When daylight came, on Christo's face was the scarlet mark of five sharp fangs!

So far, only three persons had seen or heard the phantom since Christo moved in. The next night brought a crowd of witnesses.

**C**HRISTO rushed to the police station on the morning after his ghastly experience, and the police politely laughed at him. But all the same they agreed to send a sergeant and two constables to stand guard after dark.

Then Christo summoned his friends. Paredos came, carrying a flashlight and a notebook, and so did Don Henrique Sotto Armas, scion of one of the oldest families of Spain.

At six o'clock the police sergeant and his

two men arrived to scoff. The sergeant stood guard outside, while Christo, his friends and the constables watched within. No prowler could have gotten near the house: no one, besides themselves, was inside the house.

At midnight the shutters in the haunted room swung closed, and though Christo, Don Henrique and the two constables pried at them with all their might, this time they could not open them at all!

As they tried, frantic screaming came from within and without the house. Even the sergeant heard it and shivered.

At last they gave up the shutters—and though no one was on the stairs, ghastly footsteps resounded there. Knockings came upon windows and walls, and finally, hunting through the house with guns and flashlights, they came to where the screams sounded loudest—an old, disused closet.

"I'll soon have him out of there!" cried one of the constables, and he wrenched open the door and darted in.

As they tried to follow, the door clanged shut. They tried it and it was locked. The screaming started again, and with it were mingled the frantic cries of the constable.

There was the uproar of a terrific fight within, and finally they contrived to break down the door.

The constable lay unconscious on the floor, his flashlight bent and twisted beside him, his revolver still in his hand. He bore the marks of a terrific beating—and on his face were the red marks of five sharp fangs!

This time the Christos did not even wait till daylight. They, their friends and the police fled while the screams still resounded, and none of them ever entered that house again at night.

For three days the constable bore the livid scarlet scars, and he swore that an indescribable horror, much like that seen by Christo, had borne down upon him in the closet while a cold and clammy claw wrested the flashlight from his hand. Still, he was too terror-stricken to ever tell much of what had happened.

The Christos left the house of horror forever. In time they succeeded in subletting it, but the tenants fled after a single night. To this day it stands empty, and the whole ghastly business is part and parcel of the official records of the police of Portugal!

## IMPORTANT!

**GHOST STORIES** changes its date of publication.

*The February number of GHOST STORIES will appear on the news stands January 23rd. Put a ring around the date on your calendar. You can't afford to miss the greatest collection of uncanny, creepy stories we have ever printed.*

*Watch for these remarkable stories:—*

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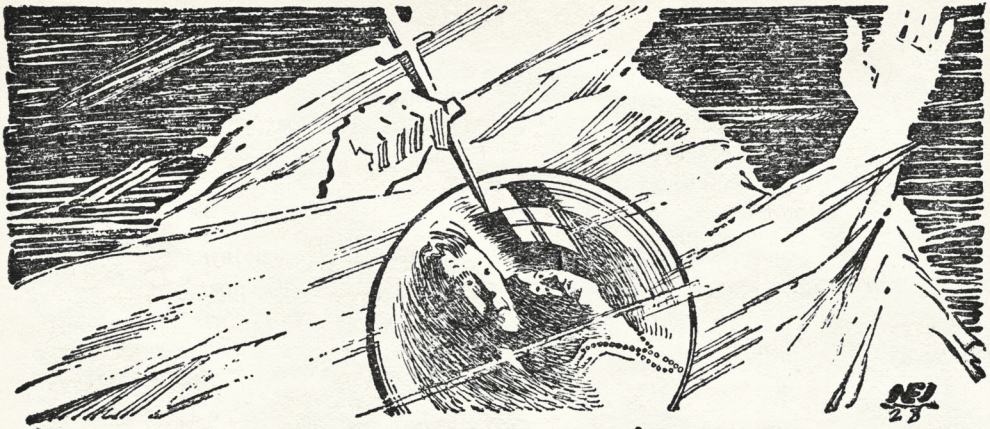
*THE MYSTERY OF THE FLOATING KNIFE, a fantastic story of an invisible Thing in a sailors' boarding-house. It will make your blood run cold!*

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*GHOST STORIES is the most thrilling magazine in the world. Order your copy of the February number—now!*





# SPIRIT TALES

*War Prophesied by Evangeline Adams—  
and Other Items of Interest*

By **COUNT CAGLIOSTRO**

**T**HE United States is to be plunged into one of the worst internecine wars that has ever occurred on this planet between the years 1940 and 1943, according to Miss Evangeline Adams, the celebrated American astrologer.

"Each time that the planet Uranus has entered the earth's orbit in a line covering America, a war has broken out," said Miss Adams in an interview.

"It occurred in 1776 and the War of Independence followed; and again in 1860, and there followed the Civil War. It will occur next time between the years 1940 and 1943, and the war which follows will be a terrible racial, religious and economic battle. It will be a frightful struggle."

## *Walking on Fire*

**A.** P. COMMINS and H. Hantzakos, leaders of the Spiritual Brotherhood Church at Durban, South Africa, responded to a challenge from a Hindu priest recently, and walked through the fire at Martitzburgh, loudly cheered by three thousand European and four thousand Indian spectators. Mr. Commins's feet, as well as those of the Greek, Mr. Hantzakos, were badly blistered while the twenty-one Indians walked through the fire unscathed.

Ten tons of wood were burned to form

the fire bed over which the men passed. Both Europeans participated in the subsequent procession around the pit. Mr. Hantzakos said he felt no pain but Mr. Commins experienced a slight burning sensation after he had passed through the water.

## *Henry Ford on Reincarnation*

**T**HE New York *American* recently printed an interview with Henry Ford, who said: "I lean to reincarnation. I am in exact accord with the belief of Thomas Edison: that spirit is immortal, that there is a continuing center of character in each personality. But I don't know what spirit is—nor matter, either. I suspect they are forms of the same thing. I never could see anything in this reputed antagonism between spirit and matter. To me this theory of life is the most beautiful, the most satisfactory from a scientific standpoint, and the most logical.

"For thirty years I have leaned toward the theory of reincarnation. It seems to me a most reasonable philosophy and explains many things. No, I have no desire to know what, or who, I once was; or what, or who, I shall be in the ages to come. This belief in immortality makes present living the more attractive. It gives you all the time there is. You will always be

able to finish what you start. There is no fever or strain in such an outlook. We are here in life for one purpose—to get experience. We are all getting it, and we shall all use it somewhere.”

### *The Hypnotized Waitress*

**A** STRANGE story of hypnotism was revealed in the local police court during the trial of J. Edmond Boivin, a Montreal carpenter. The suit was instigated by his daughter, who resented his forcibly hypnotizing her at all hours of the night.

This daughter, Germaine, is a waitress by day and she found she was not getting sufficient sleep as a result of her father's demands upon her as a medium.

Boivin confined his operations to cures, for which he charged a dollar a session. If his prescriptions, obtained through putting his daughter into a hypnotic trance, were not efficacious, they were at least original.

A man named Edward Salvat, who had suffered tortures from rheumatism for some years, told how he sought the advice of the hypnotist. The recipe he obtained from the lips of the hypnotized daughter was as follows:

*Three spoonfuls of stove-pipe soot mixed in one pint of water, with sugar. To be drunk after counting one, two, three, making the sign of the cross with the thumb on the forehead, and exclaiming: "Rheumatism, I hypnotize you. One-two-three—go!"*

Mr. Salvat was brave enough to swallow three draughts of this unenticing potion. His rheumatism, he informed the court, was as bad as ever and he felt pains he never had before.

Boivin was found guilty of "practicing magic arts," bound over to keep peace for one year and released on suspended sentence.

### *Mr. Chang, the Chinese Devil*

**A** FASCINATING work, recently published abroad, is *Chinese Ghosts and Goblins* by G. Willoughby Meade, who makes our flesh creep with some of the weird tales which he publishes. The following is a typical specimen, which concerns a certain Mr. Ye of Pekin.

This gentleman, riding along the road to I-Chou, where he proposed to visit his friend Mr. Wang, was overtaken in a

thunder-storm by a tall stranger on horse-back. As they rode, Mr. Ye noticed that this personage exhaled a curious black vapor; sometimes it dimmed the flashes of lightning and sometimes it was cut through by his long, red tongue shooting out of his mouth.

Still without too much surprise, one follows Mr. Ye into his friend's house, where the odd stranger was greeted by Mr. Wang as his cousin Chang, from Pekin. With Mr. Ye, one grows a little apprehensive when he is given the same bedroom as Mr. Chang, and approves his prudence in asking for a serving-boy to sleep between them. Midnight came, and lo! the tall stranger thrust out his dreadful tongue, arose and devoured the luckless serving-boy raw, leaving only a heap of crunched and broken bones on the hospitable floor!

Very properly, Mr. Ye invoked the supernatural aid of Kuan Ti, the special conqueror of demons, who dutifully appeared to the sound of gongs and drums. Forthwith the peculiar Mr. Chang changed into a butterfly. Round and round he fluttered, evading the dreadful sword-strokes of Kuan Ti, until suddenly there was a peal of thunder—and both demon and demon fighter disappeared!

In the morning the bones of the boy remained as irrefutable evidence on the floor; what's more, the tall man's horse was still in the host's stable! But inquiries showed that the real Mr. Chang had never left Pekin and had not even thought of making the journey with Mr. Ye.

One can only accept the logical conclusion that an evil spirit had unscrupulously impersonated Mr. Chang.

### *Conjurers versus Spiritualists*

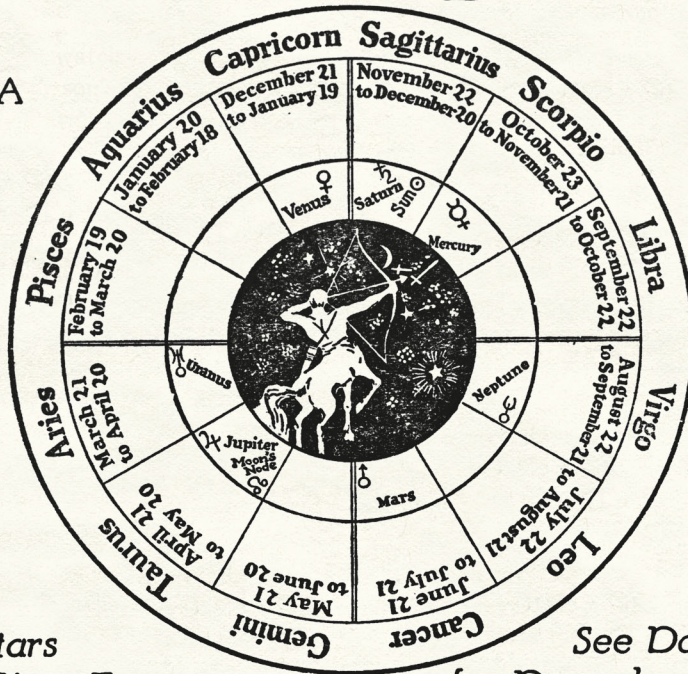
**M**R. HARRY PRICE of the American Society for Psychic Research writes that he spent a most amusing evening at Caxton Hall, London, on May 1st, when a formal debate (arranged by the Cosmos Center) was staged between the spiritualists and the conjurers. The motion was "That the Case for Spiritualism Has Not Been Proved." Speakers for the motion were Mr. Dingwall and Mr. Hocking, both of the Magic Circle (a conjurers' society); the speakers against the motion being Mr. Hannen Swaffer and Mr. Maurice Barbanell, the leader of the Jewish spiritualists.

Says Mr. Price, "Being regarded as per-

*(Continued on page 126)*

# Were You Born in December?

By  
STELLA  
KING



*Let the Stars  
Indicate Your Fate*

*See Daily Guide  
for December, page 114*

**I**F your birthday comes between November 23rd and December 21st, you belong to the element of Fire. This makes you enthusiastic, outspoken and generous.

If you run true to type, you are interested in sports and are a lover of the open spaces, active both in mind and body, and impatient of discipline or control.

As you are under the special protection of Jupiter, you are gifted with great foresight and should follow your hunches instead of listening to advice from others. It is probable that you are naturally quick-tempered and often say much more than you mean; however, the tempest soon passes and, if given affection, you will work yourself almost to death. Coldness and indifference have a blighting effect upon you and make you irritable, sarcastic and often secretive—until you realize that your real happiness lies within yourself.

As a talisman you may wear a carbuncle, turquoise or diamond. These stones increase the magnetic force of your vibrations because they are in harmony with you.

As the chart will show, the positions of the slow-moving planets remain much the same as described in my last article, except of course that the sun is now in Sagittarius, Venus is brightening the path of the Capricornians, and Mercury is in the latter part of Scorpio and will pass through Sagittarius.

Sagittarius is associated with the church, the law, the navy, insurance, and foreign countries in general—Spain, Arabia, Hungary, Madagascar and Australia being under its particular rule. For the past two years Saturn, planet of limitation, hindrance and annoyance, has been in this sign and it was only to be expected that difficulties would arise in connection with such matters as naval armaments and religion.

Those born under the Sagittarian ray have also felt this limiting influence. Some have suffered in health; others in their financial status. For them this is a period of probation, during which it is inadvisable for them to branch out in business or to accept unnecessary responsibility. It is always said that Saturn is the planet of hard work and

that when he is sending you a ray, you have to work hard for anything you get.

Fortunately, although his rings are wide, he cannot interest himself in many birthdays at the same time and just now he is chiefly concerned with the Sagittarians born between December 9th and 15th. If your birthday comes during this period, build up your forces and prepare for future changes if you desire them, but do not make them for a few months. Let this limiting influence pass before you make any move. In any case, you probably have more work than you can do for the time being. You are a born traveler, adventurer and explorer, but just now be more careful than usual to avoid the possibility of a sprained ankle, a fractured bone or an attack of rheumatism.

Use your own methods of building up, continue your exercises, but be sure to get as much sunshine as you can, for the sun dispels the gloom of Saturn. The heavy vibrations of this planet are always felt with the greatest severity when you are about thirty or forty-five years of age, as Saturn at these times comes into adverse relationship with his own position at your birth. It is therefore always advisable to build up both mentally and physically as you approach this period of life.

Jupiter, planet of plenty and the direct opposite of Saturn, is now in the sign of the Bull and on the best of terms with ancient Neptune. Taureans born about the 21st of April are therefore receiving powerful rays from both planets and they may expect a period of happiness and prosperity. Some of them may even get a windfall in the form of a legacy or successful speculation, as both the sign Taurus and the planet Jupiter are connected with money.

At present Jupiter is protecting the Virginians, born about August 23rd, from sickness, but they should be careful in regard to diet for some time to come, as Neptune moves very slowly and will continue to interest himself in them after Jupiter's rays have passed. Neptune seems to bring a period of indifferent health but his rays can be influenced by thought. It would be just as well, therefore, for the August Virginians to cultivate a very positive and constructive line of thought so as to be ready for the Neptune ray in case it does strike them. They should be especially on guard at the beginning of next July, when Mars will pass over Neptune, bringing them into contact with fraud, sickness or the result of their own impulsive actions.

Those born about the 24th of March or June should take precautions against the unexpected and should remain as quiet as possible. Particularly should they try to keep themselves free from nervous excitement and irritation. Just now they are under adverse rays from both Mars and Uranus and, unless they are careful, they may suffer from fire, explosion or sudden accident. The eyes also should be protected as much as possible, as these violent and exciting vibrations often cause twitching of the eyes, eye-strain, neuralgia and other nervous disorders.

The Sagittarians born about the 25th of November are fortunate just now, for the Uranian rays fall harmoniously upon their sun and promise them unexpected travel, pleasure and success. The Leos born about the 26th of July are also in favor with Uranus and may expect a happy and prosperous month.

**The planetary indications for each day in December are given below. Let them be your daily guide.**

1. *A day in which to get things done. Write, travel, work hard and carry out plans. Ask special favors in early afternoon.*

2. *See elderly people. Take advantage of opportunities. Avoid accidents in early morning.*

3. *Be cautious and avoid disputes. Do business in afternoon.*

4. *Take care of health and avoid cold. Visit friends and hear music. Do early Christmas shopping.*

5. *An unfavorable day. Avoid accidents and misunderstandings in the morning.*

6. *A good morning for business. Finish work, buy and hunt for bargains.*

7. *Protect health and avoid unpleasantness in early morning. Do not visit opposite sex.*

8. *Deal with clerks, salespeople, agents and correspondence in afternoon.*

9. *A day for worship, pleasure and relaxation. Visit friends, listen to good music. Wear your new clothes in afternoon. Vibrations are favorable for pleasant social contacts.*

10. *Write, travel, commence undertakings, watch the stock market and promote the interests of others. Do no business in the evening.*

11. *Control your temper. Avoid danger, undue excitement and risky adventures.*

12. *Avoid accident and do not press for decisions.*

(Continued on page 120)

*Bald Men Look!*

**FREE**



One Full Ampoule of my amazing hair fluid which I discovered myself and which grew hair on my head.

**Here is How I Used to Look**

I was just as bald as this picture. It is a true photograph without any tampering or retouching. It is exactly like I used to look. Then look at the full head of hair I have in the picture on the left!

As I have stated so often, I don't know whether I am the first man who discovered this great secret, but I do know I have it, that I grew my own hair and that I am growing hair on the heads of other men all the time.

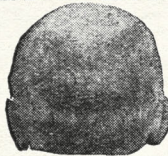


This Ampoule is absolutely free. Don't send any money. There is no C. O. D. No charge whatsoever. All I want is an opportunity to show you how easily I grew hair on my own and hundreds of other men's heads. Merely mail the coupon below for Free Ampoule.

**Bald Men Grow Hair Quick!**

I grew my own hair just as it shows here.

I will prove to you FREE that I can grow hair, quick.



Here is Brennan Brennan while he was bald.

Here is Wiseman Wiseman was bald like this.



And Brennan after Vreeland grew his hair. Write and I will tell you Brennan's story and give you his address.

But Wiseman grew this head of hair with my wonderful hair growing fluid. All about Wiseman and how he did it, if you write. You'll get his address too.



What I accomplished on my own head and on other heads I can do for you, provided you are under 45 years of age and loss of hair was not caused by burns or scars. Anyhow, I must succeed or you pay nothing. No apparatus. My home treatment is simple, quick, inexpensive.

**Mail this FREE Coupon**

Mail the coupon today—Right Now—I will send you, immediately, one full Ampoule of my marvelous fluid which I discovered, of which I hold the secret and which grew my own hair on my own bald head. Besides the Free Ampoule of Fluid, I will send photographs, names and addresses of men and women who successfully used my Wonder Fluid for Dandruff, Falling Hair and particularly for Baldness.

**VREELAND 2301 Euclid - Windsor Bldg. CLEVELAND, OHIO**

**FREE COUPON**  
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Please send me, entirely free, one full Ampoule of the same Wonder Hair Fluid which grew your hair.

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## The Magazine of Show Business

Meet your favorite dancing folk in the pages of THE DANCE Magazine, the only publication of its kind. In it you will find authoritative articles on many subjects vitally connected with the theater and those who make their living in it.

In the December issue of THE DANCE Magazine, Ruth St. Denis has written a special article on Oriental dancing. There is no greater authority on this subject. In the same issue there begins *My Memories of Maurice*, the intimate recollections of Maurice, the greatest ballroom dancer the world has ever seen, by his widow, Eleanora Ambrose Maurice. This will appear in four instalments.

If you are in the show business, you cannot get along without THE DANCE Magazine. If you are an ardent follower of stage stars, you will find delight in every page.

THE DANCE Magazine—a Macfadden publication—on all news stands November 23rd. Thirty-five cents per copy.

## Plagiarism

STORIES have been submitted to this magazine which are copies of stories that have appeared in other magazines.

Any one submitting a plagiarized story through the mail and receiving and accepting remuneration therefor, is guilty of a Federal offense in using the mails to defraud.

The publishers of GHOST STORIES are anxious—as are all reputable publishers—to stamp out this form of literary theft and piracy and are advising all magazines from which such stories have been copied of such plagiarism, and are offering to cooperate with the publishers thereof to punish the guilty persons.

Notice is hereby given to all who submit stories that the same must be the original work of the author.

## I Wanted a Husband

“GIRLS are getting married everywhere, every day, all the time. Why are they getting married? The answer is easy. It's because they want husbands. It's silly to deny it.”

Thus spoke Tola, who worked all day behind a counter in a great department store.

Whereupon her friend, Tessie, who worked beside her, asked, “Are you always wanting a husband?”

And Tola replied, “No! Sometimes I'm wanting to rest my feet, or to eat, or to sleep. But, aside from that, I guess I do a pretty steady job of wanting a husband.”

You'll like Tola. You'll find her entertaining, amusing and stimulating. And her story of her adventures in finding a husband will keep you enthralled. Begin it in January TRUE STORY Magazine.

Other outstanding stories of the January TRUE STORY are: *My Price of Redemption*, *Sacred and Profane Love*, *After the Elopement*, *The Girl That God Remembered*, *His Last Fling*, *The Loneliest Man in the World*, *A Twice Born Man*. All in all, there are fifteen soul-revealing documents.

Don't miss the January issue of TRUE STORY! On sale everywhere December 5th. Twenty-five cents per copy. Thirty cents in Canada.

## A Christmas Gift of Health

No gift you or your family could receive will be bigger or of more importance than the assurance of health twelve months throughout the year, 1929. PHYSICAL CULTURE Magazine, containing vital articles on self-help for health, of interest to the entire family, young and old alike, is issued the first day of every month. It is a Macfadden publication, founded by the noted physical culturist, Bernarr Macfadden. It sells for twenty-five cents per copy.

In the December issue you will find a stirring consideration of the subject, *Why Do We Die?* by Bernarr Macfadden; *\$5,000,000 for Cure*, *How Much for Prevention?*; *Eighteen—The Dangerous Age for Girls*. These features barely scratch the surface of the good things in store for health-seekers who get the December issue.

*Fool's Gold*, one of the outstanding novels of the season, begins also in December. *The Burglar Girl*, a stirring story with a mountain setting, continues, together with *Bernarr Macfadden—His Life and His Work* by Fulton Oursler.

If you are interested in health and a long, happy, successful life, don't miss PHYSICAL CULTURE for December.

## Cash for Opinions

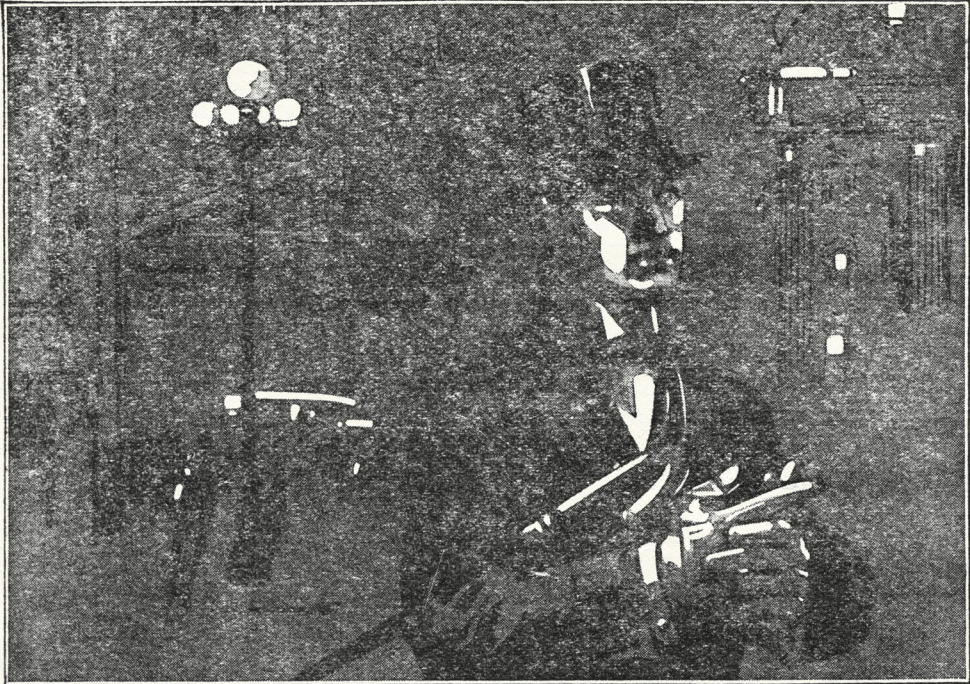
WHEN you have read this issue of GHOST STORIES Magazine, let us know what you think of the stories it contains.

Which story is best? Which is poorest? Why? Have you any 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, c/o GHOST STORIES, 1926 Broadway, New York, N. Y. This contest closes January 25th, 1929.

Three awards will be made promptly. See that your opinion gets one of them.



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Also *The Vanishing Parrot—What Really Happened to "Big Tim" Sullivan—The Clue of the Crucifix—Trailing Perfume—The San Francisco Steeple Murders—The Bunco Million!—At Grips With the Million-Dollar Rum Ring* and other thrillers by America's leading detectives and police officials. All in the January number of

TRUE DETECTIVE MYSTERIES, A Macfadden Publication.

25c at all news stands the 15th of every month—30c in Canada

## Flying Stories

THE newest member of the Macfadden fiction family went on the news stands this month with its first issue and was an instant hit. Everybody said it was good. Everybody is going to say that the next issue is better. The next issue, December, goes on the news stands November 23rd, and will be filled with stories replete with romance, thrills and action. As an added feature, there will be a complete glossary of flying terms which you will find interesting and valuable.

Remember the date, November 23rd. Twenty-five cents a copy; thirty cents in Canada.

## Red Blooded Stories

THE new Macfadden fiction sensation goes on the news stands November 15th, crowded from cover to cover with thrills, suspense and action. There will be stirring stories of the West, of the air, of the sea, the War, the jungle, all parts of the world, by such well-known and popular authors as Pollok Guiler, Victor Rousseau, Ben Conlon, Basil Carey, Nels Leroy Jorgensen and T. Howard Kelley.

RED BLOODED STORIES is America's fastest reading and fastest growing magazine. The biggest quarter's worth on the stands. You'll enjoy every page. Remember, on the stands November 15th! Twenty-five cents per copy; thirty cents in Canada

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC., REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912, of GHOST STORIES, published monthly at Dunellen, N. J., for October 1, 1928.

State of New York }  
County of New York } ss.

Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and County aforesaid, personally appeared George Bond who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the editor of GHOST STORIES, and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management (and if a daily paper, the circulation), etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 411, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publisher, Constructive Publishing Corp., 1926 Broadway, New York City; Editor, George Bond, 320 West 108th St., New York City; Managing Editor, Edith L. Becker, 317 West 77th St., New York City. Business Managers, none.

2. That the owner is: (If owned by a corporation, its name and address must be stated and also immediately thereunder the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding one per cent or more of total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, the names and addresses of the individual owners must be given. If owned by a firm, company, or other unincorporated concern, its name and address, as well as those of each individual member, must be given.) Constructive Publishing Corp., 1926 Broadway, New York City. Stockholder: Macfadden Publications, Inc., 1926 Broadway, New York City. Stockholders in Macfadden Publications, Inc., Bernarr Macfadden, Englewood, N. J.; O. J. Elder, 276 Harrison St., East Orange, N. J.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: (If there are none, so state.) None.

4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him.

5. That the average number of copies of each issue of this publication sold or distributed, through the mails or otherwise, to paid subscribers during the six months preceding the date shown above is ----- (This information is required from daily publications only.)

(Signed) GEORGE BOND, Editor.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 1st day of October, 1928.

(SEAL)

WESLEY F. PAPE,

(My commission expires March 30, 1929.)

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**Forest Rangers \$125-\$200 month. Home** Furnished. Railway Mail, Post Office Clerks, Carriers, Rural Carriers. Free Details. Write Mokane Institute, 733 Denver, Colo.

**Men, get Forest Ranger job; \$125-\$200** month and home furnished; hunt, fish, trap. For details, write Norton Institute, 1523 Temple Court, Denver, Colo.

**Amazing New Glass Cleaner offers you** \$15 a day sure! Cleans windows, windshields, show cases, etc., without water, soap or ammonia. No muss. Easily demonstrated. Housewives, motorists, garages, stores, institutions buy on sight. Write for Special Introductory Offer. Jiffy Glass Cleaner Co., 2537, Monmouth, Cincinnati, Ohio.

**Something New! Latest Craze—Rub-** ber Art Rugs in attractive patterns and colors. Practical, serviceable, economical. Soft, easy on feet. Most women buy 3. Agents cleaning up! Make \$90 weekly. Also 47 other fast-selling rubber specialties. Free Outfit. Write quick. Kristee Mfg. Co., 1501 Bar Street, Akron, Ohio.

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GHOST STORIES invites its readers to form psychic circles for research work and to submit reports of all results obtained. For the most thorough and scientific reports by amateur investigators we will pay the following prices:

- |                               |                 |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>For the Best Report</b>    | <b>\$100.00</b> |
| “ “ <b>Second Best Report</b> | <b>65.00</b>    |
| “ “ <b>Third Best Report</b>  | <b>35.00</b>    |

This offer expires at midnight, February 28th, 1929. Results will be announced as early as possible thereafter.

For further information address The Editor, GHOST STORIES, 1926 Broadway, New York, N. Y.

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# Here is the real truth about the sex question!

**T**HIS is an age of plain thinking and frank speech. No longer can a big, vital problem like the sex question be hidden away as a thing to be ashamed of. People are demanding the truth about these things. And so Bernarr Macfadden has lifted the veil. He has told the truth about mankind's most vital problem in a frank, straight-from-the-shoulder style that will appeal to every man who reads his remarkable book.

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is a fearless, ringing challenge to prudery and ignorance. It contains the fruits of Bernarr Macfadden's lifelong study of one of the biggest problems confronting the young manhood of the world.

He has had to surmount extraordinary difficulties in the preparation of the book. But the truth is mighty! It can neither be ignored nor suppressed. There was overwhelming need and demand for a fearless, plain-speaking book on sexology. The wall of ignorance that was wrecking millions of lives must be broken down.

The book was written, published and placed on sale. Today in tens of thousands of homes this great work is one of the chief factors in promoting health, strength and happiness.

## Life's Handbook

Manhood and Marriage enters the sanctuary of the most secret phases of your inner life. It grips you with suggestions that are personal and confidential. It furnishes definite and practical information on vital subjects, pure in themselves, which frequently are surrounded with vulgar mystery.

The problems of man frequently assume tremendous importance. They thus become a source of worries that ultimately assume a tragical nature. And the need for the answer to the query "What shall I do?" often grasps the victim with terrifying intensity.

It is well, therefore, that conditions and problems of this sort should be clearly and emphatically presented. For the outcome may mean success or failure, health or disease or even life or death. Both single and married men needed to know the facts, so Bernarr Macfadden spent more than a quarter century compiling the authentic information given you in this book.

## Send No Money—Just the Coupon

This big book is so powerful, so crammed full of facts hitherto neglected by old-fashioned sex hygiene that we sincerely believe it should be in the hands of every man. Therefore, we do not hesitate to send it to you upon approval. You need send no money now—just fill out the coupon and mail it today. When the postman delivers the book to you, pay him the regular price \$3.00 plus the few cents delivery charges. Take five days to examine it thoroughly. If, at the end of that time, you do not agree that Manhood and Marriage is worth much more than its cost, return it to us and your \$3.00 will be refunded.

### Mail This Coupon Now

Macfadden Publications, Inc., Desk G.S.-1  
Macfadden Building, 1926 Broadway, N. Y. C.

You may send me a copy of Manhood and Marriage plainly wrapped and I will pay the postman \$3.00 plus delivery charges when the book is delivered. It is understood that if I am not entirely satisfied with this book that I will return it in perfect condition within five days and my \$3.00 will be refunded without question.

(Book shipped prepaid when cash accompanies order.)

Name.....  
(Print name and address)

Street.....

City..... State.....

Canadian and foreign orders cash in advance.

# Were You Born in December?

(Continued from page 114)

13. An unfortunate day. Attend to regular work, and take care of health.

14. Do your Christmas shopping; meet people and make new friends. Keep warm and avoid overexertion and worry in the evening.

15. A day of happiness. Seek pleasure, buy wearing apparel, cultivate beauty and promote large business deals. Make no changes and avoid accidents late in evening.

16. Attend church, visit friends and talk over domestic problems. Be sociable and considerate.

17. Ask favors, deal with the public, push matters connected with publicity, writing and property. Visit friends and seek amusement.

18. Travel in the morning. Remain quiet the rest of the day and avoid risks.

19. An adverse day for matters of importance. Avoid haste and irritability.

20. Make no changes and take no risks. Be prepared for unexpected and annoying developments. Conditions improve in evening.

21. A good day. Push business, sign contracts and get things of importance done. Buy, but curb extravagant notions.

22. Shop and attend to important business in morning. Exercise caution in regard to traffic during the afternoon.

23. A day of irritation. Avoid controversial subjects and disputes. Listen to no overnight schemes for making a fortune; take no risks of any nature and be very guarded in your actions.

24. Deal with friends, associations and fraternities.

25. A day for enjoyment and for religious and social activity. A Merry Christmas to you all!

26. Postpone matters of importance and family discussions. Be considerate and tactful.

27. Do creative work but do not commence undertakings or ask favors. Avoid disputes.

28. The morning is the best portion of this day and is favorable for undertakings of a progressive nature, but not for financial questions.

(Continued on page 122)

# I Offer You Day \$15 a Day



Make \$15 a day selling this wonderful new household article that has taken the country by storm. It is CED-O-BAG a moth-proof, damp-proof, dust-proof, germ-proof storage bag for clothes, blankets and furs. It is the greatest, fastest selling household article that has come on the market for years. Every housewife wants one, buys on sight.

CED-O-BAGS are made from rubberized fabric which has been chemically treated. They are patented. Nothing else like them. Instead of a small easily torn paper bag or a clumsy, expensive cedar chest, a CED-O-BAG provides adequate space for two to four garments. And yet, with all of these distinctive advantages CED-O-BAGS are priced for quick sale.

## Ced-O-Bags Offer Big Profits

There is a chance for you to clean up a lot of money in your town at once just by taking orders for CED-O-BAGS. L. H. Green went out and made a clear profit of \$12 in one afternoon. J. V. Davis took five orders in one evening and was \$5 richer. Edith Phillips made \$53 in one week's spare time (evenings). You can do as well, or better.



## No Experience Needed

You don't need experience or training. Every home in your town is a live prospect. All you have to do is show

the housewife a CED-O-BAG and take her order. We deliver and collect. You get your profits at once, and move on to the next house and take another order. Everyone buys. Geo. Jones took 22 orders in two days spare time and had a clear profit of \$22. 21 agents report an average profit of \$3 an hour.

## How Much Money Do You Want?

Would you like to make an extra \$100 or \$200 a month, in your spare time? Would you like to gather a lump sum of \$500 or \$600 in a couple of months? If you would, here is your chance. Mail me the coupon and I will tell you all about this money-making proposition. I will show you how you can make \$15 a day or more in this easy, pleasant, engaging work. I will show you the way to quick profits—big profits. Mail the coupon now.

**C. E. COMER, The Comer Mfg. Co.**

Dept. M-500 - - - Dayton, Ohio

## Mail This Now

C. E. Comer, The Comer Mfg. Co.,  
Dept. M-500, Dayton, Ohio.

Dear Sir: Please send me full details of your money-making proposition by which I can make \$15 a day in cash. This does not obligate me in any way.

Name .....

Address .....

## HYPNOTISM

Would you possess that strange mysterious power which charms and fascinates men and women influences their thoughts, controls their desires and makes you supreme master of every situation? Life is full of alluring possibilities for those who master the secrets of hypnotic influence; for those who develop their magnetic powers. You can learn at home, cure diseases and bad habits without drugs, win the friendship and love of others, increase your income, gratify your ambitions, drive worry and trouble from your mind, improve your memory, overcome domestic difficulties, give the most thrilling entertainment ever witnessed and develop a wonderfully magnetic will power that will enable you to overcome all obstacles to your success.



You can hypnotize people instantaneously—quick as a flash—put yourself or anyone else to sleep at any hour of the day or night or banish pain and suffering. Our free book tells you the secrets of this wonderful science. It explains exactly how you can use this power to better your condition in life. It is enthusiastically endorsed by ministers of the gospel, lawyers, doctors, business men and society women. It benefits everybody. It costs nothing. We give it away to advertise our institution. Write for it today. (Use a letter with a 5-cent stamp.) Sage Institute, Dept. 615-J, Rue de l'Isly, 9, Paris VIII, France.

Please mention GHOST STORIES when answering advertisement

# Why Wear Glasses?

## Thousands Are Throwing Them Away

Upon startling revolutionary facts has been based a remarkable new scientific system of eye-training, which quickly enables you to train the muscles of the eye so you can make them work properly at all times, and without effort or strain. This new system has been prepared by **Bernarr Macfadden**, in collaboration with the eminent ophthalmologist who discovered the real truth about eyes.

Although this remarkable system has only recently been introduced to the public, it has been in use for more than twenty years and it has been conclusively proven of inestimable value. The most remarkable results were obtained in a series of tests made in the N. Y. City Public Schools from 1903 to 1911.

No claim is made that this course is a cure-all. In many cases glasses are essential. But if you are wearing glasses because of faulty refraction—far or near sightedness—astigmatism—cross eyes—squint eyes—weak, watering eyes—eye headaches or strain, you at least owe it to yourself to give these methods a fair test. You can test these principles of eye education out in your own home without a cent of cost. Just mail your order and the entire course comes to you at once.

The very first reading will show you all you want to know about the eye—its construction—relation to the rest of the body—and the way it sees. You will learn instantly how to test your own eyes and just how to start to get immediate benefit.

Cross section drawings show plainly the whole mechanism of the eye—muscles and nerves. Photographs of defective eyes make clear the real reasons for poor sight. Your own trouble is clearly illustrated. With this knowledge in mind, it becomes easy for you to correct your defective muscles and gain strong sight.

We want every reader of this magazine afflicted with eye-trouble to examine Mr. Macfadden's wonderful course and try the eye exercises that it prescribes. In order to bring this about we are willing to send the entire course on approval giving you the privilege of returning it within five days after receipt if not satisfactory. The price of the course has been placed within the means of everyone—only \$3.00, plus delivery charges. Less than you would pay for a single pair of glasses. Can you afford not to take advantage of this offer and all it may mean to you? Not if you value strong eyes.

Mail your order today to

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Send for a "real" proposition  
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We prove to you FREE. SEND NO MONEY. Write today for PROOF and full details of our liberal prepaid FULL SIZE TRIAL PACKAGE. GUARANTEED FOR ALL SKIN TROUBLES. Quickly ends Pimples, Blackheads, Whiteheads, Coarse Pores, Wrinkles, Oily Shiny Skin, Freckles, Chronic Eczema, Stubborn Psoriasis, Scales, Crusts, Pustules, Barbers Itch, Itching Skin, Scabbies, softens and whitens the skin. Just send us your name and address. **ANDRE & CO., 751 E. 42nd St., Suite 682, Chicago**



\$250.00. Proud owner offered Collar and Cuff Links Given SEND NO MONEY. Just send name, address and finger size. Pay postman on arrival \$3.89 and postage. Satisfaction Guaranteed. Write today. Cash with foreign orders. **ELITE JEWELRY HOUSE, Dept. 81, 6343 S. Ashland Ave., Chicago, Illinois**

**Carat Elite Diamonds.** Matchless for their dazzling rainbow brilliancy. You'll be delighted. **Elite Rings** surpass all others. Stand acid and other tests. Handsomely engraved Ring, sterling **Guaranteed.** Looks like \$85.00 5 minutes after buying one. With each ring order, we give five beautiful combination set. Set with **Elite Diamonds.** **SEND NO MONEY.** Just send name, address and finger size. Pay postman on arrival \$3.89 and postage. Satisfaction Guaranteed. Write today. Cash with foreign orders. **ELITE JEWELRY HOUSE, Dept. 81, 6343 S. Ashland Ave., Chicago, Illinois**

(Continued from page 120)

29. A day of tension. Avoid undue excitement and take care of health.

30. A day favorable for spiritual and social matters.

31. Write letters, mix with young people, and make good resolutions for the New Year!

## The Meeting Place

(Continued from page 75)

maker's store in Brooklyn. She had a dog on a leash. On passing in front of 184-17 Jamaica Avenue, the dog acted very strangely. It began to bark and acted as though it were truly mad. The woman had difficulty in persuading the animal to leave the spot. When she finally succeeded in getting the dog home, the animal whined and showed a desire to go out once more. All the neighbors complained about the actions of the dog. All during the night and the following morning he whined, cried and barked.

The next morning a terrible accident occurred at the identical spot where the dog commenced his strange actions. Edward Haefli, a worker, was buried alive in a thirteen-foot man-hole. The cave-in, it is believed, was caused by the rumble of the heavy trucks passing by.

The police worked for two hours digging the man out. Efforts to revive him failed. He died at ten o'clock—and at that identical time the dog stopped barking. The facts in this account can be authenticated by numerous witnesses.

J. M.

Brooklyn, New York

I would like to know why it is that a buried portion of a body—a leg or an arm, for instance—will cause the surviving portion of the body to suffer pain if it is not laid just so when buried. Recently in our town a man was complaining that his amputated leg was paining him and he believed that something was pressing against it. This man's leg was taken off at the General Hospital of our city, and his family buried it.

When he complained so bitterly, they went and opened the box—and the foot and leg had fallen sideways and rested

(Continued on page 124)

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# Listen In On Life!

9 P. M.  
Eastern  
Time



8 P. M.  
Central  
Time

## True Story Hour

*Makes You Glad You Own a Radio Set!*

Symphonic and Vocal Music—Absorbing Travelogue  
A DRAMATIZED TRUE STORY

*Tune in on any Columbia Station*

WOR—N. Y.,—Newark  
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WCAU—Philadelphia  
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WJAS—Pittsburgh  
WOWO—Ft. Wayne  
WADC—Akron  
WAIU—Columbus  
WKRC—Cincinnati  
WICC—Bridgeport

WHK—Cleveland  
WGHP—Detroit  
WMAQ—Chicago  
KMOX—St. Louis  
WCAO—Baltimore  
KMBC—Kansas City  
WSPD—Toledo

**EVERY FRIDAY NIGHT—A RADIO TREAT!**

### THE DANCE

for lovers of dancing, good music and the theatre, one of the few really fine magazines published in America. At all news stands, per copy 35c, or by the year \$3.00.

### Foreign Work!

Like to Travel—Does Romantic, Wealthy South America call you? Unusual opportunities for young men. American employers. Fare and expenses furnished.

**BIG PAY. Write for Free List.**

**SOUTH AMERICAN SERVICE BUREAU**  
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### CORRECT YOUR NOSE

to perfect shape while you sleep. Anita Nose Adjuster **guarantees SAFE, rapid, permanent results.** Age doesn't matter. Painless. 60,000 doctors, users praise it. Gold Medal Winner. **Booklet Free.** Write for it today.

**ANITA INSTITUTE, A-11, Anita Bldg. Newark, N. J.**

30 Day FREE TRIAL

### What Do You Want?

Whatever it is we can help you get it. Just give us the chance by writing for "Clouds Dispelled." Absolutely free. You will be delighted. Act today. Write NOW! **The Brotherhood of Light.** Dept. P., Box 1525, Los Angeles, Calif.

### Easy to Play to Pay

**6 Days' Trial**

### Only a Buescher

You can get any Buescher Instrument on six days' trial, and pay for it on easy terms to suit your convenience. Write for details and free literature.

Saxophone gives you these extra features — Snap-on Pads, greatest improvement, easy to replace, no cementing — Patented Automatic Octave Key, perfect Scale Accuracy, convenient key arrangement.

### Be Popular Socially Earn Extra Money

playing a sweet-toned Buescher. 10 evenings, one hour each — will astonish and please you. It's easy with a Buescher. Tell us what instrument you are interested in. We'll do the rest.

**Buescher Band Instrument Co.**  
2589 Buescher Block Elkhart, Indiana

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# Now You Can Have A New Skin---3 Days Blemishes Vanish!



## GET THIS FREE

—and learn that what was considered impossible before—the banishing of pimples, blackheads, freckles, large pores, tan, oily skin, wrinkles and other defects—can now be done by any person at home in 3 days' time, harmlessly and economically.

It is all explained in a new treatise called "**BEAUTIFUL NEW SKIN IN 3 DAYS**," which is being mailed absolutely free to readers of this paper. So, worry no more over your humiliating skin and complexion or signs of aging. Simply send your name and address to **MARVO BEAUTY LABORATORIES**, Dept. 200-V, No. 1700 Broadway, New York, N. Y., and you will receive it by return mail, without charge or obligation. If pleased, tell your friends about it.

## BE A DETECTIVE Make Secret Investigations

Work home or travel. Experience unnecessary. DETECTIVE Particulars FREE. Write to **GEORGE H. WAGNER, 2190 Broadway, N. Y.**

## FOREST RANGERS



Men, get Forest Ranger job; \$125-\$200 month and home furnished; hunt, fish, trap, etc. For further details, write **NORTON INST.** 1462 Temple Court DENVER, COLORADO

## HOROSCOPE,

two questions answered. Or, four questions answered without horoscope; one dollar, year, month, day of birth.

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New York

## BUST DEVELOPED



My Big Three Part Treatment is the **ONLY ONE** that gives **FULL DEVELOPMENT** without bathing, exercises, pumps or other dangerous absurdities. I send you a **GUARANTEED TWO DOLLAR**

**14-DAY FREE TREATMENT**

If you send a **DIME** toward expense. (A Large Aluminum Box of my Wonder Cream included). Plain wrapper. **IS IT WORTH 10c TO YOU?** If not, your dime back by first mail. Address **NOW**, with ten cents only **Madame D. U. Williams, Buffalo, N. Y.**

Please mention **GHOST STORIES** when answering advertisement

(Continued from page 122)  
against the side of the box. They straightened it and surrounded it with cotton. Since then the man has had no more trouble.

How much of the spirit of life goes with the discarded limb—if any? Who knows anything about such a condition?

Mansfield, Ohio.

J. G.

I knew a man who was more or less psychic and who often told his wife that he could see their dead relatives materialize. His wife wished and prayed she, too, might see those loved ones. Six months later she became a mother. Her child, a girl, turned out to be a born materializing medium and a clairvoyant.

There is nothing strange about this. It is simply the result of accidental concentration of mind over matter. A mother can impress beauty, health, goodness, psychic powers and intelligence upon her offspring. The future of the race depends upon the use of this power.

E. J. M.

San Francisco, California.

While working as a telegraph operator in Baltimore, I went with a girl to see a woman who lived near by and was reputed to be a medium. This medium was a short, rather corpulent woman of about sixty, completely unimpressive in appearance. I listened while she gave readings to various other people, and though the readings seemed to satisfy those concerned, they hardly seemed remarkable. After all the others had left, the woman turned to us. The girl chose to have her reading out of hearing distance from me, and I, too, asked for the same procedure. I am not sorry that I did.

I had never talked with the girl about myself and so I am certain that she could not have given any information about me to the medium.

When my turn came, the woman went into a semi-trance and told me some astounding things of an intimate and personal character. She told me things that my closest friends could never know or guess, and gave me a warning that I have never tested, for it so frightened me that I have followed it implicitly.

She also told me the class of work I was engaged in and prophesied that in a few months I would be in a small place surrounded by water. As a matter of fact, I had requested the telegraph company to transfer me to a summer resort for a few months, and a few weeks later they offered me a position at Nantucket, Massachusetts, which I accepted without investigation.

Afterward, on looking at a railroad map, I found that Nantucket was located on an island, thirty miles off' the coast of Cape Cod!

I asked her numerous questions about the immediate future, all of which were correctly answered.

G. T. S.

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Readers of GHOST STORIES will also be especially interested in the following strange events recorded in recent newspaper reports:

Church's Island, off the coast of North Carolina—once a favorite rendezvous for pirates—is now the scene of ghostly manifestations. These were first reported by George Brice, who lives in a frame house on the island. The sound of heavy weights dropping and a woman shrieking come at intervals from the walls of his home. The noises occur both in broad daylight and in the hours before dawn. Search after search has failed to show any natural cause.

Frank Joe Foltrin, twenty-two years old, surrendered to the police at Seattle, because he was haunted by the ghost of a man killed during an attempted hold-up in Houston, Texas.

"It's dogged me from Houston to El Paso, to San Francisco and Portland, then to Ellensburg and here," he said. "I can see the phantom of the man who crumpled to the sidewalk while my gun smoked in my hand."

A woman walking near the abbey at Beaulieu, England, was recently confronted by the wraith-like figure of an old monk. She then heard a voice, apparently coming from the form, asking her to dig at a certain spot, where she would find a box containing two round pebbles and some bones. Lord Montagu, the owner of the abbey, permitted the excavations to be made. The searchers found the box just as it had been described by the woman.



## Can We Talk with Spirit Friends? "Easily," Says This Great Mystic

NO other problem has been so fascinating for mankind as that age old mystery, "Can We Communicate with Our Departed Dear Ones?" And now one of the great masters of Psychic Powers declares that the ability to talk with spirit friends can be developed under the proper guidance. Not only that, but he gives definite rules and instructions for discovering and cultivating psychic powers.

This famous seer is Swami Bhakta Vishta, a Hindoo Master, noted as an authority on Psychic Manifestation. In simple, everyday language he reveals the long hidden mysteries of Clairaudience, apparitions, spirit guides, telepathy, Voodooism, Crystal Gazing, and Black Magic.

All the different methods through which spirits talk are carefully explained—Writing and Drawing Mediumship, Trances, Inspirational Speaking, Impersonations, Spirit Rappings, and Table-Tiltings, Materializations, Trumpet Talking, and Slate Writing. Not only are these methods fully explained, but complete instructions are given for developing these various powers, and conducting the Spirit Circle. This great book is also filled with fascinating incidents and thrilling accounts of actual incidents of spirit return.

Swami Vishta also takes up, besides the methods of communication with the dead, the subject of the development of our personalities through harmony with the finer vibratory forces of Nature. From the infinite wisdom of the East, he tells us about the great mental currents and Psychic Vibratory Waves, which, when we understand them, can be used to bring us a fuller, richer, happier life.

### Send No Money— 5 Day Trial

This great book by Swami Vishta is called *Genuine Mediumship*, or *The Invisible Powers*. In order to get this invaluable information into the hands of the many thousands eager to get in touch with their dear ones on the other side, we have made every effort to offer these lessons at an extremely low price. Consequently you now can secure this priceless work for only \$1.98. Send no money—just fill out and mail the coupon below. When the package arrives pay the postman \$1.98 plus a few cents postage. Inspect this amazing volume for five days. Then if you are not delighted return it and your money will be refunded. Get the coupon in the mail this instant—we have only a limited edition at this low price. Franklin Publishing Co., 800 N. Clark St., Dept. A-80, Chicago.

#### These Fascinating Mysteries Explained

- The Nature of Spirit Power
- How to Conduct Spirit Circle
- Crystal Gazing
- Spirit Rappings
- Slate Writing
- Psychometry
- How to Develop Tele-
- Table-Tilting
- Materialization
- Fraudulent Spirits
- Trance Phenomena
- Signs of Spirit Presence
- Domineering Spirits
- The Psychic Triangle
- Public Seances

FRANKLIN PUBLISHING CO.,  
800 N. Clark St., Dept. A-80, Chicago, Ill.

Please send me a copy of *Genuine Mediumship* or *The Invisible Powers*, by Swami Bhakta Vishta. When package arrives I will pay postman only \$1.98, plus few cents postage. If not delighted, I am at liberty to return the volume within five days and my money will be refunded.

Name.....

Street and No. ....

City and State.....

If you may be out when the postman arrives send \$2.00 with the coupon, and we'll pay the postage. Price outside U. S. \$2.50 cash with order. 63

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## Rosicrucian Secret Book Loaned to You

Has Made Thousands Happy, Successful, and Mighty in the Control of Natural Laws.

Because this new book is so remarkable and difficult to secure, the Supreme Council of the Rosicrucians has decided to loan PRIVATE COPIES of it to sincere and worthy seekers who will promise to study it and help in the great work of promoting success and health in life. It is called "The Light of Egypt" and is issued by the oldest mystical fraternity in the world. Just write and say you will read it at your convenience. Address:

Librarian 5

### AMORC LIBRARY

Rosicrucian Park San Jose, California

## TOBACCO

Or Snuff Habit Cured Or No Pay

Superba Tobacco Remedy destroys all craving for Cigarettes, Cigars, Pipe, Chewing or Snuff. Original and only remedy of its kind. Used by over 500,000 Men and Women. Perfectly harmless. Full treatment sent on trial. Costs \$1.50 if it cures. Costs nothing if it fails. Write today for complete treatment. SUPERBA CO. Dept. N-87 BALTIMORE, MD.

## 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.



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Nearest their homes—everywhere to train for Firemen, Brakemen; beginners \$150 to \$250 monthly. Promoted to Conductor or Engineer—\$3,000 to \$4,000 yearly. Highest wages on railroads. Also clerks. Railway Educational Assn., Dept. D24, Brooklyn, N. Y.



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Get This Wonderful RING COMBINATION! Wedding Ring with choice of other, only \$4.98—Think of it! Most beautiful 1928 Basket Designs in genuine Sterling. Set with famous Elite Diamonds known for their lasting fiery brilliance. Compare them with the genuine. If you can tell the difference, send them back

Money Back Guarantee: Order quick. One ring or the Combination. DON'T SEND A PENNY! Just name, address, Number of Rings wanted with finger size. Pay postman price shown, or if combination \$4.98 on arrival. If not delighted, Money Refunded. Elite Jewelry House, Dept. 81, 6343 S. Ashland Ave., Chicago

## Spirit Tales

(Continued from page 112)

fectly neutral, I was asked to take the chair—but as there was some uncertainty as to whether I should be in England at the time, Professor A. M. Low consented to preside in my stead. However, I was able to attend and occupied a seat on the platform.

"THE debate lasted three hours and twenty minutes, the motion being proposed by Mr. Hocking, who in an extremely weak speech disclosed the fact that during fourteen years the Occult Committee of the Magic Circle had done nothing more than catch Mrs. Deane juggling with the photographic plates. Mr. Swaffer followed and the large audience rocked with laughter as he wittily drove home his points against the conjurers. His production of a red silk handkerchief from an egg brought the house down, and even the crestfallen conjurers could not but appreciate the humor of his 'magical act'.

"Mr. Dingwall spoke next and denied the existence of any real evidence for spiritualism. His efforts to explain the various phenomena which, in signed statements, he had previously vouched for as genuine, were amusing in the extreme. I had a verbal duel with Dingwall on the platform as to whether we signed statements at Munich in 1922 to the effect that we had witnessed genuine phenomena with Willie Schneider. Considering that our attestation has been published over and over again, I was astonished to find the ex-Research Officer of the British S. P. R. denying he signed such a document.

"After Dingwall came Mr. Barbanell, whose eloquence and facts stirred the assembly to enthusiastic approbation. Then came an interregnum during which members of the audience were invited to make brief speeches. This was taken advantage of by one man who attempted to give us in detail the perfectly irrelevant information that on one occasion the Magic Circle members had juggled before royalty. He was promptly told to sit down, after which the principal speakers had another opportunity of stating their case. Much the same result again occurred and the conjurers once more put up a very bad 'argument,' which was riddled to pieces by the forensic eloquence of Swaffer and Barbanell."

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A new society, formed in Manchester, England, is composed of men and women enthusiasts in psychical research. The society prides itself on its exclusiveness.

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The members meet once a week in a small room in Manchester.

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To Mr. Price it looks like a case of self-induced hallucination.

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is the title of an article in the December issue of **YOUR HOME** which will appeal to all. It contains many excellent suggestions for giving the home a festive appearance for the holiday.

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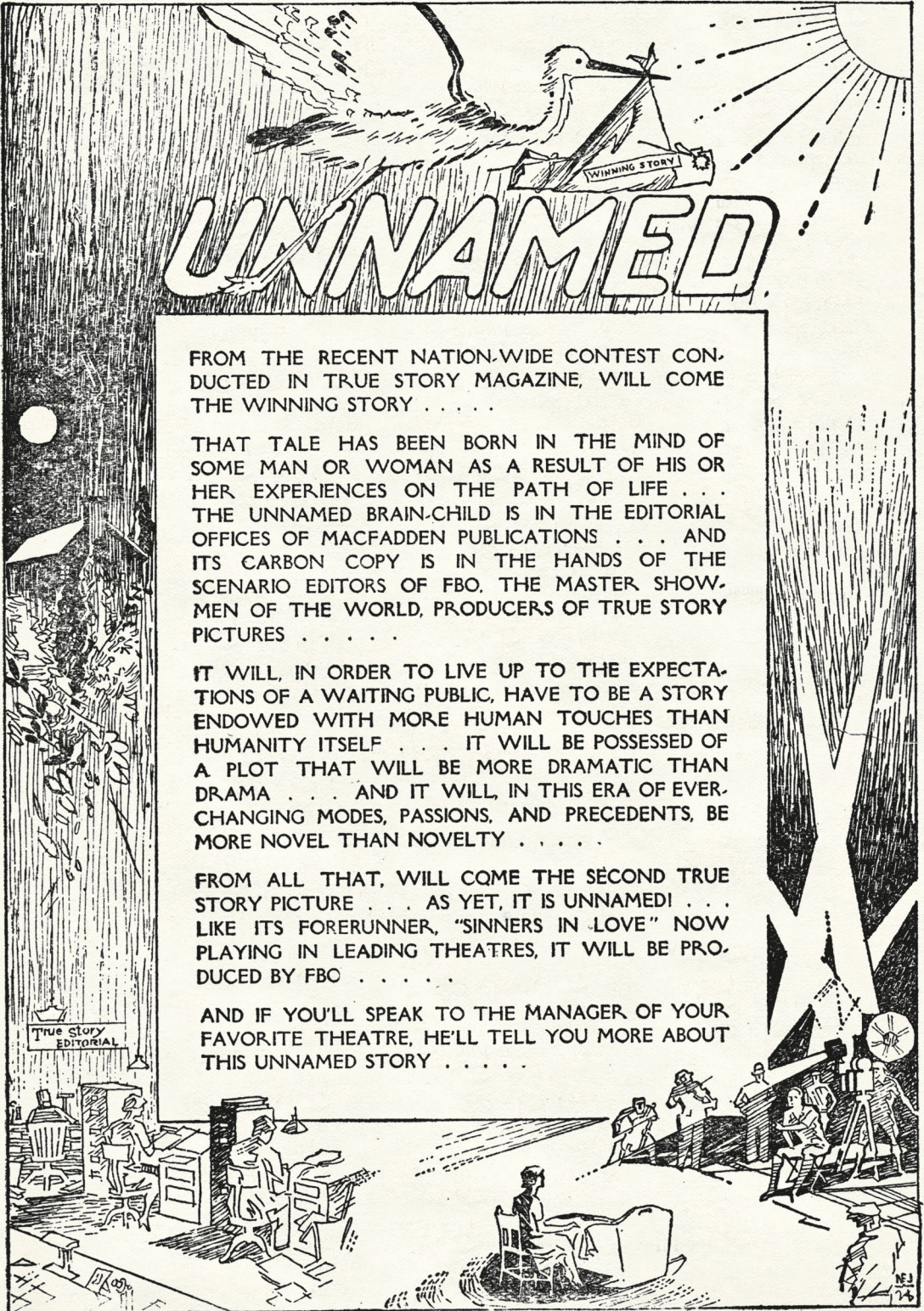
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