

UNCANNY, SPOOKY, CREEPY TALES

September

Ghost STORIES

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of the
Unknown*

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by TITO SCHIPA

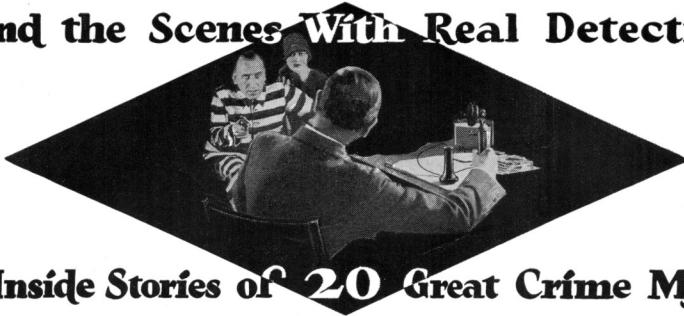
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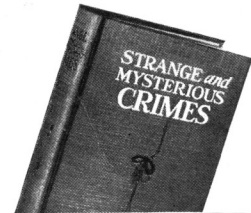
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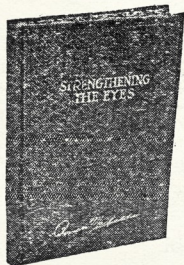
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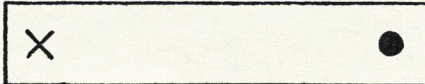
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Model Airplanes for Boys

constitute the cornerstone on which the future of this great Nation must be built

See that your boy reads MODEL AIRPLANE NEWS, a new Macfadden magazine that is aimed directly at the boys of the Nation, and in which you will find that sort of reading material which will both interest and educate your son. It will keep him clean and wholesome because it will give him clean and wholesome things to think about.

In the September issue of MODEL AIRPLANE NEWS he will find *How to Build a Bernard Monoplané Model*, with complete full-sized working plans. *You Must Be Fit to Fly*, written by a licensed pilot, will also interest him, and you will want him to know what this article has to tell him. There is an inspiring article on the MACFADDEN SKY CADETS which you will want him to join, and there is an interesting serial story of the air and a shorter fiction story entitled *Champions of Chivalry* which he will want to read.

MODEL AIRPLANE NEWS costs only 15 cents per copy, and the September issue is on sale at all news stands on August 23rd.

The Amazing Denton Murder Mystery

THE wealthy Denton, after moving to Los Angeles from Arizona in 1920, mysteriously vanished. Months later, his body was found buried in the basement of his mansion. Who did it? For the key to this riddle read the astounding true account of the Denton case—*The Great Wilshire Mystery*—in the September issue of THE MASTER DETECTIVE, on sale August 23rd. And don't miss the other great fact mysteries—illustrated with actual photographs—including *The Vanishing Priest of San Francisco*, *Chicago's Murder Castle*, *The Riddle of the Secret Graveyard* and others by America's master criminologists.

THE MASTER DETECTIVE is a Macfadden publication, twenty-five cents in the United States; thirty cents in Canada.

The Scourge of the South Sea Skies

The chase was on! Pelham thrilled to it. He would follow that plane to hell and back to find out who the Unknown was—the one who held the key to the mystery beyond. The sea was darkening. Night was falling fast. Fuel running low. Still the grim pursuit kept up. . . .

What deep mystery was this to lure a pilot on in such a situation? In the September issue of the Macfadden ace of air magazines, FLYING STORIES, you will find the solution in one of the greatest air tales ever written. It is called *The Scourge of the South Sea Skies*. In addition to this are a dozen more stirring sky stories. Also, in this issue, there begins *Gypsy Air Trails*—a true romance of barnstorming—by Clyde Pangborn, world famous air-devil. Don't miss this splendid issue of FLYING STORIES which also includes another lesson in the ground course.

On the news stands August 23rd. Twenty-five cents. Thirty cents in Canada.

Plagiarism

STORIES have been submitted to this magazine which are copies of stories that have appeared in other magazines.

Anyone 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 co-operate 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.

What Is the Ideal Body?

How often you have marveled at the grace and poise of prominent dancers—grace and poise completely cloaking the vibrant strength without which their performances would be impossible! How is this radiant perfection of physique developed? How can you, yourself, develop bodily perfection?

Ideal Bodies For Ideal Dancers, a feature article in DANCE MAGAZINE for September, explains by examples of internationally known stage stars, how you, too, can not only develop an enviable physique but control it with grace and poise. Here is information of equal significance to ambitious dancers and to folks who seek the freedom from illness which a healthy body insures.

Buy your, September, copy of DANCE MAGAZINE—a Macfadden Publication—at the nearest news stand, August 23rd, 35 cents the copy.

Philadelphia's Famous "Trunk Murder"

will go down in the history of crime as one of the world's most astounding mysteries. Philadelphia's great detective, Lieutenant Wm. J. Belshaw, handled this famous case and in his own words tells the gripping story in the September

TRUE DETECTIVE MYSTERIES. Also, don't fail to read, in this same issue, the true, inside stories of these nerve-thrilling cases, as told by the detectives themselves: *The Clue of the Crumpled Coat—The Dead Man's Foot in the Doorway—Who Was the Arch-Murderer of the Osage Hills?—Dope—Scourge of the Underworld—The Amazing Crimes of the Original Jack the Ripper—Elbows Across the Street—The Fleet of Floating Dead*—and other great cases as told by America's leading detectives and police officials.

Hear these great stories over twenty radio stations of the Columbia Broadcasting Network. See newspapers for announcements.

TRUE DETECTIVE MYSTERIES—The Magazine of Fact—A Macfadden Publication—25c at all news stands the 13th of every month—30c in Canada.

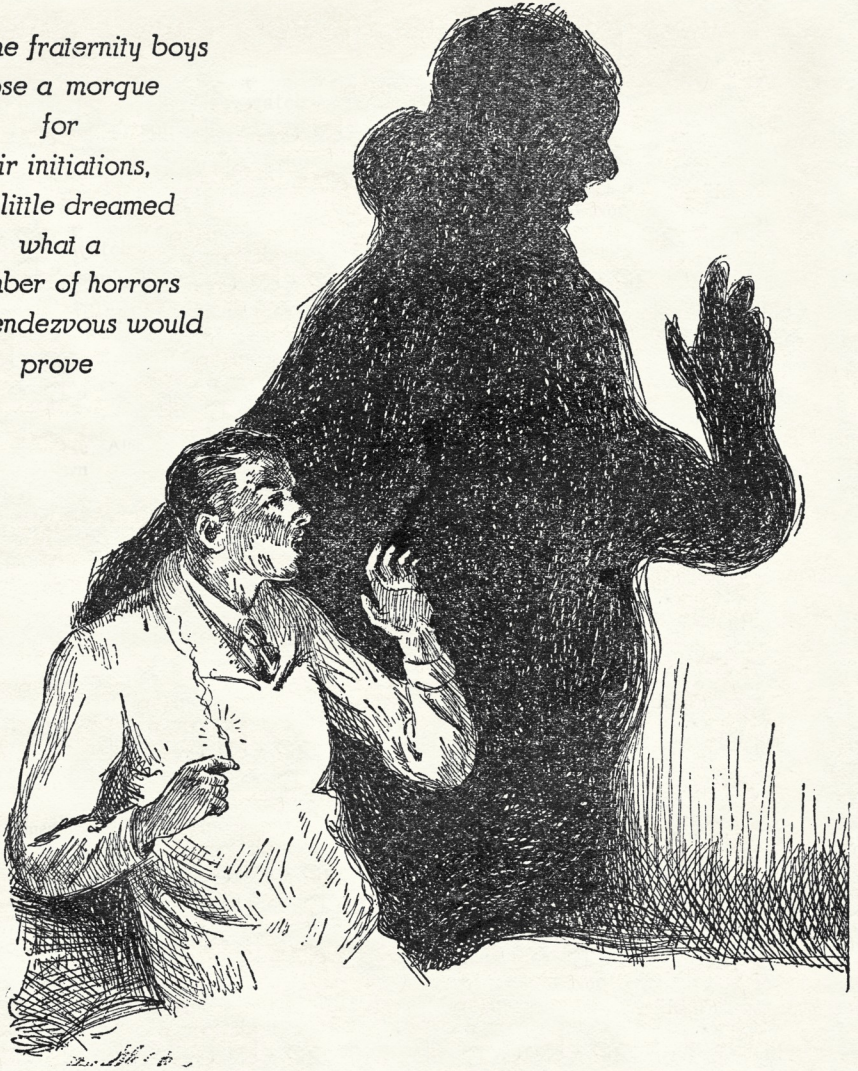
A New Radio Thrill

THE PHYSICAL CULTURE Hour on Monday evenings has added a new quality to the usual music, drama and entertainment with which radio fans are so familiar.

PHYSICAL CULTURE broadcasts present gorgeous music and stirring drama, and also fill the skies with new values in the glorification of beauty and the idealization of strength. They develop finer, higher standards of manhood and womanhood. They touch a responsive chord in human nature that is seldom reached. In short, the PHYSICAL, CULTURE broadcasts inspire the awakening of these higher levels of human life, and that is why these programs are being talked about everywhere. Don't fail to tune in on Monday evenings over the Columbia chain stations, or to pick up the Wednesday morning broadcasts in the "Radio Household Institute" Hour, National stations.

When the fraternity boys
 chose a morgue
 for
 their initiations,
 they little dreamed
 what a
 chamber of horrors
 their rendezvous would
 prove

The flickering
 match showed
 me the ghastly,
 tortured face of
 Bob Harter!



JUST a few weeks ago I read of the death of Professor C. Darwin Cormier. A third of a column on an inside page of a metropolitan newspaper, that was all. A paragraph or two about his quarter of a century tenure of the chair of Psychology at Corfield College in upper New York State; a scant few lines about the many summers he spent abroad in the study of the occult sciences; the names of several European savants with whom he was intimate, and a brief sentence stating that for some little period Professor Cormier had been practically a recluse.

Educators do not make good news copy as a rule. A gunman or a racketeer would have been given at least twice the space.

But that obscure obituary, I know, was the most important piece of news that day for any former student of Corfield College. Alumni are sure to wonder if dear old Corfield ever will, or ever can, be the same without "Prof" Cormier.

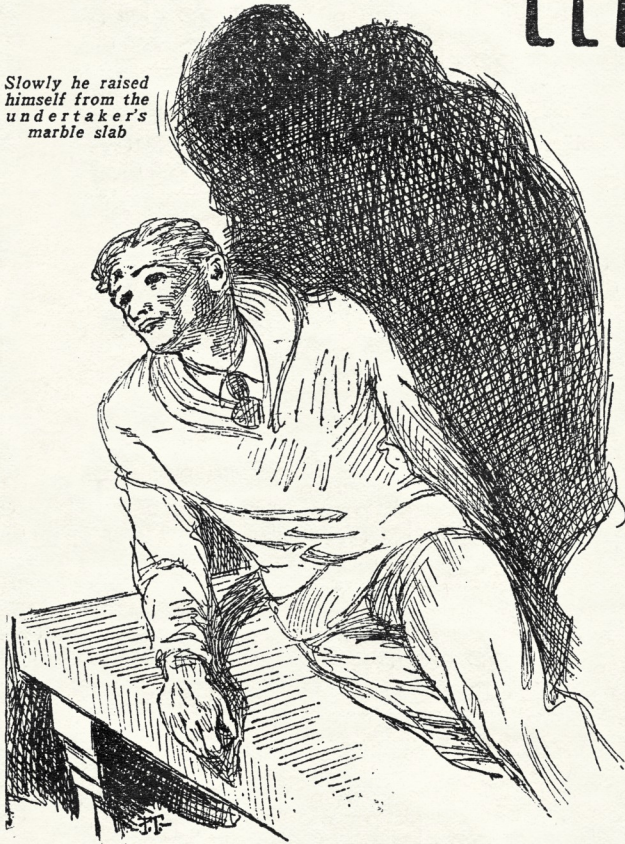
Often, when I am alone, I think of that wonderful mind of his. Can that, too, be dead? I cannot believe it.

From my first meeting with Professor C. Darwin Cormier, I grew steadily more impressed with the man's power. His mind was like a great palace of splendor with labyrinthine corridors leading to quaint courtyards and weird dungeons—dungeons which might be dark and forbidding, but which held treasure seldom glimpsed by the eye of ordinary man. Students soon sensed that there was little use in bluffing before this "Prof." He might not challenge the attempted deception, but he never failed to see through it. His query was made, more often than not, simply as a test of a student's character and honesty.

"**Y**OU are exceptional in preferring a small college to a large university," he said to me on the occasion of my first visit with him. We were having dinner at his queer little house on College Hill. I must say that I had gone there strictly as a duty, and not by any means as a pleasure. My father had been a school chum of Professor Cormier's back in the eighties, and had asked me to call. I had received a cordial welcome and an invitation to join the bachelor instructor in his simple evening meal.

The VARSITY Murder

Slowly he raised himself from the undertaker's marble slab



By

RICHARD LEE FOSTER, Jr.

As told to

Ben Conlon

He was silent as he carried out a tray from the living-room to his small kitchen—he lived alone and had no servant except a woman who came in twice a week to clean house.

Left alone in the odd little studio living-room, I was turning a curious gaze on the Victorian furnishings, the photographic apparatus and numerous works on scientific phenomena lining the many book-shelves. I had picked up one of the volumes and was looking through it as the professor returned carrying a little

silver coffee-pot.

"You are interested in this sort of thing, Foster?" he asked, nodding toward the book, and I thought his cloudy eyes grew more brilliant.

"I'm not even sure what it's all about, sir," I replied. "I just happened to notice that this book was in French. I took a year of the language at Radleigh, and I was seeing if I could read any of it."

I put the book back on the shelf, but the professor rested the hot coffee-urn on the table, absent-mindedly letting it scorch the

cloth while he drew the same volume out again.

"Ah, yes," he said. "*La Connaissance Supranormale*, by Doctor Osty. A most interesting work. I have a translation of it, if you would care to take it some time. The reason that I suggest it," he explained, as he opened the book and showed me the reproduction of a spirit photograph, "is that I thought I recognized certain psychic powers in you. But you have perhaps never had any—what you might call weird—experiences?"

"PLENTY, professor," I laughed. "But not in the occult line. That stuff to me is all—" I hesitated to finish my sentence. "I'm really very ignorant about it all," I added.

Professor Cormier smiled faintly.

"The ones who are ignorant about it," he said, "are frequently the ones who have most to say about it. Never allow snap judgments based on a lack of knowledge to govern your decisions, my boy," he counseled kindly. "To some of us is given power to penetrate certain mysteries unknown to the many. I have been studying you. In many ways

At the outset I had told him the facts—or what I represented as the facts—behind my choosing to start my sophomore year at Corfield after having completed my freshman work at Radleigh University.

"I rather thought life in a small college would be more intense, sir," I had said. "And as soon as Dad received your report as to the scholastic standing of Corfield, he was all for having me make the change."

"And perhaps you, yourself, had some good personal reason for wanting to do so?" he said, half-interrogatively.

"Well, I did have a personal reason, professor—in a way," I answered, a trifle lamely. I did not think it necessary to add that my "personal reason" was my college-boy infatuation for Avis Brent, whom I had met at Bar Harbor the previous summer. When I had learned that Avis's father was Dean of the Faculty at Corfield—well, from that moment I had started working on Dad to let me make the shift. And now, after I had mildly fooled my own father, here was this queer-looking stranger suggesting that I had some personal reason for changing over to Corfield.

He was discreet enough not to quiz me about it, however.

you are like your father, my old friend, 'Happy Dick' Foster. And yet you are very different, too. Superficially, you are the young college boy of today—fully occupied with athletics, dancing, and—possibly girls?"

He looked at me keenly, and I felt sure that he knew all about my romance with Avis.

"But underneath," he went on, "I really think you are psychic. You have your father's ruggedness and lackadaisical outlook upon life. Doubtless this other side of you that I perceive comes from your mother?"

It was true that my mother was a quiet, contemplative sort of woman, and I recalled that I had heard her tell of having had a vision a month or so before I was born. In telling the story to the professor, I happened to mention the date of my birth, the fifteenth of March.

"Most interesting!" he said. "And you were born on March fifteenth, eh? You are under the rule of Pisces, the last of the twelve signs of the Zodiac. Those born under this sign often possess an intuitive knowledge of the spirit world; indeed, many Piscarians are highly mediumistic."

THE conversation continued in psychical channels, and Professor Cormier proceeded to make almost a lecture course of the rest of our dinner. At first I was bored, I am afraid, and was far more interested in the jazzy fox-trot that floated out from the radio next door, where Avis Brent lived. But my interest warmed up surprisingly when "Prof" Cormier showed me several spirit photographs which he had taken personally. This lifted the talk out of mere theory, and gave it reality, and I listened eagerly as "Prof" prattled on.

"The actuality of psychic phenomena today is doubted only by the most incorrigible skeptic," he maintained. "You hear this radio next door. The very idea of that sort of thing would have been ridiculed a century ago, wouldn't it? But just give the occult researchers another century, possibly much less, and the psychic claims now laughed at by the uninformed and the incredulous will be generally accepted."

And my new acquaintance rambled along, carrying me far afield into new realms of thought and reasoning. It was the first intelligent discussion of the occult that I had ever listened to. "Prof" Cormier talked of ectoplasm and telekinesis, and used other terms of which I hardly knew the meaning then; but I was surprised to find myself asking many questions, not only to be courteous, but because those spirit photographs actually made by "Prof" Cormier—and to look at the man was to know that he could not lie or even embroider the truth—had whetted my interest. I stayed much longer than I had intended to, and it was dusk when I left his queer little house. The radio was still playing next door, and as I passed the Brent house, a familiar voice hailed me out of the growing darkness. I thrilled at the unexpectedness of it. It was Avis Brent.

"Going through tonight, Dick?" Avis asked.

"I sure am," I replied. I knew that by "going through," she meant undergoing the initiation of the Alpha Rho fraternity, which had "rushed" me from the day of my matriculation at Corfield. I was eligible to join the frat, as I had not joined any during my freshman year—there had been no Greek-letter fraternities at Radleigh.

Avis turned her dark-lashed gray eyes upon me, and I could see the mischievous expression in her face. I was near enough for that by this time. I had availed myself of the opportunity to walk up the path and sit on her porch.

"Afraid?" she asked, with an impish little smile. "The Alpha Rho frat has a rep' for rough initiations, you know."

Even if I had been afraid, I shouldn't have said so. Twenty-year-old youths do not admit fear to girls they admire. But as a matter of fact, I really wasn't afraid, and I told Avis so in no uncertain language.

"They'll go easy with me on account of the coming game with Manchester," I said. (I was a member of the football

squad, and the game with Manchester University was one of our biggest of the season). "Personally," I added, "I'm quite willing to go through the entire initiation. Exempting me from part of it was their idea, and not mine. The fellows said I'd just have to go through one severe test. I'm to meet them at Bell's undertaking parlors in the village at nine-thirty."

Avis laughed, a little scornfully. She was eighteen; yet sometimes she assumed the airs of an older and much more sophisticated person—a mannerism at once irritating and charming.

"You college boys, with your 'severe tests' and all your other hocus-pocus!" she scoffed. "If you're going to meet them at Bell's, I can tell you now what your 'severe test' will be. The Alpha Rhos always pull that one. They'll tell you that there is an unidentified corpse down in Bell's private morgue, in the cellar. As a test of your nerve, you'll have to go through the dark cellar, look at the corpse on the slab, probably remove the necktie from it, or something like that, and bring the tie back to prove that you've really gone through with it. You'll be allowed three matches—one to light your way in through the corridor, one to light in the morgue, and one to light your way out."

"You seem to know a lot about it," I remarked, a trifle testily. "Evidently there are some Alpha Rhos who don't take their frat vows of secrecy very seriously," I added sarcastically. I was referring to Bob Harter, Corfield's football captain, and an Alpha Rho. I had just learned that Avis Brent and Bob Harter played around together, and that he had taken her to Junior Prom the two preceding years.

But Avis ignored the jibe. "When you have lived on a campus as long as I have," she said, superiorly, "you get up on all the rackets that some college-boys think are so mysterious. I can't see any harm in telling such foolish things to an outsider. I don't know what good initiations do, anyhow; more often they do harm. Many a big fellow like you, strong and athletic and physically daring, gets a bad scare during these creepy 'severe tests.' But I can tell you now that when you get into Bell's private morgue, there won't be any corpse there at all. The frat candidates, though, get all the thrills and chills just the same."

I lit a cigarette. I was very much in love with Avis Brent, and had never had even the slightest tiff with her. But now I felt a little roiled.

"If I'd known what you were going to tell me, Avis," I said, "I'd have stopped you. I hardly think you had the right to warn me in advance this way. I have no fear of the dead, anyhow, but now I think I have an unfair advantage in knowing that the corpse business is just a hoax. I ought to tell the fellows that I've been let in on it, so I won't be appearing brave under false pretenses."

THE clock in the chapel on the campus struck a single, clanging note, and Avis stood up and compared the time with her radium-dialed wrist-watch.

"Oh, you take these things too seriously," she said. "You're just a big boy, after all. Well, it's half-past eight, and I have an appointment before nine down in the village."

There was just the suggestion of a strained feeling when I left. Avis had rather loftily refused my offer to walk down the hill with her, so I continued up to the dormitory, changed into a sweater and knickers, and, shortly after nine, started downhill. I crossed the dark campus and avoided a group of fellows who were also bound downhill toward the village of Corfield. I was moody, and wanted to be alone. I was wondering if Avis's "appointment" was with Bob Harter, my rival. Her accusation that I was just "a big boy" had hurt my vanity. Bob Harter was a senior, and was twenty-three.

My mind was hardly concerned with the coming initiation at all. As I reached the bottom of College Hill, a little streak of jealousy caused me to turn into Spike Stocker's

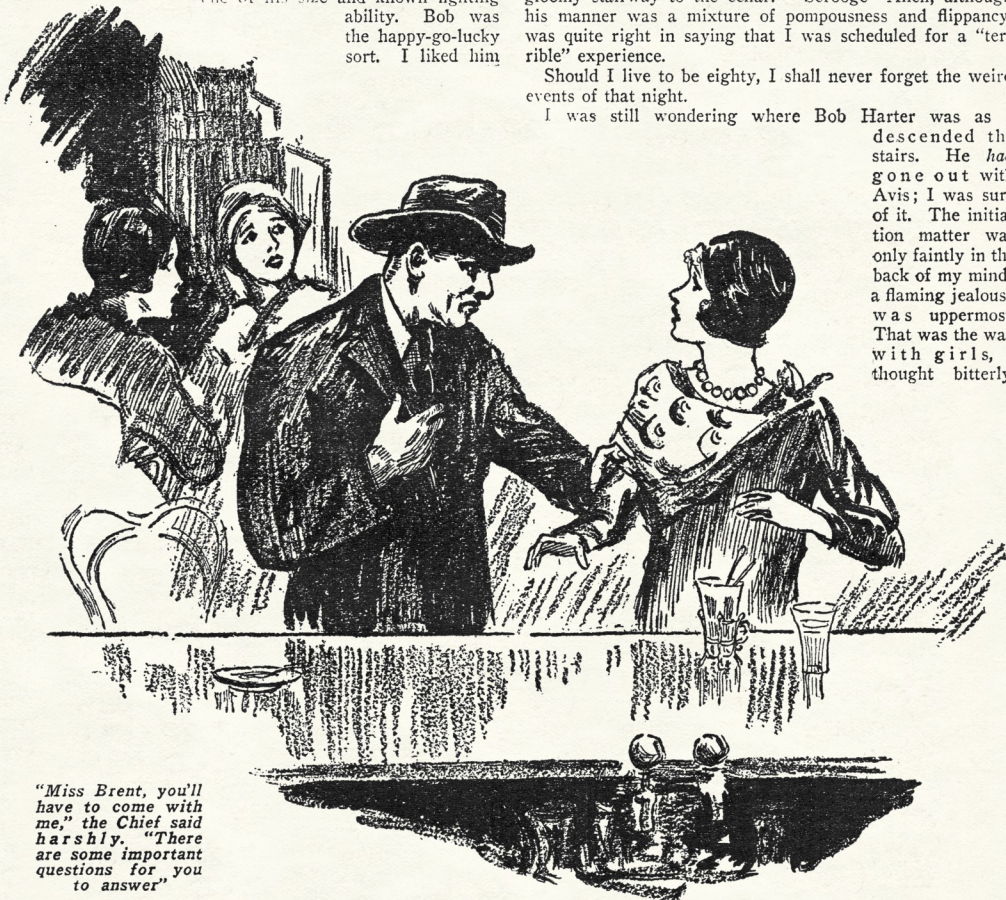
billiard-parlor. I had played billiards in there with Bob Harter and others, but recently the place had been growing rather tough, due to the patronage of the laborers from the re-opened hematite mines near Corfield. Besides, there were strong suspicions that Stocker was selling vile "hootch" to the mine-laborers and others, and the place was frequently too noisy to play billiards. Too noisy for me, that is. Bob Harter didn't seem to mind it. He was a pugnacious sort of a chap, never averse to getting into a fight or a brawl—though he rarely had to, for few cared to clash with one of his size and known fighting ability. Bob was the happy-go-lucky sort. I liked him

Allen, a junior. "This is a very severe test, for you must untie the necktie from around the dead man's neck, and bring it back to us. And you'd better get started before you get thinking too much. You're going through a terrible experience, Foster, but it's worth it to be a member of the Alpha Rho crowd." "Scrooge" was a super-loyal fraternity brother.

I was about to tell the fellows what Avis had let me in on, but then I held back. It would have seemed too much like a criticism of Avis, and of Bob Harter, who no doubt had told her of the hoax. So I started at once down the gloomy stairway to the cellar. "Scrooge" Allen, although his manner was a mixture of pompousness and flippancy, was quite right in saying that I was scheduled for a "terrible" experience.

Should I live to be eighty, I shall never forget the weird events of that night.

I was still wondering where Bob Harter was as I descended the stairs. He had gone out with Avis; I was sure of it. The initiation matter was only faintly in the back of my mind; a flaming jealousy was uppermost. That was the way with girls, I thought bitterly,



"Miss Brent, you'll have to come with me," the Chief said harshly. "There are some important questions for you to answer"

a lot—except when I thought that Avis might still like him a lot, too.

My streak of jealousy wasn't helped much when I found that tonight Bob Harter wasn't in Stocker's, although he usually played billiards there around this hour. Of course, he might be over at Bell's undertaking place with the other Alpha Rhos. I continued along, hoping that I might see him there. But when I didn't, I felt sure that he must be out with Avis in his rattling old flivver.

At Bell's I found that Avis had been right in her prediction. The Alpha Rho fellows explained my "sever test" to me with all due solemnity, and presented me formally with my three matches after I had emptied the others out of my pockets.

"You'll be allowed six minutes," I was told by "Scrooge"

A fellow comes to a special college just to be near a certain girl—and then she doesn't appreciate his devotion. Bob Harter was a good enough fellow, but—

BY now I had reached the bottom and had turned down the inky black corridor. And suddenly every jealous thought was driven from my mind. The heat of my wrath had left me. In fact, I now felt decidedly cold. I could fairly feel the chills crawling up and down my spine. What could have happened to me so suddenly? I knew what I was in for—then why should I be afraid? I hated myself for my cowardice. But the further I crawled along that corridor, the colder and more nervous I became.

I thought I saw a dim form glide by me in the darkness, and the air seemed to drop at least ten degrees in temper-

ature. My hand was trembling as I struck the first match—trembling so much, indeed, that I broke off the match-head and it guttered a second and snuffed out on the cement floor, leaving me in darkness that seemed even more intense than before.

What was the matter with me? I had never known fear before in all my twenty years. But now I felt that I was not alone in that pitch-dark corridor. Some person, or at any rate, some *presence*, was there with me. A strange sense sounded a clear warning that there was danger here for me.

I thought back to what Professor Cormier had said about spirits returning from the other world. The filmy eyes of one of his spirit-photographs seemed to be forming before me. Back there in that little studio of his, with the sound of a jazz-tune floating in from the radio next door, I had felt quite smug. But now the full force of his statement came to me. "*Why, of course, Foster, spirits travel at times from the other world to this. I have seen them, I have talked with them!*"

The words were in my ears once more, and in these lugubrious surroundings, they had an entirely different effect upon me. What more likely place, I thought, for spirits to return than in this corridor where so many lifeless bodies had been carried back and forth? My teeth were chattering. I seriously considered going back up the stairway and saying that I had been in the morgue and found no corpse at all—taking advantage of the information Avis had volunteered. But no! That would be cheating. If I did that and then joined the frat, I would be wearing the Alpha Rho pin under false pretenses. I'd at least steel myself to go through the regular motions. I'd persevere through to that private morgue, even if I trembled all the way, and get back and out into the light as quickly as possible. I crept along to where the corridor widened as it made a turn. By using all my willpower, I succeeded in partially steadying my limbs.

And then my frazzled nerves went fairly jangling again! For suddenly a door in the side of the corridor opened, letting in just enough light to outline a form very dimly. I say a *form*, and yet whatever stood there seemed to me formless. I got the merest flash of it before the door closed and the corridor was in complete darkness again. A split-second later I felt myself actually pulled from behind! I reached back quickly to grasp some attacker—and my hands clutched only empty air. At the same instant, I felt the breeze of a heavy club or cudgel swung in front of my face. I heard its whizzing sound as it swept through the air, and the splintering of wood as it hit the cement floor with terrific force.

And yet, strange to say, instead of making me more afraid, this happening, once the sudden shock of it was over, rather helped my nerves—and for a very good reason. Before this, I had been thinking that there were ghosts in the corridor. But now it came to me that ghosts didn't open or shut doors. And whoever was in that doorway had tried to hit me with some instrument—a wooden club, judging from the noise; and ghosts, I reasoned, didn't carry clubs that could be splintered and make thwacking noises.

At first I suspected that this unlooked-for encounter might be some extra hoax of the Alpha Rho gang; but I could not believe they would have gone to these extremes. There was no doubt about it—that club had whizzed down not three inches from my head; and it was only too clear to me that had I not been pulled back from that door, I'd have been knocked unconscious. But who could have pulled me?

I had felt nothing when I reached back. And now, as I listened, I could make out no sound there in the corridor. Perhaps I had only *thought* I had been jerked back; perhaps my nerves were fooling me. Maybe, in that second of strongly sensed but unseen danger, some inner instinct had made me dodge the blow. Yet I could not quite convince myself of the latter. I was too sure that I had felt a hand on my shoulder!

After a cautious wait, during which I caught not the slightest sound of any movement near me, I suddenly leaped forward, directly toward the spot where the club-swinger must have stood. But my searching hands closed on—nothingness.

The next instant I had grasped the knob of that mysterious door and jerked it with all my might. The effort nearly flung me off my feet—but the door did not budge. It was locked!

Swiftly I struck my second match. Its feeble flame revealed the bare, empty corridor.

STILL holding the lighted match, I moved quickly to the door of the morgue. A strange feeling of helplessness—of impending horror—gripped me. But I opened the door and entered.

The door slammed after me—why, I do not know, for there was no draft. My match had not been blown out, nor did it even flicker.

I looked over at the slab. And then I got the most hideous shock of all.

To my utter horror, the slab was not, after all, empty. *A form was lying prone upon it!*

In the jumpy state of my nerves, my heart pounded like a trip-hammer, and my body was wet with cold perspiration. That a corpse could have this devastating effect upon me would have surprised me if I had taken time to analyze the situation, but thought was beyond me. A stupefying terror was gripping my heart.

Shaking as with the ague, I crept closer. And then, in this strange night of surprises, still another awaited me. For the puny light of my half-burned match revealed a mop of chestnut hair above the clean-cut features and mammoth form of Bob Harter, stretched out on the slab.

So, I thought, they *were* ragging me, after all! This, then, was why Bob had not been at Stocker's billiard-parlor, and why he was not with the rest of the Alpha Rhos upstairs! The Alpha Rho gang, relying on good old Bob, was trying to put a new one over on me. And in less than a second the memory of the jealousy I had felt earlier in the evening made me ashamed

of myself. I had been misjudging Bob. Now I recalled all of his many good qualities, and our brief but firm friendship for each other.

The match burned out, and fell to the floor. Only the faintest of wan moonlight filtered through the little window cut into the morgue's upper wall. By the aid of this half-light, I could still see the form on the slab. Well, if Bob could play tricks, so could I. I was big enough to rough-house with him.

I gathered myself together, as if for a football tackle, and made a dive at the slab. But my hands touched only the cold, clammy stone!

Had Bob slipped off the slab just as I leaped toward him? Was he chuckling silently somewhere in the darkness? Still, I had heard no sound. . . .

Suddenly a queer, eerie feeling came upon me again, and I decided to light my third and last match. I scratched it



against the side of the slab. Then my hair seemed fairly to stand on end—I could not even retreat. Terror, stark nameless terror held me rooted there.

For the light revealed that the form was transparent! The flickering match showed me the ghastly, tortured face of Bob Harter, but I could see the stone of the slab right through his body! At a point just beneath his chest there was a black necktie, which one of the Alpha Rhos must have put there earlier in the evening. I recoiled from reaching through that transparent shape for the necktie. I put up my hand to wipe away the cold perspiration that was streaming into my eyes, and as I did so the match, held in my left hand, burned down to its edge, and finally went out. I did not even feel the pain—did not discover the burn until later.

Numb with horror, I began to grope weakly for the morgue door. But I could not turn my eyes from the direction of that slab. The form was growing more luminous in the darkness. I could see the dark strip of the tie beneath its ashy luminosity.

What now? Everything seemed to blur—and then, slowly, Bob raised himself from the undertaker's marble slab! I could hear the thumping of my own heart. My finger-nails cut into my palms. I wanted to rush out through that morgue door. I wanted to shriek. But I was powerless to move—powerless to utter a sound.

THE mist-like apparition drifted by me, and out through the closed door. I was alone. The walls of the morgue seemed to close in on me. Yet, I feared to open the door to go out...

A second later, a luminous hand came through the closed door. I watched that unearthly hand in a sort of hypnotic trance. On the fourth finger was a ring—an Alpha Rho ring—Bob Harter's! It beckoned to me to follow.

In the light emitted by that ghostly hand, I could again see the black tie on the slab. I picked it up and shoved it into my pocket; then, fearfully, I opened the morgue door and emerged into the corridor.

Now I could see the great, filmy form of Bob in front of me. The feet hardly touched the floor; the form floated along like a mist. The light in the corridor was appreciably better than when I had come through it on the way in. The luminous hand was beckoning. I followed.

Nearing the turn in the corridor, where the door had opened suddenly on my trip in, the hand waved me over closer to the far wall. I could see that the door was open now, and some shadowy figure was moving just back of it. But the next instant, an ear-splitting shriek came from the opening, and then I heard the streaking steps of someone clattering and stumbling up the back stairway.

The shriek unnerved me still more. The only thing that kept me from running, too, was the odd conviction that this apparition of Bob Harter wished to help me, to shield me from harm. Whoever, or whatever, had been waiting to waylay me there in the doorway, had retreated. And now I knew that it was no mere instinct that had made me dodge that club on the way in. My first thought was correct—I had been pulled away from that descending club. But not by any human agency.

The form ushered me along the dark corridor to the foot of the front stairway. There I saw it for the last time. It turned toward me, and now with the strain almost over, I found myself shaking like a leaf. I wanted to look into that ghostly face. I wanted to ask questions. Yet I dreaded looking into its eyes; I feared to hear the sound of its voice. Once I did force myself to raise my gaze, and, just for an instant, before fear overcame me again, I thought I saw a broad mark across the forehead. Streaking down from the forehead was another irregular mark. I dropped my gaze, and raced up the stairs. That irregular streak had looked like blood!

AS I neared the top of the stairway, I looked back. The form was fading, now hardly visible. It was dissolving like a fog in strong sunlight. The next second I had opened the door and almost catapulted myself through the opening. I all but knocked over "Scrooge" Allen, who was standing there, watch in hand.

"Whoa, there, Dick! What's the idea of the rough-house?" Scrooge demanded. "I was just going to open the door. I thought I heard someone yelling down there."

A few seconds later, I was surrounded by a bunch of grinning, noisy Alpha Rhos. "Get the necktie?" I heard on every

side. "Where's the necktie, old boy?"

Mechanically, I pulled the necktie from my pocket, and there was a burst of laughter and congratulations.

"We put one over on you, Dick," was the announcement of "Scrooge" Allen, the master-of-ceremonies. "What did you think when you saw that empty slab? Good joke, eh? And congrats, old boy. You made it in four minutes—you have two to spare.

"You're one of us now, Dick, old kid. You're a member of the Alpha Rho, best frat in college. But say, Dick! What on earth's the matter with you? By Golly! You look—afraid—Dick! What you doing? Trying to kid us?"

I had been standing there as if in a trance.

"Where's Bob Harter?" I asked. My throat was dry, and my voice sounded strange even to myself.

"Oh, Bob's out buzzing some (Continued on page 93)

"Cheiro" Appears Again

Every reader of GHOST STORIES will remember "Cheiro," the famous mystic—counselor to the Kings of Europe—whose marvelous life-story appeared in this magazine. Next month we are beginning a new series of amazing TRUE ghost stories by this great occultist. The first in the series is:

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PHANTOM LIPS

By
HARRY ROGERS, D. D.
As told to
Victor Rousseau

"COME to the Mercy Seat! Come to the Mercy Seat, and be freed from the shackles of sin! Come, brothers and sisters, and *know* the goodness of the Lord!"

For a moment or two, as the revivalist ended, there was an intense, dramatic silence in the little church. Then, with a gasping sob, a woman stumbled out of her pew and tottered down the aisle to the penitents' bench where the minister stood waiting for her.

Then another cried out, and followed her. After these came an old man, and a lad, and a girl.

I saw them kneel there, while the minister looked solemnly at the congregation, which was whimpering, shuffling, whispering, showing signs of the intense emotional climax to which his impassioned prayer and sermon had lifted them. There was hardly a man or woman there who was not manifestly stirred.

But a deep gasp of astonishment went up when old Simeon Tate, the town atheist, who was wont to hold forth against religion on Bill Deering's cracker-barrel, got up from a back pew and, joining the procession, dropped before the bench with a loud cry, "May God forgive me!"

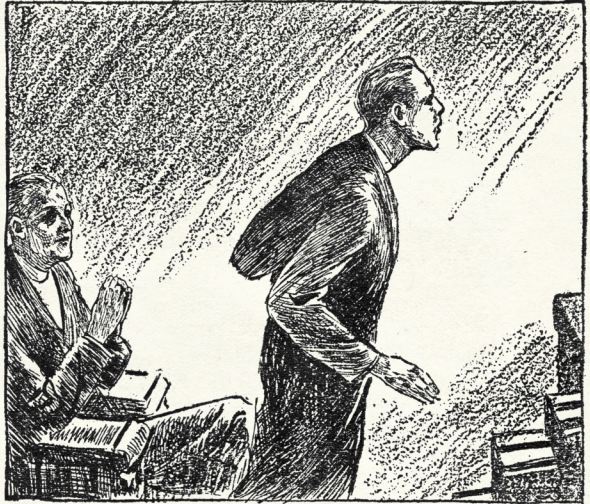
And then—I don't know *how* it happened, or *what* happened, but some mighty power seemed to seize hold of me as well. It was so unexpected that I didn't even realize, then, that it was the same power that was sweeping all these people, with a common impulse, to kneel at the feet of the white-haired revivalist.

At first it seemed like a gentle hand laid upon my shoulder, forcing me to turn and look straight at the preacher. Then it was something inside me, something at once loving and terrible, that showed me myself in a clear and startling light.

I was a boy of fifteen at the time, and had gone half-way through high school. My people were among the best in the little Southern town. Dad had been cashier of the Merchants' and Farmers' Bank for thirty years, until his death, a few months before. He had promised me a place there when I was ready, but Mother had always wanted me to enter the ministry.

She came of a family of ministers, and if ever there was a good woman in the world, she was one.

I had learned the theory of evolution, of how man and ape had bodies that were almost identical: even their blood was identical, the biology teacher had told us. He was a secret agnostic, and many of us boys had understood what he was driving at when he hammered home this lesson.



The eyes of the congregation were fixed on me. . . . But I stopped dead—I could not stir

I had gone to the revivalist meeting in a spirit of mockery. Crude, primitive, I termed the preacher's methods. I had enjoyed the feeling of superiority over those poor, deluded folk who shouted and hallelujahed, and believed that God was watching over their puny lives—God, with a million million stars to tend and watch over.

And now this light—this sudden light! This power that shook me, seized me, and forced my unwilling legs along the aisle toward the Mercy Seat.

"God be praised!" and "Hallelujah!" shouted some of the congregation as I went by.

I was forced gently to my knees, and then, in a bliss of tears, I found myself among the "saved."

I knew, when I arose and resumed my place among the congregation—knew as surely as I knew I was alive, that some Power not myself had guided me that night. I went home with a feeling of peace and happiness that I had never known before.

MOTHER had persuaded me to go to Mr. Castleman's revival. She had long grieved over me, though she had never upbraided me. She was too gentle for that. I had gone to her, elated with my new biological learning, had talked to her about it, thinking to confound her simple faith; but all my arguments had had as much effect as a man beating the air.

"God is the greatest fact in life, Harry," she would answer. "Those who come to Him know Him—and there is no mistaking Him. No book that was ever written can do away with that."

She had prayed for me, I knew, for I had seen the light in her room long after she had gone to bed, and I had been



The wraith-like figure stood in the pulpit, beckoning to me

ashamed—yet too stubborn to give in. That faith of hers had seemed to create a barrier between us; but now that barrier was broken down.

I went home, eager to tell her of my experience. I found that she knew it already. Somebody had telephoned the news to her.

She met me in the hall with streaming eyes and enfolding arms. We had never been so near to each other as we were that night.

We talked till quite late. She didn't say much about religion; she seemed to take it for granted that my own experiences had been the same as hers, as everybody's. But she asked me to dedicate my life to God's service, and I went to bed resolved that I would do so. I had received the "call," and there was nothing else for me to do.

Mother had been receiving a little pension from the bank, upon the understanding that I was to enter it as soon as I left high school. Next day she went to the president and told him of my decision. She was too honest to accept a penny under an unwritten pledge that she was not prepared to fulfill.

The banker smiled when she offered to refund what she had already received since my father's death. She was welcome to that, he said, but, under the circumstances, of course . . . Well, it was a pity, and he hoped I would change my mind, but—well, if my mind was made up, the pension would have to stop.

Mother mortgaged her home to enable me to complete my course at high school, and I started to work my way through the theological seminary. There was just enough money to enable us to live with the utmost frugality until I could hope to receive a charge.

*This young clergyman
forgot his
sacred calling
in the arms of
a wayward woman.
Then,
out of eternity,
came a
stern-faced judge!*

On the day I graduated from the seminary, I knew that the sacrifice had been all in vain, and that I had let my mother waste her little competence on an unsubstantial dream.

That was the day on which I met Celia North, and that was the day Mother died.

I had supposed that the realization which had come to me in the little church that night would never leave me. Yet a week had not gone by before I was back just where I had been before. "Mass emotion" was the name I gave to the experience I had shared with Simeon Tate and the others. Simeon, too, was again holding forth upon the cracker-barrel, and telling his cronies that he had been "putting one over on the preacher," though we all knew it was a lie.

I found myself committed to a career that I loathed. At the theological seminary, instead of a crowd of devout young men, bent on their sacred "calling," I found young fellows just like any others outside, most of them lamenting that the ministry offered so few opportunities, and wishing that they had gone in for something else.

All the town looked upon me as a good young man, who would some day be saving souls, but was at present a fledgling, to be treated with half-contemptuous patronage. Old Saunders, the banker, went so far as to tell me to come and see him, "in case you should find that you have made a mistake, Harry." He saw through me, and I knew it.

Celia North was a married woman, eight years older than myself. Her husband was a stockbroker, and they had a city apartment, as well as the big house they owned opposite the country club at Valleyfield. It was a matter of gossip that the couple were seldom in residence at either place at the same time.

I HAD got out of the train at Valleyfield, to walk home the two miles, and meditate upon the significance of the diploma I was holding. My mind seemed to roll up, like that parchment. I was doomed now, bound for life to an occupation I detested, condemned to teach others what I myself hardly believed.

I looked about me enviously at the rich houses of the commuting suburb. From the clubhouse came shouts of laughter. Men were playing tennis on the courts—athletic figures, care-free minds that knew nothing of the doubts that troubled me. I envied them. This life could never be mine. I had taken the fatal step, and it was beyond recall. I hated them, and hated myself more.

Suddenly I felt a violent blow upon the temple. I crumpled, and everything went dark.

I was not quite unconscious, for I was dimly aware of being lifted, and of hearing voices about me. When I

opened my eyes, it was to see a woman bending over me, with a little group of people about her.

"Are you feeling better?" she asked me. "I am so dreadfully sorry. It was the unluckiest thing—and I drove that golf ball at least a hundred and fifty yards away. See if you can stand. You must come into my house and rest."

I got upon my feet, still dizzy, but not much the worse for my experience, and still clutching my precious parchment in my hand. The woman took my arm with an air of solicitude.

"It's only just across the road," she said. "I'll telephone for Doctor Symons, if it's necessary. But I think a cold water compress will be better than Doctor Symons."

She helped me across the road, the others following a little way, then gradually falling back. By the time the house was reached, we two were alone.

I already knew that she was Mrs. North, and I was feeling sufficiently well to be thrilled by the adventure. But when we entered the house I looked about me in astonishment.

I had never been in such a house as this, with its rich carpets and rugs, its oil paintings, its massive furniture, each piece of which was worth more than the whole of Mother's poor belongings.

MRS. NORTH made me lie down on a divan, while she fixed a cold-water compress for my forehead. She asked me my name, but she had evidently never heard of me. "And what is this that you are holding so tightly?" she demanded gaily. "All the while you were unconscious, you were clutching it as if your life depended on it."

Blushing, stammering, ashamed, I showed her my degree from the seminary. She broke into a fit of merry laughter. "And to think how nearly I ended the life of one who is going to be a shining light in the church!" she exclaimed.

She left me for a moment, and came back with two tumblers filled with an amber liquid hissing and sparkling and full of little bubbles.

"To your success, Mr. Rogers!" she cried gaily, holding up her glass.

I drank, then set down the tumbler, spluttering. I knew that it contained some sort of intoxicant, and no spirits had ever passed my lips.

"Just a little whisky for your stomach's sake, Mr. Rogers—I mean your forehead's sake," said Mrs. North. "It's the best thing in the world after a shock like you've had. You're not so good as all that, are you, Mr. Rogers?" she continued, giving me an arch look.

I drank, because I was ashamed of being thought good. When I left the house I was completely under her sway.

I got home to find Mother dying. They had telephoned her about my graduation, and the excitement had been too much for her. She was lying on the lounge, white as a sheet, almost inanimate.

I ran in and knelt down beside her. She opened her eyes and looked into my soul with intense penetration. "I shall always—be with you—helping you."

Those were the last words she spoke. She died before the doctor arrived.

In my first grief and remorse I never expected to see Celia North again. But a few days later there arrived an envelope addressed to me in an unknown hand. Inside was a check for two hundred and fifty dollars, accompanied by a note signed "Celia North," asking me to accept this small compensation for my injury.

There was no reason, perhaps, why I should not have accepted it. A court would have awarded me considerably more, no doubt. On the other hand, I might have returned Mrs. North her check, with a statement to the effect that I did not wish to make pecuniary profit out of the accident.

Instead, I went to see her. I handed her back the check, stammering, and she laughed, but took it. Then she brought out the whisky.

"Well, let's drink to it," she said, and raised her glass. I got up.

"I—I'd rather not drink," I told her. "You see, I'm not supposed to drink, in my profession. I—I——"

She looked at me with a curious smile, and made no attempt to help me out.

"I see," she answered quietly. "Well, don't let me put temptation in your way, Mr. Rogers. I'm sure our town is to be congratulated on having such a very exemplary young man."

"You're not offended, I hope?" I stammered.

She took a step forward and laid her hand on my shoulder.

"I am very deeply offended, Mr. Rogers," she retorted. "I am not used to being told that I am putting temptation in a young man's way."

I was all humiliation. She was twisting me around her finger. I realized it, but I could not resist her.

"If you feel that your scruples are preferable to my friendship," she went on, "pray don't let me mislead you."

I snatched up the tumbler. Suddenly her mood changed. She clinked glasses with me, and we drank. The whisky ran through my veins like fire. I talked and laughed. I flung my career to the winds.

"I'm not going to be a minister," I told her after a while.

Celia North was very close to me.

"Harry, I don't believe that you are so very different from other men, after all," she murmured, and our lips met.

Behind her was a small picture by Gainsborough. It was the gem of her collection, and worth, she had told me, more than the house and all the other pictures put together. It represented a young girl sitting at a window, her knitting on her lap. As I glanced over Celia's shoulder, a cry suddenly broke from my lips.

"What is it?" asked Celia.

"That—picture," I stammered.

She turned swiftly and looked at it.

"Why, Harry, what's wrong with that picture?" she asked. "You almost frightened me. Do you mean that it's hanging crooked?"

That wasn't what I had meant, but I nodded, and she went up and inspected it. She took it from its wire and laid it down upon the table.

"Now how in the world did you notice that the frame was giving way?" she asked, very much pleased. "You must have sharp eyes, Harry. Thank you ever so much, dear boy."

I could not speak. I was still staring at the picture. I saw the young girl, musing over her knitting, and yet—had it been imagination, or the whisky that had changed that face into my mother's?

YES, I could have sworn that those eyes had been my mother's looking into mine with the same loving and yet penetrating look that she had given me that night she died!

Her last words came back to me. But Celia was at my side again, and I—forgot.

The days that followed were sheer torture to me. Although I had come to believe that I had been the victim of my imagination, the memory of those eyes in the picture would not leave me. The state of my mind can hardly be described.

On the one hand was remorse, gnawing at me day and night; on the other was the exhilarating sense of freedom. Celia had told me that she was suing her husband for divorce; she had even hinted at going away with me, had told me that she was rich enough to provide a life of luxury for anyone she cared for.

While I was in this mental turmoil, I met Banker Saunders in the street outside the bank. He shook hands with me and asked me to step inside his office. There he offered me a chair.

"Harry," he said, "I was a friend of your father's, and I'm going to take the liberty of a friend of yours. Are you

quite sure, my boy, that you have chosen your career wisely? It's not too late to change, if you haven't. I mean, there's an opening for you in the bank right now."

I assumed an injured air.

"Why should you suppose that I have made a mistake?" I asked.

"I hear," he said absently, "that the Bamboro people are thinking of calling you to the new church."

I HAD heard that too, of course, but the call that would once have filled me with exultation had left me unmoved. I looked back at him steadily, and waited for him to go on.

"Under the circumstances," he continued, "—well, Harry, to put it bluntly, I saw you coming out of Mrs. North's house the other day. Now wait, young man! Don't tell me that it's none of my business. It is. In a small town like this, everybody's business is everybody else's business, especially in the case of the prospective minister of a near-by village.

"Nobody likes anything better than making trouble—especially where a minister is concerned, Harry. Celia North is a very fine woman in certain ways. In other ways she's not. She may be all right for me to know, but she's all wrong for you."

I stuttered and stammered indignantly, but he cut me short with a shrewd smile.

"All right, all right, Harry! Your acquaintance with the charming Celia North shall remain your own private affair," he answered. "I was merely offering you the advice of an old friend of the family." He nodded, and turned to the papers on his desk, as if to indicate that the interview was at an end.

I turned away and opened the door of his office. Suddenly I stood still, rooted to the floor.

There was a throng of depositors at the cashier's window, and among them I saw *my mother!*

Yes, my mother—in the old-fashioned black dress with the shawl about her shoulders—timidly awaiting her turn in line.

As I stared at her, she turned, and seemed to glide out from among the crowd toward me. I saw that look in her eyes once more, pleading now, and sadder than any I had ever seen.

Then of a sudden she had vanished, and I was stumbling out of the bank into the sunlit street.

The invitation from Bamboro had to be accepted or rejected. If I rejected it, there would be no further place for me in the little town. I wrote, accepting it, in one of my moods of remorse. The invitation was, of course, a provisional one. I was to preach in the church the following Sunday evening, and after that the trustees were to foregather and pass upon my eligibility.

Unless I greatly disappointed them, the result would be my appointment.

I accepted, and then went to Celia North in an agony of revulsion. I, who was very doubtful whether God even existed, and whether I had an immortal soul at all, was to preach these truths to others.

Mrs. North was at home. She smiled as she greeted me.

"Why, Harry, you're quite a stranger. Do tell me, is it true that you are to become the minister at Bamboro?"

"I've accepted; I'm to preach there next Sunday evening," I answered.

She burst into a merry laugh.

"Oh, you're so amusing, my dear Harry!" she cried.

"You're positively delicious! I only wish that I could be there to hear you. But, as it happens, I'm leaving Valleyfield the same evening. Didn't you know? Well, that's your fault for staying away so long! The fact is, my suit

against my husband has been held up, owing to certain unfortunate things that I had not calculated upon, and I have decided—well, he has offered me a liberal settlement to give him the chance of suing me instead. Do you see?"

I thought I saw. She went on:

"So I am leaving for Mexico City on Sunday night. I shall motor to Philadelphia, take the train there for Texas, and by morning I shall be on my way. Everything here is disposed of—including the Gainsborough."

I glanced fearfully at the picture, but it was just as it had always been, except on that one occasion. Celia North came closer to me and laid her hand on my arm.

"Come with me, Harry," she whispered. "There will be nothing for you to do except leave everything behind and meet me here with your suit-case. I have money enough for both of us. If we get tired of each other, as we probably shall later, I swear I'll see that you are comfortably fixed for the rest of your life. I am a very rich woman. Come with me, Harry!"

She held out her arms to me, and then, with one of her bewildering changes of mood, she stepped back and began to laugh loudly.

"But, on second thought, Harry, it will not do to disappoint the good people of Bamboro. You shall preach your sermon, Harry. I am anxious to find out what sort of preacher you'd make. You shall preach them a sermon that they will remember for the rest of their lives. Your subject shall be 'Hypocrisy'."

The idea seemed to take hold of her. She began talking eagerly.

"All my life in Valleyfield, Harry, I have been a byword among those good people who uphold what they call the moral law," she cried. "A woman who lives more or less alone, who likes a good time, a drink once in a while, is a leper and an outcast to people of that type. You shall show them a picture of themselves as they are—a picture that they will never forget, Harry.

"And you—what have they done to you? You were destined to be their minister, a man holier than themselves, a man who has dedicated his life to good deeds. And they look down upon you and patronize you, and regard you with good-natured contempt, and offer you the princely wage of—how much, Harry? Fifteen hundred dollars a year! About as much as I spend for a month's motor trip! Less than half the wages of a bricklayer or a plasterer!

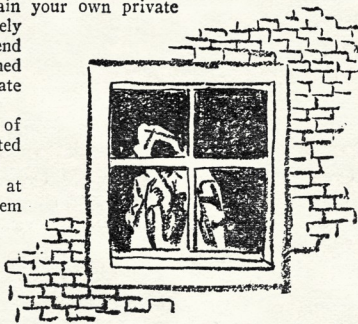
"You shall preach to them, Harry, and I will be there to hear you, and afterward we will drive away together. Oh, it will be great sport, Harry! What do you say?"

"I'll do it!" I cried, catching her in my arms. And I meant it. It was a delicious revenge for all that I had suffered in the past.

A WONDERFUL revenge! Upon the good people of Bamboro, who had honored me with the call, I proposed to pour out the vials of my long-suppressed humiliation and sense of inferiority. I labored long over that sermon, though assuredly it was not a labor of love. The devil must have chuckled as he watched me seated at my desk, preparing it.

All the scorn and contempt with which Celia had inspired me I put into those few closely written pages. I read her extracts from them, and she clapped her hands and chuckled.

"That's fine, Harry! Hot shot!" she screamed. "That will wake them up! And immediately afterward the minister goes off with a married woman! Gee, what a choice scandal! We must make sure that they send us the local paper! Read that last paragraph (Continued on page 84)



"I'll Come Back to Haunt you!"

By
LLOYD GREER

I AM a chemist engaged in experimental work for a manufacturer in a mid-western city. My work is of an exacting nature, requiring intense concentration, and I soon discovered that I could work to better advantage at night, when there were none of the usual noises and interruptions of the factory to distract me.

My only companion during the long, quiet hours was an old German watchman named Emil Krug. He was seventy-six years old and had been employed by the Company for so long a time that this job was in the nature of a pension. He made three rounds of the factory in the course of the night, just to see that no fires had broken out and no burglars had broken in. The balance of the time he sat in my laboratory and either watched me work or took a nap from which I would rouse him to make his round.

Krug was a taciturn old fellow who apparently had a perpetual frown on. Beyond greeting me when I entered the shop at night he seldom spoke. He would sit in the laboratory hour after hour, watching my every movement; yet if I tried to start a conversation he only answered with a grunt or a snort that soon discouraged me. However, I did not mind in the least, because nothing is so disconcerting as to try to concentrate while another converses. Besides, he was an illiterate fellow, so there was nothing of mutual interest for us to talk about.

A person who has never visited a factory at one or two o'clock in the morning can scarcely imagine just what a dismal, spooky, creepy place it is. The tiny night lights scattered here and there cast a dim glow over everything. The idle machines, trucks, benches and boxes take on various fantastic and ghostly forms in the half light. The silence hangs over one like a pall, save when it is shattered by some sudden eerie sound.

There certainly are queer noises to be heard in such a



Crouched down beside a machine, as though ready to spring at me, I saw—the Thing

place at that hour. Sounds scarcely audible during the day are magnified to thunderous proportions during the stillness of night.

OLD KRUG was unable to fathom these noises so he concluded that they were of the supernatural or spiritual world. He was a firm believer in ghosts, spirits, witches or "hexes," as he called them. Any untoward occurrence he couldn't satisfactorily explain, he immediately relegated to the supernatural.

Often I tried to explain to him that the unusual noises in

The chemist learned the full horror of this awful threat when an unearthly creature played havoc among the explosives and deadly acids in his laboratory!



With talons spasmodically opening and closing, the monster crept toward me

the shop at night were caused by the effects of heat and cold, or else of the dampness or dryness of the air on the boards and steel framework of the building. The expansion and contraction would naturally cause creaks and other noises.

But he would shake his head in denial. It was the "hexes," he insisted. The "hexes" and other evil spirits were abroad and he would not have it otherwise.

I was not given much to such pointless imaginings. Whenever I had occasion to leave the brightly lighted interior of my laboratory and go out into the shop, the vague shadows

and strange noises affected me not a whit. I've always considered ghosts or spirits an invention of untutored minds. Besides, I was usually too busy to be concerned about such foolishness. At least, I thought it was foolishness until the advent of the horrifying experiences I am about to relate.

ONE night we had a terrific windstorm and the building was filled with a hideous din. Loose objects would roll across the roof and boards and tin would fly up and crash down with thudding force. There was a constant creaking and moaning within the building as the structure strained against the wind. That, coupled with a shrieking,

whistling wind, made an effect that was truly eerie. During the daytime, with the machinery running, it would probably have passed unnoticed, but at night it was very loud and disturbing.

Krug was terrified. For once he was talkative and insisted over and over again that the spirits and ghosts were abroad. Nothing I could say would convince him otherwise. Along toward morning the wind died down and it was quiet once more in the building. Still Krug continued to talk on in awed whispers about ghosts and "hexes." It was getting on my nerves and distracting me from my work.

It wasn't my intention to insult the old fellow or to say anything that would hurt his feelings. Afterward I could have bitten my tongue off for having said what I did. I was engrossed in taking a scale reading on a delicate test I was making and absentmindedly voiced my thoughts aloud.

"ONLY the ignorant who know no better believe in ghosts or spirits. Any man of intelligence would consider such talk nonsense," I said unthinkingly, my attention riveted on the glass.

Krug uttered a snort of rage that startled me. I straightened up and looked around.

"Yah, you dink so, hey? Maypee you shouldt be so smart yet. I'm such a dummo, Yah? Du dummes esel, I tell you I'm yet so smart like you. I show you yet. Ven I die I come back und 'hex' you. I fix you und make you sorry you shepeak like dot."

His eyes were blazing and his feeble old body trembled with rage. He whirled around and stamped out of the door. He never entered that laboratory again while he was alive.

I was deeply sorry when I realized what I had said. I hadn't realized how it must have sounded to him. I tried to apologize and express my regrets, but he remained outside the door and rewarded me with only a venomous look.

He never relented. As time passed he seemed even more embittered toward me. Although we had never had anything much in common I didn't like the situation. It wasn't pleasant to think that we two who were together alone all night should be at odds.

But he repulsed all efforts on my part to effect a reconciliation. I couldn't understand why my words, so thoughtlessly uttered, should have affected him so deeply; one would think I had done him a grievous wrong. Yet, though he never entered the laboratory again, he hovered close outside in the chilly shop. I could see him through the window, huddled on a box, half in and half out of the beam of light. Always his eyes were glued on me and the murderous hate in them made me feel uneasy. I could fairly see this emotion grow as he sat there nursing it.

Then one night he didn't show up for work. I heard the next day that he was in bed with a bad cold. No doubt he had contracted it while he sat out in the cold shop.

Within a week his cold developed into pneumonia, from which he died. It was quite a shock to me and I couldn't shake off a feeling that I was indirectly to blame. If I hadn't spoken so thoughtlessly to him in the laboratory he wouldn't have spent his time out in the cold shop where his illness had developed.

The management decided not to replace him so I worked alone every night thereafter. For a year everything went smoothly. Then came a day—I noted later that it was just a year to the day since Krug had died—when I awoke with a strange feeling of melancholia. I moped around the house all afternoon, unable to shake off that disconsolate and depressed feeling. It was the ominous sort of premonition that something is going to happen—a sensation that is as familiar as it is inexplicable.

That feeling was enhanced by the somber atmosphere of the shop that night. There seemed to be an unusually eerie silence about the place, as I recall. The machinery and other objects looked more weird and ghostly than ever

before and the dim lights seemed to cast an unholy pallor over everything.

My mind had been so filled with apprehension all day that I felt creepy and jumpy as I walked through the shop. Common sense finally asserted itself and I realized how foolishly I was behaving. I plunged into my work wholeheartedly in an attempt to quell the disquietude in my heart and soon I was oblivious to everything but the job in hand.

Before long, however, something happened. I was standing on my tiptoes reaching upward with my left hand for a bottle on the shelf. Out of the corner of my eye and over the top of my arm I saw something that held me frozen with terror.

There, in the chair in which he had been accustomed to sit, was Krug. His eyes held that same look of bitter hatred and he appeared just as he had in the flesh, except that I could see the chair braces right through his body. I almost spoke, he looked so real. Then a horrifying flash told me it couldn't be Krug because I knew he was dead. I lowered my hand slowly and turned to get a better look. But a second shock awaited me. *The chair was empty!*

I blinked my eyes and shook my head. Then I looked again, but there was no question about it—the chair was empty. I stood there a long time, wholly unable to believe my eyes.

To remove all doubt and to fully satisfy myself, I looked at the chair from every conceivable angle, even over my left arm as I had at first. But the chair remained empty.

Then the reaction set in. I gave a hysterical little laugh that echoed strangely and set to work again. I called myself all kinds of a fool to let anything disturb me as that had done. No doubt it was my pessimistic frame of mind that had played this trick on me. Marvelous, though, how vivid was that impression of Krug sitting in that chair!

Not over twenty minutes later I was bending over, trying to get a balance on a set of delicate scales, when three loud, deafeningly loud, knocks straightened me up in a hurry. I whirled around and looked at the door, numb with fright.

The interruption was so sudden and so unexpected that I was startled beyond expression. The noise was still ringing in my ears but my limbs refused to budge. I tingled all over and my heart thumped painfully in my throat. I must have stood there a long time before I regained control of my mind and my limbs.

SLOWLY the thought assailed me that I was unnecessarily jumpy and alarmed tonight. If I had heard a knock on any other night I would have thought nothing of it. No doubt it was one of the officials of the plant who wanted to come in and chat a while before going home. Ridiculous that I should be so startled by a simple knock on my door.

"Come right in, the door is open!" I called.

I listened intently, but heard no sound or other indication that whoever had knocked intended to enter. I glanced up at the clock on the wall and saw that it was two-thirty. Certainly an unusual hour for anyone to be stopping to visit with me.

I walked over to the door and threw it open. There was no one there. I walked a few steps in each direction from the door, peering here and there around the machinery to see if I could see anyone, but I was disappointed. When I got back to the door again I was thoroughly mystified. There was no question in my mind but that I had heard those knocks. They were still ringing in my ears. Yet there was no one in the shop besides myself. Before entering the laboratory I stood in the doorway and shouted loudly:

"Who's there?"

I got no reply. When the echoes of my voice died down, a silence more stark and awful in contrast to my shout settled over the gloomy building.

Just as I closed the door behind me I heard a shrill, fiendish laugh ring out through the building. It sounded like the

cackle of an old man in the throes of hysteria. It was awful. I went hot and cold in turn and, whirling around, I threw the door open again and peered out into the shop. Again that shrill high-pitched laugh echoed through the cavernous place—and this time there was a vindictive note in it. It seemed to come from all over the shop at once, but no matter in what direction I turned, I seemed to be looking at the very spot in which it originated.

It was the most uncanny sound I ever heard. I stepped back into the laboratory and closed the door. My teeth chattered and I trembled all over as if in a deadly chill. I was too unnerved to try to do any more work that night so I slumped weakly into a chair and attempted to collect my thoughts.

I beat my temples with my fists in an effort to bring order out of the chaos that existed in my mind. There must be an explanation to all this. It had every earmark of the supernatural, but there *must* be a concrete reason for it all. Long years of ridiculing the idea of ghosts or spirits made it hard for me to accept the fact that there were such things. I had plenty of evidence that I was in the presence of something unearthly, but I didn't want to accept that evidence.

While I sat there probing my mind for some logical answer to all this I heard a crash out in the shop that lifted me right out of my chair and filled me with palpitating terror.

That was the last straw. My shattered nerves could stand no more. I snatched my coat and hat from the hook and started out the door. All that possessed me now was to get out of the factory as quickly as possible. I couldn't drive myself to investigate that crash.

I hadn't gotten more than twenty feet from the laboratory door when I heard a sound that sent cold chills racing up and down my spine. It was a long drawn-out, tremulous moan that rose in pitch until it ended in a scream. *Ugh*, what a fearful cry!

Then I heard whispers—whispers that materialized out of the very air around me. Overhead and from all sides, even coming up from the floor itself. A mad panic seized me, lending wings to my feet. I ran blindly, stumbling and falling over imaginary objects.

WHEN I rounded a corner and saw the outer door just fifteen feet ahead I was suddenly gripped by a strange languor. My arms and legs felt weighted so heavily that I could scarcely lift them. A magnetic force seemed to be straining and pulling against me to retard my progress toward the door.

In a frenzy of fear I exerted every ounce of strength to overcome this backward pull. When I finally reached the door I was dripping wet from my efforts. If it wasn't for a maniacal strength born of fear of the unknown I know I would have been stopped dead in my tracks.

The minute I stepped outside the door this pull vanished. I felt strangely light and free, as though, while straining mightily against a foe, I had suddenly found the opposing force withdrawn.

When I was safe in my room I sat on the edge of the bed with my head in my hands trying to puzzle out the strange occurrences of the night. I finally got so hopelessly befuddled that I pulled back the covers and crawled under them. But sleep wouldn't come. I tossed and rolled and stared around the room with wide eyes. My mind was a turmoil of belief and unbelief. I remembered suddenly Krug's threat "When I die I'll come back to haunt you." Were such things possible? I asked myself. Had he come back?

At eight o'clock I arose, and when I saw the drawn face that stared back at me out of the mirror I was astounded. It was the face of a man on the verge of insanity.

I began to wonder if my mind was giving way from overwork; if the things I had seen and heard the night before were the creations of an unbalanced brain. I had been plugging away rather consistently of late and was wholly wrapped up in my work. Still, I had felt no warning aches or lapses of any kind.

I decided to walk over to the factory and see if anything unusual had occurred. So far as I could see everything was going along as smoothly as always, but when I met the Superintendent he told me about a huge overhead crane that had collapsed sometime during the night. I reported the loud crash I had heard but made no mention of the other extraordinary happenings.

HE was completely mystified and I'll admit I was, too, when I heard that only the day before they had lifted tons of machinery with that very crane, and now it had collapsed without an ounce of weight on it. That started my mind to thinking of the horrors of the night before and I dreaded the thought of coming back to that shop to work alone.

I had some experiments in mind that required an aide, and although they were scheduled for two weeks hence, I decided to begin on them at once. I told the employment manager to hire a man for me and have him report that night.

When I arrived at the shop there was a young fellow named Richard Fischer awaiting me. He continued to work with me for two weeks and in all that time nothing out of the ordinary occurred. I began to question whether the horrors I had endured really happened or whether they existed only in my mind. Fear of ridicule had kept me silent regarding my experiences.

Then one day Mrs. Fisher telephoned me that her husband was ill and would be unable to come to work that night. After expressing my sympathy I thought no more of it and started to work alone.

The minute I set foot inside the shop it seemed as though waves of gloom poured over me like a flood. This mood came upon me so quickly that I paused and debated a long time whether to go on or to return home.

However, I finally conquered my depression and continued on to the laboratory. But I was not wholly calm. Thoughts of my night of terror gripped me and in spite of myself I jumped nervously at every trivial sound.

Nothing of note happened until about one o'clock. I noticed then that Krug's chair was turned to the wall. I knew it had been facing outward when I entered the laboratory and I racked my brain trying to recall whether I had turned it myself sometime during the evening. When I couldn't remember having even touched the chair I felt a curious tightening of the throat.

Not over fifteen minutes later I happened to notice it again. This time the chair was turned outward again and tipped against the wall. I was positive I had not done that. There it stood, leaning against the wall as if some one were sitting in it. My knees began to quake with growing terror as I gaped at it.

You who read this will wonder that so simple an incident could alarm anyone, but to me, alone in that laboratory, it was so uncanny that I went cold all over. I stood there trembling, praying I would be spared another night of terror.

Suddenly I heard doors slamming out in the shop. I wish I could convey in words the gripping, sweating horror that



seized me when I heard that sound and the other, more awful one that immediately followed.

I knew there was not another living soul in that factory. I was alone and face to face with something unearthly; something beyond my human strength to combat. Still I heard one door after another slam as though in the wake of someone hurrying from room to room. Then I heard running footsteps. They sounded faint at first but became increasingly louder as their rapid approach held me spell-bound. Like an impending doom, that *pad-pad-pad* echoed through the deep silence of the shop.

Suddenly the footsteps came to a stop. After a short pause I heard them stealthily creeping toward my door. Stark terror clutched at my throat. Fear of the unknown and unseen monster that threatened me gripped every fiber of my body; my breath came in gasps. My eyes felt immovable; I was unable to withdraw my gaze from the door. I expected every minute to see it fly open and admit some unholy demon.

SUDDENLY all became silent once more; I recognized the deep, throbbing silence that beats in upon one and always presages some awful catastrophe. The ticking of the clock sounded like anvil blows in my ears. I wanted to scream, but my tongue clove to the roof of my mouth. I was powerless to combat this creature of another world—a thing that couldn't be seen or felt.

I remained rooted to the spot for what seemed an eternity. Unable to stand the terrific suspense any longer I took a few hesitating steps toward the door. Anything, even death, was preferable to this ceaseless waiting in terror. I put out a trembling hand and opened the door.

There was no one in sight. I listened intently and peered around the shop, but I neither saw nor heard anything that might indicate the presence of man or spirit. The absolute silence was more terrifying than any conceivable sight would have been.

After a few moments of reflection a mite of my courage returned. I walked a little way to the left of the door and stood on my tiptoes, craning my neck to see if I could discover anything in that end of the shop. As I did so, a movement near the floor a few feet in front of me caught my eye.

Crouched down beside a machine, as though ready to spring at me, I saw—the Thing. Its eyes were like two glowing coals. Its lips were drawn back in a snarl. The one long black fang in its upper jaw gave the creature a hideous, witch-like look. But—it was *Krug!*

What saved me from becoming a raving maniac at that moment is more than I can say. The horror of that sight left marks on me that will never be erased. It caused a chemical reaction in my blood that poisoned the whole circulatory stream. My hair came out in tufts and has never grown back.

While I stood petrified, watching the unholy spirit of old Krug, it slowly reached out its two clawlike arms. With talons spasmodically opening and closing, the monster crept toward me. There was a fendish leer in that mouth that seemed to be talking, though it uttered no sound. The eyes were like two burnished discs and bored into mine like hot irons. There was something menacing and inevitable in that slow—interminably slow—advance.

I tried to scream but could only utter a gurgling, wheezing gasp. Just as the clutching fingers were about to close on my throat the tension broke and I turned and dashed into the laboratory. I felt that fendish presence close behind me as I slammed the door and collapsed in a chair.

I struggled now to hang on to the last shred of sanity left to me. I fought down a desire to rush out there shrieking and laughing. I wanted to take this old man and dance around with him. Why should I be afraid of him? Why suffer this agony any longer, when I could just give in and forget? Why not welcome that terror outside—and

die, if I must? What mattered anything to me any more?

I strained every nerve in my body to fight down those insane impulses that throbbled in my head. I mustn't let myself slip! Suddenly the lights began to grow dim and I slumped down in a dead faint.

When consciousness returned I felt as one awakening from a hideous nightmare. But the horrors of the past few hours returned a thousandfold when I opened my eyes. The room was filled with a strange dampness and steaminess that I couldn't fathom at first. When realization finally did burst upon me I leaped from my chair.

In one corner of the laboratory I had a small vat filled with a mixture of Trinitre-phenol, a powerful explosive. The tank was lined with ammonia cooling coils, and there were chunks of ice also floating in the mixture. It was necessary to keep the temperature low, otherwise the solution would explode. The whole factory and a good portion of the town would be reduced to matchwood if that concoction ever reached combustion heat.

What had startled me almost out of my senses was the condition of that liquid. I rushed over to the vat and discovered that the ammonia pump had stopped. The pieces of ice had melted to tiny slivers. Less than three minutes more and this story would never have been written.

I noticed that the switch on the pump was off, so I gave a frenzied tug on the belt and to my surprise it started off easily. To this day I cannot account for its having stopped. It was just as though some giant had reached out his hand and stopped it on dead center. My tug threw it over and it continued to run.

I doubled its speed and was gratified to see the thermometer suspended in the liquid drop. Nevertheless, the narrow margin by which tragedy had been averted left me shaken. Almost before I knew what I was doing I had poured into the mess a preparation that rendered it harmless. Although a week's hard work was wasted, I felt relieved. There was no doubt in my mind that Krug's uncanny spirit was responsible for the stopping of that pump. I couldn't take any more chances with this demon bent on my destruction.

I glanced around the laboratory to make sure that everything else was all right. Then I took my coat and hat from the hook, determined to get out of this shop as quickly as possible. I vowed I would never spend another night alone in there. All doubt as to whether such things as ghosts or spirits existed was now wiped from my mind.

When I turned the knob and pulled it, the door refused to budge. I took hold with both hands and gave a mighty yank but it was stuck tight. Then I noticed that the key was not in the keyhole. I got my flashlight and peered through the crack near the door. It was locked.

I KNEW I had not removed the key from the door, nor had I ever locked it. In spite of that I searched my pockets through carefully at least a dozen times but found no key. I was sorely puzzled. Next I began a systematic search of every inch of that laboratory—to no avail. The key was nowhere to be found.

Then I wondered if I could possibly have slipped it into my pocket when I left the laboratory. In my mad rush away from that awful specter it might easily have fallen unnoticed. But then how could the door be locked if I had lost the key outside?

In my haste to avoid that horror I may have slammed the door so hard that the lock sprung itself. That would be the logical conclusion, but to this day I feel convinced that the door was not locked by any natural means.

I walked over to the window in one partition and peered out into the shop. The first thing that caught my gaze made my flesh creep. I saw a black hooded object bobbing up and down and weaving in and out among the machines. It dodged about like a cork on the waves. From side to side it floated, edging ever nearer to the window until, when I

got a better view of it, it resembled an old man hobbling with a cane. I stood there fascinated, with the old terror again gripping my heart.

Suddenly the figure popped into the beam of light showing through the window. The hooded appearance vanished and I saw the hideous grinning countenance of Krug leering at me. He fastened those glittering orbs upon me in a way that made my scalp tingle. Then he began to crouch down beside a crated machine that stood outside the laboratory. While I watched him I suddenly spied the key under his foot on the floor. The astounding part of it was that I could see the key right through his foot! The other objects were visible right through his body, as though he were made of a clear jell-like substance.

Finally he lowered his gaze from my face and looked gloatingly at the key on the floor. Next he began slowly to straighten up and I saw that his face was writhing in a paroxysm of rage. Straight toward the window where I stood he seemed to float. I recoiled in horror.

AS I watched him, owl-eyed with terror, I saw him floating like a wraith right through the closed window. I cowered in a corner, too terrified to withdraw my gaze from this ghastly apparition.

He bobbed up and down in the center of the room for a while and then as if just noticing me, he turned and fixed me with a venomous glare. His lips moved; yet I heard no sound. A freezing but foul breath of air smote my cheeks; it seemed to have come from some dank hole of the dead.

I shuddered in apprehension when Krug stretched out a long bony arm and pointed to a bottle of concentrated hydrocyanic acid on the shelf. This is a devilish poison, one drop of which will kill in ten seconds.

My hair stood on end as I muttered a prayer that he would not throw the contents of the bottle in my face. It was such an agonizing moment as I hope will never be experienced by another mortal.

With a murderous gleam in his eyes the old man picked up the bottle and hurled it to the floor, shattering it into a thousand pieces. I knew what that meant; I knew the effects of cyanogen, the poisonous vapor that arises from sprayed hydrocyanic acid. Just an instant or so more and that laboratory would become a fatal chamber of death. One smell, one small whiff of that cyanogen and I would be beyond earthly help.

A million thoughts raced through my head at lightning speed. There was a huge suction fan in the ceiling of the laboratory designed to draw out any poisonous vapors that might arise from experiments—but the operating switch was on the wall outside of the room and I was locked in, cut off from all avenues of escape!

Visions of the horrible, strangling death this terrible ghost had plotted for me flashed into my mind. On the heels of these came an overpowering urge to live. I couldn't die this way. I mustn't submit without a struggle. I held

my breath to keep out the poisonous fumes. Desperate now, I seized a chair and swung mightily at the door. But that strange magnetic force again caught my arms in mid-air, and despite all the force I used I struck the door only a light tap.

I flung the chair from me. As I did so I heard an hysterical cackle, a sneering laugh of triumph, behind me. An answering cry surged up within me but I smothered it resolutely. I *would not* open my mouth to receive those poisonous fumes! I would go down fighting—fighting that vengeful fiend to the last.

I dashed for the window. My veins stood out and my lungs were almost bursting now for want of breath. The stress of emotion and nervousness made it doubly hard to hold my breath. My eyes felt as though they were being forced from their sockets and around my neck was an iron band growing ever tighter.

I drove my fist at the window pane but again that paralyzing force gripped my muscles and I was unable to break it. I clenched my teeth tighter and fought down a desire to take one tiny breath. If I had so much as opened my mouth in that poisoned air I would have toppled over.

Laboriously I climbed on top of the table. The exquisite torture I was experiencing now seemed unbearable. Why not open my mouth and have it over with? Surely death could not be more agonizing than this!

I dragged myself up on one knee. Then I got the other under me, and before the evil, bobbing spirit in that death chamber realized what I was doing I straightened my legs. Just as my mouth was opening to gasp in the breath that would no longer be denied I crashed through the glass and fell to the floor outside. A horrible scream of bafflement and rage resounded behind me.

I was badly cut and blood flowed freely from a dozen deep wounds. I took two or three good breaths and then crawled to my feet. I staggered over to the fan switch and turned it on.

Mingled with the whirr of the fan as it sucked that poison out of the room, there sounded a weird, ghostlike whistle.

I STAGGERED back to the window and from a safe distance peered in. As I watched I saw streaks of vapor being drawn upward toward the fan blades. Then the suction seemed to take hold of Krug and draw him upward too. His face grew elongated, as though it was made of smoke, and a stricken look shone in those burning eyes.

He appeared to be struggling against the terrific suction of that fan, for as I watched I saw first the head, then the shoulders and body and finally the legs pulled into a narrow stringy wisp as they soared up into the speeding blades of the fan.

I wanted to shout and leap for joy. Words cannot describe the triumph and relief I felt. I knew I had conquered that wraith forever.

Nevertheless, I will never again be so foolish as to say there are no ghosts!

China's Spectral Emperor

THE new Nationalist party in China is making an effort to rid that country of its imperial specter, the ghost of Chung Chen, last of the Ming Emperors. According to report, the phantom has lurked about Peking for centuries. Its favorite haunt was a royal park, just north of the "Forbidden City," which for hundreds of years has been open only to occupants of the dragon throne and their families. In order to drive the specter back to his tomb the authorities have requested the public to use the park freely night and day. The Chinese, however, are reluctant to comply with the request—probably from fear of dire consequences—for the ghost is reported to have been seen moving about the place in recent months.

In the center of the park is Coal Hill, an embankment 210 feet high, ornamented with temples and kiosks erected by the Emperor Chin Tsing in the Sixteenth Century. On the highest point is a weatherbeaten tree from which, history records, Chung Chen hanged himself in despair in 1682 because his army was unable to halt the invading Manchus. About the base of the tree is an iron chain, placed there soon after the tragedy as a sign of the tree's condemnation for having assisted in the "killing" of the Emperor. It is about this tree that the ghost is said to pace at intervals, shaking the chain so that it makes a loud noise whenever any venturesome native pauses before one of the gates in an effort to observe the phantom.

BRIDE of the Unknown

A True Story

THE story below was sent to GHOST STORIES by the woman who suffered all the heart-break and horror pictured in this poignant human document. Not one fact in her amazing narrative has been altered.

U P in the Kentucky hills the coming of a stranger is still a rare event. But it was even more unusual in the days of my childhood, when a "furriner" was watched with mingled fear and curiosity.

I have learned considerable since then, I reckon, and suffering has come to me with the learning. I am only forty, as years go, but my hair is white, and to all the mountain folk I am known as "Old Aunt Sallie." The story I aim to tell, though, begins with the arrival of a stranger at our cabin when I was seven years old.

We lived right far back in the sticks, and at that time I had never been out of the hills. The only music I had heard was the crooning of my mother, the singing of birds and the whispering of the pines.

Then the stranger came. It was on a Sunday night, when the sun touched the top of a mountain opposite ours, but left our cabin in gloom beneath the trees. He was on foot and he carried a long flat box under his arm.

My father saw him coming up the trail and went down part way to meet him. Pap always met outsiders half way.

"I figured on getting farther along before nightfall," said the traveler. "I'm wonderin' now if you all could put me up."

Pap studied him.

"Why, I reckon, stranger, if you can stand a bed in the loft, you're welcome."

He led the man into the house. My little brother and I went out behind the cabin to discuss that queer box the stranger toted. I remember how we argued about its contents. My brother thought it held a dead baby. I reckon that was because so many babies die up here in the hills.



A great sadness welled up in my soul. Did I feel the heavy shadow of future tragedy?

But I was perfectly certain that the box contained money.

My mother called us in when supper was ready. There was nothing special about the meal that I could see, but the visitor praised the corn pone, and even the potatoes. He talked with Ma and Pap while my brother and I ate in silence.

"Do you play the fiddle, stranger?" my mother asked him.

"A little, ma'am."

My brother and I held our breath in suspense, for we did not know what a fiddle was. We knew only that that must be what was in the strange box. So, after supper, when Pap had fed and watered the stock and milked the cow; and when my mother and I had washed the dishes, we all gathered before the log fire.

THE stranger opened the little clasp on his box and lifted out the violin. He began to play, while he watched the flames dance among the dogwood branches. Ma and Pap sat back in the shadows. Bud and I had stood close at first, but at the opening strains we stepped back.

I don't remember the tune he played. But I can still recollect the pain that seared my body, as though the stranger had taken the heart out of me and crushed it in a vise. I could not breathe. It was an exquisite agony—like watch-

"I know why music makes you cry, Sallie," Gilbert said softly. "You've got love in your heart—just like me"



This mountain girl learned too late that her dead lover would never give her up

rarely. Pap used to say he was a dreamer, but Gilbert was a good worker and as strong as any lad. He would come over to our place in the still of the twilight and talk over the crops with my parents. I never had much to say. I guess I was bashful.

One evening when the air was so sultry that we knew a storm was piling up behind the mountain, Gilbert happened to speak of music. Ma laughed and told him about the scene I had made as

a child. Gilbert sat upright.

"I've got a violin," he said. "I don't play it so good, but I'll tote it over tomorrow night. Maybe Sallie will have another tantrum."

I begged him not to do it.

"I don't like music, Gilbert. Please don't."

But he only smiled, and when he came over next evening, sure enough, he brought his fiddle. I told Ma that I intended to go down by the springhouse where I couldn't hear. She laughed at me.

"Pshaw now, honey, you're a grown-up girl! Don't be silly."

So I sat on the stoop there behind the honeysuckle vines while Gilbert began to play the sweet old tune, "I Will Take You to Heaven in May." I thought I had never heard anything so beautiful. This time I felt again that rapture of pain, but it was somehow different. A great sadness welled up in my soul. Did I feel the heavy shadow of future tragedy? I cried softly to myself, trying to conceal my tears from Gilbert. But when Ma and Pap went into the cabin, he came over and stood by me.

"I KNOW why music makes you cry, Sallie," Gilbert said softly. "You've got love in your heart—just like me. Sallie, will you make my heaven for me?"

I scarcely knew what he meant. But in another moment he was beside me and had drawn (Continued on page 85)

ing the stars at night and wondering what lies beyond them; or like finding a bud one day in spring and next day discovering it has become a flower.

The tune was ended at last and the spell was broken. My knees gave way and with a thud I fell to the plank floor. Ma was over me in an instant.

"What's wrong with you, child? Look at her, Fred. She's pale as a ghost!"

My strength came back as suddenly as it had left me and I scrambled to my feet. Without saying a word I ran upstairs and flung myself on the bed, crying as if my heart would break. I heard Ma telling the stranger that she couldn't account for me.

"But don't play no more, stranger," she pleaded, "less'n she take a fit."

It was thirteen years before I heard music again. Looking back now, I can no more explain its effect on me then, than I could on that first occasion in the cabin.

I was coming on twenty-one. Even in the mountains there had been progress in thirteen years. New roads had been cut through the sticks; new people had moved in.

Our nearest neighbors were a family named Rollins. They had one son, Gilbert, a tall, dark boy who smiled

By
ARCHIE
BINNS



"Unmask,
goddess of
the shears!"
someone
called

The INTRUDER at

PLEASE don't invite me to a masquerade. To say I would rather die than attend one would not begin to express my feeling. For a long time I deliberately sought death, without finding it; even now it would have no terror for me. But a masquerade! The very word fills me with a nameless dread!

Has it never occurred to you that there is something melancholy about a masquerade? At best, life is a lonely affair; we are all alone, crying out our joys and sorrows—anxiously, tenderly, angrily—to the ones we love and the ones we hate, and to the strangers who are like a procession of dim portraits passing by without coming to life. How much more lonely, then, is a masquerade, where the masked and costumed dancers become for a while the ghosts of others, or of fanciful beings who never had a real existence outside the dreams of story-tellers?

But that is not all. It is only the background for what may happen when some uninvited guest, some august and inscrutable intruder from the Other World, joins the merry-making of unsuspecting mortals.

I AM at a loss to know why, of all places, the thing should have happened at the Stevens'—unless, perhaps, it was because their mansion was one of the first, as well as the last, to stand on Knob Hill. Not that there was anything sinister about it, or about the Stevens girls themselves. Of all the sisters I have ever known, they were the jolliest; and for all their wealth they were the moving spirits of the happiest and most democratic set in San Francisco.

I can still see those girls trundling about the city in their impossible old electric carry-all—laughing, chatting, playing pranks on each other and apparently paying no attention



*Her beauty cast
a spell
of silence and
mystery
over the
crowded ballroom.
Her strange
words
struck terror
to
the dancers' hearts.
Who was she?
What was
her
fearful purpose?*

*The stranger drew
back haughtily.
"Beware!" she
cried. "It is mad-
ness to look into
my eyes!"*

the MASQUERADE

to where they were going. To the best of my memory, indeed, they invariably faced in the opposite direction from which they were traveling. But that may have been only an illusion of mine. At any rate, they never met with any misfortune; they were the darlings of fate.

It was near the beginning of the winter of 1917 that the Stevens girls gave their famous masquerade—the last to be given in the old mansion, and certainly the last I shall ever attend. An invitation came by mail, and the next day Betty Stevens created a traffic jam on Market Street by stopping my roadster and the old electric chariot in the middle of the thoroughfare to issue a second invitation; none of the girls had any faith in the conventions of note writing or of traffic regulation.

Of course I accepted, both in writing and in person. I would not have thought of declining, any more than I

would have thought of refusing to observe Christmas. With that settled, I immediately began thinking up a disguise. For when the Stevens trio planned a masquerade, it was taken for granted that all costumes were to be original and home-made.

THE evening of the masquerade I stopped on my way to pick up Tom Greenfield, who appeared as a blood-thirsty pirate. My own makeup was less spectacular, but at the same time less revealing. A solemn black gown borrowed from my uncle, who was a judge, a white wig and a pair of horn-rimmed spectacles over my domino made me look like anything but myself.

We were somewhat late, and when we reached the reception room on the third floor of the Stevens' home there were about twenty couples assembled—everyone who had

been invited, I believe. The orchestra behind the potted palms was already striking up.

The costumes were gay and varied, particularly those of the girls, though not many of them were effective disguises. I had no trouble in immediately recognizing Betty Stevens dressed as a French peasant, Louise as Columbine, Marie as Peter Pan, Dorothy Wells as Pierrette, and half a dozen others in as widely differing garbs. As for the rest, I had no doubt that I should be able to identify them all, long before the time for unmasking.

My own disguise proved fairly effective. By altering my voice I was able to make my first three partners believe that I was Doctor Phillips, who was actually masquerading as a Spanish torador. Betty Stevens was the first to recognize me, and she promptly began to tease me about Ann, the Australian girl to whom I had become engaged a month earlier, telling me I must be dreadfully particular to have had to go so far to find a girl who suited me. My answer gave me away, but I knew that the secret of my identity would be safe with Betty. A little later, having guessed that Doctor Phillips' disguise might have been penetrated, I began imitating Jack Rodger's English accent and made out famously.

ONE always had a glorious time at any party given by the Stevens girls, and on this occasion the costumes, the music, the conversation, the punch—everything—seemed to be even better than usual. There was something about the evening that made it seem as near perfection as anything in this world can be—so wonderfully harmonious that it could never be duplicated.

It was just when I was most strongly conscious of this atmosphere of perfection that I seemed to feel a subtle change taking place—no more than if a new motif had been introduced in the music, or a door somewhere behind me had opened silently. I looked inquiringly about the mellow old room and at the gay costumes weaving exquisite, accidental harmonies of color across the floor. Nothing had changed, so far as I could see; yet I couldn't shake off the feeling. I don't know if Louise Stevens, with whom I was dancing then, felt the change, but I think she did. At any rate, her charming, playful chatter drifted into silence.

About a minute later my attention was suddenly attracted by Robert Holt's partner in the waltz. She was a girl whom I could not place, wearing a costume I did not remember having seen earlier in the evening. From the glimpses I caught of her, moving in and out among the other dancers, I decided that her tall, exquisitely-proportioned figure was what would be called classical. That word, too, would describe her costume. Gracefully-flowing white draperies, luxuriant hair done in the manner of the ancient Greek goddesses, with a band around the forehead, and bare feet in beautifully fitting sandals. The costume was completed by a girdle to which some kind of heavy ornament or weapon was attached. At first I could not make this out, but on passing close I saw it was a pair of bronze shears.

What most held my attention, however, was the supple stateliness with which she danced, as if it would have been impossible for her to make one ungraceful motion. My guess was that she had been trained in classical dancing from childhood.

Presently, when the stately figure had disappeared again among the other dancers, I was unable to restrain my curiosity.

"Louise," I said to my partner, "who is the classical goddess dancing with young Holt?"

"Where?" she asked in surprise. "I haven't been paying attention."

But a little later, when Robert Holt and his stately partner waltzed into view again, Louise caught her breath.

"Oh-h," she exclaimed, "what a perfect costume—and what a perfectly marvelous figure! Dick, did you ever see such dancing, really?"

"Never," I admitted. "Will you be jealous if I ask who she is?"

Louise pretended to be offended.

"Why, Dick," she said, "was I jealous even when you engaged yourself to little Miss Australia, knowing all the time that Betty and Marie and I all love you?"

"You know none of you would have me," I protested. "Now be a nice gracious hostess and tell me who the stranger is."

Instead of responding with one of her usual sallies, the girl studied the proud white figure in silence. After a minute she looked up at me and shook her head.

"I don't know who she is," she said in a low voice. "We didn't invite anyone outside the usual crowd. You know them all."

"Do you think some outsider has slipped in for a prank?" I asked.

Just then the waltz came to an end and we went in search of punch.

"Ishi, did anyone come in just a few minutes ago?" my partner asked the Japanese boy who served us.

"No, Miss Louise," he answered. "Mr. Worth and Mr. Greenfield were the last. I have watched the stairway by looking in the mirror; no one has come since."

That seemed to settle it; surely nothing could have gotten by the impassive little Oriental, who identified the masqueraders as easily as if they had been placarded with their own names.

"How many are here tonight?" Louise asked.

"Twenty-two men and twenty-two women," Ishi answered promptly.

"That's the number we invited," Louise whispered to me. "Could someone have sent a substitute?" She turned to the Jap boy again. "Are you sure, Ishi, that there are just forty-four?"

"Miss Louise," he answered, "I will count again." And with that he disappeared behind the potted palms to some point of vantage where he could see without being seen.

Involuntarily, our eyes turned to the other side of the room, where the baffling Grecian beauty was standing talking to Bob Holt and Tom Greenfield.

"Even if she did horn in on our party, we must give her the prize," Louise declared. "She is perfect. But, Dick, which goddess carried a pair of shears? I can't remember."

"I've been wondering about that myself," I admitted. "Mythology isn't my strong point, but she must have some reason for them, since everything else about her costume is worked out so perfectly. Those shears don't give me a very comfortable feeling, though."

Louise laughed softly. "Maybe she intends to snip pieces from her partners' costumes for a souvenir patchwork," she suggested.

We were still laughing when Ishi appeared beside us.

"Miss Louise," he announced gravely, "there are now twenty-two men and twenty-three women."

"Then you were mistaken," she said.

"No, Miss Louise," he answered quietly, "I was not mistaken—unless there is one here who does not cast any reflection in a mirror." And, imperturbable as ever, the Japanese went back to serving punch.

"I can't fathom Ishi," the girl declared. "There is some-



thing *you* can do, though," she added. "Get the first dance you can manage with that classical person and try to find out who she is."

Before I could make my way across the room the music started again and the beautiful stranger glided away with the piratical Tom Greenfield. The best thing I could do was to talk to young Holt, who had been her previous partner.

"Hello, Bob," I said casually. "Where did you find the goddess that Greenfield just took away from you?"

"There was nothing to it," he answered sourly. "I was sampling the punch when the waltz started; I looked around for my partner, but she was dancing with someone else. Then I saw the tall woman in white standing near me and I asked her to dance."

"Who is she?" I asked.

"I didn't find out," he admitted. "She must be one of the crowd, though; she knew who I was, all right."

BOB appeared nervous and unwilling to discuss the matter further, so I went back to dance with Louise. A little later, as we passed close to Tom and his statuesque partner, I signalled to him to let me have the next dance with her. He nodded assent, but with a mysterious look that seemed to say: "You can try it at your own risk."

When the dance ended I crossed over to the oddly-assorted pair—the fierce-looking little pirate and the cool, lovely white goddess. Tom greeted me with a flourish.

"Maid of Athens," he said to his partner, "allow me to introduce the Dancing Doctor of Laws."

The stately girl inclined her head graciously in response to my deep bow.

"And are you really a doctor of law?" she asked in a voice of wonderful richness and clarity. "You appear to be young for such a calling."

The question, and the tone in which it was spoken, upset me. Being masked, I had not thought that my flowing black gown and white wig particularly advertised my youth. But Bob Holt had warned me that though I might not recognize the girl, it did not follow that she would be ignorant of my identity. So when I finally managed a response, I disguised my voice by imitating the gentle, hesitating tones of Doctor Phillips.

"That is quite true," I assured her modestly. "I am known as the Boy Wonder of my profession. I am only fourteen years old and a Judge of the Superior Court of Golden Gate Park."

The Maid of Athens seemed neither impressed nor amused. "You are deceiving me about your age," she answered pleasantly. "You are nearly twenty-six."

It was a fact that I would be twenty-six the next week, and I found something devastating about the combination of innocence and omniscience in the girl's conversation. Presently Tom excused himself, with a look of humorous warning for me, and went in search of another partner. A moment later the orchestra struck up a fox-trot, and my queenly companion accepted my invitation to dance.

"Only—you will have to teach me the step," she added as she put one cool, exquisite hand in mine and the other on my shoulder. For a few moments it actually seemed that the fox-trot was new to her, but I soon decided that she had been making fun of me; she was incomparably better than anyone I had danced with, and her effortless, fluid grace made me feel like an awkward beginner.

"Did you recognize your last partner in his pirate rig?" I asked after a minute, intending to lead up to the question of her own identity.

"You mean Thomas Greenfield?" she asked. "Doesn't he always dress like that?"

More baffled and curious than ever, I made another attempt.

"Has anyone recognized you tonight?" I asked casually.

"I think not," she answered.

"My disguise has been quite successful, too," I confided. "In view of that, don't you think we might tell each other who we are."

"That is hardly necessary," she answered in her cool, melodious voice. "I know you are Richard Worth."

Dropping the futile disguise in my voice, I asked: "What else do you know about me?"

"A number of things," she responded pleasantly.

"Do you know where I was born?" I queried. Most of my friends assumed that I was born in San Francisco, and I had never disabused them of the idea.

"Certainly," the cool voice said. "You were born in your grandfather's house in Ogden, Utah, on the fourteenth of October, Eighteen hundred ninety-one."

Unable to deny the fact or to hide my surprise, I asked: "Do you know for whom I was named?" I was sure that none of my friends knew that.

"You were named for your maternal uncle, the late Richard Clark."

That was true, except that I had every reason to believe that Uncle Richard was very much alive and enjoying himself on a big game hunt in Africa. But her apparent mistake gave me a clue. The classical beauty must be someone who had once known my family very well, and because uncle had been out of the country for years, she assumed that he was dead.

"You are right," I agreed, to lead her on. "Do you happen to remember the year my uncle died?"

"Was it so long ago?" the cool voice asked. "I must have been thinking of another Richard Clark—a hunter who died of blackwater fever only last Friday on the upper Congo River."

The words brought a cold sweat to my forehead. Uncle Richard had intended to penetrate that very region of East Africa. But could he be dead? And if he were, how could this mysterious woman be the first to know? I had grown so uneasy, however, that instead of trying to press the matter further, I changed the conversation.

"Do you know," I began, "ever since I first saw you I've been trying to remember which of the Greek goddesses carried a pair of shears. Would you mind telling me whom you represent?"

My partner glanced down at the bronze implement in her girdle.

"Why," she said, "that is my own idea. I find it useful for snipping threads."

There was such an awful significance in her tone that I could not have felt more uncomfortable if she had explained that the shears were for cutting off people's heads. I was heartily grateful when the orchestra finally stopped and I led the disturbing goddess to the refreshment table, where Dale Wells was already waiting to ask her for the next dance.

TOM GREENFIELD hailed me as I was making my escape.

"Well," he greeted me, "how did you enjoy your dance with the Maid of Athens?"

"Don't ask me," I replied, as we strolled to the other side of the room.

"Did she know you?" he demanded eagerly.

"Plenty," I told him. "I never had such an uncomfortable time in my life."

Tom laughed. "She certainly had me going—had my personal and family history down so pat I couldn't trip her up on anything."

"Haven't you any idea who she is?"

"I couldn't even make a guess," he declared. "She's one of the evening's mysteries."

"At least we'll find out when everyone un.masks," I suggested.

"No we won't," he retorted. "I've guessed that part of her game. A little before midnight she will slip away and

leave all of us guessing for the rest of our lives. I tell you she's just that kind of a heartless beauty."

"You mean we never shall find out who she is?" The thought staggered me.

"Oh, yes, we will," Tom declared with a confidence that made me feel he had had a little too much of the punch. "It's perfectly simple. You are to get another dance with her—"

"Never!" I broke in.

"For the good of humanity," he pleaded.

"What then?" I asked.

"Before the dance is ended you are to drop out and engage her in conversation at the alcove in front of the third window over there."

"Yes. And then what?"

"Nothing, so far as you are concerned," he replied airily.

"Just what devilry are you up to?" I asked suspiciously.

"NOTHING at all," he insisted. "Aren't you willing to give up part of a dance you don't want for the sake of finding out who she is?"

"That depends on how it is done," I reminded him. "Something tells me the white goddess has a temper I wouldn't like to see disturbed."

"You can't let me down!" Tom pleaded. "Whatever happens will be my lookout, and it's the only chance of clearing up this mystery."

I agreed at last, with a good many misgivings, and waited for an opportunity to carry out his instructions. By this time, I noticed, the mellow perfection of the earlier evening had given way to an atmosphere of tension and expectancy. Everyone in the great room seemed to be either watching the august stranger with a kind of awed admiration, or assailing those of us who had been her partners with whispered, unanswerable questions. The men were waiting jealously for an opportunity to dance with her, but I noticed that those who had done so once did not make a second attempt.

The grandfather's clock had struck eleven-thirty by the time my opportunity came to play the part I had promised in Greenfield's plan. Graciously the Grecian beauty accepted my invitation to dance. The orchestra struck up the "Blue Danube," and we glided away over the rich old polished floor.

I was silent and ill-at-ease, wishing myself almost anywhere else; and yet I could not help admiring the marvelous dancing of my partner, or the beauty of her white shoulder and extended arm—like the cool, austere perfection of white marble. There was the same calm smoothness about the beautiful hand that rested in mine, and presently I found myself repeating a line from the *Garden of Proserpine*:

*Who gathers all things mortal
With cold, immortal hands.*

My gaze was arrested for a moment by the triangular white scar on the back of my own hand, and I thought of a question I was sure my partner could not answer.

"Do you mind if I ask you one thing more, Maid of Athens?" I asked.

"One, or a hundred," she answered in that smooth, melodic voice. "Only be careful, for your own peace of mind."

There was an unmistakable warning in her words, and I began to feel sorry I had spoken. But after all, the question was trivial enough; no harm could come of it.

"Can you tell me," I asked, "how I came by that scar on my hand?"

"Two summers ago, when you were in the high Sierras," she informed me, "you stole away from camp and went climbing alone. You slipped on the edge of a precipice and would have fallen a thousand feet if your hand had not caught in a crevice. A sharp piece of stone made the scar." After a pause, she added: "Your life hung by a thread that day."

It would be impossible to describe the feeling those words gave me. Everything had happened precisely as she had said, but the incident had given me such a fright at the time that I had invented another explanation for the wound, and the truth had remained a secret from everyone.

"Excuse me," I stammered, "but I think I shall have to sit out the rest of this dance. I don't know what's the matter with me."

We were then at the edge of the room, and we dropped out at once. My only wish was to get away—as far away as possible—from this chill, beautiful stranger who appeared to know every hidden secret in my heart. It seemed incredible that I had even listened to Greenfield's suggestion. By this time I was ready to let well enough alone, and I would certainly warn Tom against carrying out his bold plan.

Just then, with a sinking feeling, I noticed that by some coincidence we had stopped at the very alcove Tom had designated. No doubt he would think I had deliberately carried out my part in the little conspiracy. There was no time to lose.

"I think there is a draft here," I remarked hastily. "Shall we go somewhere else?"

It was too late! Before my companion could answer, Tom's mischievous hand appeared round the curtain just behind her and deftly caught the ribbon that secured her domino. For an instant it seemed that his touch would be light enough to untie the bow without his being detected; then I realized there must be some trick about the knot, for it yielded a little, then held fast. Tom cast discretion aside and gave a tug. Still the ribbon did not give—but the mischief had been done.

The stately masquerader turned swiftly and the shears fell from her birdle with a loud, brazen clang that seemed to ring through the whole house! All the dancers stopped in their tracks, and even the musicians paused inquiringly for a moment.

In a flash the offended goddess retrieved the shears and drew herself up until she seemed to tower above us like a statue of white anger.

"So you two conspired to unmask me!" she said in a cold, ringing voice. "You must be brave men—or mad—to wish to see my face!" Her eyes blazed through the openings in the domino as she looked from one of us to the other.

Tom attempted to explain, but her voice drowned him out like the music of a fatal trumpet.

"If you had succeeded," she continued, "no retribution could have been greater. I have no power to punish your sacrilege; I could not shorten your lives by one second. But since you attempted to take the mask from my face, I will grant a portion of your wish; I will give you one glimpse into the future that is mercifully veiled from mortals who are wise enough not to meddle with what does not concern them."

She touched the shears at her girdle lightly with her beautiful, marble-white fingers; then continued: "Are you listening? *One of you is to die before morning. Within a year the other, with his own hand, will kill the woman he loves!*" After a pause, she asked: "Would you care to hear more?"

I DON'T know if either of us attempted any answer; I only remember that the waltz ended a moment later and we were thankful to escape in the general confusion, and make our way to the far side of the room, where we dropped into two convenient chairs.

"That's what I call going too far!" Tom muttered as he mopped his forehead. "Do you think the woman is mad?"

"Very likely," I agreed. "At least, the masquerade has gone to her head. You can see she actually believes herself to be some kind of goddess or oracle."

My companion moved uneasily.

"What if she were?" he muttered. "After all, we don't know anything to the contrary. Remember how she answered, without error, any question we put to her."

"Nonsense," I tried to reassure him. "Demented people sometimes have unusual powers in that direction. Besides, you know, she wasn't infallible. Why, she told me my Uncle Richard was dead, and when I caught her on that she said she must have been thinking of someone else. So, you see—"

"Mr. Worth, someone wishes to talk to you on the telephone," Ishi announced at my elbow. His sudden appearance, and his words, startled me unreasonably.

A few minutes later, when I returned, Tom Greenfield faced me apprehensively.

"Anything wrong?" he demanded.

"Nothing at all," I answered, hoping he would not detect the lie or see how troubled I was. It had been my mother who called: she had just received a cable informing her of the death of my uncle—*on the day and under the circumstances which the mysterious intruder had mentioned!*

MIDNIGHT striking on the big clock brought me out of an unhappy reverie; mechanically I removed my domino and reminded Tom to do the same. All about us familiar, merry faces were coming out of their temporary eclipse. It was good to see them again. Someone raised a shout which I did not hear distinctly because it was echoed by so many voices. Then I saw everyone crowding toward the strange goddess, who was still wearing her domino, and I felt myself drawn in the same direction.

"Unmask, goddess of the shears!" someone called—and Betty Stevens started toward her to tear the mask away.

The stranger drew back haughtily. "Beware!" she cried. "It is madness to look into my eyes!"

The crowd gasped. The next instant everyone surged forward until I could no longer see the tardy masquerader. And then—there was a medley of exclamations and orders—ending in a buzz of disappointed protests.

"She went that way!"

"No, I was standing there to stop her. She went that way!"

"She slipped between the two of you and went toward the stairs—I saw her!"

"You're all wrong. I saw her step back into the alcove."

"No, I was watching for that. She went the other way—"

Everyone had a different version of what had happened. Only one thing was clear: the stately intruder was gone—gone as mysteriously as she had come. Presently a wisp of fog stole into the room through the alcove. Someone closed the window hastily.

Tom was still depressed and out of sorts when I drove him home. I doubt whether I was in any better frame of mind. I tried to tell myself that the masked goddess and her prophecy were some colossal hoax. If only she had not disappeared in such an unaccountable manner! A man who is in good health and in his right mind is not likely to be troubled much by a prediction that he is fated for sudden death—or worse. But the matter presents an unnerving angle when the prophecy is made by someone who vanishes like smoke, without leaving a clue to her identity.

That fear of the unknown!

As I drove through the deserted streets I experienced an overpowering desire to get home as quickly as possible. After midnight the masquerade had turned into something like a court of inquiry, where an attempt had been made to piece together all the known facts concerning the intruder. Little enough had come of it, but the night was far spent when we left the Stevens' home, and now I found myself glancing apprehensively at the eastern sky. I was not fool enough, of course, to believe that one of us was to die before morning—and yet. . . . What a relief it would be to sleep and forget that nightmare prophecy!

My companion's feelings must have been identical with mine, for presently he, too, looked toward Mission Hill, which raised the dark outline of its cathedrals against the eastern sky.

"Faster, Dick!" he urged me. "Faster!"

In answer to the throttle, the car went rocketing through the sleeping city. I could feel, without looking up, that the sky was growing gray with dawn.

"Five minutes more and we'll be at Greenfield's house—unless some milk wagon comes out of a side street," I told myself.

And still Tom's muffled voice urged me on, "Faster, faster!"

As we shot down the last hill, the intersection of Hayes Street leaped toward us sooner than I had expected, and the car was traveling at such a rate that I did not dare attempt to turn in. I was just able to slow down enough to turn into the next cross street, which obliged me to go around the block and stop on the opposite side of the road from the Greenfield house.

Tom was very pale and he staggered a little as he climbed out.

"Thanks for bringing me home, Old Man," he said. "This has been a hell of a party!"

"So it has," I agreed. "But a few hours' sleep will fix you up all right."

Half way across the street Tom turned back and indicated the first light of daybreak in the sky.

"See that?" he called with a sudden return of buoyancy.

"It's morning, and we're still alive!"

The answer stopped short on my lips. I heard a sound—

"Tom, look out!" I shouted.

In the same instant a heavy yellow roadster lunged round the corner, balanced drunkenly on two wheels. Tom jumped toward safety, but the yellow avalanche was already upon him, with a screech of futile brakes and the smoke of burning tires. . . .

Afterward it was easy enough to tell myself that my friend had been the victim of a drunken driver in a stolen car—and that he had been struck down by no chariot of the avenging gods. But there was no comfort in the thought. Coincidence or not, one half of the prediction had been fulfilled, and by the same token I was fated to something worse than death.

That day I wrote to Ann Ravenhill in Australia, explaining precisely what had happened and offering her her freedom. Under any circumstances I told her, it would be fatal for us to see each other before a year had passed, and we must advise each other of our moves so as to avoid any possibility of an accidental meeting.

Three weeks of anxious waiting ended with a characteristic cable from Ann:

Situation understood. Am staying by you. Will join you after end of year. Love.

After that I breathed easier, knowing that my fiancée would keep her promise to the letter. As for myself, there was no danger of my tempting fate—with the trumpet voice of the august intruder still ringing in my ears, and the memory of Tom Greenfield's fatal boast haunting me day and night.

WHEN the United States entered the World War a few days later, I welcomed the event as an escape from the strain of a year's separation, and I joined the Navy at once, feeling quite sure that the submarine situation in the Atlantic would keep me at a safe distance from Australia.

After a brisk training at Mare Island I received a gun pointer's rating and was assigned to an old destroyer which a hundred or so bluejackets will remember by the more or less affectionate nickname of "Tin Broncho."

Then I learned, with dread foreboding, that the destroyer was to remain indefinitely in the Pacific. My pleas to be

transferred to the Atlantic Squadron were unavailing, and I lived in a continual nightmare until it became very clear that the best days of the "Tin Broncho" were over, and that a voyage to Australia was as improbable as a trip to the moon.

So my navy days were spent in lazing up and down the Pacific coast, with an occasional run to Honolulu, a good deal of time spent at target practice and still more in dry-docks. To one who had enlisted enthusiastically, this tame fare was keenly disappointing. But in spite of everything, I found the months of the perilous year slipping by pleasantly enough. And each time we returned to our base, several precious letters from Ann would be waiting for me.

There was time, too, in those leisurely days, for me to reconsider the strange events of the Stevens' masquerade—the stately, enigmatic intruder, her awful pronouncement and her mysterious departure. Looking back at that strange night was like trying to call up some fantastic dream. Yet it had been so real at the time! Even the majestic goddess had seemed actual enough, although now I could think of her only as some fateful vision, never intended for mortal eyes. Who was she? I asked myself the question a hundred times. What was her mission? The answer, I felt sure, was connected with the shears she had worn at her girdle. But how was I to know what goddess had carried such an implement? And why had one of the pagan deities, banished for so many centuries, returned to this earth—to a masquerade, at that?

THE fateful year drew toward its close almost before I realized it. Near the beginning of October, 1918, the "Tin Broncho" left the navy yard at Pearl Harbor and headed west on one of those obscure missions that always seem so exciting and important at the time—despite the fact that nothing ever comes of them. The old destroyer had never ventured west of the Hawaiian Islands before, and the gun deck hummed with rumors. We were going to intercept a German raider; we were on our way to Manila; we were going to patrol the waters about the islands. What matter if no two stories agreed?

I alone failed to share in the enthusiasm. Suppose we got as far as Australia, after all? If that happened, Sydney would certainly be our port of call. Ann and I might meet by chance—or imprudence. Then what? Perhaps by my very caution I would do something that would cause her death.

After two days of such depressing speculations it suddenly occurred to me to check up on my dates. The result was electrifying. Bring on Australia! Find Ann! No need to worry now; we were safe! In two more days the fatal year would be over. We were more than two days from any port, and something like two weeks from Sydney, Australia!

"This brand of sea air must be good for you," the machinist's mate remarked to me that afternoon. "You're looking ten years younger than you did when we left!"

Actually, I felt as if the weight of centuries had been lifted from my shoulders—and the sea air had nothing to do with it. But that was my secret.

The following day we met with the first real adventure of all our months aboard the "Broncho." It was just after our morning mess that the lookout reported a sail off the starboard bow. Nothing wonderful about that. Just the same, everyone who could, piled out on deck. After even one day at sea the most ordinary passing craft becomes something worth looking at.

The stranger proved to be a three-masted schooner under plain sail. Judging from her white-painted hull, she was one of the island trading craft, but whatever her business, she was a fine sight upon the blue sea that sparkled under a cloudless sky and a rippling breeze. A few minutes more and our leisurely twenty knots brought the schooner abeam at a distance of half a mile. Then, to the surprised satisfaction of the crew crowded against the lifelines, the sails

shook and the stranger came up into the wind. Apparently they were heaving to with the intention of speaking to us. But where were the signal flags?

The officer on the bridge rang down the engines to "slow ahead" and reached for his binoculars. At the same time the schooner's head paid off and the sails began to fill on the other tack. Evidently she had only been going about, after all!

The watch officer lowered his glasses and reached for the engine-room telegraph. Then he paused doubtfully and raised his glasses again. The schooner fell off until she had the wind almost on her quarter, ran at an increasing speed for a minute, then hove to with a great shaking of sails.

While we were still wondering at the seemingly drunken and purposeless maneuvers, the Captain appeared on the bridge and a moment later the bugle sounded: "Gun crews to their posts!" Obviously our commander believed that the schooner was trying to dodge a submarine.

After fifteen minutes or so of excited speculation we were allowed to leave our guns; the submarine theory had been discarded. On coming back to the deck, I found that the destroyer, with her engines stopped, was lying fifty yards from a big schooner, the *Mary Jordan* of Brisbane. There was an unnatural air of silence over everything, and when I peered closer I saw that there was not a soul on the sailing vessel's deck. It was uncanny!

All was in perfect order on her. Not a boat was missing from the davits, the ropes were neatly coiled, and the deck looked as if it had been scrubbed that morning. Yet there was not a living thing in sight and not a sound except for the slapping of sails and the creak of the untended wheel—and those very sounds seemed but to intensify the weird silence. Imperceptibly, we drifted closer. On the companion hatch of the schooner I could see an open book, with the wind idly turning the pages like an unseen hand.

At last the Captain shattered the oppressive silence by booming through his megaphone: "Ahoj, there! What is wrong with you?" The only answer was a dull, confused echo. Then, as if in contempt, the sails filled on the starboard tack, and, with a rattle of blocks and jolting of booms, the *Mary Jordan* began sailing away from us with a ghastly jauntiness. After a bit she came up into the wind again, and we ranged alongside as before. Again the Captain hailed, our siren shrieked, and I was ordered to fire a blank shot. Nothing was of any use; it was like trying to wake the dead.

Our officers went into a huddle on the bridge, while those of us on deck clamored for permission to board the schooner and clear up the mystery. Finally the knot on the bridge broke up and the Captain withdrew to the starboard wing, looking thoughtfully from his noisy crew to the silent schooner.

"Captain," the Boatswain called boldly, "may I take a boat and find out what has happened?"

IN answer, the Captain came down from the bridge, looking very solemn.

"Men," he addressed us as we crowded round, pleading for a chance to lower the boats, "I am as eager as any of you to go on board the schooner. But it doesn't seem advisable. We have talked it over. If the schooner were abandoned, I should not have any hesitation. But you can see that none of the boats is missing. There seems to be only one explanation: the crew is on board there, dead of some contagious disease—bubonic plague, perhaps, or more likely a virulent form of influenza. If even one of you paid a visit to that ship, it is doubtful whether any of us would reach port alive. Do you understand?"

We nodded in awed silence.

"Man the starboard gun forward," he ordered abruptly, "and be ready to put a shell into the schooner at the waterline!"

It was my gun that had been designated, and in record time I had it loaded and trained on the *Mary Jordan*.

"Fire!" came the order, and I pressed the button. The range was point-blank and the three-inch shell struck true, throwing up a fountain of spray that fell back to reveal a splintered and gaping hole into which the sea was pouring. One more round was enough.

We stood by until the end, hoping that the dying ship might give up some clue. She settled by the head, slowly at first, then quite rapidly. The sea rose to receive her, in a clear glassy line. Now it was on a level with the proudly-tilted bowsprit; now it covered the fore-castle, where some strange and endless sleep had overtaken the crew.

"My God, there she goes!" someone called unsteadily.

The stern rose high in the air, as if seeking to escape the obliterating sea. The rudder, covered with barnacles and seaweed, jolted to starboard with a dull crash, while the wheel spun furiously, as if an invisible helmsman were attempting some last, hopeless maneuver. There was a sudden rush and swirl of water and the schooner plunged down, carrying her secret to the depths of the sea.

We had done our duty; we had cleared the shipping lane of a derelict—a real menace to ships at night, and probably a still greater peril to the unwary who might try to man it by day.

In silence, as at a sea burial, we stood with bowed, uncovered heads. The face of the water smoothed and composed itself, and, except for a few bits of floating gear, our meeting with the *Mary Jordan* might have been some figment of our imaginations, or an appalling dream.

That same day a wireless message ordered us back to San Francisco. And before we sailed again the war had ended. So I was not to see Australia—and Ann—that trip!

On the homeward run I felt composed and thoughtful; the tragic mystery in which I had taken part had the quieting effect of any event which passes human understanding. That, and the fact that my year of peril was over, allowed me to think calmly of the other mystery which had entered my life. Oddly enough, on the very night after the sinking of the *Mary Jordan*, there sud-

denly came to me the answer to the riddle which had troubled me for a year—the meaning of the shears which the intruder at the masquerade had worn on her girdle.

I was asleep in my hammock when there came up before me a picture which I had seen in my childhood, a tableau of the three immortal sisters, the Three Fates who control human destiny—the first sister spinning the thread of life, the second measuring, and the third cutting the thread at its appointed time. It was the third of those awful sisters who had come back to an earth turned pagan again in the frenzy of war. No wonder there had been something chill and forbidding in her voice when she had told me that her shears were useful for *snipping threads!*

And yet I had triumphed in snatching the most precious—to me—of all threads from those chill, clanging shears. The immensity of my victory made me feel humble.

When we reached San Francisco, seven letters from Ann Ravenhill were waiting for me, and my happiness was complete. Settling myself in a secluded corner of the shelter deck, I read them in the order of the dates on the post marks. What a thrill it was to read in each one that Ann was well and happy—and counting the days of the receding year as eagerly as I had!

The first six letters were fat, and the seventh, mailed only a day after the sixth, was a brief, happy note, hastily scrawled:

DEAREST DICK:

How surprised you are going to be! When you receive this, I will be well on my way to join you. I have waited quite long enough. In a month from today the dreadful year will be over. If I obeyed my impulses, I would be sailing on the fastest steamer, but that would bring me to the States too soon. So I am embarking on a real adventure. My Uncle Roger and his family are making the trip on one of his schooners, and they have invited me to go with them! No danger of my arriving too soon!

An ocean of love for you, and be on the look-out for the *Mary Jordan!*

Am I a Prophetess?

This story, related by Mrs. Frank H. Vannings, of Racine, Wisconsin, proves the contention often made that children sometimes speak with the gift of prophecy when their parents think they are lying.

Introspecting, I ask myself this question: Am I a prophetess who, once deigning to prophesy, cannot slip, or am I a sort of lucky liar dominated by a jinx, who, having told a lie, immediately proceeds to make it come true?

The first illustrative instance I recall is the time, when, aged six, I was inexplicably moved to go about telling all the neighbors, "we are going to move; we are packing our trunks." And my mother, emphatically assuring them we were *not* going to move and spanking me soundly, put me to bed without any supper.

Just two days later, my dad, who was a district sales manager, came home, and after he had kissed us all around and was fishing in his grips for the regular trip-ly presents, remarked over-casually (the way fathers do when they are handing out unwelcome news), "Well, Mother, we are going to move again. I have to be in Toronto all next year."

Then there was the case of the measles. I played on the way to school and had to give some excuse for being late so I told the principal, "I am awfully sorry to be late but my little brother has the measles and I had to . . ."

"Go home," she cried.

So I did, and there was the doctor and the littlest brother all measly! Mother had discovered them after I left for school and I didn't have to go back for two weeks.

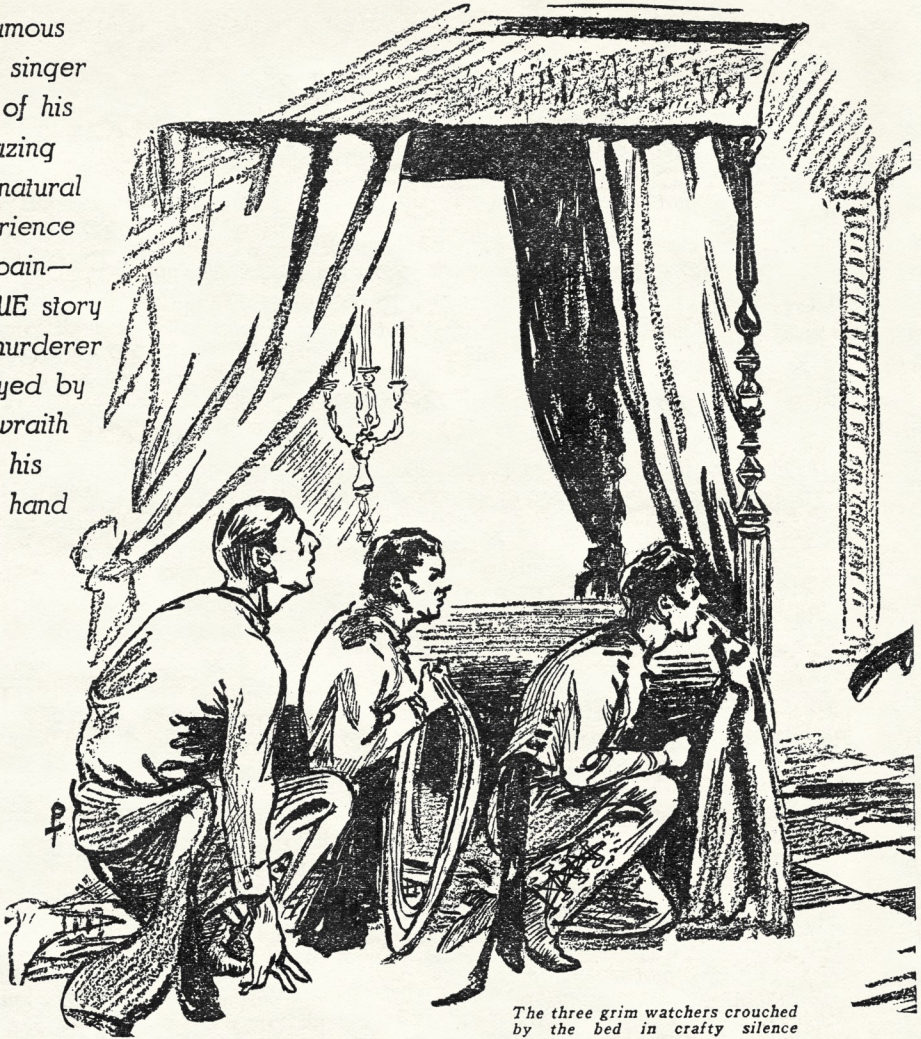
Followed years of discretion—a number of them. I was at a house party among total strangers—when the next bloomer bloomed. The girls my own age were discussing their engagements, and I, who was as yet unclaimed, was suddenly possessed to go them one better, so on the spur of the moment and the strength of my graduation presents, one of which was a perfectly beautiful diamond and grandmother's little old band ring, I sprung this; "Girls! Will you never tell? Promise? Well, I am *married*—secretly." Under chorused and soloed questioning I admitted that his first name was Frank and he had dark eyes and wonderful white wavy hair because he was, oh, ages older than I, so that my people would never approve of him even though he was quite wealthy. Pressed as to his religious affiliations I decided he was Lutheran.

Believe it or not, this very day I am married to Frank, who has white hair and dark eyes and is much older and wealthier than poor me and is Lutheran, anyway on Sundays. The only flaw was that the family lost no time in clapping him to its figurative bosom. And up to the day we met, which was some six months after the house party mentioned above, Frank and I had never even been in the same state at any time in our lives.

But here's the rub. I can't work my jinx premeditatedly or at will. I have tried deliberately saying "I made the fourth hole in three," or "Frank is *certainly* getting slimmer." But it doesn't work.

Let science take the platform and give the explanation!

A famous
opera singer
tells of his
amazing
supernatural
experience
in Spain—
the TRUE story
of a murderer
betrayed by
the wrath
of his
own hand



The three grim watchers crouched
by the bed in crafty silence

ALL artists are, to a certain extent, psychic. That is to say, they are acutely sensitive to impressions conveyed by persons and places. In my own case, I am certain that this psychic quality was responsible for the most amazing experience of my life.

I was singing in Seville that winter, after a very successful season in Barcelona. The Spaniards are wonderfully hospitable, but a singer who would gain and keep success can accept few social invitations. However, I formed a number of delightful friendships, among others with the Rodriguez family. They lived some distance from Seville; and, wishing to see Spanish country life, I promised to pay them a visit when my opera contract ended.

Meanwhile, Don Rodriguez and his charming family suffered a severe shock through a tragedy that had befallen one who was dear to them. Their estate, nearly always gay with the laughter of guests, lay under a deep shadow of gloom.

They had entertained at dinner their intimate friend, Señor Martinez, owner of a vast cattle ranch on which he raised prize bulls that were among the most famous in the

arenas of Spain. Having just returned from Seville, following a business transaction involving a large sum of money, Señor Martinez carried on his person a fortune in cash.

"Why did you not bank it in Seville?" Rodriguez had asked him.

Martinez, as careless with wealth as he was generous, had smiled.

"I am adding more land to my place," he replied. "Tomorrow I shall need this money to make payment on it, so I'm taking it with me."

"That is well enough," his host insisted. "But just the same, my friend, you must stay with us this night. There is no use in tempting road agents."

I HEARD later how Martinez had laughed and shrugged his broad shoulders.

"Thank you," he told them, "but I must be up and about too early in the morning. My horse is here and the distance is not great. No, I shall go home."

And despite their protests, after they had dined and talked

The Scarred Hand

By *Lido Schryer*

Premier Tenor of the Chicago Opera Company



He lunged at my throat like a madman, thirsty for blood

together on the wide veranda, Martinez mounted his great roan and waved good night. It was his last gallant gesture to his friends.

Shortly after dawn, his body was found beside the road. He had been stabbed in the back with one swift lunge of a dagger. His wallet had been taken and the riderless horse left to gallop home through the night.

When I learned of the tragedy, I, of course, suggested that my visit be postponed. But Rodriguez and his family insisted that my stay with them would serve to drive from their troubled minds the thoughts of Martinez and his tragic death. Accordingly, on the morning after my final appearance in the most romantically beautiful city of Spain, I journeyed to Miramar, the Rodriguez estate.

Miramar was part castle and part chateau. The castle was a monument to ancient Spain, dating back to the time of her glory as a world power. The chateau was modern in construction and in appointments. The apartment assigned to me was in the castle and was furnished in antique mahogany, while heavy damask draperies added to the effect of medieval splendor. A crimson canopy hung from the high ceiling

and enveloped my bed, a monumental affair set at the far end of the room.

On the wall at the foot of the bed, and visible between the parted curtains of the canopy, was a massive portrait in oil, dimly illuminated by four candles in tall silver sticks which rested on the floor. I took no special notice of the painting at the time, though I was to have good reason to study it carefully later on.

This apartment was the one usually occupied by Señor Martinez on his frequent visits to Miramar—but I did not learn this until some time afterward. However, even as I was ushered into the somber chamber, I became conscious in a subtle fashion of some mysterious quickening of the senses.

It is a difficult thing to describe. I have thought since that human beings are exactly like a radio. That is to say, if they are extremely sensitive, they possess nerves which serve as antennae, making them responsive and in tune with much that to others remains hidden. It is these highly strung people who invariably receive supernatural impressions.

Carlos, one of the faithful retainers of the family, had been assigned to serve as my valet. But when he had shown me to my rooms, I, preferring independence, dismissed him with the promise that I would ring if he were needed.

DINNER that evening left me more than ever attached to this congenial family. Afterward I sang for them, choosing for my subjects the lighter melodies whose qualities were gay and carefree. I am certain that for the time all thoughts of the recent tragedy were erased from their minds, and in a happier mood we parted for the night.

I went directly to my apartment and retired. The somber room lay in heavy shadows and in my canopied bed I slept soundly in the deepest darkness of all.

The next morning, and the three following, we passed in riding along the white winding highways and over the vast Rodriguez estate. Our evenings were spent in the music room, or at cards. But at no time did we discuss Martinez, or refer to the tragedy of his end.

On the fourth night of my visit (Continued on page 83)

Panic in Wild Harbor

By
GORDON
HILLMAN



*Cranshawe raised his voice
in a last warning. "Don't
go near the sea, Captain!"*

IN all my friend Cranshawe's portfolio of psychic experiences, there is none more ghastly or unearthly than the weird affair at Wild Harbor. Cranshawe, being a trained psychic investigator and perhaps one of the best known in America, catalogues it simply as "phenomena in a New England coast town." But Cranshawe is always conservative.

He was working on a lecture for one of the psychic societies—an account of "The Mystery of the Screaming Skull," which had occupied much of our summer—when the telegram was laid on our table.

Cranshawe read it, signaled to his Japanese valet and tossed the wire over to me. It read:

*Engage you immediately to probe ghastly mystery.
Come at once.*

It was signed by the town officials of Wild Harbor.

"I know the place," said I, but Cranshawe had already galloped to the Jap boy.

"Pack the bags and get two seats on the Boston express," he snapped. "This appears to be important."

"Your lecture——" I reminded him.

"My dear fellow," said he, "the lecture can go hang. This may be a most remarkable case. I've heard something, I believe, about this place. A bell rings at uncanny intervals."

"Rot," said I. "You can't expect to find ghosts in a summer resort nowadays. Wild Harbor's full of artists and barelegged girls in the season. The only thing that's ghastly about the town is the smell of fish."

Cranshawe was already sorting out his equipment; his

note-books, his camera, the telescope he always took with him, and a dozen other odds and ends.

"You're always so skeptical," said he. "That's why I'm taking you with me. If what I fear is true, horror stalks in that town, and a good, sane, sensible scoffer is exactly what I need as a witness. Come along."

I must confess that as we went to the train I shivered a little at the memory of my other experiences with Cranshawe—the house of terror by the Black Bayou in Louisiana; the uncanny spell that hung about the English cottage where stark fear stalked. At that moment I would have gladly abandoned the whole business.

BUT the sight of Wild Harbor reassured me. It was such a sleepy little fishing town, and more sleepy now than it would be later, for the summer season had not yet begun. Ordinary box-like New England houses were everywhere. The inhabitants were peaceably going about their business, while a quarter of the town's police force was down at the station, picking his teeth and watching the train come in.

"Well, here we are," said I, "and not a ghost in sight."

A short man in a faded blue suit came running up to meet



What
Was the
Lurking
Horror
That
Terrorized
This
Quiet
New England
Village?

Stark fear glinted in the old seaman's eyes, but he shouted angrily: "By God! Alive or dead, I'm not afraid of him!"

stood by itself, away from all others, and at the far corner of its grounds rose the prosaic red chimney of a paint factory.

"You'll come in?" said Cranshawe to the little man.

"Me?" he shuddered. "I can't. I don't dare. That bell and the face and—

Good-by!" With that he slammed the door in our faces.

The cab was gone in a cloud of dust, and Cranshawe and I stood in front of the white picket fence looking up at the old house.

"What's he afraid of?" I asked testily, for I was tired from the long train ride.

"Horrors," said Cranshawe. "Horrors that he does not understand. One of them's the bell above you."

I looked up, and there, just below the flat roof-walk that adorns the top of all sea captains' houses, hung a bell—an old, worn ship's bell, gone green in places from rust and damp. No rope led to it.

"EVERY Friday at midnight it tolls ten times," said Cranshawe. Then he led the way to the front door of the house, opened it, and we stepped inside.

A very ordinary house it was, too. Old haircloth chairs and sofas, a ship's lantern in the hall, rugs and bric-a-brac picked up from the four corners of the earth, lithographs of sailing vessels on the wall; in short, the house of a sea captain.

Then I thought of something.

us, and if ever a man was agitated, he was. His very eyes held a hint of dark terror and his voice shook when he spoke.

"Mr. Cranshawe?" he said. "Thank God you've come. These things can't go on—they mustn't! It's too ghastly——"

"I have brought a friend to help me," said Cranshawe, and the three of us climbed into one of the town taxicabs and went rattling over the cobblestoned streets.

"The whole town's terrified," the little man was saying, "and if the tourists get wind of it, our summer season's ruined. We count on you, Mr. Cranshawe; we count on you!"

It was quite idiotic. Here was the little man babbling away as though we were living in the Dark Ages; yet through the cab window I could see the fishnets drying, and the red front of a five-and-ten-cent store, and could hear the newsboys crying the Boston papers.

I couldn't catch much more of the conversation, for the little man was leaning toward Cranshawe and whispering in his ear. But I could tell from the way his hand shook that he was frightened out of his wits.

We stopped in front of a big white house, with a green lawn in the rear sloping gently to the harbor. The house

"How can the bell ring?" I asked. "It has no rope." "It tolls," insisted Cranshawe calmly. "It tolls ten times." "But why ten?"

Cranshawe lifted one of the lithographs from the wall. "Ten men," he said, "went down on the schooner, *Golden Wind*, at twelve o'clock on a Friday night two years ago. What's that?"

It was a long-drawn hail, and as we stepped outside on the piazza, a stout, red-faced seafaring man was waving to us from beyond the fence.

"Mr. Cranshawe!" he called. "It's Cap'n Starbuck."

"Come in!" called back Cranshawe, but the Captain shrugged his shoulders.

"Not I!" he said. "Will you come out here, sir?"

Cranshawe and I sauntered over to the gate. I could not help marveling how men could entertain such supernatural fears when the sun shone down and all the day was fair. Now, I marvel how they could have lived at all, side by side with that house of evil.

"I haven't been in that house," said the Captain shakily, "since what happened a year ago today. Nothin' on earth'd ever git me in there agin. Clear out, sir! Clear out quick! I warn you!"

"Now my advice to you, Cap'n," said Cranshawe, quite seriously, "is to clear out yourself. Go far away, go to California, and straighten out your nerves. And go at once——" He paused, looking still more serious. "At once—before it's too late."

The Captain's hands shook.

"I been ready to go," he muttered, "and now I got my affairs in shape, I will. But I'm bound to sail to the banks tomorrow in the *Hallowe'en*. The moment I git back, I'll start for Califony, and thank you kindly, sir."

He turned quickly and shambled off down the road. Cranshawe raised his voice in a last warning. "Don't go near the sea, Captain! Don't go near the sea!"

Stark fear glistened in the old seaman's eyes, but he shouted angrily: "By God! Alive or dead, I'm not afraid of him!"

WHEN we went back into the house, the swift twilight was already falling.

"What the devil did he mean?" I said.

Cranshawe calmly lit his pipe. But his eyes were not calm: they darted hither and yon as if he were expecting something weird—something uncanny and horrible.

"Two years ago," he droned, "the *Golden Wind* was racing the *Hallowe'en* up the coast, racing to be in first with the catch of fish. Cap'n Starbuck drove his ship headlong into a fog; a fisherman's horn sounded dead ahead. Cap'n Starbuck was at the wheel. He took a chance and kept to his course. There was a crash and that's all he knows, save that the *Golden Wind* went down with nine men and its Portuguese skipper."

"Ten men in all," said I, shuddering, "and the bell tolls ten!"

Cranshawe knocked out his pipe.

"Precisely," said he. "Cap'n Starbuck came back here to this house. A year ago he was found unconscious, with his hand upon the knob of this very front door. He has never stirred a foot onto his own land or into his own house since. Now, if the summer colony get wind of this, they'll stop coming to Wild Harbor, so the city fathers called on me. Let's have a sandwich."

The sandwich and the cup of coffee which Cranshawe had provided made me see again how foolish the whole business was. An old sea dog

falls unconscious in his house, the wind makes a bell toll—and there you have a pretty tale of terror. Besides, I reasoned, all seafaring folk are superstitious.

Cranshawe chatted away as only he can, and I listened lazily while a faint sea wind moaned. Nothing at all happened during that time, and whenever you looked out the windows, there were the harbor lights all twinkling red and green and everything as peaceful as you please.

By half-past ten, I was yawning my head off. By eleven I said to Cranshawe, "I'm not going to wait for your beastly old bell. I'm going to bed."

"Righto," said Cranshawe, with a yawn. "The front room's made up."

The electric lights were on in the hall; they were on in the cheery little bedroom, and after a last look out at the harbor, I undressed and slipped placidly between the covers. Then I switched the lights off and waited for that phantom bell.

I watched the hands on my radium-faced watch racing toward midnight. They came together on the hour and I strained my ears.

The bell did not toll on the hour, nor at the quarter nor at the half, so I shrugged my shoulders and turned over to sleep.

At last, I chuckled, Cranshawe had come on a wild goose chase!

IT must have been a horn that wakened me—a fisherman's horn such as they use on ships—for its eerie wail was still ringing in my ears when I sat bolt upright in bed, to find the room dank with fog.

The horn sounded suddenly again, on a keen, high note of terror, and I stepped to the window from which the sound seemed to come.

As far as I could see stretched a white sheet of fog, and through it twinkled the red and green riding lights of a schooner. The horn had stopped; there was no sound; but out of the fog loomed the broken bow of a ship, heading into shore. That ship was ghastly white, and she seemed to move in her own circle of light, a dull, greenish, corpse-colored glow. In she came and in, till it seemed she must touch the sea wall. Her foremast was a tangled wreck, her bulwarks broken down and slimy with weed.

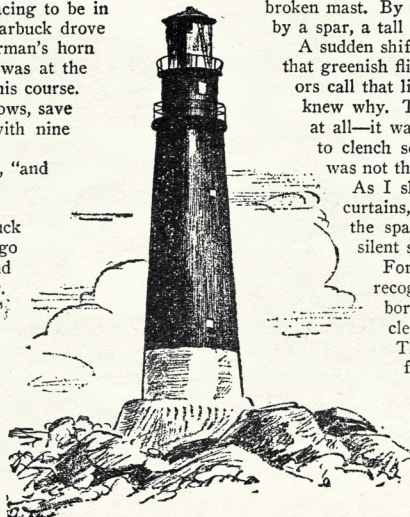
The fog clung close about her; yet that ghastly green glow illumined the long, rutted, weed-hung decks, the splintered wheel-house, the ribbon of sail stringing from the broken mast. By the mast, and seemingly supported by a spar, a tall shadow was twisted.

A sudden shift in the light revealed it plainly as that greenish flicker played about the bows. Sailors call that light "corpse-fire," and in a flash I knew why. The tall shadow was not a shadow at all—it was a sailor, his arms outflung as if to clench some unknown thing, and his face was not the face of any living man!

As I shuddered and gripped the window curtains, I saw plainer still—the splinter of the spar had pierced clean through that silent shadow!

For a moment I fancied I knew, recognized, remembered the man who bore that ooze-green face, the man cut clean through by that splintered spar. Then horror upon horror loomed from the wreathing fog.

A ship's lantern made a spark of white upon the lawn—a loathsome, deadly white; but outside of that one spark, the lantern threw no light at all. There was no glow around it; the fog was no brighter there,



and stare though I might, I could see nothing behind or beside that lantern. Waist-high it was, as though a man were carrying it. It even swung with the motion of a man's arm, but there was no man there.

Straight it came, as if bearing down upon me. Then, with a start, I realized it was rising to the height of a man's shoulder, then above his head—a shuddering, eerie dead-white spark in a sea of fog.

Behind it lay the silent ship, the figure still inert upon the transfixing spar—and terror held me fast. Move my legs I could not; my head seemed riveted to one position on my shoulders. But even so, my fear-crazed brain registered the approach of something sinister.

Something, I knew, was creeping out of that fog, creeping down upon me like the hunter of a wild animal. And I was the animal, caught in a mesh of cold fear, my legs paralyzed, my arms like water, my eyes staring straight into the white welter.

IN a panic I stretched a clammy hand out to the revolver under my pillow. A jerk and it was mine, though I could scarcely hold it.

Then the lantern glowed level with my eyes, glowed with its dead light that illumined nothing. It moved as if a man were carrying it across the veranda roof, but no man was there. And all the time I had the feeling of some Terror coming from the fog. . . .

The lantern's light was so bright it hurt my eyes; yet it lit nothing in the night outside nor in the room. I raised my revolver and then I saw—

First a hand, misshapen, twisted like a claw; and though that hand held no lantern, held nothing at all, the light was still there. The hand moved blindly toward the window pane. It had no thumb, and the nails were like long talons.

As I stared, a scream—a hideous, racking scream—came through the fog. It came from that sepulchral ship, from that ghastly shape impaled upon the splintered spar. It was the scream of a man in utmost agony—of a man on the point of death—and the claw crept close to the catch on the window.

My icy finger slid on the trigger of my revolver, slid slowly as death, and I could see the hammer rise as that corpse light shone full upon me and I was face to face with the Horror of all Horrors.

There was a Thing behind the lantern—huge, transparent, so that I could see the death ship through it—a Thing in the semblance of a man.

Long earrings such as Portuguese seamen wear glittered dully, the hair above them was matted with salt and seaweed, and—it is nearly beyond me to tell it, even now—that Thing had no face!

More because my finger twitched than because I willed it, the revolver went off with a deafening roar. The window crashed. My wrist was caught as if by claws, the revolver clattered to the floor, and I could see nothing—nothing that can be mentioned even now—save two long earrings.

I must have screamed. I must have struggled, for my arm was slashed as if by sharp claws—and suddenly I was at the door, with the soft patter of footfalls behind me! Not the footfalls of a living man—rather those of an animal, and I wrenched at the knob and stumbled down the stairs, scream upon scream tearing from my throat.

Above my cries, drowning them out, arose the deafening tolling of a bell. Slow strokes and sure—like the toll of a dead man's doom. *One—two—three—*

I caught feebly at the stairhead, and screamed again, while those footfalls pattered soft behind me, closer—closer—

"Four—five—six," the bell was still tolling.

A cold shiver seized me. *"Eight—nine—ten—"*

Though the clamor still went on, I could not cry out again.

The bell tolled thirteen, and stopped dead!

Then I lost track of everything.

I awakened in the warm sunshine of the library, with

Cranshawe bending over me, a whisky glass in his hand. "The bell!" I whispered, for my voice seemed gone. "The bell tolled thirteen!"

"Thirteen!" said Cranshawe, and his face went even paler. "I didn't count. I heard you calling and rushed out. Lucky I caught you as you fell."

"I didn't fall," said I weakly. "There was some Thing—"

But Cranshawe was not even listening.

"Thirteen?" he mused. "*Thirteen!* And there's a fishing schooner just come up the bay with her flag at half-mast. Old man, I'm afraid we're in for more terrors."

"There aren't any more," I whispered. "There can't be." And, still shivering all over, I told him the horrors of that awful night.

He was just helping me to rise, when a shout came from the outer door, and the little man we had met at the station came in, creeping fearfully, as if in abject terror.

"Mr. Cranshawe!" he cried. "Oh, my God, it's horrible! The *Hallowe'en* was sunk last night with every man aboard save one."

Cranshawe looked stunned. "I told Starbuck to stay away from the sea," he said, as if to himself.

"The *Hallowe'en*," said the little man, peering about him in fear, "sailed on the evening tide. The *Mary B.* picked up one man. He says—he says that off the Graves Shoal, they ran into a fog, and out of it loomed a ship—all white—and the white ship ran them down! Its foremast was a wreck—What say, sir?"

"Nothing," said I.

"And as they struck, Cap'n Starbuck was up for'ard, and one of the white ship's spars pierced him through and through. All that the man the *Mary B.* picked up can remember is the Cap'n screaming, and one more thing—"

"What's that?" asked Cranshawe.

"He says that the white ship—the one that struck them—was the *Golden Wind*—the ship that Cap'n Starbuck sent to the bottom two long years ago last night!"

The little man was ashen pale; his hands were quivering, and he flinched as Cranshawe suddenly spoke.

"How many were lost aboard the *Hallowe'en*?"

I could have told him, even before the little man spoke.

"Thirteen!"

Cranshawe snapped his notebook shut.

"We'd better help my friend out of here," he said. "He's had—a bad fall!"

THE little man lifted me on one side, and Cranshawe on the other. I was hardly able to walk.

"What are they?" said the little man, and drew back swiftly.

I looked down. My pajama sleeve was crushed back, and on my forearm there were four red marks, like the gashes left by four sharp talons. My wrist was so stiff I could not move it.

"I tripped in the night," I said weakly. "The fog was so thick I couldn't see—"

The little man took hold of my arm again, but he was shaking all over.

"There wasn't any fog in Wild Harbor last night," he said.

Cranshawe snapped at him.

"Don't mind about that," he said. "Take him across the street and get him a cup of coffee. I'll bring down his clothes. I'm going upstairs, anyway, to have a look around."

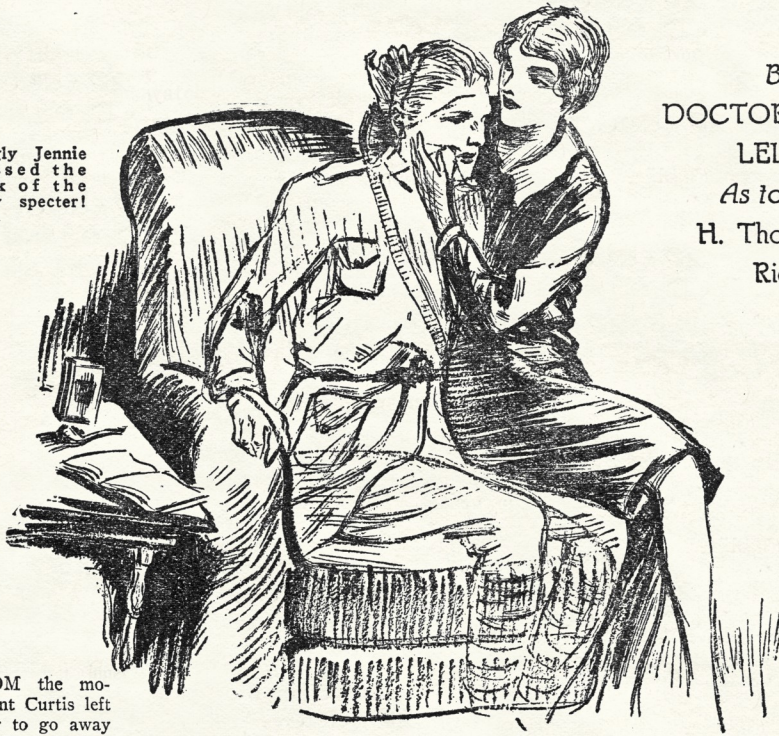
I was propped up in an easy chair in a pretty little cottage across the street. Out on the porch the housewife and the little man were still rattling on about the horrible wreck of the *Hallowe'en*, when Cranshawe came in and shut the door on them.

"Old man," he said solemnly. "I found everything as you said. The window is smashed—there are pools of sea water on the floor—the whole (Continued on page 81)

The THING That Came

By
DOCTOR HENRY
LEIGH
As told to
H. Thompson
Rich

Lovingly Jennie
caressed the
cheek of the
ghastly specter!



FROM the moment Curtis left her to go away to France, Jennie seemed—well, somehow different.

I can't describe it, but to me it seemed as if she were never quite able to realize he had gone.

And the way they parted that day! I tell you, even then it sent shivers through me. Afterward, when I looked back—but there, I mustn't go into that until I have explained a bit. It was all so odd, from the very first; and later, so incredible.

There they stood—he, tall and straight in his uniform, a light in his eyes that I knew meant he was ready to give his life, if need be, for his country; and she, a slender, delicate wisp of a girl, scarcely old enough to be his wife. What a pity, I thought at the time, that she had no relatives to stay with until he returned.

"You will come back?" she pleaded, lifting those wistful, lovely eyes to his. "Oh, my dear, promise me truly, no matter what happens!"

"I will come back, Jennie sweetheart," he vowed, "No matter what happens."

Lifting her in his arms, he kissed her again and again, while she whispered dear, foolish things that tore my heart for them. At length I turned away. I couldn't stand it, hardened old doctor though I was.

When I looked again, Curtis had left.

"Good-by, Doc," he called back with a wave of his hand. "Take good care of her!"

Then Jennie turned to me, her eyes bright with tears.

"I wouldn't have Curtis see it hurts so," she sobbed. "He thinks I'm so much braver than I really am."

"Nonsense," I laughed. "I guess he knows you for just what you are—a dear, loyal little woman!"

With that I kissed her lightly on the cheek and turned away.

For some weeks no news reached us, of course. Curtis was on the transport, crossing the perilous, torpedo-infested Atlantic.

But one day Jennie came rushing over breathless to my house, which was just across the way.

"Oh, I have a letter from him!" she exclaimed, holding it aloft in exultation. "He's arrived! He's safe. Just think, he's safe! And I was so afraid."

"Of course he's safe!" I exclaimed. "And why, in the name of goodness, wouldn't he be safe?"

"Well, I don't know," she mused. "But, anyway, he is, and I'm so happy! I never thought I could be so happy."

AFTER that, letters began to arrive fairly regularly, yet each new word from him aroused in her the same degree of enthusiasm. Each letter seemed a fresh delight, and she always came running over to me the moment she had received one, to read it aloud. Poor wail! She had no one else to turn to.

And as she read those letters aloud to me, she grew so earnest that I almost felt the boy's presence in the room. It was as though he were actually there beside her.

I used to watch her in awe, and sometimes I found myself unconsciously straining my eyes, as if I really expected to see him. Then I would come to my senses and get up

Home from the WAR

*As he kissed his bride good-by,
Curtis vowed he would
return from France—
no matter what happened.
But stark terror
gripped a whole town
when he kept his promise!*

and walk about the room to throw off the spell. But she sat there, tensely absorbed, reading on and on in a queer little hypnotic voice, as if making a conscious effort to bring about the very spell I was trying to throw off.

As the days and weeks passed, she grew more and more into that curious state of mind. She, who had been the gayest of the gay, became quiet, almost melancholy. And yet, not melancholy—for that was only the impression she gave to others. She herself seemed actually happy, or rather, oblivious. Her whole life was so wrapped up in the absent Curtis that her mind, too, seemed to have followed him afar off.

Several months went by, and then—suddenly the letters stopped! At first we thought his letters had probably gone down with some torpedoed liner; later that an unexpected movement at the front had held up the mail. But when several weeks passed and still there came no word, I began to feel a vague alarm.

Surely, I thought, if Curtis were well he would write. But I dared not express my thoughts to Jennie. She sensed them, however, and laughed them away.

"He's all right," she said. "I feel his presence continually near me, even though he does not answer my letters." And from this conviction I had not the heart to shake her.

Soon after that I was called out of town for a few days. When I returned I found a note from Jennie under my door. But I had no sooner got into the house than she came running over.

"Oh, Doctor Leigh!" she cried. "I have the most wonderful news. Curtis has come back! He's here!"

The tone of her voice made me look up suddenly, and somehow, when my eyes met hers, something very like panic took hold of me. Such eyes I had never seen. They were dark and lustrous, as of old, but now there was an odd, baffling light in them.

In that instant, as she stood there, I *knew*—with terrible certainty—that Curtis had not come back!

Yet, in the face of Jennie's almost frenzied joy, I was speechless. Finally, in answer to her insistent request that I come over and see Curtis, I put on my hat and coat once more and stepped with her across the street.

She ran lightly up the steps and I followed somewhat reluctantly.

Opening the door with a laugh, she turned to me.

"He's probably in the library, smoking his pipe," she said.



"Oh, he'll be so glad to see you! Wait—I'll go in and find out if he's there first. What fun it will be to surprise him!"

She vanished, and a moment later returned.

"Yes, he's there," she said, "sitting in the big chair by the fire, smoking his pipe, just as I thought he would be. He's so happy to be back he doesn't seem to care to see anyone. All he wants to do is sit and smoke, and sometimes take me in his lap and talk. He tells me the strangest tales!"

I shivered and a sudden fear gripped me. Then, with a shrug of my shoulders, I followed her quietly through the door into the library.

"You must go on tiptoe," she whispered. "Steal up behind him as you used to do, and slap him on the back. Oh, but he'll be glad to see you!"

DIMLY I realized that she was speaking, but it was not until afterward that I recalled her words sufficiently to do her bidding. My mind was too preoccupied with other things.

I had no sooner entered that dim library than I knew I was in the presence of something uncanny. There was a vague dampness and haze about the room, while seemingly from a great distance came the odor of tobacco—the faint, well-remembered odor of the particular brand of tobacco that Curtis had always smoked.

Shuddering, I looked in the direction of the big library

chair, where she had said he was sitting—the chair was empty! Only, it seemed to me that in it and all around it the haze was a trifle denser than elsewhere.

I stood there trembling, not knowing what to do.

Jennie came over to me.

"Quick!" she whispered. "He hasn't seen you yet."

Still I hesitated. Perhaps the girl's reason had been affected by her constant brooding. At any rate, I must do nothing to disillusion her until I had been able to analyze this staggering hallucination further.

So, with a reluctance and dread which can well be imagined, I advanced to the chair, and, moving my hand as though slapping someone heartily upon the back, exclaimed: "Why, hello, Curtis, my boy! I'm certainly glad to see you! How fine you are looking!"

Then I turned to Jennie to see what effect my words had had on her. She was fairly radiant.

"You see?" she cried, coming over. "I knew he'd be delighted to see you. But he's grown so moody lately. See if you can't get him to put his pipe down and talk."

WHAT was I to do? To have fled—as I was sorely tempted to do—would have been fatal. Jennie's mind must be spared any shock, whatever the cost to me. So I sat down upon the chair-edge and pretended to talk to her husband, addressing the empty air. All kinds of questions I put, and laughed or was silent as the answers would have required.

But there came no answers; only, from time to time the curious haze that surrounded me seemed to move or shift. Once or twice I brushed my hands across my eyes as though to drive it away, but when I opened them again it was always there.

How I ever endured that hour, I do not know. But I did, somehow, and at length I rose, said good-by to my imaginary friend, and turned to Jennie, telling her that I had some calls to make.

"Well, I suppose you must go," she said, "but anyway, Curtis and I are very happy to have had you with us this afternoon. It seemed like old times."

I shuddered.

"And you will come again, won't you?" she begged. "Do come often, for we get terribly lonesome sometimes."

I promised to come back often, and went out.

Heavens, how sweet and pure the fresh air seemed! Fifteen minutes of brisk walking drove the morbid events of the past hour from my mind and I felt like myself once more.

"I wonder—" I found myself musing as I walked along, "I wonder if she really is insane."

But I found no answer to my query.

After that I saw Jennie almost daily, generally when I was out making calls. She never seemed to be alone any more. She would come walking along, laughing and talking as though someone were by her side. But there was no visible creature with her.

One morning I was sitting in my office when Jennie's little tap sounded on the door.

"Come in," I called, and she entered, her arm bent as though she were leaning on someone. Her eyes were very bright.

"Curtis and I have been walking," she said, "and we thought we'd just drop in on the way home and say hello. Didn't we, darling?"

There came no answer, at least nothing that could have been called an answer—and yet I fancied I heard a far-off whisper.

Startled, I stepped forward, peering into the space whence the sound had seemed to issue. *There was nothing there!*

With ill-concealed nervousness I asked my caller to take a seat, and was secretly glad when she replied that they must hurry on.

"Some other time," she said. "Curtis is tired now."

She—they I mean, or whatever it was—went out, and I sighed in relief. Much as I liked Jennie, I was beginning to feel that for the good of my own health I must see as little of her as possible. There was something baffling about her, something profoundly mysterious and disturbing. Her eyes were depthless and their expression was such as I had never seen in any human eyes before. They seemed to look beyond the world, and yet they were soft, wondrously soft. Indeed, her lips, her face, her whole being seemed transfigured, unearthly.

She was frailer, too, than before, and as her physician and best of friends, I began to have very grave fears for her. This madness that had come upon her—if one chose to call it madness—was, I felt, leading her swiftly to her grave.

Yet I was powerless to help. Had there been anything to do, I would gladly have done it. But there seemed nothing. I might possibly have called in some specialist in mental disorders, with a view to restoring her mind to normal. And yet, again, the conviction was growing on me that she was *not* insane—not what we call insane, at any rate. In fact, I was beginning to feel that there actually *was* someone with her, and that that someone was Curtis.

This feeling was to be confirmed more quickly than I had expected.

One morning she came running to me with tears in her eyes, not tears of sorrow, either. She was angry if anything.

"What foolish mistakes the War Department makes!" she cried, handing me a telegram. "See, I've just received word that Curtis has been killed in France. Imagine! I have a mind to write them and tell them how absurd they are. And yet Curtis says no. So I'll let them go on thinking he's dead, if they want to. As long as he's with me, I don't care what they think."

I handed the telegram back to her with fingers that trembled.

"You are quite right," I echoed. "As long as he's with you it really matters little what they think. Yes, it really matters little."

"There's only one thing I'm worried about," she confided, "and I can't bear to mention it to him. He must be here on furlough, of course, and—well—when his leave expires he's got to go back!"

Real tears were in her eyes now, and her lips trembled.

"Well," I said, with a shaky laugh, to reassure her, "I wouldn't let myself be troubled about that. If he's been here three months already, I guess he won't have to go back in a hurry. It looks to me as though he had done about all the fighting he'd have to. No, Jennie, I don't think he'll ever have to go back again."

Those great incredulous eyes of hers were suddenly upturned to me and her frail little fingers clutched my sleeve.

"Do you really mean it?" she breathed.

"Yes," I replied slowly.

At that moment she was happier than I had seen her in months.

IT was not long afterward that she decided to give a little dinner, for just a few intimate friends. She read the list off to me for approval. Curtis and herself—that made two. My wife and I—that made four. And Florence Reeve, with her husband, Jack, who had been an intimate friend of Curtis—that made six and completed the party.

Well, when she told me of her plans and read off that list, I was struck dumb. What was there to say? She had her mind set, and to try to persuade her against it would be worse than folly. There remained but one thing to do—let her have the party and try to prepare the guests for what awaited them. So I agreed and promised that my wife would help her.

First I went to see Jack and Florence, and told them the whole story as best I could.

"Why," said Jack, "it's impossible! I won't believe a word of it until I see for myself."

"But if there isn't anything to see, how are you going to see, stupid?" objected Florence.

"Anyway, I won't believe it," said Jack. "I simply can't. Why, such things—well, they just can't be, that's all!"

"That's what I thought, too," I replied without humor. "But this is an exception, or something—I don't know quite what. However, see for yourself when the time comes—or rather, feel."

That party will always stand out in my memory.

In the first place, Jack was convinced inside of five minutes; Florence, at once. She came to me, apparently on the verge of hysteria, before we had even gone in to dinner.

"Really, Doctor Leigh, I—I don't think I can go on with it. You will excuse me, won't you? Jack can stay if he wants to, but it's too much for me."

"Oh, come now," I argued. "We're all here together and you've simply got to see it through."

But she declined pointblank, and Jack had to escort her home.

"I'll be back, though, old man," he shouted to me from the door. "Why, I wouldn't miss this for a vacation! Just wait till the boys hear it!"

"See here," I warned, "if you ever repeat a word of what I've told you or of what goes on here tonight, I'll wring your neck! Mum's the word, understand?"

"Just as you say," he replied, crestfallen. "But, anyway, keep a place for me at the table—I'll join you later!"

I shut the door on him and went back into that strange living room.

Jennie was radiant. I had never seen her so beautiful or so vivacious. She laughed and talked incessantly, to the unseen Curtis, to my wife, and to me. Somehow I managed to reply, addressing a sentence now and then to the man I saw only as the faintest hovering, shifting mist—if at all—and Jennie seemed delighted by the attention paid him.

Presently we went to the table and sat down. There were three vacant chairs: one for Florence; another for Jack; and the third—for Curtis.

Jennie looked at the empty places on my left and right.

"Why, where are Florence and Jack?" she cried in sudden dismay.

"Why—that is, Florence was taken suddenly ill and had to leave," I explained. "Jack went with her, but he will return presently."

She expressed some concern for Florence but her thoughts soon became engaged elsewhere again and she speedily forgot.

The first course had just been served, when the bell rang and Jack was admitted by the maid. He came in eagerly and was about to offer some word of apology—when suddenly, his eyes staring fixedly at the chair next to Jennie, where Curtis was supposed to be, he uttered a hollow cry and his face went instantly as pale as a sheet.

"Great God!" he whispered. "Why, I could have sworn I saw Curtis sitting there as I came in."

"Of course you did," answered Jennie lightly. "Why shouldn't you?"

I flashed him a warning look.

"Why—I—why, yes, of course. Why shouldn't I? Stupid of me—" He smiled wryly and sat down, dumbfounded.

At the first opportunity I leaned over to him.

"What was the idea of your creating such a disturbance a few minutes ago?" I demanded.

"Disturbance!" he muttered. "Are you a fool? I tell you I saw him sitting there as plain as day. Who would know him better than I?"

"Well, where is he now?" I countered. "There's no one there."

And indeed, in the glare of the overhead lights I had requested to be put on, the chair seemed quite empty. As when Jennie walked with him on the street, in the daytime, even the faint evanescent haze had now vanished.

"I don't think I'll ever be able to get it out of my head," Jack said later as we walked down the steps after bidding Jennie goodnight. "There he sat, seemingly as alive as you or I. And yet, somehow, as I come to think of it, he wasn't exactly there, either. I seemed to sense him rather than see him."

I was silent.

"Does she know?" he asked after a moment.

"Know what?"

"That he is dead."

"She knows nothing," I told him. "To her he is not, and never has been dead. I have seen her stroke his hair and kiss him. One terrible day, it almost seemed that I myself could see the shadowy counterpart of Curtis as she lovingly caressed the cheek of the ghostly specter. Fear caught me in its icy grip—and I knew then that the mystery was beyond any human solution. She *must* see him, must actually feel the touch of his flesh, or she could not do these things. It seems impossible that the imagination, even when crazed, could go so far."

Thus we conjectured as we walked on down the street.

Soon afterward the story began to be whispered about town. People seeing Jennie on the street would pause and look at her. Then they would go back home, puzzled and curious, but talkative. Thus the rumor grew that Jennie was "wedded to a ghost."

Months passed, and I noticed a steady change for the worse in her. She seemed to be growing daily more frail. There was still that radiant look about her, but the flush on her cheeks and the fire in her eyes now seemed to be almost feverish.

"Jennie," I said one day, "you are not well. Tell me, is there anything I can do?"

But she only laughed and assured me there was no need for me to worry about her, as long as Curtis was not worrying. So there seemed nothing left to do but wait, and hope against hope.

Then occurred something that was little short of a miracle.

One morning Jennie came running to me with a letter from Curtis. He had not been killed!

The letter explained that he had been wounded and captured and had lain for months in a German military hospital, shamefully neglected and utterly miserable. But a sturdy constitution had won out in the end, and he had rallied. Somehow he had managed to escape, returning to France through Switzerland after weeks of terrible, nerve-racking experiences. He had gone back to his sector, obtained indefinite leave—and was sailing for America on the first boat.

"But I don't understand!" she exclaimed as I gave the letter back to her. "I don't dare ask Curtis, or show this to him, he's so easily upset. But what can have happened? You know yourself that Curtis is home already, and has been for ever so long."

IN that instant I realized the tremendousness of the drama that would be enacted when the young husband should return and find, between himself and the woman he loved, an invisible barrier of her own imagining—*his spirit self!* Would it prove insurmountable, or could some way be found around it? Could it be dissolved, or—

Dissolved!

That gave me an idea, so I turned to her.

"Doubtless he wrote that letter many months ago and it's been lost all this time," I said in answer to the question in



her eyes. "Let me see if I can manage to make out the date."

Listlessly she handed me the envelope, her mind too perplexed to notice what I was doing. I held it up. The date was a recent one.

I regarded her closely, and as she seemed oblivious of my presence, I moistened my thumb and blurred that stamp until it was illegible. Then I faced her.

"I knew it!" I cried jubilantly. "I can just barely make it out. This letter was written months ago and the simple conclusion is—Curtis reached you long before it did."

She smiled in relief and her gaze returned to me.

"That must be it," she agreed. "But he never said anything to me about being captured by the Germans."

"Well, he probably didn't want to talk about it," I assured her. "But that certainly accounts for his moodiness, doesn't it? Now you go back and forget about the letter."

She promised to, and shortly afterward she left.

THEN I sat down and thought. Here was as knotty a pathological problem as ever faced a medical man, and it was clearly up to me to solve it.

Of course it was a great relief to know that Curtis was indeed alive and well. And as for Jennie, I knew then and there it would mean saving her life—if only the shadow of that invisible, uncanny third person could be removed. But would such a thing prove possible?

Clearly nothing could be accomplished by haste. And, equally clearly, if anything at all were to be accomplished I must be on the lookout for Curtis, and see that he didn't go to his wife before I had in some way prepared him and her.

That meant I would have to meet every train that came into our little town, and this I set myself to do.

Fortunately I hadn't long to wait. Not many days after his letter, Curtis arrived himself, and I was the first to greet him.

He seemed little the worse for his ghastly experience, save that he looked older now and walked with a slight limp. But he carried himself erect, and on the breast of his well-worn uniform was a little cross, the reward of those who have been very brave.

"Dr. Leigh!" he cried, shaking my hand energetically. "By George it's good to see you! And Jennie—how is she?"

I hesitated, and he, watching me closely, divined something of what I dared not say.

A sudden look of pain came into his eyes.

"She's not well? I haven't had a word from her in months. Tell me! What is it?"

Then I took him home with me and told him the whole story.

At last, when I had finished, he looked up.

"I feared something like that from the last letters she wrote me," he confided slowly. "Oh, Dr. Leigh," with the saddest look I have ever seen, "don't tell me she's—beyond hope?"

"Curtis," I assured him, "if there's anything that can possibly be done to bring happiness back to both of you, I'll find the way to do it. Now that you're back, I think there is hope. Yes, my boy, I believe I know the way."

Then I outlined to him my idea.

"You see," I ended, "to her, you have already returned from the war—you've been at her side for months. Therefore it's clear that you cannot go to her now as yourself. She'd simply look at you in amazement. Then she'd turn and look at that other, invisible Curtis and—much as I hate to say it—I'm sure that in the condition her mind is now in, she would cling to the one she has come to know so well in your absence, rather than to you.

"So, since she is going to look upon you as a stranger, anyhow, it seems to me that the best thing to do is to go to her first as a friend of Curtis. Then, when you have won her friendship, slowly—oh, very slowly—I think it will be possible to dissolve the invisible Curtis—erase him entirely

from her mind, leaving only you. Do you get the idea?"

Naturally, and as I had expected, Curtis flatly refused. It was only when I had used every argument at my disposal that I finally managed to win him to my point of view.

"It may almost break your heart," I warned him, "but in the end, if you have the courage and the patience, Jennie will be restored to you. After all, it's a harmless subterfuge. I'm sure you'll give it a fair trial—for her!"

I held out my hand.

"Here, shake on it, and tell me you agree to leave it all to me. I know just how to go about it and I promise you'll have nothing to regret."

He shook my hand in silence and together we went across the street. The boy's emotion almost overcame him at sight of his wife, but I kept a firm hand on his arm as I spoke to Jennie. I introduced him as Arthur, a friend of Curtis, a homeless war hero who had come to see if his buddy could put him up for a while.

And, just as I had hoped she would, Jennie took him in—"for Curtis' sake," she said.

I made it my business, after that, to look in on them every day. Jennie seemed very happy, and oh, so busy! She petted "Arthur" and fussed over him and mothered him and made him quite at home—all for Curtis' sake.

And he, in accordance with our plan, pretended all along to be suffering from some mysterious wound he had received in the trenches, and instead of recovering, gave every appearance of growing weaker.

So the great experiment began.

No one will ever know the exquisite torture Curtis endured during those months when Jennie lavished on him, as her husband's friend, every possible tenderness. She was so near, and yet so remote—so utterly remote. He suffered terribly, but he entered into the spirit of the game, knowing that we were playing for big stakes. He soon learned to act his rôle of Arthur very convincingly, and to talk to the invisible Curtis as did I and the rest of the little set that shared our secret.

Time passed, and Jennie's health began to improve. The hectic flush left her cheeks and they bloomed again as of old. She seemed almost her old lighthearted self.

But still the strange apparition remained, nor would it leave her.

By this time, Arthur's feigned condition was made to seem so serious that at my advice he took to his bed. Indeed, one might well have believed that he was not long for this world.

So the three of them lived on from week to week in that amazing drama.

AT last the day drew near when the final test in the experiment was to be made—the attempt to dissolve that invisible barrier forever. I had planned it all with the utmost care.

Noting that Jennie was accustomed to sleep with a faint light in her room, manifestly so she could see that strange haze-like apparition, I made my preparations accordingly. After all, I reasoned, the thing I was going to do was quite simple and natural. It was certainly no stranger than what had been going on in this house right along.

"I fear only one thing," I confessed to Curtis on the eve of the experiment. "I'm quite confident that I can merge your personality with the one of this invisible Curtis, so that hereafter she will know you as the real Curtis. But the thing that worries me is, what's going to happen to the Invisible One then? Will it dissolve and fade away, or will it still remain in her mind, perhaps as Arthur, in spite of what we plan to do?"

Of course I could not tell and there remained only to try and see. Surely, even if it failed, it could leave her no worse off than before. And if it succeeded—well, we could only hope for the best. But the fear of that invisible barrier still remaining in a changed form hung constantly over my mind and left me far from easy.

At last, the night arrived. Some time after Jennie had retired, leaving as usual the faint light by her bedside, Curtis sent for me and I came over, bringing with me—no kit, no opiates—only one well-formulated idea and a grim resolve to carry it out to the end.

"Is she asleep?" I asked Curtis as I slipped into the "sick room."

"Yes," he whispered from the bed where he lay, though now there was nothing of the invalid about him. Then, looking straight up at me he added, anxiously: "Are you sure it can do her no harm? Doctor, are you *sure*?"

"It can do her no harm at all," I promised him. "It's just a simple matter of auto-suggestion. I am going to enable her to free her mind of that apparition, that's all."

"Very well, then," he said in a voice that trembled. "Go ahead—and God grant you success!"

Then, while I tiptoed softly into Jennie's room, he rose and dressed, to be ready when he should be needed.

I STOOD there motionless, looking at her. She lay asleep, with her hand resting on the quilt as though someone were holding it. For one moment I could have sworn that I saw that same wraithlike haze hovering there in the semi-darkness beside her. But I was prepared for that, and so, unhesitatingly, I reached for the electric button, turned off the light, and the room went utterly black, blotting out everything.

Then, advancing swiftly to her, I spoke in a low voice, as simply and distinctly as I could.

"Jennie," I said, "this is Dr. Leigh."

She started up out of her sleep and sat there trembling.

"Jennie," I went on, taking her hand, "something has happened. I must tell you. I want you to be brave. You will try?"

Her hand gripped mine and I could feel it shake.

"What?" she faltered. "Not Curtis?"

"No, not Curtis—Arthur. He has gone away—forever. He's been ill a long while, you know. The crisis came just now and he—he's dead, Jennie."

"Oh——" She relaxed her grip on my hand and sank back.

"Curtis needs you more than ever now," I added. "He is terribly cut up about it. Can't you comfort him?"

Suddenly she sat up straight.

"Curtis!" she called. "Curtis! Where are you?"

"Curtis is outside," I answered, repeating the name distinctly.

"Curtis!" she called, "Are you there?"

"Right here, darling," he cried.

Then he entered, shutting the door behind him, and came straight to the bed.

"Jennie," he whispered, reaching out his hand and finding hers in the darkness.

"Curtis," she faltered. "Is—is Arthur dead?"

"Yes," said Curtis.

We heard her gasp and a little sob broke from her throat. Then she reached her arms up instinctively to comfort him.

"Curtis, I know how you must feel! I'm terribly sorry. But you have me and I have you. We have each other, dear, haven't we?"

"Yes!" he whispered brokenly.

Then he bent down beside her and took her in his arms, and I tiptoed out of the room, leaving them there together.

The test was not over. The crucial moment was yet to come, and I could scarcely wait until I should hear whether he had met with success, or—failure.

Curtis told me the next day:

All night he sat with her and held her, while she slept.

In the morning, when at last she awoke, he was still there. The sunlight, flooding the room, now brought everything to view. She half rose and, her eyes widening, she looked at him long and steadfastly. He forced a smile to his lips and looked back at her, breathlessly awaiting the verdict. Would she accept him as Curtis in the broad light of day, or would he still be Arthur? The crisis had come——

Long she looked, until her eyes seemed literally to melt into his. Then, imperceptibly her glance wavered and her lips almost formed another name. But at last, meeting his steadfast eyes, she smiled in complete acceptance, and her arms went out to him.

"Curtis!" she cried. "Curtis!"

"Jennie!" With a sob of relief he bent to his knees and held her close.

The experiment had been a success. That incredible barrier had been dissolved. The Invisible One had vanished forever.

Was This Supernatural?

THE following amazing story was sent to us by Amos Milton Stack, Jr., of Monroe, North Carolina:

"You may not consider the narrative which I submit as a ghost story, but it contains an element of the supernatural that will give scientists something to think about.

"About forty years ago the members of the Methodist Church in the little town of Swanquarter, North Carolina, decided to build a new church. Swanquarter is in Hyde County, in the eastern part of the State, and on Swanquarter Bay. The Bay partially divides the town. After raising the necessary funds to build the church, the Methodists decided to try to buy a beautiful lot located directly across the Bay from the old site, for the location of the new church. It happened that a bar-keeper owned the site selected, and he refused to consider any offers for the property; so they had to build the church on the old site.

"At that time Swanquarter was often flooded by the high tides from the Bay, and immediately after the church was erected, there came a tidal wave that swept the town and flooded the entire business district and most of the residential section. Then came the miracle that will never be forgotten by the people of eastern North Carolina.

"The rising waters swept the new church from its foundations and carried it across the Bay. The hand of God seemed to guide the course of the structure, for it moved through the streets and past groves of trees without striking an obstacle until it finally rested, with the front facing the street, on the beautiful lot owned by the bar-keeper. When the waters subsided, it was found that it could not have been placed better if it had been done by human agencies!

"The bar-keeper was so impressed that he went before the members of the Church Board and told them that they could have the lot free because it was the will of God that the church should be there.

"THIS story is absolutely true and I invite anyone who doubts its authenticity to write to the mayor or the clerk of court, or any city official or to any preacher now residing in Swanquarter and find out the facts from them.

"My grandfather, the Reverend J. S. Nelson, was later the presiding elder in that district and he preached in the church very often after it had been swept by the tides to the beautiful lot across the Bay. My mother has also been there and attended services in that church."

How the American Ambassador's family turned the tables on

By
OSCAR WILDE

Famous British Satirist

WHEN Mr. Hiram B. Otis, the American Minister to Great Britain, bought Canterville Chase, everyone told him he was doing a very foolish thing, as there was no doubt at all that the place was haunted. Indeed, Lord Canterville himself, who was a man of the most punctilious honor, had felt it his duty to mention the fact to Mr. Otis when they came to discuss terms.

"We have not cared to live in the place ourselves," said Lord Canterville, "since my grand-aunt, the Dowager Duchess of Bolton, was frightened into a fit, from which she never really recovered, by two skeleton hands being placed on her shoulders as she was dressing for dinner; and I feel bound to tell you, Mr. Otis, that the ghost has been seen by several living members of my family, as well as by the rector of the parish, the Reverend Augustus Dampier, who is a fellow of King's College, Cambridge. After the unfortunate accident to the Duchess, none of our younger servants would stay with us, and Lady Canterville often got very little sleep at night, in consequence of the mysterious noises that came from the corridor and the library."

"My Lord," answered the Minister, "I will take the furniture and the ghost at a valuation. I have come from a modern country, where we have everything that money can buy; and with all our spry young fellows painting the Old World red, and carrying off your best actors and prima-donnas, I reckon that if there were such a thing as a ghost in Europe, we'd have it at home in a very short time in one of our public museums, or on the road as a show."

"I fear that the ghost exists," said Lord Canterville, smiling, "though it may have resisted the overtures of your enterprising impresarios. It has been well known for three centuries, since 1584 in fact, and always makes its appear-



The littlest twin took deadly aim with a pillow!

ance before the death of any member of our family."

"Well, so does the family doctor for that matter, Lord Canterville. But there is no such thing, sir, as a ghost, and I guess the laws of Nature are not going to be suspended for the British aristocracy."

The Canterville

GHOST



*and nearly scared
the phantom
out of its wits!*

Never, in a brilliant and uninterrupted career of 300 years, had the ghost been so grossly insulted!

"You are certainly very natural in America," answered Lord Canterville, who did not quite understand Mr. Otis' last observation, "and if you don't mind a ghost in the house, it is all right. Only you must remember I warned you."

A few weeks after this, the purchase was concluded, and at the close of the season the Minister and his family went down to Canterville Chase.

Mrs. Otis, who, as Miss Lucretia R. Tappan, of West 53rd Street, had been a celebrated New York belle, was now a very handsome, middle-aged woman, with fine eyes and a superb profile. Many American ladies on leaving their native land adopt an appearance of chronic ill-health, under the impression that it is a form of European refinement, but Mrs. Otis had never fallen into this error. She had a magnificent constitution, and a really wonderful amount of animal spirits. Indeed, in many respects, she was quite English, and was an excellent example of the fact that we have really everything in common with America nowadays, except, of course, language.

Her eldest son, christened Washington by his parents in a moment of patriotism, which he never ceased to regret, was a fair-haired, rather good-looking young man, who had qualified himself for American diplomacy by leading the German at the Newport Casino for three successive seasons; and even in London, he was well known as an excellent dancer. Gardenias and the peagee were his only weaknesses. Otherwise he was extremely sensible.

Miss Virginia E. Otis was a little girl of fifteen, lithe and lovely as a fawn, and with a fine freedom in her large blue eyes. She was a wonderful Amazon, and had once

raced old Lord Bilton on her pony twice round the park, winning by a length and a half, just in front of the Achilles statue, to the huge delight of the young Duke of Cheshire, who proposed to her on the spot, and was sent back to Eton that very night by his guardians, in floods of tears.

After Virginia came the twins, who were usually called "The Stars and Stripes," as they were always getting swished. They were delightful boys, and, with the exception of the worthy Minister, the only true republicans of the family.

As Canterville Chase is seven miles from Ascot, the nearest railway station, Mr. Otis had telegraphed for a wagonette to meet them, and they started on their drive in high spirits.

It was a lovely July evening, and the air was delicate with the scent of the pinewoods. Now and then they heard a wood-pigeon brooding over its own sweet voice, or saw, deep in the rustling fern, the burnished breast of the pheasant. Little squirrels peered at them from the beech-trees as they went by, and the rabbits scudded away through the brushwood and over the mossy knolls, with their white tails in the air. As they entered the avenue of Canterville Chase, however, the sky became suddenly overcast with clouds, and a curious stillness seemed to hold the atmosphere. A great flight of rooks passed silently over their heads, and, before they reached the house, some big drops of rain had fallen.

Standing on the steps to receive them was an old woman, neatly dressed in black silk, with a white cap and apron. This was Mrs. Umney, the housekeeper, whom Mrs. Otis, at Lady Canterville's earnest request, had consented to keep in her former position. She made them each a low curtsy as they alighted, and said in a quaint, old-fashioned manner, "I bid you welcome to Canterville Chase."

Following her, they passed through the fine Tudor hall into the library, a long, low room, paneled in black oak, at the end of which was a large stained glass window. Here they found tea laid out for them, and, after taking off their wraps, they sat down and began to look around, while Mrs. Umney waited on them.

Suddenly Mrs. Otis caught sight of a dull red stain on the floor just by the fireplace, and, quite unconscious of what it really signified, said to Mrs. Umney, "I am afraid something has been spilled there."

"Yes, madam," replied the old housekeeper in a low voice, "blood has been spilled on that spot."

"How horrid!" cried Mrs. Otis. "I don't at all care for blood-stains in a sitting room. It must be removed at once."

The old woman smiled, and answered in the same low, mysterious voice, "It is the blood of Lady Eleanore de Canterville, who was murdered on that very spot by her own husband, Sir Simon de Canterville, in 1575. Sir Simon survived her nine years, and disappeared suddenly under very mysterious circumstances. His body has never been discovered, but his guilty spirit still haunts the Chase. The blood-stain has been much admired by tourists and others, and cannot be removed."

"That is all nonsense," cried Washington Otis. "Pinkerton's Champion Stain Remover and Paragon Detergent will clean it up in no time," and before the terrified housekeeper could interfere, he had fallen upon his knees, and was rapidly scouring the floor with a small stick of what looked like a black cosmetic. In a few moments no trace of the blood-stain could be seen.

"I knew Pinkerton would do it!" he exclaimed triumphantly, as he looked round at his admiring family. But

no sooner had he said these words than a terrible flash of lightning lit up the somber room; a fearful peal of thunder made them all start to their feet, and Mrs. Umney fainted.

"What a monstrous climate!" said the American Minister, calmly, as he lit a long cheroot. "I guess the old country is so overpopulated that they haven't enough decent weather for everybody. I have always been of the opinion that emigration is the only thing for England."

"My dear Hiram," cried Mrs. Otis, "what can we do with a woman who faints?"

"Charge it to her like breakages," answered the Minister. "She won't faint after that." And in a few moments Mrs. Umney certainly came to. There was no doubt, however, that she was extremely upset, and she sternly warned Mr. Otis to beware of some trouble coming to the house.

"I have seen things with my own eyes, sir," she said, "that would make any Christian's hair stand on end, and many and many a night I have not closed my eyes in sleep for the awful things that are done here."

Mr. Otis, however, and his wife warmly assured the honest soul that they were not afraid of ghosts, and, after invoking the blessings of Providence on her new master and mistress, and making arrangements for an increase of salary, the old housekeeper tottered off to her own room.

The storm raged fiercely all that night, but nothing of particular note occurred. The next morning, however, when they came down to breakfast, they found the terrible stain of blood once again on the floor.

"I don't think it can be the fault of the Paragon Detergent," said Washington, "for I have tried it with everything. It must be the ghost."

He accordingly rubbed out the stain a second time, but the second morning it appeared again. The third morning also it was there, though the library had been locked up at night by Mr. Otis himself, and the key carried upstairs.

The whole family was now quite interested. Mr. Otis began to suspect that he had been too dogmatic in his denial

of the existence of ghosts; Mrs. Otis expressed her intention of joining the Psychical Society, and Washington prepared a long letter to Messrs. Myers and Podmore on the subject of the Permanence of Sanguineous Stains when connected with Crime.

That night all doubts about the objective existence of phantasmata were removed forever.

The day had been warm and sunny; and, in the cool of the evening, the whole family went out to drive. They did not return home till nine o'clock, when they had a light supper. The conversation in no way turned upon ghosts, so there were not even those primary conditions of receptive expectations which so often precede the presentation of psychical phenomena. The subjects discussed, as I

have since learned from Mr. Otis, were merely such as form the ordinary conversation of cultured Americans of the better class: such as the immense superiority of Miss Fanny Davenport over Sarah Bernhardt as an actress; the difficulty of obtaining green corn, buckwheat cakes, and hominy, even in the best English houses; the importance of Boston in the development of the world-soul; the advantages of the baggage-check system in railway traveling; and the sweetness of the New York accent as compared to the London drawl. No mention at all was made of the supernatural, nor was Sir Simon de Canterville alluded to in any way.

At eleven o'clock the family retired, and by half-past, all the lights were out. Some time after, Mr. Otis was awakened by a curious noise in the corridor outside his room. It sounded like the clank of metal, and seemed to be



coming nearer every moment. He got up at once, struck a match, and looked at the time. It was exactly one o'clock. He was quite calm, and felt his pulse, which was not at all feverish. The strange noise still continued, and with it he heard distinctly the sound of footsteps. He put on his slippers, took a small oblong phial out of his dressing-case, and opened the door. Right in front of him he saw, in the wan moonlight, an old man of terrible aspect. His eyes were as red burning coals; long gray hair fell over his shoulders in matted coils; his garments, which were of antique cut, were soiled and ragged, and from his wrists and ankles hung heavy manacles and gusty gyves.

"My dear sir," said Mr. Otis, "I really must insist on your oiling those chains, and have brought you for that purpose a small bottle of the Tammany Rising Sun Lubricator. It is said to be completely efficacious upon one application; and there are several testimonials to that effect on the wrapper, from some of our most eminent native divines. I shall leave it here for you by the bedroom candles, and will be happy to supply you with more, should you require it."

WITH these words the United States Minister laid the bottle down on a marble table, and, closing his door, retired to rest.

For a moment the Canterville ghost stood quite motionless in natural indignation; then, dashing the bottle violently upon the polished floor, he fled down the corridor, uttering hollow groans and emitting a ghastly green light. Just, however, as he reached the top of the great oak staircase, a door was flung open, two little white-robed figures appeared, and the littlest twin took deadly aim with a pillow! There was evidently no time to be lost, so, hastily adopting the Fourth dimension of Space as a means of escape, he vanished through the wainscoting, and the house became quite quiet.

On reaching a small secret chamber in the left wing, he leaned up against a moonbeam to recover his breath, and began to try and realize his position. Never, in a brilliant and uninterrupted career of three hundred years, had the ghost been so grossly insulted. He thought of the Dowager Duchess, whom he had frightened into a fit as she stood before the glass in her lace and diamonds; of the four housemaids, who had gone into hysterics

when he merely grinned at them through the curtains of one of the spare bedrooms; of the rector of the parish, whose candle he had blown out as he was coming late one night from the library, and who had been under the care of Sir William Gull ever since, a perfect martyr to nervous disorders; and of old Madame de Tremouillac, who, having wakened up one morning early and seen a skeleton seated in an armchair by the fire, reading her diary, had been confined to her bed for six weeks with an attack of brain fever, and, on her recovery, had become reconciled to the Church, and broken off her connection with that notorious skeptic, Monsieur de Voltaire.

He remembered the terrible night when the wicked Lord Canterville was found choking in his dressing-room, with the knave of diamonds half-way down his throat, and confessed, just before he died, that he had cheated Charles James Fox out of £50,000 at Crockford's by means of that very card, and swore that the ghost had made him swallow

it. All his great achievements came back to him again, from the butler who had shot himself in the pantry because he had seen a green hand tapping at the windowpane, to the beautiful Lady Stutfield, who was always obliged to wear a black velvet band round her throat to hide the mark of five fingers burnt upon her white skin, and who drowned herself at last in the carp pond at the end of the King's Walk.

With the enthusiastic egotism of the true artist, he went over his most celebrated performances, and smiled bitterly to himself as he recalled to mind his last appearance as "Red Reuben, or the Strangled Babe," his *début* as "Gaunt Gibeon, the Blood-sucker of Bexley Moor"; and the *furor* he had excited one lovely June evening by merely playing ninepins with his own bones upon the lawn-tennis ground. And, after all this, some wretched modern Americans were to come and offer him the Rising Sun Lubricator, and throw pillows at his head! It was quite unbearable. Besides, no ghosts in history had ever been treated in this manner. Accordingly, he determined to have vengeance, and remained till daylight in an attitude of deep thought.

The next morning when the Otis family met at breakfast, they discussed the ghost at some length. The United States Minister was naturally a little annoyed to find that his present had not been accepted.

"I have no wish," he said, "to do the ghost any personal injury, and I must say that, considering the length of time he has been in the house, I don't think it is at all polite to throw pillows at him." A very just remark, at which, I am sorry to say, the twins burst into shouts of laughter. "Upon the other hand," he continued, "if he really declines to use the Rising Sun Lubricator, we shall have to take his chains from him. It would be quite impossible to sleep, with such a noise going on outside the bedrooms."

FOR the rest of the week, however, they were undisturbed, the only thing that excited any attention being the continual renewal of the blood-stain on the library floor. This certainly was very strange, as the door was always locked at night by Mr. Otis, and the windows kept closely barred. Also the chameleon-like color of the stain excited a good deal of comment. Some mornings it was a dull (almost Indian) red, then it would be vermilion, then a rich purple, and once when they came down for

family prayers, according to the simple rites of the Free American Reformed Episcopal Church, they found it a bright emerald-green. These kaleidoscopic changes naturally amused the party very much, and bets on the subject were freely made every evening. The only person who did not enter into the jokes was little Virginia, who, for some unexplained reason, was always a good deal distressed at the sight of the blood-stain, and very nearly cried the morning it was emerald-green.

The second appearance of the ghost was on Sunday night. Shortly after they had gone to bed they were suddenly alarmed by a fearful crash in the hall. Rushing downstairs, they found that a large suit of old armor had become detached from its stand, and had fallen on the stone floor, while, seated in a high-backed chair, was the Canterville ghost, rubbing his knees with an expression of acute agony on his face. The twins, having brought their pea-shooters with them, at once discharged two pellets at him, with that

No matter how many trying situations may be met and mastered by General Dawes, our new Ambassador to England, it is certain that his experiences can never compare with those of Mr. Hiram B. Otis, the imaginary Ambassador of Oscar Wilde's story.

Mr. Otis' rude treatment of the ancient Canterville Ghost is described in inimitable fashion by the English author and wit.

This is a classic ghost story that we could not fail to pass on to you.

accuracy of aim which can only be attained by long and careful practice on a writing-master, while the United States Minister covered him with his revolver, and called upon him, in accordance with Californian etiquette, to hold up his hands!

The ghost started up with a wild shriek of rage and swept through them like a mist, extinguishing Washington Otis' candle as he passed, and so leaving them all in total darkness. On reaching the top of the staircase he recovered himself and determined to give his celebrated peal of demoniac laughter. This he had on more than one occasion found extremely useful. It was said to have turned Lord Raker's wig gray in a single night, and had certainly made three of Lady Canterville's French governesses give warning before their month was up. He accordingly laughed his most horrible laugh, till the old vaulted roof rang and rang again. But hardly had the fearful echo died away when a door opened, and Mrs. Otis came out in a light blue dressing-gown.

"I am afraid you are far from well," she said, "and have brought you a bottle of Doctor Dobell's tincture. If it is indigestion, you will find it a most excellent remedy."

The ghost glared at her in fury, and began at once to make preparations for turning himself into a large black dog, an accomplishment for which he was justly renowned, and to which the family doctor always attributed the permanent idiocy of Lord Canterville's uncle, the Honorable Thomas Horton. The sound of approaching footsteps, however, made him hesitate in his fell purpose, so he contented himself with becoming faintly phosphorescent, and vanished with a deep churchyard groan, just as the twins had come up to him.

ON reaching his room he entirely broke down and became a prey to the most violent agitation. The vulgarity of the twins, and the gross materialism of Mrs. Otis, were naturally extremely annoying; but what really distressed him most was that he had been unable to wear the suit of mail. He had hoped that even modern Americans would be thrilled by the sight of a specter in armor, if for no more sensible reason, at least out of respect for their national poet, Longfellow, over whose graceful and attractive poetry he himself had whiled away many a weary hour when the Cantervilles were up in town. Besides it was his own suit. He had worn it with great success at the Kenilworth tournament, and had been highly complimented on it by no less a person than the Virgin Queen herself. Yet when he had put it on, he had been completely overpowered by the weight of the huge breast-plate and steel casque, and had fallen heavily on the stone pavement, barking both his knees severely, and bruising the knuckles of his right hand.

For some days after this he was extremely ill and hardly stirred out of his room at all, except to keep the blood-stain in proper repair. However, by taking great care of himself, he recovered, and resolved to make a third attempt to frighten the United States Minister and his family. He selected Friday, August 17th, for his appearance, and spent most of that day in looking over his wardrobe, ultimately deciding in favor of a large slouched hat with a red feather, a winding-sheet frilled at the wrists and neck, and a rusty dagger.

Toward evening a violent storm of rain came on, and the wind was so high that all the windows and doors in the old house shook and rattled. In fact, it was just such weather as he loved. His plan of action was this: He was to make his way quietly to Washington Otis' room, gibber at him from the foot of the bed, and stab himself three times in the throat, to the sound of low music. He bore Washington a special grudge, being quite aware that it was he who was in the habit of removing the famous Canterville blood-stain by means of Pinkerton's Paragon Detergent.

Having reduced the reckless and foolhardy youth to a condition of abject terror, he was then to proceed to the

room occupied by the United States Minister and his wife, and there to place a clammy hand on Mrs. Otis' forehead, while he hissed into her trembling husband's ear the awful secrets of the charnel-house. With regard to little Virginia, he had not quite made up his mind. She had never insulted him in any way, and was pretty and gentle. A few hollow groans from the wardrobe, he thought, would be more than sufficient; or, if that failed to wake her, he might grapple at the counterpane with palsy-twitching fingers.

As for the twins, he was quite determined to teach them a lesson. The first thing to be done was, of course, to sit upon their chests, so as to produce the stifling sensation of nightmare. Then, as their beds were quite close to each other, to stand between them in the form of a green, icy-cold corpse, till they became paralyzed with fear, and finally, to throw off the winding-sheet, and crawl around the room with white, bleached bones and one rolling eyeball, in the character of "Dumb Daniel, or the Suicide's Skeleton," a rôle in which he had on more than one occasion produced a great effect, and which he considered quite equal to his famous part of "Martin the Maniac, or the Masked Mystery."

At half-past ten he heard the family going to bed. For some time he was disturbed by wild shrieks of laughter from the twins, who, with the light-hearted gaiety of school-boys, were evidently amusing themselves before they retired to rest. But at a quarter-past eleven all was still, and, as midnight sounded, he sallied forth.

The owl beat against the windowpanes, the raven croaked from the old yew-tree, and the wind wandered moaning round the house like a lost soul; but the Otis family slept, unconscious of their doom, and high above the rain and storm he could hear the steady snoring of the Minister for the United States. He stepped stealthily out of the wainscoting, with an evil smile on his cruel, wrinkled mouth, and the moon hid her face in a cloud as he stole past the great oriel window, where his own arms and those of his murdered wife were blazoned in azure and gold. On and on he glided, like an evil shadow, the very darkness seeming to loathe him as he passed. Once he thought he heard something call, and stopped; but it was only the baying of a dog from the Red Farm, and he went on, muttering strange Sixteenth Century curses, and ever and anon brandishing the rusty dagger in the midnight air.

FINALLY he reached the corner of the passage that led to luckless Washington's room. For a moment he paused there, the wind blowing his long gray locks about his head, and twisting into grotesque and fantastic folds the nameless horror of the dead man's shroud. Then the clock struck the quarter, and he felt the time was come. He chuckled to himself, and turned the corner; but no sooner had he done so than, with a piteous wail of terror, he fell back and hid his blanched face in his long, bony hands.

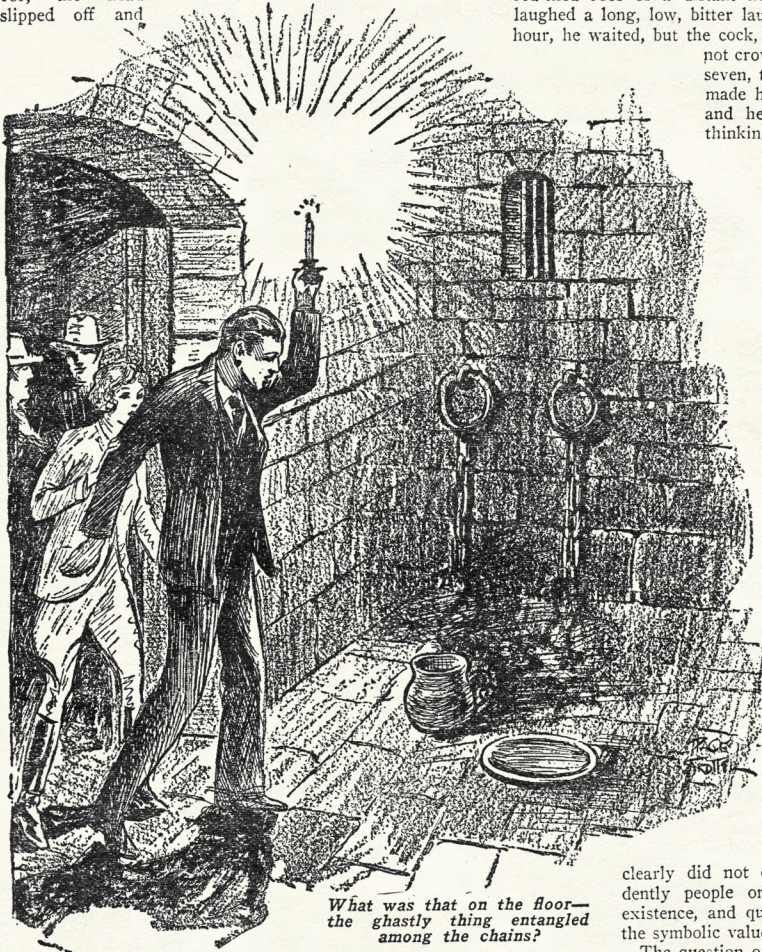
Right in front of him was standing a horrible specter, motionless as a carved image, and monstrous as a madman's dream! Its head was bald and burnished; its face round and fat and white; and hideous laughter seemed to have writhed its features into an eternal grin. From the eyes streamed rays of scarlet light; the mouth was a wide well of fire, and a hideous garment, like his own, swathed with its silent snows the Titan form. On its breast was a placard with strange writing in antique characters—some scroll of shame it seemed, some record of wild sins, some awful calendar of crime—and, with its right hand, it bore aloft a falchion of gleaming steel.

Never having seen a ghost before, he naturally was terribly frightened, and, after a second hasty glance at the awful phantom, he fled back to his room, tripping up in his long winding-sheet as he sped down the corridor, and finally dropping the rusty dagger into the Minister's jackboots, where it was found in the morning by the butler.

Once in the privacy of his own apartment, he flung himself

down on a small pallet-bed, and hid his face under the clothes. After a time, however, the brave old Canterville spirit asserted itself, and he determined to go and speak to the other ghost as soon as it was daylight. Accordingly, just as the dawn was touching the hills with silver, he returned to the spot where he had first laid eyes on the grisly phantom, feeling that, after all, two ghosts were better than one, and that, by the aid of his new friend, he might safely grapple with the twins.

ON reaching the spot, however, a terrible sight met his gaze. Something had evidently happened to the specter, for the light had entirely faded from its hollow eyes, the gleaming falchion had fallen from its hand, and it was leaning up against the wall in a strained and uncomfortable attitude. He rushed forward and seized it in his arms, when, to his horror, the head slipped off and



What was that on the floor—the ghastly thing entangled among the chains?

rolled on the floor, the body assumed a recumbent posture, and he found himself clasping a white dimity bed-curtain, with a sweeping-brush, a kitchen cleaver, and a hollow turnip lying at his feet!

Unable to understand this curious transformation, he clutched the placard with feverish haste, and there, in the gray morning light, he read these fearful words:

YE OTIS GHOSTE

Ye Onlie True and Originale Spook,

Beware of Ye Imitationes.

All others are counterfeite.

The whole thing flashed across him. He had been tricked, foiled, and outwitted! The old Canterville look came into his eyes; he ground his toothless gums together, and, raising his withered hands high above his head, swore according to the picturesque phraseology of the antique school, that, when Chanticleer had sounded twice his merry horn, deeds of blood would be wrought, and murder walk abroad with silent feet.

Hardly had he finished this awful oath when, from the red-tiled roof of a distant homestead, a cock crew. He laughed a long, low, bitter laugh, and waited. Hour after hour, he waited, but the cock, for some strange reason, did not crow again. Finally, at half-past seven, the arrival of the housemaids made him give up his fearful vigil, and he stalked back to his room, thinking of his vain oath and baffled purpose.

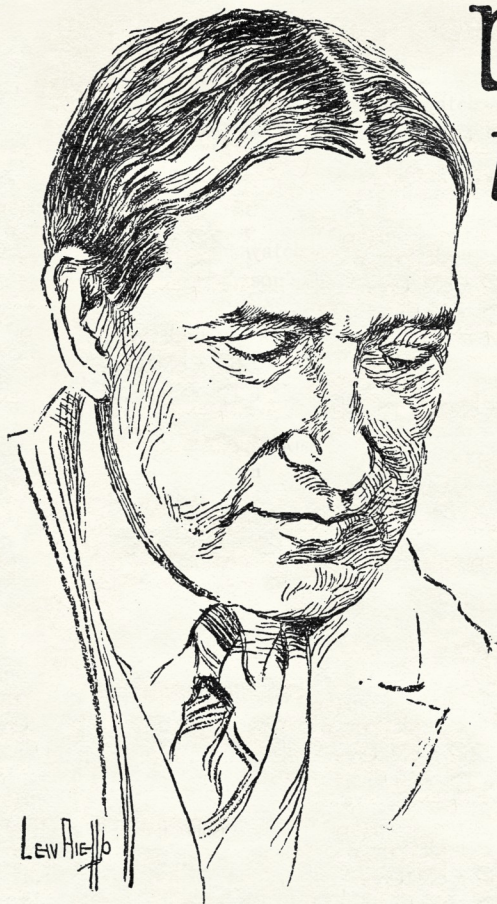
There he consulted several books of ancient chivalry, of which he was exceedingly fond, and found that, on every occasion on which this oath had been used, Chanticleer had always crowed a second time.

"Perdition seize the naughty fowl," he muttered. "I have seen the day when, with my stout spear, I would have run him through the gorge, and made him crow for me an' 'twere in death!" He then retired to a comfortable lead coffin, and stayed there till evening.

THE next day the ghost was very weak and tired. The terrible excitement of the last four weeks was beginning to have its effect. His nerves were completely shattered, and he started at the slightest noise. For five days he kept to his room, and at last made up his mind to give up the point of the blood-stain on the library floor. If the Otis family did not want it, they clearly did not deserve it. They were evidently people on a low, material plane of existence, and quite incapable of appreciating the symbolic value of sensuous phenomena.

The question of phantasmic apparitions, and the development of astral bodies, was of course quite a different matter, and really not under his control. It was his solemn duty to appear in the corridor once a week, and to gibber from the large oriel window on the first and third Wednesdays in every month, and he did not see how he could honorably escape from his obligations. It is quite true that his life had been very evil, (Continued on page 86)

Do DEAD Ever TELL



The public is indebted to Mr. Thurston for the fearless way in which he has used his unique powers to expose fakes and charlatans

(From a recent photographic character study)

FOR a number of years I have occupied a peculiar position in regard to the investigation of spiritistic phenomena. On the stage, as a professional magician, I reproduce many of the wonders accredited to Daniel Douglas Home, Stainton Moses and other great psychics, not to forget that extraordinary woman, Eusapia Palladino. Having originally come to the subject because of an innate love of all weird and mysterious things, I soon found myself evolving, quite unconsciously, into a kind of magical detective for the discovery of fraud.

As a professional illusionist I am naturally able to detect deception where others, especially the most intelligent scientists, would be completely deceived. Thus I have come to be regarded as a kind of consulting specialist on mysteries. When certain psychologists come across a medium who does things that they can't explain, they sometimes send for me. If she can convince me, they feel certain she is not faking.

Naturally the reader will want to know if I have ever seen anything that I couldn't explain!

Well, it is to answer that question that this article is written.

Its discussion here, in the pages of this magazine, is entirely proper, for one unescapable reason; that whatever is not deliberately contrived hocus-pocus in mediumistic manifestations is necessarily an indication of mental force.

Ninety per cent of the mediums are frauds, this famous magician believes—but read what he has to say of the other ten per cent!

All genuine phenomena come from some strange, unexplored and uncontrolled brain power, whose effects we witness, but whose explanation still eludes us. In this strange category we can include not only the puzzles of spiritualism, but those fascinating enigmas presented to us by telepathy, clairvoyance, and their associated problems.

Hence a study of spiritualism is an exploring adventure into the unconquered jungles of the mind. When we attempt to strike a trail through the morass of superstition and the undergrowth of prejudice, we may find ourselves encountering strange wild creatures, and perhaps figurative savage tribes. But the prize is worthy of the quest.

Therefore, a pursuit of these queer manifestations is a thoroughly scientific and laudable undertaking. I am proud to play a part in it, and to give here the fruits of a quarter of a century of watching closely the miracles presented to my skeptical vision.

In doing so, I may shatter many a dearly-prized illusion, for I propose first to expose some of the standard methods employed by so-called psychics to dupe the unwary, with "sittings," "readings," table-tippings, rappings, slate-writings, voices and faces in the dark.

But having done that—having stripped away the gaudy draperies of deceit and shown you the grinning *deus ex machina*—I shall then be forced to give a *solar plexus* blow to the crass materialist who says it's *all* a fake.

For I *have* seen things that not even a magician can explain.

In approaching the subject, one must bear in mind that no scientific field to-day is such a battle ground for opposing armies of investigators as is the wide expanse of psychic phenomena. To attempt any determination of what is accepted, for example, by orthodox scientists as demonstrated and proved; what is still accepted only by a few enthusiasts, and what is still highly debatable, may look like a simple proceeding until one tries it.

THEN it is discovered that among themselves the scientists do not agree. In the various societies there are groups which hold to clashing conceptions and ideas. Where the public can fit in, under such circumstances, it is difficult to see.

Yet it is for the public that these scientists are themselves laboring—not consciously, perhaps, but none the less surely. Their ideal is the advancement of truth, in which all mankind can share.

Therefore, while most investigators will throw up their hands when any attempt is made to popularize the subject; when they insist that the processes of experimentation are beyond the grasp of the lay mind, I find myself in sharp disagreement.

MEN TALES?

By
HOWARD THURSTON

This is a new science. It is bound by no known rules. The guess of a layman may be better than that of a professor. That is why I am glad to see the subject brought into the magazines, so that the public may be acquainted with the progress that has thus far been accomplished.

What we call modern spiritualism practically began in 1848 with the rappings produced by the famous Fox sisters in Rochester. I recall a book written by one of these young women, admitting that she made the noises with her toes. Yet there are many serious spiritualists today who look back on the Fox sisters as prophets of a new science.

After them came a rapid host of miracle workers, producing a whole circus of marvels. For a long time the subject was a hodge-podge of superstition and prejudice, with science standing coldly aloof.

BUT later certain serious thinkers were attracted to the subject, and societies sprang up, among them such important and worthy undertakings as the British Society for Psychical Research, and its American counterpart with which the name of Professor Hyslop is so indelibly associated.

It was not long afterward that the wonders which they were investigating were classified into two distinct divisions—the mental and the physical.

In the latter group are included all such nerve-blasting exhibitions as escapes from rope ties and fetters, the speaking trumpets, the materialization of ghostly specters from cabinets, table tipping and rapping, spirit slate writing, spirit photography, and the levitation of the medium's body—Daniel Douglas Home being reputed to have floated out of one of the séance room windows and into another, before the gaze of the astonished company!

After an unremitting examination of a great number of people who have offered this kind of evidence in proof of the survival of personality, I am ready to say unreservedly that ninety per cent of the business is rank imposition, trickery and fraud. It is readily understandable to any student of conjuring and illusions.

I am happy to know that Mr. E. J. Dingwall, of the British Society for Psychical Research is of the same opinion. Mr. Dingwall is a specialist in the investigation of the physical phenomena of the mediums.

Side by side with the mass of puzzling feats of this kind, in which that unexplained ten per cent does continue to hold out its Sphinx-like challenge, is a convincing ocean of testimony known as the mental phenomena. This, more than anything else, is engaging the enlightened attention of scientists, and is finding the sympathetic coöperation of the magicians, who have, since the days of Maskelyne, Cooke, De-



Madame Eusapia Palladino, the Neapolitan miracle woman, whose strange powers baffled even the wizard Thurston

(Sketched from one of the few photographs ever made of the great medium)

vant and Harry Kellar, presented an uncompromising front against the physical evidence.

In this group of mental phenomena are included the trance revelations, clairvoyance, clairaudience, automatic writing, crystal gazing, and even the ouija board manifestations which, of course, do imply some form of what is called external control.

THIS second group presents the great riddle to science.

Nothing of sufficient and continued importance has yet been proved, in my judgment, to justify the claim that communication with the dead has been established. On the other hand, enough unexplained things have been witnessed to validate the assumption that some strange, hidden energy, some inexplicable force, some concealed intelligence—or just plain *something*—is operative in us which we are now able only vaguely to apprehend.

I have been privileged to observe a great deal of experimenting in both these groups. It is my purpose here to shed some light on the frauds of the first, and then, in all honesty, to describe the ten per cent of my investigations which left me spellbound with amazement. I shall then feel privileged to

go on and relate some of the astonishing experiences I have encountered in probing into the mysteries of the second group.

Let us take for example the first mentioned physical phenomenon—the escape from fetters. Originally this trick was made famous by the Davenport Brothers, a pair of swindlers who toured Europe and America, throwing the people into hysterical excitement with their exhibitions of so-called spirit release. It was their custom to be bound with ropes, by a committee from the audience, so that their wrists, fingers, legs, feet and head were immovable. Thus secured within their cabinet, they asked that the doors be closed.

Immediately it sounded as if bedlam had blown up behind those mahogany walls. Tambourines were flung out and about as if by some maudlin reveller from the nether regions. Thumpings and poundings, groanings and struggles struck terror to the hearts of the audience.

Yet when the doors were opened, there were the two innocent brothers, placidly bound and entranced, just as before.

It happened that these young men employed as an assistant a bright youth with a habit of observation. His name was Harry Kellar—afterward the reigning king of the conjurers of his day, and the man whom I succeeded on the American stage. Mr. Kellar very speedily discovered how the rope trick was done; for years he displayed it in the principal theaters of America. No one was ever able to detect how it was done. But Mr. Kellar never claimed the spirits helped him out. He merely smiled and assured the spectators he wouldn't deceive them for the world.

Nor would he, in the sense that the Davenport Brothers deceived.

Without divulging how Mr. Kellar is able to tie and untie the knots which bind him in less time than it takes to flash off and on an electric light, I can properly point out that there are hundreds of methods now known to magicians by which that and similar effects can be obtained. Slack, gathered in an unsuspected quarter; a hitch tucked away where no one suspects, a clever twist of the wrist with a concealed coil hidden swiftly—these and various other little tricks are all that is needed.

Yet scientific men of that day held clinics over the Davenport Brothers, and also over Anna Eva Fay, another vaudeville performer, who showed a rope trick of her own.

The speaking trumpet is far more eerie and ghostly a manifestation. An ordinary trumpet—"magnetized" by the medium—is placed on the table, around which are gathered the sitters, with the medium at the head. Hands are laid out flat on the table, the little finger and thumb of the participants overlapping. But when the lights are turned out, the medium begins to shudder and be convulsed and gradually shakes one hand free. Immediately the thumb of the other hand is extended to restore contact with the little finger of the next sitter. Blinded by the darkness, those on either side of him believe they are each holding one of his hands. As a matter of fact they are both touching the same one, and the other hand of the medium is entirely free.

Obviously, if I were in the medium's place I should find it very easy to pick up the trumpet and speak through it softly, while both my neighbors believed that they were touching my hands and that therefore I could not possibly be implicated.

By this same device, spirit slate writing is often accom-

plished, although in this department of spirit fraud there is a whole school of methods. Some mediums wear fake shoes which they can get out of easily, while they write on slates underneath the table, holding the pencil in their toes. The front part of the sock is cut away to make this easier. Again, flaps made of silicate, are dropped over the faces of slates, only to be taken away in the darkness, and the previously written message displayed. An entire book could be written on slate writing methods alone.

Of all these spectral exhibitions, none created greater amazement, or more genuine confusion among baffled scientists than the problems of materialization.

By materialization is meant the actual production of ghosts—floating filmy apparitions, glowing with phosphorescent radiance, gliding through the dark. This might well be termed the *Ultima Thule* of spirit phenomena; I have never heard of a case of the kind that was not easily betrayed, to the experienced eye, as the most brazen deception.

Some years ago, and perhaps to this very day, a man made a business of supplying these "ghosts" to the "profession" as the fake mediums refer to themselves privately. The "spooks" were constructed of exceedingly flimsy gauze, sewn in the shape of a human figure, their faces and hands smeared with what is known as "luminous paint," which gives a luster like the radium figures on a watch dial. So delicate were these mechanical phantasms that they could be folded up and concealed within a hunting-case watch.

Of course such effects as these have to be shown in the dark. When questioned on this point, the mediums will always tell you that one must work with the conditions which science imposes. One cannot develop a photograph in the light; science requires a dark room. "And," they add, with the most plausible air in the world, "the same is true of the ghosts!"

THEFORE the dark séance—with the medium regaining control of his apparently guarded hands, opening the watch and blowing softly while the silken texture of the spook becomes inflated and rises in a ghostly spiral, gradually assuming the outline of the human form. To this day the materialization mediums—when they are not dodging the police, who manage to keep them on the march—are using these fakes of silken gauze. They cling to their methods, which were long ago detected, while I—and I say it in all modesty—am producing ghosts far more real and inexplicable, in my own spirit cabinet, at every performance.

Of the origin of my own spirits I am naturally silent. I make no claim for them whatever. Those who prefer—and many do—to regard them as actual visitants from beyond the tomb are welcome to their opinion. Those who seek a different and more rational explanation, may busy themselves trying to find out where they come from, and where they go to, and how they appear and disappear in my cabinet.

Such is the superstition of the human race that people in my audiences, night after night, recognize my ghosts as the phantoms of their departed friends and relatives. One ghost has been variously identified in one performance as "Aunt Betty," "Poor little Joseph," and "Grandpop!"

Table tipping and lifting deserve a paragraph to themselves, for of all the physical manifestations they are the most frequently encountered. Various means are employed

Mr. Thurston, the noted American illusionist, has exposed scores of fraudulent mediums. In these pages he explains just how many of their best tricks are done.

But he does more than that.

He tells of genuine super-normal wonders that even a magician cannot explain!

to levitate a table right before the undarkened eyes of the spectators. Supporting rods are sometimes shot out from the sleeves of the operator, under the table, silently connecting there with bolts that hold them rigid. With such a connection established, it is easy to lift the table.

More frequently, however, the trick is accomplished by the foot. In an actual séance, this is made more baffling by having one of the other sitters keep his foot on top of the medium's foot—"to prevent any suspicion of fraud!" But it doesn't prevent the fraud, even if the suspicion be absent. All the medium needs to do to elude this precaution is to wear an iron shoe. It is easy to slip the foot free from this shoe, but its weight and rigidity are so pronounced that the sitter on guard feels confident that he has imprisoned the medium's foot all the while. Meantime, the medium's foot is cutting up high-jinks, propelling the table up in the air five or six inches, to the mingled awe and astonishment of all the spectators—the sentry included!

Rappings are accomplished by means equally simple. One successful faker made these rappings merely by scraping his thumb, which previously had been rubbed with resin, across the polished surface of the séance table, the action of the thumb being masked by the palm. Again, a pencil is placed, point downward, on the table, and the thumb, again rubbed with resin, makes the startling little raps by merely scraping hard against the side of the pencil.

READING sealed questions is among the best of fake mediums' feats, and various methods are resorted to to learn, without awakening the sitter's suspicions, the contents of the written question. To tell all of these methods would require a volume; it is my purpose here only to indicate a few, in order that the reader may get a perspective upon the deceptive means which are constantly being practised.

In the trick which I have in mind, the sitter writes a question on a small piece of paper, folds it and places it against his forehead. Without asking a single question, the medium proceeds to call out the question—though apparently he has never seen it—and to give some more or less satisfactory answer to it.

Though this particular feat has converted many a skeptic to the miracles of mediumship, its secret is exceedingly simple. The paper on which the question is written is furnished by the medium, and is folded in accordance with his explicit instructions. Concealed in his palm, the performer has another, blank sheet of paper, folded exactly the same way. When the sitter places the paper against his forehead, the medium pretends that he has not got it in the right position, and, cautioning him not to move, undertakes to adjust it for him. In one lightning moment, in which the paper is completely withdrawn from the sitter's

fingers, the exchange is made. After that the sitter is holding a blank piece of paper to his forehead, and the medium has the original in his palm.

To get a sly look at the writing on his concealed quarry is not difficult. Very often the medium pretends that he needs spiritual counsel and gets out a fairly large Bible which he sits down and reads. Under cover of the pages he opens the paper and reads it. Then he closes the Bible, leaving the original paper inside.

"I'M afraid we will have to burn your question," he declares, and so the blank piece of paper—damaging evidence—is laid on a saucer, a bit of alcohol is thrown over it, and it is burned to a crisp.

Secure against detection, the medium then oracularly replies to the question!

By this time, I hope the reader is beginning to see what a mass or trickery has been drafted from the legitimate field of the magician and the slight-of-hand artist to the nefarious purposes of the faker. A whole library of exposures might be written before the unmasking of their conscienceless mummery is completely revealed.

But the fact remains that it is not *all* trickery.

Even in the field of physical (Continued on page 91)

Up in the air the table rose, one, two, three inches, shaking unsteadily but seemingly sustained by a force superior to gravity!



The Man with the Sabre CUT

A Tale of
Mystery
and Terror
in the
New York
Night-Clubs

The Story Thus Far:

In the attic of an old house my mother had taken in Corona, Long Island, I discovered a curious workbench that seemed to have uncanny properties. One evening, after a weird experience there, I went for a walk. Close to the subway a beautiful girl collapsed against me and at her request I took her home. She seemed very frightened, but would tell me nothing except her name—Ella Bixbee.

On returning to my workbench I was startled to see a copper plate rapping out a message in code. I could make no sense of it until a misty form appeared—that of an old, old man. He gave me the clue I needed, and vanished.

In accordance with the message, I went the next night to the Crystal Slipper, a Broadway night-club. There I met a man who had a sabre scar on his cheek and who introduced himself as Raoul Murtha. He was waiting for a certain dancer to appear, and when she did—it was Ella Bixbee! Suddenly, in the midst of her number, the dancer pitched to the floor, senseless. I saw Murtha's eyes fixed hypnotically on her. Later I heard him say he was taking her on a party that night.

I determined to warn Ella, but as I waited in the corridor, an unseen force impelled me toward the wineroom. I entered, and only by a miracle escaped death at the hands of Murtha's Jap chauffeur.

More upset than ever, I tried to persuade Ella and her friend, Dixie Lee, not to go with Murtha, and Dixie said the party was postponed. That night the ancient ghost appeared to me again, warning me on no account to let Ella go with Murtha.

The next evening when I tried to interfere, Dixie Lee flew into a frenzy and almost strangled me. I subdued her and calmed Ella, who was panic-stricken. Then I took the girls home—and on the way I was nearly run down by Murtha's car.

Ella had told me that her great-grandfather, an electrical inventor, had once lived in my house and used my work-



The Jap was like a jungle beast, waiting to kill

bench. So I hurried to the attic. Soon the copper plate began to rap out: "elladangernow". I grabbed my revolver and ran to the Bixbee cottage. There I beheld a ladder against the side of the house and on it an ape-like figure. The monster was dragging Ella's unconscious figure out of her window—and I dared not shoot for fear of killing the girl I loved!

THE unholy, ape-like swaying of the monster froze my blood. Ape-like! Suddenly I understood! It was he who was carrying off my sweetheart! That hateful Jap! I saw him clearly now, silhouetted in the moonlight that flooded the white wall of the cottage. It was he, without doubt, and my poor helpless Ella, her eyes closed, was entirely at his mercy. . . .

The Jap's hands were braced against her shoulders and she hung forward like a broken doll, while he edged her body outward, as one might ease a loaded box over a fence.

I shivered and felt a strange numbness steal over me. A moment before I had refrained from shooting, for fear of harming Ella, but now volition was beyond me. I could not interfere, though I would have given my life to. My arms hung useless.

Ella's rigid figure was projecting beyond the window, now. The harrowing thought that the Jap might let her fall to her death stabbed me. But I was spellbound. In another second the Jap shifted her overbalancing weight to his shoulder, and continued dragging her, head foremost, out of the window! Her nightgown had slipped off one shoulder. The Jap did not stop.

By
JAMES
HASKELL
As told to
ALAN
SCHULTZ



Ella was struggling and moaning in Murtha's arms. Realization of her danger sent a typhoon of fury sweeping through me

*Raoul Murtha's
subtle web ensnares the
little dancer.
And I plunge heedlessly into
a death-trap—
to save her*

I was literally stunned. Not a step could I take. There I was, standing in the shadow of the hedge, a useless revolver in my hand, paralyzed as if by a stunning blow, unable to cross the mystic barrier which hemmed me off from the Jap. And that gruesome, ape-like monster was carrying off my dearest one!

The old sense of impotency that had on two other occasions overpowered me was on me now. I had felt it, once at the Crystal Slipper, when that hidden force had almost driven me against the knife of the Jap in the winerroom; and a second time when Ella's tears had shaken me out of the spell cast over me by Raoul Murtha's black eyes.

Taut in every fiber of my being, my body struggled within itself. My muscles tensed and a hot moisture was about my eyes. It was agony!

In another minute it will be too late! The words were in my ears as if an unseen presence were talking to me. *In another minute it will be too late!* All at once I felt a surge of power course through me; a sense of returning strength. I had a feeling of triumph, of having overcome an almost insuperable obstacle!

The Jap had Ella's body practically through the window, holding it head downward in his flimsy nightgown. One of his arms was about her waist now, as if the body were stiff and lifeless. . . .

A shriek tore from my aching throat. It rang like the report of a shot, echoing in the ghostly stillness.

The Jap stopped dead in his tracks. He took a step up the ladder, instead of down. I sprang from the shadow of the hedge, afire in every nerve, intent on reaching that ladder—on giving my life, if need be, to save Ella Bixbee.

The Jap hesitated, swung his head about as if seeking orders, then pushed Ella's body over the window sill, back into the room. Even as I ran, I heard, sickeningly clear, a thud as her body dropped to the floor within the room.

I was only a few feet from the ladder when the Jap, like a frightened monkey, straddled the outside posts with his legs and slid down like a streak. In a second he had hit the ground—almost at the same moment that I reached the ladder!

He made as if to run, and then sprang back—*unwillingly, it seemed to me*—and his two hands flew at my throat. My breath stopped and my knees buckled under me. I hadn't a chance. Only just in time I remembered my revolver, and gave a desperate pull on the trigger. Its detonation blazed out—but the shot had gone wild. And then, before I could collect my wits, I felt myself pitched high into the air!

As I think back now, I know the Jap must have sprung a ju-jitsu trick. For, with one hand at the back of my head and the other thrown under my right shoulder, there had been a quick shift of weight on his part and I went sailing through the air, landing in a thicket of thorny bushes.

CUT and bleeding, but clear-headed, I pushed the bushes aside, in time to see the Jap racing to the road. I swung up my revolver, to which I was still clinging—fired—and missed again!

Desperately holding on to the branches, I pulled myself to my feet. There was a queer humming in my head for a moment, and then I realized that the purr I was hearing was really a motor getting under way in the street at the rear of Ella's cottage. The Isotta Fraschini aga. ' The man with the sabre cut! . . . was Raoul Murtha here, too?

But there was no time for deduction. I had one imperative job.

Across the yard I dashed to the door of the white cottage. Ella? Ella? Was she hurt?

There were lights in the house by this time. I rang the bell. Mrs. Williams, Ella's aunt, looking sallow and distraught, admitted me after cautiously questioning me through a side window.

She made no remark as I went in, and I got the curious impression that she knew as much as I did of what had happened.

In her manner I also sensed the relief of one who was welcoming a possible protector. We went upstairs at once.

Ella's bedroom was flooded with light. Dixie Lee stood at the door, seeming not at all surprised to see me, though I was taken aback at her matter-of-fact calmness. Her face betrayed no panic, no trace of horror.

Ella lay on her bed, moaning brokenly. I bent over her, but her eyes were shut. Her cheeks feverish and her lips parted, she was like a beautiful child in pain.

I stayed beside Ella's bed, watching Dixie whispering to Mrs. Williams. It seemed to me she was objecting to my presence. When next I looked back at Ella, she had apparently regained consciousness, but her wide eyes gazed blankly at the ceiling.

I touched her forehead with my hand and she shut her eyes for a second, shuddered and then opened them again. A memory of something seemed to revive her. She tried to raise herself on an arm and speak.

"Not now, dear," I whispered, and she fell back to the pillow, her lips moving pitifully.

DIXIE and Mrs. Williams were standing behind me. I turned to them, my eyes questioning Dixie. The girl looked away, a sullen cast clouding her expression. I could not help thinking there was some curious bond between her and the man with the sabre cut, though what it was, baffled me. She seemed always afraid that I was going to do something to anger Raoul Murtha.

"Has anything of this sort ever happened before?" I asked.

The old lady mumbled something about not knowing and Dixie Lee looked carefully in the direction of the window, giving me the impression that she was on her guard. I noticed also that neither of them was doing anything for Ella, as if they were aware of what had happened to her and knew that neither doctors nor medicines were of any use.

Ella was breathing more evenly now, and had dropped off into a light sleep, her eyelids fluttering open once in a while. I went over to the window outside of which I had witnessed the drama of a few minutes before. There was a screen leaning against the inside wall a few feet from the window, in a position that could not very well have been reached from the outside. Was it possible that Ella herself had removed and set it there? But her eyes had been closed while she was being lifted out of the window by the Jap!

The top ends of a ladder were leaning against the sill. I was considering the possibility of getting fingerprints when, without warning, I heard Dixie Lee say:

"We should have gone to Raoul Murtha's party." Her voice was low, as if she were speaking to herself.

"Is there any connection between your not attending Murtha's party and this attack?" I blurted out furiously.

"How do I know!" replied Dixie in a stubborn pettishness.

"Then what did you mean?"

"Oh, lay off! Please don't bother me. I want sleep," and she looked at me in a way that meant I was to go. I turned to the bed.

Ella had fallen into a sound sleep. Her regular breathing was a cheerful whisper in the room. I did not have the heart to leave her; the memory of that ape-like Jap climbing the ladder was still haunting me.

"I'll sleep on the landing outside Ella's door," I said.

"This isn't a hotel," said Dixie sullenly.

"Say, what's the matter with you? Do you want me to call in the police?"

A twitch of terror ran over her features. I was sorry for her, but I felt I had to be ruthless.

"Use your head," I went on. "I saw enough here tonight to call in the whole force. If it weren't to protect Ella from

unpleasant publicity, I'd do it, too! But one thing's sure—I'm not going to leave her alone for the rest of this night."

It was finally agreed that Dixie should spend the night with Ella in her bedroom, while I took up my post on the landing outside.

I lay down, with my head resting against the wall, my hand near my revolver. Alert to every sound, though I doubted that anything further would happen that night, I took up my vigil.

What with the novelty of my situation and its exciting prelude, I did not shut an eye. I lay there, on the landing, thinking over the mysterious march of events which in the last few days had swept me on the high tide of this breath-taking adventure. I, who had hitherto been just one of New York's six millions, was no longer a spot in a crowd. The swing of something tremendous had taken hold of me. Just what it would prove to be, I did not know. Certain I was, however, that the forces with which I had become entangled were more than human!

Quite evidently beautiful Ella Bixbee was the prize over which two relentless powers were warring. The evil would stop at nothing to put me out of the way; and the good would use every means to protect Ella through me.

I had never given serious attention to any world but the obvious workaday one we live in. And yet, here I was confronted with insurmountable proof of a spirit existence. Twice, I had received definite messages over the copper plate on my workbench, and twice had I seen the misty form of something supernatural—ghost or spirit, call it what you will.

IT appeared, unless I was being hoaxed, that my ghostly visitant was in league with me and the girl I loved. How else account for the spirit messages, especially the most timely one I had received that night?

About the forces which were, on the other hand, linked against Ella's safety, I was wholly perplexed. I could not conceive of any motive for doing Ella harm. It seemed to me everyone must love her. As for the man with the sabre cut, he whom they called Raoul Murtha, and his Jap—I could not understand or explain them.

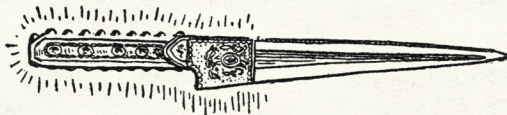
Ella stayed in bed for two days. I was, of course, a frequent visitor, though most of the time I had to sit in the kitchen talking to Mrs. Williams. Her fund of gossip, however, was a compensation. In time she gave me additional confirmation of what Ella had already told me about her great-grandfather James Stephens Bixbee. He had actually lived in a house situated where mine was, and had once been the fond owner of the very workbench I used in my attic. I also gathered other important evidence. By careful questioning I led the old lady to give me a description of the inventor, James Stephens Bixbee—and it tallied exactly with my memory of the ghost I had seen in my attic!

There were, too, some talks with Dixie Lee, though on the whole she avoided me. I tried to manage accompanying her

to the subway when she left for her work at the Crystal Slipper. But she took to slipping out of the house unseen. Apparently she did not care to discuss the terrifying events which we had witnessed.

It was different with Ella. I had her full confidence. A quick sympathy had sprung up between us from the first. Though I never had quite the pluck to tell her, she seemed to know I would give my life for her, and in turn she promised to trust me explicitly.

Those short intervals we had together were very dear to me. I came closer to understanding what an adorable person she was; and there were heavenly moments when I sat beside her, holding her hands, forgetful of everything



but my love. How soon was this bliss to be shattered!

On the evening of the third day after the fearful adventure of the Jap and the ladder, I had an unsettling experience, though at the time I failed to interpret it.

Since six in the morning I had been at my workbench in the attic, rigging up a radio set I was making for Ella. About lunch time my mother came up to urge me to take a bite to eat. I refused and stuck stubbornly to my job. Later, at about four o'clock, mother came up again. Looking at my watch, I realized that I had promised to see Ella at five and so I pushed my work aside, saying, "All right, Ma, I'll be right down. I'm knocking off for the day."

I had just risen to my feet to join my mother, when I was startled to see a shifting shadow on the wall behind her! There was no mistaking it. The ancient ghost was there again—the ghost which, I was now convinced, was the spirit of Ella's great-grandfather. But in the late afternoon light, the apparition was hardly visible; it was like the reflection a lacy curtain makes on a white wall.

"I'll follow in a minute," I said, anxious to get my mother out of the room. But she insisted on waiting. From a corner of my eye I kept watching the ghostly shadow, hoping it would more clearly knit together. Why had it come this time? Surely it had some message to give me!

Finally I was forced to follow my mother out of the room. Just as I was crossing the threshold, I saw the faint apparition lift a hand warningly before its face. At once I stopped and turned back, but the ghost had vanished.

"Hurry, James!" my mother called.

I went down and ate quickly and at the first opportunity dashed back to the attic. But the ghost was no longer there. I sat down at my workbench. I held the copper plate, tapping it while I fervently concentrated on the spirit of James Stephens Bixbee. But not for a moment did I succeed in calling it back.

What meaning lay in that upraised warning hand?

At a quarter to five I left my house. As I crossed through our backyard to make a short-cut I saw someone scurry past a clump of bushes by the roadside. Without hesitation I dashed in pursuit. I searched eagerly in the bush growth and then, climbing a spiked telephone pole which stood near-by, I scanned the road and the next street. No one was in sight, and yet I was almost sure that the figure I had glimpsed was that of Raoul Murtha himself!

What was he doing here? Had he been keeping my house under his baleful eye? I went cold at the thought. But then another struck me. Had his presence made it impossible for the ghost of James Stephens Bixbee to crystallize more definitely? Even made it impossible for it to appear at all when I was so eager to learn its message?

Full of foreboding I reached the Bixbee's cottage. I found that Ella intended to return to her work at the Crystal Slipper that evening. There was no trace of illness about her, and she was in a high mood. So was Dixie.

THEIR gaiety was cheering and I fought down my instinct of danger ahead. The girls were positively hilarious.

Later I rode into Manhattan with them. "Slink" Mustapoy, the detestable owner of the Crystal Slipper, welcomed Ella back with much jubilation. Nevertheless, he cast side-long glances at me. Ella explained that I intended to wait around the place and take her home. An ugly scowl glowered on his face.

"And that means every night," I snapped.

Slink answered sullenly, "Like hell! Dis no charity home." But I ignored him, knowing that under no condition would I ever leave Ella unprotected at the Crystal Slipper.

It meant a lot of trouble for me. There were dull waits through the evenings. Most of the time I spent quietly in the long, dusky corridor, keeping my eyes on the main half

of the cabaret and on the winerroom. Naturally, those two points held my attention.

Ella and I had arranged that at any sign of trouble she would call for me. So, having become bored with the entertainment after the first few nights, I appeared in the cabaret only when Ella was going through her turns. The intervals I spent seated on a camp chair in the corridor, watching the flashing couples come and go, laughing and chatting, entirely oblivious of me and the weird drama in which I was playing.

That winerroom fascinated me. I had an uneasy curiosity about it. Those delirious moments when I had been drawn into that room against my will, like a man in a trance, to face the murderous knife of the Jap, were never for long out of my mind.

That Jap! If only I might have put the police on his trail! The unsavory details I held against him and his master, Raoul Murtha, were worth police investigation, I thought.

Dixie, however, was steadfastly against my making any such move. "It'll mean trouble, big boy," she would say and I could see she meant it.

She insisted that any public meddling of mine would mean the immediate loss of jobs to herself and Ella. But, as I look back now, I believe I stalled on police action for still another reason: I was not so sure the police would not think me a little unbalanced. I could see myself trying to tell the Police Department about ghosts, messages, mysterious Japs with long knives, and secret compulsions!

HOWEVER, as the days wore on, both Ella and Dixie resumed a dangerous nonchalance about the man with the sabre cut. They assured me that I was an old fuss-budget and that Murtha was a gentleman and a scholar, as well as Dixie's benefactor. He had given her her first job on Broadway, and her present one as well. Both girls admitted he was occasionally overbearing in his manners, but on the whole a likeable chap.

Likeable chap! I could not stomach their cordiality to him. It always struck me as very rash and unsound. True, he had most engaging manners. He was much about the Crystal Slipper and a great deal of deference was paid him by everybody. Invariably he made it a point to have a cozy chat with the girls before they quit the cabaret in the morning hours.

In time, even my resentment wore off; it got so I doubted my own judgement. It was hard to believe ill of so ingratiating a chap. And yet—there was so much to be explained, both in his actions and in those of his Japanese chauffeur.

The latter was as much of an enigma as his master. The first time I saw him, after the appalling adventure on the ladder at Ella's home, I shuddered. But as I kept meeting him at the Crystal Slipper, my keen antagonism grew dulled. It became increasingly difficult to connect him with the terrible ape-like figure I had seen climbing the ladder to Ella's room. And yet—I did not weaken in my fundamental distrust.

Dixie had become her old slangy self. She was full of high spirits and began again to dominate Ella despite my influence.

"Jimmie," she said one night on our way home, "if you continue to get cold feet about our seeing Raoul, we'll buy you a red kimono and a Turkish towel."

"What for?" I had asked.

"Why, we'll set you up as a Swami or a plain American medium, and charge admission. The way you see things!"

I could contain myself no longer. "How about the ladder against your cottage?" I cried. "And wasn't Ella almost kidnapped by that Jap? How about that?"

"Oh, we all had lobster and ice cream that night, Jimmie."

"Well, your joking won't get you out of a jam. It wouldn't be a bad idea if you went to a reliable medium

yourself, Dixie." I watched closely, to get her reaction.

"Whoops! What for?"

"It strikes me you're not always yourself," I said, for the first time betraying my secret belief that she was at least partially under another's influence.

She ignored me and went on humorously, saying, "In Frisco, once, I went to a gypsy and she told me I was to marry an Italian count and become a famous opera singer. Well, I married a Scotch woolen salesman and at my first vocal audition they begged me to become a dancer!"

It was on the point of my tongue to relate my experiences with the ghost in my attic. Neither of the girls had any inkling of those facts. They were still under the impression that my accidental meeting with Ella near the subway in Corona and a coincidental visit to the Crystal Slipper was all that was behind our friendship.

But I restrained my impulse. They were becoming too skeptical of late and showed a tendency to rag me too much over my suspicions. Besides, I was very unsure of myself. It was a new rôle for me, that of psychic investigator, and I was timid about talking too much.

Sometime during the second week of Ella's return to work at the Crystal Slipper, I began to realize that Raoul Murtha was more firmly entrenched in their friendship than he had ever been before. A couple of times he and Dixie went off for a good time. He made no attempt to invite Ella. But afterward, Dixie was always sure to rave about his wealth and his generosity, and I could see Ella was impressed.

I HAD a constant dread at the drift our friendship was taking. Dixie was always overriding my objections and influencing Ella against me. At length I believe even my sweet Ella began to think I was a little foolish in my anxiety.

Outside of our trips to and from the Crystal Slipper we saw one another for only a few hours on Sunday. Most of the days I spent hunting for a job or working in my attic at home.

As can be easily guessed, I had a purpose in spending much of my time there at my workbench. I was on the hunt for further clues, either over the mysterious telegraphic route I had discovered, or directly from the ghost who had twice manifested itself.

But I failed consistently. Sometimes I was aware of abnormal influences in the attic, but no message came and no ghost appeared. I tried going through, step by step, the same conditions which had previously produced messages, but no results followed.

There was one afternoon when my waiting was not entirely fruitless. The attic was—I know no better way to describe it—bewitched. My tools, the chairs and workbench, the odds and ends my mother had stored away, seemed alive, almost as if electrically charged. I kept my eyes glued to the copper plate over which I had already received two ghostly messages. It was moving in queer spurts. I could sense a force passing through it. But its tapplings were undecipherable in any code I knew.

It came into my head to wonder whether my failure to reestablish actual contact with the ghost might not be due to contrary influences which Raoul Murtha was directing against my house! It did not seem reasonable, and yet I was supported by the suspicion that I had seen the man with the sabre cut scurry past my house on that day when I had found it so difficult to connect with the Spirit World, and had caught only a glimpse of the warning gesture of the ghost.

In the midst of this new consideration, I was called downstairs to the telephone. It was Ella, her voice tremulous with uneasiness. Murtha had been to visit them and had just left!

My nerves tingled at the news. So the man with the sabre cut had actually been in the neighborhood while I had

witnessed the unsatisfactory and unprofitable chaos of psychic activity in the attic!

"Why, I'll go batty," I said to myself, "if I believe his power has such far-reaching effects." And yet—what else was I to believe, keyed up as I was?

I went back to the attic and without any clear plan in mind, I took the copper plate off the workbench and slipped it into my pocket.

A half hour later, when I called for the girls at the Bixbee cottage in Chestnut Lane, Ella welcomed me tenderly. Dixie was a bit standoffish. Neither was quite at ease. I suspected something in the wind.

They said nothing until we were in the subway on our way to the Crystal Slipper. Then I learned what was up. They had accepted another invitation from Raoul Murtha!

Their eyes avoided me and they chattered uneasily, trying to be glib about the details. The party was to be a private entertainment given by Murtha. Ella kept saying, "Now, Jim dear, don't scold," while Dixie made it clear that she cared not a whit what I thought. It was obvious I had no chance of talking them out of accepting the invitation this time.

I grasped at a last straw. "Am I invited too?" I asked. "Listen, Jimmie," Dixie began, "if this were my party, you'd sit at the head of the table, but I can't choose Raoul's guests."

I looked toward Ella. Her face was non-committal.

"Don't you want me along?" I said.

Ella glanced back at Dixie, then to me.

"Honestly, Jim, there's nothing going to happen to me," she said. "Dixie will take care of me."

"I've seen how much good that's likely to do."

MURTHA is such an influential man on Broadway," continued Ella. "He has so much influence. I must keep in his good graces."

"Nonsense! No job is worth it."

"Jim dear, my career is important to me," and there was a touch of impatience in Ella's voice.

"But *you're* more important to me than anything in the world! I'd be worried to death if you went."

"You're just an old maid," put in Dixie.

"It's dangerous, and you know it better than anyone, Dixie Lee!" I cried, this time hinting more clearly than ever that I really believed she was under the influence of Raoul Murtha. As usual, Dixie swept my innuendo aside.

"I?" she said. "You're blotto, Jimmie!"

"And furthermore, if Ella can't hold her job without catering to that oily trickster, she ought to quit the game!"

"Now, now, James! Are you proposing to take care of Ella?"

I looked at my sweetheart. Her eyes were clouded with distress. She was fretful, torn between her loyalty to Dixie and her affection for me; embarrassed by the former's bold talk. If I had thought it would help the situation I would have proposed to Ella, then and there.

We got nowhere with all our talk on our ride into Manhattan. Dixie obviously wished me to leave them. She hinted continually that they needed no chaperone. Once, she even said:

"It's no use waiting for us. After our turn in the show we are going with Raoul—to see his place."

"Oh, I've got nothing better to do than wait," I answered and in my mind I was weighing the possibilities. *To see his place*—I didn't like the sound of that; it was of a piece with the rest of Murtha's impudence.

My thoughts buzzed around like angry bees, trying to find a solution. I sat there at the Crystal Slipper, on my camp chair in the corridor, worrying over the business. I must either accompany Ella or prevent her going.

Every now and then I kept popping into the main hall of the cabaret, just to keep an eye out for Raoul Murtha, but he was not around. For the rest, everything at the

Crystal Slipper was as usual; and yet I dared not relax.

Once I saw "Slink" Mustapoy, accompanied by a man—in a police uniform I thought at the time—go into the winerom. But though I kept an eye on it for the rest of my vigil, I did not see them come out.

Murtha's Jap chauffeur passed me twice, but he did not greet me with the friendliness he had been displaying lately. His face was set grimly and there was a stealthiness in his walk.

Between numbers, Dixie came out to the corridor in her corduroy dressing gown, and told me not to be a fool and to go home. But I stuck.

Once I thought I saw the man with the sabre cut at the darker end of the corridor, but when I rubbed a temporary sleepiness out of my eyes, there was no one standing there.

At midnight, I could feel myself astir like one who awaits a great test. Every nerve was alert. . . .

There was a ripple of chatter at the dressing-room doors, and Ella and Dixie came up the corridor. I rose, my hat in my hand, and met them.

"Well, well, well! The St. Bernard is still watching the little girls! Haven't you carfare home?" There was a note of hostility in Dixie's voice.

I walked out of the Crystal Slipper with them, and though I had still no plan, I took Ella's arm, crowding between her and Dixie.

"Raoul is waiting for us on 57th Street," the latter said. "We know our way, Jimmie."

I made no answer and went on. The streets were crowded still, and I felt it strange that no one was concerned with our little group. To me, tragedy seemed to be stalking behind us. I could hear the beat of my own blood in my ears. And yet I had no plan.

Ella's arm nestled under mine, and in my secret heart I was caressing it and kissing it tenderly. She addressed a few remarks to me, trying to make light of the whole situation. But the moment silence fell, my mood of fretting unrest came back.

As we approached the corner of 57th Street, I saw an impressive Isotta Fraschini, waiting. Dixie was slowing up, evidently stalling for me to say good night. I went on doggedly. I could see the Jap chauffeur at the wheel, and in the back of the great car was the man with the sabre cut. We came up slowly. My thoughts raced.

The Jap saw me first. His eyes glistened as he realized I was accompanying the girls. Raoul Murtha jumped out of the machine and held the door open. I saw him look questioningly at me and then exchange glances with the Jap behind the wheel.

Immediately I had a plan! My mind was made up!

"Regards to Long Island," said Dixie, not quite in her gay manner. She was apprehensive as to what I would do. Ella nodded uncertainly and both girls bent forward and stepped into the car. *Before Raoul could follow, I jumped quickly after the girls into the Isotta Fraschini!*

"A little night air will do me some good," I said lightly.

DXIE was plainly stumped. To my surprise, Raoul Murtha's face showed no trace of being taken unawares. Almost, he acted as if he had expected the move, which I had only a moment before decided on. As for Ella, she took my arm the moment I was seated. She seemed glad I had taken the decision out of her hands. At least she welcomed me—and with that assurance I was ready to defy the world at her side.

The Jap at the wheel waited for no instructions. The machine shot forward. In the car was a strained silence, and past us flew the scenery.

Dixie Lee perked up and began bantering Murtha, though a bit diffidently. Gradually a murmur of talk arose. I gathered we were on our way to Pelham, where the man with the sabre cut was to show us his home, "The Palazzo."

Ella was now holding one of my hands and I was strok-

ing hers. Once or twice Murtha tried to draw her into the conversation, but she said little. Either that irritated him, or else he was looking for trouble. For, unexpectedly, he turned toward me and said, in the most insolent manner, "I am not accustomed to having strangers crash my parties."

Dixie Lee rose to the situation before I could frame an answer.

"Now, now, Raoul," she said, "no ice! I'm going to play puss-in-the-corner with Jimmy all evening. He won't interfere."

Ella's face was looking unsmilingly ahead. She was like one expecting the worst.

I DECIDED not to reply to Raoul Murtha before I had a better reckoning of my bearings. He, indeed, expected no answer. Having delivered himself of the insult, he continued to converse lightly with Dixie; but most of the flippancy had gone out of her.

There was a queer dank odor in the car. It seemed to seep in past the glass partition which divided us from the chauffeur. At first I thought it due to the fresh subway diggings we were passing. But the odor persisted. It was a dampness as of newly turned earth, and even when we were far up in the northern section of the city it stayed with us.

I heard a low chuckle which at first had the weird effect of coming out of the air into the car. Only with difficulty I recognized it as having come from Raoul Murtha. For the rest, there was a silence.

"Am I the only happy person?" he cried. There was a challenge in his voice.

"I'm smiles all over, Raoul, and we're all so happy we're afraid we'll be taxed," said Dixie, but it did not seem to help.

At first I had looked Raoul Murtha's way whenever he spoke, but there was a queer intensity about his eyes which I found disturbing. They were brighter than I had ever seen them. More glowing. Frankly, I kept my own eyes averted from his as much as I could. There was a quality in them I feared. It was a compelling power, frightful, magnetic—something like the odd sensations I had experienced in the winerom when I had almost walked to my death at the hand of the Jap. . . .

That Jap! Suddenly I was calling myself a brainless idiot. For here I was, allowing myself to be driven over lonely roads by the very Jap chauffeur who only a few weeks before had almost killed me in the mysterious darkness of the winerom of the Crystal Slipper! Insanity! I should never have gotten into the Isotta Fraschini, nor permitted Ella to risk it.

Again there was the fantastic chuckle. "*It's very nice of you to spend the night with me.*"

Astonished, I realized Raoul Murtha had just said these words to my Ella!

"Raoul! Behave!" Dixie broke in. "I really think we better just stop at a roadhouse and have supper. We can run up to your place some other day."

"It isn't proper for the guest to make plans. I'm playing host tonight," said Raoul, and again he chuckled in that unearthly way which was like a sound coming out of the air. He turned to my sweetheart, saying:

"Ella, do you like me?"

"Why, yes, Mr. Murtha."

"Raoul to you, Ella. Now say it again."

"Why, yes, Raoul." Ella seemed like a child being drilled by a severe teacher.

I sat tight against the upholstery, trying ineffectually to think. In that car it seemed impossible to be otherwise than foggy. One thing I noticed. This Murtha had a way of humming in the intervals when he was not conversing, and there was a plangent electric buzz in his humming which lulled the senses. I would catch myself listening intently, on the point of drowsing off.

In the midst of such a humming spell I heard Dixie cry out, her voice sounding dead and forced:
 "How about a tickler? It's chilly and I feel the need of a nip of warmth."

Murtha, without stopping his solo humming, leaned forward and, from behind a flap in the upholstery of the door, extracted a leather case from which he slid out four silver drinking cups and a flask. Skillfully he poured the liquor and handed each of us a drink, humming to himself all the time.

"Here's to the dust on your tonsils," toasted Dixie.

"And to the confusion of our enemies," replied Raoul, and unmistakably nudged me. A shiver ran through my body. This man was altogether too cocksure to suit me. On the dot I made up my mind not to drink and as I looked from the corner of my eye I could see Ella was not touching her cup either.

THE humming stopped. There was an angry snarl from Raoul Murtha.
 "What's this?" he cried.

I knew he was addressing me and that he was insulted at my not drinking. But I held my silver cup, untasted. There was another snarl and Murtha cried out, "He who refuses to drink with me, must refuse to share any of my hospitality!"

He tapped against the glass partition between us and the chauffeur. The Jap did not turn. But the automobile slowed down at once, though it seemed to take minutes before it came to a stop. Not a word had been exchanged between Murtha and the Jap. The former was humming again and there was a satisfied smile on his lips.

"I never drink hard liquor, Mr. Murtha," I said, trying at the same time to guess what he meant to do. I glanced toward Dixie Lee, half expecting her quick tongue to intervene in my behalf. To my horror I saw a glazing filming over her eyes! Her facial muscles were working in a frenzied, horrible grimace. She began to look as she had that night at the Crystal Slipper, when she had gone out of her mind and struggled like a fiend against Ella and me!

The sight struck me amidships. All hope went out of me. I felt entirely at the mercy of this infamous rogue. Ella was pinching my arm in a panicky way.

And the man with the sabre cut! He was humming more energetically. His eyes were on me, their gaze hot on my skin! I am not exaggerating; *his eyes were burning into my flesh!*

"I don't like you, *Mister Haskell*," he said slowly, looking hard at me, suavely pronouncing each word.

"You told me that before," I replied. Ella's hand tightened in its grip on my arm. Her action gave me a flare of courage.

"You offend me, *Mister Haskell*."

"I'm sorry," I said.

"Oblige me by leaving my car, *Mister Haskell*," and his voice was no longer suave.

I braced my legs against the footrest, and sat back deliberately.

"At once, *Mister Haskell!*"

"Not unless these girls come with me," I said.

"They are my guests."

"They are my friends!"

"You are just a penniless hanger-on."

"They find me satisfactory."

"I find you a blackguard!"

My right hand doubled into a fist and in another moment I would have swung. But Ella's grip on my arm seemed to be a warning. Besides, common sense told me it would take more than a fist fight to get order out of this mess.

The car was at a standstill. The Jap had left his place at the wheel and was standing in a fantastic, crouched position at the open door of the car.

"You have five seconds in which to decide on the manner of your departure," said Murtha sneeringly.

The face of the Jap was wrinkled and contorted; it was almost unrecognizable. But there was something I did recognize! His peculiar ape-like movements! In a flash I saw him as he had been that moonlight night, trying to abduct Ella! My blood thirsted for revenge.

Suddenly I heard a low moaning and sensed a commotion in Dixie's corner of the seat. I saw Raoul's hand reach out to her and he murmured, "Not now," and at once she was quiet again.

All about us was silence. I could hear each of us breathing; Ella's breath came in short frightened soblike gasps.

"You have not left my car—and I never give an order twice," came clearly from the man with the sabre cut, and I cursed myself for a fool not to have brought my revolver along!

The Jap, his shoulders hunched, took a short step nearer me. I was on guard, no longer able to keep my eye on Murtha. I imagine a signal passed from him to the Jap, or perhaps it was just the weird power of Murtha's eyes. The Jap leaned forward. My hands went up, ready. The Jap's arm shot into the car. He grasped one of my knee caps in his fingers. The grip paralyzed me. It felt like a buzz saw zooming through the bone. I screamed in agony. Then I sprang forward for his throat. But a nasty stomach blow caught me and doubled me up with pain. The Jap was clever with his hands. I crumpled up like an old hat and went down in a heap to the floor. But it was not all over. A hand was at my collar. There was a wrench. In another moment I was sprawled on the ground outside of the machine, my head swimming and my eyes blurred.

I tried to rise to my feet. Somehow, through the fog of my dizziness, I became aware that Murtha had changed swiftly to the driver's seat of the Isotta Fraschini and that Ella was there beside him, fighting to prevent him from starting the car and abandoning me. Above me stood the hunched figure of the Jap. He was like a jungle beast, waiting to kill.

A SCREAM rent the night. Ella was struggling and moaning in Murtha's arms. Her cries of terror tore through me. Realization of her danger sent a typhoon of fury sweeping through me. Out of the corner of my eye I saw Raoul Murtha tighten his hand across her mouth! The sight maddened me. Wildly I flung myself at the Jap. Crash! I went headlong into the steel frame of the machine. That Jap was a devil. . . .

When I regained my feet, I was dazed. More than dazed. I heard a low, agonized moan. Ella! Fury swept through me again. That fiend with the sabre cut! I'd tear him limb from limb!

I sprang to the step of the machine and wrenched open the door. This time I was too fast for the Jap. In the flash of the moment I saw that Ella was in a faint and Raoul Murtha lay back in frozen stiffness against the upholstery, his fingers oddly extended fanwise. . . .

"I'll rip out your heart!" I yelled as I flew at him.

Can there be but one outcome to this unequal struggle between Haskell and the unscrupulous Murtha? And Ella—with her rash young defender destroyed, what harrowing fate awaits her? Only a miracle can save them now. The October GHOST STORIES will reveal the astounding conclusion of this weird drama.

Renunciation

Roger made the greatest sacrifice of all—he gave up the woman he loved. But the Other World granted him a reward sweeter than any earthly happiness



Just as his lips were about to touch hers, an immense, invisible and very sad presence seemed to creep into the room

By ACHMED ABDULLAH

WHEN she came to him that night, forty-eight hours before he sailed for France with his battalion, she did so of her own free will.

For he had not seen her; he had not written to her; he had even tried not to think of her since that shimmering, pink-and-lavender noon of early June, two years before, when, in rose point lace and orange-blossoms, she had walked up the aisle of St. Thomas's Church and had become the wife of Dan Coolidge.

Her low, trembling "I will" had sounded the death-knell of Roger Kenyon's tempestuous youth. He had plucked her from his heart, had uprooted her from his mind; from his smoldering, subconscious passion he had cast the memory of her pale, pure oval of a face into the limbo of visions that must be forgotten.

It seemed strange that he could do so, for Roger had always been a hot-blooded, virile, inconsiderate man who rode life as he rode a horse, with a loose rein, a straight bit and rowel-spurs. He had always had a headstrong tendency to hurdle with tense, savage joy across the obstacles he encountered—which were, as often as not, of his own making.

He had been in the habit of taking whatever sensations and emotions he could—until he had met Josephine Erksine up there in that sleepy, drab New England village where,

for a generation or two, her people had endeavored to impose upon the world with a labored, pathetic, meretricious gentility.

Then, suddenly, like a sweet, swift throe, love had come to him in Josephine's brown, gold-flecked eyes and crimson mouth.

He had told her so quite simply as they walked in the rose-garden; but she had shaken her head.

"No, Roger," she replied.

"Why not?"

"I do not love you."

SHE told him that she was going to become the wife, for better or for worse, of Dan Coolidge, a college chum of his—a mild, bald-headed, paunchy, stock-broker chap with a steam-yacht, a garage full of imported, low-slung motor cars, a red-brick and white-woodwork house on the conservative side of Eleventh Street, a few doors from Fifth Avenue; a place in Westchester County at exactly the correct distance between suburbia and yokeldom; four servants, including a French—not an English—butter; and a mother who dressed in black bombazine and bugles.

"Yes," she had said in a weak, wiped-over voice, "I am going to marry Dan." (Continued on page 82)

The CLUE of the

*Chinatown,
grimly
inscrutable,
concealed
the
dreadful secret
of
Millicent
Courtney's
disappearance—
until
her lover
found
a weird guide*

THE *Rochambeau*, ploughing through long rolling swells under a clear winter sky, was rapidly approaching the American coast.

I had completed the packing of my bags an hour previous and, like scores of others, leaned upon the rail, my eyes strained to catch the first sight of land. For I was desperately anxious to be back in my native New York, to which I had been a stranger for six long months. It was not so much that I wanted merely to greet my loved ones again—as that I felt it imperative to make certain none of them was in trouble.

I could not shake off the anxiety that had been preying on my mind ever since awaking that morning. A sixth sense seemed to be warning me that I was about to learn of some serious happening; perhaps a tragedy. Before the death of my mother I had received a similar premonition.

A cry of, "There it is," from a fellow passenger finally snapped me from my disagreeable thoughts. And, looking where he pointed, I, too, noted the faint blur which indicated the shore. The next instant I heard my name called and turned to see a uniformed messenger from the radio department.

I took the proffered envelope with a heavy sense of fore-



A Chinaman, his face a mask of unspeakable evil, was peering furtively through the murky glass

boding and tore it open with trembling hands. I read:

Come to me as soon as you land. Millicent disappeared on Friday. Police have learned nothing. Know you can help.

JULIA COURTNEY.

THE message explained all my intuitive fears. Again and again I read the stunning words, oblivious of everything but their sickening import. For lovely Millicent Courtney meant more than all the rest of the world to me. And she had "disappeared." Never before had I realized the in-

BLACK DRAGON

By
CLINTON
TOLLIVER

Julie barely suppressed a scream. "You see?" she cried. "You're being trailed!"



numerable and fearful possibilities of that single word! Finally I managed to pull myself together, walked to my cabin and dropped limply into a chair. With the confusion of the decks shut out, I was able to think more calmly. According to her mother's cable, Millicent had disappeared on Friday, nearly four days back. The police had failed to find any trace of her. Yet—and I looked again, to be sure—Mrs. Courtney had cabled: "Know you can help." What had made her so sure?

This turned my thoughts into a new channel and, with a suddenness which set my pulses to pounding, there came a suspicion of what might be the real answer to this hideous

riddle. For several years Millicent had been a volunteer welfare worker among the natives of New York's Chinatown. Could it be possible that she had fallen into the hands of one of the quarter's lawless yellow men, as had Elsie Sigel, Margaret Fellows and others? God! The idea drove me into a frenzy of fear.

So that was the reason why Mrs. Courtney believed I could succeed where the police had failed. For probably no white man was as familiar with New York's yellow quarter and its denizens as I. Though born in the great city, I had been taken to China when a small boy, and there I had been reared until early manhood, learning to speak the pure Chinese, as well as some of the dialects.

Upon the death of my parents I returned to New York with my younger sister, Mary. And, because of my familiarity with Chinese customs and the language, I soon obtained a position as the representative of several welfare organizations in the quarter. Before long I had gained the confidence of the yellow men and frequently acted as peace messenger between the rival tongs. It was there that I had met Millicent who, following the death of her banker father, sought to forget her sorrow by taking up welfare work in Chinatown. Her zeal finally led her to conduct in her home a Sunday School class which was attended by many of the more intelligent of the quarter's youthful natives.

I fell in love with her almost upon our first meeting and soon endeavored to persuade her to give up her labors among the Chinese. For, knowing them as I did, I realized that their quarter was no place for an innocent white woman, particularly one as young and beautiful as Millicent. Mrs. Courtney had joined with me in my pleas, but her daughter had only laughed at our arguments and persisted in what she considered her duty. And now—

TORTURED by the awfulness of my suspicion, I rushed up on deck again. As soon as the newspaper men came aboard from the revenue cutter, I located one I knew and asked him what the papers had learned concerning the Courtney case.

"The last time the girl was seen, as far as we or the police have been able to learn," he said, "was in the late afternoon of the day she disappeared. This was in a bookshop on Fifth Avenue, where she ordered a new work on the philosophy of Confucius sent to her home. After that she just vanished.

"The hospitals, the morgues, every institution where an injured or dead person might be taken, have been searched. Chinatown, where the girl spent a lot of her time, has naturally come in for investigation, but other white welfare workers there, as well as trustworthy natives, have insisted that Miss Courtney was not seen there since Friday morning. And the places she was accustomed to visit in her relief work uncovered no clue. Her mother says the girl seldom wore jewelry or carried much money, so robbery couldn't have been the motive. Also, though the Courtneys are wealthy, no demand for ransom has been made and nothing has been learned to suggest a love affair. Frankly, the disappearance is as much a mystery today as it was in the beginning."

This information, vague as it was, did nothing to counteract my suspicion that Millicent had been the victim of Chinese abductors.

The instant I had cleared my possessions through the customs, I hastened to the Courtney home, where my sweetheart's mother, pale and distraught, received me in her private apartment.

In an effort to spare her as much as possible, I told her what I had learned from the reporter.

"Mrs. Courtney," I concluded, "from the wording of your message I'm certain you have some definite idea—"

"I will come to that," she said, "but first I must speak plainly to you concerning another matter. I can state positively that there is nothing in the suggestion that Millicent has eloped. She was very much in love with you. And I've watched and am certain you loved her. Frankly, though I have nothing definite upon which to base my suspicion, I believe Millicent was abducted by one or more of the Chinese whom she met frequently, perhaps by some of her students! Oh, Clinton—"

At that point she burst into a fit of sobbing. I comforted her as best I could and begged her to tell me all she knew.

She admitted she could single out none of Millicent's students who had ever done anything to suggest that he had looked upon the girl other than with the respect of a pupil for his teacher. In fact, when the search in Chinatown began on Saturday, the Sunday School scholars had come to

her in a body and stated they were voluntarily assisting the authorities.

"But you," she said finally, "who know the quarter backward and are acquainted with most of the natives, can learn things the police never can. Go there—see what you can discover before it is too late. You are my last hope. If you fail, I know I shall never see my daughter alive again."

"You can depend upon me," I replied, taking her hands, "for I believe as you do. I shall begin my search today and shall never give up until I have learned something definite."

Leaving Mrs. Courtney, I went at once to the office of Police Inspector Ferris, a capable official who was in charge of the district which included Chinatown. But from him I received no encouragement. His best men had scoured the quarter—in vain.

"Of course it is possible," he added, "even if the girl is concealed there, that only her abductors know where she is. There are hundreds of underground hide-outs and places near the quarter where a woman, kept under drugs to prevent her giving an alarm, might be held for weeks without a hint reaching us. However, I'm positive Miss Courtney is not in the hands of any Chinese. She was too well known and liked for that. It can do no harm for you to search, though. And if you learn anything, I'll give you prompt assistance. When the truth is known, you'll find I'm right."

A block from the station I paused to consider what Ferris had said. And, for the first time since coming ashore, I began to doubt my suspicion. Ferris' conclusion was not one to be put aside lightly, considering his long experience among the city's Orientals. Still, all the other theories concerning Millicent's disappearance lacked tangible support. So, whether right or wrong, I must proceed with my original intention.

My course fixed, I went home to greet my sister and explain my mission. The only precaution I took before heading for the quarter again was to place a loaded revolver in my pocket.

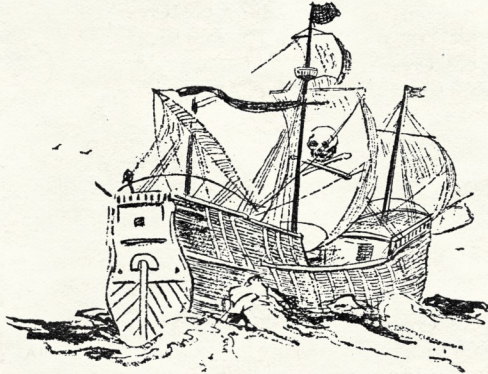
However, before I reached the climax of my adventure, I was to encounter experiences in which man-made weapons

were useless, maddening, weird encounters which may seem totally incredible, except to those who have also seen the like—and know.

It was not until I was close to the quarter that I recalled one of its residents whom I should have thought of before: Leung Nam. This Chinese, who lived in a one-story shack in the rear of the tenements facing the "Bloody Angle," was very old, wise and just. He numbered many whites among his intimates, including Millicent and myself. Of her he was particularly fond, for she had nursed him through a serious illness. No man in the quarter

had a greater knowledge of what went on there under cover. If she were hidden there, he would know it, and would help me. I resolved to visit him late that night, when I was not likely to be observed.

While waiting for that time, however, I was far from idle. Despite a fine chilling snow which had begun to fall, I kept on the move and talked with hundreds of my Chinese friends in their shops, in their homes and in the street. All of them, after giving me a warm welcome, brought up the matter of Millicent's disappearance and were loud in their protestations that the police had erred in thinking she was hidden in the quarter. I had scarcely expected anything else and



was content merely to let my return become generally known. Later, I hoped, some native who was particularly friendly would tell me in private something of value.

In the early hours of the morning I left Chinatown at the lower Mott Street end. Then, as soon as I dared, I slipped back into the narrow lanes in the upper portion and headed for the home of Leung Nam, keeping in the shadows to avoid being seen. But I was followed just the same. As I started through the black passageway toward the rear, I heard a crunching behind me and the next instant a hand gripped my shoulder.

"It is Wing Tao," said a voice which I recognized. "Let me lead you to a place where we can't be overheard."

I followed without hesitancy, for Tao, a young man who had been educated in England before coming to America, was a member of my sweetheart's Sunday School class and was well-known to me.

He drew me within the shelter of a shed.

"Why all this secrecy, Tao?" I whispered. "I talked with you early this evening."

"Yes, but others were listening. I thought you would try to see Leung Nam, our old friend, so I followed you. You will never see him again—and you must not go to his house."

"What do you mean?"

"NAM is dead," he said. "Wait," as I gripped his arm. "I must do the talking, and quickly, for I might pay with my life if it became known I held secret talk with you. Three months ago Nam was suspected of telling the *lo fung* police where opium was being sold. He was found dead in the alley with a bullet in his brain."

"But why can I not go near his home?" I demanded.

"Let me tell you. For some reason which we can only guess, his spirit has not gone to his fathers but still lives in his little house. Many of my countrymen have seen it. His relatives have not dared to enter the place, and even you might be harmed if you went there. This is a matter which we Chinese are forbidden to discuss or you would have heard it earlier in the night. You must not betray my confidence."

I gripped his hand but made no comment. Was he telling me the truth, or—had the natives some motive in keeping me away. Instantly my thoughts sprang to my objective for being there.

"You said you would tell me something about Miss Courtney," I prompted.

"I can tell you as much as Nam would have told you, were he alive. We, her pupils, and others who loved her, have searched diligently and listened much. On my honor I am certain no Chinese was to blame for her disappearance. But we shall continue to search. I dare not meet you again secretly, lest the opium people suspect me, but I shall communicate with you promptly if we learn anything. Now—good night." He gripped my hand and slipped away into the blackness before I could thank him.

I slunk out of the upper quarter without meeting anyone I knew. Though deeply shocked by the news of my old friend's murder, I tried to put the thought of his tragedy out of my mind. Tao's statement that he was practically certain Millicent was not in the quarter seemed, for the moment, all-important. Coupling it with Ferris' assertion, I reached home almost convinced I was following a blind trail.

However, the next morning I decided to continue my investigations in Chinatown. By some lucky twist of chance I might learn something to confirm my original suspicion. But the day passed without a single development to aid me.

Throughout the week that followed I tramped through the slush of the quarter, questioning, listening, spying, trying with bribes to obtain information from the district's derelicts. And, being half mad with anxiety all the while, I seldom ate, slept but little and neglected to protect myself properly. The result was that I contracted a racking cough, burned with fever and ached in every muscle.

It was around midnight of my seventh day of misery when I realized I was at the end of my strength. The weather had suddenly become unseasonably warm and a light rain had been followed by a fog which grew thicker each minute. Utterly exhausted, I stumbled into Tom Yen's little all-night restaurant. The proprietor, whom I knew well, placed me in a chair near a gas stove, where I immediately fell asleep.

It was a full hour later when I awoke to hear a woman's voice addressing me.

"Do you feel better, Mr. Tolliver?"

Turning, I recognized Julie, a once beautiful and refined woman who, through drink and drugs, had become one of the quarter's driftwood. I nodded.

"You should let Tom put you up for the night and go home tomorrow," she said. "And take my advice and keep out of Chinatown hereafter except in the daytime. You're—oh! Look—*behind you*—"

I swung round to face the door—and saw a sight that curdled my blood. A Chinaman, his face a mask of unspeakable evil, his beady eyes riveted wickedly on me, was peering furtively through the murky glass.

Julie barely suppressed a scream. "You see?" she cried. "You're being trailed!"

But even as we looked, the gruesome thing slunk off and was swallowed up in the fog.

"For God's sake, Julie, what does it mean?" I cried. "Has this spying anything to do with Miss Courtney?"

"I don't know. But if you think she's hidden in Chinatown, you're wrong; that's all. And the Chinos may not understand your purpose; they may think you're spying on the opium and gambling games for the police and bump you off. I've taken a long chance in warning you and won't talk to you again. Take my tip and remain here tonight. Good-by." The next minute she was gone.

But I refused to heed either her warning or Tom Yen's pleadings. Julie's statement had revived my suspicion that Millicent was concealed hereabouts. So, buttoning my coat about my throat, I literally ran out into the blanket of fog, hoping to shake off the one who had been trailing me. I had not gone far, however, when I had to stop, for I seemed to be in a mist so thick that I could not detect a single light and the very buildings had been wiped out. As I stood there, bewildered, my reason argued that, while the fog was very thick, it was because the fever had dimmed my eyesight that I was unable to see clearly.

With that thought my first fears left me. I knew that all I had to do was to walk straight ahead and I would reach a wall. Then, feeling my way along the buildings, I was certain to reach Chatham Square. With my revolver in my right hand and my left arm extended, I began to walk. One, two, three—fifty steps. And still I encountered nothing!

WHEELING sharply, I pushed ahead. But the result was the same. I had become hopelessly bewildered; probably I had walked in a circle. I began to wonder how much longer I could go on, when there came to my ears a sound like shuffling footsteps. I called out for help, but none came, and the sounds died away. I must struggle on alone. . . .

Summoning all of my remaining strength, I pushed on once more, stumbling, lurching, but apparently getting nowhere. Finally I paused, ready to give up the struggle. The next instant I felt a light touch upon my shoulder. A chill coursed through my fevered frame. I turned—then shrieked in terror!

The mist was all aglow beside me, and at my elbow, his parchment-like skin strangely gleaming, stood Leung Nam, my old friend and counselor. But it couldn't be! He had gone before the Seven High Judges months previous. My fevered brain must be playing me tricks. I rubbed my eyes—but Leung Nam remained.

Then I recalled the story I had heard—and doubted—about his phantom. I endeavored to speak, but my tongue

seemed to choke me. The next instant Nam's cold, remorseless fingers closed tightly about my wrist and I was dragged along, too dazed to notice where I was going.

For a time, which seemed unending, I stumbled after my unearthly guide. He paused finally, shook me roughly, then pointed. And, gazing in the direction he indicated I saw, right before us, a black dragon—a familiar Chinese symbol. For a brief period it remained fixed, its outlines clear and distinct. Then it began to fade, finally vanishing into the haze.

In bewilderment I turned toward Nam for an explanation. But he, too, had disappeared. The eerie glow was gone, and a dank, impenetrable cloud seemed to close in on me. That was the last I remembered.

When I regained my senses I was in bed in my own room. As I opened my eyes my sister gave a glad cry and seated herself beside me.

"You've been unconscious for nearly forty-eight hours, Clint. And when you were not sleeping under opiates, you were out of your head, talking about Chinatown, dragons, ghosts and—things I can't remember."

At her words the recollection of my awful night in the fog flashed back to me, and I shuddered.

"Mary," I managed weakly, "how did I get here?"

A DETECTIVE who knew you found you wandering in Chatham Square in the mist and brought you home in a taxi. You were fortunate not to have been injured, for it was one of the worst fogs in the city's history. Now try to sleep again." She kissed me, drew the shades lower and left the room.

But sleep for me was impossible. All the incidents of my last night in the quarter came back to me with frightful vividness. I marveled that I recalled them, considering the fever I had had at the time. My encounter with the specter of Leung Nam was the most maddening recollection of all. Had I really seen the spirit of my old friend? Wing Tao had said that for some reason Leung Nam's shade had not gone to join his father's—for *what* reason?

I sat bolt upright as a sudden thought dawned upon me. Perhaps—perhaps Leung Nam was lingering here to help me—

But no, my emotion was getting the better of me. I sank wearily back on the pillows. Besides, I reasoned, if his spirit had been trying to show me some clue to Millicent's place of concealment, it would have indicated something other than a dragon. For in Chinatown, where that symbol was on hundreds of flags, banners, lanterns and shop windows, it would be useless to try to find one particular dragon.

Still, if my sweetheart were not in Chinatown, why was I being trailed? I had no enemies in the quarter. But perhaps Julie's explanation of that circumstance and her assurance that Millicent was not in the district were correct. Too weary to think farther, I fell into a troubled sleep in which I dreamed Millicent had been found dead in some place I never had seen.

It was with this dream in my mind that I awoke, trembling. What course I would have followed after that, if left to my own devices, I cannot say. But Fate decided the matter for me.

Two days passed in which I gained rapidly, despite the fact that I could not clear my mind of worry. For there was still no news concerning Millicent. On the third day Mary decided to clean the overcoat I had worn in the fog. But she had little more than left the room when she returned and tossed a glove upon my bed, saying, "I found that in one of the pockets—a remembrance of Millicent, I suppose."

I nodded, but suddenly a deathly faintness seized me. I was too stunned to speak. For the glove, which I clutched with trembling fingers, was unmistakably one of a pair I had sent my sweetheart from Paris. And—*these were the gloves she had worn on the day she disappeared!*

I could think of but one explanation of its being in my

pocket. And this I dared not even voice. So I pretended to fall asleep until my sister had gone. Then I sat up to study the situation. One thing was certain: that glove could not have been placed in my pocket by any human hand! Then it must have been the work of Leung Nam's phantom. His uncanny form had been no figment of my imagination, no mirage in the fog. He had come to me in the spirit, guided me to Millicent's place of concealment—which was marked by a dragon of some kind—and placed her glove in my pocket so that I must believe what I had seen.

There was no time to be lost. I must take up the search again—as quickly as possible.

However, two more days passed before I felt sufficiently strong to continue my quest. Meanwhile I racked my brain, trying to fix upon some plan of procedure. My only consolation was that I knew Chinatown like a book. For the rest—I must trust to chance. I would just walk about the quarter late each night and keep myself fit and on the alert for anything which might aid me.

I purposely refrained from notifying anyone when I was ready to leave my home again, believing that I would accomplish more by working alone. Furthermore, to prevent being recognized and trailed, I waited until long after midnight, and then partially disguised myself by wearing a cap pulled low and a muffler wrapped about my chin.

I had no course mapped out that night, but something seemed to impel me toward Nam's old home. Twice I found myself on the sodden wood doorstep, expecting I knew not what. But after waiting for long periods without seeing anything out of the ordinary, I again began my wanderings through the streets.

It was along about four in the morning, when practically all the lights had been extinguished and the quarter seemed deserted. It may have been my weakened condition, or my nervous anxiety, but somehow those narrow alleys and dingy hovels had never seemed so drear, so haunted and altogether baffling as they did that night.

I was slouching along in the shadows of one of the narrower lanes, when I thought I heard my name spoken. I paused, but did not turn. I was being trailed again—and by someone who knew me, despite the disguise! My hand gripped the revolver in my pocket. Again my name was pronounced, and I swung quickly, to face my pursuer—

A strangled cry choked in my throat. My revolver dropped with a thud in the slush. It was the phantom of Leung Nam!

His shriveled form was bathed in a greenish light which made things around him visible, and I could see that he stood at the foot of the cellar steps of an old warehouse. Without giving me time to speak, he pointed to the door behind him. It was fastened by a heavy padlock. Then I all but shrieked. For in the upper panel of the door was a huge knocker in the form of a dragon. The next instant the specter had vanished.

BUT I had reached the end of my quest. Somewhere in that old warehouse my sweetheart was being held a prisoner. But how to penetrate its forbidding walls was the question. To attempt it alone was to court almost certain death.

My only hope lay in Inspector Ferris and his men. Yet, if I were to tell them the truth, they would think me mad. But I soon thought of a plan to bring about a search of the building. I would inform Ferris that I had been told by a Chinese, in whom I had absolute faith, where Millicent was concealed. He could not go back on his promise to help me.

Fortunately Ferris was on night duty at the station. He believed my story and volunteered to act at once, though he had supposed the warehouse was vacant since the raid his men had made upon a gambling club located there. After explaining the situation to all the plainclothes men in the station, he said: "We can't smash our way in, you know. That would bring a mob of Chinos on the run and would give the men on the inside a chance to slip away through some

underground passage. Do any of you know how we can get inside without noise?"

A veteran detective, O'Brien, stepped forward.

"Down under the stoop," he said, "is a window with steel bars. It can't be seen from the street. I was down looking over the place some time ago to make sure that our lock hadn't been tampered with and I saw that the woodwork around the bars was badly rotted. If we can get them out quietly, then a few of us can slip in through the window while some go to the rear yard and others to the roof through the tenements next door."

"Great!" said Ferris. "Half of you get inside and take Mr. Tolliver with you. If you spot anybody hold 'em. I'll take the other boys and surround the place. Come on, we'll have to hustle; it's getting light!"

Stealthily, one at a time, we slipped into the quarter and made our way noiselessly down the cellar steps. O'Brien, who went first, had removed the bars by the time the last man arrived, and we were soon in the building.

With the aid of flashlights we made our way across the littered basement floor. At the far end we encountered a door. In some surprise I noted it was held by a steel cross bar, set in sockets on our side.

"This is luck," O'Brien whispered. "Whoever's in there came down from upstairs and probably figured this door was walled up on the outside, the way most of them are after a raid. But we didn't do that with this old dump!"

UNDER his hands the bar came up, making practically no sound. But it was different with the door. Despite our every effort, it creaked upon its rusty hinges, and as we swung it wide I raised my flash, revealing a long passage-way. Instantly a door at the other end was jerked open and in the light from the room behind stood a Chinese with a revolver in either hand.

It was none other than Wing Tao!

In my amazement I dropped my light, and, as I bent involuntarily, the bark of two shots rang through the passage-way, one scorching bullet all but kissing my cheek as it tore past me.

O'Brien's gun sent back a tattoo of answering shots. And, as a yell of pain came from beyond, he raced fearlessly toward the other room, followed by the rest of us. We entered with a rush, just in time to see Tao, blood streaming from his cheek, slip down through a trap door into an underground passage.

O'Brien and I hurled ourselves after him. But we failed to take him alive. Just as we reached the bottom of the steps, Tao sent a bullet crashing into his brain.

"And that's the dog who has been pretending to help me and whom I trusted," I said, turning him over with my foot.

"You should have known better," replied O'Brien. "He's one of the mission-venerated Chinos and they're usually the crookedest. He ran the gambling joint here."

Further discussion was cut short by cries from above: "We've found the girl!" "Miss Courtney is up here!"

With pulses pounding I raced upstairs. One of the detectives grasped my arm and led me through a sloping passage-way to a tiny room lighted by an oil lamp. There, on a litter of blankets, lay Millicent, her eyes closed, breathing heavily. She had on the same clothing she had worn when she disappeared.

With a glad cry I dropped beside her, calling her name and rubbing her hands in an effort to wake her. But she did not move.

"No use, Mr. Tolliver," said a detective, "she's doped. We'd better get her to a hospital quickly."

I was too dazed to reply, but I sprang up to help carry her. At that moment Ferris entered, followed by several of his men. At the sound of the shots they had broken into the cellar through a back door and hurried to our assistance. The Inspector was quickly told all that had occurred and shortly afterward, Millicent, accompanied by O'Brien and myself, was being rushed to a hospital.

The doctors, to whom I revealed their patient's identity, informed me that my sweetheart had apparently been given drugs at intervals over a considerable period and would not be physically fit to talk much until some hours after she regained consciousness. My disappointment was keen, but with the joyous knowledge that Millicent was safe at last, I hurried to the home of Mrs. Courtney to share my wonderful news with her.

It was not until late in the afternoon, after Millicent had been removed to her home—still weak, but so happy over her rescue that she insisted upon talking—that we told her mother our stories. Hers, in brief, was this:

Upon leaving the bookshop she noticed a limousine parked at the curb. Wing Tao alighted as she appeared and offered to drive her home. Suspecting nothing, she entered the car, occupying the rear seat with her pupil. The man at the wheel she recognized as his cousin, whom she knew slightly.

The machine soon turned into a side street, and Tao, placing a hand over her mouth so she could not cry out, drew the curtains. She struggled to free herself, but her assailant held her helpless until she fainted. When she recovered consciousness she was in the place where we found her, with the two Chinese acting as her guards. Whenever both left her at the same time, they forced her to drink some opiate which sent her into a long sleep.

Otherwise she was well treated, for Tao insisted that he had loved her for a long time and intended making her his wife. He had kidnapped her only because he knew there was no chance of marrying her in America. His plan was to wait for a favorable opportunity to smuggle her aboard a tramp steamer for Cuba. Then, when she found herself in one of the Chinese colonies in the sugar plantations beyond Havana, he felt certain she would be glad to marry him to escape a worse fate. He had trailed her several times in his machine previous to the day when he had succeeded in kidnapping her.

Though she understood but little Chinese, Millicent soon gathered from frequent repetition of my name that I was spurring the police to such efforts that her captors feared to remove her from her prison.

AMAZING as was her story, mine was even more incredible. And, though I was not interrupted, I saw my sweetheart and her mother exchange wondering glances frequently. Indeed, it was not surprising that they found my tale hard to believe. Even as I write, it seems preposterous that the phantom of Leung Nam should have appeared to me and indicated the hiding place of my sweetheart. Yet here she was, close beside me again—saved from a tragic fate only by the intervention of the spirit world. Millicent and I can doubt no more. . . .

There is little more to tell. Tao's cousin escaped the American police and probably made his way back to China. And, as far as I have ever been able to learn, the specter of Nam was never seen again. But best of all, Millicent and I were married a week after she was taken from her prison.



HAUNTED

Trapped! Yet the "Scorpion" makes one last desperate move—and terror reigns in the studios



What Has Gone Before:

IN the Summit Studios, where the filming of Frank Padgett's mystery novel, *The Scorpion*, was under way, disaster succeeded disaster, until, to cap the climax, an explosion rendered the author-director blind. At Padgett's insistence my friend Clayton Caldwell was put in charge of the picture and I was made his assistant. It was in going over the script with Clay that I made some startling discoveries.

The "Scorpion" of Padgett's story is a human fiend who preys upon motion-picture celebrities through their weakness for drugs and occult practices. His most valuable pawn is the lovely screen star, "Lucille Ames," whose career he has financed to gain his own ends. She later falls in love with a novelist, "Leslie Porter," who tries to save her, but the "Scorpion," fearful that she may betray him, forces her to commit suicide.

What struck me immediately was the obvious resemblance to Padgett's own life. His fiancée, the beautiful star Sybil Dale, had recently killed herself and willed to him her home, Eagle's Nest. How much of *The Scorpion* was fact, then? I kept my suspicions from Clay, but we both got a shock when we found that the final sequence of the story had not yet been written.

Late that night Elinor Dean, the lovely "Lucille Ames" of the picture, summoned me to her hotel. She was almost hysterical as she told me of having been visited by the ghost

There came a sudden, sharp, hissing sound—and instantly a dense, greenish smoke filled the room, choking us!

of Sybil Dale who had seemed to urge her to leave Hollywood. When the phantom vanished, Elinor had found on her table—a blood-red square of paper, with a writhing golden scorpion in one corner!

WE went immediately to consult Ali Cassim, a Hindu mystic in the cast. He revealed to Elinor the terrifying information that she was to be the victim of the unscrupulous "Scorpion"—a living fiend! But he predicted that the love which would develop between her and myself would be an invincible safeguard.

One evening, a short time later, we began the filming of some scenes in Laurel Canyon. Padgett was present, his head swathed in bandages. Suddenly, in the midst of

Hollywood

By GEORGE T. OSBORN
As told to Wilbert Wadleigh



"No, you don't, Lu Pi!" Taylor snarled at the Chinese girl. "I've got you—dead to rights!"

the action, Elinor made a wild lunge at Padgett and would have stabbed the blind man in the back, had I not caught her. As she collapsed in my arms a volley of shots streamed at us from across the road and a car whizzed out of the woods. A motorcycle officer, an "extra," raced in pursuit, but failed to overtake the car.

Cassim revived Elinor and before taking her home, gave me permission to tell Clayton Caldwell the true story of the Scorpion. I did, and the next day, while lunching with Padgett, Clay vowed to stand by us. Word had just come of a successful raid on the "Scorpion's" den, when Caldwell shrieked and pitched headlong to the floor.

We summoned Cassim, who recognized symptoms of Twyang-Chi—an oriental, and often fatal, state of trance.

The Hindu asked permission to use extreme measures to save Clay, and in the tense silence that followed, all eyes were turned on Taylor, Padgett's secretary. Why? I wondered. Who was Taylor?

CALDWELL'S life was at stake, and I was determined to discover the nature of the subtle secret that linked Padgett, Taylor and Cassim.

"See here, Padgett," I exclaimed, "are you going to let Cassim save Clay or not? What's Taylor got to do with it—and why all this fuss about his attitude? Is he your secretary—or something else?"

There was an embarrassed silence. Cassim regarded me with twinkling eyes, and Taylor favored me with a scowl.

"I see no reason why Osborn should remain in ignorance of your true status, Jim," Padgett remarked—obviously addressing Taylor, though the latter's given name was Arthur, I had thought. "Osborn is with us in this thing to the finish."

Taylor's scowl faded, and his jaw set.

"I guess you're right, Frank," he said gruffly, eyeing me sharply. "For your information, Osborn," he added, extracting a badge from his pocket and holding it before my eyes, "I am actually Jim Kennedy, Special Officer of the Los Angeles District Attorney's Office, assigned to investigate the matter of Sybil Dale's death and the whole 'Scorpion' case in general."

I could only stare at him, utterly astonished.

"YOU see, Osborn," Padgett said quietly, "I am a personal friend of District Attorney Fenton J. Randall, who, though he prefers not to have it known, is interested in matters of a psychic and occult nature. Therefore, when poor Sybil committed suicide some months ago, I went to Randall and laid the whole case before him. I told him how Sybil had been the miserable pawn of an arch-criminal and human fiend who was known to his associates as the 'Scorpion.' I revealed the wiles of this beast, and his Devil-worshipping cult, *The Sivanians*; and I begged him to give me official assistance and protection so that I could expose this monster, and release his victims."

His voice trembled with emotion, and I knew he was thinking of the departed star, Sybil Dale, whom he had loved more than life.

"Randall was amazed when I told him of these things; frankly, he was highly skeptical. But I assured him that the 'Scorpion' existed, and was not only a preyer upon credulous and moneyed motion-picture celebrities and screen aspirants, but also the head of a gigantic criminal and narcotic ring.

"In the end, Randall ordered a quiet investigation made concerning the manner of Sybil's death. It was proven that she had taken opium; in short, that she was really, for all legal purposes, a suicide. But I knew better, and later confirmed my belief, prompted in my efforts by Sybil's death-bed remark: 'I don't know why I did it, Frank; I have no recollection of taking poison, but perhaps it's the best way out.'

"I now know that the 'Scorpion' hypnotized her, as he was readily able to do, and caused her to take her life—so that she would not reveal to me further secrets. In other words," his voice became harsh, "I was the indirect cause of her death. I had learned enough of the truth to make her continued existence dangerous to this monster.

"Months have passed since then—months of the grimmest struggle between right and wrong that this country has known in modern times, at least from a sociological standpoint. I wrote the novel, *The Scorpion*, as propaganda designed to warn possible victims of this fiend, and to show him that I was determined to break up his devilish organization and expose him. As you know, Osborn, my life has been threatened repeatedly; through a so-called accident at the studio a few days ago, when a mercury lamp exploded, I lost my eyesight."

He trembled with the emotion that consumed him, and I was deeply touched at the revelations my demand had produced. As for Taylor, as I shall continue to call him, and Cassim, their features were full of respect and compassion. "It is enough, Osborn," Padgett resumed, more calmly, "that you know the why and therefore of all this. We are

united in a war to the finish with the 'Scorpion' and all he stands for, and thank God that there is a District Attorney in this country who is intelligent enough to realize the forces at the enemy's disposal, and courageous enough to give me the aid of such men as Jim Kennedy in my fight against this monster."

At last everything was clear to me—everything but the identity of the "Scorpion." At last I comprehended the true greatness of Frank Padgett; the love he bore the departed Sybil Dale, and the extent of his valiant efforts to avenge the tragedy of her life and purge Hollywood of a human fiend who had set himself up as a satanic emperor of a vast criminal domain.

"Now then," Taylor said, "I can speak freely. As an officer of the law, the question of ethics brought up a while back, concerning Cassim's right to attend Caldwell, naturally comes under my jurisdiction. That is why I hesitated. However, as far as I can officially see," he added, with an ironic smile, "Cassim is within his rights as a mystic, and for all I officially know, that thing-a-majig with the lenses and that electric machine are merely accessories of his trade, designed to further mystify the uninitiated. Carry on, Cassim."

We all laughed—the first laugh we had enjoyed in many days, I am sure, and certainly under strange circumstances, with poor Clay lying in a trance in the same room.

"WELL," Cassim said gravely, viewing Caldwell, "were I a certified American specialist, I would have liked to have made use of atropine, for the purpose of dilating the pupil of Caldwell's eye so that I could more readily determine the true appearance of the back of it through the ophthalmoscope I have been using."

He replaced the instrument carefully in his case.

"However," he concluded, "I am satisfied that poor Caldwell's vitality, combined with other things, will pull him through. These other things are: first, to maintain the function of nutrition; second, to repeat electro-therapy treatments, and third and most important, to put occult forces into play to destroy the invisible chains that bind his mind to that of the enemy. To this end, Padgett, Madame Fennier and I must make *Eagle's Nest* our temporary abode, and I am certain that a few hours or days will see Caldwell himself again."

Cassim asked me, as the director's most intimate friend, to attend to such of Caldwell's affairs as required looking after, and assured me that I could safely trust him with Clay's case.

It was with relief that I drove toward Hollywood a few minutes later, for I was certain that, in Cassim's able hands, Clay would eventually be himself. I determined that Elinor should not fall a victim to the "Scorpion" and was somehow confident that the affection between us would, as Cassim had once said, prove too powerful a barrier for the enemy's forces to surmount.

She joined me at luncheon at a confectioner's on the Boulevard, and there I revealed to her in detail what had occurred. She was greatly affected by Caldwell's plight, but was even more confident than I that Cassim would succeed in restoring him.

"So Taylor is really an agent of the District Attorney's Office!" she mused. "Like you, George, I have always felt that he was playing a part. But what of this raid you were so jubilant about over the telephone? There is nothing in the afternoon papers about it."

"The report came in just before Caldwell was stricken," I explained, "and Padgett was quite happy at the news. As I understand it, he managed to locate the secret rendezvous of the 'Scorpion's' Devil cult, *The Sivanians*. Then he tipped



off the police, who made a raid and took thirty prisoners. Among these were eleven half-crazed victims, members of the cult, who have been listed as missing for months. But the master mind, the 'Scorpion', was not taken. And his astral visit to *Eagle's Nest* this morning, attended by Caldwell's misfortune, indicates that the enemy is not only still at liberty, but also fully possessed of his evil powers."

Elinor shuddered.

"Oh, George—who is the 'Scorpion'? When will this all end?"

"It will have to end before long," I said grimly. "Cassim and Padgett seem to have an inkling as to who the monster is, but they cannot be sure, otherwise immediate steps would be taken to apprehend him. It seems as though their hopes lie in the original plan: to go ahead with the filming of the picture, and wait for the 'Scorpion', in his desperate efforts to stop the production, to betray himself. It is a strange situation, but then we are dealing with a strange criminal."

IT was two-fifty when Elinor and I entered the Summit Studio administration building, and a few minutes later Padgett arrived, accompanied by his special attendant and Taylor. A conference followed in the office of Sam Weinberg, studio manager, and president of the company. In the presence of members of the cast and technical staff, I was officially tendered the obligation of directing the ill-fated picture's concluding sequences.

While the set was being made ready, we went to the projection-room to view the "rushes," or prints, of the scenes Caldwell had filmed the preceding day and evening. Satisfied that the stuff Clay had taken would require no re-takes, we made our way to Stage Three, where seven scenes of an important sequence in the picture were to be filmed.

A telephoned report came in from Cassim, informing us that Caldwell's condition was slightly improved, and, heartened by the news, we plunged into the work on hand.

The set was supposed to be the bedroom of Lucille Ames, the unfortunate heroine of the story, played by Elinor. The scenes were to depict her dying confessions to Leslie Porter, played by Phillip Benton—and, finally, Lucille's tragic death, and Porter's solemn oath to track down the "Scorpion" and expose him.

The interior represented was actually a faithful reproduction of the bedroom at *Eagle's Nest*, where the late Sybil Dale had passed into the Beyond. Elinor and I knew that Lucille Ames, whom she portrayed, was but the fictitious name of Sybil Dale, and that Leslie Porter, as the novelist lover, was none other than Frank Padgett in real life. It was no wonder that, knowing these things, I picked up my megaphone with trembling fingers. Elinor, clad in the exotic oriental pajamas that had once graced the lovely and tragic Sybil Dale, took her place on the floor by the bed, where she was to be discovered by the maid. The latter, a young Chinese girl by the name of Lu Pi, though new to pictures, was well versed in her rôle, for she had been Sybil Dale's maid, and the first to discover the plight of her mistress.

I rehearsed the action: a fade-in shot framing the doorway, with the Chinese maid appearing to remind her mistress that she had an appointment with "Leslie Porter" and depicting, by her facial expression, the startling discovery of her stricken mistress. At this point the cameras were to catch Elinor's writhing form on the carpet, while the maid was to hurry to her side and lift her to a sitting position.

But Lu Pi seemed nervous and unstrung, despite the fact that she had appeared in previous sequences of the picture.

Three times I called her to the doorway, and cued her to "discover" her mistress in distress. Yet each time her nervous tension was such that she failed miserably to make the proper, unsuspecting entrance. Her trouble was that she anticipated what she was to discover before she was to make the discovery.

"Come, come!" Padgett exclaimed at length, annoyed at the waste of time. "Just be yourself, Lu Pi. Do just as you did on this occasion in real life."

"But, I know the mistress is sick!" protested the girl doggedly. "I know that before I come in—I feel it, Mr. Frank—"

"What?" Padgett cried, for the 'script called for no such knowledge. "You were not surprised?" He referred to the actual tragedy.

She hesitated, and her oval features took on an enigmatical expression.

"Maybe—I don't know," she faltered. "I see what you wish for me to look; I try now again."

I rehearsed her bit once more, and this time she made her entry with the proper nonchalance, "discovered" the plight of her mistress, and registered the proper degree of horror and concern. We went through the entire scene, and Padgett was satisfied from my report that I could go ahead and film it.

I did so, and obtained three takes, all of them good.

The next scene showed Lu Pi getting Elinor into bed, and calling up a physician on the boudoir telephone. Elinor was to interrupt her with the spoken title: "Get word—to Mr. Porter!" The maid, completing the call to the doctor, was then to call the novelist, and on learning that he had left his hotel a few minutes before, to communicate this information to Elinor by means of a spoken title. The scene ended with the maid hurrying out of the room.

This bit of the picture was filmed successfully, and we set up for a new angle. The ensuing scene would show Lu Pi returning with a cup of tea, and depict her successful efforts to force her stricken mistress to drink it.

The new camera angle required a change in the lighting arrangement, and the Kleigs and Cooper-Hewitts were shut off while they were being moved. It was during this interval that my attention was attracted to what I at first thought was a diffused ray of sunlight on the wall near the head of the bed in which Elinor lay.

"**D**ID you notice that light spot before, Charlie?" I remarked to the first cameraman.

"What spot?" he inquired.

"On the rear wall, just to the left of the bed; I suppose the arcs killed it in the last shots, but it's from the outside, and you'd better 'kill' it."

"But I don't see it, George," Charlie protested, staring at the wall. "You must be mistaken."

And I was mistaken—for it was not a light spot I saw, but a faint, ghostly shape! As I stared at the form, Elinor sat up suddenly in bed and called to me in a quavering voice. I hurried over.

"George," she whispered, her lips trembling, "don't let on, but—she is here; I feel her presence, and she's trying to warn me about something—"

"Who?" I whispered. I was trying to make out the form, but it had vanished.

"The ghost of—Sybil Dale! Oh, George, what does she want?"

"I'll tell Frank about it," I said, considerably shaken.

Can YOU guess who the "Scorpion" is? The identity of the fiendish masquerader is revealed in these pages. Don't miss the thrilling conclusion of Hollywood's strangest mystery!

"I saw it, too, but it seems to have disappeared, now——"

"Oh, no," she said quickly. "I can still feel her presence—almost hear her voice. Tell Padgett, please."

I hurried over to Frank and acquainted him with the situation. His body tensed, and he turned his bandaged face in Elinor's direction, as if trying to see the phantom of his unfortunate sweetheart.

"It is a warning, Osborn," he whispered, "a warning that the 'Scorpion' is about to strike. But thank God we are prepared. Tell Elinor not to worry; go ahead with the scene."

I approached Elinor with some misgivings, reporting what Padgett had said, and she promised to go through with the scene if I would keep a careful watch.

"I'm dreadfully nervous," she said, "but I suppose it won't matter in the picture."

I went back to the cameras, adopting a matter-of-fact attitude, for on no account did I want the technical staff to suspect that something sinister was about to happen.

"I GUESS I was mistaken about that light spot, Charlie," I said to the head cameraman. "All set with the two-inch lens?"

"O. K.," he responded.

"We'll rehearse the action now, Lu Pi," I called to the Chinese maid. "At 'camera' you come in with the cup of tea, and simply go to Elinor and get her to take it. Elinor, you know what to do; you are supposed to be in a semitrance, and Lu Pi has to raise your head, and force you to drink the tea."

"I understand, George," she called, with a brave smile.

God, how my heart went out to her!

Lu Pi nodded her understanding, her ivory features tense, and took her place outside the door ready to go on. The property boy handed her a tray, upon which was a cup and saucer and a spoon.

The action went quite smoothly, though the Chinese girl seemed a bit too tense. I called her attention to the fact, but she, looking at me absently, seemed unable to understand.

"Did you hear me, Lu Pi?" I called sharply. "You're too stiff. Just be yourself; that's all I ask."

She nodded slightly, in a sort of preoccupied way.

"Go ahead, George," Padgett grunted, "take a crack at the scene."

"All right; we'll try a shot," I called. "Lights! Take your place, Lu Pi—tea, Henry," to the prop boy.

Lu Pi took her place just outside the door. Henry poured the cup half full of tea, and handed her the tray.

"Ready," I said. "Start grinding, boys—camera!" This last was Lu Pi's cue to enter.

She opened the door, and came in, the tray shaking slightly in her grasp. I had to remind her to close the door, and then she proceeded to the bed, setting the tray down on a taboret. Watching her sharply, I saw one of her tiny hands slip covertly into the pocket of her jacket, and flash swiftly out again, passing over the cup. Hurriedly, too hurriedly for the required action, she raised Elinor's head, bringing the cup to her lips.

But in three bounds I reached the bed and snatched the cup from her. With a shrill scream, she slipped by me, making for the door of the stage.

"No you don't, little girl!" came Taylor's gruff voice, and I saw that he had caught her. "Good work, Osborn, you just beat me to it."

The set was soon in an uproar of excitement. Elinor slipped out of bed, and hurried over to me, snuggling into the protection of my arm. Lu Pi struggled frantically to escape from Taylor, but she was no match for him.

"Don't spill the contents of that cup, Osborn," he warned me. I set it on a table, and told Henry to watch it. Taylor thrust his hand into the pocket of Lu Pi's satin jacket, and brought out a red paper.

"Hm!" he exclaimed. "Somebody hold this Chinese devil

for a minute. I think we've got the goods on her now!"

Two burly electricians volunteered, and Taylor unfolded the paper, revealing a small quantity of grayish powder. He sniffed at it, and a grim smile twisted his lips.

"Opium—with a heavy percentage of morphine!" he grunted. "God knows how much she dropped in that tea, but we'll find out in short order."

Elinor gave a shudder, and I led her to a canvas chair.

"Well, Lu Pi," Taylor addressed the Chinese girl, extracting a pair of handcuffs from a pocket, "this looks bad for you, very bad."

But there was no need to handcuff her then, for with a low frightened moan, she fainted.

A half hour later, in Weinberg's office, Padgett, Elinor, Taylor, Rosenthal—the studio production head—Lu Pi, myself, and two detectives from the Hollywood Police Station, were awaiting the report of the police chemist, who was subjecting the cup of liquid to tests. At length he straightened up, his features stern.

"Had Miss Dean swallowed this stuff," he said, "she would have died within twenty minutes, and nothing could have saved her. I find that there were no less than seven grains of opium, and two of morphine put into this tea, and I have reason to believe that a deadly Indian poison known as Dhatura is included in the mixture."

I met Elinor's horrified gaze, well knowing that it might have been several minutes before we would have learned that she was poisoned.

"Who got you to do this?" Taylor demanded of Lu Pi. But before she could reply, there came a sudden, sharp hissing sound—and instantly a dense, greenish smoke filled the room, choking us!

"George!" gasped Elinor, from somewhere near me, and I groped for her hand and found it, dragging her in the direction of the window, which I knew to be open.

We encountered the others, all groping about, choking, and giving vent to curses or hoarse cries.

"No, you don't, Lu Pi!" Taylor snarled at the Chinese girl. "I've got you—dead to rights! Open the door, somebody!"

Someone who was near the door opened it, and at once the vaporish stuff drifted toward the window in thin, ghostly streamers.

As the atmosphere cleared, Weinberg leaped from his desk, pointing to a square of red paper that lay upon it.

"My—my God! what is this? How did it get here?"

My blood turned cold, for I had seen such a sheet of red paper before, and so had Elinor. We advanced, fascinated, to the desk, and one of the detectives picked the paper up gingerly.

UPON it, stamped in the lower right-hand corner, was a golden scorpion. And across the face of the red paper was printed in letters that seemed to have been burned into the sheet:

*I concede this trick, Padgett,
but watch your trumps.*

"The 'Scorpion'!" Elinor cried. "The 'Scorpion'!"

We stared at the sinister message in stupefied silence. The sight of that golden scorpion, with its spread claws, was enough to inspire terror in anyone who, like myself, had reason to know the character and power of the human monster who had just attempted to take Elinor's life.

"How—how did this thing get here?" gasped the detective who was holding the message. "And that green smoke, or whatever it was——"

He coughed. The acrid taste of the strange, greenish substance that had filled the room a moment before was still in my own mouth, and my eyes smarted and watered.

The door to the hall closed, and a key turned in the lock. Taylor—or Jim Kennedy, special investigator of the Los Angeles District Attorney's Office, as we now knew

him to be—had locked the door. He drew an automatic.

"No one will leave this room," he snapped, "until the District Attorney gets here. That will take all of a half hour, so you might as well make yourselves comfortable—"

"Please, Mr. Officer," the Chinese girl pleaded, "I no think what I do; it is not me who try poison Miss Elinor—"

"Tell that to the marines, Lu Pi," Kennedy snorted. "We've had your number for some time. I'll give you a chance to talk in a few minutes, but shut up for the present, understand? Watch her, Bill," to the detective near her.

Kennedy approached the desk, and, extracting a silk handkerchief from his pocket, spread it over his fingers. Then he took the Scorpion message from the other detective.

"Hm!" he grunted. "A golden scorpion as a signature. Quite theatrical. 'I concede this trick, Padgett, but watch your trumps,'" he read aloud. "What do you think of that, Frank?"

PADGETT laughed harshly through the bandages that swathed his head.

"An empty gesture, by a human devil who knows that he is doomed!" he said scornfully, though there was a tremor in his voice. "Elinor—are you all right now?"

"I—yes, Frank," she managed to say. "But that smoke or whatever it was nearly blinded me."

"It is harmless," Padgett said shortly, "merely a dense vapor made of tannic acid and copper sulphate—just black magic."

"But who turned it loose? Somebody in the room here?" asked the detective who had picked up the message.

Padgett shrugged.

"Perhaps, but I hardly think so. He who signs himself the 'Scorpion' would have been able to accomplish this effect and leave the message, without so much as entering the room."

Incredulous exclamations greeted his remark. Kennedy muttered to himself as he placed the red paper on the desk, spreading his handkerchief over it gently, and picked up the telephone.

"Kennedy speaking," he said crisply, when he got his connection. "Call the D. A. to the phone, pronto!" The Chinese girl began moaning, struggling to slip her wrists out of the handcuffs, and he ordered her to be quiet. "Hello, Fenton," as the District Attorney answered, "this 'Scorpion' business—an attempted poisoning. . . . Yes. Elinor Dean, the leading woman. We caught the Chinese girl, Lu Pi, dead to rights. . . . In Weinberg's office now, at the Summit Studio, and I'm holding everybody. Yes, Padgett's here; better hurry out and bring Dick and Sam, and a good man from the Identification Bureau. . . . Fine!"

He hung up the receiver, regarding Weinberg sharply.

"Are you in the habit of wearing gloves in your office, Mr. Weinberg?" he asked pleasantly, glancing meaningly at the gloves the studio manager wore.

Weinberg favored him with a scowl.

"Just what do you mean, Kennedy?" he growled.

"I asked you a question," evenly.

"No. I just came in, a minute before you brought Lu Pi here, and the rest of these people. I suppose I forgot to remove my gloves, but if the fact bothers you, I'll do so now."

He was manifestly angry. I studied his heavy features narrowly, aware of Kennedy's thought. Could Weinberg, president and manager of the Summit Studios, be—the "Scorpion"? The possibility staggered my imagination.

But Kennedy merely shrugged, smiling.

"Don't be so touchy, Weinberg," he said calmly. "I was only curious, and your explanation is accepted—"

Weinberg's features went an apoplectic red.

"My explanation?" he fumed. "Why, you—"

Kennedy turned his back upon him, his keen gray eyes roving around the room and taking in everything.

Elinor and I stood with our backs to the rear window,

which opened out upon the company street, with its rows of stages on either side. We were both considerably upset by what had just occurred.

"Mooney," Kennedy spoke to the officer who was guarding Lu Pi, "that door was closed, and you were standing with your back to it when that gas, or greenish vapor materialized?"

"Right," Mooney responded. "I know the door was closed, because I was leaning against it. Of course, when you hollered for somebody to open the door so the draft would blow that gas out of here, I opened it. I hadn't moved more than a foot or two away."

Kennedy scowled, extracting a cigar, biting the tip off savagely and lighting it. I saw him glance at each window in turn, and note that they were screened. He strode over to Lu Pi.

"Now you can do some talking, girl," he said gruffly, thrusting his automatic half in its holster, and drawing up a chair beside her. "And if you don't come clean with me, you'll squawk when the District Attorney gets here. Heap savvy? Might as well save him the trouble." He leaned forward belligerently. "Where did you get that poison?" he snapped.

She cringed away, her mouth opening in an affrighted gasp, her eyes wide and staring.

"I—I no tell!" she said faintly.

"Where did you get it?"

She lowered her head, burying her face in her manacled hands.

"Flom—flom Chinatown—" she sobbed.

"Who in Chinatown? Come on, out with it."

"I—no tell; never will tell!" she moaned, looking up defiantly.

"Why did you try to poison Miss Dean?" Kennedy tried another tack, doggedly.

She made no response.

"Why?" Kennedy repeated.

"I no tell you why—because—I see lawyer man first."

Kennedy laughed dryly, getting up and pacing the room.

"Padgett," he said suddenly, "blessed if I don't think that Lu Pi poisoned the late Sybil Dale, from what has happened today."

"I shouldn't wonder," the blind novelist remarked somberly. "Lu Pi, we know Lu Shen Set, your father; we know how you came to enter Sybil Dale's service. If you don't want to heap further dishonor upon your august father, you'd better make a complete confession to Kennedy."

The girl quivered, but her lips set determinedly, and her almond eyes flashed.

"I make confession to lawyer man. You no find my father; he go China."

KENNEDY stared at her. He started to say something, and thought better of it, returning to the desk and lifting the handkerchief that covered the Scorpion message.

The telephone rang while he was studying it, and Weinberg answered.

"No," he spoke into the mouthpiece, "neither Rosenthal nor myself are to be disturbed until further notice, and that goes for Padgett, Osborn, and Miss Dean, I suppose—wait a minute," as Padgett held up a hand.

"Is the call for me?" Padgett asked.

"Well, that Hindu, Cassim, is on the wire; wants to talk to me, or you, but—"

"Put him on; it's something important," Padgett said, rising.

The attendant guided him to the desk, and Weinberg relinquished his chair. Padgett took up the receiver, and a short conversation ensued. He seemed pleased at what the Hindu had to report, and in return sketched over what had occurred at the studio.

"Well, Osborn," he said, hanging up the receiver, "here's some good news for some of us! Cassim says that Clayton

Caldwell is improving very rapidly under his treatment."

"Thank God!" I exclaimed fervently, and both Kennedy and Elinor gave vent to expressions of relief. None of us had dared to hope that poor Clay would be so soon recovered from the trance into which the "Scorpion" had cast him.

"What did Cassim say when you told him of the attempted poisoning of Elinor, and the Scorpion message?" Kennedy asked.

Padgett hesitated, and then beckoned to him. As Kennedy leaned over, the blind novelist whispered something to him that caused him to nod his head vigorously.

Padgett was assisted back to his chair again, and Kennedy approached the Chinese girl once more.

"Lu Pi," he said grimly, "if you'll tell me the name of this 'lawyer man' you hope to engage, I'll take it upon myself to notify him."

She regarded him suspiciously.

"I wait," she snapped. "Meantime, you tell me charge which you arrest me."

The girl was manifestly no fool. But Kennedy was equal to the emergency.

"[ARREST you, Lu Pi," he said, "for the murder of your late mistress, the former Summit star, Sybil Dale; for the attempted poisoning of Miss Elinor Dean, here, and for the possession of narcotics." The girl quivered, her features working. "And let me tell you that you'd better get a half dozen lawyers. But I'm offering to give you an even break—I'll notify your counsel now, by telephone."

She made no answer, and Kennedy, with a grunt, seated himself again beside her.

"Lu Pi," he said more gently, "we know that you have been merely an agent—a tool; that you are shielding somebody. Now I'm going to give you a chance to save yourself. If you don't want to hang, you'll have to make a complete confession; tell everything; tell who this fiend is who forced you to do these things, and who calls himself the 'Scorpion'."

She broke into a paroxysm of sobbing.

"The 'Scorpion'!" she gasped, terror in her voice.

"You admit that the 'Scorpion' is responsible," Kennedy said sharply. "Now who is he? Come, he can't hurt you, and it's his life in preference to yours. Out with it: who is the 'Scorpion'?"

"He kill me! I—no tell; I not know!" she gasped.

Kennedy's eyes took on a triumphant gleam.

"So this criminal's miserable life is worth more to you than your own, eh?" he taunted. "You'd better make up your mind, Lu Pi. You're wasting precious time, and I can assure you that the District Attorney will not give you much consideration. Come! Who is the 'Scorpion'? Is he in this office?"

Her lips quivered, beginning to form a reply, and then a change came over her. Her features set like a mask; her eyes closed, and she dropped back in her chair stiffly. Kennedy gripped her arm, shaking her.

"Come, come; none of that foolishness, now!" he snapped. "You're going to talk. Snap out of it!"

But she remained immobile. Alarmed, Kennedy rose, raising one of her eyelids, and uttering an exclamation. The eyeball had not moved upward, as it would in a faint or in sleep, but had taken on an inanimate appearance, the pupil contracted to a small point. The hideous truth burst upon me, when I saw that she was still breathing: some powerful will, no doubt that of the mysterious "Scorpion," had put her in a trance! Was this monster among us now?

Kennedy ordered Mooney to get a glass of water, and the detective hurried over to the cooler, returning quickly with a tumbler full. Kennedy took it, dipping his fingers in the liquid, and shaking some on the girl's face. There was not the slightest response. Nor was there any reaction when he slapped her on the cheek.

"Is there a doctor on the premises?" Kennedy demanded

of Weinberg, above the excited murmur of all our voices.

"Yes. We have a small emergency hospital on the lot." He picked up the telephone. "Send Doctor Warner to my office right away. Yes, Weinberg talking."

"She certainly seems to have fallen into a trance," Kennedy observed with a puzzled frown, "and I know she isn't shamming."

"It is a trance," Padgett said with emotion, "a spell that has been cast over her by that unspeakable fiend. There is only one man in this country, aside from the 'Scorpion,' who can call her back to consciousness—the same man who is at this very moment performing a similar service for Clayton Caldwell."

Weinberg and Rosenthal both uttered surprised exclamations.

"What's that?" Weinberg cried. "Caldwell was simply ill, you said, and now—"

"He is in a trance, under an occult spell known as *Twyang-Chi*, cast over him by the 'Scorpion'."

Weinberg stared at him.

"See here, Padgett," he said grimly, "the time has come for a show-down about this 'Scorpion' business. You have a controlling interest in the Summit Company, and you've had a free hand in filming your picture—*The Scorpion*. I begin to see now that, when you wrote the story, you wrote of facts, or used facts in it—that the character of Lucille Ames, played by Elinor Dean, was in real life none other than the late Sybil Dale, once a Summit star herself—"

"You're doing fine, Sam," Padgett interposed drily. "I'll lay my cards on the table—all but the trumps."

He leaned back in his chair, and we who already knew the story listened in rapt silence while the gallant director told the others his unbelievable discoveries about Sybil Dale, about the "Scorpion" and his despicable practices.

When he had finished, Rosenthal gave an impatient grunt.

"Rubbish!" he said scornfully, staring at Padgett keenly, and exchanging glances with Weinberg.

Detective Mooney laughed, a bit uncertainly, looking at Kennedy; but Kennedy's features were solemn, and his eyes were on Padgett.

"You are skeptical, Rosenthal," Padgett said, turning his bandaged head in the direction of the production manager. "It is not strange. Perhaps you even doubt my sanity, but that does not concern me.

"I say I learned these things. It happens that, all my life, I have been a student of psychic and occult matters. Here, I found, was a problem: a monstrous criminal combination of material, occult, and spiritistic evil under a mysterious head. Even had I not loved Sybil Dale, I would have pitted my every resource to uncover this organization, and to expose the monster who had conceived it.

"[KNEW a world-famous man of science, a Hindu, who was just that—a man of profound scientific knowledge, and also a mystic of unusual attainments. Some of you know who he is: Ali Cassim—a Hindu of royal lineage, who at one time was chief surgeon to the ruling Prince of Bengal. Cassim was in New Orleans, and, such is our friendship, he gave up important interests there, and came to Hollywood to advise and assist me. I turned over to him my home in Beverly Hills.

"But before we could learn the identity of the 'Scorpion', and certain other facts, the monster contrived to get rid of Sybil—making it appear that she had committed suicide. We now know the truth; that she was poisoned—by that Chinese girl, Lu Pi, who was her maid."

His voice trembled, and grew husky, and he asked for a glass of water. The attendant secured one, and helped the blind man to loosen his bandages so that he could drink.

"To resume," Padgett went on, "we knew that there was but one way to fight this fiend, and that was with his own weapons—occult, spiritistic, and psychological methods. At the same time, we knew that there were a number of credu-

lous victims in Hollywood who were falling into his clutches.

"I wrote the novel, *The Scorpion*, chiefly as a warning to these persons. Thank God, some of them understood; they came to me, and supplied me with valuable evidence and testimony. But there was another reason behind my writing that novel—to confront the real 'Scorpion' with what I knew, or part of what I knew, and infuriate him into making some blunder.

"He tried to put me out of the way; even made a clever attempt to stop publication of the book. Cassim and I saw that we had aroused his hatred, and we conceived the idea of filming the story as well. We knew that by so doing—by having actors portray the various rôles—we would set in motion powerful psychic vibrations that could not fail to interfere with the 'Scorpion's' sinister work in Hollywood. Thus we hoped to goad him into attempting to stop the production.

"AND we were right. Most of you know the misfortunes and delays that have attended the filming of the picture, as well as the explosion of the mercury lamp that came near ending my life. Most recently, we have had the attempts on the life of Miss Dean, and the enemy's successful removal of Clayton Caldwell, the director I had entrusted with the completion of the picture, by placing him in a trance."

Padgett chuckled drily.

"By each thrust, he revealed to us details that fitted in with the mass of evidence we were gathering. And yesterday, we were able to locate the secret rendezvous of his cult; this morning, picked officers from both the Los Angeles Police Department, and the United States Secret Service, raided the den, and took thirty prisoners. Two of the so-called priests of the cult made a full confession last night to the District Attorney, and the forces of the law and government are now rounding up other members of the huge ring."

He paused, and a tense, breathless silence greeted him.

"I knew," Padgett continued, "that it would only be a matter of time before right would win out, and the enemy would betray himself. Today he has delivered himself into my hands!"

His voice had risen to a high pitch, and his body quivered with emotion. He raised a hand; it must have been a signal, for Kennedy drew his automatic, his eyes roving over the room, and ordered the other two detectives to draw their weapons. Elinor, with a frightened gasp, snuggled close to me, and I put my arm about her.

"Gentlemen," Padgett declared, "just before entering this office, I ordered the cameramen assigned to my production to set up their outfits on the sidewalks outside this building, framing the entrance; told them to begin cranking when officers came out with this monster handcuffed to them.

"Within a few minutes, this scene will be filmed," he gloated, "for the 'Scorpion' is here—in this room!"

I hardly dared to breathe as I scanned the faces of those in the room. Every one, save that of the Chinese girl, was turned upon Padgett, mirroring various emotions. But the eyes of Kennedy and the other officers roved everywhere, their automatics ready for any emergency.

Footsteps and voices sounded in the hallway outside, and someone knocked sharply on the door.

"Who is it?" Kennedy demanded.

"Doctor Warner," came a masculine voice, "and there are some officers—"

"Let us in, Jim," came another masculine voice.

Kennedy smiled.

"The District Attorney," he announced.

He turned the key, opening the door. A small, bearded man—Doctor Warner—entered first, staring from us to the inert form of the Chinese girl. He was followed by four athletic and determined-looking men in plain clothes. One, a keen-eyed, square-jawed man of perhaps forty-five,

his dark hair sprinkled with gray at the temples, I knew to be Fenton J. Randall, then District Attorney of Los Angeles County.

"I was delayed," Doctor Warner addressed Weinberg, manifestly astonished by the grim gathering, "setting a fracture—"

"That's all right, Doc," Kennedy cut him off, pointing to Lu Pi. "Look her over; trance of some sort, we think. Close and lock the door, Ray," to the last detective to enter.

He whispered something to the District Attorney, who nodded, his eyes darting about the room, examining every face. Then, slowly he stepped forward to grasp Padgett's hand, and whisper something to him. Padgett nodded vigorously, and whispered something in return. I caught one word: "message."

Randall went to the desk and, removing the handkerchief from the sinister red paper, studied the golden scorpion, and the words printed across the face of the sheet. Then, with a grunt, he beckoned to one of his men, who carried a black satchel.

"See if you can get some prints to stand out on this, Ed," he directed. The man, no doubt a fingerprint expert, set his grip on the table, opened it, and extracted the accessories of his trade.

Randall sat down on a corner of the desk.

"Now then, Jim," he said calmly, "skim over the details."

Kennedy did so. Doctor Warren interrupted the proceedings once, to state that the Chinese girl was indeed in a trance, and that she should be rushed to a hospital, but Padgett told him that this was unnecessary.

When Kennedy was concluding his report, footsteps again sounded in the hallway, followed by a knock on the door.

"Cassim!" Padgett exclaimed. "Let him in—and whoever is with him."

Kentedy opened the door, and the tall figure of the Hindu mystic appeared, the jeweled scimitar sparkling on his cream colored silk turban, his lean, dusky features a mask. Following him were two persons: an elderly woman whom I knew to be Madame Fennier, one of his mediums and assistants; and—a cry of joy escaped me at sight of his burly figure—Clayton Caldwell!

"I see that I am on time," Cassim said, with a grim smile. "My word—what an assemblage!"

I hurried forward impulsively, oblivious to the command of one of the officers to remain where I was, and grasped Caldwell's hand.

"Clay! Thank God you're yourself again!" I exclaimed.

"Thank God—and Cassim," he said with a wan smile, returning the pressure of my hand.

I DREW him back to where I had been standing, and Elinor welcomed him with feeling.

Cassim had walked over to Padgett, and they were conversing in whispers. Randall and Kennedy had joined the fingerprint expert, and were poring over the red "Scorpion" message.

"Right thumb and index finger, all right—a man," the District Attorney commented. He straightened up, glancing around. "We are going to take the prints of the right thumb and index finger of every man who was in this room at the time this message appeared. I ask everyone concerned to cooperate. No offense is intended; on the other hand, no resistance or argument will be tolerated. The persons concerned will kindly raise their right hands now, and keep them up until their prints have been taken. "Men," to the watchful officers, "you have my authority to shoot anyone who behaves suspiciously, or fails to comply with this order."

Needless to say, the hands went up—my own included, and I was the first to be selected, and called to the desk. My prints were taken, and after a short scrutiny, the Bureau man called: "eliminated."

Kennedy was next, followed by the two detectives from

the Hollywood Station, and the police chemist—all eliminated. Then Weinberg came up and was dismissed.

Padgett's attendant came next, and was eliminated. Then Padgett was called. He rose slowly and walked over to the desk. His impressions were made, and as his hand lifted, a cry broke from Kennedy.

"My God—Padgett? It can't be——!"

Elinor gave a gasp, and I dug my fingers into my palms.

"Silence!" Padgett called, stilling the murmur of voices. "There is some mistake, and I merely ask that a thorough microscopic comparison be made. This is a trick!"

THE District Attorney, considerably shaken, stared at him uncertainly. But suddenly the expert gave a cry.

"A forgery!" he declared emphatically. "Look at the pores on this red paper; compare them with those of the tented arch——"

"And the central pocket of the index—a break in the top of the loop!" exclaimed his assistant. "Let's see your index finger again, Mr. Padgett."

Padgett held it out.

"There's no break in that ridge!" the expert declared. "Mr. Randall," he addressed the District Attorney, "the prints on that message are crude forgeries, made by a stamp of some sort after being passed through the hair of the guilty person to coat it with the necessary oily secretion. But whoever he is, he bungled the job——"

"What's this?" exclaimed his superior, examining something through the microscope over the red paper. "Looks to me like a tiny bit of——"

He paused, and held a whispered conference with the District Attorney. At that moment, the gruff command of one of the detectives broke the silence:

"Keep that hand in the air, you behind the desk!"

I saw Rosenthal's hand go up. All eyes were on him.

"What happened, Bill?" Randall demanded, regarding Rosenthal sharply.

"Why," the detective said, "he let his hand drop to his chest, and it looked to me like he was rubbing his fingers on his vest. So I called him; that's all."

Randall's eyes and those of Rosenthal clashed. The lean, hawk-like features of the production manager were set like a mask, his slit of a mouth tightly compressed. And suddenly another mask-like face recurred to my mind—the hideous, evil countenance that I had seen in Cassim's beryl crystal on one eventful night. The same mouth, the same piercing eyes set in deep sockets, the same bulging forehead—in short, the face I had seen in the crystal had been the distorted features of Jules Rosenthal.

Then Rosenthal was the "*Scorpion*!"

As we stared at him, a shrill scream broke the silence; a scream so piercing, and so unexpected that I, for one, turned to see from whence it had come. Lu Pi had emitted it as she leaped to her feet, out of the spell that had bound her.

Even as the last echo of her cry faded, I heard a peculiar hissing sound, and was aware that a dense green vapor was rising from the floor—the same sort of vapor that had masked the delivery of the mysterious note. But above the cries that ensued, came Padgett's shrill call:

"Guard that door—don't let Rosenthal escape!"

There was the sound of a violent struggle; oaths, commands were snapped out. The vapor, as before, made my eyes smart and water, and everything was obscured.

But suddenly a body hurtled by me, and collided with Elinor, who screamed.

"George! George!" she cried; "it's——"

Her voice trailed off, and I heard her fall to the floor. Almost simultaneously I heard the window screen split.

I caught hold of an arm, and the next instant I was struggling with an adversary possessed of maniacal fury.

"I've got him!" I choked. "He tried to get out the window——"

A fist crashed against my jaw, and I toppled backward;

but I kept my grip on that arm, and Rosenthal fell on top of me, his teeth closing on my wrist. Groping hands found us as I swung my free hand with all my force and struck a pointed chin. My opponent slumped, pitching to the carpet.

Someone had sense enough to open the door, and soon the draft had blown out the vapor. With smarting eyes we stared down at the man whom fate had decreed should owe his final defeat to me.

It was Rosenthal, of course, and he was soon revived and manacled. Never will I forget the hatred in the blazing eyes he directed upon me, and his hissed remark:

"Damn you, Osborn! The stars warned me that you would be the one who'd get in my way—wreck my plans!"

It was several moments before some semblance of order was established. Rosenthal, two pair of handcuffs on his wrists, his hands behind his back, was finally subdued. The Chinese girl had tried to escape also, but failed again.

Rosenthal was dragged to the desk, where his right thumb and index finger were examined.

"I knew it!" exclaimed the fingerprint expert. "He's coated his fingers with collodion! I thought that particle we found was collodion! He must have those stamps on him. Let's have a look——"

Sure enough, a search brought to light two rubber stamps, which Rosenthal had used to forge Padgett's prints. Under the desk were found two empty four-ounce vials, and near them the stoppers that had kept in the greenish gas or vapor. It was the end for the "*Scorpion*," and he knew it.

Padgett's final coup—the filming of the real "*Scorpion*" under custody, was accomplished, when Rosenthal, in company with Lu Pi was escorted to the police car.

THE hitherto termed "hoodoo picture," *The Scorpion*, was completed under Clayton Caldwell's able direction, with added scenes to take in the astounding climax I have just recounted. In these, of course, he used doubles to play the rôles of the characters whom we could not very well film in person. The rest of us, including Weinberg and Padgett, Cassim, Caldwell, Elinor and myself, appeared in some of the final sequences of what was, to quote a cinema review: "the most astounding film production of a decade."

But the "*Scorpion*" managed to cheat the hangman at the eleventh hour, and was found in his cell at San Quentin, in a trance from which he could not be awakened. Removed to the prison hospital, he remained in this state for forty days, despite the efforts of leading specialists. Then, one morning, it was found that dissolution had finally set in—that Rosenthal had passed on.

It is enough that with the "*Scorpion*'s" capture the weirdest and most evil criminal organization of modern times was broken up.

Elinor and I were married at the close of production on the picture, and I accepted an offer to direct for another company. A little later, the Summit Studios burned down.

Before me on my desk as I conclude this account is Volume Two of *The Scorpion*, a first edition just released by Hamilton-Sarbone and Company, and sent to me from London, where Frank Padgett is undergoing an operation that is expected to restore his eyesight.

On the flyleaf he has written:

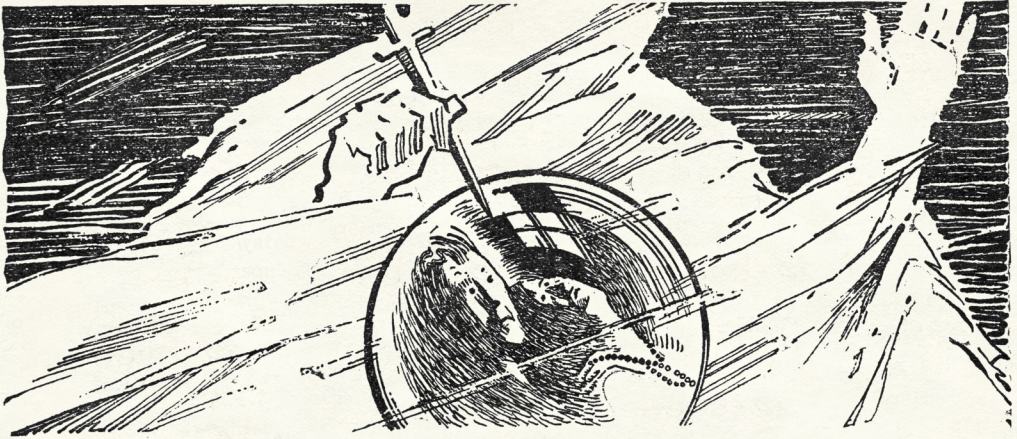
TO ELINOR AND GEORGE:

You both lived this book with me, and you know the events described in it to be true. *Verbum Sap.* But there is still another sequel, one I shall never set in story form, however, for it is too precious. Sybil's spirit has found me—here in London, of all places! Words cannot describe my happiness. Truly my blindness has been a blessing, for while groping in the shadows she came to me, and I know that she will be with me always.

Affectionately,

FRANK PADGETT.

THE END



SPIRIT TALES

*The Brown Man of Croglin—The Screaming Skull—The Uncanny Doom
of Cecil Rhodes, the Empire Builder—and Other TRUE Stories*

By COUNT CAGLIOSTRO

HERE and there in the strange history of the supernatural there crop up ghastly cases of vengeful ghosts: apparitions that haunt certain families or certain individuals until the old score of hatred is settled.

Curiously enough, although these "ghosts of vengeance" are few in number, the circumstances of their weird and horrible appearances are remarkably well attested. From India, Thibet and the Far East come endless tales of terror concerning these malignant specters; but one would scarcely expect to find them in England of the Twentieth Century.

Yet one such "ghost of vengeance" figured not long ago in a London lawsuit, while another solved a centuries-old murder.

The most remarkable instance of ghostly vengeance is probably that suffered by the Fisher family of Cumberland in the last years of the Nineteenth Century and the first years of the Twentieth. This "haunting" is also one of the most terrifying tales in all supernatural history.

For some strange and unknown reason the Fishers had left their manor house of Croglin Grange early in the 1800's. Subsequently the Grange was leased to various tenants, all of whom found it an agreeable place in which to live. There is every evidence to prove that the Grange was not a "haunted house"; there was not a single mysterious happening there in the absence of the Fisher family.

In the last years of the Nineteenth Century, all the leases had run out, and the heirs of the Fisher family—two brothers and a sister—returned to their ancestral home.

During the winter and the spring nothing happened. Then, on a sultry night in mid-July, the Terror came.

On this night Miss Fisher had retired to her room on the first floor. As was her custom, she had locked the door behind her. The leaded casement window was also locked at the moment. The Fisher brothers, one of whom was an army captain, sat in the library, smoking and talking.

The night grew hotter and the air in the room was stifling. Miss Fisher sat up in bed and reached for the wrought-iron handle that would let the window swing open.

But before she could turn it, she saw suddenly, across the long lawn and near the stone wall, two flickering bluish lights. There was something weird about those lights. They came nearer. They suddenly centered in a ghastly dark blur that flew across the lawn at an unearthly speed.

Up until then, Miss Fisher had been merely curious. Now she was struck with cold terror. The moonlight shone across the lawn and *shone through* the sinister dark shadow. She would have screamed, but she could not—for the Terror was already scratching at the window.

First there was a claw-like hand of a strange copper color, then a hideous brown face with the blue lights glaring where eyes should have been. *And the specter was picking the leads from the window!*

Miss Fisher sat hunched up in bed, powerless to move, powerless to scream. As the last lead fell from the pane, the claw-like hand of copper caught at the window-catch and turned it, and the specter was in the room!

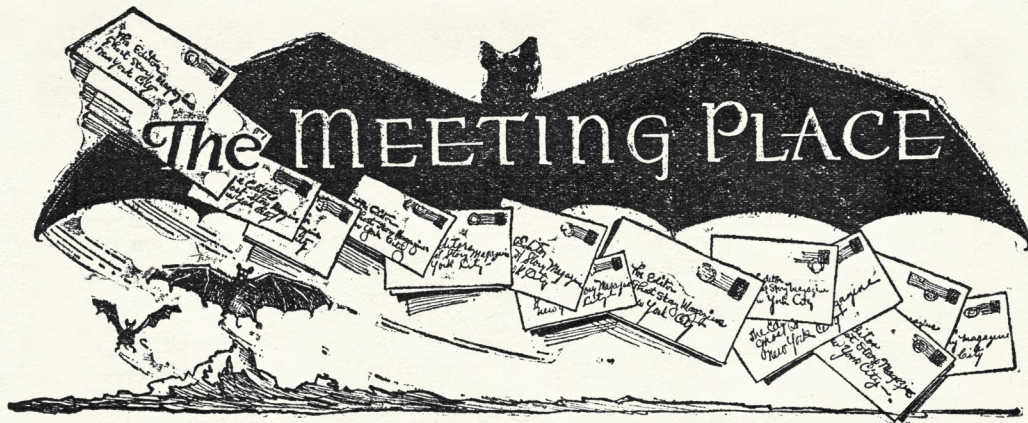
The next thing she knew, that ghastly brown face was leering above her, and the claw-like hands were twisting like cold steel in her hair.

THEN she did scream for her life, and her brothers attacked the locked door with a poker, broke it down and rushed in to see that ghastly, dark mass half through the opened window.

Captain Fisher was a good shot. He leveled his revolver as the specter leaped across the lawn with unearthly strides; he fired as it flashed through the bar of silver moonlight. The range was so close he should have hit it twice; yet while the specter was still in the full flooding glare of the moon, it shriveled to a blur and vanished like smoke.

The two brothers ran out on the lawn, rather expecting to find a dead man there. They found nothing. But all the leads were picked from that bedroom window, and there was the long, red, raking slash of claw marks across their sister's arm.

A fictional ghost story should end here: this true one does not. *(Continued on page 94)*



A Prison Warden's Story

An Editorial by ROBERT NAPIER

WHEN the Warden of a great Western prison, a hard-headed, efficient executive, relates an incident like the one quoted below, even the most blasé skeptic must open his eyes in wonder and admit that events sometimes occur which apparently defy natural explanation.

The Warden's testimony is given in his own words, as follows:

"On July 15th, 1925, a notorious criminal was brought to my prison, after a sensational murder trial. He proved to be utterly uncontrollable and seemed to take a special and violent dislike to the guard on duty at night. This guard was an elderly man named Gordon—one of the finest fellows on our staff.

"At the first opportunity the killer complained to me of inhuman treatment at the hands of Gordon, and I instituted an investigation. Brutality, on the part of the guards, is sternly prohibited. The inquiry completely exonerated Gordon, and I was left with the hunch that the convict was hoping to escape and that he wanted to get rid of Gordon because he realized the old man could not be bribed.

"Two weeks later my suspicions were corroborated in an unexpected way. The murderer made an astounding break for liberty. The body of Gordon was found in the corridor outside the cell. He was dead, his skull crushed with an iron bar. The killer was gone.

"The whole prison was thrown into an uproar. The great siren began to shriek its warning to the town near-by. Posses were organized and every available man was sent to beat the country roundabout.

"Two hours later, when things had quieted down a little, I was sitting in my office, going over the plan of the man-hunt. Suddenly there was an excited knock at the door, and one of the guards entered. His face was oddly pale.

"'He's back, sir,' he said.

"'What?'

"'The killer, sir. He came back to the gates a moment ago, his hands up above his head, his eyes staring. *But there was no one with him.*'

"'Somehow his tone sent a shiver up my spine.

"'Bring him in,' I said.

"'A moment later the killer stood before me. His face was deathly white and streaked with blood. His prison clothes were torn and bloody.

"'Well, Warden,' he snarled, 'he got me.'

"'I stared at him. 'Who—'

"'Old Gordon—*damn him!*' He stole a furtive glance over his shoulder. 'I thought I croaked him—but he followed me like a bloodhound. I wasn't

more than a mile or two from here, before I heard footsteps moving through the grass and underbrush back of me. And then I saw Gordon—and he had the drop on me! And he marched me back to this living hell. I guess he'll get a medal for it, the ————.

"And all the while Gordon lay silent and lifeless under a white sheet in the doctor's office.

"A prison warden can't afford to believe in ghosts—officially—but, I ask you, what do you think of it? Did Gordon actually make good from the world beyond? Did his spirit bring the escaped convict—his own murderer—back to justice?

"I believe he did."

READERS are invited to send brief accounts of personal experiences with the occult to *The Meeting Place*. The correspondent's full name and address must be signed to each letter but we will print only the initials or a pseudonym if it is requested. Answers to other correspondents' letters will also be printed.

Here is a chance to get in touch with persons all over the world who are interested in the supernatural!

Georgia's Famous Ghost

DOWN in Georgia we're almost as familiar with the tales of the Surrency ghost as if it had visited our own families, but for those who do not know the inside story of the prankish specter, I should like to recount some details which I found in the *Atlanta Journal*. The Reverend J. W. Tinley, a Methodist pastor, wrote the article after he had interviewed the late Hamp Surrency, nephew of the man whose home the ghost first visited. Scientists who investigated its queer manifestations admitted themselves baffled.

According to Mr. Surrency, "the ghost sort of slipped up on" them, making its appearance one night when it dumped a whole basketful of rubbish down on a group of passing youths. At first, naturally, the boys suspected a practical joker, but though they waited in the shrubbery and watched, nobody came into sight and the house remained deathly still.

The next day Mr. Surrency was summoned to his uncle's house and found the family standing up against the wall, aghast. As he walked in, his aunt said:

"Hamp, we can't keep that piece of wood on the fire!"

What followed can best be told in the young man's own words:

"I went over to the hearth and looked at the stick of firewood. It was an ordinary split of oak and seemed incapable of trickery. I picked it up and tossed it into the fireplace, but no sooner had it touched the andirons than it bounded back at my feet. I tried laying it on again, but it hopped back over the firelogs. . . . I gave up trying to refuel the fire, and my aunt pointed to the door.

"See if you can close it, Hamp," she said. "We can't."

"I pushed the door shut and heard the latch click, but when I removed my hand from the knob, the portal flew open and struck the wall with a loud bang. . . . Then I took the key and locked the door, but no sooner had I removed the key than I heard the bolt click back and the door was thrown open so violently that it shook the whole house. . . ."

Thus did the strange ghost announce itself to the Surrency family. But, not content with that, it began to take liberties with the dishes and tableware. The very next morning after the firewood episode, the breakfast dishes suddenly hopped off the table and fell in a broken mass on the floor. This happened again and again, until the elder Surrency had to provide tinware in order to save expense. The meals, however, were upset as much as ever. There was no explanation to account for the phenomenon. The table, its legs and the floor beneath it were all perfectly solid.

"We might all be sitting in a room," Mr. Surrency went on to say, "when a brick would crash against the wall and

thud to the floor. This was disconcerting, as we were never sure that the ghost's aim was accurate enough to miss us. . . ."

There was nothing shy or retiring about the Thing, either, as you may judge from this:

"The news soon spread that my uncle's house was inhabited by the ghost, and folks gathered from everywhere to watch its antics. At first many were skeptical, but after watching empty chairs move about the rooms, sticks, plows and stones hop around in the yard, most of them were convinced.

"Even the newspapers were attracted and sent their star reporters here to write up the strange doings. It was one of these men who attached the name of the 'Surrency Ghost' to the unseen being, and it has stuck through the following decades."

At last, weary of its pranks, the ghost vanished—as mysteriously as it had come. But its short stay on earth was sufficiently provoking to have rendered it immortal in the memory of the people of this State.

Atlanta, Ga.

P. F. Bullock

Spirits in Iceland

IT seems to me I've read about psychic experiences in just about every spot on the globe, but I never expected to hear about any in Iceland. Yet, would you believe it, Iceland is about the most enlightened country in the world in its attitude toward spiritualism! That hasn't always been true, though, I am told. It is largely due to the efforts of Einar Hjorleifson, the Icelandic novelist. But now, at any rate, theologians and lawyers, merchants and doctors openly avow belief in spirits.

All of this, and much more enlightening information was given us by the eminent violinist, Florizel von Reuter, who, in addition, is a renowned psychic researcher. He had just come from a tour of Iceland and delivered an address at Glasgow on his way back. You can imagine how we flocked to hear him!

Herr von Reuter reported that mediumship was quite common in Iceland, but that it usually took the form of psychic research rather than spiritualistic communication. However, one young woman medium has gained a wide reputation for her ability to diagnose and treat diseases; while another girl, a clairvoyant confined to her bed for life, has been able to describe correctly and in detail scenes and places in far distant lands to which she has never been.

An incident which greatly impressed the violinist was the statement of a young Icelandic girl, who said she saw four

tiny gnomes always hovering close to him. When he played or lectured they sat in a ring around him, and as von Reuter was boarding his ship to depart, the girl saw the gnomes perched on his shoulder. She actually bid the "little ones" farewell, with such sincerity that those who knew her and her innate honesty, could not help but believe she really saw them.

Herr von Reuter is about to publish a book based on his psychic experiences; it is to be called *The Consoling Angel*. Glasgow, Scotland. R. McT.

Ectoplasm—Or a Soul?

I DO not agree with Mr. F. Bligh Bond in his ideas of ectoplasm and spirit photography, as set forth in the June GHOST STORIES. I still believe that what he chooses to call ectoplasm is a spiritual force greater and more beautiful than any scientific "substance."

I assure you that my mind has nothing to do with the spirit faces that have been appearing on my kodak films ever since two years ago. The pictures were mostly taken on my front lawn, in strong sunlight—and the spirit images appear without my seeking. Many of them I recognize. I cannot help but believe that my friends have returned to teach the truth of immortality.

Perry, Arkansas

Jennie McLaughlin

Some More About Vampires

TO those of your readers who, like myself, enjoyed "My Strange Adventure With a Vampire," which appeared in last month's GHOST STORIES, I should like to communicate some further information I came across on this ghoulish subject.

In the first place, the belief in vampires is not at all confined to any age or country. It seems to have existed forever, and is as strong today, in some places, as it ever was. The vampire was known some 6,000 years ago to the Sumerians in Asia Minor. From them the tradition circulated around the Mediterranean, and was established in Mexico long before the coming of the Spaniards!

The terrifying part about vampires, whether they are in China or in America, is the fate that they inflict upon their victims. For anyone bitten by a vampire is doomed, after death, to become one himself. And among all peoples there is the same conviction that the only way to avoid this ghastly fate is to burn the corpse or decapitate it with a sexton's spade and then drive a stake through its heart.

There is nothing more horrible than the thought of a dead person arising from the grave to suck the blood of the living, and yet when we seek the origin of the tradition we find a logical explanation. The earliest vampires were the dead who in life had been denied food and drink, and who naturally came back to be avenged and fed. It is true, though, that another element entered into the idea later. Immoral men and women and suicides came to be condemned to vampirism, while premature burial, once an all too frequent occurrence, helped to strengthen the belief.

The vampire has been treated often in literature, and I am sure many theater-goers will not soon forget the drama *Dracula*, recently adapted from the novel of that name.

It seems impossible that there isn't some truth in a tradition that has flourished so long and so widely. Frankly, I'm more than half convinced!

Boston, Mass.

Alie D.

Phantoms of the South Seas

SOME very unusual ghosts, and ones which I am sure will interest your readers, were described to me the other night by a man who had just come back from a tour of the outposts of civilization. According to his story, Bali, an island almost unknown and entirely unspoiled, has weird spirits of its own called *Laoks*. The natives live in terror of their manifestations—and little wonder! For from the traveler's description, *Laoks* seem to me a combination of vampire and the mischievous "poltergeist." On one occa-

sion a *Laok*, taking the form of a pulsing beam of light, led the white men a merry chase through the darkness, and when they gave it up and came back to their carriage, they found it filled with filthy rubbish.

Another time when a dead woman was laid out on the compound, as is the custom before burial, the spirit of a woman appeared to a native of the village. The wraith had a wild, fantastic look and laughed and laughed perpetually, giving forth no sound at all. The native ran after her, accompanied by others to whom she was plainly visible. But when the mocking spirit came to the corpse lying on the ground, the people of Bali stopped dead in their tracks. For the *Laok* drew back the dead woman's shroud—and slipped under it! When cautious braves approached and turned the cloth back—there lay the corpse—alone.

In Java is to be found a very annoying spirit or sprite, the name of which I have forgotten. This Thing singles out one victim among the natives, and wherever the unfortunate one happens to be, alone or in a group, he will suddenly be drenched and stained by squirts of betel juice being directed at him from nowhere apparently. This liquid, I should explain, is like tobacco juice, for it comes from the betel nut which the Javans chew.

Minneapolis, Minn.

H. Williams

A Specter With a Guilty Conscience

A FRIEND of mine in London, knowing my love for ghost stories, sent me a clipping from the *London Post*. The item concerns an uncanny manifestation and is told by the beholder himself, so that rather than tell it in my own words, I will, if I may, quote the brief account:

"Nearly thirty years ago I was obliged to prolong my stay in a very old country place, on account of a feverish cold. The host was compelled to go, and this left me alone! On struggling up for dinner one night I noticed, on descending, a man standing just inside the dining-room door. I imagined it to be the footman deputed to wait on me, and I walked leisurely downstairs.

"The man continued to stand stock-still; but as I approached he flitted in a curious way behind a screen. I followed, and was greatly surprised to find no one there. A minute later the footman entered with the soup.

"I attributed everything to my slightly raised temperature; but, ten years later, I learned that a forbear of my host on that occasion had, about a century previously, been drinking with a boon companion, when the butler, being sent to fetch from the cellar some very old wine, shot himself sooner than confess that he had stolen it."

Hope your readers like the little tale as well as I did.

Roslindale, Mass.

Kemp

Can a Miser Come Back?

LAST month the little Pennsylvania town of Runnemed was all agog over a ghost. The excitement even reached Philadelphia, and motor cars swarmed out to the old Page house in Chews Landing Road, their occupants hoping for a glimpse of the unearthly visitor who had appeared there.

On a previous night three Camden, New Jersey, professors of spiritism held a séance at the ancient manse. The meeting was attended by scores of reputable citizens who vowed that by the dim light of an oil lamp they had seen a luminous vapor hover over them and answer their beckoning. Many of the spectators recognized the form and features as those of Howard Page, the founder of the Page house and a man who in life had been known as a miser.

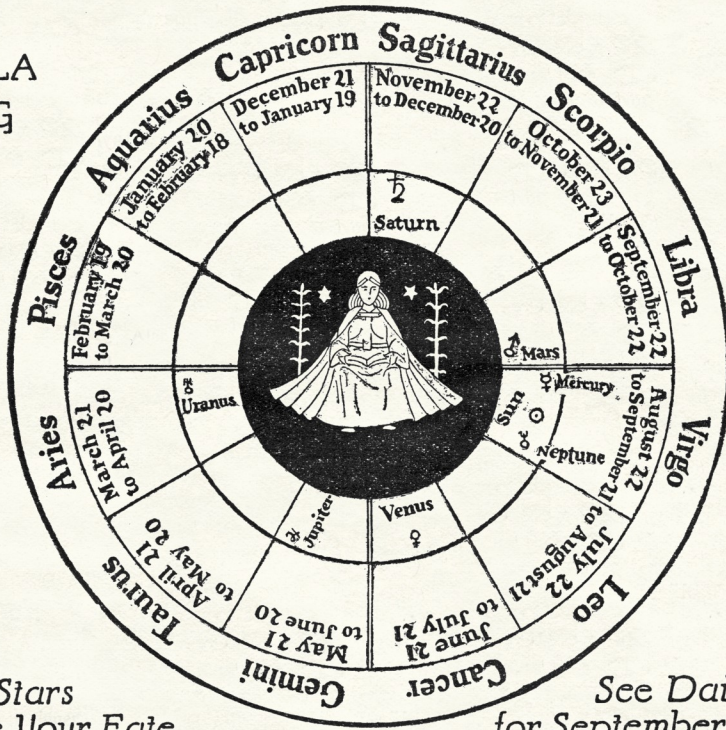
Chief of Police of the town, Thomas Hogan, who had been present at the séance, ordered the curiosity seekers off the Page premises, in obedience to the complaints of the present owner. So none of us were allowed even the ghost of a chance to see a ghost!

West Philadelphia, Pa.

Frank R.

Were You Born in September?

By
STELLA
KING



Let the Stars
Indicate Your Fate

See Daily Guide
for September, page 80

FROM August 23rd to September 24th the sun passes through the sign of Virgo, symbolic of the virgin earth from which the harvest is gathered. The influence of this sign expresses itself along practical lines, and those born at this time of the year are useful people, concerned with work and workers, with utility and craftsmanship, rather than with art's sake alone.

You who were born under the rule of Virgo are gifted with a critical and discriminative faculty. You are methodical, industrious, hard-working, conscientious and analytical. Sometimes you are too critical, both of yourselves and others, and so conscientious that you work yourselves almost to death. Yet you never fail to recognize the tremendous importance of health. In fact, none of the twelve types is as interested as you are in dietetics, hygiene, proper clothing and the preparation of food. Even patent medicines seem to exercise a veritable charm over some of you!

The New Englander is an excellent example of your type. Those who saw the play *Craig's Wife* will doubtless recognize the characteristics of Virgo—in an extreme degree—in the overscrupulous wife who lost everything worth while through devotion to her household gods. I can give you no better illustration of the pitfalls that beset the Virgo-born, and of what *not* to do if you wish for happiness.

The fact that in each of the twelve types there is a negative side, which, if given way to, inevitably leads to failure, has been stressed in previous articles. In your case, the danger lies either in too great an insistence upon detail, or in an exaggerated critical sense. I mention the faults inherent in each of the signs as we discuss them, because I believe that a realization of one's own potentialities for good and

bad means that half the battle of life has already been won.

As a child of Virgo, you are modest, self-conscious and unassuming, though loyal to your opinions. In addition to a clear and analytical mind, you possess an instinct for purity and for sanity, and your influence will always be exerted for the betterment of society. There is nothing spectacular about you, because you dislike ostentation and are much afraid of appearing ridiculous; but your sound sense and practical achievement mean a great deal both to yourself and to the community in which you live. You direct your energies into useful, practical channels.

Mercury is the ruler of Virgo and is also associated with writing. It is your star of destiny and promises you success in any vocation that demands industry, accuracy, method and discrimination. You should be successful in business, especially as a manager or overseer. If your natural bent is toward writing, you will probably find success in journalism or in literary or musical criticism. In literature, your mastery of detail and conscientious work should serve you well, but do not be too painstaking and insistent upon trifles.

THE practical earth signs give the persistence which converts great talent into genius. It is interesting, therefore, to note that both Shakespeare and Goethe were born when the sun was passing through one of these signs—the former on April 23rd, when the sun is in Taurus; the latter on August 28th, when it is in Virgo. Oliver Wendell Holmes was born on August 29th, and as nearly as we know, both Jane Austen and Charles Dickens were born when Virgo was in the ascendant. Virgo is concerned with facts; most of her subjects are clever statisticians and history students.

What the Stars Foretell for Every Day This Month

Below are given the planetary indications for each day in September.
Let them guide you to happiness

1. A fortunate day. You will benefit through religion and physical exercise.

2. Favorable for scientific and creative work. Do anything that requires attention to detail and careful finish.

3. Attend to routine work.

4. Work hard, but avoid excitement and dispute. Visit friends, relax and amuse yourself in the evening.

5. Avoid risk and spend the day as quietly as possible. There is danger of accident. Six P. M. is the most favorable hour of the twenty-four.

6. Be careful of possible accident. Otherwise, this is a good business day. The morning is the best time for buying. The evening is adverse.

7. Vibrations still dangerous. Take no chances; do nothing of importance; take care of your health.

8. Relax, see your friends and listen to music. The evening is favorable for social affairs and friendship.

9. Favorable for invention, for automotive and electrical matters. Commence new undertakings and make changes in the late afternoon or evening.

10. Get things done in the morning—especially writing and anything connected with construction or machinery. Do not seek publicity or ask favors in the afternoon or evening.

11. Postpone important matters and rest as much as possible. Do not begin anything. A day of disappointment. Stick to routine work and finish things already begun. Seek amusement in the evening.

12. Study and do work requiring imagination and invention. Make no changes, be careful in traffic and do not travel in the afternoon or evening. Avoid domestic discussions and controversial subjects.

13. Advertise in the evening papers. Ask favors and seek employment after noon. Do nothing of importance in the morning but commence new undertakings and attend to business in the afternoon.

14. The afternoon is favorable for investment, enterprise and invention. Plan new work or changes. Attend to matters that demand energy, vision and executive ability.

15. A favorable day for most things. A day in which to gain health and strength. If you possibly can do so, spend at least the afternoon in the open air. You may make plans for big undertakings.

16. A good day for trade, correspondence and bargains. Deal with relatives and elderly people in the morning. Do not invest or speculate.

17. A poor business day, with danger of loss in financial matters. Postpone important business and take care of your health.

18. An adverse day. Do routine work and protect your interests but begin nothing new.

19. Vibrations are still adverse. Attend to routine duties; read, study and associate with those you know well and can trust. Friendly advances may meet with an uncertain reception.

20. A much more fortunate day. You may collect money, buy or sell. Be careful what you sign or agree to do. Attend to financial matters and investments. Buy wearing apparel. Invest in property to sell again.

21. Go for a trip on the water or spend the afternoon attending to any matters connected with liquids or chemicals. Also favorable for psychic matters.

22. Spend the day quietly.

23. Seek employment or publicity early in the afternoon. From noon to 4 P.M. very favorable for business and finance.

24. A day of activity and enterprise. Attend to important matters. Sell but do not buy. Make and carry out plans and get things accomplished.

25. The morning is disappointing, but the afternoon is favorable for social and artistic affairs. Avoid domestic discussion or changes.

26. Make no changes. Avoid excitement and dispute and be careful of possible accident.

27. Do not travel or take risks. Be careful what you say.

28. Advertise, investigate and invent. Seek employment and make changes. Carry out plans which require energy and diplomacy. Visit friends and relatives. Arrange domestic affairs and settle problems.

29. Visit elders in the afternoon. See friends, wear new clothes and hear music in the evening. A fortunate day.

30. Unimportant. An average day.

Were You Born in September?

(Continued from page 79)

If you run true to type, you are healthy and appreciate the wisdom of keeping fit. You can do a great deal of good by interesting other people in exercise and diet and by teaching them how to maintain physical and mental balance. But try always to put as much joy and rhythm as possible into your exercise. Joy means relaxation, which not only rests you but also enables you more easily to absorb new life and vitality—or *prana*—from the air and sunshine.

It is said that many children of Virgo are lame, often as a result of accident in childhood. If this is so, it lends added force to the suggestion that, instead of Mercury, whose rule over the sign of Gemini is undisputed, Vulcan—a planet as yet undiscovered—is really your star of destiny. If we delve into ancient lore we find that among the Olympic

gods Vulcan was the craftsman, the smith who forged armor and ornaments for the gods. But Vulcan was lame. It was in his honor that the festival of the Vulcanalia used to be held in Rome on August 23rd, the day on which the sun enters Virgo. These correspondences are interesting, for they seem to associate Vulcan with the sign of Virgo, whereas Mercury, which we have hitherto regarded as Virgo's guiding star, appears to have more in common with the Gemini.

THE Jasper stone is your talisman. Efficiency and Helpfulness are your watchwords; and for your motto you may take "Achievement and Service."

It is difficult to generalize in astrology, because there are always factors in the individual horoscope which should

be considered. The characteristics of the different types, however, are well established and the point of view toward life in general can be interpreted from the sun-sign.

Virgo is an earth sign and indicates a point of view similar to that of the other earth signs, Taurus and Capricorn. All are practical and rather conservative. In marriage this constitutes a basis of understanding, for the most successful and lasting marriages are those between people of the same elemental nature, or between opposites who complement each other. As one born under Virgo you should, therefore, look for your mate among the Taureans, Capricornians or Piscarians, the latter being your opposites and possibly your affinities. Between opposites there will be one of two things—perfect accord or

antagonism. If the latter prevails, marital harmony is virtually impossible.

However this may be, Virgo is probably the most self-sufficient of the signs and frequently manifests a desire for a simple, even hermit-like existence, especially during the latter years of life. Pisces also is inclined to withdraw from the world and thus gain opportunity for meditation. When we consider the numerous opportunities and the various motives for marriage, does it not seem remarkable that the number of marriages, the probable time at which they will take place, and even the description of the marriage partner, should be shown by the stars at the moment of birth?

FOR the past year, Neptune has been hovering on the border between Leo and Virgo and has now definitely passed over into the latter, where he will remain until the end of 1941. The last time this planet entered Virgo was in the year 1766; he takes 165 years to complete the circle, being the slowest of the planets, and the most distant in our solar system. In October, 1914, Neptune entered Leo, the sign which rules France and the city of Los Angeles. The World War was fought for the most part in France; while in Los Angeles the growing motion picture industry gained tremendous headway. Both places were prominent, though in widely different fields.

As Boston and all of New England are under the rule of Virgo, it will be interesting to watch developments there during the next thirteen years. Also, just as Neptune left Leo, the "talkies" were launched and the theater—which is under the rule of Leo—has undergone a veritable upheaval. The sign of Leo—the Lion—is closely associated with pleasure and entertainment, whereas Virgo is more concerned with industry and the necessities of life. The famous Boston Tea Party occurred when Neptune was last in Virgo, so that it is interesting to speculate upon what will happen this time. It seems at least probable that the industries of New England will be brought more and more into the limelight and that these states may anticipate a commercial revival in

some form. The change should be favorable.

Other matters intimately associated with Virgo are journalism, chemistry, statistics and the practical, utilitarian side of invention. Already we have witnessed an investigation into the ownership of newspapers; Neptune always likes to work in a big way and to form large combinations. In medicine we may expect greater progress in the actual cure of disease, with particular stress laid on the preservation of the health of the people at large and of workers in factories. It is possible that methods of preserving food will come under discussion; and, as there are always two sides to any picture, serious bacterial epidemics are likely to arise. While Neptune was in Leo, we heard much about heart affection and pneumonia; in Virgo, this planet is more likely to produce diseases akin to enteric poisoning and disturbance of the digestive and assimilative processes.

THOSE under the rule of Virgo are healthy and muscular for the most part, but they are very susceptible to poisonous matter in food or drink; alcohol is extremely detrimental to them. Being practical people and critical as well, they are not easily inveigled into the Neptunian schemes of the fraudulent promoter; but their opposites, the more sensitive Piscarians, must be on guard against those who approach them with the old story of overnight riches.

A number of things come under the rulership of Neptune. Among them may be mentioned hospitals, asylums, charitable institutions, laboratories, and concerns engaged in producing opiates, gases and oil. It was, of course, while Neptune was concerning himself with Los Angeles that oil was discovered there and fortunes made—and lost. It would be interesting if a similar source of wealth were discovered near Boston! Or, it may be that the development there will be along scientific lines in the hospitals and laboratories.

Those born during the last few days of March will feel the influence of Uranus and should be prepared for the unexpected. Some will suffer through a parent's misfortune or sickness. Others

will meet with sudden changes in connection with work and should be careful not to offend those in a position of authority. Still others may suffer from neuralgia or insomnia, or may be obliged to visit the dentist, as Uranus often affects the teeth.

If your birthday comes about the first of July, especially if you were born about 1866 or 1867, you should prepare to meet these Uranian rays, which are exceedingly powerful and are likely to affect your health. During the next few months, you should avoid changes, excitement and sudden exertion, living as quietly as possible until these vibrations cease to affect you.

This applies also to the Librans born early in October, and in particular to those born about 1887. The Capricornians born on or about the first day of the year are also affected by these powerful Uranian rays; those born in 1907 are particularly sensitive and should exercise great care. If you were born during the first few days of 1906 you should guard your money or it will be spirited away from you.

These Uranian vibrations will be very destructive during the first ten days of September and an extra amount of caution and prudence will be required by those they affect in order to prevent loss or accident during this period. Those of you whose birthdays come on the 5th, 6th, or 7th of September may have to meet some difficult situation during the next twelve months and it will be better for you not to assume risks or take any chances with electricity, fire or explosives.

ON the other hand, if you were born about the third of either August or December, the Uranian rays will help you. You may even anticipate unexpected benefits and pleasures. This is more especially the case if you were born in 1860, 1873, 1899 or 1914.

Saturn remains in the same position he occupied last month, warning those born on or about the 17th of September to take care of their health and money during the next twelve months.

Jupiter is still helping the Geminians, and the Leos also are enjoying good fortune.

Panic in Wild Harbor

(Continued from page 35)

place smells of dank weed and ocean bottoms—and I found your revolver with one chamber empty. Only it's not a revolver any more. Some terrific force has twisted it into scrap iron."

"Ugh!" I shuddered.

Just then a boy came shouting down the street. I could not help hearing what he cried from door to door:

"There's a wreck come ashore at the Graves with a dead man on it."

"Was it the *Hallowe'en*?" I could hear a woman ask, but the boy's voice blurred so I could not hear it any more.

The little man came hastily into the room, his face a mask of utter horror, and I asked weakly, "Is it the *Hallowe'en*?"

"It isn't the *Hallowe'en*!" cried the little man in near hysteria. "It's the *Golden Wind*, up from the sea bottom after two years—and aboard her, hung on a spar is—"

I waved him to silence. I knew who hung on that spar. I remembered at last that dead face on the dank deck of the dead ship. And I wanted to know no more.

"Mr. Morse," said Cranshawe, "that ends the tolling of the bell and the apparitions of the face—that is not a face—in the fog. Nothing more will disturb you or your summer visitors. The dead man's vengeance is complete. What did you say, old man?"

"I said," I whispered, standing shak-

ily upright, "when is the next train out of this terrible place?"

"My car's outside," the little man volunteered, "and there's a train in twenty minutes. But don't you want to drive over and see the wreck—?"

"N-no," said Cranshawe reluctantly. "It's hardly necessary, I think. Ready, old man?"

I rose weakly. The talon marks were still scarlet on my arm, and I donned my coat gingerly.

"But what's the explanation of this whole terrible business?" quavered the little man as we stood in the sunshine.

"You must make your own," Cranshawe told him. "One man's guess is as good as another's."

Renunciation

(Continued from page 59)

"Because you love him—and because you don't love me?"

"Yes, Roger!"

He had laughed—a cracked, high-pitched laugh that had twisted his dark, handsome face into a sardonic mask. "You lie, my dear," he had replied brutally, and when she gasped and blushed he had continued: "You lie—and you *know* you do! You love—*me!* I can feel it in my heart, my soul, in every last fiber and cell of my being. I can feel it waking and sleeping. Your love is mine, quite mine. You don't love Dan!"

"But—"

"I'll tell you why you're going to marry him. It's because he has money, and I have no financial prospects except a couple of up-State aunts who are tough and stringy, and who have made up their minds to survive me, whatever happens."

"I must think of mother and the girls," had come her stammered admission through a blurred veil of hot tears; "and Fred—he must go to Harvard—"

"Right! You have your mother, and the girls, and Fred and the rest of your family, and they'll all live on Dan's bounty and on the sacrifice you're making of yourself—not to mention myself!"

Then, after a pause, taking her by both slender shoulders he went on:

"I could make love to you now, my dear. I could crush you in my arms—and you'd marry Dan afterward, and somehow strike a compromise between your inbred, atavistic Mayflower Puritanism and the resolute Greek paganism which is making your mouth so red. But—as she swayed and trembled—"I won't! I'm going to play the game!"

She said nothing. He laughed and spoke again:

"Confound it! You can put—your foot on every decency, on every splendid emotion, on the blessed decalogue itself—as long as you play the game!"

So he had gone away, after being Dan's best man, to his little plantation in South Carolina. For two years he had not seen her, had not written to her, had even tried not to think of her—

And there she stood, now, on the threshold of his room in the discreet little hotel where he had put up, with a grinning plump boy in buttons beside her, his hand well weighted with money, winking as if to say:

"It's O.K., boss. I'm goin' to keep mum, all right, all right!"

Then the boy closed the door, and the bolt snapped into the lock with a little steely, jeering click.

She was dressed in white from head to foot; only her lips were red, and the long-stemmed Gloire de Dijon rose that she held in her hand.

She spoke in a matter-of-fact voice, as if continuing a conversation that had been interrupted just for a second by

the entry of a servant or the postman's whistle:

"Don't you see, Roger? I had to come. I had to say good-by to you—before you sail for France!"

He did not move from where he stood between the two windows, with the moonlight drifting across his shoulders into the dim, prosy hotel room.

There was surprise in his accents, and a keen, peremptory challenge.

"**H**OW did you know that I was booked to sail? Our orders are secret. I am here on a special mission—incognito, at that. Josephine, who told you I was here?"

She smiled.

"Of course I knew, dear. How could I help knowing?"

Suddenly, strangely, the explanation—what there was of it—seemed lucid and satisfactory and reasonable, and he crossed the room and bowed over her hand. He took the rose from her narrow, white fingers and inhaled its heavy, honeyed fragrance.

"A rose from your garden!" He heard his own voice coming in an odd murmur. "From your garden up there in the little New England village!"

"Yes, Roger!"

"Did your mother send it to you?"

"No, I picked it myself. It kept fresh, didn't it, Roger dear?"

"Yes."

He remembered the garden where they had walked side by side, two years earlier—where he had told her of his love.

It was the one splotch of color, the one sign of the joy of life, in the whole drab Massachusetts community, this old garden which the Erksine family had jealously nursed and coddled for generations. It was a mass of roses, creepers as well as bushes, scrambling and straining and growing and tangling in their own strong-willed fashion, clothing old stones with hearts of deep ruby and amethyst, building arches of glowing pink and tea-yellow against the sky.

But he had always liked the scarlet Gloire de Dijon roses best.

They were like her lips.

He looked up.

"What about Dan?" he asked.

"Oh, Danny—" she smiled.

"He is my friend, and your husband. If he knew—"

"Danny won't mind, dear," she said.

Her words carried conviction. Somehow he knew that Dan wouldn't mind.

He sat down on the hard couch that faced the windows, drew her down beside him, and put his arm around her shoulder.

Her hand, which sought and found his, was very steady and very cool.

He did not speak; neither did she. Twisting his head sidewise, he looked at her.

She was in shadow from the shoulder downward. Only her face was sharply defined in the moonlight. The scarlet lips seemed to swim to him along the

slanting, glistening rays. He leaned over.

THERE was hunger in his soul, in his mind, in his heart, in his body. "I am going to play the game!"

The words came from very far, from across the bitter bridge of years, with the jarring, dissonant shock of a forgotten reproach.

"Dear, dear heart!" he whispered.

She did not resist. She did not draw back; nor did she say a word.

Only, just as his lips were about to touch hers, an immense, invisible, and very sad presence seemed to creep into the room, like a winged thing.

It came soundlessly; but he felt the sharp displacement of air. It was as if a huge bird's pinions had cut through it, the left tip resting on the farther window-sill, the right on a chair near the bed, on which he had thrown his khaki overcoat and his campaign hat.

With it came a sense of unutterable peace and sweetness, strangely flavored with a great pain. As he leaned back without having touched her lips, the pain was mysteriously transmuted.

It became a realization, not a vision, of color—clear, deep scarlet with a faint golden glow in the center. Then it began to assume a definite form—that of a gigantic Gloire de Dijon rose, which, as he watched, slowly shrank to its natural proportions until it rested, velvety, scented, where he had dropped the rose among the books on his desk.

He moved to pick it up.

When he turned back again, he saw that she had left the couch and was standing on the threshold of the open door, a blotch of filmy, gauzy white.

She was gone before he could rush to her side. When he tried to cross the threshold, to run after her, he felt again the wings, and the feeling brought with it a sense of ineffable sweetness and peace.

It was Captain Donaldson of Roger's regiment who startled him out of his sleep early the next morning.

"Hurry up, old man!" he said. "The transport sails this afternoon."

Roger Kenyon tumbled out of bed and walked over to the desk where he had dropped the rose the night before.

"What are you looking for?" asked his friend. "A cigarette? Here! Have one of mine."

"No, no. I thought I had left a rose here last night—a scarlet Gloire de Dijon rose, but—"

"Gallant adventure, eh?" laughed Donaldson. "Say, you must have been drinking! Why, this isn't a rose—it's a white lily!"

He picked up the stiff, sweet-scented flower.

"By the way," asked Donaldson later, facing his friend over coffee and toast and eggs, "have you heard that Danny Coolidge's wife died last night?"

"Yes," replied Roger Kenyon.

(Printed by arrangement with the author.)

The Scarred Hand

(Continued from page 31)

I retired at the usual hour, more than ordinarily tired from a hard day in the saddle. I fell into a deep slumber almost immediately.

How long I slept, or whether I was actually asleep at all, I have no way of knowing. . . .

I seemed, at any rate, to be conscious. No sound had wakened me; yet I sat up in my canopied bed, staring into dense gloom toward the wall where the ancient painting hung. Suddenly, from the center of the canvas there seemed to come a faint glow, at first misty and far away, but growing brighter as I watched.

Presently in the radiant light I could discern the form of a hand. It gripped a dagger, point downward. Slowly, steadily, the hand that held the dagger appeared to float through the air toward me. From time to time it halted, then came on again.

STRANGELY, I was not conscious of fear; I seemed benumbed.

The apparition paused at the foot of my bed and remained there. The hand, in the eerie light around it, was ghastly white; and on the back of it, as my eyes grew accustomed to the glow, I made out a scar, curiously shaped like a half moon.

I studied this without reasoning. It brought no conscious thought, nor did I experience even curiosity. How long the scarred hand with its ominous burden remained there, I cannot say. But the hand and the dagger melted, after a period, into the darkness, and I fell back upon the pillows and slept.

When daylight streamed through the tall windows I awakened. For a long while I lay there concentrating on the vision of the night. It was impossible for my conscious mind to accept the conviction that I had been dreaming; the thing had been too real.

At length, however, I rose and rang for Carlos to bring hot water. While he was out I went straight to the portrait from which my strange vision had come. Reaching forward, I tapped the canvas gently with my knuckles. It gave forth a hollow sound.

The space behind that picture was empty!

I tried to shift the frame. My effort was futile, for it was wedged firmly in the wall.

I determined to say nothing of the affair to my host. It seemed only the part of good taste at such a time. But all through the day I was nervous and perturbed over my experience, and almost wished for some second manifestation that might explain the first.

But although I remained awake most of the night, nothing occurred.

Dinner the following evening had reached the salad course. Rodriguez was speaking of current affairs in Spain, when the servant, bending over my shoulder, clumsily jarred a plate he was placing before me. Abruptly I glanced down. The man's hand was

startlingly white. Just then he turned it—and on the back of that extremely white hand was a mole, shaped like a half moon!

Glancing up into his face, I saw that it was Carlos, my valet. His expression was blank; his face was carved granite, calm, impenetrable. It was with an effort that I mastered my own swift surprise and resumed the conversation.

Whether unconsciously, or because of my sharp scrutiny, Carlos continued to serve dessert without once revealing the back of his hand.

After dinner I was inwardly in chaos. I could not sing. My bridge was abominable. I talked with my host, but in a strange detached fashion that must have been noticeable. One thought possessed me: To what end had I been visited by that spectral scarred hand? Was its likeness to that of Carlos purely coincidental?

Finally, one by one the members of the household retired, until Rodriguez and I were alone. He smoked for a time in silence. I cannot describe the effort it took to broach the matter on my mind.

"Will you forgive me," I asked at length, "if I touch upon a very painful subject?"

"Of course, my friend. Proceed."

"Were several servants present during that last dinner with Señor Martinez?" I demanded.

He thought for a moment and slowly shook his head.

"No, only the man Carlos—your present valet."

"The man with the scar on his hand?" I said.

"Yes, but why—"

He gazed across at me, puzzled.

"Did Señor Martinez mention, in the presence of Carlos, the large sum of money he carried?" I persisted.

Rodriguez made a little gesture of impatience. He saw my point at once and exclaimed sharply:

"Ah, my friend, we cannot suspect Carlos! He has been with me since he was a boy. Why, I trust him absolutely."

In my agitation I arose.

"Have you a chisel, Señor?" I inquired.

SURPRISE showed on his grave face and he smiled faintly.

"Certainly. But what use have you for it?"

"I desire to pry that painting from the wall in my bedroom. The space behind it is hollow!"

Rodriguez came to his feet on the instant. His eyes were troubled.

"How did you come to notice that?" he asked curiously. "There is an empty space behind that portrait, to be sure, though I thought I was the only living man to know it. My grandmother used it as a hiding-place for her jewels."

He paused thoughtfully.

"Now that you know the reason for

it," he added, "we won't need the chisel, eh, Señor?"

"With your permission," I told him, "I should still like to have it. There is something I have not told you. But if you will accompany me. . . ?"

"Of course."

He went out and returned with a chisel. Together we went up to my bedroom.

"For the life of me," he said, "I can't imagine what you hope to find behind that picture."

I realized the difficulty of my position as this man's guest, and felt impelled to tell him what I had seen. He listened intently, but when I had finished, I could see, by the light of the candle he was holding, that he was still unconvinced. Nevertheless, I picked up the chisel and set to work. The frame was stubborn; I could not budge it. Looking up in the flickering light I saw that Rodriguez was watching me closely. He was obviously not in sympathy with this rash scheme of mine, but true to his native courtesy he rose and came over to help me.

For ten minutes we pried carefully at the frame before it loosened. Then, together, we swung the huge canvas slowly outward. The interior of the cavern behind it was in stygian darkness. Rodriguez, his interest awakened, touched a match to one of the tall candles standing near-by. Immediately a reflected gleam of metal sprang to life in the gloom of the recess, and together we peered in.

ON the stone floor lay a dagger and beside it—a wallet!

I heard my companion gasp. He reached down, seized the wallet, and then dropped it. I picked it up. The leather was blood-stained and the banknotes inside it were stiff with dried blood.

Rodriguez, fired by the discovery, set down the candle and sprang toward the door.

"You were right, Señor. We must act—immediately," he cried hoarsely, his eyes flashing.

"Wait," I called out. "Let us be certain, Señor. Let us consider."

He was for seizing Carlos at once, and only by a strong effort forced himself to be calm. I suggested a plan of action and he agreed to it.

He went to the servants' quarters and returned with two men, one of whom bore a length of rope. They, with Rodriguez, concealed themselves on the far side of the bed. Then I pulled the bell cord, while the three grim watchers crouched by the bed in crafty silence.

There was a period of tense silence. Then Carlos appeared, sleepy-eyed. He had taken about ten steps into the room before he saw the picture swung out from its place. His body stiffened and his face suddenly contorted in fright. Instantly he wheeled to escape.

I flung myself between him and the door. He lunged at my throat like a madman thirsty for blood. As I strug-

gled free of his clawing fingers, the servants sprang out with the rope. In a moment Carlos was securely trussed in a chair.

Rodriguez stepped before him, but before he could utter the scathing accusation on his lips, he stopped. Carlos was

not looking at him, but at the hollow in the wall.

From the recess now, there came a sudden draught of air, icy and unearthly. And at that moment Carlos' livid face lifted, his eyes distended, and with one convulsive shudder he tried to

ward off the horrible vision he alone could see. Then his body stiffened; he gave one awful moan, and went limp.

Rodriguez sprang forward to loosen the man's bonds. He was too late.

Carlos had escaped mortal judgment to face the Supreme inevitable one.

Phantom Lips

(Continued from page 13)

again, Harry," she demanded frenziedly.

I read, with all the feeling I could muster: "The same hypocrisy that He denounced in the scribes and Pharisees, I denounce in you, you smug, respectable townfolk, measuring the ways of God with your twelve-inch ruler of righteousness. The humblest sinner that walks the earth and knows he is a sinner, the scarlet woman of the pavement, who sometimes feels the need of something nobler than has ever come into her sin-stained life, is better than you!"

"Harry, you're great!" cried Celia in ecstasy. "We'll have to have another drink on it!"

I went home reeling drunk. I make no extenuation. I am trying to set down in black and white exactly what occurred, because I know now that one can raise oneself up from the uttermost depths by the help of that Higher Power that is always at one's command, if one will but call upon it.

THE day arrived. I had experienced no change of heart. I exulted in the wrong that I was about to commit that night. I grasped the hands of the Bamboro church folks; I looked into their kindly faces with never a pang.

Nevertheless, I felt sobered when at length I took my place beside the kindly old preacher in the little new church, and looked down at the congregation. All Bamboro seemed to have turned out to hear me, and all my acquaintances in Valleyfield, too. There was old Simeon Tate in a rear seat, a grin on his face—and there was Saunders, the banker! He had paid me the compliment of foregoing his usual Sunday evening at the clubhouse in order to listen to me. There were old friends of my mother's, their eyes fixed encouragingly upon mine.

And there, in the rear, seated alone, was Celia North. I caught her gaze, and the devilry in her heart entered into mine and buoyed me up.

The preacher, old Mr. Witherspoon, prayed, and we all kneeled. He prayed that the spirit of God might fill my heart; he thanked Him for having guided me, and asked that I might be worthy of the great trust and privilege that were to be mine.

And all the while I was thinking of Celia's words, "Fifteen hundred dollars a year! About as much as I spend on a month's motor trip! Less than half the wages of a bricklayer or plasterer!"

I started in my seat. The prayer was ended. The eyes of the congregation

were fixed upon me. Old Mr. Witherspoon was smiling kindly at me. I rose and walked toward the empty pulpit.

God in heaven! Empty? But—it was no longer empty! My mother was standing there, in her quaint black dress and bonnet—standing there with her eyes fixed on mine—no longer the loving mother, but a threatening and awful judge!

I stopped dead. I could not stir, could not cry out. I looked at the congregation. Did they not see her? No, not a soul of them saw her, though to my eyes she was almost as plain as ever she had been in life!

The wraith-like figure beckoned to me, and I moved falteringly toward her. Old Mr. Witherspoon, thinking that I had been overcome with stage-fright, placed his hand upon my arm and murmured something in my ear. I nodded and ascended the three pulpit steps. My mother was still there—and then, as I stepped into the pulpit, she vanished.

She had vanished from my sight, but she was there. She was the reality, and I was only a puppet. I was a child again, saying my prayers after her. I did not know what words were coming from my lips. I was not conscious of the congregation. But I was talking, preaching, crying out as if the spirit of the Lord was on my tongue.

How long I stood there, I do not know. All of a sudden I came back to myself. I was conscious of the rapt audience below me. I leaned forward, and faces leaped out at me. There was old Simeon Tate upon his knees, bawling hallelujahs, as on that other night. There was Banker Saunders, staring at me with eyes of amazement. But Celia's place was empty.

In that moment of awakening I knew it had been no delusion that had turned my footsteps toward the ministry. I knew that I had been led from the beginning. And I knew, too, that my dead mother had come to my aid to save my soul in the moment of its mortal peril, and that because of her sacred goodness she had been permitted to come to me.

I staggered out of the pulpit. I dropped upon my knees and prayed. Again the spirit of the Lord spoke through me, for, though I heard the words, I did not seem to form them with my own lips.

I PRAYED for strength to overcome the evil of hypocrisy, and the sin of judging others. I prayed for all who

were judged, and for their judges. I prayed for all sinners, and I thanked God that His mercy is strong enough to bless the worst who turn to him, and to wipe their sins away.

"Or else," I said, "I should not dare to stand here before you tonight."

Then I was among the congregation, and they were surging about me, clasping my hand, many of them with the tears streaming down their faces.

"That was a wonderful sermon you gave us," said Mr. Satterlee, a crabbed old trustee, the one of the three who had been rather opposed to calling me. "We're lucky to have you for our church."

Banker Saunders took my hand in his, and, after the first enthusiasm had spent itself, led me a little apart.

"**H**ARRY," he said, "I want to make an acknowledgment to you. I've been a fool. I've never seen much in religion before. I've believed in it in a way of course, but—well, after hearing you tonight I've come to see that it means a lot more than I ever thought it did. I always tried to translate it into economic values, but it's too big for that. And it's taken me forty years to understand it."

"But I've been a fool in another way, Harry. I'm a pretty shrewd judge of character—at least, I've always thought so—but I sized you up wrong. To be frank, Harry, I thought you would be a misfit in the ministry. I didn't dream you had the fire and the inspiration that you showed us tonight. It was the most wonderfully inspired sermon that I've ever heard, Harry, and you'll go far in your career. I wish your mother could have lived to hear you; she would have been so proud of you."

But I knew that my mother had heard me; she had been there! To this day I don't know what it was I said in that sermon. It was not I who spoke, but a higher power than myself. But that it was my mother who made the contact I am as sure as that I am alive.

Whatever it was I said, Celia North must have understood, for when I reached the door of the church her car was gone. I never saw her again.

And I never saw my mother after that night. But I have felt her guidance sometimes, in the perplexities of my work as minister of a large city congregation. I believe that she still watches over me, as on that night when she saved my soul, and that she will be there to greet me when I pass on.

Don't miss THE SHADOW OF CRIME in the October GHOST STORIES. It's the story of a crook who reformed—after death!

Bride of the Unknown

(Continued from page 21)

me into his arms. He kissed me wildly and whispered again and again that I belonged to him. I never knew, until he told me there, that his evening visits had been for me. He played again and I was swept into the current of his wooing like a leaf on the mountain brook.

"I am yours, Gilbert," I said at last, "through life and death—for all eternity."

When we told my people and his, they were all approving. There was nothing in our way. All through that drowsy summer and fall we were, probably, the happiest people in the hills. We were married on Christmas Eve, and, remembering that song Gilbert had first played for me, I thought then that surely I had gone with him to heaven.

But such happiness, I reckon, is too fragile to last.

GILBERT was a man of the old mountain stock. Perhaps it was not his fault that he saw things as he did. We had been married but a little while when he began to put his lifelong dreams into words. He wanted a son. An older son, he would say, to look out for two little sisters, and then another son to make a family that could hold its own against the rocky hills.

He would plan on their schooling; would even talk about the clothes they would wear and the things they would do. It became an obsession that he talked of endlessly, and not always in good humor.

We were married a year when the son was born. Gilbert rode down to the settlement for the doctor and they came back together, riding like the wind. Dimly, after an eternity, I heard the doctor talking.

"I'm sorry, Gilbert, but there was no other way."

When at last I came to consciousness, I learned that the baby had been born dead. It was my life or his, and the doctor had chosen to save me.

We buried the baby beneath a poplar tree out from the house a piece, and I used to keep flowers on the grave. Gilbert fashioned a cross and set it up. His face was so white that it frightened me, and his eyes were like storm clouds behind the mountain. I understood his grief and did my best to console him. My mother came over to stay with me for a while but Gilbert kept getting worse. The doctor gave him a sleeping powder and he lay drugged for a whole day and a night.

When he revived, Gilbert raged at me. He said I was to blame for our baby's death. I was stunned, unable to understand his cruelty. From that moment, Gilbert and I were never the same.

He built a seat out beneath the poplar tree near our baby's grave, and there every evening he would sit with his violin and play. He improvised the melodies. It was the saddest music in the world. The old violin would wail across the valley until even the birds

ceased their evening song. I pleaded with him to stop and to forget.

"Gilbert, you're grieving your heart out," I told him. "Come in the house and try to be cheerful. It couldn't be helped, Gilbert. You're defying God himself with this carrying on."

"When I have a child to romp through the house with me, I'll put down the fiddle," he replied.

And that awful sobbing of the violin would continue, sometimes late into the night.

I lay sleepless. At times I thought that I was going mad. I grew to hate the cabin; the mountains lost their beauty and life itself became a burden too miserable to bear.

The years go by relentlessly in our hills. You scarcely notice their passing. Each year I gave birth to a still-born child, until five lay yonder beneath the poplar. The old doctor shook his head and said nothing. It was then that I rebelled.

"Gilbert," I told my husband, "this is the end. I'll never have another child."

IT was a bitterly cold night. Our cabin was comfortable enough, with the logs blazing and the lamp lit. But Gilbert picked up his fiddle and went out. I was exhausted, overcome with the futility of trying to make him understand. I fell upon my bed fully dressed, and passed into a deep sleep. I awakened sharply. From the shadows beneath the poplar came the strains of Gilbert's violin. I recognized the tune: "I Will Take You to Heaven in May." He hadn't played it since we were married.

I called to him pleadingly, some of the old tenderness welling up in me. "Come in, Gilbert. Please—it's too cold out yonder to play."

But he gave no answer and continued to send that heart-breaking music across the silent snow. I fell asleep again in utter exhaustion, mental and physical.

The hills were still shadowed when I roused myself. Gilbert was not in the house. I hurried out. He was sitting on the bench beneath the poplar tree, still clinging to his fiddle. A frozen smile lingered on his white face, and he—was dead!

They found me wandering in the deep snow of the mountainside.

I lay in the home of a neighbor during Gilbert's funeral and it was not until the snow had covered his grave that I returned to the cabin. I struggled alone through that winter with a fortitude that I marvel at today. Years of suffering must have given me a stoicism of which I was not aware.

Spring came to the hills and the brooks burst loose from their fetters of ice. Big Don Flynn, who lived with his mother down in the valley, came up as usual to help me with the chores. This day he was strangely timid.

"Whatever is the matter with you, Don?" I asked. "Are you feeling

poorly?" I'd never seen him act so.

He halted in his work and faced me. "It isn't that, Sallie," he said, and his voice was husky. "It's just that—that I'm a lonely man, Sallie—and you're alone now, too. I'm wonderin' if we—if we couldn't mosey along together—"

He was like a great awkward boy. I had never thought of Don Flynn in that light. He made no rash promises now, nor did he demand my love. I told him to wait a while, so that we both might think it over. He consented readily enough. Don was like a great solid rock that one might gladly cling to. I promised him that I would consider carefully.

That night, while I sat alone in my cabin, I was drawn to my feet by the strains of a violin. I stared out toward the poplar and saw nothing. Only the mounds were visible in the shadows. I went out and stood in the clearing beneath the stars. The music came again—softly, from nowhere. I stifled a scream and ran back into the cabin. I bolted the door and shrank into my chair. As suddenly as it had commenced the music ceased.

I recalled my pledge to Gilbert.

"Gilbert, I am yours through life and death—for all eternity."

Was he holding me to that promise? Was I bound to him forever—wife of a ghost—bride of the unknown?

The strange, sad music came again in the dusk of the following evening, and once more I was stricken with terror. With frantic eyes I searched the shadows and the mists that rose up from the far valley. There was nothing that moved. Yet the air seemed to vibrate with that wailing melody of a phantom fiddle.

WHEN Don came for his answer, I was haggard and ill. I could no longer keep the awful secret. I told him in a burst of tears. Don did not laugh. Instead, he took me into his arms.

"I understand, Sallie. I was a mite afraid of something like this. But it won't happen again, honey. Let me take care of you—you'll have nothing to fear."

I sank against his broad shoulder, eager for the comfort it afforded. I was weary and terrified, half crazed with the dread of this torture.

"We'll be married tomorrow," Don soothed me. "We'll sell everything and go to California. I've got enough, Sallie, and we'll take a new lease on life, you and I."

In the morning, when the birds were singing their gayest songs and the sunlight spread its warmth across the mountains, Don and I were married down in the settlement. There was no merrymaking this time, for life was different. We were two serious people facing an enterprise. We returned to my place and spent the day wandering about, laying plans for the sale and the great

journey that was to follow. Confident in my bright new future, I slept that night for the first time in months—but not for long. . . .

Just as the old clock over the fireplace struck twelve, I sat up in bed, wide awake and chilled with fear. It was as if an icy hand had brushed my cheek. I called my husband but he did not answer, so I got up and lit the lamp. Then I walked back to the bed where Don lay. But he wasn't asleep—

His eyes were wide open—glassy and staring!
"Don!"

I cried his name again and again, and then I shook him. I touched his face, and it was frozen—like Gilbert's had been that awful morning! Then my heart stopped beating—for on his throat were four blue finger marks! I screamed

and as I did there came from out under the poplar the clear high notes of a violin—and I heard, unmistakably, Gilbert's laugh, jubilant, triumphant. . . .

I think I went mad then. I ran from the cabin, ran on and on, away from that ghostly fiddler. . . .

Neighbors found me at dawn, wandering down beside the creek in the pasture. They thought I had lost my mind. For weeks the doctor despaired even of my life. But gradually I began to regain my strength. It was then that a neighbor spoke kindly to me as I lay in bed.

"Sallie," he said, "can you talk a little now? Can you answer a few questions about—about Don?"

I felt that I could.

"You know, Sallie, when we—found him," my old neighbor went on, "Don's throat was marked by fingers. He'd

been—strangled." The kind voice broke. I recalled the strange blue marks I had seen on his throat that night, and I shuddered in horror. But I could not account for them. Nor could I make my questioner understand what I had heard—that phantom fiddle out under the poplar tree.

No one believed my story. I was arrested, and through the long, hot summer the trial dragged on. I told them all I knew, and at length, when all the evidence was heard, the jury brought in its verdict. I was set free. It would have been impossible, they agreed, for me to have made those finger marks. I am a small woman, and not over strong—and these were the imprints of powerful fingers.

I am old Aunt Sallie now, and I have never again heard that violin.

The Canterville Ghost

(Continued from page 47)

but, on the other hand, he was most conscientious in all things connected with the supernatural. For the next three Saturdays, accordingly, he traversed the corridor as usual between midnight and three o'clock, taking every possible precaution against being either heard or seen. He removed his boots, trod as lightly as possible on the old worm-eaten boards, wore a large black velvet cloak, and was careful to use the Rising Sun Lubricator for oiling his chains. I am bound to acknowledge that it was with a good deal of difficulty that he brought himself to adopt this last mode of protection. However, one night while the family were at dinner, he slipped into Mr. Otis's bedroom and carried off the bottle. He felt a little humiliated at first, but afterward was sensible enough to see that there was a great deal to be said for the invention, and, to a certain degree, it served his purpose.

STILL, in spite of everything, he was not left unmolested. Strings were continually being stretched across the corridor, so that he tripped over them in the dark, and on one occasion, while dressed for the part of "Black Isaac, or the Huntsman of Hogley Woods", he met with a severe fall, through treading on a butter-slide, which the twins had constructed from the entrance of the Tapestry Chamber to the top of the oak staircase. This last insult so enraged him that he resolved to make one final effort to assert his dignity and social position, and determined to visit the insolent young Etonians the next night in his celebrated character of "Reckless Rupert, or the Headless Earl".

He had not appeared in this disguise for more than seventy years; in fact, not since he had so frightened pretty Lady Barbara Modish by means of it, that she suddenly broke off her engagement with the present Lord Canterville's grandfather, and ran away to Gretna Green with handsome Jack Castletown, declaring that nothing in

the world would induce her to marry into a family that allowed such a horrible phantom to walk up and down the terrace at twilight. Poor Jack was afterwards shot in a duel by Lord Canterville on Wandsworth Common, and Lady Barbara died of a broken heart at Tunbridge Wells before the year was out, so, in every way, it had been a great success. It was, however, an extremely difficult "make-up,"—if I may use such a theatrical expression in connection with one of the greatest mysteries of the supernatural, or, to employ a more scientific term, the higher-natural world—and it took him fully three hours to make his preparations.

At last everything was ready, and he was very pleased with his appearance. The big leather riding-boots that went with the dress were just a little too large for him, and he could only find one of the two horse-pistols. But, on the whole, he was quite satisfied, and at a quarter-past one he glided out of the wainscoting and crept down the corridor. On reaching the room occupied by the twins, which I should mention was called the Blue Bedchamber, on account of the color of its hangings, he found the door just ajar. Wishing to make an effective entrance, he flung it wide open, when a heavy jug of water fell right down on him, wetting him to the skin, and just missing his left shoulder by a couple of inches. At the same moment he heard stifled shrieks of laughter proceeding from the four-poster bed.

The shock to his nervous system was so great that he fled back to his room as hard as he could go, and the next day he was laid up with a severe cold. The only thing that at all consoled him in the whole affair was the fact that he had not brought his head with him, for, had he done so, the consequences might have been very serious.

He now gave up all hope of ever frightening this rude American family, and contented himself, as a rule, with creeping about the passages in list slippers, with a thick red muffler round his

throat for fear of draughts, and a small arquebus, in case he should be attacked by the twins. The final blow he received occurred on the 19th of September. He had gone downstairs to the great entrance hall, feeling sure that there, at any rate, he would be quite unmolested, and was amusing himself by making satirical remarks on the large Sarony photographs of the United States Minister and his wife, which had now taken the place of the Canterville family pictures.

He was simply but neatly clad in a long shroud, spotted with churchyard mold; he had tied up his jaw with a strip of yellow linen, and carried a small lantern and a sexton's spade. In fact, he was dressed for the character of "Jonas the Graveless, or The Corpse-Snatcher of Chertsey Barn", one of his most remarkable impersonations, and one which the Cantervilles had every reason to remember, as it was the real origin of their quarrel with their neighbor, Lord Rufford. It was about a quarter-past two o'clock in the morning, and, as far as he could ascertain, no one was stirring. As he was strolling toward the library, however, to see if there were any traces left of the blood-stain, suddenly there leaped out on him from a dark corner two figures, who waved their arms wildly above their heads and shrieked out "BOO!" in his ear.

SEIZED with a panic, which, under the circumstances, was only natural, he rushed for the staircase, but found Washington Otis waiting for him there with the big garden-syringe, and being thus hemmed in by his enemies on every side, and driven almost to bay, he vanished into the great iron stove, which, fortunately for him, was not lit, and had to make his way home through the flues and chimneys, arriving at his own room in a terrible state of dirt, disorder, and despair.

After this he was not seen again on any nocturnal expedition. The twins lay in wait for him on several occasions,

and strewed the passages with nutshells every night to the great annoyance of their parents and the servants; but it was of no avail. It was quite evident that his feelings were so wounded that he would not appear. Mr. Otis consequently resumed his great work on the history of the Democratic party, on which he had been engaged for some years; Mrs. Otis organized a wonderful clam-bake, which amazed the whole county; the boys took to lacrosse, euchre, poker and other American national games, and Virginia rode about the lanes on her pony, accompanied by the young Duke of Cheshire, who had come to spend the last week of his holidays at Canterville Chase.

It was generally assumed that the ghost had gone away, and, in fact, Mr. Otis wrote a letter to that effect to Lord Canterville, who, in reply, expressed his great pleasure at the news, and sent his congratulations to the Minister's worthy wife.

THE Otises, however, were deceived, for the ghost was still in the house, and though now almost an invalid, was by no means ready to let matters rest, particularly as he heard that among the guests was the young Duke of Cheshire, whose grand-uncle, Lord Francis Stilton, had once bet a hundred guineas with Colonel Carbury that he would play dice with the Canterville ghost, and was found that next morning lying on the floor of the card-room in such a helpless paralytic state that, though he lived on to a great age, he was never able to say anything again but "Double Sixes." The story was well known at the time, though, of course, out of respect for the feelings of the two noble families, every attempt was made to hush it up, and a full account of all the circumstances connected with it will be found in the third volume of Lord Tattle's *Recollections of the Prince Regent and his Friends*.

The Ghost, then, was naturally very anxious to show that he had not lost his influence over the Stiltons, with whom, indeed, he was distantly connected, his own first cousin having been married *en secondes nocces* to the Sieur de Bulkeley, from whom, as every one knows, the Dukes of Cheshire are lineally descended. Accordingly, he made arrangements for appearing to Virginia's little lover in his celebrated impersonation of "The Vampire Monk, or the Bloodless Benedictine", a performance so horrible that when old Lady Startup saw it, which she did on one fatal New Year's Eve in the year 1764, she went off into the most piercing shrieks, which culminated in violent apoplexy, and died in three days, after disinheriting the Cantervilles who were her nearest relations, and leaving all her money to her London apothecary. At the last moment, however, his terror of the twins prevented his leaving his room, and the little Duke slept in peace under the great feathered canopy in the Royal Bedchamber, and dreamed of Virginia.

A few days after this, Virginia and her curly-haired cavalier went out riding on Brockley meadows, where

she tore her habit so badly in getting through a hedge that, on their return home, she made up her mind to go up by the back staircase so as not to be seen. As she was running past the Tapestry Chamber, the door of which happened to be open, she fancied she saw someone inside, and thinking it was her mother's maid, who sometimes used to bring her work there, looked in to ask her to mend her habit. To her immense surprise, however, it was the Canterville Ghost himself!

He was sitting by the window, watching the ruined gold of the yellowing trees fly through the air, and the red leaves dancing madly down the long avenue. His head was leaning on his hand, and his whole attitude was one of extreme depression. Indeed, so forlorn, and so much out of repair did he look, that little Virginia, whose first idea had been to run away and lock herself in her room, was filled with pity, and determined to try and comfort him. So light was her footfall, and so deep his melancholy, that he was not aware of her presence till she spoke to him.

"I am so sorry for you," she said, "but my brothers are going back to Eton tomorrow, and then, if you behave yourself, no one will annoy you."

"It is absurd asking me to behave myself," he answered, looking round in astonishment at the pretty little girl who had ventured to address him, "quite absurd. I must rattle my chains, and groan through keyholes, and walk about at night, if that is what you mean. It is my only reason for existing."

"IT is no reason at all for existing, and you know you have been very wicked. Mrs. Umney told us, the first day we arrived here, that you had killed your wife."

"Well, I quite admit it," said the ghost, petulantly, "but it was a purely family matter and concerned no one else."

"It is very wrong to kill anyone," said Virginia, who at times had a sweet puritan gravity, caught from some old New England ancestor.

"Oh, I hate the cheap severity of abstract ethics! My wife was very plain, never had my ruffs properly starched, and knew nothing about cookery. Why, there was a buck I had shot in Hogley Woods, a magnificent pricket, and do you know how she had it sent to the table? However, it is no matter now, for it is all over, and I don't think it was very nice of her brothers to starve me to death, even though I did kill her."

"Starve you to death? Oh, Mr. Ghost—I mean, Sir Simon—are you hungry? I have a sandwich in my case. Would you like it?"

"No, thank you, I never eat anything now; but it is very kind of you, all the same, and you are much nicer than the rest of your horrid, rude, vulgar, dishonest family."

"Stop!" cried Virginia, stamping her foot. "It is you who are rude, and horrid, and vulgar, and as for dishonesty, you know you stole the paints out of my box to try and furbish up that ridiculous blood-stain in the library. First you took all my reds, including the vermilion, and I couldn't do any more sun-

sets. Then you took the emerald-green and the chrome-yellow, and finally I had nothing left but indigo and Chinese white, and could only do moonlight scenes, which are always depressing to look at, and not at all easy to paint. I never told on you, though I was very much annoyed, and it was most ridiculous, the whole thing; for who ever heard of emerald-green blood?"

"Well, really," said the Ghost, rather meekly, "what was I to do? It is a very difficult thing to get real blood nowadays, and, as your brother began it all with his Paragon Defergent, I certainly saw no reason why I should not have your paints. As for color, that is always a matter of taste: the Cantervilles have blue blood, for instance, the very bluest in England; but I know you Americans don't care for things of this kind."

"YOU know nothing about it, and the best thing you can do is to emigrate and improve your mind. My father will be only too happy to give you a free passage on spirits of every kind, there will be no difficulty about the Custom House, as the officers are all Democrats. Once in New York, you are sure to be a great success. I know lots of people there who would give a hundred thousand dollars to have a grandfather, and much more than that to have a family ghost."

"I don't think I should like America." "I suppose because we have no ruins and no curiosities," said Virginia, satirically.

"No ruins! No curiosities!" answered the Ghost. "You have your navy and your manners."

"Good evening! I will go and ask papa to get the twins an extra week's holiday."

"Please don't go, Miss Virginia," he cried. "I am so lonely and so unhappy, and I really don't know what to do. I want to go to sleep and I cannot."

"That's quite absurd! You have merely to go to bed and blow out the candle. It is very difficult sometimes to keep awake, especially at church, but there is no difficulty at all about sleeping. Why, even babies know how to do that, and they are not every clever."

"I have not slept for three hundred years," he said sadly, and Virginia's beautiful blue eyes opened in wonder. "For three hundred years I have not slept, and I am so tired."

Virginia grew quite grave, and her little lips trembled like rose-leaves. She came toward him, and kneeling down at his side, looked up into his old withered face.

"Poor, poor ghost," she murmured, "have you no place where you can sleep?"

"Far away beyond the pinewoods," he answered, in a low, dreamy voice, "there is a little garden. There the grass grows long and deep, there are the great white stars of the hemlock flower, there the nightingale sings all night long. All night long he sings, and the cold crystal moon looks down, and the yew-tree spreads out its giant arms over the sleepers."

Virginia's eyes grew dim with tears, and she hid her face in her hands.

"You mean the Garden of Death," she whispered.

"Yes, death. Death must be so beautiful. To lie in the soft brown earth, with the grasses waving above one's head, and listen to silence. To have no yesterday, and no tomorrow. To forget time, to forget life, to be at peace. You can help me. You can open for me the portals of death's house, for love is always with you, and love is stronger than death."

VIRGINIA trembled, a cold shudder ran through her, and for a few moments there was silence. She felt as if she were in a terrible dream.

Then the ghost spoke again, and his voice sounded like the sighing of the wind.

"Have you ever read the old prophecy on the library window?"

"Oh, often," cried the little girl, looking up. "I know it quite well. It is painted in curious black letters, and is difficult to read. There are only six lines:

*"When a golden girl can win
Prayer from out the lips of sin,
When the barren almond bears,
And a little child gives away its tears,
Then shall all the house be still
And peace come to Canterville."*

But I don't know what they mean."

"They mean," he said sadly, "that you must weep with me for my sins, because I have no tears, and pray with me for my soul, because I have no faith, and then, if you have always been sweet and good and gentle, the angel of death will have mercy on me. You will see fearful shapes in darkness, and wicked voices will whisper in your ear, but they will not harm you, for against the purity of a little child the powers of Hell cannot prevail."

Virginia made no answer, and the ghost wrung his hands in wild despair as he looked down at her bowed golden head. Suddenly she stood up, very pale, and with a strange light in her eyes.

"I am not afraid," she said firmly, "and I will ask the angel to have mercy on you."

He rose from his seat with a faint cry of joy, and taking her hand bent over it with old-fashioned grace and kissed it. His fingers were as cold as ice, and his lips burned like fire, but Virginia did not falter, as he led her across the dusky room. On the faded green tapestry were embroidered little huntsmen. They blew their tasseled horns and with their tiny hands waved to her to go back. "Go back! little Virginia," they cried, "go back!" But the ghost clutched her hand more tightly, and she shut her eyes against them. Horrible animals with lizard tails and goggle eyes blinked at her from the carved mantelpiece, and murmured, "Beware! little Virginia, beware! We may never see you again." But the ghost glided on more swiftly, and Virginia did not listen. When they reached the end of the room he stopped, and

muttered some words she could not understand. She opened her eyes, and saw the wall slowly fading away like a mist, and a great black cavern in front of her. A bitter cold wind swept round them, and she felt something pulling at her dress.

"Quick, quick," cried the ghost, "or it will be too late," and in a moment the wainscoting had closed behind them, and the Tapestry Chamber was empty.

About ten minutes later the bell rang for tea, and, as Virginia did not come down, Mrs. Otis sent up one of the footmen to call her. After a little time he returned and said that he could not find Miss Virginia anywhere. As she was in the habit of going out to the garden every evening to get flowers for the dinner-table, Mrs. Otis was not at all alarmed at first, but when six o'clock struck, and Virginia did not appear, she became really agitated, and sent the boys out to look for her, while she herself and Mr. Otis searched every room in the house. At half-past six the boys came back and said that they could find no trace of their sister anywhere.

THEY were all now in the greatest state of excitement, and did not know what to do, when Mr. Otis suddenly remembered that, some few days before, he had given a band of gipsies permission to camp in the park. He accordingly at once set off for Blackfell Hollow, where he knew they were, accompanied by his eldest son and two of the farm servants. The little Duke of Cheshire, who was perfectly frantic with anxiety, begged hard to be allowed to go too, but Mr. Otis would not allow him, as he was afraid there might be a scuffle. On arriving at the spot, however, he found that the gipsies had gone, and it was evident that their departure had been rather sudden, as the fire was still burning, and some plates were lying on the grass.

Having sent off Washington and the two men to scour the district, he ran home, and dispatched telegrams to all the police inspectors in the county, telling them to look out for a little girl who had been kidnapped by tramps or gipsies. He then ordered his horse to be brought round, and after insisting on his wife and the three boys sitting down to dinner, rode off down the Ascot road with a groom. He had hardly, however, gone a couple of miles, when he heard somebody galloping after him, and, looking round, saw the little Duke coming up on his pony, with his face very flushed, and no hat on.

"I'm awfully sorry, Mr. Otis," gasped the boy, "but I can't eat any dinner as long as Virginia is lost. Please don't be angry with me; if you had let us be engaged last year, there would never have been all this trouble. You won't send me back, will you? I can't go! I won't go!"

The Minister could not help smiling at the handsome young scapegrace, and was a good deal touched at his devotion to Virginia. So, leaning down from his horse, he patted him kindly on the shoulders, and said, "Well, Cecil, if you

won't go back, I suppose you must come with me, but I must get you a hat at Ascot."

"Oh, bother my hat! I want Virginia!" cried the little Duke, laughing, and they galloped on to the railway station.

There Mr. Otis inquired of the station master if any one answering to the description of Virginia had been seen on the platform, but could get no news of her. The station master, however, wired up and down the line, and assured him that a strict watch would be kept for her, and, after having bought a hat for the little Duke from a linen-draper, who was just putting up his shutters, Mr. Otis rode off to Bexley, a village about four miles away, which he was told was a well-known haunt of the gipsies, as there was a large common next to it. Here they roused up the rural policeman, but could get no information from him, and, after riding all over the common, they turned their horses' heads homewards, and reached the Chase about eleven o'clock, dead-tired and almost heart-broken.

They found Washington and the twins waiting for them at the gate-house with lanterns, as the avenue was very dark. Not the slightest trace of Virginia had been discovered. The gipsies had been caught on Brockley meadows, but she was not with them, and they had explained their sudden departure by saying that they had mistaken the date of the Chorton Fair, and had gone off in a hurry for fear they should be late. Indeed, they had been quite distressed at hearing of Virginia's disappearance, as they were very grateful to Mr. Otis for having allowed them to camp in his park, and four of their number had stayed behind to help in the search. The carp pond had been dragged, and the whole Chase thoroughly gone over, but without any result. It was evident that, for that night at any rate, Virginia was lost to them; and it was in a state of the deepest depression that Mr. Otis and the boys walked up to the house, the groom following behind with the two horses and the pony.

In the hall they found a group of frightened servants, and lying on a sofa in the library was poor Mrs. Otis, almost out of her mind with terror and anxiety, and having her forehead bathed with *eau de cologne* by the old house-keeper. Mr. Otis at once insisted on her having something to eat, and ordered up supper for the whole party. It was a melancholy meal, as hardly any one spoke, and even the twins were awestruck and subdued, as they were very fond of their sister. When they had finished, Mr. Otis, in spite of the entreaties of the little Duke, ordered them all to bed, saying that nothing more could be done that night, and that he would telegraph in the morning to Scotland Yard for some detectives to be sent down immediately.

JUST as they were passing out of the dining-room, midnight began to boom from the clock tower, and when the last stroke sounded they heard a crash and a sudden shrill cry. A dreadful peal

of thunder shook the house, a strain of unearthly music floated through the air, a panel at the top of the staircase flew back with a loud noise, and out on the landing, looking very pale and white, and with a little casket in her hand, stepped Virginia. In a moment they had all rushed up to her. Mrs. Otis clasped her passionately in her arms, the Duke smothered her with violent kisses, and the twins executed a wild war-dance round the group.

"Good heavens, child! where have you been?" said Mr. Otis, rather angrily, thinking that she had been playing some foolish trick on them. "Cecil and I have been riding all over the country looking for you, and your mother has been frightened to death. You must never play these practical jokes any more."

"Except on the ghost! Except on the ghost!" shrieked the twins, as they capered about.

"My own darling, thank God you are found; you must never leave my side again," murmured Mrs. Otis, as she kissed the trembling child and smoothed the tangled gold of her hair.

"PAPA," said Virginia, quietly, "I have been with the ghost. He is dead, and you must come and see him. He had been very wicked, but he was really sorry for all that he had done, and he gave me this box of beautiful jewels before he died."

The whole family gazed at her in mute amazement, but she was quite grave and serious; and, turning round, she led them through the opening in the wainscoting down a narrow secret corridor, Washington following with a lighted candle, which he had caught up from the table. Finally, they came to a great oak door, studded with rusty nails. When Virginia touched it, it swung back on its heavy hinges, and they found themselves in a little low room, with a vaulted ceiling, and one tiny grated window. Imbedded in the wall was a huge iron ring, with dangling manacles—but what was that on the floor—the ghastly thing entangled among the chains? As they peered through the gloom, their astonished eyes fell upon the remains of a gaunt skeleton, stretched out at full length on the stone floor; it seemed to be trying to grasp with its long fleshless fingers an old-fashioned trencher and ewer, that were placed just out of its reach. The jug had evidently been once filled with water, as it was covered inside with green mold. There was nothing on the trencher but a pile of dust. Virginia knelt down beside the skeleton, and, folding her little hands together, began to pray silently, while the rest of the party looked on in wonder at the terrible tragedy whose secret was now disclosed to them.

"Hallo!" suddenly exclaimed one of the twins, who had been looking out of the window to try and discover in what wing of the house the room was situated. "Hallo! the old withered almond tree has blossomed. I can see the flowers quite plainly in the moonlight."

"God has forgiven him," said Vir-

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ginia, gravely, as she rose to her feet, and a beautiful light seemed to illumine her face.

"What an angel you are!" cried the young Duke, and he put his arm round her neck, and kissed her.

FOUR days after these curious incidents, a funeral started from Canterville Chase at about eleven o'clock at night. The hearse was drawn by eight black horses, each of which carried on its head a great tuft of nodding ostrich-plumes, and the leaden coffin was covered by a rich purple pall, on which was embroidered in gold the Canterville coat-of-arms. By the side of the hearse and the coaches walked the servants with lighted torches, and the whole procession was wonderfully impressive. Lord Canterville was the chief mourner, having come up specially from Wales to attend the funeral, and sat in the first carriage along with little Virginia. Then came the United States Minister and his wife, then Washington and the three boys, and in the last carriage was Mrs. Umney. It was generally felt that, as she had been frightened by the ghost for more than fifty years of her life, she had a right to see the last of him.

A deep grave had been dug in the corner of the churchyard, just under the old yew-tree, and the service was read in the most impressive manner by the Reverend Augustus Dampier. When the ceremony was over, the servants, according to an old custom observed in the Canterville family, extinguished their torches, and, as the coffin was being lowered into the grave, Virginia stepped forward, and laid on it a large cross made of white and pink almond-blossoms. As she did so, the moon came out from behind a cloud, and flooded with its silent silver the little churchyard, and from a distant copse a nightingale began to sing. She thought of the ghost's description of the Garden of Death, her eyes became dim with tears, and she hardly spoke a word during the drive home.

The next morning, before Lord Canterville went up to town, Mr. Otis had an interview with him on the subject of the jewels the ghost had given to Virginia. They were perfectly magnificent, especially a certain ruby necklace with an old Venetian setting, which was really a superb specimen of Sixteenth-Century work. Their value was so great that Mr. Otis felt considerable scruples about allowing his daughter to accept them.

"My lord," he said, "I know that in this country mortmain is held to apply to trinkets as well as to land, and it is quite clear to me that these jewels are, or should be, heirlooms in your family. I must beg you, accordingly, to take them to London with you, and to regard them simply as a portion of your property which has been restored to you under certain strange conditions. As for my daughter, she is merely a child, and has as yet, I am glad to say, but little interest in such appurtenances of idle luxury. I am also informed by Mrs. Otis, who, I may say, is no mean authority upon Art—having had the

privilege of spending several winters in Boston when she was a girl—that these gems are of great monetary worth, and if offered for sale would fetch a tall price.

"Under these circumstances, Lord Canterville, I feel sure that you will recognize how impossible it would be for me to allow them to remain in the possession of any member of my family; and, indeed, all such vain baubles and toys, however suitable or necessary to the dignity of the British aristocracy, would be completely out of place among those who have been brought up on the severe, and I believe immortal, principles of Republican simplicity. Perhaps I should mention that Virginia is very anxious that you should allow her to retain the box, as a memento of your unfortunate but misguided ancestor. As it is extremely old, and consequently a good deal out of repair, you may perhaps think fit to comply with her request. For my own part, I confess I am a good deal surprised to find a child of mine expressing sympathy with medievalism in any form, and can only account for it by the fact that Virginia was born in one of your London suburbs shortly after Mrs. Otis had returned from a trip to Athens."

Lord Canterville listened very gravely to the worthy Minister's speech, pulling his gray mustache now and then to hide an involuntary smile, and when Mr. Otis had ended, he shook him cordially by the hand, and said: "My dear sir, your charming little daughter rendered my unlucky ancestor, Sir Simon, a very important service, and I and my family are much indebted to her for her marvelous courage and pluck. The jewels are clearly hers, and, egad, I believe that if I were heartless enough to take them from her, the wicked old fellow would be out of his grave in a fortnight, leading me the devil of a life.

"As for their being heirlooms," he went on, "nothing is an heirloom that is not so mentioned in a will or legal document, and the existence of these jewels has been quite unknown. I assure you I have no more claim on them than your butler, and when Miss Virginia grows up, I dare say she will be pleased to have pretty things to wear. Besides, you forget, Mr. Otis, that you took the furniture and the ghost at a valuation, and anything that belonged to the ghost passed at once into your possession, as, whatever activity Sir Simon may have shown in the corridor at night, in point of law he was really dead, and you acquired his property by purchase."

MR. OTIS was a good deal distressed at Lord Canterville's refusal, and begged him to reconsider his decision, but the good-natured peer was quite firm, and finally induced the Minister to allow his daughter to retain the present the ghost had given her. And when, in the spring of 1890, the young Duchess of Cheshire was presented at the Queen's first drawing-room on the occasion of her marriage, her jewels were the universal theme of admiration. For Virginia received the coronet,

which is the reward of all good little American girls, and was married to her boy-lover as soon as she came of age. They were both so charming, and they loved each other so much, that everyone was delighted at the match except the old Marchioness of Dumbleton, who had tried to catch the Duke for one of her seven unmarried daughters, and had given no less than three expensive dinner-parties for that purpose—and, strange to say, Mr. Otis himself.

Mr. Otis was extremely fond of the young Duke personally, but, theoretically, he objected to titles, and, to use his own words, "was not without apprehension lest, amid the enervating influences of a pleasure-loving aristocracy, the true principles of Republican simplicity should be forgotten." His objections, however, were completely overruled, and I believe that when he walked up the aisle of St. George's, Hanover Square, with his daughter leaning on his arm, there was not a prouder man in the whole length and breadth of England.

The Duke and Duchess, after the honeymoon was over, went down to Canterville Chase, and on the day after their arrival they walked over in the afternoon to the lonely churchyard by the pinewoods. There had been a great deal of difficulty at first about the inscription on Sir Simon's tombstone, but finally it had been decided to engrave on it simply the initials of the old gentleman's name, and the verse from the library window.

THE Duchess had brought with her some lovely roses, which she strewed upon the grave, and after they had stood by it for some time, they strolled into the ruined chancel of the old abbey. There the Duchess sat down on a fallen pillar, while her husband lay at her feet smoking a cigarette and looking up at her beautiful eyes. Suddenly he threw his cigarette away, took hold of her hand, and said to her, "Virginia, a wife should have no secrets from her husband."

"Dear Cecil! I have no secrets from you."

"Yes, you have," he answered, smiling, "you have never told me what happened to you when you were locked up with the ghost."

"I have never told anyone, Cecil," said Virginia, gravely.

"I know that, but you might tell me."

"Please don't ask me, Cecil, I cannot tell you. Poor Sir Simon! I owe him a great deal. Yes, don't laugh, Cecil, I really do. He made me see what Life is, and what Death signifies, and why Love is stronger than both."

The Duke rose and kissed his wife lovingly.

"You can have your secret as long as I have your heart," he murmured very softly.

"You have always had that, Cecil."

"And you will tell our children some day, won't you?"

Virginia blushed.

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Do Dead Men Ever Tell Tales?

(Continued from page 51)

manifestations, there have been occurrences which no guile of conjuring will suffice to explain away. Under test conditions, supported by the witness of competent and informed spectators, effects have been produced which are inexplicable on any other ground than the operation of some psychic force or influence, the nature of which has yet to be determined.

To those who would care to pursue the subject further, I can say that the Proceedings of the two Societies for Psychological Research will give them all the information that can reasonably hope to secure. All that I can do here is to relate one astounding personal experience.

If, after reading what I have to say of this single adventure into a realm where my magic could not penetrate, the reader doubts, not my word, but my observation, let me say this:

My career has been consistently devoted to magic and illusions. I believe I understand the principles governing every known trick. I would be willing to sail around the world just to behold one feat I could not explain. In all séance examinations I train all my faculties against the medium, watching for the slightest evidence of trickery.

I am willing to stake my reputation as a magician that what this one medium showed me was genuine!

I do not say it was spiritism. I do not know what it was. All that I do insist is that this woman accomplished what she showed me, not by trickery but by some baffling, intangible, invisible force, that radiated through her body and over which she exerted a temporary and thoroughly exhausting control.

I am referring, of course, to Madame Eusapia Palladino.

MOST of the American public, with the natural exception of those especially interested in such topics, have forgotten that squat, stodgy, stolid, blinking Neapolitan old woman. She is dead now; gone to that unknown realm from which she believed her mysterious powers were drawn. I shall tell you the story of Eusapia and you may judge for yourself.

This ignorant peasant woman had completely puzzled some of the keenest minds among the scientists of Europe and Asia by her phenomena. In her presence, distinct rappings were reputed to be heard, tables and chairs rose stiffly from the floor and floated about, and other strange things developed most unexpectedly. She was creating something of a furore abroad.

When I read of this, I said to myself: "That old woman must have a good bag of tricks, if she can pull the wool over the eyes of all those professors!"

Not for a moment did I credit her with genuine powers. At that time my investigations had convinced me that there were no such powers.

Then came the news that Eusapia Palladino was coming to America. The

American scientists were going to have a whack at trying to analyze her miracles. And the Society of American Magicians was also eager to see what she could do.

One morning, on my way into New York, returning from a season out of town, I read in the papers that Eusapia had been completely exposed. A committee from the Society of American Magicians had been given a séance, in the course of which the lights had been turned on; the old lady had been caught right in the middle of her table lifting trick—I think she was employing the method I spoke of a little while ago—and the papers were chuckling at the confusion of the scientists who had been her dupes.

I SMILED wisely. Just what I had suspected had been proved correct. I was rather glad that fellow magicians had been able to show her up. With this thought, the subject passed from my mind.

Only a few days after this I chanced to encounter on Broadway Mr. Hereward Carrington. Besides being a man deeply interested in all matters mystical, Mr. Carrington was the impresario who had brought Eusapia to this country. I could not resist a bit of friendly joshing with him on the fiasco that had attended her encounter with the conjurers.

He looked at me solemnly. "It is a melancholy fact, Thurston," he said in sepulchral tones, "that Palladino does fake. They all do, somehow or other. They know they are expected to have these manifestations on tap all the time. Somehow things don't work that way. It is only now and then that real results occur. That is why they fake. They oughtn't to do it, but they do. Now, I tell you that this old lady is a real medium!"

"You don't tell me!" I replied, laughing in his face.

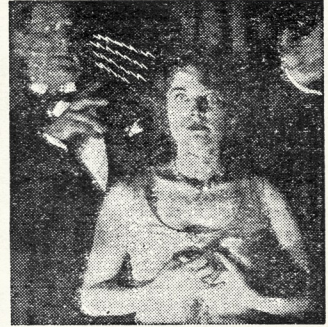
"I mean it!" he replied. "I can prove it!"

"You can't prove it to me," I prodded him.

He said he would prove it to me, and in the next two minutes we had arranged a private séance, to be held in the medium's hotel room, no one else to be present except Mrs. Thurston, Carrington, Eusapia and myself.

With no expectations whatever, except the old story of a fraud and its exposure Mrs. Thurston and I repaired to the hotel a few afternoons later. Eusapia kept us waiting, and in the interval before her appearance, Mrs. Thurston and I took the opportunity to make a complete examination of the room. We were there to find the trickery, if trickery there was to be. But all our searching was unrewarded; we found nothing even remotely suspicious.

Particularly I examined the table which she was to use. I scrutinized every inch of that piece of furniture; I do not recall ever having seen a more innocent object. Presently the medium appeared.



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We put down the curtains, and shut out every tiny little gleam of light. Around the table we were grouped, Palladino very pale and very short of breath and nervously ill at ease. I should be explicit in describing our positions, which I had dictated, with no protest from Madame. I held her right ankle and foot; Mrs. Thurston held her left leg and foot; Carrington stood at the other end of the room. Eusapia had her hands spread out in star-fish fashion on the mahogany surface of the table.

Suddenly we felt the table twitch. It shuddered, as from the impact of some external force. The legs quivered and cracked. All at once it left the floor!

Up in the air the table rose, one, two, three inches, shaking unsteadily, but seemingly sustained by a force superior to gravity. Inch after inch it climbed then stopped, seemed to waver, and then fell back crashingly, thuddingly among us.

"Turn up the lights!" called Eusapia clearly, in Italian.

The lights were turned on. I saw that she was ghastly pale; her eyes were glazed; she seemed exhausted. Yet only a moment later she declared she was anxious to continue; the power was flooding through her brain; she touched damp fingers to her forehead and said that the force was there!

"Let the lights remain!" she said calmly.

I DO not believe that ever before in the history of the world had a magician and a skeptic been privileged to behold what I then looked upon.

I saw Eusapia Palladino replace her hands on that table which I had examined so carefully; I saw her lift it up, and make it float unsupported in the air; and while it remained there I got down on my knees and crawled around it, seeking in vain for some natural explanation.

There was none. No wires, no body supports, no iron shoes, nothing—but some occult power I could not fathom.

My pride was wounded. I felt I had been tricked. I was not ready to surrender my faith in rationalism. I demanded more proof, and with bewildering readiness the strange old lady agreed. I held her legs; Mrs. Thurston held her feet, and even then, thus guarded and held prisoner, the table rose again!

When it finally crashed back to the floor, never again to rise before my eyes, I was a defeated skeptic. I acknowledged that Palladino had convinced me. There was no fake in what she had showed me; yet Carrington, moody and unexcited, declared that it was altogether an ordinary occurrence to one who knew Palladino and her work.

And there you are! In every other case of physical mediumship that I had witnessed I had discovered the fraud, yet here in the clear electric light I had seen a problem that I could not solve.

Through all this strange conglomeration of deliberate fraud and that unexplained ten per cent of the manifestations of which Palladino's séance is a part, there must run one annoying question.

If all this is spiritualism, why does it cloak itself in such a mountebankish guise? Do dead people suddenly become trivial? If not, why do they seek to communicate by means of drunken furniture and alarming noises? Why not a more dignified attempt at spiritual telegraphy?

Here we are led automatically to the mental phenomena of trance and its wonders.

You will recall that Palladino asserted her power came from the mind. Among advanced investigators, it seems generally agreed that all forms of mediumship emanate from some undiscovered functions of the brain. Even the levitation of tables and the production of raps is regarded as a mental exercise of some neglected cells. Under this theory, every human being may be a dormant medium, an undiscovered psychic, just as every human being may be a potential athlete, by proper exercise, even though not all can be champions.

It is the theory of those who blame the spirits for all these manifestations that they are merely the automatic outbursts of psychic forces during an attempt to communicate; that such things are natural when we are only beginning to learn how to signal the departed. Eventually we shall learn the mechanism and handle it more intelligently. This is already being done, it is claimed, by automatic writers and by psychometrists.

To watch an automatic writing medium at work is an amazing experience. Sometimes they go into trances; at others they remain entirely normal, and may even be holding an objective, ordinary conversation during the communication. Frequently the writing is done backward, so that it is necessary to hold the writing to a mirror to read it. Again the writing may all be jumbled together.

HERE some of the greatest scientific puzzles are met, if one holds out against the spiritualistic theory, for, through this automatic writing come messages of astonishing veracity. They purport to be sent by persons who have died, and they often relate such a wealth of detailed incident from the life of the dead person, or from his family affairs as absolutely to confound the skeptic. All sorts of ingenious explanations have been offered. One theory is that the medium gets the information telegraphically from the brain of the sitter—that it is nothing more than mind reading.

In some cases, however, this theory will not hold water. Many, many times the medium will get a message that can be verified yet which deals with matters unknown to any living person. For

instance, a will may be hidden by its maker, and then the maker dies. No one knows where the will was concealed. The medium gets an automatic writing message, ostensibly from the spirit of the dead man, telling where the will may be found. When that place is searched the will is found.

Now nobody's brain could be read to find that out, because nobody knew but the legator, and he was dead!

It must be admitted that evidence of this kind is all too rare. It is the task of the scientific societies to secure all of it that they can. Such testimony, multiplied, verified, and made evidential, will go far toward establishing the spirit theory.

The work of the psychometrists is largely along the same lines, although the method is different. Here the medium goes into a trance, while holding some object associated with the dead person. Verbal messages come from the parted lips of the entranced medium, and some of them are truly astounding, and apparently unexplainable.

There is, of course, not space in an entire issue of a magazine to describe, or even to note, all the phases of this weird and fascinating field of scientific research. I have tried to give it only in the boldest and most rugged outline—to show the public, first, the ever-present, imminent danger of trickery and fraud, and second, to make clear that there are genuine wonders which are pointing the way to scientists to explore deeper and deeper into an unknown land.

"BUT," I can hear the reader asking, "what do you really believe about the subject? You haven't told us that!"

Well, but I shall.

I am not ready to say that I believe the agency of spirits to have been established by these manifestations. I doubt if many members of the investigating scientific societies would be willing to go that far. But we must remember that it is their origin only that is in doubt—the phenomena have been evidenced, and are not in dispute.

You remember that if you rubbed kitty's back in the dark, the sparks would fly out? You recall how your hair crackles in the dark when you draw the comb through its wavy tresses?

Years ago these very same things happened—and people used to say it was an enchantment; the devil was abroad!

Now we know it is electricity!

Today we see strange things—rapings, tables rising, singular communications from an uncharted domain. We are curious, a little awed, perhaps a bit frightened. And we whisper that the ghosts are doing it all!

Perhaps!

But perhaps again it is some gigantesque force, greater than electricity, greater than radium, which some day we shall harness to drive in whirling revolution all the whirling wheels of the world!

HOWARD THURSTON

will contribute another astounding article to the November GHOST STORIES. Watch for it!

The Varsity Murder

(Continued from page 9)

dame, I reckon," spoke up "Dixie" Tolliver, a classmate of mine. "Say, Dick, something sure has happened to you. You look as if you needed a shot of something to straighten you up. Better stop in at Stocker's," he added, flippantly.

But now I could see "Scrooge" Allen nudging "Dixie" and whispering to him to lay off riding me.

"It's all right," one of the gang comforted me. "Don't you let 'em kid you, boy. This test has scared lots of 'em. I admit I was scared myself when I went through it. Hey, Cyclops, take his pledge button and give him his frat pin."

"Cyclops" Carlson plucked the pledge-button from my lapel, and proudly attached the Alpha Rho fraternity pin to my sweater.

"I must know where Bob Harter is," I started to say. "Down there in the cellar—"

But that was as far as I got. "Scrooge" Allen, the leader of the bunch, began booming out instructions.

"Come on now, fellows," he yelled, as he herded the gang quickly out in front of the undertaking parlors. "I'll treat the bunch up at the drug store. Then we'll take Dick up to the chapter-house and wise him up on the passwords and grips and all the inner mysteries of Alpha Rho. Sing up! Everybody join in the Alpha Rho song as we march up College Street."

BEFORE I could say anything more, I was hustled along in the midst of the festive crowd, bound for the drug store. The doubts, the puzzles, the questions that were running through my brain would have to wait. I did start to ask about Harter again, but the roaring song drowned out my question.

"Listen to me!" I demanded of "Cyclops" Carlson, who was marching beside me. "Where is—?"

"Aw, shut up!" Carlson cut in good-naturedly. "Shut up, and sing!"

Folks looked after us tolerantly and laughingly as we marched up College Street. The frat song rang out:

*For we are the Alpha Rhos,
The Alpha Rhos are we—ee.
And every man in college knows
It's the fraterni-tee-ee—*

The words and music rolled off jauntily, and now, marching along the well-lighted street, it seemed incredible that I had seen what I had down in that gloomy cellar of Bell's.

The gang turned into the brilliant little drug-store. The movies had just let out down the street, and there was already a gay throng there. I noticed Avis Brent laughing and chatting with a group of girls at the soda fountain.

Once more, as we found tables for the gang, I asked about Bob Harter. But "Scrooge" Allen, always a little

noisy and domineering, would hardly let me get a word in edgewise.

"What you so interested in Bob Harter's movements for, Dick?" he asked in his bluff manner. "He's not out with your girl friend, anyhow, for I can see her over at a table near the door. But Bob ought to cut out banging around so much right now. He ought to keep in better training."

And then "Scrooge" carried the conversation into football channels.

"If Bob'll only settle down, I tell you we've got a great chance in the Manchester game this year," he predicted. "And the Alpha Rhos are the ones who'll win for Corfield," went on this fraternity booster. "With Bob Harter, and 'Cyclops' Carlson here, and you, Dick, old boy, and—"

I WAS impatient for him to get through. I wanted to tell the crowd what I had seen in Bell's cellar, but "Scrooge" rattled along on football, and some of the other fellows had started to sing again. I was looking over toward Avis near the door, trying to catch her eye, when through the wide-flung doors came the stocky form of Dan Quigley, Corfield's Chief of Police. He walked right up to our group of tables. His face was very sober.

"What I have to tell you, boys," he announced, "will stop that singing of yours, I'm afraid. Quiet there, please! Is there anyone here that was with Bob Harter tonight?"

I felt myself growing cold with a terrible premonition. I tried to speak up, but as usual, "Scrooge" Allen was first with his voice.

"I saw him at the chapter-house at about seven, I think it was. What's the matter, chief? Has old Bob been up to some of his ructions again?"

"Did he say he was going anywhere or meeting anybody?" Quigley persisted.

"Scrooge" Allen laughed his rumbling laugh.

"Oh, I think he was going to shoot a game or two down at Stocker's" he said. "He promised to show up at our initiation, but I suppose he fixed up a date with a girl, and—"

I could stand it no longer. I jumped up from my chair.

"Wait a minute!" I yelled. "Why are you asking that question, Chief?" I said, hoarsely. "Good God! Is Bob Harter—is he—?"

Chief Quigley had turned to me, and was looking at me queerly out of his steel-blue eyes.

"He's dead!" he said.

"**DEAD! BOB HARTER DEAD!**" The fellows had leaped to their feet. Several persons around us had heard the exclamation, and were rushing over toward us.

"And more than that," Quigley snapped, grimly, "his body was found quite a ways from his car with a bad bruise on his forehead. First we

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thought Harter might have run his car into the ditch or had a collision with another car. But now it looks like Harter was murdered!"

No one spoke for several seconds. "Scrooge" Allen, usually so noisy and pompous, fairly crumpled into his chair, pillowed his face in his hands, and started to cry like a baby. There were tears in the eyes of many. I looked blurrily around the circle, and saw the horrified expression in Avis's face as

she leaned weakly against the soda fountain.

Then I realized that what I had seen down in Bell's cellar had not been, after all, a hallucination. Bob Harter was dead—maybe murdered, as Quigley had said. And the spirit of Bob Harter had appeared down there in Bell's cellar to save me from a similar fate.

The room was spinning about me. I all but fainted. And then I saw Quigley walk over to Avis Brent.

"Miss Brent, you'll have to come with me," the chief said harshly. "There are some important questions for you to answer."

With my brain in a whirl, I thought back to that "appointment" that Avis had for sometime around nine o'clock. Had she been with Bob? Was Quigley going to charge her with the crime?

"Just a minute there, Chief!" I yelled. "I have something important to tell you!"

Who killed Bob Harter, Corfield's gridiron star? Upon the answer to that query depends the safety of the beautiful Avis Brent, the future happiness of Dick Foster, and the honor of Corfield College. Suspicion is rife on the once-peaceful campus, and you won't want to miss a single one of the staggering developments in this gripping story of the supernatural. "The Varsity Murder" moves swiftly to a weird climax in the October GHOST STORIES. Watch for it on the news stands, September 23rd.

Spirit Tales

(Continued from page 75)

The Fishers took their sister to Switzerland to recover, comforting themselves with the theory that an escaped lunatic had terrified the girl.

Early next March they came back to Croglin Grange. Again, Miss Fisher slept in that first floor bedroom, but she kept her window locked and her door open.

On the night of her homecoming she was startled from sleep by the sound of scratching. In terror she stared at the window. There was the hideous brown face; the ghastly, winking blue light; the claw-like hand. *And it had stripped away half of the window leads already!*

The terror never entered her room that time. Miss Fisher screamed with all her might, her brothers came rushing in, revolvers in hand. Again the brown face loomed before them. They fired through the window, shattered it, and the Terror vanished into thin air.

Next morning they went first to the village magistrate and then to the parish rector. The magistrate hemmed and hawed and seemed very much alarmed, but the rector showed them, in the old records of the church, an entry dated 1750:

In this year, Alan Fisher died of fright from seeing the Browne Man of Croglin.

What the Browne Man was or why his vengeance fell upon their family, the Fishers never found out. Whatever dark tale of terror lay behind his appearances had been lost in the mists of time.

Nevertheless, the Fisher family never returned to Croglin. They have never again seen the specter, and neither have the tenants to whom the Grange is let. Perhaps in another fifty years, another skeptical Fisher will come back to Croglin. And then—

A GHOST that settled its vengeance, and, having settled it, utterly disappeared, used to haunt Ham House, a weird and eerie-looking castle on the

Thames meadows between Richmond and Kingston.

This was the ghost who solved the secret of a most atrocious murder.

Back in the gay old days of King Charles II, the hostess of Ham House was the witty and wicked old Duchess of Lauderdale. Ever since her death, her boudoir there has remained as it was centuries ago. Even her silver-tipped walking-stick lies across the desk.

Indeed, in the last days of the Nineteenth Century, when the Ladies Tollemache lived at Ham House, the walking-stick was reputed to leave the desk and go rapping around the floors and walls of the room at night.

Still, no one paid much attention to this until the Ladies Tollemache invited the butler's little girl—a child of six—to spend the night with them. She had a room of her own, and slept soundly until dawn, when she was awakened by a strange scratching noise.

THINKING of the walking-stick legend, she looked up to see if the Duchess' cane was performing its tricks. It was not, but in the clear cold light of breaking day, she plainly saw a little old woman, hunchbacked and white-shawled, scratching at the wallpaper in a certain corner.

This did not terrify the child at all. She sat up in lively curiosity, and as she did so, the old woman turned and stared at her. The child never could describe the old woman's face, but it must have been a thing of horror, for she screamed so loudly that she woke the household.

By the time the Ladies Tollemache and the servants appeared, there was no little old woman in the room. Nor were there any marks of sharp fingernails on the wallpaper.

Yet the child was so positive of what she had seen that the wall was examined and a packet of yellowed papers discovered in a secret cranny there.

The documents revealed, beyond all question, that in that very room, centuries before, Elizabeth. Countess of

Dysart, had murdered her husband so that she might be free to marry the Duke of Lauderdale. These very papers are in the British Museum at the present time and may be seen upon request. The ghost of the little old woman has never been seen again.

EVEN the most famous families of England are not free from these ghosts of vengeance.

In the time of Henry VIII, the Black Monks, driven from their monastery, doomed the posterity of the Byron family "to extinction by fire and water."

Not until 1793 did this curse begin to work, and not until then did the famous Black Monk of the Byrons begin to appear at the ancestral seat. Thereafter, whenever the Black Ghost appeared, it foretold some grim doom for the Byrons.

Lord Byron, the famous poet, saw it several times. He even wrote certain stanzas about this baleful apparition, and comments thus in his diary, "The apparition of this strange specter was the forerunner of the most unpleasant and tragic happenings in my life."

Through generation after generation the family of the Byrons has slowly died out, some by fire and some by water, and some—unfortunately for the prophecy—by neither.

Whether there is a ghost at Dalham Hall near Newmarket, is still a question. Certainly, in ancient times, there is a record of the "Gray Ghoste of Dalham"; yet it has not been seen—or, at least, reported—in recent years.

"Unlucky Dalham" and "Fatal Dalham," the old Manor House is called, and it has borne that name since 1704 when it was built. The legend is that whoever buys or comes into possession of "Unlucky Dalham," dies within three years, and the startling thing is that the story seems to come true with uncanny persistency.

No less a person than that famous empire builder, Cecil Rhodes, bought the Dalham property in 1902. There is no absolute certainty that he saw the "Gray Ghoste" there, but he died within

six months after acquiring the place. He left it to his brother, Colonel Frank Rhodes, who died at Dalham in 1905. The story of "within three years" seemed still to hold good. Its prediction came to be even more startling when the third brother, Captain Ernest Frederick Rhodes, the heir of Dalham—died in 1907.

Now, no one will buy the house or even live in it. Whether there is really a ghost at "Unlucky Dalham" or merely some evil, uncanny influence, remains a mystery; but there is no doubt that Wardley Hall in Lancashire boasts a most ghastly ghost of vengeance—"The Screaming Skull."

Visitors today can see that skull on the Wardley Hall staircase. As long as it remains there, nothing happens. When it is moved, screams resound through the mansion, and the whole building rocks and quivers. The last attempt to move it, in 1897, was attended not only by the flight of the terrified family who occupied the hall, but of all their farmland tenants as well.

The legend is that that skull has remained on that staircase since Roger Downe, "Black Roger," lost his head in a London brawl during the reign of Charles II. The King, so the story goes, thoughtfully sent the brother's skull to his sister at Wardley Hall, and she dropped it on the stair. When the servants tried to move it, the skull screamed. So they very carefully left it alone, and there it rests still—for the tourist to examine but not to touch.

BUT if ghosts bring dire vengeance down upon the great families of England, one ghost brought luck that has never failed—"The Luck of Eden Hall." Eden Hall is in Cumberland, near the River Eden. It has been in the hands of the Musgrave family since the days of Henry VI, and the Musgraves will live there till their ghostly "Luck" shivers to pieces—if it ever does.

At what time the ghost brought the Luck of the Edens to them has never been clearly established. Even the family do not know, but they guard the "Luck" as carefully as anything can be guarded.

Centuries ago, the Musgraves' butler went yawning from his bed, to draw water from the well. The sun was just striking through the gray mist that rose from the river Eden, and the butler had put his jug down on the well-rim when he became conscious of two things.

The first was a huge and curiously carved glass goblet that stood by the well. Nothing like it had ever been seen in England before; nor has its like ever been seen since.

The second thing was a woman all in white, and because the sun shone clear through her, the butler knew she was a ghost. He was frightened out of his wits, so he seized the first thing at hand—the great goblet. For a moment, he felt cold hands on his shoulders, as if the ghost were struggling with him. Then suddenly the White Woman stood back, as if surrendering the goblet—and the butler ran for his life.

He guarded that famous goblet of yellowish green glass engraved in blue and white enamel and heightened with red and gold; and after him, others guarded it. For years it sat on a crimson cushion with this inscription under it.

*If this glass either break or fall,
Farewell the Luck of Eden Hall.*

For generations it neither broke nor fell, till the Duke of Wharnton dropped it from his hand one day, and the butler—a grandson of the man who saw the White Woman—caught it in a napkin. The Musgraves still have it, and their "Luck" still holds.

A pretty fairy tale? Well, perhaps, but that ghostly goblet—the Luck—is this very day in possession of the Musgrave family. It is hidden securely away in a strong vault in Eden Hall. It is never brought out; it is never used, and not one of the Musgraves is allowed to have the key to that vault.

The key is kept in the Bank of England.

Why Did He Do It?

"I AM tired of living. Break the news of my death to my mother gently."

This was the tragic note written by Theophilus Demis, a nineteen-year-old Mexican lad who recently killed himself by leaping from the eleventh floor of a New York City building where he worked.

Although the youth's mother collapsed when she learned of the suicide, she said, upon recovery, that she had been expecting her son's death for months. A forecast that he would die within a short time had been made by a medium to whom she was taken by a friend. Her belief in the prediction had grown steadily stronger, but fear of alarming her son had kept her from confiding the prophecy to him.

A most mysterious angle to the tragedy is that young Demis not only had no reason to kill himself, but frequently spoke of his future with optimism and discussed with pleasure the things he intended doing. He was of a happy disposition, well educated, was in the best of health and possessed many friends. Also, he had no love affair. Five minutes before his leap to death he had been eating candy and joking with fellow workers. Then, quite suddenly he wrote the farewell note, stepped up on the sill of the window and jumped out.

A Ghost With a Cough

A GHOST with a cough has been troubling two women Salvation Army officers in Wales. Although the women bear the Irish names of Adjutant McGuire and Lieutenant Murphy, they live on the outskirts of the Welsh mining town of Blaina. Crowds have visited their house in the hope of solving the supernatural manifestations which take place there.

Windows which the women have been unable to open suddenly fly up or down of their own accord. Doors bang and loud knocks come from various rooms.

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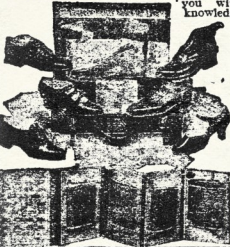
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But most persistent of all the noises is an unearthly cough in a masculine voice. Thus far, neither the women nor anyone else have been able to find the slightest sign of an agent—natural or supernatural—to account for the disturbances.

A Weeping Diamond

MYSTIC jewels of the sort that abound everywhere in the Indian Empire, have long baffled any attempt on the part of science to explain their mysterious powers. There are diamonds that weep when the moon is full; pearls from the head of the King Cobra that make rain; rubies that cure certain diseases. The origin of these strange gems and their properties, and the mystic spells with which they are imbued are all matters of speculation, though natives assert that they are not mere freaks of nature. For generations the jewels have been entrusted to the care of psychic persons who have shrouded them with mystical secrecy. Hidden in gigantic vaults, their whereabouts are known only to the heads of the families who possess them; and to attempt to steal or even touch them is supposed to bring horrible penalties upon the would-be thief.

A few months ago an ordinary-looking antique necklace belonging to a royal family in south India was offered for sale in the *Sowkarpetti*, or Bankers' Lane, in Madras. The man who bought it took it to a jeweler to have the large diamond pendant reset. The stone, he discovered, weighed five and a half carats.

On further examination it was found that the diamond's original blue tint had changed to a rosy shade. But the moment the jewel came under the direct rays of the sun it again turned full blue. In a dark room it gave out no light at all.

One evening when the jeweler went to open his safe he was astonished to find the whole receptacle flooded with what seemed to be brilliant moonlight. The lovely gem was illuminating the whole interior of the safe. Amazed, he picked it up and found that the pad of cotton wool upon which it rested was wet.

The stone lost its luster when the moon waned and would not give any light during the day. The behavior of the variable weeping diamond caused considerable comment, and mystics who heard about it told the jeweler that psychic presences from another life often inhabit such gems.

For Seekers After Truth

TODAY there are so many "isms" and "ologies" that offer health, wealth and happiness to their customers that the bewildered seeker after truth stands like a man in a crystal maze, knowing not which way to turn or even how to escape. The pages of so-called occult magazines teem with advertisements, with seers and savants offering to show—for a mere few cents—the way, the truth and the light. It is all very discouraging.

This makes the experience all the more refreshing when one comes upon a book written with sincerity, enthusiasm and some competence; a book that may serve as a synthesis of the best of the modern New Thought theories. Such a book is "Life Abundant for You," by Louise and George B. Brownell.

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